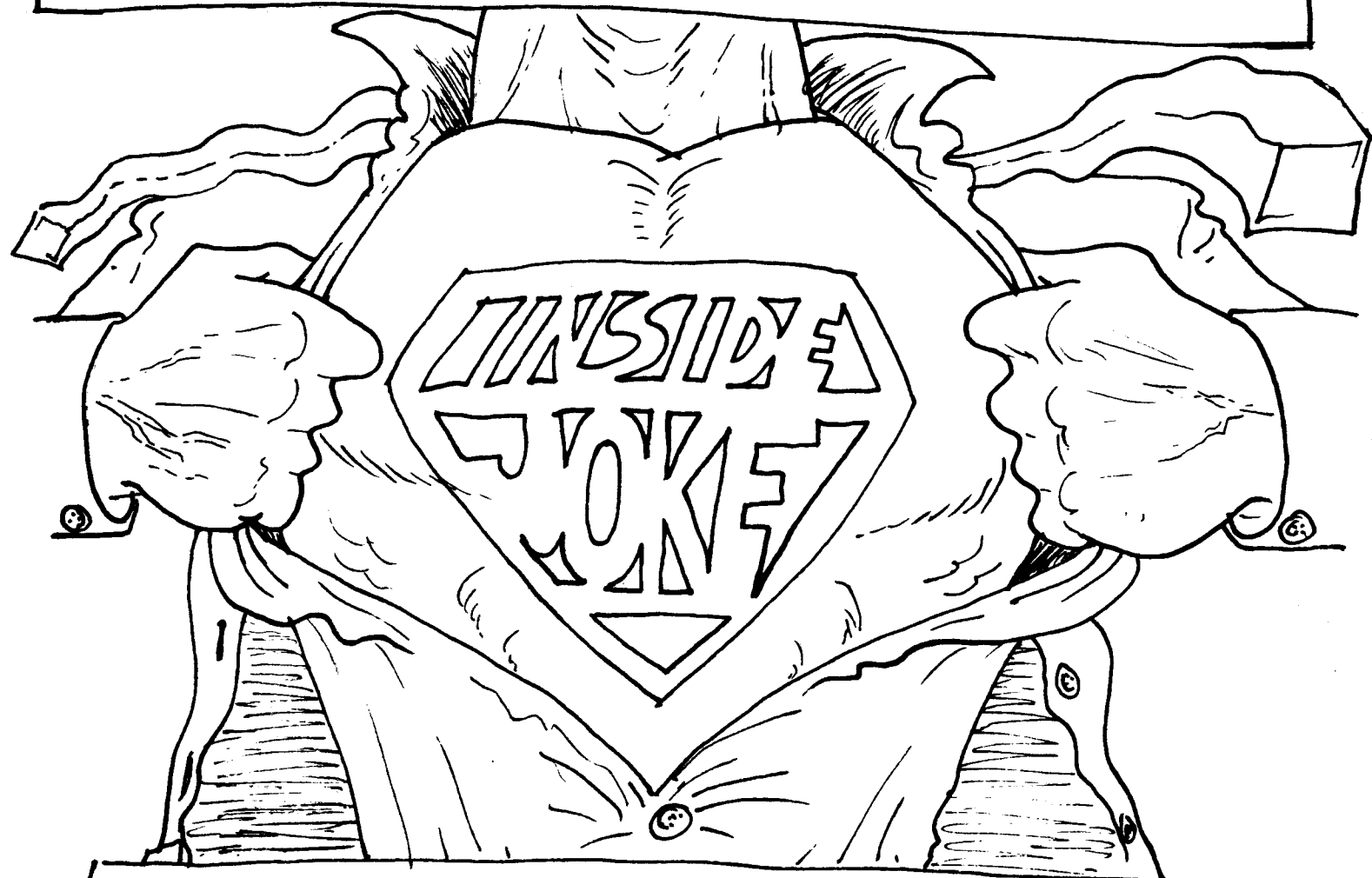


LOOK!

TALENT-FILLED... WHY !!!

IN A
WORD

IT'S
INANE, IT'S...



A NEWSLETTER OF COMEDY
AND CREATIVITY

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ISSUE **65**

65

Upcoming Events

JANUARY 31 - DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS TO IJ #66
FEBRUARY 1 - Terry Jones (47); George Pal (b. 1908);
Freedom Day
FEBRUARY 2 - Graham Nash (47); Tom Smothers (49); Ayn
Rand (b. 1905); James Joyce (b. 1882)
FEBRUARY 3 - Gertrude Stein (b. 1874)
FEBRUARY 4 - Rosa Parks (76); Betty Friedan (68)
FEBRUARY 5 - Chris Guest (41); Alice Cooper (?); Hank
Aaron (35); William Burroughs (75)
FEBRUARY 5-11 - Nat'l. Pancake Week, Nat'l. Cork Board Wk
FEBRUARY 6 - Chinese New Year; Bob Marley (b. 1945);
Babe Ruth (b. 1895)
FEBRUARY 7 - Mardi Gras; Eubie Blake (b. 1883);
Charles Dickens (b. 1812)
FEBRUARY 8 - Neal Cassady (b. 1926); Jules Verne (b.
FEBRUARY 9 - Gypsy Rose Lee (b. 1914) 1828)
FEBRUARY 10 - MICHAEL FLORES (?); Donovan (43)
FEBRUARY 11 - Thomas Edison (b. 1847)
FEBRUARY 12 - Charles Darwin (b. 1809)
FEBRUARY 13 - Peter Tork (45)
FEBRUARY 14 - Matt Groening (34); Jack Benny (b. 1894)
FEBRUARY 15 - BARB PACKER (35); Lupercalia
FEBRUARY 16 - Edgar Bergen (b. 1903)
FEBRUARY 18 - Yoko Ono (56); Gahan Wilson (59)
FEBRUARY 17-19 - NY/NEW ENGLAND BEATLES CONVENTION—for
more info call Charles F. Rosenay!!! at 203/865-8131
FEBRUARY 19-25 - Int'l. Forgiveness Week
FEBRUARY 22 - MICHAEL PACKER (34)
FEBRUARY 24 - Zeppo Marx (b. 1901)
FEBRUARY 25 - TODD KRISTEL (26); George Harrison (46);
Anthony Burgess (62); Theodore Sturgeon (b. 1918)

(continued on page 4)

ACKNOWLEDITORIAL

When—made it through 1988 just in time! Did the Christmas/New Year's bit, and thanks for all the lovely cards, only remember if you're addressing stuff to any Chaput or, for that matter, anyone else not designated "Elayne Wechsler" or "INSIDE JOKE" to the palatial P.O. box, please write "c/o Elayne Wechsler" or "c/o INSIDE JOKE" on your envelope, else it may not reach us (besides, we have a mailbox at home for anything addressed to "Chaput"). Got the place painted (finally) and moved furniture around, throwing out all my past letters in the process (one of the more traumatic things I've had to do in recent years) to open up more space. Got a couple new elements (including this Calligraphy one) for my home typewriter, now that I must do 90% of IJ out of the office (thus cutting what little social time I had in half). All in all, been too crazed to begin to think about things like coming to a decision on an alternate "title" to describe my function at IJ, which I'll try to make by #66. In the meantime, I'm starting to gear up for ...our Annual IJ Spring/Baseball Nearing/Ides-o-March/St. Patty's/April Fool's/Etc. Party, which will take place this year on Saturday evening, March 18 at Apartment Third-Eye here in Brooklyn—more details will appear next issue, but just to let you know, we will be mailing out invites to local IJ readers and past attendees but that is NOT to say you aren't invited if you don't get an invite. However, if you wanna come you gotta call us to confirm so we know how many plan to show, okay? Mark them calendars now!

A word, if I may, about editorial parentheticals—they are, in point of fact, my prerogative; I have a self-appointed right to butt in parenthetically when I feel it's necessary I make a comment on a given piece I'm running in, after all, my own newsletter. You are equally free not to read it or to ignore its content. My paren comments are, I feel, relatively few and obviously my opinion only, not meant to imply the same feelings on the part of the author on whose work I am commenting (I even use a different typing element to designate my "voice"). With a very few exceptions, most involving matters More Than I Need To Know (and I have begun leaving those in and giving MTINIK Alerts, this issue's going to Nick Dana for cat mutilation description and Andy Roberts for being, well, a bit too Mickey Spillaine), I do not cut out nor censor IJ material, as I feel everyone deserves a say—but it's my newsletter, dammit, and "everyone" should certainly include the one who types/lays out/pays to get it printed/etc. I'm sticking to my guns on this one, and will therefore try to inform the more apparently sensitive among you when I plan to paren-comment on your work so you don't get bent out of shape over it, okay? But, hey, lighten up, staffers—egad, you do get your issues free, after all; and while I value your opinions, I've also come to value some of my own (like free speech in my own zine).

I'm saddened to report Deborah Benedict will be leaving the ranks of stafferdom (see letters column); also, due to consensus demand and with the creators' consent, based as well on the fact that the work in question is syndicated elsewhere and may soon appear in book form anyway, we have dropped HOMO PATROL. Otherwise, all the usual folks are in attendance, we've ended one serial and are close to ending two others, one writer (Daza, our cover artist next issue—and BY THE WAY, WE NOW NEED IJ COVERS FOR FUTURE ISSUES, so see me about details) even continues a story he started a couple issues back, and, best of all, we have new blood—welcome to new writers and artists Elliot Cantsin, Al Fry, Jim Middleton, RSMoser, Spence Nicholson, Paul Nicoloff and, in a splendid satirical IJ debut, Dale White. As for folks not present, I guess David Serlin took a break between semesters, so I've no article from him nor any news to report on INSIDE STROKE yet, sorry...

Next issue will feature another edition of Fan Noose, my plug column for fellow zines/papers/alternative stuff out there, so if you have anything coming out that you want publicized, get it to me by the next deadline so I can include it (I'd have done Fan Noose this issue but I haven't had time to read much lately). The deadline, as listed on the left, for #66 is January 31; we're having two separate deadlines for #67 due to the IJ party, so the deadline for mailing stuff to me for that issue will be the Ides of March, March 15, and the deadline for submitting stuff to me in person will be the IJ Party, March 18 (which will feature, once more, our annual round-robin Gerber story). "Stuff" in this case includes pieces of under 1500 words (under 1900 for staffers), art, letters to the "editrix" and ads—by the by, thanks to all 3 folks who paid for ads this issue, and, as usual, to J.C. Brainbeau for his above-and-beyond donation. Donations are always welcome (I lose about \$250-300 per IJ), as are regular subscriptions, which are \$1.50 an issue and \$12 for 8 issues (one year)—checks must be made payable to "Elayne Wechsler" and, Canadians, postal money orders only please. Overseas, I send IJ surface rate and it costs 3 IRCs per issue. If your writing or art appears in the next IJ, you have the option of either paying the \$1.50 cash/check or sending me 65¢ exactly in stamps (Canadians must send 74¢ US postage; overseas, sorry, you're outta luck here). If there's an "X" next to your name on the mailing label, this is your last paid issue; time to renew! Send shatcha got to us at:

P.O. Box 1609, Madison Square Station, New York, NY 10159.
 This issue is dedicated to the memories of Hal Ashby, Roy Orbison and Leonard Ackner.

* INSIDE JOKE is put on hexaweekly by Elayne "Hard Me The Wite-
 * Out Again, This Typewriter's Driving Me Crazy" Wechsler and a
 * lot of dear friends and emanates from beautiful downtown
 * Brooklyn, where some apartments which shall go nameless actu-
 * ally appear to be slowly caving in...

* EDITOR-IN-RESIDENCE (for now).....ELAYNE WECHSLER
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FRONT COVER BY MICHAEL POLO

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DIARY of the ROCK FIEND

by
Anni Ackner
BABY BUST



Well, here's the thing. Marriage—as those of you who have lately taken out second mortgages on your home in order to keep the sterling silver cake server people in business can attest—has been breaking out in record proportions over the past several years, and among otherwise intelligent people, too. You can blame this on the AIDS crisis, on the country's general swing towards conservative values and mores, or on the simple fact that, in many major metropolitan areas these days, it's impossible for a single person to afford a decent apartment, but, whatever, there's no denying that, in these final years of the Twentieth Century, marriage has become as fashionable—and just about as attractive—as wearing a velour jogging suit to a formal dinner party.

Now, marriage has been talked to death, and, in fact, we have chatted about it fairly interminably, and, to tell you the truth, your beloved Rock Fiend is sick to death of the entire subject and has no intention of pursuing it; however, it should be pointed out, if we are to go any further in this column—and if *She Who Would Not Be Editrix* is not to have a psychotic episode, we certainly are—that, in a tolerably large percentage of cases, where a Thinking Person has friends who get married, eventually, a Thinking Person will have friends who have A Baby.

There are a great many reasons for this sociological phenomenon, none of them particularly logical, but all of them pervasive and, one gathers, inescapable. For one thing, parental pressure to reproduce is constant and unyielding, beginning, as it does, in one's own childhood—the so-called and long-identified “Mother's Curse,” which runs something along the lines of “I only hope you grow up and have a miserable little bastard just like you, then you'll know the way I suffer”—continuing into young adulthood, when one may be fighting both the idea of marriage and parenthood—“By the time I was your age, I was married and had you and your sister”—and shifting into high gear as one's biological clock goes ticking merrily away—“I only hope that I get to kiss my grandchild before I die.” Then, too, there is the societal view that anyone not immediately spending \$25,000 on obstetric and hospital fees, \$50,000 for Early Childhood Education, another \$50,000 for the equipment necessary for “quality time” (this usually involves a semi-yearly pilgrimage to Disney World), and \$300 for an Aprica stroller is somehow selfish and materialistic; subtle peer pressure—“Honestly, Ralph, I never really realized my true potential as a man until Amanda was born”—which probably springs from a sort of “Misery loves company” dynamic; and the deadly and completely erroneous belief that opportunities missed or thwarted in one's own youth may somehow be accomplished in the youth of one's offspring (Potential Daddies, please take note: If you weren't tall enough for the N.B.A., chances are that little Kareem Abdul isn't going to be tall enough for the N.B.A. either. Furthermore, if by some fluke he does make it onto the Lakers, you're going to be in the uncomfortable position of being nastily jealous of your own child, at least until he buys you that bright red Trans-Am). Whatever the underlying causes, however, the results are much the same: After sustaining a relationship for an undefined and subjective period of time, and being married—sometimes, particularly if the couple in question makes a habit of appearing in made-for-TV movies, even before getting married—it is, as they say, a probable 12 to 7 that any given couple, in any given month, is going to be spending its evenings sending out adorable little cards with jolly storks on them and debating the merits of Bradley or Brianna versus Kristoffer or Krystle (the sudden inability to spell which sometimes strikes prospective parents is a topic for another treatise which, thankfully, I am under no obligation to write), and the Thinking Person is going to have to react accordingly.

For the purposes of this discussion, we shall define a Baby as any small, potentially human creature too old to fit comfortably into a uterus and too young to begin nagging about Fashion Star Fillies, and which belongs to somebody else. A Baby which belongs to you is no longer A Baby as such, but The Baby or, worse, My Baby. The Baby or My Baby is to Other Babies what Karl Gustav of Sweden is to a thundering mob of second-stringers in the World Wrestling Federation, and that is just about all we need to say about that. We are assuming, at this point, that the Thinking Person is not afflicted with The Baby or My Baby, but is merely in a position of having to deal with A Baby or Babies belonging to friends or relations, and has a vested interest in not being driven to hysterical symptoms thereby.

And make no mistake about it—you will be expected to deal with the offspring of your supposed loved ones at some point or another. One curious side effect of Parenthood, whether current or impending, is the unshakable belief that no one of their even casual acquaintance has anything else in the world to do at all that could possibly be more pressing, interesting or important than admiring, hearing about or, worse still, holding their Baby. If one

wishes to emerge from this experience more or less unscathed, and remaining on civil terms with the Parents in question, it is therefore necessary to arm oneself with a series of strategies for coping with the situations that may arise. And if anyone among you hasn't seen a lead-in for a list coming for at least the last two sentences, may I humbly suggest that you run off and make an appointment with a reputable optometrist right this minute while the rest of us peruse DR. SPOCK, or

How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Stork

1. Because practically the first thing you will be called upon to do, when presented with A Baby, is make some suitable remark concerning its physical charm and attractiveness, it is well to remember, first of all, that, except for minor variations in size and colour—not unlike the uniforms of professional football teams—all Babies look pretty much alike. Furthermore, there has never been a Baby in the world that resembled, at initial glance, its parents or grandparents—unless its parents or grandparents happen to be 20 inches long, toothless, and somewhat undercooked—or, for that matter, anyone else except another Baby. However, all Parents labour under the delusion that their offspring is the mirror image of themselves, some revered ancestor or, lately, Elvis Presley, and here is where the Thinking Person is apt to get into trouble. If, for instance, you buy into this fancy and remark cheerfully that, well, he certainly does look like Daddy, doesn't he, you will haughtily be informed that he most certainly does not look like Daddy, he looks just like Pop-Pop, just look at those dimples, after which you will be forced to stare at those dimples as if they were *The Last Temptation of Christ*. On the other hand, if you opt to steer away from family connections altogether, and go for something general, such as “hasn't he got blue eyes?” (FYI, all Caucasian babies have blue eyes in their early days, so you aren't going to be allowed to get away with this remark in any event, unless you really enjoy sounding witless), you are probably going to be accused of not paying attention. The thing to do, in this case, is to memorize a few standard phrases that, while they are trivial and general, may be delivered with enough force and enthusiasm to make them sound personal. In other words, never ask a question—deliver a statement. “How big and strong!”, not “Isn't he big and strong like his Daddy?” (By the way, in this day and age one should always bear in mind that Mommy's husband may not necessarily be Daddy, nor does Daddy's wife have to be Mommy, so before you go noticing strong family resemblances, make sure you know just who is whom.) “What powerful lungs he has!”, not “Strong voices run in the family, don't they?” “Get him off of me!”, not “You sure can tell his Mom's a dentist, can't you?” Of course, very occasionally the Parents will help you along in your praise: The only thing a Thinking Person need answer to a question like “Doesn't he look just like Uncle George with the big trust fund?” is “Yes.”

2. Interwoven with the fact that all Babies look alike is the equally tedious and frustrating truth that, at least until they begin to grow hair and wear “Daddy's Fishing Buddy” t-shirts, and sometimes, given the current trend towards nonsexist pursuits, even then—male Babies are virtually indistinguishable from female Babies. This wouldn't cause any particular problem—after all, one assumes that the gurgling infant in the bassinet has one or two other things on its mind besides the etiquette of who picks up the dinner check and which one tips the wine steward—except that, for unexplained reasons, even the Parents who are charter members of NOW and have every intention of grooming their daughter for the Presidency of the United States and their son for a key spot in the New York City Ballet will tend to become unbalanced to a degree all out of proportion to the thing if you chance to refer to the former as “Slugger” and the latter as “Sweetie-Pie.” The Thinking Person may attempt to avoid this sort of embarrassment by ascertaining the infant's name beforehand but, unfortunately, this doesn't always work. While, with the exception of a few anomalies (some Parents will insist on naming a female, despite all efforts to dissuade them, after that previously mentioned Uncle George), you can fairly safely figure that anything named “Barbara” is a girl and anything named “Jerome” is a boy, there isn't going to be very much you can do with “Leslie,” “Terry,” “Chris,” “Tyler” and, lately, “Jamie,” and, beyond that, Parents have been known to be given to wild flights of fancy, and anyone faced with a creature christened “Marley Infinity” (by the way, that happens to be a real handle stuck on a real Baby of your correspondent's acquaintance, so you see how much good it does you to kid these things) might just as well hand over the savings bond and go home. Sometimes a Parent will give you a boost along by going in for traditional methods of sex-delineation—and here is where, “Kid” Sieve's protests to the contrary notwithstanding, those pink and blue diapers really do serve a legitimate purpose—but more often it's best to play the percentages and, if you must refer to The Baby by a pet name, make it something non-gender specific, such as “Shorty,” “Pee Wee” or “Drooler.” This will not only have the salutary effect of letting you off the hook, it will provide The Baby with a suitable appellation should it grow up to become a comedian in one of the smaller hotels in the Catskill Mountains.

3. While you may believe that one only becomes an Aunt or Uncle by having the misfortune to possess a sister or brother with an urge to reproduce, it is equally easy to attain this dubious honour merely by standing in the immediate vicinity of formerly valued friends who have issued forth with Child. This is known in the business as being an Aunt or Uncle by Courtesy, or Getting

(continued next page)

Really Stuck With It, and it differs from being a biological Aunt or Uncle only in that, if a biological Aunt or Uncle does not pay proper homage to The Baby, the worst that can happen is that he or she will be talked about at family gatherings, while a Courtesy Aunt or Uncle runs the risk of not being invited out to the house in the Hamptons during the hottest weeks in August. Of course, you can do what you like, but you are strenuously advised to weigh the cost of a couple of rattles and a silver drinking mug against having to spend long, lonely afternoons sitting naked in front of the open refrigerator before coming to any decision.

4. Whether you are an Aunt or Uncle by biology or Courtesy, a friend of the family, a second cousin once removed, or someone who just happened to drop by collecting for the Fund to Send Unpaid Humor Columnists to Europe for a Couple of Weeks, never, ever allow yourself to be left alone with The Baby, not even for "five minutes while I run over to the Safeway." Totally aside from the fact that five minutes at the Safeway have been known to turn into dinner, a movie, and a romantic evening in the nearest Marriott with alarming frequency, and the parallel fact that people left in the company of Babies are going to have to perform all manner of unpleasant chores, which will be delineated later, Babies have a peculiar knack for selecting the precise moment that their Parents move out of earshot to bump their little heads against pieces of furniture, trip and skin their little knees, come down with little cases of colic, and otherwise cause minor injuries to their little persons. Parents, on returning home to discover a squalling, bruised Future Senator from the State of New Jersey, and you belly-up in the liquor cabinet—which is, logically, the only place you should be in such a situation—are very prone to coming to various sorts of hysterical and wrongheaded conclusions, and the best that can happen is that they'll never speak to you again, but their lawyer will. Plead a previous engagement, an allergy to baby oil, or an intense fear of birdie mobiles that play "Alou-ette," but keep out of the nursery when there aren't any Grown-Ups about.

5. Considering the aforementioned obnoxious chores that must be performed if A Baby is to be coaxed through its initial years—and the general consensus is that they should be—the one to be avoided by all possible means and contrivances is the changing of diapers. Oh, admittedly, it is at least physically easier than it once was—back in the days of cloth diapers in the pins that went with them, there was always the chance that one might, accidentally, stick The Baby, which could easily lead to that squalling, bruising and those precipitous flights to the liquor cabinet previously detailed. With the advent of things like Pampers, about the worst mishap that can befall The Baby is a bad case of tape burn—nevertheless, it's still a task no Thinking Person should be forced to endure. For one thing, contrary to those adorable euphemisms used in advertisements for diapers and creams and such, Babies do not "wet." White mice, perhaps, "wet." Babies flood, and with a cheerfulness and consistency that would do credit to a tropical rain forest. Moreover, they prefer flooding after one has removed the old diaper but before one has had a chance to apply the new one and, just to add to the festivities, boy Babies flood upwards, with a pinpoint accuracy not usually seen in anyone short of Roger McDowell. The other things Babies do while awaiting a change of diapers are so thoroughly unspeakable that we will not even begin to consider them—some of them involve a primitive form of finger-painting—but take my word on this one. Don't even trouble to come up with a sweetly-worded excuse for refusing to have anything to do with The Baby's bathroom habits. Stamp your foot and scream if you have to, but do not change a diaper.

6. For that matter, don't feed A Baby either, at least until it's old enough to pick up the check. Neither Calvin nor Anne Klein has ever come up with a colour that looks well with strained spinach. Just don't, that's all.

7. And for God's sake, don't burp The Baby. Babies are not old enough to be able to tell the difference between the oral passing of intestinal pressure and, shall we say, stronger manifestations of a disagreement with their dinners, and Calvin and Anne have not managed to come up with a colour that matches that, either.

8. Jean Kerr once wrote a charming and amusing piece concerning the ways one should and should not converse with A Baby. Ms. Kerr, as I recall, lived in fear of offending or boring The Baby, or, worst yet, having what she said in innocence come back at her when The Baby ultimately learned to speak. Ms. Kerr, who had some unconscionable number of Children of her own—I believe it was seven, although after three or four it scarcely matters any more—was labouring under the delusion that Babies understand what people say to them, and remember it. Ms. Kerr may be excused this misapprehension on the grounds that any woman with that many children is entitled to have taken at least one brief voyage on the banana boat, but, between ourselves, she was dead wrong. Babies most assuredly do not understand what is said to them until they reach 25 or so—some of the males may never understand what is said to them—and they certainly don't remember it, else every Baby's first words would be, "Oh my God, why are you crying? You're not hungry, you're not wet—what's the matter?" Therefore, it is not necessary to entertain them with sparkling conversation and mordant wit. Should you feel the spirit of Noel Coward rising within you, save it for the next time you're dining with William Buckley and Edwin Newman—as far as talking to A Baby is concerned, if you ever have to, you can get away with reciting "The boy stood on the burning deck" or trying to figure out just why it

is that last relationship went so very dreadfully wrong. The Baby will not care. Chances are, The Baby is not even listening, but lying there in its crib conjuring up new and better ways to inconvenience the people luckless enough to have to change its diapers, and, even on the off-chance that The Baby does remember what you said and eventually repeat it, you won't by that time remember who that last relationship was, so you haven't lost a thing.

9. As intimated earlier, from time to time you will be expected to present The Baby with a gift or gifts, and it is important for everyone's peace of mind that these be of a suitable nature for an infant. Most Parents—as do most sentient beings, allowing, for the moment, that anyone who deliberately lets him or herself in for all this is sentient—generally prefer cash, checks, money orders or, in a pinch, savings bonds, but assuming you wish to actually buy something for The Baby and not contribute to its Parents' next car payment, tiny toys, stuffed animals, little garments, and nice snugly blankets are all considered suitable presents for A Baby. No matter what your feelings on the matter, a jolly packet of razor blades is not considered a suitable present for A Baby. And it does you absolutely no good to get The Baby a pearl necklace on the assumption that it will lend it to you until it's old enough to appreciate it. It won't. Trust me.

10. Of course, the thing that has saved the sanity of more Thinking Persons forced to commune with Parents and their Babies than anything else is the knowledge that, whatever happens, The Baby does not belong to you. Admire it all you like, play with it if you must, talk to it if they force you, and then, when it begins to wear on your nerves or does something to disgrace itself, hand it right back to Mummy and Daddy and beat it the hell out of there. This is your inalienable right as a member of the happily Child-Free and should be exercised at all times. Never let anybody take it away.

It is at this point in the column that I usually like to close with a few final words of wisdom, a summing up of the facts of the case, or, if all else fails, a fairly weak riposte designed to get me safely away from the typewriter as rapidly as possible, before anyone notices, but, as it happens, in the course of writing this I have learned that yet another one of my myriad acquaintances has brought forth an Heir, and I must run off and get the little dear a present. You don't suppose it would enjoy this really spiffy beige swede jacket I happened to see at...oh well, you don't, do you?

Staffers love to get mail, and often answer it! Won't you consider writing to an INSIDE JOKE staffer today?

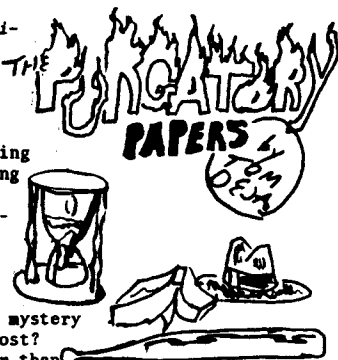
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As of this writing, Pru is planning to move her P.O. Box to Laurel, MD—we'll keep you updated!

