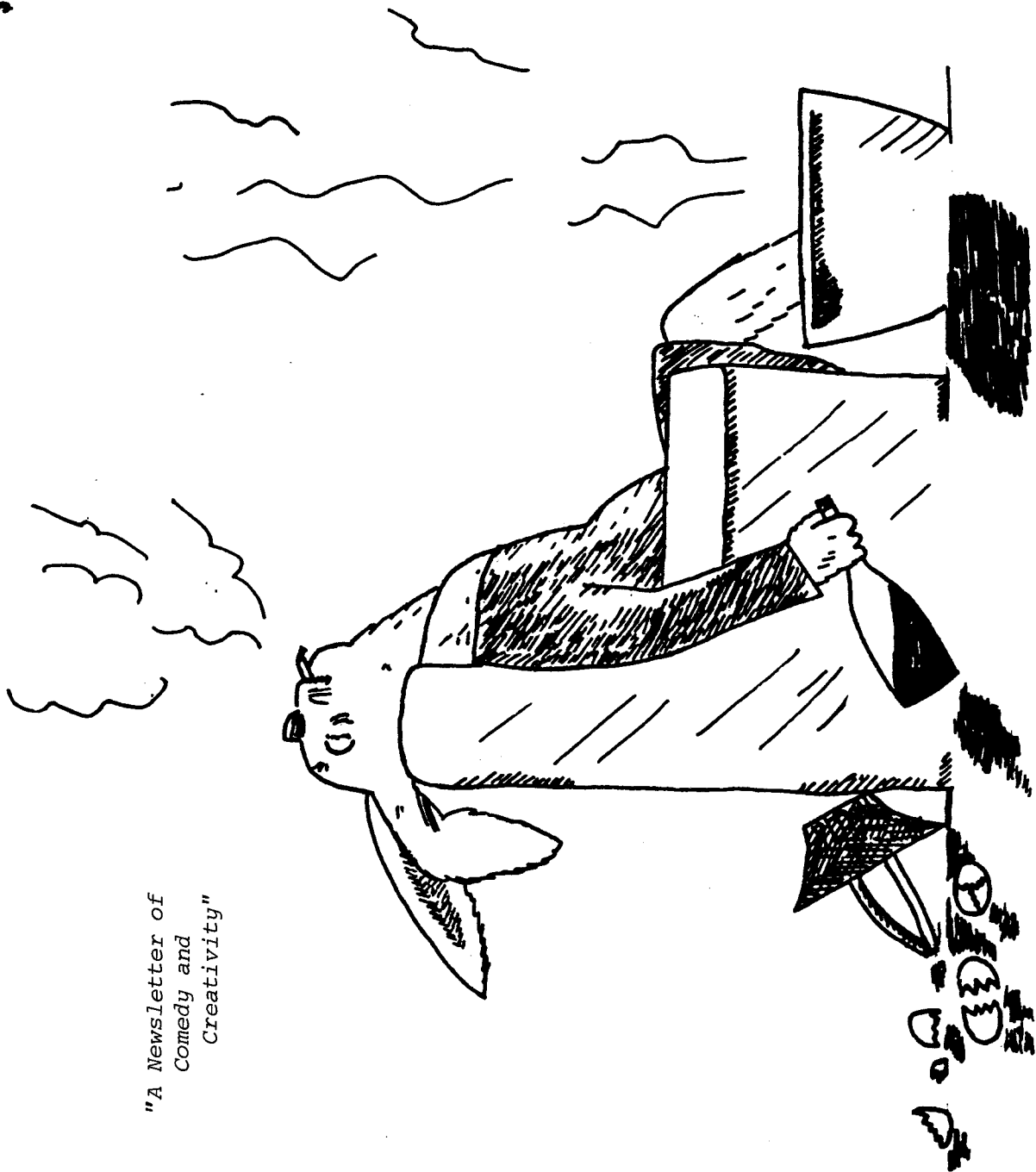


INSIDE JOKE #67

\$1.50

"A Newsletter of
Comedy and
Creativity"



HOLLOBAUGH

Upcoming Events

- APRIL 30 - DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS TO IJ #68
 MAY 1 - Mother Goose Day; Jack Paar (71); "Calamity Jane (b. 1852); Judy Collins (49); Joseph Heller (55)
 MAY 3 - Pete Seeger (70); NPR On the Air (1971)
 MAY 4 - Kent State Massacre Anniversary
 MAY 5 - Michael Palin (46); Karl Marx (b. 1818)
 MAY 6 - Rudolph Valentino (b. 1895); Orson Welles (b. 1915); Sigmund Freud (b. 1856)
 MAY 10 - Fred Astaire (b. 1899)
 MAY 11 - Mort Sahl (62); Salvador Dali (b. 1904)
 MAY 12 - Limerick Day; George Carlin (52)
 MAY 13 - Peter Gabriel (39)
 MAY 14 - David Byrne (37); Moms Day
 MAY 15 - Brian Eno (41); L. Frank Baum (b. 1856)
 MAY 17 - Dennis Hopper (53)
 MAY 18-26 - Cartoon Art Appreciation Week
 MAY 19 - Pete Townshend (44); Grace Jones (37)
 MAY 22 - Arthur Conan Doyle (b. 1859)
 MAY 24 - Frank Oz (45); Bob Dylan (48)
 MAY 25 - BILL-DALE MARCINKO (31); ORSON OSSMAN (1!); Michael Gunderloy to speak at Workmen's Circle, 369 8th Ave. (corner 29th St.), New York; sponsored by Libertarian Book Club - Call 718/965-4391 for information (tell Dave Mandl IJ sentcha!)
 MAY 25-JUNE 3 - International Pickle Week
 MAY 26 - Harlan Ellison (55); Al Jolson (b. 1886)
 MAY 27 - Christopher Lee (67); Vincent Price (78); Dashiell Hammett (b. 1894)
 MAY 28 - Barry Commoner (72)
 MAY 29 - MIKE DOBBS (35); JFK (b. 1917)
 MAY 30 - GARY PIG GOLD (34); Mel Blanc (81)
 MAY 31 - Peter Yarrow (51); Fred Allen (b. 1894)
 JUNE 1s National Adopt-A-Cat Month (take ours, please!)
 JUNE 1 - Nathaniel Ulysses Turtle Day; Marilyn Monroe
 JUNE 2 - Donut Day; Jerry Mathers (41) (b. 1926)
 JUNE 3 - Allen Ginsberg (63)

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 * **INSIDE JOKE** is put on hexaweekly by Elayne "Insomnia Time" Wechsler and lots of dear friends, and emanates from beautiful downtown Brooklyn, where even now local news crews are staking out the neighborhoods with the Kasher Patrol, I kid you not...
 * **EDITOR-IN-