UPCOMING EVENTS (continued from p. 2)

FEBRUARY 26 - ANDY ROBERTS (30); Tex Avery (b. 1908)
FEBRUARY 28 - KEN BURKE (33); DANA SNOW (36); JOE SCHWIND (39); John Tenniel (b. 1820)
MARCH is National Women's History Month
MARCH 1 - JED MARTINEZ (35); National Pig Day; Peace Corps est. (1961); Roger Daltrey (45)
MARCH 2 - Dr. Seuss (85); Tom Wolfe (58); Lou Reed (47)
MARCH 4 - Catherine O'Hara (35)
MARCH 6 - BRIAN PEARCE (24); Rob Reiner (44)
MARCH 8 - Int'l. Women's Day; Mickey Dolenz (44)
MARCH 12-18 - Fun Mail Week
MARCH 12 - Jack Kerouac (b. 1922)
MARCH 14 - Michael Caine (56); Albert Einstein (b. 1879)
MARCH 15 - DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS BY MAIL TO IJ #67
MARCH 16 - JOHN BRIDGMAN (?)
MARCH 18 - IJ PARTY (details in IJ #66); DEADLINE FOR IN-PERSON SUBMISSIONS TO IJ #67

"I HEP, YOU HEP, HE/SHE/IT HEPS"
(In which Our Hero begins a multi-part dissertation on the quality that makes him great with a history of this elusive but oh-so-vital part of his nature)



Hep.
That's what they've been calling me since I began my duties as King of Purgatory. It's not an easy title to maintain. You'd be surprised at how short a hop it is from "Hep" to "Faddish" and from "Faddish" to "Garbage." Look at the Fonzi. Look at Miami Vice. Look at Pee-Wee Herman. The big mystery is still, what makes a Hepster most? Why is Peter Gabriel still neater than neat while David Bowie can't even get a check cashed in this town? Why is Little Richard struggling by with the occasional cameos on FOX sitcoms while Elvis—years after he died!—is still idolized and worshipped as a Hercules of Heppeningness?

Since I've been designated one of LJ's arbitors of Hep², I'd like to take some time to discuss Hepness, the act of being hep and why hepness doesn't in any way guarantee you'll be successful with women.

The exact origins of Hepness are unknown, lost as they are in the mists of time. What is fairly certain is that the first Homo Hepilis (aka "Way Cool Man") must have developed itself some time after the debut of Homo Gigantus. Homo Gigantus, known for its uncommonly large stature³, was the first homonid to pioneer trendiness by creating the power shoulders. As all true hep connoisseurs know, trendiness can never precede hepness. There is no "chicken or egg" question where hepness is concerned.

Homo Hepilis, without a doubt, was right in the fray during the Great Divergence. The Great Divergence was when the earliest forms of man split in such a way that some of them became MEN and learned such interesting practices as murder, war and torture whereas others became orangutans and learned how to climb rocks, pick flies off of each other and muck about in trees. Homo Hepilis and its trendoid cousins naturally chose to be MEN⁴. You see, if we decided to join Australopithecus and their pals we'd have to give up progress. At that time progress was illustrated by things like fire, the hand axe and the digging stick. Homo Gigantus and their ilk couldn't live without those modern conveniences. Homo Hepilis couldn't do without the ability to fob these items off on Homo Gigantus: oranges didn't have much use for hand axes. Even Hep people—whether man, woman, or homonid—had to make a living somehow.

I bring this up to illustrate one of the major tenets of hepness: Hepness and Stupidity are not mutually exclusive terms.

As Homo Hepilis gave way to Neanderthals who gave way to Cro-Magnon who finally gave way to Homo Sapien, the Hepper being always won out over the non-hep. In this survival of the fittest, the hepster always knew what was on the money. Frequently, the primordial skies were rent by the shouts of "M'gra-Urgra" (rough translation: "Cool!") or "Egra Rhagro" (rough translation: "Watch what happens when I attach these rounds things to your board. Pretty neat, eh?"). Before too long, the truly Hep of early men made the most important discovery up until that time.

They developed civilization.

Civilization was the missing piece, the lost marble, the Third Stooze in the Hepness equation. It was a wonder that Hep folks could have gotten by without it for so long. Prior to the development of the Big C, Hep was the only game in town. Early man's choices were fairly limited, you see. It was either follow the Hep or get mauled by a wild boar or eaten by a sabre-tooth, something like that. With civilization, those new humans could choose something other than Hep. Simply put, civilization put hepness into a sharper relief.

Unfortunately, civilization was a double-edged sword. While it was true that civilization helped Hepness reach new heights of total cool, it also gave the non-Hep the ability to ignore—even criticize—their former leaders. Thus were created the Dweebazoids, the race of humans whose normalcy was not only a constant but a prideful badge of honor. These people would cause severe problems in the centuries to come.

For every Hepster trying to improve the copaceticness of life, there were seventeen Dweebazoids holding their noses and making pukey sounds. These Dweebazoids usually held jobs such as King, Pope⁵, Chancellor of the Exchequer and Baron. Thus, a Hepster had an uphill battle if he wanted to get something done. That's why so many of the early hepsters were reviled, shunned or—in the case of Joan of Arc—burnt at the stake.

The constant persecution didn't sit well with the legions of Hep, to be sure. They began to feel the pressure to give up their way cool life and enter the normal, dull existence half of humanity already lived. No one understood that normalcy could never be a possibility. It was Hep or die. Of course, death wasn't the only outcome. The worst the Artistic Hep had to do was move to tropical islands or cut off their ears. The politicians and scientists had a rougher time of it. It isn't easy conveying your concepts of the universe when you're being used as kindling.

The fortunes of the Hep began to change circa with 19th century. In Europe, the way cool made their Hepness acceptable by

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making it a source of amusement. Oscar Wilde led this assault on normal society, showing the intelligentsia the depths of their contempt under the guise of being witty. In America, the Wild West proved a breeding ground for Hepness. Unfortunately, the frustration and persecution of the past few centuries welled up in an orgy of aggression. The slightest impingement led to a shooting match. Considering the accuracy of these Hepsters, death was a fairly common thing. So much Hepness was snuffed out in that period that the West began to resemble the Vatican.

This incident did indicate that American Hep had to adapt itself to the demands of a different nation. Irreverence was fine for a society with a long tradition of subservience and groveling, but America required something more. For the United States to achieve its Hepness potential, the stakes had to be higher. Irreverence was not enough—the American Hepster had to be downright dangerous. By cultivating an outlaw image, the Hepster was finally able to cut through the repressed American Protestant veneer while driving the Authorities nuts. Now the Hepster was able to challenge conformity and all the normals could do was print nasty things about them.

It took time for this last piece of the Hepness Equation to pay off. There were early successes: people like Theda Bara, Douglas Fairbanks Sr. and Valentino served to test the societal waters. At first, restraint was a problem. The innate hepster didn't know when to stop. Hepsters were supposed to admire the proper wielding of a baseball bat, not use one to bludgeon underlings to death. These excesses didn't stop Al Capone from becoming a folk hero, however. On the contrary, he was quite the media darling. The press fawned over this fellow and there was even talk of a television show, a show that was scotched because television wasn't invented yet.

Even without television commercials advertising "Capone Crunchies" ("The breakfast cereal you'll die for!"), the desired effect was achieved. Trendoid genes, long dormant due to disuse, blossomed again. Folks emerged who wanted to follow, who wanted to attain that pale mockery of Hepness that Trendoids almost never achieve. The mystique of Hepness was accentuated by the advent of Black Mask Magazine. Its stable of writers showed us that amorality, cruelty, mindless violence and betrayal were not only excitingly mysterious but damn sexy. Some people call this style of writing—and later, films that usually starred Bogart and Cagney—"hard-boiled" or "noir." The public just called it neat.

And that, folks, was all she wrote.

Of course, the Dweebazoids tried to rein in this New Hepness. They ranted. They screamed. They gave us the Hays Code. We managed to circumvent each of these attacks. They gave us RICO, we gave them Bugsy Moran. They gave us the IRS, we gave them the tax shelter. They gave us censorship, we gave them Lauren Bacall. As time crawled onwards, some formidable, much subtler attempts to subvert the Hep way of life were made. Things like the 50s were designed to bring humanity back into the fold. But the Hepsters had their confidence back and calmly launched a counterattack of greasers, Elvis and Rock n' Roll. Rock, of course, was Hepness' nuclear warhead. Once we dropped that "tribal dance music" ("heh-heh") into the breach, the war for the public was over.

That's not to say there weren't behavioral dips. We call these dips the 70s.

It's a true testament to Hepness that we've survived a lot: persecution, censorship, Reagan. Not surprisingly, we've been criticized because we're resisted attempts to control us. But that is the nature of the beast. It is the Hepster's destiny to pioneer, to act as scout into unknown cultural territory. We're not supposed to conform—that's the trendoid's job. We point the way; the trendoids disseminate the new revelation to the public. We've done it quite well, also. Our struggle is over for the time being. We're now able to sit back and observe what's going on around us with a sneer on our lips and next year's fashions on our backs. Someday—and that day may be soon—we'll have to struggle again. Let's hope we don't get fat and lazy because of this respite.

But, for the time being, it's a way cool life.

NEXT: Guidelines for the New Hepness—what to wear, where to go and for whom you should show contempt.

PERFECTLY RESPECTABLE, ANTHROPOLOGICALLY CORRECT FOOTNOTES

- 1—This statement does not indicate an approval; however, it must be said that Elvis did have several aspects—rampant self-promotion, flagrant flaunting of sexuality, outrageous dress and manner—that other posthumous pop icons (John Lennon and Ian Curtis readily come to mind) do not have.
- 2—This is not me tooting my own horn. As dictated by DeJa's First Law of Hepness, I have waited until I have been called hep by others. See your average "Sez-U" column for proof.
- 3—Also known as Zoot Suit Man and Big Sunova Man.
- 4—Not that I'm saying there weren't WOMEN either.
- 5—Granted, there's not much difference between the two, but let's just let it lie there.

THE CONTINUING SAGA OF DR. IGUANA

THE STORY SO FAR.

by Ken Burke

THE LIFE IN A BAND QUIZ

You've been kicking around with your music for quite a while now, and you're kinda looking for some sort of barometer of where you're at and how far you've come. This quiz is an attempt to fulfill that need. You may not agree with its findings or think that anything included applies to you, but what the hell—it'll give you something to do during rehearsal when you're waiting for one of your band members to return from his beer run...

This test is multiple-choice. (You've got the wind at your back already.) Circle the letter next to the answer with which you agree the most.

- The ideal drummer for our band...
 - keeps a solid beat behind us.
 - can play in a variety of moods and styles.
 - has tremendous stamina and is always musically alert.
 - has his own van or mini-bus and loads and unloads all of his own equipment.
- A good lead guitar player...
 - knows all our songs and owns his own guitar.
 - is as proficient on rhythm as he is on lead.
 - can play the same leads over and over but still makes them sound fresh each time.
 - remembers to turn the damn thing down during the vocals.
- The perfect manager for our band...
 - really digs our music and is supportive of our artistic goals.
 - knows the address of and directions to the gig and where to plug in.
 - can move us from "exposure gigs" to paying ones.
 - acts like a shit-heel towards our fans so we don't have to.
- Which statement do you agree with most?
 - Anyone can write hit songs.
 - Practically anyone can write hit songs.
 - It takes a special kind of talent to write songs for our band.
 - It's nearly impossible to find original material that fits our band.
- The best reason to call off band practice is...
 - "Ahh, we don't feel like it, man."
 - "We're afraid that if we over-rehearse, the music won't feel spontaneous."
 - "We're too damned tired from working our day jobs."
 - "The members of our band are liable to kill one another if they have to spend one more minute together."
- Your main motivation for being in a band is...
 - "To make noise...y'know, bop-bop, rock'n'roll!"
 - "To get paid and get laid, heh-heh."
 - "To prove that there are at least a few people who know what good music is all about around here."
 - "To show those bastards that I'm going to make the type of music I want in spite of all the bullshit they throw at me!"
- You are the main reason people come to see your band; when you get paid your band members' share is...
 - "The same as mine. We're all in this together."
 - "The same as mine—for now..."
 - "Not that much less than mine."
 - "What I tell them it is. I'm the show."
- Which statement is similar to your attitude towards your band?
 - They're all good guys. We're very close friends.
 - We're sort of like two good bands joining forces to make up one great band.
 - As far as I'm concerned, he and I are the band. The rest of you guys are just along for the ride.
 - I respect all these guys as musicians, but I don't get that close to any of them because they might not be around that long.
- Your band is playing and members of the audience are requesting a type of music your group doesn't play. You...
 - ridicule the request and then play what you were planning to play.
 - bravely stumble through some unfamiliar material.
 - apologize, saying, "That's a great song and he's a fine artist but we just don't know that well enough to do the material justice."
 - Smile. Fondly reminisce about how the artist or song in question was such a big influence on you and how they inspired you to "write this song" and then you proceed to do the material you had planned to do all along.
- You're playing an out-of-town dance at a rented hall when you notice that the event's organizer has skipped out without paying you. What course of action do you take?
 - Chalk it up to experience and make plans to kick his ass.
 - Lock the doors and make people pay to get out.
 - Lodge a formal complaint in civil court and sue for your wages.
 - Offer to sweep and lock up, then confiscate as many tables,

chairs and fixtures as you can and sell them to a junk dealer.

- You've "topped out" on the wage scale club owners are willing to pay for bands. Which added incentive or "perk" do you demand from management?
 - Let us put as many of our friends on the guest list as we want.
 - Let us drink all the beer we want, on the house.
 - Give us extra big ads in the local papers promoting our engagement.
 - All of the above, and we don't want to hear the bar's blender whirring through our sound system when we're on stage.
- A member of your band dies in a hideous, well-publicized tragedy. You react by...
 - disbanding until you overcome your collective grief; consider never reforming.
 - waiting a respectful length of time before seeking a replacement and renaming the group.
 - organizing a fund-raiser for his family. Invite all the local musicians. Play one tune with the remaining members of your band and dedicate it to him.
 - finding a replacement immediately and capitalizing on the publicity. Place life-size photos strategically onstage and do a series of "tribute shows" as a springboard to bigger and better things. Tell everyone, "He would have wanted it that way."

If most of your answers are "A": It wasn't too long ago that you got a guitar and made your first clean chords. As soon as you found yourself able to play along in the same key as some of your records, you formed your first band.

At this point, everyone in your band is either your best friend or a relative who lives with you. After learning six songs in one key and two in another, you play your first party. Some people make sour faces and walk out on you. You dismiss them as "hopelessly out of it." A few people dig your wild intensity and tell you that you show promise. Your body is shaking with an adrenaline rush and your nerves buzz with an addictive warmth that you are determined to recapture.

If most of your answers are "B": You've assembled a nice little repertoire of songs in several different keys. You play your own songs better than you play cover versions, and though your instrumental ability is more subtle and varied than when you started, your stock in trade is still your energy and enthusiasm. People invite you to play at parties regularly. No money, but you eat and drink free, and you get a chance to strut your stuff in front of members of the opposite sex and find that aspect of being a musician very rewarding.

Creative differences surface in your group. Some of you want to play better, others just want to play loud. The self-proclaimed leader of the group tries to get everyone to "care" as much as he does, but soon realizes that if he has a whole band of people who act like him, there'll be a fist fight every night. You start noticing what other bands own that you don't, and you quickly become infected with the "equipment bug." For the next few years, musical supply dealers rub their greedy little hands together every time you walk through their doors.

If most of your answers are "C": By now the less serious members of your band have split and you have encountered your first experiences in playing your music with people you barely know and hardly like. You've added about 25 songs to your playlist that you don't particularly like, so you can play audience requests, but somebody still always asks for something you don't know. Your discontent is assuaged when you realize how good the band sounds.

You find out who your true friends are when you tell them that you can no longer play their parties and barbecues for free. Your band gets on the same treadmill of bars, clubs, and showcases that all the other bands are on; you get sick and tired of stapling your band's xeroxed ads on telephone poles. As often as not you are getting paid (when you can find the guy who booked you), but the money is either short-line or minimum scale.

You've tried to develop a sense of artistic integrity and professional ethics, but sometimes, while you halfheartedly drudge through your day job, you wonder if this whole "music thing" isn't just some unconscious excuse on your part to stay up in bars all night and drink stupefying amounts of beer. Later, when your band is playing, people are dancing, and shafts of light illuminate the curls of rising cigarette smoke, you start to feel the beat and sense the dream. Hope rises like a champion in your breast once again.

If most of your answers are "D": You've finally made a name for yourself. You are identified by the public as an artist with something to say, the heir apparent to your music's legacy, or a guaranteed "good time." You are a dependable attraction, yet some clubs won't hire you because they know they can't fuck you around the way they did before. You take pride in this, and there are plenty of other takers at your price. You've been putting out records on a local level, your band opens for big-name acts on tour, and you're making a living playing your music.

The down side is, you're a big fish in a little pond. Record company execs tell you you're "hot" and then forget to return your calls. Your old pals from your first band are all married with kids, and they can't hang out nights any more. When you do see them, they always ask you the same question—"When are you gonna grow up and get a real job?" Your most loyal and supportive fans are beginning to look like drunken idiots to you. You are feeling isolated. The only people you talk to are musicians, bartenders, waitresses, and people who want you to play somewhere for free.

Once in awhile you'll get tired of pushing so damned hard and you'll have an off-night. Your reflexes will seem dull, and the

fire cooking in your soul is nothing more than a pilot light. About then, some college twit with a sorority sister on his arm and about \$800 worth of drugs visibly caking in his nostrils will walk up to you and say, "Man, you can't play worth shit! I play better than that and I'm still taking lessons." You can't punch him out because he's a paying customer. The depression you feel has no bottom.

At times like that, you should comfort yourself and remember where you are and how far you've come. You are a mature talent and you've proven your commitment and breathed life into your music. You are riding on the cusp between being a local legend and becoming a rising national star. You've got more guts than anybody ever gave you credit for, so hang in there. Someone has to live the dream.

Wax Ink

by Rory Houchens

BIRD LIVES!—Various Artists (Milestone)—Inspired by the recent movie biography of Charlie Parker made by Clint Eastwood, the folks at Milestone Records dug into their vaults and came up with **BIRD LIVES!**, a ten-cut tribute to the most influential alto saxist to ever walk upon this great, green earth. Spanning nearly thirty years, this thin slab splits up juicy filets as cooked by Art Pepper (a smooth and sizzling "Yardbird Suite"), Blue Mitchell (a boisterous "Scrapple From The Apple"), Johnny Griffin (a buzzing, humming "Billie's Bounce"), Bill Evans (a rarely-heard, jumpy solo piano rendition of "Ornithology"), Wes Montgomery (an atmospheric "Repetition" which, though not written by Parker, was one of his trademark tunes), and Frank Morgan (a most Parkeresque reading of "Now's The Time"). Real beef for real people.

THE FAR EAST SUITE—Duke Ellington (Bluebird/RCA)—Though Ellington and Billy Strayhorn are well known for their contemporary jazz and "pop" compositions which are now considered standards, **THE FAR EAST SUITE** was a bit of a departure for the songwriting duo—it gave them a chance to explore and experiment with new moods, colors, patterns and textures, and they came up with an ear-opening masterpiece. "Tourist Point of View," with its busy foundation of drums and bass and animated horns on top, easily evokes a bustling street scene in an exotic land, while the playful horns and shifting moods of "Bluebird of Delhi" may express both the amazement and frustration of a stranger in a strange land. "Agra" and "Amad" recount the magic and mystery of the East, the former notable for the burly baritone sax work of Harry Carney. Highlighting the album are "Mount Harissa," with its alternating bittersweet and bold passages, and "Blue Pepper," a driving mix of rock beats and artificial Eastern flavorings, which critics are quick to point out "sounds contrived in its blend of East and West," but sounds fine to me. One of Ellington's best!

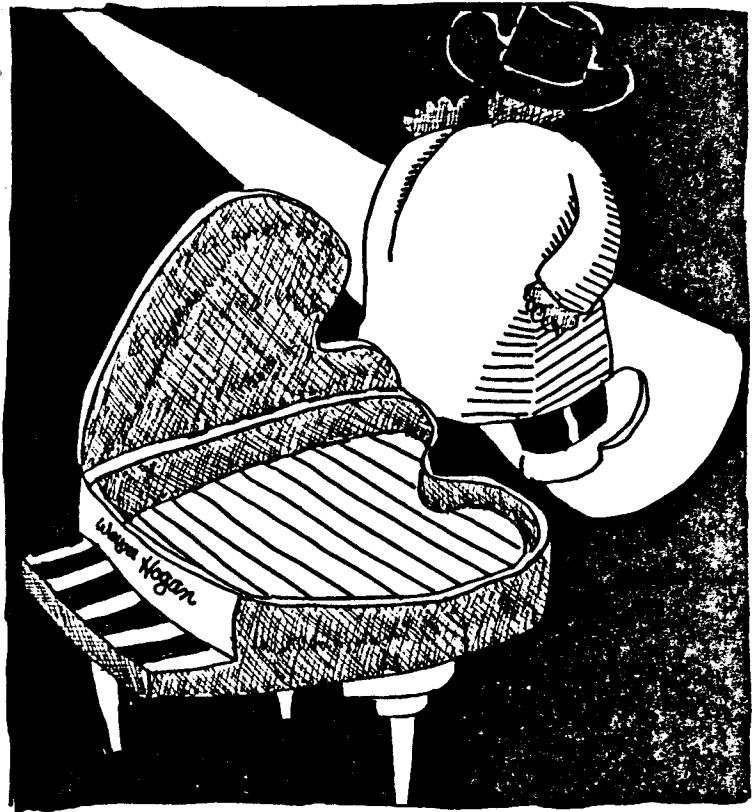
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ABNER

sits in his cabin
smokes and drinks
smiles to himself
as he thinks of his family
and "Why should I leave?
When you lose anything
you've become used to
you feel you've lost
your right arm. Yet
when you give up a thing
because you choose to,
you kin give it without
any alarm. A near hit
is still a miss," he said
with the pondered thought
of a four-year-old. "You can't
never tell when you're
gonna be hurt. The older
I get, the more I forget
and yet, it seems, I find
that the memories still
gather like cobwebs
on the rafters of my mind."

- Mary Ann Henn

DRIVING HOME

by Curtis Olson

you snoring drunkenly
in the seat beside me

the full full oh god so full
moon

shining white cool dazzling
above

the windshield nearly shattered
to glittering falling fragments
by the brightness of it

the only touch of sadness to the scene:
that you are asleep
not seeing
this visitation of god

IT SHOULD BE NEXT TO
IMPOSSIBLE FOR
Any country not to come up
with an increasingly better
standard of living for everyone
because of labor-saving
machinery but this and other
countries are doing the next to
impossible. It is happening at a
time when higher education is
at an all time high. Getting that
diploma has always been a way
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A DIP IN THE FLAMAPOL

by Dorian Tenore

ELVIS PRESLEY AS MOVIE STAR: THE MALE WHOOP! GOLDBERG?
Or, HICK SHOULDA MIXED PIX (PART I)

Since January 8th would have been Elvis Presley's 54th birthday, it seems an appropriate time to reflect on his surprisingly prolific film career. Who knows, if Elvis were still alive and making movies, he and Michael Caine might be vying for the title of "Most Ubiquitous Film Actor." Has anyone ever noticed that back when Elvis' best-known anatomical part was still his swiveling pelvis rather than his pincushion buttocks, Presley actually made some pretty decent movies?

Now, don't get me wrong: I'm not some crazed fan who thinks Elvis is God or some such nonsense. You won't catch me camping out in front of Graceland declaring that "The King" is alive and well and hiding out among the Maoris in New Zealand or whatever the most popular rumor is. But after growing up watching his films on TV (mostly because my older sister took control of the TV set, a la OUTER LIMITS—but don't judge her too harshly, she also introduced me to the Beatles' movies) and helping to revise promo materials for video reissues of several Elvis movies during my stint at MGM/UA, I began to notice three periods of "Elvisfilm."

The first period, from 1956 to about 1963 (the year I was born—hmm, that might explain a few things...) was Elvis' celluloid zenith. The consensus of film critics and public alike was, "Can't help falling in love" with Elvis. Indeed, it's possible that the movies he made during this period would have been all-around hits even if The Pelvis and his ever-present manager, Colonel Tom Parker, hadn't had a thing to do with them. ("Sure," I hear you skeptics sneer, "and CASABLANCA would have become a classic with Ronald Reagan in the Bogart role.")

These projects were good in the first place. That is, they had decently-written scripts (even the lesser movies at least had storylines that hung together, made a modicum of sense, and kept the audience both interested and awake), able directors, talented co-stars, and some of Elvis' best songs. Most important, Elvis actually seemed to be enjoying himself on-screen. Presley's roles in these early flicks made the most of his particular brand of smoldering personality and his boyish yet vaguely surly charisma, not to mention his admittedly incredible singing voice.

Okay, so maybe Elvis' swivel-hips number didn't exactly heighten the authentic period detail in his film debut, the 1956 Civil War story LOVE ME TENDER, but it was still a fairly engrossing family drama. The following year was a double-header for the budding media crossover star. His first film of 1957, LOVING YOU, was an above-average rags-to-riches tale of a talented hick who's discovered (by Elizabeth Scott, the Woman Who Would Be Lauren Bacall) and turned into a pop star—finding maturity along the way, of course. Musical highlights included Elvis' crooning of the title ditty, as well as his bouncing "Teddy Bear."

However, it was Presley's other 1957 release, JAILHOUSE ROCK, that really put him on the celluloid map. JAILHOUSE ROCK has been hailed (and rightly so) as Elvis' best movie. The plot sounds similar to LOVING YOU, except that Elvis plays a hot-headed yet impressionable ex-con instead of a gas station attendant. The difference is that JAILHOUSE ROCK's characters have more fire, and

the plot moves along with more drive and urgency. Also, the story, which could have been a mine field of clichés, is pretty straightforward and doesn't veer too much into soap opera territory—except toward the end, when our hero is punched in the throat by his estranged singing partner and nearly loses both his life and his voice. And let's not forget the great music, kinetic production numbers (especially of the title song—wow!) and uniformly excellent acting.

One of JAILHOUSE ROCK's standout performances comes from Judy Tyler as the hero's manager who eventually (and not surprisingly) falls in love with him. The Couch Potatoes among us no doubt got their first taste of Tyler back when they were mere Tater Tots. That was when Tyler had her best-known role, as Princess Winter-fall Summerspring on HOWDY DOODY. Alas, she never got a chance to fulfill her potential as an actress. Shortly before JAILHOUSE ROCK's release (if my information is right), the wholesomely lovely brunette met a most unlovely and untimely death, James Dean-ed in a car crash.

Elvis' next feature, KING CREOLE, is a good companion piece to JAILHOUSE ROCK. Believe it or not, this tanga crime drama with musical asides (including the driving "Hard-Headed Woman") was based on a novel by Harold Robbins! Yes, once upon a time, Robbins wrote things other than sleazy, sex-drenched potboilers. KING CREOLE provided Elvis with one of his better roles—and one of his best performances—as a hood-in-training who tries to go straight in a new career as a nightclub singer, only to find himself entangled in the New Orleans underworld. KING CREOLE packed more movie talent, both veteran and up-and-coming, than any Elvis film did before or since. The director was CASABLANCA's Michael Curtiz; one of the screenwriters was Michael V. Gazzo, a respected playwright (A HATFUL OF RAIN) and actor (THE GODFATHER) in his own right; and the top-notch supporting cast included Walter Matthau (back when he was still a character actor who specialized in heavies), Dean Jagger, a poignant Carolyn Jones (pre-ADDAMS FAMILY) and Dolores Hart (before WHERE THE BOYS ARE; it's hard to believe she retired to become a nun!).

The early '60s gave Presley more opportunities to prove himself as a serious actor, and he was up to the challenge. One of these opportunities was in the exciting Don Siegel-directed Western FLAMING STAR. Elvis is very effective as American Indian Dolores Del Rio's half-breed son, torn between the "civilized" white man's world of the woman he loves (a pre-...JEANIE Barbara Eden) and loyalty to his mother's people, who have gone on the warpath. Those who like Elvis strictly for his music will be disappointed to learn that the only singing he does in FLAMING STAR is of the title song, over the credits.

Later, in the twilight of his film career, Elvis assayed another Native American role, to lesser effect. Then again, even Robert DeNiro couldn't have lifted the script of the downright offensive STAY AWAY, JOE. I can't believe MGM/UA had the chutzpah and/or greed to make this turkey available on video in the enlightened (?) 1980s. Disney veteran Peter Tewkesbury (who fared better with Elvis later, in 1970's THE TROUBLE WITH GIRLS) directed this purported comedy about the misadventures of a wacky, modern-day, gratingly stereotypical American Indian family. Elvis, Joan Blondell (as his white jailbait girlfriend's pistol-packing mama, who has the hots for him herself!), Katy Jurado and a heavily made-up Burgess Meredith (they play Elvis' cigar-chomping battleaxe of a mom and his dimwitted, wimpy dad) should have been ashamed of themselves. But then, what can you expect from a movie whose ads show a scowling Elvis pointing at an elderly Sitting Bull wanna-be wrapped in an Indian blanket? The balloon over Elvis' head reads: "87 years old and he still needs his security blanket!" Other similarly deathless prose in STAY AWAY, JOE included: "This Indian doesn't say 'How,' he says 'When!'" Stay away, moviegoer!

Apart from FLAMING STAR, WILD IN THE COUNTRY and KID GALAHAD, Elvis' body of film work after KING CREOLE consisted mostly of lighthearted—and sometimes lightheaded—musical comedies. Still, at first even non-Elvis fans could enjoy these fluffy confections, at which we will take a closer look next issue. It wasn't until 1963 that Elvis' movies gradually stopped making sense taking risks and eased into a nice, safe, bland little formula. Granted, Elvis Presley and the filmmakers he hooked up with will never be counted among the cinema's great innovators, but how many young pop-idols-turned-movie-stars would have taken roles in Westerns, or had scripts written for them by Clifford Odets (WILD IN THE COUNTRY)? Give the guy at least a maiden of credit.

Anyway, in about 9 out of every 10 movies from 1963 on, the plot involved Elvis and his slicked-back pompadour (I suppose there's a certain degree of integrity in keeping one's trademark hairstyle long after it became unfashionable) steeped in gorgeous starlets—at least one of whom would end up as the King's consort by the final reel—and more songs than dialogue, all plunked down in the middle of an exotic locale. The Elvis character wasn't always a rock singer, either; sometimes the screenwriters gave him two-fisted, he-man occupations that gave them an excuse to add a few action scenes. In these cases, Elvis was usually a race-car driver (VIVA LAS VEGAS!), SPINOUT and SPEEDWAY leap readily to mind), though sometimes he'd try his hand at being a pilot (BLUE HAWAII and PARADISE, HAWAIIAN STYLE), a deep-sea diver (EASY COME, EASY GO), a boxer (the KID GALAHAD remake—this was originally filmed in 1937 by KING CREOLE director Michael Curtiz, with Wayne Morris and Bette Davis in the Elvis Presley and Joan Blackman roles), even a cheesecake photographer—and I ain't talking Sara Lee (LIVE A LITTLE, LOVE A LITTLE).

Continued next issue!

Breaking Up All Over

by Larry Oberc

Think it was renting out Friday the 13th movies, 1 through 7, that broke it/then again the real breaking point was the late night she stopped by/12:37 AM I believe it was/and I was watching a video of Survival Research Laboratories' conceptual art in action/animal parts mixed with robotics gone wild/the camera swung to a victim in the audience/"I thought it was pretty interesting until my friend got hit in the eye with a BB" he said/in the background was a soundtrack of squealing pigs altered to simulate human voices screaming "no no no"/that was the breaking point/she walked downstairs to her apartment/slammed the door/it wasn't the first fight/the time I told her about a trip gone wrong/a bad mixture of acid and mescaline/that hit her the same way/bar stories from the Club House/renamed High on Rose/stories about bikers having to leave their colors outside to avoid fights/25¢ beer night at Down The Hatch/pool hall hustlers/eight balls bouncing off of heads/thousands of mysteries/books about looking for psychopaths/books by psychopaths/a cop once told her that it was people who read that kind of thing that tried it out/horror videos/night dawn day of the dead/zombies turned loose on unsuspecting victims/hospital massacres/when I told a friend about her leaving me because of the Survival Research Laboratories' video he couldn't understand/

8 "That's art" he said/"I know" I said smiling...

by Nick Dana

"You think that's funny? Being trapped inside a giant submarine sandwich when you're the best goddamned pizza jock in the ga-

Concluded next issue



SEND IN THE CLOWNS

by Larry Stolte

1988 will be remembered for many things, not the least of which was the merging of two of the wackiest, zaniest lunks in history into one comedy duo. According to the latest Gallo poll, George Bush and Dan Quayle have already been judged funnier than the Beverly Boys and Abbott and Costello and just shy of the Marx Brothers. (Remember though, the Marx Brothers had them outmanned.) Their place in the history of comedy is secure.

While other great comedy teams took years to break onto the scene, Bush and Quayle's meteoric rise seemed to be an overnight sensation. But was it? Evidence points to the conclusion that this overnight sensation had been planned for as many as twenty years. Dan Quayle never released his school records, but many former classmates have borne out the fact that Quayle did indeed take classes in jokewriting, humor in politics, and comedic acting. And George Bush has been seen in the company of Don Knotts numerous times dating back to 1974.

It really doesn't matter how much planning was put into this team. The genius speaks for itself. Their humor is inspirational and mainstream.

But why are they funny? A case can be made for Marxist tendencies—a coarse melding of Chico and Harpo—but that is an oversimplification. Their humor is quite complex.

The scope of their act is fairly limited—no impersonations, no music, no intellectual humor. Also, no straight man bedecks the ticket. Quite strange really, considering each looks like he could play straight man to Ed McMahon. Oddly, each of the principals does exactly the same schtick—a combination of nervous energy and verbal pratfalls. They really don't play off each other. Though distinctly a team, most of their act is done individually. Separate but equal. How imaginative!

Both come off as babbling idiots—bumbling dorks who couldn't read a stop sign without a flub. How can two people do the same routine and be funny? The answer seems to lie in the context of the situation, the fact that they actually ran for the presidency and vice-presidency of the U.S. This is where the real beauty lies.

In 1988, it had to be a team to be funny. A laughable presi-

The Boston Tea Party, Part II
by Susan Packie

"Now is the time for all loyal patriots to come to the aid of their country. Now is the time for all New World colonists to stand up for their basic beliefs."

"What are you doing, dear?"

"Oh, I have to make a speech in Boston next week. A tax has been imposed on our favorite refresher, and I have been asked to deliver an impassioned plea for all Bostonians to dump the next shipment into the sea."

"That's nice, dear, but how will that help us enjoy our four o'clock pick-me-up any better?"

"Well, it won't, of course. I'm making a political statement, I'm not placing a grocery order."

On that note, the governor of the colony of Massachusetts strutted out of the kitchen to round up some Indians.

"What white man want Indians for?"

"We're going to throw some crates into the sea."

"That wasteful. Red man conservation conscious. You paint up your own people in war paint and pass them off as Indians."

The governor shrugged his shoulders. What could you expect from Indian givers? They give you a little corn and some dumb turkeys and expect the whole country in return! Their own men were more reliable. They really knew how to take, take, take. None of this quid pro quo business. No nonsense about borrowing.

"What's up, boss?"

"We unload the ship, dressed in feathers and war paint, and dump everything in the harbor."

"Are you crazy? Do you know what's on that ship?"

"Nothing important."

"Don't be ridiculous! This is the eighteenth century! That's marijuana out there!"

"Go collect all the tea you can find. Then get a rowboat that can sneak around that ship and meet me at the dock in one hour."

Suddenly, two hundred Indians appeared, demanding a piece of the action.

"Nothing doing! We got our own red men!"

So history was made on that fateful December day as seemingly useless crates splashed into the sea, and the first shipment of marijuana to the New World was completed, tax free. And everyone thought it was some kind of tea party!

dent alone wouldn't do. Ronald Reagan already set the precedent for acting the part of a duncical lout in the White House. Will we ever forget his helicopter props or comically timed amnesia and narcolepsy?

Ronald's effort was truly a solo act. His administration was not considered a comedy team per se, as George Bush was invisible the entire time. Ronald couldn't even place the name. The answer to "Where was George?" can be found if one questions whether he's ever seen George Bush and Fred Rogers of MR. ROGER'S NEIGHBORHOOD together in the same room.

The originality here is in the fact that we have a ventriloquist act, but with two dummies. Imagining both a president who needs his drinking glass marked with a "this end up" note and a vice-president of which it can be said that once on the golf course someone took a divot out of his head and never replaced it, is so absurd as to not be real. One wonders if even Woody Allen could pull this off.

The Pearl Harbor Day on September 7 (this very day!) joke will live, but not in infamy, for years to come. Certain to be retold on its anniversary, no one could ever top Bush's version. The consummate actor, he pulled it off brilliantly—for the rest of the speech, one actually believes he is an abject moron.

Who would ever think of hiring bigots and slave traders from the Nixon administration for the sole purpose of getting caught, firing them, and delivering a punchline? What unbelievable effort for one joke. And who would have thought it would ever be worth it, could ever be worth it? But when the presidential candidate stood up cocksurely and espoused, "I stand for anti-racism, anti-Semitism, and anti-bigotry," there wasn't a dry eye in the house. Again, the critics marvelled.

Bush's best moment, the nonsequitor of all time, was the announcement of his running mate, Gomer Quayle-USNG. Gomer, aka J. Danforth or Dan, started with the ball in his court, but soon he dribbled all over it.

The public became restive in regards to his one-liner about pride in the Guard—"National Guard and proud of it." Clearly, he wanted to be marked with a single epithet that would distinguish him in the way that "Excuuuuuse me" did for Steve Martin in the 70s. It almost extinguished him.

He started to rebound and take control when the press questioned how he got into grad school without knowing how to read or write or play football. It was a grant for dumb, rich kids, he explained. Of course, an overprivilege grant. The press loved it. He was back on the track.

Courting newfound verve, he set forth with his now-famous "obfuscating" humor, which pales the nonsequitor into some innocuous syllogism. It started with a simple basketball analogy about offense and defense. It ended like a "Who's on first?" tirade as told by an Alzheimer patient in the tertiary stages. Who said comedy isn't pretty? This was beautiful.

But the capsheaf to date for Gomer was the routine that catapulted him to the Bush level and probably beyond. That, of course, is the now-famous unparalleled Holocaust routine. At first he couldn't quite place the Holocaust—possibly somewhere outside of Cleveland?—then he confessed that he didn't live in this century and, well, you know the rest. Gomer stuck this routine dead nuts on and got style points to boot. He performed a clinic for would-be comics with an appeal that's bipartisan and ecumenical.

Aides say Quayle had to go into a trance for hours before that spot. "He gets into his role; he actually believes he is a geek," said his press manager, "and that is why we believe it. I don't know anyone who works harder at a performance than Dan does. It can take weeks for him to get out of character." Indeed, if we had hooked a geek detector up to him at that time, we would have blown out all the lights on the Eastern Seaboard.

Never is the potential for hilarity greater than at a debate. Quayle didn't disappoint. He stoically delivered consistently funny answers, the best of which was his reassurance that the first thing he'd do upon entering the presidency is pray and drop names.

Not always did the laughs go according to plan, however. One of Bush's routines went right over the public's head. They failed to see the mirth in the making of the Pledge of Allegiance the number one campaign issue. It wasn't until the House of Representatives decided to incorporate the pledge into their sessions right before naptime and after phonics that the concept got the laughs it deserved. We all pretended we got it right away, didn't we?

The election of Bush/Quayle confirmed America's sense of humor to the world. Possibly no other country (Austria excepted because of their selection of a Nazi for president, but that's sick humor) sees the risibility in politics as we do.

Perhaps we realized the potential for this ticket in the White House. Envisage Dan Quayle going to funerals of heads of state, a Russian General Secretary correcting Bush's English, or just the silly situations the boys could get into by pushing a button or two.

Now comes the real test. Can Bush/Quayle keep up the high level of humor while tending to the needs of the country, i.e., creating more homeless and tax loopholes for the rich? Time will judge.

We only hope that their heads won't get too big, that some time when they are out of the limelight they will drop in unannounced at some small comedy club, maybe in San Diego or Minneapolis, and do a few minutes on amateur night without the press, the bright lights, and the crowds. It makes you kind of misty just thinking about it.

MasterMath Explains...

The Anti-Matter Universe

by William G. Raley

Welcome back! Or in case you haven't read my previous MasterMath columns, what took you so long? My title, of course, was granted me by the Oriel Orator, and is good for life, or until Alabama gets a professional baseball team (I'm not worried).

Today we consider the matter of the anti-matter universe—pardon the pun. If you don't pardon the pun, dire things will happen to you; for example, you'll be unable to receive the audio portion of Saturday Night Live, and your daughter's first date will be with Aerosmith's Steven Tyler. The anti-matter universe is every bit as real as our own, and perhaps more so, considering the California Angels' pathetic showing last year. It will be described in detail below, although for recommendations on specific vacation spots, you'll have to consult your travel agent, or Fred, whoever wheezes on you first.

But wait, you say. MasterMath, you've already explained to us the other universe, and it had nothing at all to do with anti-matter. Have you gone crazy, or are you just trying to milk this alternative universe concept for as many articles as it's worth? Neither. Actually, I have gone crazy, but that's beside the point. When I related to you concerning the universe of perspectives, I said nothing about its being the only other universe, did I? That is what is known in the writing trade as covertly preparing the reader for a sequel, whether their pharmacist recommends one or not.

Succinctly, the anti-matter universe contains the following tenets: Objects in this universe are empty spaces in the anti-matter universe. Empty spaces in this universe correspond to objects in the other. The density of such an object is inversely proportional to the emptiness of the space here. Thus, the counterpart to other space is one heavy object—even heavier than William "Refrigerator" Perry—and the counterpart to air around Los Angeles is some pretty flimsy material. Finally, all objects in the anti-matter universe are alive, while none of the empty spaces are; note that this makes planning cocktail parties extremely difficult.

So how does this affect you and me? Actually, you probably don't care how it affects me, but my analyst does—I hope he's paying attention—so here goes. Because these two universes overlay each other exactly, any object moving in one forces a corresponding movement in the other; that is, for every action, there is an equal and opposite TV sitcom. Thus, whether you know it or not, for your entire life you have been irreversibly moving empty spaces around in the anti-matter universe simply by moving your body around—driving to work, playing tennis, doing laundry. So what, you say.

So did I, once. Then I stopped to consider how inconsiderate it was to shove these empty spaces up against the objects in the anti-matter universe; what if these objects were trying to take a geography test or something? Their failing grades could be on your hands, for all you know.

Also, you may unwittingly be disturbing the objects in the anti-matter universe by constantly moving them around. But MasterMath, how can I move around this universe's empty spaces? Well, what do you think the inside of a football is made of? Or the inside of a blimp? Or the brains of people from Georgia? You get the point, although obviously they don't.

—HI MASTERMATH, HOW'S IT GOIN'? SAY, HAVEN'T I SEEN YOU SOMEWHERE BEFORE? IS IT TRUE THAT YOU AND MR. BILL ARE THE SAME PERSON? I'VE NEVER SEEN THE TWO OF YOU TOGETHER, EXCEPT THAT TIME I DRANK A CASE OF BOONE'S FARM—

We on planet Earth, and throughout this universe—based on an informal survey I took on my way back from Aughton—tend to think of ourselves as the movers and the shakers, especially those of us who drink four cups of coffee in the morning. In other words, we think this universe is the primary one, and the anti-matter one is secondary, even inferior (the perspective universe was not included in the survey, due to a clerical error). However, this position is in error, as can be easily shown. Of what does most of our universe consist? Not matter, certainly. Just as very little of the Earth's surface is covered by land, and very few astronomical disasters are covered by my insurance policy, our universe consists of very few objects, and a whole lot of wide open spaces. For example, the Australian outback, or downtown Boligee, Alabama.

Since outer space is contiguous (think of the Beatles' song "All Together Now"), it comprises only one object in the anti-matter universe. And what an object! It is bigger than the Great Wall of China, bigger than the sun, bigger even than Michael J. Fox's toothpaste bill. As an honor duly befitting such an object, C.H.U.D. has given it a special name: the megaobject.

Now you may ask (and later, too, if you're in the habit of repeating yourself), what does this megaobject do? Anything it wants to! It is the ultimate big cheese, and you certainly don't want to rub the megaobject the wrong way. I've actually become good friends with the megaobject. It's been quite helpful in selecting drapes and in negotiating freeway exits late at night, though it does tend to cheat a bit at Scrabble.

Seriously, though, the megaobject has to constantly be aware of its actions and their consequences. On October 1, 1987, he had an itch he couldn't scratch, so he rolled over to try to rub up against a binary star system. Three days later he tried it with the Veil Nebula. I for one did not appreciate my waterbed being

turned into a wave pool by the earthquake, and let him know in no uncertain (though gentle) terms. He has promised to make amends, and except for a minor sniffle this February 11, he's managed to behave himself. Perhaps I should send him some fresh fruit.

INSERT TOTALLY OFF-THE-SUBJECT CLOSING STATEMENT HERE: A friend of mine has an occasional table; I wonder what it is the rest of the time.

Zenarchy STORIES

by Ho Chi Zen

FOR A DIME YOU CAN TAKE THE FERRY

During a previous visit to Uruvela the Buddha heard of a matted-hair ascetic called Kassapa (Kasyapa). "Kassapa had achieved mastery of psychic powers during the course of his yogic meditation and started performing miracles. Young men who were fascinated by such miracles flocked to him to become his disciples in hope of learning the technique of miracle-making. Brahman householders who identified religion and spiritual life with the miraculous were not only filled with wonder at his achievements, but were also fearful of his powers. His disciples as well as the householders were willing to undertake extensive and expensive sacrificial rituals at his bidding. Sacrifices to the god of fire were among these. The performance of each sacrificial ritual was normally preceded by offerings of worldly goods to Kassapa. Thus he came to amass a fortune, becoming a man of great power and privileges. His capacity to perform miracles and other psychic powers enabled him to enjoy a life of pleasure.

"Kassapa had come to know of the Buddha's reputation, but did not pay much attention to it. Upon arriving at Uruvela Buddha decided to visit Kassapa. Kassapa did not appreciate Buddha's visit. He feared that his own reputation with his disciples would be lost if Buddha too possessed such psychic powers and were able to reveal the means by which Kassapa was retaining the faith of his disciples. Therefore, he decided to get rid of Buddha at the earliest opportunity. When, in the evening, the Buddha needed a place to rest for the night, Kassapa offered a small cottage into which he had surreptitiously introduced a venomous snake. Unsuspectingly Buddha retired to the cottage to sleep and he discovered the snake. The Buddha, the enlightened one, was cool and composed. He did not panic. He could not have panicked, for he had gotten rid of all the passions and desires that cause such panic. Buddha settled down to sleep on the floor strewn with dried grass. The snake, not being disturbed, coiled in his own corner of the cottage and remained quiet throughout the night.

"In the morning, Buddha woke up and quietly walked out of the cottage, leaving the snake undisturbed. Kassapa, waiting outside the cottage, could not believe his eyes when he saw the Buddha open the door and walk out. His disciples were standing behind him ready to remove the Buddha's dead body. It was greater than all the miracles they had so far witnessed. Kassapa questioned Buddha:

"Friend, what kind of miracle did you perform in order to tame this venomous snake?"

"Kassapa, I have achieved the miracle of taming myself. One who has tamed himself has no difficulty in taming others, whether that be a poisonous snake, a lion, or an elephant, or even the most vicious of men," replied the Buddha...

"Overwhelmed by the feeling of shame, he (Kassapa) regretted his arrogance and stupidity. Falling prostrate on the ground before Buddha, he pleaded:

"Sir, I was deceived by jealousy and pride. May you instruct me in the art of taming myself."

(From *The Way of Siddhartha* by David J. & Indrani Kalupahana: Shambhala, Boulder & London, 1982.)

If I am not in error, this is the same Kassapa who became known as the Great Kassapa or Mahakasyapa, whose miracle of enduring fame was smiling with understanding when the Buddha, preaching on Vulture Peak, simply held aloft a flower. According to Zen, Mahakasyapa was the first Patriarch of their tradition.

GETTING RID OF WHAT IS USELESS

Once someone asked Joshu, "If a man who had nothing at all came to you, what advice would you give him?"

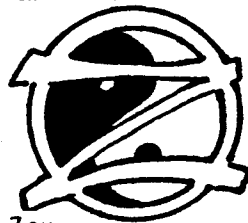
Joshu replied, "Throw it away!"

RUBBER STAMP ZEN

Asked to explain the Tathagata, the type of Buddha which Guatama called himself, Korean Zen Master Seung Sahn says, in *Dropping Ashes on the Buddha*: "In America, people sign checks and documents. But in the Orient, people use a rubber stamp or seal. The Tathagata is only this. There are three kinds of Zen: Theoretical Zen, Tathagata Zen, and Patriarchal Zen. Theoretical Zen is like stamping a piece of paper: anyone can understand the sign. Tathagata Zen is like stamping water: people can only hear the sound; the stamp disappears immediately. Patriarchal Zen is like stamping space: no one can understand."

FIVE BLIND MEN AND AN ELEPHANT

"Once upon a time," said Ho Chi Zen, "a Raja brought to his court five blind men and presented for their examination an elephant. Now the first blind man took hold of the animal's tail and shouted, 'An elephant is like a broom!' When that happened the beast grew frightened and stomped all five of them flatter than 11 pancakes."



Contemporary Fiction Demolished

by Todd Kristel

First, **BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITY** by Jay McInerney. Now...

BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG ELECTRIC BILLS

Chapter One

It's Six A.M.: Do You Know Where You Are, President Quayle?

You are not the kind of guy who would be at a place like this at this time of the morning. But here you are, although the details are fuzzy. You are at the White House talking to a man with a shaved head. The discussion is about either national security interests in Guam or the World Series. All might come clear if you could just slip into the conference room and ask your staff. Your brain at this moment is composed of tapioca pudding. You are still exhausted from memorizing how to say "hello" in Hindi last week.

Chapter Two

The Department of Factual Verification

Monday arrives on schedule. You sleep through the first ten hours. This is considered to be in the best interest of the nation.

If J.G. Ballard had written the novel...

BRIGHT LIGHTS, A UNIQUE ONTOLOGY OF VIOLENCE AND DISASTER

You are not the kind of guy who would be lying on the worn concrete of the gunnery aisle at this time of the morning. But here you are, although the fact of your guilt was never established and confirmed. You are now looking at the cubist landscape while listening to the dying cough of a heavy diesel. All might come clear if you could just slip into the burned body of the white Pontiac in the waste lot of wrecked cars.

If Jack Kerouac had written **BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITY**...

You are not the kind of guy who would be on the road at this time of night. You'd often dreamed of seeing new places, always vaguely planning and never taking off. But here you are. You are in Nebraska talking to a crazy chick with a shaved head. She pulls a hundred-dollar bill out of her silk stockings and gives it to you. All might come clear if you could only see through the vast emptiness of night, across the highway filled with mud-splashed, rusted old automobiles driven by beer-soaked gringos.

If Saul Bellow had written **BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITY**...

You are not the type of person who would be at a place like this at this time of the evening. But here you are, despite your arthritic neck and prostate gland difficulties. You are discussing Balzac's Comedy with a provincial lawyer who throws up his palms and shrieks with laughter (looking like one of Goya's frog caricatures). All might come clear if you could just slip into the other room and talk with the socialist manic depressive who is on a Dostoevski kick.

If Laurie Anderson had performed **BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG SCIENCE**...

Ah-ah-ah-ah-ah

You are not the kind of guy

Ah-ah-ah-ah-ah

Who would be at a place like this

Ah-ah-ah-ah-ah

At this time

Ah-ah-ah-ah-ah

And this is the record of the time

Ah-ah-ah-ah-ah

But here you are

Ah-ah-ah-ah-ah

And you say

Ah-ah-ah-ah-ah

"This is going to be some day"



RADIOPHILIA

by Steven F. Scharff

There is something about my psyche that I cannot understand—my passion for old radios. Not the tiny portables that seemed to multiply during the 60s, but the OLD ones. The big bulky tube receivers that took forever to warm up.

When my late great uncle lived in New Jersey, our visits to his house would almost always be accompanied by music from the oversized console receiver. The wooden cabinet was designed to resonate with the loudspeaker. When I got up close, I could smell the heat coming off of the vacuum tubes.

When he moved to California, he and his wife took the Taj Mahal of radios with them. It must have been either careful packing or that "Faculty X" that radio had that allowed it to survive its cross-continent journey unscathed.

I longed to own a radio like that, but the space limits of my room and the financial limits of my budget (what little there was of it) would not permit it. However, the parents of a friend gave me a cast-off Zenith Wave-Magnet (AM/FM/SW) that was made between the wars. Then a neighbor who was cleaning out his basement asked me if I'd be interested in his oversized multiband receiver that sat on the shelf by his pool table.

He never knew that every time I was in his basement, I secretly envied him that radio. Now he was giving it to me! (He recently died, so every time I see that radio, I think of him.)

Earlier this year, I was passing a neighborhood TV repair shop's garbage can. I saw something on top of the can. It was an old AM radio in a wooden cabinet the size of a soccer ball. I

Talk Show Host Confidential

by G. Michael Dobbs

Since our last visit, I've had to write a 50 page grant proposal with my boss. Now, I like my boss. She's not only the fairest person I've had as a supervisor, she is also generally a decent person whom I view as a friend...therefore breaking Dobbs' Rule Number Seven: Be Sweet, Be Civil, Be Shallow When Involving Yourself With Your Boss. I'm constantly breaking my own rules.

My boss' worst characteristic is her tendency to be a perfectionist. While I'm not a slave to the ultimate, I do like things to be neat, tidy, have their shoelaces tied and BE THE BEST THEY CAN BE IN TODAY'S ARMY. As a professional writer, I know there can be an infinite number of revisions with a decidedly finite amount of improvement. She does not accept this theory of keyboard physics. The philosophical clash led to about one major pout, scream or under-breath curse each day for quite a number of days.

This constant conflict put a strain onto my otherwise pleasant relationship with my boss and also put a pressure on me. Now, when I come home from a hard day of teeth-gritting, I don't escape reality through illegal drugs, or America's drug of choice, Demon Rum....I escape through movies. And when the going gets tough, I get going to the Bad Movie section of my local Videotopia. The partial results of my UNS meanderings are as follows...

Perhaps the best low budget film I viewed was **KILLER KLOWNS FROM OUTER SPACE**. This gore-free horror spoof has a perfectly wonderful premise...a race of aliens have evolved into Earth-type clowns, but they don't want to make us laugh, they want to eat us. The script is clever in a Gahan Wilson way, and the make-up design is superb. If you don't want your child to trust weird guys in whiteface, strap him or her to a chair and make watch this flick. They'll cry all through the circus next time you bring them!

Seeing the little black and white films made by Roger Corman in the late fifties and early sixties can be difficult as television programmers don't like non-color movies and video companies have not yet seen fit to release movies like **NOT OF THIS EARTH** and **THE UNDEAD**. Well, I've got the original version of **NOT OF THIS EARTH** on tape, and I eagerly looked forward to seeing the much-publicized re-make starring on-porn queen Traci Lords. The new film isn't bad, and aside from one sequence lifted from the old Corman film **HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD**, there is any gore in it. There is a lot of Traci, though, who may have sworn off porn but seems to have few hesitations about shedding her clothes. Director Jim Wynorski does much with the tiny budget and gives us a funny, almost campy, movie. Oh, Traci can act about as well as Sybil Denning, and if she doesn't mind appearing mindless drack, could have quite a career in low-budget action and horror movies.

Mindful of the 13 column length requirements, I'll conclude with a movie that wasn't definitely not a relief after a day of grantmanship. **THE FURTHER ADVENTURES OF TENNESSEE DUCK** is a low-budget vanity project for David Keith who was both star and director of this white hunter jungle picture. At first, I liked the movie as most of my favorite trash cinema ingredients were included...a determined tongue-in-cheek attitude, outrageous stuntwork, a Saturday matinee plot and a fair number of attractive women in various states of undress. Since the plot also made fun of Yuppies, I thought I was going to be couch-time heaven. But, Keith had to include a slow-motion rape scene which was completely unacceptable. Rape is not a subject to trivialized or exploited, and I was surprised an actor as talented as Keith would be so damn stupid.

rescued it from oblivion and took it home. Much to my surprise, it worked. All it really needed was a new tuner. Amazing how people can be so wasteful.

Still, despite the antiquity of the radios, something was missing. The Shadow. Abbott & Costello. Orson Welles. Arch Oboler. The old radio programs. I was given a fine cassette of mystery shows, but listening to them on a Walkman wasn't the same.

A few days ago, while "slumming" at the Short Hills Mall (NJ's answer to Beverly Hills), I passed by The Sharper Image and, again, something caught my eye.

At first I thought I was mistaken, but it turned out to be a most unusual (and pleasant) surprise.

Thomas America, an electronics firm that makes a line of products usually sold under department store brand names, has come out with a "Collector's Edition" series of radio reproductions, retro-fashion AM/FM receivers with a cassette player cleverly disguised or hidden. I had seen a large console version and several "cathedral" types (the wooden cabinets shaped like a church window, hence the name). But this was a copy of a 40s-style Zenith, art deco design with amber lighted dial and the pre-set buttons made into control buttons (on, off, AM, FM, Tape). Eighty dollars later and I had one at home.

I listened to a rock station, just for the anachronism, but then tracked down one of the mystery show tapes. The radio (a Crosley CR-1) has the tape player inset on one side. A cassette inserted, the lights out, and the Green Hornet came to life by the light of the dial.

The illusion was complete.

I guess I discovered what it is that draws me to old radios. A sense of romance.



"IF I HAD A HAMMER"

I worked for this guy one summer—let's call him George. George was a nice old guy, but a man with a definite problem.

George had spent hundreds of thousands of dollars on what you would call

"home improvements." Now, for that kind of dough you gotta figure ole George would have one helluvan improved home. But no-o-o.

Instead of a luxurious mansion, the place was a complete mess.

See, George's estate was filled with what he called "projects." I had another word for it, but never mind. George's backyard was dug up to hell, like mortars had exploded everywhere—this was to be the garden. The second story of George's house was completely torn apart—this was remodeling. And one entire side of his house was ripped open where George was installing a sun deck.

Everywhere you turned around was more chaos and construction/destruction. And George pattered between projects with a twinkle in his eye, happier than a pig in shit.

How I got involved was through a carpenter friend who assisted George in his projects to the tune of \$10 an hour. I was enlisted to help tear apart a perfectly good driveway and put in a new one.

Now, in between lugging 100-lb. pabs of concrete and pouring cement, I came upon two conclusions about George: 1) the guy was a fucking nut; and 2) if he ever did reach the point where he completed all his household projects, the very next day, on a whim, George would probably decide he wanted the first floor where the second floor was, and vice versa. Tear 'em both down and start all over.

Now I probably could've been set for life working on George's never-ending projects. My friend had been milking him for years. The problem was, I'm a complete mechanical nerd. Anything more complicated than mixing concrete with water in a big vat is beyond my expertise. Now that was no problem for ole George. He would happily set me up doing menial shit like painting walls and pushing brooms. See, aside from his pet projects, George's other big kick—as I couldn't help noticing—was watching young men sweat under the hot sun.

But that's another topic. The thing that killed me about George was this: this country, the United States of America, is just filled with Georges. They're everywhere, dear God! Lord have mercy on me. In just, what, a few hundred years, they've taken a perfectly beautiful countryside, left unspoiled for centuries by them heathen injuns, and turned it into a teeming mass of concrete, Taco Bells, nuclear power plants, turnpikes, skyscrapers, sewer systems, slagheaps, garbage piles, stinking rotten etc. etc.

And every damn one of these messes was some damn George's idea of a "project." They sat down at their table and drew up their perfectly reasonable plans for one more step towards Hell.

Now maybe I protest too much because of my own utter and complete lack of any mechanical abilities. Indeed, as I type these words I find myself grinding my teeth. This lack of mechanical dexterity has been the great bane of my life. Verily, my Achilles' Heel in terms of trying to fit in with this goddamn over-mechanized society of ours.

This could be a simple matter of left side versus right side of the brain thinking. The classic example was John Lennon, who was so much into the artistic side that, even though he could create records, he couldn't for the life of him figure out how to play one by operating a simple stereo system. All them buttons, knobs and levers. Imagine that.

Now let me tell you my secret shame: 7th grade shop class!! It was a double period, on Thursday, the last two periods of the day, I still remember it. Ninety minutes of pure hell. There were some guys who dreaded gym class, the unathletic ones. To me it was shop class. Put a hammer in my hand and you have one complete fool.

My only project that year was making a table—or should I say, attempting to make a table. I spent six fucking months just trying to even the boards with a plane. Mr. Burney, the shop teacher's, only words to me all year were, "Boy, you've got so many planes there, you oughta be a pilot."

Most of the time I spent hiding out in the bathroom. And as often as possible I was absent on Thursdays. Ninety long minutes.

Oddly enough, the next year in 8th grade I was voted co-forman of the shop class, along with one of the most popular kids in the class. That gave me the honor of saying, "Goggles on! Sweaters off! Everybody sound off!" Then we were supposed to shout out our names, one by one, in alphabetical order as we jumped off our work tables. This was Mr. Burney's idea. The guy was a nut. Definitely a case of inhaling too much sawdust. He had this thing for military drills. When the class fucked up too much he'd take us out behind the school and make us march around in military formations. Like the time Mark Sudol sliced his finger off on the power saw. Grossest thing I ever saw, half his finger hanging there by a thread. I was scared to death to go NEAR that fucking saw after that.

PINKY NUSSBAUM IN THE LAND OF THE DEAD

PART TWO

by Prudence Gaelor

"Miss Ricketts? Please have a seat. I'm Dr. Sharkey." The school principal outstretched her hand to greet Jenny. Jenny sat down without shaking. After a pause, Dr. Sharkey continued. "I guess you wonder why I called you in here."

Jenny shrugged, said nothing.

"Um, Miss Paine is very concerned about Prudence and after sharing her thoughts with me, I must say I feel that her concerns are well grounded."

Absentmindedly Jenny started digging her nails into the wooden arms of the chair. This made an annoying grating sound.

"Prudence doesn't play well with the other children. That isn't to say she doesn't have friends; she has a few, Beline Weisman and Billy Blueberger, she plays with on occasion. But mostly she sits and reads or watches the other kids play. She rarely engages in any active sport and...does she get any sun? The poor child is so pale, it's horrid."

Scratch, scratch. Jenny started carving a "J" into the chair.

Dr. Sharkey swallowed. "You know, I find all of this very difficult to say...Anyway, today she gave this to Miss Paine. I think it's a cry for help." She handed Jenny a little booklet fastened by a safety pin. On the cover it read: "Pinky Nussbaum in the Land of the Dead."

Jenny flipped through a few pages and then started to read. She read through it once silently, the second time aloud. When she had finished, Jenny exhaled, flicked some wood grains from under her nails, looked Dr. Sharkey in the eye and said, "What's the problem?"

Dr. Sharkey, all flustered, said, "This type of material content is not normal. Normal seven-year-olds do not write about dead fish. Prudence is not a normal child."

"What's wrong with that?"

"Let me—let me explain something to you. When children write about death it means they are severely depressed. In this story not only does the character insist that her parents are liars but she commits suicide. It is my opinion that the Gaelors' divorce has severely traumatized young Prudence."

"Dr. Sharkey, I don't agree with you. I think your theories are shit. For one thing, Prudence has always preferred activities more cerebral than tag and as far as I can remember, she never liked the kids down the block. I can't blame her. They're stupid."

Jenny rose out of the chair. "And another thing. I don't see where a child's creative outlets necessarily have anything to do with her subconscious psyche."

"Miss Ricketts, the child is psychotic—"

"No, Dr. Sharkey, I feel that this school under your influence is a very hostile environment that tries to stifle any activity outside of your repressed views of normalcy."

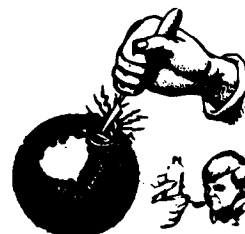
"Well, maybe you won't take my opinion, but I suggest you have that story analyzed."

Jenny, halfway out the door, erupted, "I certainly intend do." (To be continued)

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Anyway, my big project that year was making a baseball bat on the lathe. After about six months that thing was lathed down to a misshapen toothpick. Lordy.

Like I said, my mind just doesn't work that way. I managed to get through my entire childhood without ever successfully completing one single model.

I recently spent three entire days trying to fix a flat tire on my bike. I finally succeeded but, alas, in the process ruined the frame, the chain, the rims, and the gears. But I FIXED THE FUCKING FLAT!!!!!!

IT'S IN THE NEWS! (Really!)

by Kathy Stadalsky

I recently had the dubious honor of acquiring a rather large stack of supermarket tabloids--the STAR, NATIONAL ENQUIRER, SUN, NATIONAL EXAMINER, WEEKLY WORLD NEWS--ranging in age from two to ten months in age.

How I came by these papers, indeed, the content of the periodicals is not at all important. What IS important is the headlines and lead-ins of the items "reported" in these publications. With these, you see, I propose a new semi-regular IJ column. A contest column, if you will, wherein you'll be presented with ten "news" items, of which nine will be authentic and one will be a phony created by yours truly.

Your mission? Find the fraud.

To make this more fun, of course, we have to have everyone send in their guess for which one it is, and the winner (by random selection in the case of a tie) will win something. (Else he or she wouldn't be a "win-ner", now, would he/she?)

This is an off-the-cuff, spur of the moment, totally spontaneous, make up the rules as we need them type of game.

Anyhow, what the hell? You got any better ideas on what I can do with these papers? I mean, hell, a person can only use just so much kindling!

It might be good for a couple of laughs, and if it sucks like a Hoover, if it's total mule puke, you have my word we'll bury this sucker ten feet deep and never resurrect it, okay?

So, what've you got to lose? The winner will get their very own personal pad of post-it notes. (Hey, I admit it, I'm a cheap-skate!) Runners-up will get an honorable mention at the start of the next (if any) contest column.

Send your entries to me, at 933 ST. RT. 314, RR #13, Mansfield, Ohio 44903-9807.

Have fun, sports fiends...

1. CAT EATS PARROT--NOW IT TALKS

Says 'Kittycoot wants a cracker'

An ordinary housecat has inexplicably been blessed with the gift of gab ever since it ate a talking parrot, according to the feline's stunned owners and several reliable witnesses.

2. NEIGHBORS COMPLAIN OF INCESSANT YAPPING

Woman told she must cut vocal cords of 21 pet dogs

An all-out war has erupted between two neighbors, one of whom has been ordered to slit the vocal cords of 21 of her 22 dogs so they won't be able to bark any more.

3. KILLER PLANT CAME FROM OUTER SPACE!

Deadly plant that ate a farmer and four cows is not from this planet says expert!

The gigantic purple flower that ate a farmer and four cows in central Turkey last month may have come from outer space!

4. CLASSROOM GHOST TERRORIZES COEDS!

Evil spirit scrawls names of girls' dead kin on blackboard

A college called in a ghost-busting preacher to get rid of an evil spirit that students conjured up with a Ouija board.

5. Scientist's Reconstruction Proves...

CAVEMAN LOOKED LIKE ELVIS

...Prehistoric Presley flabbergasts fans

The discovery of a Meanderthal skull took on added significance when the anthropologist who reconstructed the face with modeling clay came up with a perfect likeness of Elvis Presley!

6. CHEF JAILED FOR MAKING HERBAL SALAD DRESSING--WITH MARIJUANA

'This salad dressing really added spice to our marriage' says disappointed former patron.

Customers flocked to an out of the way eatery for five and a half years to sample the zesty herbal salad dressing--"Casa de Loco"--that made the restaurant famous.

7. ALIEN TRAPPED IN LABORATORY

University Laboratory Shocker!

Officials of the Bolivian government refused to confirm or deny recent reports that a group of scientists had captured an alien in a laboratory.

8. ANGRY GURU TURNS MAN INTO DOG

Squabble over Einstein's ideas make swami see red...now, ex-professor howls, scratches and chases cars!

An Indian guru tired of arguing Einstein's theories with a College Professor and turned him into a dog!

9. TRUCK DRIVER EATS HIPPO!

Man on diet gets so hungry--he breaks into zoo!

Cops nab 300-pound suspect red handed!

A 300-pound truck driver slaughtered a zoo's hippopotamus, cut it into steaks and ate it for dinner!

10. For dog and cat owners, it's the newest rage...

PETROMONY!

If this isn't the doggonedest thing: Fido and Spot are going to tie the knot! Woofers weddings are the newest rage--even

14 if the bride is a real dog.

"IF I CAN DREAM"

Deep inside a sun-fleeced sub-tropically orange country, a regally steedish young fawnover rises from a blistful night's respite, refrenched, enhanked, yet somnamblically pos-tled over the new daze dawning yawn.

Elvis's daughter marries musician

Star
LOS ANGELES

ISA Marie Presley, who will inherit the multi-million-dollar fortune of her late father, Elvis Presley, has married musician Danny Keough, press spokesman Paul Bloch said yesterday. The wedding ceremony took place on Monday at the Church of Scientology in Los Angeles and the couple left for a honeymoon at an undisclosed location.

Elvis Presley, who died in 1977, left an estate that could now be worth \$50-million (U.S.). His 20-year-old daughter will inherit the fortune in five years.

ISA Marie, Presley's only child, has belonged to the Church of Scientology for 10 years and has been dating Keough, 23, for two years. Her mother, Priscilla Presley, attended the wedding ceremony with a few friends of her daughter.

than ever realizing how the time has finally come to crack out from beneath her legend's bosom, drop down from her highly nest, and stake out into the wide wild world swirling ever closer.

She chooses the dead of that very afternoon to slide syruptiously towards her fate, at this moment housed ever hankering a mere block or two away.

Tapping at his drawer with the pre-arranged rap of their mutually consent, she immediately loses herself (not to mention her spanking her pair of designer flogs!) beneath the glistening pound of her beloved, drifting so eromically into hitherto unchastened avenues of sweet, sweating fervent which even her coltish rhythmic bucking fails to raise past the ever-watching ire of her heretic.

* * * * *
Of course soon they are weld, her imblazoned mother and possibly eventually father en tow, and a child is even rutenly bored out. Ahh, all seems so cozy lame in the neverweatherland of fame and fortune, doesn't it?

But you certainly don't need a nationwide enquirer to soon enough sniff the celebrized union is much more blasted than blessed: even the wonderful cover of life betrays but the speeding reworm of resent penetrating those baby blues.

And so, I ask you, why then should it come as that very much of a compromise to realize my receiver ringing conspeerily in the dead of my very orange afternoon?

Immediately recognizing the void at the other end of the whine, I instantly resort my own affairs and agree to a nocturnal rendezvous. "At the corner of Weinstein and Davidson, near the Village Revolver," I'm torn.

"Of course," I coo, and sooner than naught we're tattle-tailing it high off into the distant, the Princess and the Pig, together forever again for the first time.

The End.

DIDJA

by Richard M. Millard

Didja see that UFO before it vanished in the sky? Didja take a real good look before the pilot popped inside? Didja listen to that song that lingered after he was gone? Didja know you'd just seen Elvis goin' strong and Venus-bound? Didja?

IF WE CONTINUE TO LIVE

As did Jesus Christ for 28 years with unconscionable wrong-doing in this nuclear age we will surely all wind up in hell. Scrap 8000 year old winnerless wars, fixed wages, working-class work avoidance and atheism.

(No Herebefore). Spirit a SASE to,

20th Century Herebefore

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ON HIS GOVT. ISSUE POGO
STICK WHITE BOY SURVEYS
GHETTO BLACKS ON OPINION
OF S. AFR. ANTIAPARTHEID
LEADERS CALL TO BOYCOTT
ELECTIONS AS SEGREGATED

- a. ballot separates for ws, Bs, Cs, As
- b. Bs have no vote in natl. affairs
- c. "participation" is deceptive

UNABLE TO ANSWER CHARGE
OF P. J. JACKSON WAS NOT
NOMINATED IN USA, WBOY
GETS POGOED FROM AREA

- Paul Weinman

ANIMATION UPDATE



FILM REVIEW: A real rarity—two holiday offerings at the same time, each one with some advantages and disadvantages. First, OLIVER AND COMPANY, the 27th animated feature from Disney. Openly, this film won't achieve the classic status that PINOCCHIO or BAMBI earned, owing to its own brand of "full animation." Its actions are more likely lifted from the ones used in short subjects from the '50s and '60s (lots of quick pans and some repetition cels), but that's where the disadvantages end. On the plus side, it has a number of delightful characters, and an equal number of exceptional voices linked to them (among the best: Billy Joel is a natural as "Dodger," the laid-back leader of a mob of pickpocketing pooches; Bette Midler as "Georgette," a pampered poodle from Uptown, gives new meaning to the term "bitch;" Dom DeLuise as "Fagin" tries to keep his troop of four-legged felons in line while attempting to maintain his own well-being, and displaying a range of hilarious emotions in the process; but the real scene-stealer in this flick is "Tito," a feisty Chihuahua voiced by Cheech Marin, who doesn't have as much trouble hot-wiring machines as he does trying to hot-wire a romance with Georgette). Set in modern-day New York, the story (loosely based on Dickens' "Oliver Twist") deals with an orphaned kitten who becomes temporarily adopted by Fagin and Dodger, but eventually ends up in the home of a little rich girl. In between this somewhat predictable plot are some songs (performed by the likes of Joel, Midler, Huey Lewis and Ruth Pointer) which, surprisingly, don't slow it down. There are also moments that use computer-animated tricks that are effective without disrupting the storyline (such as scenes of New York traffic, the underground subway system, and a brilliant panning shot of the limousine owned by "Sykes," the villain of the film, played by Robert Loggia). All in all, it's a great picture for all ages, and not to be missed...THE LAND BEFORE TIME, on the other hand, seems specifically aimed at younger viewers. This collaboration of Steven Spielberg/George Lucas/Don Bluth deals with a different troupe of characters, all dinosaurs. This cross-breeding of BAMBI and the "Rite of Spring" segment from FANTASIA tells the story of "Littlefoot," an orphaned Brontosaurus, and of his quest to find the "Great Valley," where he hopes to find more of his own species. Along the way he picks up a small entourage of other small dinosaurs (including "Cera," a tomboy Triceratops; "Spike," a semi-lethargic Stegosaurus; and "Ducky," a prehistoric Platypus) who must overlook their differences and work together throughout the trek. The principal enemy of this flick is "Sharptooth," a towering Tyrannosaurus Rex who pursues the little dinosaurs every step of the way. The animation is much fuller than OLIVER, and all of the action is well-timed, but that's it. This film was geared for young people (hence, four of the five dinosaurs in Littlefoot's group have children's voices) who are obviously keen on prehistoric animals. Adults may squirm at some of the cutesy-pie scenes near the beginning, but it is otherwise a tolerable film to see...Both THE LAND BEFORE TIME and OLIVER AND COMPANY run about 70 minutes, a little shorter than most features, and the action makes the time go quickly, thus making the viewer yearn for more. The Disney people may have supplied an extra short subject to go with OLIVER at some theatres, but not at the one where I went. As for THE LAND BEFORE TIME, a number of movie houses compensated for the short running time by screening "Family Dog," Brad Bird's hilarious 20-minute tale of a hapless hound that was first seen on TV as part of Spielberg's "Amazing Stories" series. So the choice is yours—two animated features that are both appealing in their own respective ways. Of the two, my personal favorite was OLIVER, but my seven-year-old niece disagrees. She gave THE LAND BEFORE TIME a "two-Kleenex" rating (she cried twice during the screening). Oh well, to each his (and her) own...

FILM PREVIEW: Among animated features to debut in '89 are "The Little Mermaid" from the Disney studios, Don Bluth's "Charlie the Heavenly Dog" (not to be confused with live-action fantasies "Charlie and the Angel" and "Oh, Heavenly Dog!"), and "Felix the Cat" ("Righty-O!"). Also coming out this summer, Dave Thomas and Sally Kellerman portray live versions of everybody's favorite cartoon no-goodniks, "Boris and Natasha"—the big question is, will this film be the 1989 equivalent of "Popeye" or "Howard the Duck?"

MAGAZINE UPDATE: Commencing with issue #17, ANIMATO! has gone magazine-sized (as compared to its original digest form), thus making its storage and reading material easier for its subscribers to contend with. Said issue features articles on Chinese animation, Disney animator Jack Hannah (and his work at the competing Walter Lantz studios), and Ralph Bakshi's newest project, "Tattertown" (the cover story). For a 4-issue subscription, send \$10 (\$15 in US currency outside North America) to ANIMATO!, P.O. Box 1240, Cambridge, MA 02238...Don't expect a 1989 "Animation Issue" of MILLIMETER this February; the magazine had ceased publication months ago...

ANIMATION FOR SALE: If you're keen on Japanese, write to ARSENAL OF FANTASY, Box 2153, Clifton, NJ 07105, and they'll send you a free list of titles to numerous animated movies and TV shows that they're selling on videocassette (including "Dirty Pair," "Project A-Ko," and many more)...CARTOON JUNCTION, a division of

Creative Animations, has two locations in Florida, for the discriminating buyer of objects d'toon (from buttons and t-shirts to giant stuffed replicas of your favorite characters); one store is in Boynton Beach, but I visited the other shop at the Coral Square Mall in Coral Springs (ZIP 33071), just 15 minutes away from I-95 (after you exit on Atlantic Blvd., go west). Although the shop is smaller than its West Coast counterpart (see IJ #62), it still has a lot to offer. For more information about the Coral Springs store, phone 305/752-1012...The CARTOON ART MUSEUM in San Francisco offers a variety of benefits to its members, including an annual item called "The Collectors' Print." Each year, a different cartoonist creates and illustrates specifically for the museum. This year's contributor is Chuck Jones, whose sketch of Bugs Bunny at a drawing board (similar to the February '87 cover of "Millimeter") is truly a collectable. To be a member of the museum (and obtain said print by Jones), write for an application to 665 Third Ave., San Francisco, CA 94107, or call 415/546-3922.

PREDICTIONS FOR 1989: As far as the Academy Awards go, I foresee at least one American nominee for "Best Animated Short"—it will be a toss-up between John Lasseter's "Tin Toy," Bill Kroyer's "Technological Threat," and Bill Plympton's "One of Those Days," with Greg Ford and Terry Lennon's "Night of the Living Duck" as a dark horse (duck?)...I'm going out on a limb for this prediction, but I think that one of the tunes from OLIVER AND COMPANY will earn an Oscar nomination for "Best Song." It will either be Huey Lewis' "Once Upon a Time in New York City" or Billy Joel's "Why Should I Worry?" (the last song from an animated feature to earn such a nomination was "Somewhere Out There" from Don Bluth's AN AMERICAN TAIL two years ago)...As for the Emmy Award for "Outstanding Animated Program," it will be a dead heat between "The 9 Lives of Garfield" and "The California Raisins" for top honors. Personally, I think it's too close to call...

Bibliophilic Blitz

#3 - A NEW BEGINNING by R. Bain

Hello, all! Today's books under review are the "Eyebeam" series by Sam Hurt. The titles are, in order: *I'm Pretty Sure I've Got My Death Ray In Here Somewhere!*

Eyebeam, Therefore I Am
Eenie Meenie Minnie Tweed
Our Eyebeams Twisted

and last but not least

The Mind's Eyebeam

I hope you're interested already.

This guy's stuff, like most really good original work, is kind of hard to describe. Basically, it's about the title character, Eyebeam. He's a skinny guy who lives in an exceedingly odd world. He makes a living as a lawyer for "Shortbread & Snuff, Attorneys-At-Law" with his old college pal Vernon, his boss Mr. Snuff, a junk-food lover named Molene, and a law nerd. Sometimes his hallucination, who goes by the name of Hank, stops by to liven things up.

His home life isn't any more serene, and is equally as entertaining. His terminally procrastinating roommate Ratliff is a nice guy, but never does anything. His artistic girlfriend Sally provides a small anchor of calm in all this silliness, but she's as nuts as he is.

Then, of course, there's I.M.4.U., the outer-space robot butler, who seems to have moved in permanently, and many, many more...

The book's strips are in the basic 3-4 panel newspaper comic strip format, but the jokes are many and varied. They run from small continued (and very funny) strips to one-shot gags of all types—puns, sight gags (this guy has a great imagination for odd backgrounds—his stuff isn't realistic, it's fantastic in every sense of the word), and good ol' fashioned weird jokes. If they could chemically reproduce Hurt's originality, the government would ban it instantly. Even the little doodles in between strips are interesting. The one rule for this book is "anything goes!"

If you can get your local bookstore to order at least one of these, check it out! They're about 128 pages of weirdness, and you've got nothing to lose but six dollars or so.

LITERARY WARNING: Some of you have probably seen the collected reprint of Robert Anton Wilson's "Schrodinger's Cat" trilogy, but you may not have noticed that "they" left some stuff out. Mostly they omitted some of the raunchier sex scenes, but who knows what hidden messages of mystical import they have (one hopes) "accidentally" deleted?!

This has been a public service announcement fnord.15

PHARMACISTS NEVER RETIRE

#7 RULE of THUMB



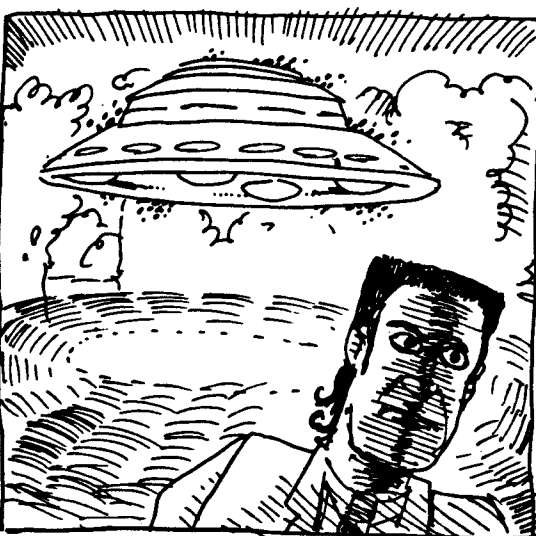
"Oh, that's just Charley. He died five years ago but nobody's had the heart to tell him."

Introducing Florence Nightingale Jones in *Tender Loving Comedy*. A RIB-TICKLING new cartoon book by TLC. Thelma & Laura Canarecci take a humorous look inside nursing. A great gift. \$4.95/\$1 postage

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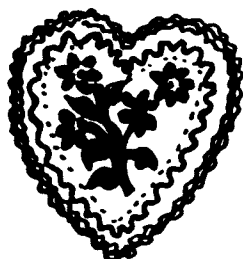
I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE THIS!....



THE INVADERS

THE NEXT GENERATION

T.P.M.



Rather amazing, actually...

Imagine:
The slithering, green inhabitant of a distant, pastel planet orbiting binary stars that cast two shadows—one framed by blue-white sunshine, the other shadow cast by red light.

That creature might think that walking on two legs in the light of a single star

is amazing and beautiful.

Heck, he might even enjoy eating a stale doughnut, paying rent, and catching the flu.

- Curtis Olson

DIGGETY DOG



NICOLOFF

Realist Editor Sought

Bulldozer Kills 300 Snoring Poor

TOLEDO, Ohio (VU) — Sheriff James L. Taft has been placed on indefinite leave of absence without pay while the Spencer-Hepburn Township Trustees investigate why he ordered a dozen bulldozers into this city's predominately black Hightone neighborhood to dig for bodies believed buried by a satanic cult.

When the dust cleared, more than 300 bodies were found in the rubble, all of them longtime residents of the area who apparently died while asleep. It now appears Taft was acting on a tip from Paul Krassner, editor of *The Realist*, who now lives in exile in Toponga, Paraguay.

Informed sources claim that Taft neglected to evacuate the area prior to digging, a charge Taft denies.

Yoesarian Universal

DON'T DREAM TOO HARD IT GETS THEM ANGRY...

THEY DON'T LOOK AT THE GRASS AND THEY DARE NOT LOOK INTO THE OPEN SKY FOR FEAR OF SEEMING DIFFERENT...

LOOK UP INTO THE SKIES.

DON'T FOLLOW THE SHEEP BLINDLY

OR DO I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU DO IT'S YOUR LIFE TO THROW AWAY AS YOU SEE FIT...

WHY DREAM???

IT'LL NOT KEEP YOU WARM WHEN THE AIR BECOMES BITTER. SETTLE INTO THE CONCRETE WORLD AROUND YOU. IT'S FOR YOUR OWN GOOD...

- Rev. Randolph Scott Moser

My god, it's an all-art & poetry page!

by "Kid" Sieve

What else is waiting for us in 1989? I know it's early in the game, but I'm already casting my vote for '89 as *The Year of the "Personal"* 900 Number. Sitcom teens have it. Lou Albano has it. Lots and lots of black singers (including scads of rappers) have it. What happens, near as I can tell, is that if you're somewhat famous or on your way to being there you can get in touch with this company, presumably run by some regional phone company or other, and they'll set you up with a 900 number. You do a commercial for people to call you (throwing in a lot of words about how "intimate" and "personal" calling this number can be, exactly all the things a 900 number is not) and tape x-amount of messages to be hooked up to the same type of answering machine that they must use for horoscopes or calling Santa or whatever. The callers are charged about \$3.00 or so (I remember back when 900 numbers were only 50¢, but then again, that was usually for radio call-in votes and consisted of a 5-second connection), and there must be some

WORLD'S WORST STAND-UP COMIC

WANT
A NORMAL
DRUG-FREE
RELATIONSHIP?
JUST SAY NO
TO CONDOMS



THE BEST DEFENSE IN THE WORLD
Is the one that the world's brains and no brains have
built against the only lam that can end war,
terrorism, inflation, unemployment, free riding,
crime and death. For an lam that had to be adopted
in a previous herenow to make heretofore and here
before, viable wing a S.A.S.E. to: BRAINBEAUSIB
Box 3243 - YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO, 44504

The final Scrooge commercial count was around 6, half of which I can't even remember now (effective marketing tool, eh?). Next year I'll give the 4C a break and bet him on the number of Santa commercials instead. Until next time, stay tuned! 17

Half the World by Stu Newman

I never figured out what was wrong with our old house, although Dad insisted our new house was much, much better. Among other things, the new house has a fallout shelter in case something called a Tom Mick bomb happens to fall on us. I asked my older brother Ricky was a Tom Mick bomb was and he said it was something the Russians would drop "if they ever decided to kill half the people in America."

Our new house is smaller than the old one. There's a farm in back which is kind of neat. I know Dad wouldn't think a farm made one house better than the other. I decided it was the fallout shelter. The shelter made the new house better.

I asked Ricky who the Russians were and he pointed to the television. Vice-President Nixon was talking to a bald-headed man named Cruise Chef or something. Cruise Chef and Vice-President Nixon were so friendly, it seemed odd that one of them would want to drop a Tom Mick bomb on the other.

I enjoyed eating the fresh tomatoes and green peppers from the farm in back. I thought it was a great idea to have free vegetables instead of going to the A&P to buy them.

One day, the farmer sped toward us in his tractor. He yelled things I'd never heard before. Although his words were unfamiliar I knew he was angry from the tone of his voice. He must not have realized that his food was free; and I wasn't going to risk getting run over to tell him.

Dad came home one day with cartons filled with large containers of canned food. He asked me to help carry them to the fallout shelter. When the last box was down, Dad wiped off his hands and looked at the neatly-stacked shelves.

"Now, at least we'll have something to eat if the Russians attack."

"Will we have to stay down here long?" I asked.

Dad smiled at me. I don't think he realized I was asking a question because he didn't answer. Finally he said:

"Well, let's go. Your mom's probably got dinner ready."

My brother, Ricky, is three-and-a-half years older than me. I can tell that Mom and Dad think Ricky is lacking in some essential areas as a son; but as a brother he's tops.

Ricky showed me how to catch and how to fight. Dad taught me

Switched-On Block

by Brian Catanzaro

Seventy-Eighth Street was mobbed, as usual, for National Flashlight Day. A lot of folks brought their plastic throw-aways, but I noticed more high-tech models than last year. It was a pleasure to see lanterns of all shapes, sizes and colors, many antiques. The media people were in the way, as always. Jackie O. didn't show, despite more rumors, but she never does. It was quite a spectacle to see all those tiny bulbs come on as a wave of light cascaded down the street.

Fungist Manifesto

by Elliot Cantsin



We are fungi growing on the rotting log of a dead society. Others call us parasites because we feed off of the decaying flesh of a defunct vegetable. They consult ancient maps from the pulp library which give a clear picture of how the world looked from the tree when it was a living, growing entity, and look out at the littered floor of the forest pretending to see those landmarks portrayed on the maps, ignoring the fact that the tree trunk's position is now horizontal and they are only inches above the ground. But how can they be blamed for their stupidity when, culturally, they are dead?

We have fungi. We believe that our individual lives are important, though we have no proof. Perhaps we can evolve into something like orchids. Perhaps we can evolve roots and seek nourishment from the earth once more; after all, it is not so far away as it was, now that our cathedral-like, skyscraping tree has fallen. Perhaps not, but even as fungi we have a certain corrupt beauty.

things, too. He taught me how to wash his car and rake the lawn after it was mowed.

One day I spilled a gallon of paint on the porch floor. I didn't think paint was something you could clean up. I thought of it was something that changed the color of whatever it touched. So, I just assumed the floor would have to be blue from now on.

It takes a lot to get Dad angry. He mostly likes to watch television and fall asleep sitting straight up. But I guess a fresh coat of paint on the porch floor touched a nerve.

When I came home that night, Dad was giving Ricky a beating.

"Did you spill the paint, Ricky?" he shouted.

"Yeah, I spilt the paint!"

"Why didn't you clean it up?"

"I forgot."

I thought this was a pretty snappy comeback on Ricky's part, but Dad didn't go for it. He gave him a spanking and sent him to his room.

I walked into Ricky's room. He was lying face-down on his bed.

"I spilt the paint, Ricky."

"I know."

Ricky never told a soul about my misdoing. He spends his life a convicted paint-spiller.

My sister, Ruby, is three years older than Ricky. She constantly tells me to grow up. Ruby tells me that I act like a seven-year-old, which is pretty bad 'cause I'm almost nine-and-a-half.

Ruby's boyfriend, Harley, plays guitar and used to bring over records by a group called The Kingston Trio.

Harley told me that The Kingston Trio sing songs about politics and society. I asked him why they sing about stuff like that and he answered, "to make a lot of money."

I listened to the record. There's one song I like a whole lot. It's called "The Cat Came Back":

The cat came back
He wouldn't stay away
The cat came back
The very next day

I never saw Dad in the fallout shelter after the day I helped him bring down the cans. Me and my friend Eggy hang out there a lot. We play Monopoly. Once in a while Eggy gets some good property like Boardwalk or Carolina Place, but I always win.

Every kid's got a friend that pulls the *show me yours and I'll show you mine* bit. Eggy showed me his first then asked:

"Okay, now show me yours."

To this day (and it's been almost two years), Eggy is still wondering what *mine* looks like.

Eggy's done some other weird stuff, too. He tried to tell me that people make babies by...well, Eggy talked about the parts of people's bodies that they use to go to the bathroom.

Could you imagine if people actually did the things that Eggy says they do? What does he think I am, stupid?

I like lying on my sister Ruby's floor on my stomach. For some reason the floor in Ruby's room is always nice and cool. I like to lie on it and pretend I'm swimming.

One day I was doing this when Mom walked in.

"Hi, Sonny," she said.

"Hi, Mommy."

"Watch out for sharks."

"What are sharps?"

"Sharks are big fish that eat people."

Mom has an imagination like Eggy's.

She started to make Ruby's bed when something startled her.

She drew back Ruby's blanket and picked up a small foil wrapper. Her eyes opened wide and she put her hand over her mouth. I looked at the small piece of foil. It said this: TROJANS

"What's that, Mommy?" I asked.

Like Dad, Mom didn't always answer my questions. Instead she ran downstairs to her bed and began to cry.

From now on, whenever I eat candy, I always throw away the wrapper. Especially if I'm in bed.

Mom and Dad have been fighting a lot lately. Earlier today, Mom took me aside and said:

"Louis," (that's my name, Louis Richards), "I have to tell you something."

"Yes, Mommy?"

"Your father and I are—"

"Yes, Mommy?"

"Your father and I are getting a divorce."

"What's that, Mommy?"

"That's when two people don't get along well. When they fight with each other—"

"Then you already have a divorce, don't you, Mommy?"

"No, honey. Not yet...your father and I are going to live in separate houses. You're going to live with me. Daddy's going to move away."

"I wannus t'all live together, Mommy," I said.

"I'm sorry, Sonny."

"No, Mommy. I WANNUS T'ALL LIVE TOGETHER!"

I ran downstairs to the fallout shelter. That's where I am right now. If I had a can-opener I could stay here for the rest of my life.

It's pretty boring, though. Just a bunch of food, some old furniture, and the Monopoly set.

I'm pretty good at Monopoly. I have a secret trick. I buy every piece of property that I land on. It's pretty hard to lose when you own half the world.

INTERVIEW

by Spence Nicholson

The elevator was packed with coughing, intruded bodies. Everyone pressed his or her button, then stared at the lights in the ceiling. As they passed the third floor, Ethan reached through the crush, flattening moussee in some hair and scraping an ear with his cuff, to press his twelfth floor button. He would have said sorry to the hairdo and the ear but the glare that he got forbade words, let alone apologies.

At the twelfth floor, Ethan still had to struggle to get out of the elevator before the doors shut. He pushed passed buttocks, groins, and one particularly large and mobile bra with an embarrassed determination that surprised no one but himself. Finally, he was out and the doors slid shut, taking the uncomfortable occupants further above 57th Street.

He had stepped out into a hallway with orange industrial carpet and off-white walls. Framed album covers at head height caught even the most unobservant eyes. Ethan stood in front of a large Whitney Houston poster and tried to study his reflection in the glass; he threw damp fingers through his hair, but all he could see was Whitney's MTV smile and her belly button, which suggested that she'd had sex at least once. He was staring at the navel when a girl strode into the hallway. She saw Ethan jump back and sneered at him as she walked to the elevator. He walked over to the door from which she had come. There was a red "Spangle Records" logo and a full-length mirror there, and he studied the flourishing pink blemishes on both sides of his mouth with dismay. Even though he had agonised earlier that morning upon how to dress for his interview, his tie now looked laughable with that jacket and his shoes were more Wall Street than midtown. He swore at himself for staying up until all hours watching videos, as his eyes looked like those famous piss-holes in the snow.

Ethan pressed the intercom bell before he could find anything else wrong with himself and told the voice that answered that he was here for his appointment with Seth Mortimer. A buzzer sounded. Through the heavy door was another orange and white hallway, but before he could walk down it, a girl appeared at the far end and told him to wait here (she opened him a door) as Seth wasn't in yet. Ethan shuffled into the room and was about to say thanks, but she was gone, leaving the door open and a whiff of cigarettes in her wake.

He sat on one of the couches. There were more framed albums and posters; Taylor Dane—were those tits or hands beneath her shoulders?—The Church in ever-so-moody poses, and the Grateful Dead as skeletons with guitars. Carly Simon had a huge smile on a bigger poster and next to her was just a hook in the wall. Theft or loss of grace took even odds. He thumbed an old copy of Billboard twice and saw dozens of people scuttle past the open door; each one stared at him with expressions that ranged from malice to curiosity. Music drifted out from somewhere down the corridor. First Led Zeppelin, then The Police and then Bowie. Telephones rang constantly. The same voice seemed to answer each time, always on the second ring. She would say, "Good morning, Artist Development" in the same sprightly tone, and then connect the caller to an office somewhere. Sometimes, the voice knew the caller and she would chat for a while, putting her friend on hold when another line rang. Ethan daydreamed and wished he'd put his watch on this morning. He wished he could brush his teeth. He wished he wasn't dressed like a schoolteacher. He was wishing himself something else when another girl appeared in the doorway. She told him to follow her, but before he could grab his resume and get up off the couch, she was gone.

He caught her up down the corridor with a few lengthy strides. They turned left and passed the telephone voice, who was giggling into the receiver saying, "Oh God I know, and that dreamboat Marty kept bringing me drinks and I was saying No! No! but he wouldn't listen, and then we went backstage and that's when I bumped into Jeanie and Peter...". She was surrounded at her desk by piles of paper, flashing buttons, pictures of bands and singers, albums, compact discs and a huge trash can. She didn't flinch as Ethan and his rapidly moving guide swept by. They passed office after office, each with the door open, each containing shelves and a cluttered desk with elbows belonging to the person who sat behind, upon it. Without exception, everyone had a telephone pressed firmly to one ear. Ethan couldn't help glancing left and right into each office as they breezed along the carpeted hallways. None of the office inhabitants shifted their eyes from desk-top stares. More music. This time it was Billy Ocean. They passed some large computer screens and a fat girl covered in blood-red makeup, carrying a tray with plastic cups of coffee on it. She wore a huge thigh-length white t-shirt that said "FRANKIE SAYS DON'T FUCK AROUND" in six-inch letters. Ethan would have laughed if she hadn't given him the nastiest sneer he'd had all morning.

The girl he was following turned left and went up a spiral staircase just about the time that Ethan began to sweat beneath his crotch and armpits, but still they sped along more corridors with endless open doors, shelves and one-way chatter. Suddenly, the girl stopped, just as Ethan was craning his neck to peer into an office, and he walked right into her, stepping on her foot and scraping his nose on her earring. He apologised sheepishly and, after giving him his 28th killer glare of the morning, she rapped on the door that they faced, and opened it immediately. She motioned for him to enter with a nod of her head. He did so and

heard himself say "Thanks" but the girl was gone, probably to look for somebody else better dressed and less clumsy to chase her down the hallways.

In the room, a bearded, balding man with Buggles glasses on sat behind another desk with a telephone jammed to his right ear by his shoulder. With exaggerated signs he told Ethan to sit on the small couch that faced the desk, then held a finger up and mouthed "one minute," although it took a couple of seconds for Ethan to realise that he wasn't saying "Want a mint?" The man spoke rapidly into the telephone; he was insisting to somebody that performance videos were out and that he didn't give a fuck what INXS were doing, and that if Charles and Gary and Miles weren't going to do things his way then they knew what they could do with their fucking album publicity. Eventually he hung up, sat back and breathed a big dramatic sigh of exasperation. "One fucking hit single and they wanna run the whole fucking show. Wanna cigarette man?" Ethan took one. It tasted good despite the dryness in his mouth.

The man introduced himself as Seth Mortimer, Vice President of Artist Development and then the telephone rang. He snatched the receiver up and proceeded to talk into it for another fifteen minutes. This time he spoke about airplays and rotations to somebody who was obviously his superior. Mortimer was animated as he spoke, scratching his sparse beard and playing with pens and paper clips on the desk, changing his expressions constantly, while he dragged hard on his cigarette. The office soon filled with fresh swirls of blue smoke. On the wall to the side was a framed photograph of a younger Seth Mortimer with Keith Richards. The Rolling Stone held a guitar and a burning cigarette dangled from his sarcastic lips. Mortimer, about eight inches taller, had his arm around Richards' shoulder and was grinning like it was a holiday snap. Ethan felt he knew a little more about why the Stones had split up. Other photographs lined the walls, most of them picturing the executive with assorted friends and, Ethan supposed, industry bigwigs. Keith Richards, though, stood out like a dissonant chord.

When Seth did put the telephone down he lit another cigarette. Ethan tried not to look bored and was about to say something when the office door was banged open and in strode two men and a woman. The first man seemed not to even notice Ethan and demanded that they had to have an immediate conference call because Scott was in Chicago and Aretha was in Dallas, and it was too good an opportunity to miss. Mortimer didn't argue. Ethan thought that perhaps he had become invisible until he was asked to wait outside the office for a while. As he got up, he was nearly knocked over by the woman diving into the seat he had just vacated. Ethan shut the office door behind him and heard one of them say something, then they all laughed. There were no chairs in the hallway so he put his hands in his pockets and leant against a wall.

Forty-five minutes later, the door to the office was opened. Ethan stood up straight and tried to look fresh and interested. Smoke and chatter flew from the door which Seth opened only long enough to squeeze his head and shoulders out of. "Listen, man," the grinning executive said, "this is gonna sound real fucked up, but something's happened, so can we do this another day? Do you mind?" Even though Ethan was standing six or seven feet away at the far side of the corridor, he could taste the liquor fumes that were breathed toward him. Tequila, most likely. A shout of "Seth man!" came from back in the office, and the face at the door did well to stop itself from going into hysterics. Ethan said that no, he didn't mind cancelling and he was thanked for understanding before the door was shut. Ethan just stood there, controlled and civil. He had no desire to kick the door down and decapitate them with the gold and platinum albums on the walls. Funny why that was, really.

He trudged back down the hallway he was on, but several turns and dozens of identical offices later, Ethan was a little confused. After an hour of wandering the corridors, it was almost as if Ethan was in a trance; the desks, offices, telephones, music, chatter, carpet and telephones that rang and beeped and buzzed and burred, floated over and through Ethan, fascinating him. He forgot all about his morning and just drifted around. Once, beside a set of drawers, he saw a pile of Barry Manilow promotional key rings. He picked one up and put it in his shirt pocket. People began to nod hellos once they had seen him two or three times, and each time, Ethan responded with a smile. Someone asked him if he knew where Alex Travis' office was and he explained patiently, without having the faintest idea, that it was down there, left and left again, go up the stairs and it's the fourth door on the left. "Thank you," the person said.

A telephone rang in an office that he was passing and he went in to answer it. He picked the receiver up and pressed a flashing button. It was a very agitated man from a Florida television show who said that he'd asked for six copies of Jermaine Stewart's latest video two weeks ago and still they hadn't arrived. "What's the fucking problem?" Ethan calmed him down and assured him that he would have them by tomorrow. He would Federal Express them himself. The man from Florida thanked him several times and then they hung up. On a piece of Arista notepaper he wrote: Please send 6 copies of Jermaine Stewart Video to Mark in Florida. He needs them urgently. Ethan Glass.

Hunger eventually drove Ethan from Spangle Records. People were now eating in their offices. He walked through pale smells of tuna fish and rye bread. On his way back toward the elevator he passed the room he had first sat in and been glared at. He 19

(continued next page)

glared in too, but there was nobody there. As he waited for the elevator, he tried to pry the Whitney Houston poster from the wall, but it was screwed in hard and he ended up with squashed fingertips and a crunched-up face next to Whitney's nicest smile.

The elevator opened up before him. It was empty. Inside he brushed his hand over the columns of buttons that he could press. The doors slid smoothly shut and the elevator began to move down. Ethan knew it was moving down because of where his stomach was. He backed up against the rear wall. An alarm was going off on a floor that he shot past. He screamed and began to jump up and down to save his knees when the elevator hit the bottom. He stared wild-eyed at his feet and saw the Barry Manilow key ring fall out of his shirt. He was actually in mid-air when the elevator hit the floor of the shaft with a great metal whump, but of course his jumping did him no good. As he lay there in a distorted angular heap amidst the splintered bones, Ethan remembered that he had left his resume in Seth Mortimer's office. He wondered if he would have to bring another one to the next interview.

NOW HERE'S SOMETHING YOU'LL WANNA SEE!...



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FIND SUCCESS TRAINING YOUR
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Only the broad-minded need apply.

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Thought you were 'ordinary'?

WRONG.

Tap your secret Abnormality
Potential! Take control through
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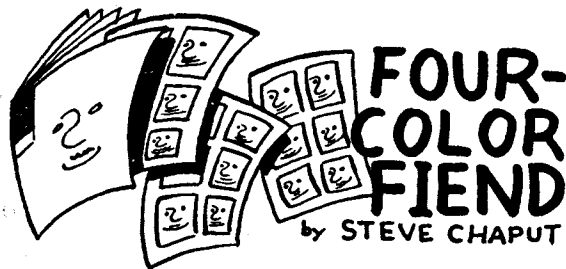
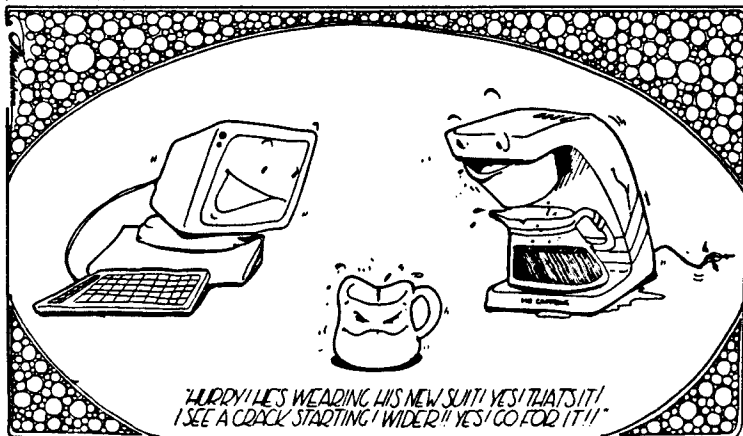
This one isn't for everybody.

Unbelievably unusual pamphlets.

Damn weird. Totally new.

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The Further Adventures of MR. CAFFEINE



Having already hit you with Politically Correct comics (IJ #64), let's take a look at some that are more fun, but probably non-PC—WAR COMICS!!

It's terribly cliché to say that one was a child of one's time, but for me it's true. The fifties and early sixties were a great time for war. Most of the action by the U.S. government was covert and, except for invading an island or two to restore democracy, things were going okay. Audie Murphy and John Wayne were still fighting the Axis on the big screen and on weekend television, while Vic Morrow and the fellows in "Combat" were making prime time safe for all "good" Americans.

Meanwhile, back on the newsstands, over a dozen comics carried on the good fight. FIGHTIN' ARMY/NAVY/MARINES from Charleton stood shoulder to shoulder with FIGHT THE ENEMY from Tower. DC was the big boy with SGT. ROCK, THE HAUNTED TANK and others. Later Marvel was to join the fight with SGT. FURY and his Howling Commandoes.

As the sixties made way for the seventies and the war on TV was now life from Vietnam, the sales of "war comics" continued to decline. There was something distasteful about the books now, and kids perfectly willing to spend their allowances on everything. Marvel and DC put out just didn't feel right about the war books when their older brothers and cousins were being brought back in body bags.

Since the late seventies, only DC's SGT. ROCK had sales that kept them on the front lines, but eventually even he packed up his dufflebag and marched off to the old soldiers' home.

Well, take heart, America! We're standing tall again and those patriots in the Marvel Bullpen are marching once more, with DC and a few independents timidly eyeing a recruiting poster or two. (DC) SGT. ROCK SPECIAL #2 (\$2 US/\$2.70 Can.)—The lead story deals with three of DC's lead war heroes, Sgt. Rock, Johnny Cloud (a Native American aviator) and Jeb Stuart Smith (of HAUNTED TANK fame) all involved with rescuing a member of the French underground from those evil Nazis.

(MARVEL) SEMPER FI' #3 (75¢ US/95¢ Can.)—Tales of the Whittier family, who have been Marines since 1777. All stores are written by Michael Palladino and drawn by numerous artists, including John Severin, who either pencils or inks the main story (sometimes both). Nicely realistic tales of warfare, with a bit of flag-waving thrown in ('natch).

(MARVEL) THE 'NAM #26 (\$1.50 US/\$2.50 Can.)—Doug Murray is a Vietnam veteran, and his viewpoint is all over this book. He's bitter and believes that it was the politicians and anti-war activists who lost this war. THE 'NAM covers the war in chronological order, with each book corresponding with a month in the war. This issue takes place in February 1968 and is a look at the members of the first unit that was covered in the series. Propaganda! (APPLE) VIETNAM JOURNAL #7 (\$1.95 US/\$2.60 Can.)—Don Lomax writes and draws this book and, as in THE 'NAM, his politics are present. However, unlike Murray, Lomax is able to see the Vietnamese as human beings and not as Tojo reincarnated. He is also a much better writer than Murray and his characters, whether major or throw-aways, are fully-rounded personalities. The only one of this lot I would recommend.

(DC) THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER #1 (\$1.50 US/\$2 Can.)—Like the SGT. ROCK special, there are elements of mysticism in this book, but instead of ghosts or Indian spirits we have a soldier who can't die. Being immortal and a master of disguise does have its advantages when you work for Army intelligence, I guess. Writer Jim Owsley and artist Phil Gascoine do their part in a predictable story of a career soldier grown tired and bitter. Even the veneer of patriotism is gone and the thing is just a job. I knew a number of guys with a similar attitude when I was in the Navy. War as a 9-to-5 job. Tolerable.

Before I close, let me recommend THE HEDONIST #5 (\$2 from Morgan Lloyd, 4385 W. 132nd St., Hawthorne, CA 90250). Morgan improves with each issue, and this issue's "Toontown Babbie On" is a nice sendup of both animated cartoons characters and "gossip" journalism. As usual, Recommended.

Let me also recommend NOT AVAILABLE COMICS #23 (35¢ + SASE from Matt Fezell, 106 N. Summit #1, Ypsilanti, MI 48197). This mini has a number of autobiographical pieces that Matt had in his sketchbook. It's more in the style of ANTBOY (though sketchier) than in Matt's famous "stick figure" art. Nicely done and recommended. Ask for a catalog, as all Not Available material is well worth the price. By the way, Matt's "Zot in Dimension 10½" has expanded to six pages a month in the regular ZOT! comic. Both series are great!

Next issue I'll be talking about the newest Amazing Heroes Preview, and in the following issue I'll take a look at manga. So if you have any favorites you'd like covered, let me know.

Notary Sejac

Keys to Spirituality by Al Fry

People of today's world are often unwilling to take responsibility for their lives and actions. They are willing to receive but not willing to originate or acknowledge. Such laziness can lead to their eventually losing their higher mind components at the final period of choice. Since the higher level components are aware of the creators' choice system, they will not allow the rational self to break into awareness and understanding until the ETHICS are mastered...

Without ethics there is karma, and karma lowers our free choice quotient. Great teachers have always provided the truths to humanity so we could have choice. Great civilizations have risen and fallen from their rejection and adherence to the creators' choice principles. Ancient documents in Sanskrit and other ancient languages show that our ancestors had aircraft, laser weapons and much of the technology we enjoy today for short periods. Lack of ethics and karma stripped such technology away. BEFORE intelligence arrived to our humanoid species we had many strange human forms and sizes here. Claws, tails, scales and even venom sacs were existant in certain tribes.

As intelligence contaminated our ancestors who were living in an "instinct" act/react mode, more radical forms and bodies were discouraged by the dominion leaders. Eventually the superior abilities of these early "gods" were stripped from them and humanity was given a chance to progress to higher levels of awareness and ability themselves. The key was pointed out by virtually all of the great spiritual teachers. KNOW THYSELF was the admonition.

Handling communications is important in spiritual growth. Our thoughts create our reality and to handle larger creations we must be responsible for our creations. This responsibility can start at a lower communication level. If we speak we should see that our thoughts get to a terminal or person in a clear form. And if spoken to we should give an acknowledgement of having received the communication. If a child's mother doesn't acknowledge or praise them after they have spoken, they tend to commit upsetting acts until they are acknowledged. If we fail to answer a simple "hello" it breaks up a healthy two-way energy exchange and builds up a condition that can lead to problems if repeated long enough. Poor eyesight and hearing are typical examples of problems that can come from communication breakdowns. A hearing loss may come from being around another person who talks all the time without letting any feedback occur. Outflow abuse can come from persons who want attention, with little intention of real communication. Inflow abuse can result when a person withholds due to fear of criticism, etc. Garbled communication can be sent by people using long impressive words, many pauses, stuttering, or other garbling. They are parasitic, seeking attention with little concern for being understood. Lags and refusal to acknowledge are also parasitic actions. Normally the energy batted back and forth between communicating humans is dispersed if there is proper exchange. If acknowledgement doesn't occur there is a buildup of energy that can lead to health problems eventually. Mental institutions have many patients who remain "hyper" and miserable because they run off at the mouth continually, or fail to exchange with others. Acknowledge persons around you and give them some attention. If you find them to be parasitic, you can leave the area or explain to them what they are doing. If you or they keep failing to exchange correctly, the buildup of unexchanged energy reduces awareness. If you got burned by a hot stove in the past, the memory energies accumulated will bring on a fear of stoves in the future unless such memory patterns are run out. Going over the incident and duplicating it mentally helps run out this energy buildup. If your child burns itself on a stove, it is important to ask the child all about what happened as soon as possible, or until the child has faced and duplicated the incident enough to have erased most of the energies involved.

To eliminate most of the problems stemming from lack of communication, it is only necessary to grant the right of CHOICE to others. No matter what others like, desire or believe or do, allow them to as long as it doesn't drag your own freedoms down. The ability to Be, Do or Have is most important in any relationship; don't deny others this freedom if you wish to progress spi-

Tessie Died

by Paul Beckman

"Hello."

"I thought I'd see you at the funeral this morning."

"Funeral? Who died?"

"Tessie."

"Who the heck's Tessie?"

"Don't swear."

"I'm sorry. Who's Tessie?"

"She lived on the third floor of Garfield Street when you lived there."

"We moved from Garfield Street when I was four."

"So, that's no reason not to go. She was very good to your mother."

"I didn't know she was still alive."

"She's not. I told you, I went to her funeral today."

"Yes. You're right."

"You should have gone. Your mother would've wanted you to go."

"How was I to know she died? I didn't know she was living. I didn't know her and never heard anyone mention her name!"

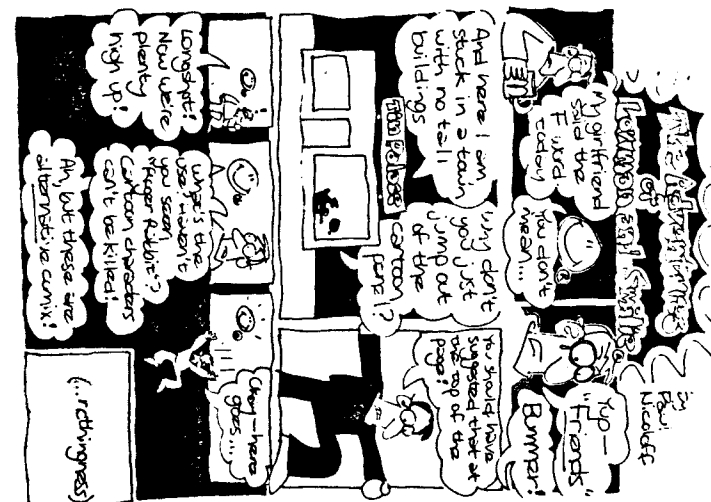
"Don't get upset. If you'd call me more often you'd know what was going on."

"But I spoke to you three days ago."

"Three days ago she was still alive."

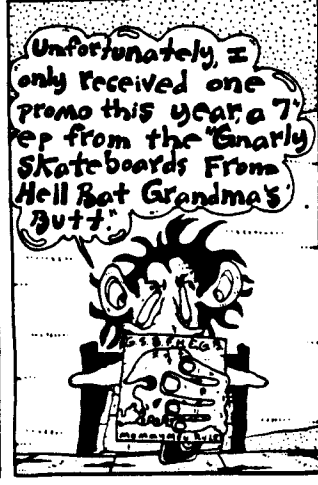
"Well, if it was that important for me to go to the funeral, why didn't you call me?"

"You know me. I don't like to call with bad news."



ritually. Granting of Choice is an ethic that can lead to immortality and the overcoming of all the usual mental and physical barriers.

In learning balance, the human can begin to tap his or her awareness. Such "flowline" can come as an instantaneous thought before the usual mind thoughts and rationality come pouring in a split second later.



STAIN *by Andy Roberts*

"Betcha a dollar for a doughnut she won't show." Mr. Bluestain drummed his fingers on the table and glanced anxiously at his watch. "She's getting her tits pulled into the wringer. But she's good people, you know—good, broke and lonely."

"Bluestain, if you think God's not a humorist, why don't you take a look in the mirror?" Harold Cashdollar chortled a quick laugh and cut his slits of eyes to the breezes swimming through the wheat fields of Ames, Iowa. Inside the diner where the two men sat across a table the size of an overgrown half-dollar, the smells of corned beef and cabbage, onions, and hot coffee filled the air. "You gotta loosen up, bub," said Cashdollar. "How you expect to get anywhere if you don't lay out the dollar? You're tight as a Cincinnati millionaire, Stain. You gotta dig deep, man."

Bluestain grimaced, a tight smile wrapping itself around the plow of his face. "She's got legs to forever, Harry."

"Will you drop it, man. Come on, let's blow this dump." He stood up and fingered a dime from his change, dropped it on the table. "Let's watch people get hurt. They got a light heavy on the card tonight quick enough to hit the light switch and be in bed before it's dark. Come on, whatta ya say?"

Bluestain adjusted his cowboy hat; a shaft of light illuminated his bowl and nearly penetrated the soup. He laid his spoon down with a sigh and got up.

"What is it with this shit? Who you trying to be, Roy Rogers?"

Stain smiled with his eyes. "I'm just a street kid from Blood Pressure, New Jersey, Harry. I'm on vacation, lighten up. This is cowboy country. When in Rome, you know."

They pushed out the door into the blinding sunlight and the smells of heating garbage and urine. At the curbside knelt a blind man at a whelping box. His bitch was about to give birth. "Mind if I have a look?" said Cashdollar, and the dog sprang at him, a vicious ball of muscle with a drumtight belly. The blind man caught it by the neck. "Whoa, Sugar. You boys better beat it," he said. "Everybody knows this is nowhere."

"Whatever...Hey, I had a dream Sammy Davis Jr. told me I could get high on garbanzo beans," said Cashdollar to Bluestain as they trod the hot pavement of Ames, Iowa in August in search of a taxi to take them to the Civic Center. "He was with Billy Dee Williams. Billy said: 'You stupit, man, believing in something like that. Boy on all kinda drugs.' Then I woke up."

"Yeah? Well, you know what I learned in the Marines?" said Bluestain. "Eat Life or it will Eat You."

"How true," said Cashdollar. "How true."

They continued on down the street.

"Oh man, when she kisses me her mouth is a hungry little animal." Bluestain stopped, stuck a cigarette in his mouth, and ducked his head down to a cupped match.

"You still talking about Tremonisha? Let it rest, man, let it rest."

"She can squeeze me like nobody in this world..."

"Can it, Stain!"

The cabbie took them downtown and dropped them at the steps of the Civic Center. Bluestain gave him a ten-spot and a smile and the cabbie made it disappear. "Twelve-fifty, Mac. Come on." Bluestain threw him another five.

"Jesus H. Christ, Ames, Iowa! Don't people take cabs around here?"

"Not at that rate, they don't."

The undercard was a boring, a dog: a couple of welterweights, a feather, a Dominican bantamweight who beat his man to a pulp in fifty-two seconds, and then the light heavy—an over-the-hill ham andegger named Thurlow Spurr who came out in a t-shirt that said "Sexy & Ferocious." "He looks soft," said Cashdollar as Spurr stripped out of his t-shirt and began to bob and weave from side to side, shooting jabs, bouncing on the balls of his feet.

"Soft? He's a fetus in shoes." Bluestain excused himself, got up from his seat and bolted for the doors. He had some action on his mind and it didn't wear trunks. Its name was Tremonisha Barnes.

He hailed the same cabbie again and got him to take him to the suburbs. He was prepared this time and tipped generously. "Always glad to be of service," said the cabbie, and peeled away in a roar of stinking rubber that left Bluestain at the foot of a sloping, manicured lawn. A lawn that led the way to Tremonisha Barnes—a has-been actress on the far side of forty who through years of trying had succeeded in fucking her way to the middle. He stepped up and rang the bell. She was all he had and love didn't come easy.

As she cracked the door and peered out, then opened it wide and stood with hands on hips, Bluestain couldn't help but be reminded of a more than passing resemblance to Don Ameche. She had begun to raise a moustache.

"I knew you'd show," she said.

"But you didn't."

"I've been waiting." A tip of her tongue peeked out and wet her lips. Her eyes crinkled at the corners in a smile and it gave him that feeling of wild excitement again.

She pushed the door open wider. "Well, you old son of a bitch, you still pushing a dream around?"

"Trish honey, I'll never forget you in Light Of My Life."

That's my dream, baby, and you're always there in my mind, hot, tight, and gorgeous."

"Stain, that was twenty years ago." Her voice cracked and if it had been anyone else he could have sworn he heard a ragged sob catch in her throat. But it was just the East Texas in her voice. Something they couldn't scratch out in thirty years of elocution lessons. "You gonna stand there, or come on in? God, how long's it been, Stain? Where's time flown?"

"You still smell sweet, Trish," said Stain. He moved closer and caught the delicious soapy smell of her. She was fresh from the shower. His eyes skipped around to the clock on the table and her eyes and the framed picture of a shriveled man in denims on the wall—her late husband. The man Bluestain had taken out with a shot to the temple, and the terrible secret he kept locked from her.

"Since you left, Stain, I've just been on the edge of life and crying. Stay awhile, baby. Please."

He pulled her to him and dug his fingers into her arm and saw her eyes go wet with the pain. Then she gave in and was lost, her mouth a hungry little animal again searching for his. He broke and she shuddered. She made her tongue stand and dance like a snake.

"Save it, baby, I'm just here on business."

"What?" She trembled once and collapsed in a heap at his feet.

"Once nasty, never neat."

She was back on her feet in a flash. "You bastard!"

"Save it. You don't know how badly I want it. But there's something I got to tell you and I don't think you're gonna like what I say. You wouldn't appreciate me so much after. You might be ashamed of yourself for giving in. You might want to scrub down with a wire brush and Lysol, get the stench of me off your skin. Yeah, there was a contract out on your husband and I took it. That's right, I took it baby, because I was hard up for dollars, into something over my head and no way out. I took it and I died myself that day. It's been eating at me ever since. Go ahead baby, slap me, rip me with your claws because I need it. I've been dying ever since and I took you with me—stuck out in the middle of Ames, Iowa with a Darvon prescription, too much vodka, and a life insurance payoff that'll just about meet your mortgage. So go ahead, baby, give it to me."

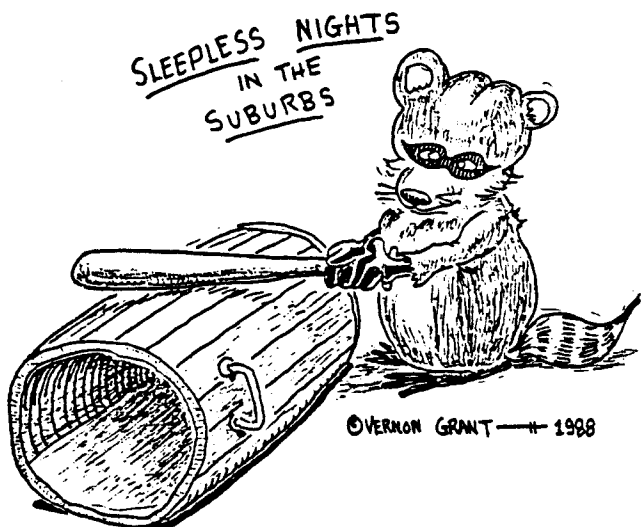
He braced himself for her shot and this time a sob did catch her throat. He looked up and her eyes were turning sixes and sevens. Her hair stood out in a fright wig and a pulse leapt at a blue vein in her throat. She went for the vodka and filled a tumbler, seized it with trembling lips. Her back shook with sobs and Bluestain kept his distance, riding it out.

Eventually she turned and her eyes were two bright pinpoints. Her upper lip trembled as she spoke. "I'm the one that oughta be hit, Stain. I'm garbage. I knew you were the hitter on Eddie and I didn't care. I thought if I could just see you one more time, just one more time get the man I need, the man I want, the man I had to have, then everything would be right. You see, it doesn't matter if you wreck my life, kill my husband, throw me out on the trash heap like a sack of broken garbage, if just one more time I can have that man I need, that man I could kill and die for, then everything would be right again. Stain, I'm crazy about you. God, I'm nuts! Go ahead, rip me!"

Bluestain moved in, took her in his arms and punished her with his lips in a fierce kiss that bridged time—twenty years of bad dreams and alcohol, lonely nights of guilt that rode his back like a monkey and, pausing once to take the vodka tumbler from her hand as he lifted her off her feet and into the bedroom, said: "Don't worry, baby, I'm back...forever."

"Oh, Stain," she said, and melted like hot butter on toast.

"Baby, we were made for each other."



Another Damn Space Opera

From the memoirs of
VIVILAN SUPERNOVITCH: INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR
by James MacDougall

LOG ENTRY #4 - A MINOR PLOT COMPLICATION

Shortly after we discovered our tail we picked up his transponder signal. Whoever was following us was either just as stupid as everyone else who had hassled us since I got into this mess, or they didn't care if we knew who they were. I had Sprite try to ID the signal.

"I've got it, Captain," said Sprite. "The intruder is the—oh, my." Sprite giggled nervously.

I hate giggling, particularly nervous giggling. "Someone we know, Sprite?" My tone of voice indicated that I had better get an answer NOW, which was ironic, because I was quite sure this was something I didn't want to know.

Sprite took a deep breath. "It's the God's Gift."

"NO!" I screamed. "No, no, no, no, no, no! Not him! Anyone else but him!"

The God's Gift, captained by my old acquaintance Gogo St. George.

I have a section of my control console, padded and reinforced, for occasions such as this. It prevents me from damaging myself or the ship. I can even chew on it if I want to.

For several minutes I took full advantage of it.

"I take it this is not a friend of Captain Supernovitch's," said Hotwater Jones. She was the only one who did not keep a respectful silence while I threw my tantrum.

"No," I answered. "Just someone I keep forgetting to kill."

Sprite nervously cleared her throat (a distinct improvement on the giggling). "Signal coming in, Vivilan." She had to clear her throat again before continuing. "He wants to talk to you."

I got a firm grip on my console; actually, it was more like a stranglehold. "Brick, if it looks as if I'm about to put my fist through the view screen, grab my arm, okay?"

"I'll try, Skipper," said Brick, uncertainly. I'd seen her casually dismantle tanks. If she was uncertain about stopping me that indicated that I really should try to control my temper.

I took a deep breath. "Put him through, Sprite."

And there before me was the angelic face of the man I hate most. His shit-eating grin was a more tempting target than any set of concentric circles. Behind me Brick shifted her weight, ready to move quickly. I just gripped my console a little tighter.

"Vivilan, darling, so wonderful to see you again! It's been much too long!" Gogo started right off trying to make me ill.

"I hate you, St. George," I greeted him. "What do you want? You aren't going to get it, but tell me anyway."

Gogo pouted, a gesture even more infuriating than his grin.

"How can you treat me like that, sweetheart, knowing how I cherish you? Can it be that we always hurt the ones we love?"

"Shitfire, St. George! 'Slow to get the message' doesn't come close to describing you!" Damn it, I thought, I'm screaming again. "I hate you! I hate you a lot! I have not been subtle about this, I have made my feelings very clear! I hate you!"

"Come now, Vivilan," said St. George. He was grinning again, and I decided I'd changed my mind, I liked the pout better. "I'm the only one who can make you lose your cool. That must mean something."

"Yes, it means I hate you!" Why me, I thought. St. George can have his choice of bimbos; why does he pick on me? I look like a bulldog; that should make me exempt from this kind of shit.

"Look, Gogo, every time we've met I've begun shooting at you before the first five minutes have passed. Knowing this, if I were you I would come swiftly to the point and then run away."

Gogo laughed, as if I were just kidding around. Actually, the statement was quite true; every time I'd seen Gogo I'd eventually wound up shooting at him. He'd somehow managed to forget this.

Gogo looked at me quizzically. "Vivilan, dear, are those teeth marks on your control console?"

"Never mind the control console! What do you want, damn it?"

Gogo leered at me. "I heard you were headed for the Children of Apollo's pleasure planet. I'd been meaning to visit the place myself and I couldn't think of anyone I'd rather be there with than you."

"AAAAARRRRGH!" It took me a moment to formulate a more articulated response than that. "This is business, not pleasure, St. George. My business, not yours. You can let go of my arm now, Brick."

At this point the impossible happened. Gogo's grin became broader. "Your business has experienced a few setbacks lately, darling. I know you're working with a skeleton crew. Another ship and an extra set of hands would be a big help to you."

"How did you know that?" I was really getting to hate the security problem on this job.

"I got an anonymous tip," said Gogo. "I guess I have friends everywhere."

"I have to think about this, Gogo," I said. "Just a moment, please." The screen went blank.

Hector D'Affronte gently set a hand on my shoulder. "Captain," he said, "if this man offends you perhaps I should challenge him. It would be my pleasure to be your champion."

I had to fight the urge to giggle, and I hope I didn't blush.

THE LEWISES by Don Wagberg

Every summer, around Fourth Of July time, they come in swarms from the southern cities and suburbs, clogging up the main roads, piling into the parks, flowing onto the golf courses and jamming up the beaches. Despite their awesome dimensions, they float on concrete like luxury liners, dipping smoothly, nonchalantly into and out of potholes, squashing errant animals into welcome mats, obliterating whole buildings with their shadows in passing. That's because they're like bungalows on wheels, big fat white-walled wheels like sofas and king-sized shock absorbers, maneuvering down your street like it's the most normal thing in the world. They're controlled by people the size of dots sitting way up high and far away behind a steering wheel. And sometimes, even, as one of these monster mobiles goes purring by your humble home and you peek above the windowsill in time, you'll be privileged to learn the identities of its inhabitants, because it'll say "THE LEWISES" right above the back window, in giant sweeping strokes.

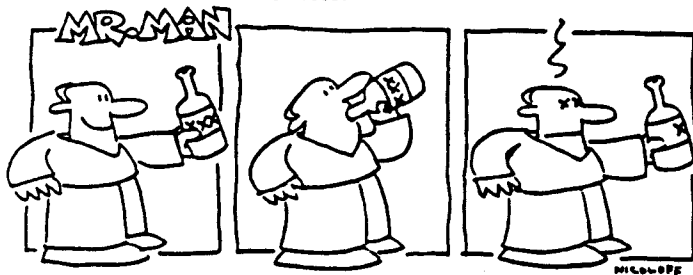
They come in swarms, escaping from the south, houses on wheels. And almost nine times out of ten, as if they weren't already huge enough to mow your high school clean into the ground, they're pulling things, big things—sailboats, speedboats, motorcycles and mini-houses for added color and pageantry. Pulling things, they're all pulling things, even real old people sitting behind the wheels of the rolling bungalow's relative—the mile-long car, their mouths hanging open like they're surprised, like they can't believe they're in Smokey River, pulling a nameless something the size of Oregon at ten to fifteen miles per hour below the speed limit. This last fact you know because you've heard your dad mention it in various configurations through his teeth as he's trying to pass one on the road.

The moms and dads in the sixteen-cylinder spas don't exactly resemble your mom and dad. They wear light blue and yellow clothes and navy blue low-cut tennis shoes with blinding white sidewalls. And the kids, especially, don't seem like kids with whom you have a terrible lot in common. They seem like aliens. You even spotted one, pale and kind of plump with braces, imitating a negro doing a rap dance.

At night, the parks are packed with these vehicular castles, which sit there blankly, hooked into poles by a grand network of electrical cords, charging up for tomorrow's adventure. They dwarf your puny pup tent, their generators going "rumble, rumble." If you wait long enough, an actual Lewis will briefly emerge, holding a cocktail, then retreat back into the bungalow to the muffled tones of "The Tonight Show" and intermittent eruptions of studio laughter. In the day, many Lewises can be seen reclining in lawn chairs with the Tiger game going at record decibels, or roasting hot dogs over natural coal in grills on wheels. And the hot dogs dangle on the tips of steel-pointed pokers. All through the day, the boats float smartly in and smartly out to the middle of Lake Pearl—thousands, bobbing around.

Yes, this is one time of year when Smokey River becomes the Twilight Zone, when there are no more places to park, when it takes two green lights to make a left, when you have to stand in line for an ice cream cone, when you better get to the beach by eleven a.m. If you want a spot. Take off the wheels, and you've practically got another municipality.

Yes, every summer around Fourth Of July time, Smokey River is alive with the sound of Lewises.



Was looking like a bulldog becoming fashionable? "Thanks, Hector, but I have a better idea. Brick, have you acquired a target yet?"

"Locked on," said Brick. My crew understands me much better than Gogo does. "You want his drives disabled?"

"If you miss and accidentally kill him I promise to forgive you," I said, as I called Gogo back. "Okay, St. George, just one last question. Do you know what this job's all about?"

"Why, Vivilan, everybody knows you're out to rescue Dorian Hotz's darling of a daughter. Now, what do you say to a partnership, eh, darling?"

"Here's my answer, Gogo," I said. Brick took this as her cue to open fire.

I left the channel open long enough to see the look on Gogo's face. After that I ordered Sprite not to acknowledge any of his calls. Then I turned to confront Hotwater Jones.

"Gogo St. George knows about this rescue mission. The thugs back on Gehenna know about this rescue mission. Everybody knows about this rescue mission. Funny thing, you forgot to tell us." My voice would have made liquid nitrogen seem tepid.

Jones blanched. I enjoyed that, I'd finally got one on her.

"Everything will be explained as soon as we're there..." she began.

"Everything will be explained now," I said.

"The point's moot," said Mef. "We're there now. Estimating 12 minutes to orbit with Caligula."

Caligula. The Children of Apollo's pleasure planet.

To be continued

The Poet's Diet Book

by Tamarina Dwyer

CHAPTER 5 - JANET'S NEW LIFE

Janet, the poet, and Fred, her lover, had had a steady relationship for about a year. Janet's job as a waitress, her fanaticism about poetry, the lovers' differences and unidentified confusions of some sort led to the end of the affair. In this chapter, Janet gets a new job, a new apartment and begins to seek solace in more varied activities.

Janet stood in front of a gum machine in a bank on Genesee Street and fumbled through the bottom of her denim bag for pennies. She had just applied for a job and she had been advised to call back in a couple of weeks, but in the meanwhile, Janet thought she might enjoy the sudden rise in temperature. Still, she inertly stared at the strips of sunlight from the walls of the windows. Her face was pale, eyes bloodshot, and hair frizzled. The tired and hungry poet dropped the bag with trembling fingers and pushed the metal lock of the gum machine. "It's jammed," she thought, bending down to get her bag. "No, I didn't put money in," Janet corrected herself and turned to see if anyone was looking. She was frightened by the gaze of a man who looked like Chuck and stuffed the bag under her arm. She forgot the gum and hurried out the wide bank entrance and down the marble steps. The poet walked a block and slowed down her pace considerably when she reached Steuben Park.

Janet sat on a bench and counted the materials in her denim bag—three colored felt-tip pens, a folded copy of "The Bluebell," a broken comb, and a coin purse of stuffed bills and pennies. She carefully replaced the items in her bag and put it on the grass to use as a pillow. The air was damp and chilly, the grass was still wet with the morning's dew, but the poet lay down anyway and closed her eyes. Janet actually slept for awhile and ended up at a health food store where she purchased a bag of sunflower seeds, a jar of peanut butter, and a box of unsalted crackers. Janet stuffed the items in her denim bag, which she threw over her shoulder, and then she continued an undirected walk that returned to Steuben Street, where she rented a room overlooking the park.

Janet's new room was only fifteen dollars a week and it was spacious and airy. There were two windows that looked down on the street from the third floor of the old brick apartment building and they provided more than enough light. Janet painted the walls of the room in strips of yellow, orange, and light green. When the days grew warmer, she picked wild flowers which she found along the street and put them in plastic glasses.

The poet got the job as teller at the Utica Savings Bank and she was thankful for the change back to day hours and weekends off. No more silverware to dry and no more eggs to fry and the bank job became a total replacement for Janet's discriminating sense of a meal and its theoretical or poetic expression.

She had been working at the bank for six weeks, but new poetry forms weren't satisfying her. So she decided to put her effort elsewhere. She covered the floor with cheap printed silk-like material and bought a large, plump quilted pillow. The last tenants had left behind a mattress, a wooden chair, and a broom without a handle, but Janet kept adding personal touches to the room, artificial, feathery weeds and more pillows.

The question of new poetry form led to various writing schedules. Janet wrote for an hour before work and in the evenings, Janet wrote on her lunch break and on weekends and, finally, Janet wrote only on Sundays. She also got tired of regular meals and refused to eat scrambled eggs in the morning or egg salad sandwiches for lunch. Instead, Janet painted her eggs with the felt-tip pens every Friday night after work. A flower vase and a dancing doll were her favorite subjects, but the evening ritual of painting eggs was always interrupted by hunger. Sometimes Janet let the dancing doll fade in the boiling water. Other times she cracked the shell with artistic malice, but the poet also wished that she could eat the pieces of shell and become a dancing doll herself. However, poetry form changed and Janet sparkled because her poems were even more colorful.

Strips of humor, like the gaily-painted walls, had been keeping her writing for several hours. The poetry lines were vivid, but they were too lighthearted and Janet laughed at her own development. Her illusory production was suspended one evening by a knock at her door.

"Here. I thought this would inspire you." Ken, standing in the doorway, handed Janet a lilac and asked her if he could come in. "Lilacs are everybody's backyard downfall," he added as he walked into the room. Ken immediately tried to ignore the spiritual gloom. The patched glass of the window drew his attention away from Janet's stringy hair and he sighed a bit as he tried to suppress doubts about his reasons for visiting. Janet laid the flower across the top of her coffee cup.

"Ken, do you want some coffee?" she asked, holding that cup out in front of her. With mouth hanging open, eyebrows raised, eyes too big, and cheeks too drawn, Janet resembled an aged gypsy and Ken hesitated before taking the cup from her hand. He removed the lilac and sipped the coffee, but it was cold and he soon set it on the floor next to the box.

"Janet, ah, your bra, do you always answer the door wearing a bra?" Ken asked.

24 "No," she replied naively, "I usually don't answer it," she

continued, "but I'll put on a shirt to cover me up even if the trees only wear leaves." She went to a cardboard box, took a shirt from it, and buttoned it so that the buttons were in the back.

"You're going to wear it like that?" Ken warily asked. Janet's hands dropped and her gaily-painted lips changed suddenly. The corners moved inward and, slightly pursed, the lips seemed strangely patient as she unbuttoned the shirt and fixed it properly. Ken watched her unwillingly, but he was nervous and a little confused.

"I think we better get out of here," suggested Ken, eyes averted and shaking his head. "We'll go get something to eat or drink," he said, relieved that he was able to put the poet's care-free manner into perspective.

Janet and Ken got into his car and rode to the Critic's Lounge. After a couple of drinks, they both strode up to the dance floor. Ken was already too weak to conceal his attraction to the poet and she began dancing in slow motion. Ken was embarrassed at first, but he checked his self-consciousness and became entranced by her movements. Some others were laughing, but he ignored their inappropriate response. Ken was already drunk and his more philosophical nature came out when they sat down again.

"Slow motion is what you use, huh?" he asked.

"Not to get up," she replied in a light, high voice.

"Slavery to nature isn't always slow, right?" he asked.

"No, slavery is speed," Janet corrected him.

"I think I recognize myself in poem," Ken admitted. "Tell me more about speed slavery," he went on. "I suppose the changing of the leaves was the beginning of that philosophy."

"The spots on brown leaves are warnings to not put salt and pepper on cube steak. When personified, the leaves speak and they—"

"Why don't you just kiss the trees?" Ken asked, laughing.

"The shades of color reveal the quality of leaf and steak. Darker leaves are wiser because they don't draw as much attention to themselves and so they see more. The quality is so natural—just eyes are needed. A cube steak's eyes—"

"Wait a minute," laughed Ken again.

"No, the eyes of an animal are all through its body. All parts of the animal see and even when he is slaughtered, he keeps the eyes of the leaves inside him."

"You mean like his soul?" Ken asked, his eyes questioning, his head tilting, attempting to understand Janet's theory.

"No, the leaves are always alive!" exclaimed the poet with side, bright eyes. "And their shades of color are twisted inside the animals so that the animals see more."

"You have a creative mind, but you gotta have logic in your philosophy," Ken explained and shook his head.

"Well, then, I'll tell you about the egg and the snowball," Janet went on.

"All right," he agreed, smiling.

"A snowball is worth more than an egg. A snowball is a weapon because it won't melt unless it's inside, but an egg liquid becomes a solid inside," the poet rapidly theorized.

"What about your logic, Janet?" Ken asked, getting more than confused and annoyed with the unchanneled discussion. "I can't even imagine how you rhyme things," he sarcastically commented.

"Phlox and flocks," Janet sharply retorted.

"Let's go," Ken said as the poet downed one more drink. "We're both drunk. I have to work tomorrow and I've gotta get home. Your theories are a little bit too undeveloped anyway," he added as they both got up from the booth seats.

At her apartment, the poet opened the door and stepped aside to let Ken in. He was still put out by Janet's crazy theories and decided to push her a little. She turned on the light, which was a naked bulb in the ceiling. Ken approached her and warpped his arm around her. He played with her hair a bit, laid her down on the bed, and started kissing her. "Your philosophy is full of shit," he whispered.

In the morning, Janet fixed coffee and Ken moaned about not getting home the night before.

"We're moving in a couple of months also, you know," he told Janet, his head resting in his hand, "lots of things to do."

Janet turned toward him. "Your wife too?" she asked timidly.

"Of course," Ken retorted.

"Your work?" queried Janet.

"Yes, Janet!" Ken shouted to her across the room. "And get that coffee over here 'cause I've gotta get back."

Ken left shortly and Janet's drama of interpretation expanded as she made plans to visit the James Ensor exhibit at the town museum.

The paintings were in a large gallery upstairs and Janet could easily view the artist's work since there were few observers in the afternoon.

His self-portrait intrigued her the most. Ensor's face had been painted with a realism technique and he was wearing a plumed hat which was also done in the same manner. Surrounding Ensor's portrait were numerous, surrealist expressions of sorrow, grief and pain. The poet wondered if Ensor had been trying to see too much and if his concentration had resulted in the surrealist expressions or if he had merely used exaggeration of facial expressions and she looked at Ensor's plumed hat again.

"They're just masked marauders," she determined.

A self-enhancement theory developed spontaneously. "If he was able to paint the surrealist expressions which seem to be

(continued next page)

masks," Janet reflected, "he must have had to perceive or experience the qualities that lead to such expression. But, they are expressed quantitatively and they appear less alive. He is calm and expressionless, but his head is covered. He wears a hat; he enhances himself. I'll do the same."

The poet left the museum and went back to her room. Once there, Janet organized all the papers which she sorted out weekly and filed for reference in folders and long manila envelopes. She put all the papers in a cardboard box, except for the eight-syllable meter, Janet's favorite, and covered them with a plaid cloth. Then the poet sat down on the mattress.

After two months at this book, Janet thought, staring at the top page of a five-page manuscript of mostly eight-syllable meters—"After two months." She closed her eyes, pressed the edges of the papers between her fingers, and brought them up to her chest. "I've been stopped," the poet concluded. "Making notes for poems isn't supportive enough. I think I'd like another hobby."

Concluded next issue

SCENIC HELL BECOMES VACATION HOT SPOT by Dale A. White

PANDEMONIUM, Hell (Universal News Service)—The underground city that poet John Milton compared with a snake pit more than 300 years ago is now the hottest vacation spot this side of the Riviera.

As a result of new diplomatic relations between Heaven and the Nether Regions, the capital of Hell has opened its doors, for the first time, to Celestial tourists. And visitors here say their first impression of the Kingdom they once regarded as "the Evil Empire" are mostly positive.

"Mind you, I wouldn't want to live here," Ruth Priest, a housewife from New Jerusalem, said. "But from what I've seen, it looks as if the underworld is trying to improve the quality of afterlife for its citizens. It's still an oppressive society. I doubt its ideology will completely change. But I think it's sincere in its commitment to be more progressive."

Travel within Hell is restricted. Visitors must adhere to the schedule of package tours. "They should expect many inconveniences," Uriel Rhodes, director of Zion Escorts Inc., said. "Remember that you're going to Hell. It's not a jolly holiday down there. If you consider this to be an educational trip, you have the right attitude. Don't go thinking you'll find another paradise."

After passing through the canine-patrolled Gates of Hell, tour groups must stop at the border town of Erebus. Customs officials thoroughly check luggage for contraband such as Bibles, rosaries and crucifixes. Smugglers may be detained for indefinite periods.

Having passed through the checkpoint, tour groups are allowed to see many of the infamous sites that, heretofore, they have only read about: the Lake of Fire District, a source of inspiration and excellent reading light for ancient Hades' anti-pastoral poets; the Grand Abyss, a bottomless pit that makes a scenic backdrop for amateur photographers; the River Styx, a mighty waterway that takes a serpentine course through the infernal lowlands; the crematoriums, brimstone factories and sulphur mines in the industrial provinces; rolling countrysides of hot springs and molten lava; Covenstead, a quaint retirement community for many of the Devil's disciples; and Tartarus, the brass palace that serves as the seat of government.

Travelers stay overnight in Pandemonium, the clamorous city with literally billions of damned souls. "The accommodations aren't first rate," Uriel Rhodes warned. "The hotels don't have cold water. The furnaces are always on full blast, despite the insufferably humid climate. And the help is, to say the least, rude."

In Pandemonium, however, visitors can most easily experience Hellish culture. Hoofed, unclean animals roam the streets. Surly natives are either dressed in black or not dressed at all. Cheating, cursing and copulating are considered acceptable behaviors in public. In the marketplace, skilled artisans sell pentagrams, talismans, graven images and other handcrafted souvenirs. Nightlife includes fiddle contests, pan flute concerts and magic shows. Bawdy festivals occur every esbat (full moon), during which tourists may participate in parades, pagan feasts and masquerade balls.

Overall, Hell isn't as dismal as they presumed, visitors say.

"I expected pitchforks, whips and monsters everywhere," a schoolteacher from Elysian Fields said. "I haven't seen any of that. Basically, it's sort of a cross between Philadelphia and Rio de Janeiro."

"As a tourist, you don't see the real Hell," said Abe Raphael, a diplomat stationed in the neutral state of Purgatory. "You see what they want you to see. They'd like visitors to think it's one big drunken orgy down there. Everybody parties all the time. What they don't show you are the torture chambers where scores of human rights violations are committed every day..."

"I'm all for this goodwill exchange that's come about. Yet we can't afford to be naive. Hell is still a Satanic state. It's letting far more of us in that it is letting its people out. We can't forget that Lucifer remains in charge there. He still has great philosophical differences with us. And, though his rhetoric may have softened, he still regards his Kingdom to be at war with Heaven and Earth."

Throughout this subterranean land, people are constantly reminded of the presence of its demagogic founder. Lucifer's likeness observes them from every banner, pamphlet and coin. Children are taught the government's slanted versions of "Genesis," "Faust" and Dante's "Divine Comedy." Even when someone sneezes, bystand-



ers fear they may inadvertently say something that could get them arrested as subversives.

Not all experts share Raphael's cynical view, however.

Minister of Defense Gabriel Horne, who assisted in the negotiations, said he believes Lucifer is becoming more flexible. "I knew him before his fall from grace. I've seen his sensitive side. He, in fact, was the one who approached us about taking steps toward a peaceful coexistence. He's not about to surrender his throne. But he realizes he's losing the propaganda war. His cult following is diminishing rapidly. And he doesn't have the resources to win by conventional means. If he expects to retain his limited share of influence, he must make concessions."

According to anonymous sources, the Mephistophelian bureaucracy has agreed to the following: Several thousand souls who have applied to emigrate on religious grounds will be gradually released to guardian angels. Perdition, which has been traditionally considered a mode of punishment, will include several rehabilitation and counseling programs. And laborers in the Devil's workshops will be allowed to unionize.

"Heaven may not formally admit it but it has a vital interest in cutting a deal," Jacob Prophet, Pandemonium bureau chief for Eternity Magazine, said. "It wants to keep the fires burning. It needs Hell to take the heat..."

"We've heard that, in exchange for meeting Heaven's demands, Hell has received assurances that it can keep certain individuals against their will—forevermore. We're not certain but we believe those who've been written off include Hitler, Stalin, Mengele and, as a bonus, Roy Cohn."

"Really, if you think about it, it's not a bad arrangement."

GOD FOR PREZ

by Dana A. Snow

None of the candidates seemed any good to me

But good news: I hear that, in four years, GOD

may run for President!...
With SATAN as his runnint-mate
to balance the ticket...
The Devil says he's excited to be
"a heartbeat away from the Presidency,"
but he's not holding his breath...
God has already upset the military!
He says He'll cut down the size of our
nuclear stockpile.

We can only have enough bombs
to destroy the Earth three times...
The rich were slightly encouraged by
God's plan to end inheritance tax,
But some theologians feel this means
The meek will soon inherit the earth...
Also, God has a plan where the homeless
will all move in with their Congressmen.
Unless Congress comes up with a better
solution...

As for AIDS,
God has promised that, if elected,
He'll stop it...
Some people feel this campaign
will violate the traditional separation
of Church and State,
But God has promised to
put all religions into a blind trust...

GET A COLLEGE EDUCATION —
RIP OFF THOSE WHO LACK ONE.
Better yet — work one year and go to college the next
WHILE COLLECTING FULL PAY.
This is the 20th century and we should scrap
OUT-DATED WAYS OF DOING THINGS.
Send S.A.S.E. to:
BRAINEAUNOMICS
Box 2243 — YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO, 44504

THE NUCLEAR HALL OF FAME

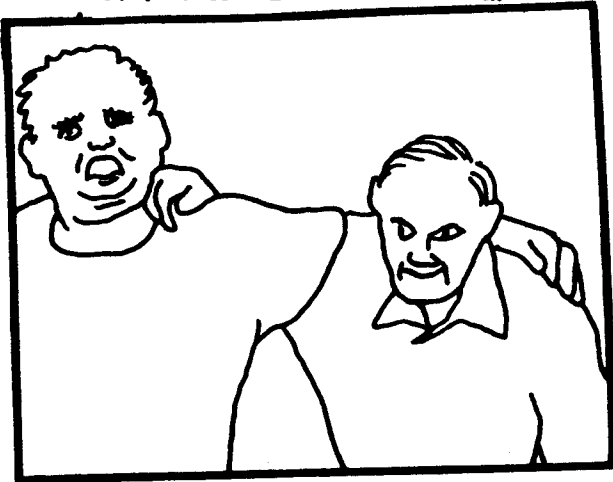
(PART 2)

by Daza

A stack of PIG PAPERS dislodged by my dislocated body followed me from the bookcase to the floor, from hypnotic sleep to hard reality. All in a moment, passing the art books on the first shelf whose covers I had never parted, the second shelf with its oversized books exposing my ribs, and the final shelf stacked with magazines collecting dust. Once perched upon the top, my case had fallen; sleep ended, dream ended. Shit. No video could have been

OVERHEARD

at America's Lunch Counters



"You can't have money and spend it too."

ALEXANDER THE GREAT LIVING BETTER THROUGH CHEMISTRY

by Roger Coleman

The role of the chemist was important in the early history of civilization. Alexander the Great couldn't have won many of his battles without them. Army apothecaries invented a dye that changed color after a fixed time interval. Each commander had a piece of cloth around his wrist containing the pigment. In this manner several armies could attack simultaneously with a silent coordination; much superior to the usual horns, drums and smoke signals.

These colored rags, one might think, were the origins of the wrist watch, but no—they came down to us in modern times as Alexander's rag time-band.

that great.

Here on the floor, the nylon-carpeted floor, the dramatic dream of Martin and the E-Chords seemed to end. From this perspective, so too ended the alarm clock upon meeting a flying art book, unequally and violently. The concert cut short, the alarm silenced, I was wide awake.

I rolled over on well-read ribs to my knees and started to rise. A dull thump cojoined the sharp meeting of my skull to my bookcase, and I returned to examine the nylon carpeting up close. "Get Lost And Die. Again." Take it now but have it back before sunset or you're in serious trouble...

The long wavy-haired blue-eyed girl pushed a video into my face. "Now get out. We want to close up, you television slave. It's on your bill and I've got your credit card number so don't get any ideas about leaving town or my closet gets filled with fur."

Trying not to think about it too much, I ripped home and mashed the video into my machine. There they were, the E-Chords, still crashing and thrashing around a blackened stage. Marvelous Marv was (still) wrestling with death, at least for a singer—a multi-headed creature pulling the microphone away from him, most of its heads now battered unrecognizably, being repeatedly slammed by the whirling guitar of Gary PIG himself. Background vocals harmonized amidst the smoke, the lights, the screaming teens. In the shadows, other musicians moved in and out of view, none venturing forward, leaving the dynamic duo to perform or die on center stage, alone.

A long gangly neck entwined itself up Gary's strumming arm, silencing his guitar. Another pulled at his ankle, suction cups puckering on his leg. Martin had lost the microphone, voice tearing from his throat the frustration of an angel in hell. The bass player came forward, but he too was enveloped in the serpentine embrace, and all three were slowly dragged to the edge of the stage. The floor between the stage and the first row of fans cracked, and fire-red light filtered up in the smoky room. But still, the drummer thundered on.

Looking around, I was terrified and excited, finding myself in the middle of the floor in front of the stage surrounded by hypnotic hyperactive screaming teens. There was no time to think about it—the floor shaking, flames now tonguing up into the room, the beast dragging most of the band to the very edge of hell's gaping maw!

No one seemed to notice the scene playing itself out; to this crowd it was all part of the ritual, the show, and they loved it. But these guys were my pals, and this pudgy-bodied manyheaded sap-suctioned show-stealing creep was making off with all that's good in rock and roll.

Jumping up on a chair, I planted a foot on someone's shoulder and clambered forward, leapfrogging across the widening abyss onto the stage. Seizing an idle guitar and running across the stage, I wound it into the kidneys of the beast. The guitar was wired live and groaned as it hit. The beast paused on its path to perdition and Gary wrenched his guitar free and, strumming once again, broke away, feet flying. Martin's preponderant weight had been too much to carry, finding himself a-drag by three slimy tendrils. The beast raked an appendage across Martin's stubbly neck, and pitching a screech recoiled, withdrawing half a slimy step. From his pocket Martin drew a harmonica. He blew into it a familiar melody, which Gary picked up.

There was a rising feeling in the stands, and a steady rhythm overpowered all sense of fear. I pulled the guitar away from the beast, struggling with suckers stuck on my leg, pulling, and joined the band. A tentacle pulled at my arm, and bending the heck on the guitar sounds only heard in heaven howled out to the packed house. Puckering his flatulent lips, Martin screamed out the words to the song "My Generation," and mysteriously the creature gurgled fluid, shrivelled, pulled away, and fell off the front of the stage. Flames rose around, embracing the beast. It seemed renewed with vigor and a tentacle reached out for Martin's leg. Gary swung in time with the beat to stage left and, with one motion, released a tight chord stretching up overhead in the dark smoky hall. Something overhead, something big, moved in the shadowy room, moved down. With increasing speed a large round shape dropped into the light. It was pink; it was smiling. It was a pig. It was an exploding pig.

Beneath the pink rubble extinguished flame tasteless beast lay silent. Not so the room itself. The fans, whipped to a frenzy, thought it was all a show, and indeed it was.

"...don't you all f-f-fade away..." Martin growled. Looking down at my feet only inches away I saw one beautiful woman after another, excited, glowing, not listening at all but with adoration on every face. Wow; this was amazing!

"Talkin' about, talkin' about, hey, talkin'..."

"What're you talkin' about? Hey, wake up, are you okay?" A slap on the chops and an arm under my shoulders.

"What are you talking about?" The voice was out of place, and the floor of my home didn't belong here. "You sleeping on the floor again?" Ah, there it is, none of it happened. Good thing; I'd never get the video back in time.

"Yeah, I'm okay, a little stiff..."

"You're a big stiff." Her voice was real enough, the floor was hard enough.

Up in a puff of smoke, just a bump on my head.

"Why are all these books on the floor? You been reading again? What's this, 'THE PIG PAPER'?"

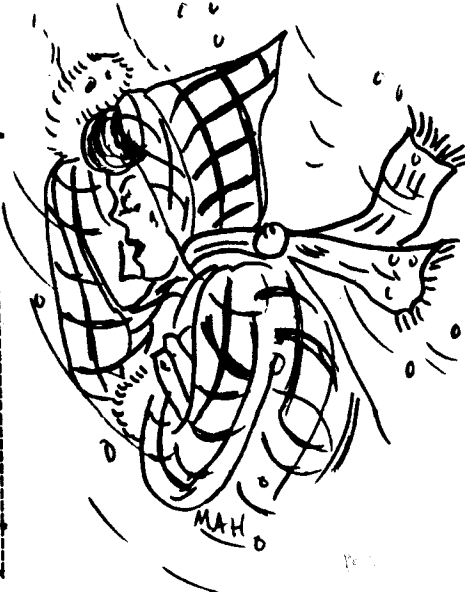
"Some things can't be explained, just experienced."

**They're
Out To Get
YOU!!**

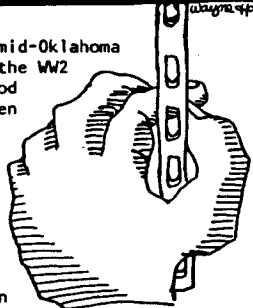
Global conspiracy to keep those who are "different" silent.
WEIRD MEN ARISE!!

**The Future
Revealed**
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Find out who "They" are and how to overcome them for big \$\$\$.

Intense pamphlet \$1.
The Church of the SubGenius®
P.O. Box 148386,
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So what, finally, can it be, you think, with me and the three-

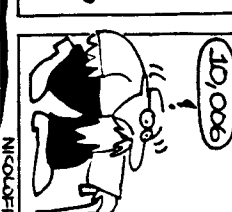


Mail order firms caught sending the book into New York would be subject to federal charges under a new interpretation of the Controlled Substances Act of 1967. YU News Service

W30 W30

EEEEEEEEECEEEEEE

J.P.N

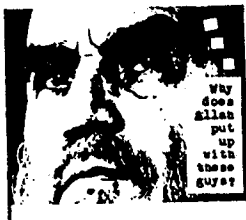


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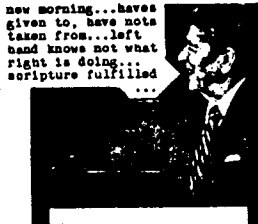
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THE AYATOLLAH SAYS: Where is America going?

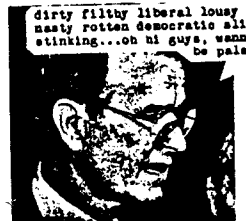
The adventures of the Ayatollah, chosen and loved by 50 million loonies (190 million less than we have)....



The Ayatollah looks at American politics



The Great Satan



The No-bus Satan



The Mickey Mouse Satan

When is America going to look in the mirror and ask itself, "Am I really this insane?" I'm afraid of what the next frame of this comic strip will look like. -E. Gentain

SAID BUT INCOMPLETELY

by Mary Ann Henn

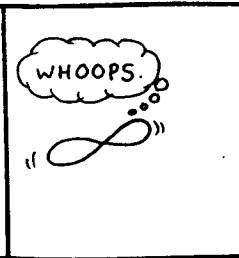
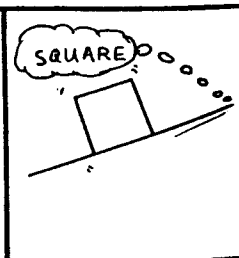
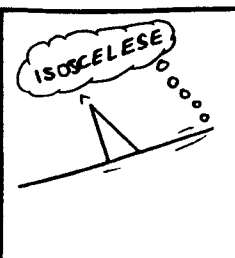
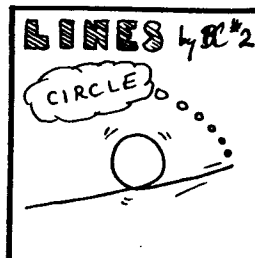
Soon
when your sign
and mine
rise together in the heavens
you will go
leaving human day behind
and I will go on plodding.
And
if you should cast a shadow
(I cannot think you won't)
I must be bold
to walk in it not fretting
nor regretting
but grateful for another time.



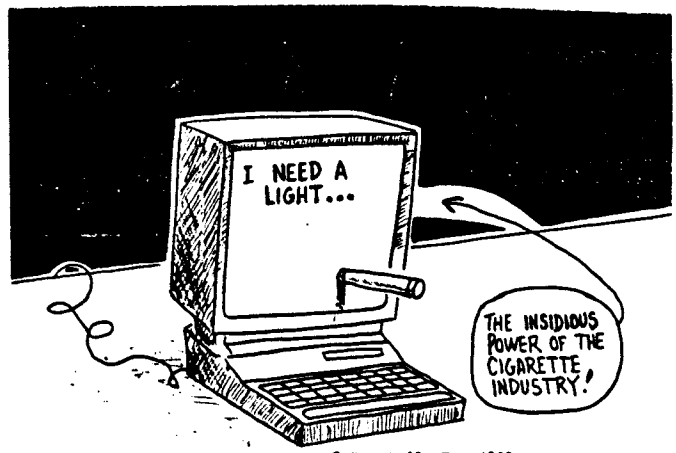
ALSO
NEXT
ISSUE:
MORE
BALANCED
LAYOUT
(HA!)



The Church of the SubGenius is an empire of "unpredictables" on a rampage of strangeness.



CHICANO ATHEISTS



© VERNON GRANT - 1989

Sayz-U!(Letters)

Dear Elaine,

It is with regret and sadness that I must announce that Deborah will have to resign her staffer status at INSIDE JOKE.

She has a very serious and dangerous cardiovascular condition that will require aggressive and consistent medical treatment and attention. She is on medication and is monitored for this condition which causes extreme arrhythmias-tachycardia, atrial fibrillation and respiratory distress. She must, for now and we don't know for how long, maintain a very limited lifestyle. Even if she were able to write, her mood would probably prevent her from writing humorous things, because she is very depressed, biochemically and psychically. She is still struggling with her MS problems, and now this cardiac dysfunction has surfaced and will curtail any unnecessary activities. Right now, her health is in a very precarious state and the doctors insist on total rest. There is some suggestion that the heart muscle is damaged, and can possibly be repaired if she follows medical advice; however, it will take a long time and there are so many treatments to be tried and considered that it is dubious she will be up to doing anything but the basics for probably a year or so. Maybe longer. This being the case, she feels it is wisest to resign from IJ entirely, as she would hate to make a promise or commitment that she couldn't keep. She has enjoyed her years with IJ and the camaraderie of the other staffers and wishes everyone, especially you and Anni, the very best. She wishes she had the health and stamina to continue living as she did before, and so do I, but it is just impossible.

I am, of course, totally devoted to taking care of her and making sure she follows the medical regimen she must adhere to, and she has many friends who feel the same way and help out greatly. I know you will keep good thoughts for her and her future and pray that her health will improve. I will certainly keep you apprised of any news and developments.

I hope everything is good with you and Steve, and all our other friends at IJ.

All the best,

TOM GEDWILLO
3724 Baldwin Avenue
Lincoln, NE 68504

(I personally shall miss the contributions of Deborah Benedict more than I can express in words, and pray she grows stronger as time goes on; our love is certainly with her.)

E E E E E E E Elaine;

Well, at this point I'd say that I'm licked. Early this fall I was a house afire, now I can't seem to get the frost off my brains ... I don't know what's happening with me. I've started an even dozen pieces but can't find the spark necessary to finish any of them. It's been this way since early November. I feel like I am going crazy!

Received IJ #64 today (12-8) and there was much to like. Anni's piece on doctors, Gary Pig's conspiratorial death scenario, Nick Dana's piece, Larry Stolte's stuff (really funny and hilarious in its accuracy). I agree with Dorian Tenore about "Without A Clue," somehow felt a responsive chord in Mark Rose's piece, and I LOVED the cover. Cracked me up to the nth degree.

I counted words in my piece and think that I can bring the vast majority of them easily within the 1500-1900 word range...

Roy Orbison's death has thrown me for a loop. Weird, he was the only one of those surviving early rockers who wasn't a druggie, boozier, wencher, or asshole, and he's dead. Gonna miss him.

Remember the movie "Punchline" where Tom Hanks' character sex that he's about to "go under"? That's how I feel when I'm all jumbled up like this.

"...Or Not TV"—well, another fine episode of that venerable column. I am still amazed that you can actually watch this much video wasteland without being tempted to blow the set up with a tasty stick of Acme TNT. I agree with most of your assessments with the following exceptions: MURPHY BROWN is not only a great show, but Candice Bergen is great in it. I haven't felt this way about a show or its star since the ol' Mary Tyler Moore show. I recognise (not be her work on this show, but in films) that Candice is a rather wooden actress, but something tells me that acting is NOT what makes successful TV performances, it's impact in a hot medium. I love this show, and I suspect that I love Candice (it's okay, I have my wife's permission). Again, not since MTM... (We really have little disagreement here—I too love the show, it reminds me a helluva lot of the old MTM with its level of quality writing—but even though I admire Bergen the person and think she has a wonderful sense of humor, nobody's ever going to convince me she's a good actress; and even though I think the show's gonna be a monster hit, I still think her non-acting detracts just a bit from the part of what has to be one of the best characters to come along since Buffalo Bill/Slap Maxwell. I'm sorry, I don't think Bergen does a good Dabney Coleman, and I would rather have seen someone with more acting talent in the role. I have also noticed, in reading other people's reviews of this show, that most assessments seem to depend on whether or not people like Bergen, so this must make us the exception, since we don't think she can act but we enjoy the show anyway.) I like DEAR JOHN, BABY BOOM, and can tolerate the puffy BEYOND TOMORROW. But EMPTY NEST does not make me laugh, and there's no excuse for junk as awful as FREDDY'S

NIGHTMARES. (New show: KEN'S NIGHTMARES—Each week BILL COSBY and A DIFFERENT WORLD are shown in place of other scheduled programs until these two boring programs dominate the airwaves entirely. AAAUUUGGGHHH!!!!)

Have you seen "The Naked Gun"? Is it my imagination, or has Leslie Nielsen's nose grown about a foot each way? Damn funny movie, a little silly though. Priscilla Presley was surprisingly inoffensive, QJ and Reggie were great.

OH! I got a response from Gail Brewer-Giorgio on my "Is Elvis Alive?" review in Outer Shell. We're going to print her letter, but I'm taking a page out of Tom DeJa's book and using footnotes on her letter to respond. Thank Mr. DeJa for me. I know you don't care about the early rockers & especially EP (hold on, I never said I "don't care," it's just never been a big interest of mine—hey, now, don't send those letters lambasting me, music fans!), but I really do a job on Ms. Brewer-Giorgio in OS #39, and the response to her letter is just as stern. This lady has been discredited by Larry King and just about every media figure, but not in the inimitable "Dr. Iguana" style, and I get to do it TWICE! I feel like Xmas has come early.

OHMIGOD! THEY'VE COLORISED "SOMEBODY UP THERE LIKES ME!" First time I ever saw a fight film colorised. Is Paul Newman's torso really as blue as his eyes? Ah, the wonders of the computer age...hey, the blood is mauve, I didn't know any of this stuff. Colorisation is VERY educational, doncha think? (I like the parts in "The Maltese Falcon" where Sam Spade's hat changes colors right on his head while he's wearing it.) What next? Colorising the old I LOVE LUCY series, just to show people that it can be done? (What offensive color would they make Ricky's jackets? Lucy's lipstick? Ethyl?) (Not to panic you, but I understand early episodes of GILLIGAN'S ISLAND and I DREAM OF JEANNIE have already been colorized so they can be sold to syndication as a package with the later-season color ones.)

Anyway, I'm down in the dumps and IJ 64 cheered me up a bit, good work folks...

Take care, live it up, laugh once or twice, think encouraging thoughts at me, and like that there...

confused, bothered, distracted, and dying bit by bit,

KEN BURKE

P.O. Box 8

Black Canyon City, AZ 85324

P.S. Did you and Steve ever find conclusive proof that dinosaurs have big blue eyes? (Well, we checked out the exhibits at the Museum of Natural History, and they are cute, I'll give 'em that.) P.P.S. Um...Typilsher? Publypist? Tag-team Partner? Circulation-er? Necessary Evil? Asylum Coordinator? There's gotta be a title we can bestow on you that accurately reflects your hard work, sacrifices and status as a non-editing editor. If you took credits as Publisher, Circulation Director, Typist and Designer (not to mention Financier) I think that would be appropriate. (After reading again the litany of what I do, I think "Certifiable Nutcase" might be just as appropriate, Ken!)

Dear Elaine,

December 8, 1988

Hi...of all your options I dislike #7 the most. "Says You" is my favorite section. I think people write the best in their letters—straightforward and clear, as opposed to when people "try" to write literature and they often get self-conscious and gimmicky ... still, whatever you gotta do, I greatly admire your editorial approach of printing everybody—very democratic and altruistic...I was only commenting on whether you could afford to do that. (Actually, no, but that's not stopped me yet.)

New title? How 'bout "Acknowleditor?"

Best,

ACE BACKWORDS

1630 University Ave., #26

Berkeley, CA 94703

P.S. I'll send free comix to any IJer who sends me a SASE.

MissElainious—

12/10

Well, my suggestion for a title to replace the discarded "editor" would be Number 2—you know, like on the old television series THE PRISONER. "Who is Number One?" "You are Number 6." The Village; the ball; Patrick McGooan; the mystery of where one is and who the hell are they...you know?

Really liked the way me cover came out [in #63], it's a pleasure to be once again an IJ pal. What can I say? These are happy days.

Yours true,

JOHN CRAWFORD

P.O. Box 74

PV, NY 11803

(Dunno, John, I like THE PRISONER too, and the new comic book version is just as intriguing and does feature a woman as Number 2... it has possibilities, but maybe it's too obscure!)

Dear Elaine;

12/9/88

Thanks for IJ #64. I got a real kick out of the cover. And I enjoyed your Santa-note. Hope you have a Happy Holiday! And if you get any extra snow, please send it my way!

I've been reading IJ for about a year. And it seems to be getting better and better. So, listen to the critics and blasphemers, but then use your own judgment. And keep up the good work!

...I also want to thank you for remembering John Carradine in your column.

Sincerely,

RICHARD M. MILLARD
4508 St. Anthony Lane
Whitehall, OH 43213

Dear Ms. Wechsler—

Yes, this is Eric Ewing (The Prime Minister of Livestock and Heavy Machinery). Very happy to see myself in *IJ* even if, as you say/write, "I believe in giving everyone who can string sentences together competently a chance at appearing in these pages." I'll write anyway...When I'm monied, I want to take advantage of the \$5 ad rates. I'm working on something called SASQUATCH. No format, aim, or ideas yet, but I expect it to be some fun. I talked the Student Government at the University of Maine into recognizing SASQUATCH as a club, so right now we're concentrating more on the campus radio station. We're enjoying ourselves. Pants!

But on a constructive side, speaking for the apathetic, it's an effort to read something that's two columns on a page. Unless it's being carried into the bathroom, time must be set aside to move through the pages. (So, who told you not to take it into the bathroom? *IJ* was made for bathroom reading, as I've asserted for years!) It's time well spent, mind you, but the format combined with the print size makes perusal a chore. The art helps break it up. Syndicated art costs you extra money, right? You pay for it? I'm sure that people contribute, don't they? Encourage artists to contribute. It would be free. (Some syndicated art costs money for some publications, but all of *IJ*'s art comes to us free. I'd rather have original than syndicated stuff anyway, so hey, artists—contribute, okay?)

Yeah, I too support selective acceptance. Just like everyone else, I assume that mine would be the first to go. But then, I've just had one thing printed and am certainly no *IJ* veteran, so no-body should feel obligated to listen to me.

Well, give me another issue. I'm scrapin' the bottom, but ain't we all?

Again, thanks.

ERIC EWING
P.O. Box 126
Milford, ME 04461

Dear Elayne,

Loved the cover on #64—it was a real hoot! Other fave stuff includes La Ackner's "Fiend" column about those weird people called "doctors"...they can be pretty appalling, alright! Also the latest Pru & Bunny story, naturally; Larry's "Reaganoid Years"; Zenarchy; Dooley; Eric's "Mouse Garden"; "Rambo Bright"; Curtis' "Thermostats"; an' "...Or Not TV." Hmm... "The Poet's Diet Book" is giving the impression of depicting clinical schizophrenia...Ace shows us the deterioration of a 60-year-old woman...Kathy's "Cure for AIDS!" is pretty grim when you consider that this mode of thought is Truth to some people...so we still have our quota of depressin' stuff! Cool!

Doug's Gerry Anderson bit reminds me, there was this show I used to watch back in the early 60s, on Channel 11 (WPIX), I think, something called GALAXY PATROL (I believe)...we had a B&W TV then, but it seemed to be shot in B&W regardless...the opening showed various shots of space, and this spinning, gyroscope-like space station that made a weird whistling hum. It was an Anderson-type show, with marionette characters—anybody remember it? I've never seen it written about anywhere.

Mea Culpa, Mea Culpa, there's no Snide Critic column again...whattaya want from me, eh?? THEY keep releasing, um, stuff like MY STEPMOTHER IS AN ALIEN, NIGHT OF THE DEMONS, COCOON: THE RETURN, HIGH SPIRITS...I mean, do you really expect a Snide Critic to actually go out and pay for the dubious privilege of cinematic serum of Ipecac? No, no, please don't ask me, I couldn't take it. Besides, what could I say besides things like, "They should return Naomi Basner to the vat they grew her in!", or pointing out that the ad quote-blurb for NIGHT OF THE DEMONS—"A 'PORKY'S FOR HORROR FANS!'—should be enough to keep anybody with a brain away from the theatre? Y'know? (I love it, you're still doing your column-without-a-column, JP, you know that don'tcha?)

Oh dear. "Kid" Sieve is still doing battle with th' Snide Critic about the merits of STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION! Well, Kid, dunno what to tell ya, 'cept to mention the TV timetable listing that relayed the fact that no less than, er, Whoopi Goldberg is going to play a recurring part in ST:TNG! Yep, ya loved her in CLARA'S HEART, she wowed 'em in FATAL BEAUTY, brought down

the house in JUMPIN' JACK FLASH...and now we may rest assured that she will lend her magic touch to the new Enterprise! Talk about finishing touches...[I heard CLARA'S HEART was kinda okay, JP... anyway, the Kid says she's seen a couple Whoopi-on-the-ship episodes so far [one cofeaturing Joe Piscopo, equally as insipid if not more so], and so far the writers have risen about Goldberg's usual quality level...but she ain't holdin' her breath and thanks Roddenberry this is only a part-time role for the Whoopmeister.] That's all, folks! Hope you all had a Merry Consumer-Stampede, Booze-Guzzlin', Belly-Stuffin', End-of-the-Year Holiday blowout! And Happy New Year.

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

Dear Elayne,

I especially like the parodies by Kathy Stadalsky, Gary Pig Gold, and Ho Chi Zen; the satire by Larry Stolte; and the autobiography of Prudence Gaylor. Is there really a Spontaneous Human Combustion Quarterly? The name sounds familiar, but I may be confusing it with the Spontaneous Human Combustion Monthly, or possibly the Daily Spontaneous Human Combustion. (As far as we know, SHCQ is still in production; the Pru & Bunny stories aren't really true biography, y'unnerstand—at least Pru says they're not.) I can understand why you're so malignant to people in correspondence, being so needlessly benign in your capacity as non-editor. Still, I'm glad to read that you're loosening up in your attitude toward smut. Having one's ears pierced can make all the difference. As for myself, if you are truly a non-editor and print my stuff, I will always say, "Elayne won't let me go into details" or "—deleted by Elayne" when I get to the naughty parts.

What in film is called a director is called a producer in records, while what is called a producer in film is called an associate producer in records. I suggest that you say: INSIDE JOKE is an Elayne Wechsler Production, or: INSIDE JOKE is produced by Elayne Wechsler in association with lots of dear friends...and the rest of that corny stuff. Producer...EW. Production Assistant (see how perfectly it fits)...SC. (Well, *IJ* is actually a production of Pen-Elayne Enterprises, which would make the elusive Kip M. Ghesin our producer, which is why the edit. box always starts with "IJ is put on by" me, in an obviously failed attempt to make a pun out of "put on" and "joke." Serves me right.)

ELLIOT CANTSIN
1961 Cedar St.
N. Merrick, NY 11566

P.S. I disagree with you on everything [vis a vis TV reviews]. Ernest and Ta'ra are just about the only TV characters who don't make me throw up. So maybe your readers will like my stuff and you can abuse me verbally in your letters? Know-what-Ah-mean? P.P.S. Though I didn't read Deborah Benedict's diatribe on bigots, I do find attitudes like Geoffrey Fourmile's, that "bigots are dumb shits," that refined, classical scholars need not lower themselves from their lofty ivory towers to engage in defending victims of prejudice, much less—for shame—become emotionally involved in such controversies which are best left to the ignorant—I find that kind of intellectual detachment to be deplorable, to say the least. Let Mr. Fourmile maintain his exquisite lack of concern, but must he also preach against those who still have a little blood and fire left in their veins? Conservatives tell us that we don't mention such things in polite society—and then they kick our heads in if they get a chance. "Intellectual drive" is precisely what is on my mind." Quite so. Is this what constitutes a pleasant, classical frame of mind? Possibly. Me, I'm a romantic "dumb shit." What amazes me about people like Mr. Fourmile is that they truly feel that they have to convince people most rigorously that such monumental minds as their own could really be totally into intellectual drive. I always take them at their word immediately. (In all fairness, although I'm as little acquainted with Geoffrey as most of you at this point, I think you may be responding to something taken out of context, Elliot, and I ask both your and Geoffrey's indulgence if this is the case. Do give him the benefit of the doubt.)

more letters →

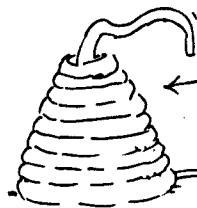
STUFF FROM "GALAXY PATROL" (?) THAT I RECALL:



TALKING, BIRD-LIKE CHARACTER... about as big as other cost members... often comely relief...



ONE CHARACTER was a concicted -professor tupe... he once ate a square alien egg to grow his hair, but it then grew so fast as to engulf him... wait! no, the square egg was the cure! "Give it to me, I'll eat it raw!!"



IN ONE EPISODE BEE-HIVE-LIKE ALIENS APPEARED... ONE of the humans was trapped in a pit, and this alien sent

down its tentacle to loan its "life energy" to keep him alive... it shrank in size, but would recover...



"'50's-MOD" LOGO...

CYNICAL OF CLAIMS THAT VEAL CALVES ARE KEPT IN TINY PENS, WHITE BOY DONS CALF SUIT, FINDS

One: boxes 22" wide
Two: 56" long

BREAKING HIS CHAIN WHITE BOY FREES ALL TO GROW UP & BECOME HOT DOGS & HAMBURGS

- Paul Weinman

Party Heady - more next issue!

Howdy Elayne and Steve,

How are things? Fine, I hope...I really enjoyed the last [IJ]. The article about the influence of cartoon characters on some actors' movie portrayals was right on. Here's some other ones the author overlooked, however: Sean Connery in "The Untouchables" was obviously inspired by Scrooge McDuck; Mickey Rourke in "Barflies" was a ripoff of the Snaggletooth the Lion School of Acting; "Beetle Juice" owes a tip of the hat to Bugs Bunny; and finally, the Dennis Hopper character in "Blue Velvet" was the best imitation of the Koo-Koo-for-Cocoa-Puffs bird I've ever seen.

Good health to you and yours.

Your friend,

MORGAN LLOYD
4835 W. 132nd Street
Hawthorne, CA 90250

2 January 1989

Dear Elayne:

I really and truly did mean to write you a Real, Live Letter of Comment this time—I absolutely did—but I have just come off a week of intense partying (why is it that, 51 weeks out of the year, I sit at home keeping company with Johnny Carson, and then, in one furious week, everyone suddenly takes notice of me and I am forced into a sort of Purgatory wherein I am stuffed full of onion dip and ring bologna, subjected to everyone from Bing Crosby to David Bowie trilling Christmas carols in my ear—sometimes, unnervingly, on the same record—and drowned in a sea of cranberry juice-and-7-Up punch? It's not exactly that I mind, you know, but you might think they'd spread things out a bit), and spent the day in an ultimately fruitless quest through six stores in two separate shopping malls, searching for what is tantamount to the Holy Grail in these parts—a plain, black, unadorned-by-ruffles-lace-bows-cabbage-roses sweater, after which I had to visit a sick friend in the hospital—yes, I know, but this is the absolute truth. I honestly do have a sick friend in the hospital, and I'll bet she wishes I didn't. She got carted off there on New Year's Eve, after finally deciding that the stomach pains she'd been experiencing for the last several days were not the result of her mother's plum pudding, and she's been languishing there ever since, as a team of hung-over doctors attempts to remember just where it is she keeps her gall bladder—and now it's 3:00 a.m. and I feel lucky to be sitting up, let alone writing anything. Besides, the last issue of IJ has egg nog on it (best overheard remark at a holiday party this year: "Say, this egg nog is pretty good. What all do you put in it?" "Well, eggs and, uh, nog." You see the sort of parties I get invited to. While we're on the subject, rudest shock at a holiday party this year: Discovering that the peculiar sausage I was nibbling had, as an active ingredient, deer liver. If you make a habit of attending parties in the more rural sections of Pennsylvania, it pays to inquire about these things beforehand, boys and girls). And my head hurts. And I still don't have a black sweater. Yippee—here comes another year I can screw up.

So, dear Elayne, while I'm sure I enjoyed the last issue of IJ as much as I always do which of course is considerable, you understand that there isn't much I can say about it just now. Anyway, I thought I just saw Steve Landesberg doing an anti-drinking PSA, which means it's definitely time to go to bed. Preferably till next Christmas.

Fa la la la la la la la yuck, ANNI ACKNER
P.O. Box 18
Reading, PA 19603

P.S. Now, damn it, I had a P.S. I know I had a P.S., and it was a little love, too, I'm sure of it. Oh, nuts...I wonder if there's any of that gingerbread left...

Dear Elayne, 1/54/89

THE EDITING DILEMMA: You could call yourself a coordinator, or maybe that's too much like what they call women in offices when they get a pseudo-title instead of a real promotion...OR one of the many possibilities listed under "edit" in the thesaurus, eg., compiler, arranger, etc...

I thought the cover for 64 was incredibly odd, but the idea of superimposing 20th century pop art onto Christian mythology was spellbinding—the way a miracle is supposed to be (or pseudo-miracle). Batman and Christ—both superheroes, amazing. (Well, in *Godspell*, remember, the Christ character wore a Superman t-shirt.) Let's see some more Mario Acevedo. Still enjoying "Equipment Control." It is riveting. Liked "Pigshit." Was charmed by "I Bitch, Therefore I Am." Always enjoy the ever-varying poetry (I saw a bumper sticker that said "Poetic License"). All in all, entertaining as usual...

BRIAN CATANZARO
7 South Warren St.
Dover, NJ 07801

Tiny Story

by Eric Ewing

Jessica wandered into the bedroom. I was still there, pretending I was dead.

"I'm not fooled," she announced as she fixed herself in the mirror. "You can stop now."

So I stopped. It was just as well, though. The noose wasn't getting any looser after three days. The lack of oxygen had made my skin turn blue. My eyes, which I decided to leave open, were dried and painful. Even with the theatrics, she didn't buy it.

"Okay, then," I conceded, stumbling over my stiff, protruding tongue. "Cut me down."

The Hunger

PART THREE

by Linda Calderone Wilson

(No longer satisfied with just eating paper, Amanda's desk has expanded its diet to include the janitor's dog and everything that had been resting on top of it (the desk). The desk has declared war...)

The desk made one tiny mistake...

After Amanda dragged herself to work, she found it next to impossible to enter her office. Her desk, rather bulky by now, tried to block her path. The room, earned through a great deal of sacrifice and effort, had long ago become her own inner sanctum. She had, many times, successfully fought off people who sought her job and office. There was no way that she was now going to simply turn it over to an unruly piece of wood.

Like her adversary, she decided to formulate a plan of action. She was beyond the point where reasonable people question the necessity of outwitting furniture. This was war, and the woman had no intention of losing, even if it meant that Kevin would continue to question her sanity for a while longer.

The desk was a little uneasy. He was glad that the lady was going to compete with him, but he had a funny feeling about the whole thing. His natural arrogance soon won out, though, as he realized that he held all the cards. And it was a marked deck.

Lucas came in that morning to pick up his paycheck. Amanda conscripted him and Kevin to help her return the desk to where it belonged. Neither one of the men was quite curious enough to ask how it had been moved to begin with. But both were uneasy, and grateful to leave the room as quickly as the opportunity arose, closing the door behind them.

Amanda paced back and forth in front of the desk. She was not the least bit pleased with the effect that recent events were having on her previously unblemished reputation. Finally, in anger, she removed one of the desk drawers and hurled it across the room. That felt so good that she yanked out another one and flung it at the first one. Within a short time, the desk was devoid of drawers. Having pretty much run out of objects on which to vent her fury, she shoved the chair toward the desk and stomped out of her office, in search of hot tea and sanity.

With his boss safely out of the office for a while, Kevin entered the room to determine the damage, having heard the tantrum. However, the room was undisturbed. All the drawers were in place. But the chair was missing. He would have been able to convince himself that the chair had been missing earlier, except for the castor which was on the floor by the desk. He shook his head, but did not leave the room swiftly enough. The desk started approaching him, menacingly, of its own accord.

Amanda ran toward her office as soon as she heard the screams. She opened the door, and there stood Kevin, too terrified to move anything larger than his vocal cords. The desk was moving, and heading straight for the poor secretary. Amanda had to quickly think of a way to stop the desk, as that seemed somehow easier than trying to get Kevin out of the office. She quickly ran and grabbed a basket filled with papers from the top of Kevin's desk, and threw it, aiming for the top of the desk. Her aim was fairly good; there was enough of the basket on the desk to keep it from falling off the side. The desk stopped, hungry.

Amanda stood there for a moment, fascinated, as she watched the papers and file basket slowly disappear. Then she thought, very hard and very quickly. Since this was an off-the-wall situation, it required an off-the-wall solution. But what?

The desk had had, by now, just about enough of these little games. His cravings had long since stopped being limited to food. He wanted power, and revenge. Fueled by an overdose of anger, the desk headed for Kevin and Amanda.

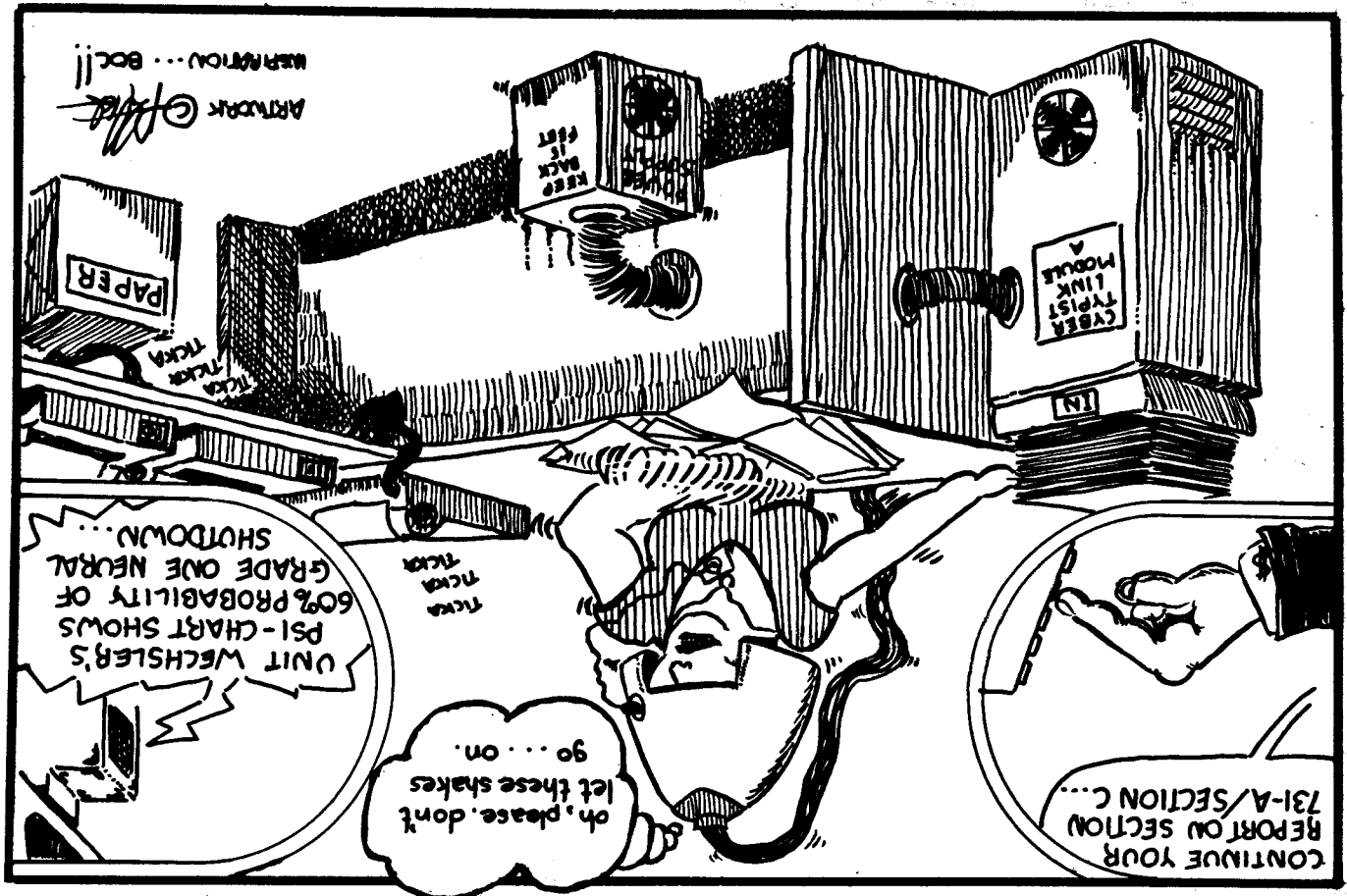
Amanda had learned, a long time ago, that enough pain will stop, at least temporarily, any aggressor. This desk was definitely aggressive, and therefore alive. So it had to be able to feel pain. Grabbing Kevin, who was in shock by now, she backed towards the office door, luring the desk to follow her. With Kevin safely out of the office and behind her, she gestured to him what she wanted him to bring her.

Kevin moved too slowly, so when the desk got to the office door, she grabbed the nearest object to feed the hunk of wood, Kevin's electric typewriter, which was still turned on. In her head, Amanda silently pleaded with Kevin to hurry. She knew the desk was a fast eater, and that it wouldn't let a little thing like walls keep it confined.

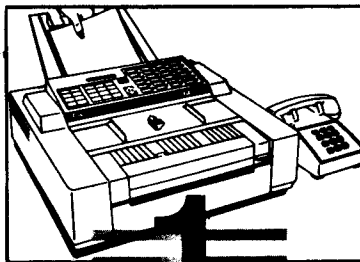
Kevin finally got there, right before the desk finished its snack. The woman's intention was to scald the desk with the coffee in the urn, to slow it down long enough to think of something more permanent. But when the hot coffee made contact with the exposed wires of the still-plugged-in typewriter, there was a horrible sizzling noise, followed by a terrible stench. Then all was quiet for a moment.

The two watched in amazement as the desk returned to its original size. Amanda, shocked but pragmatic, opened the bottom drawer, and saw the elusive McKenna file. She handed it to Kevin, who went to make copies of it before another disaster could strike.

The copy machine made a funny noise. Kevin ran into the copy room to see what was the matter. He raised the lid on the machine, but the original was gone. The machine burped...

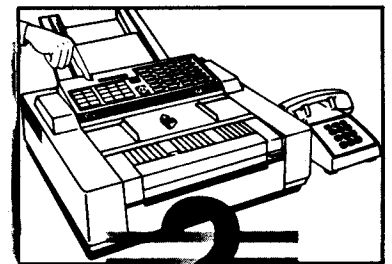


INSIDE JOKE
UNITWECHSLER
PO BOX 1609
MAD. SQ. ST.
NY, NY 10159



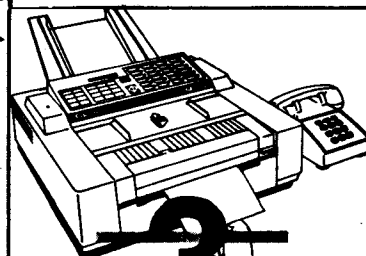
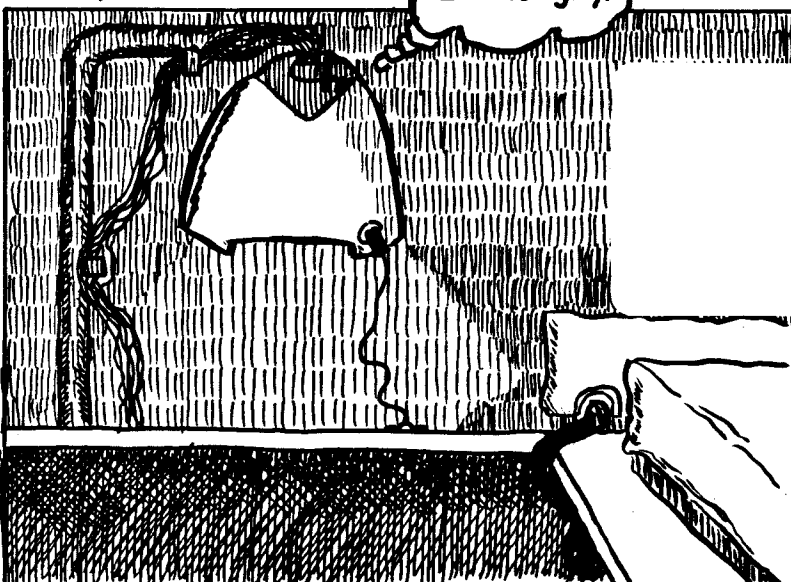
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Jeffrey Bocilli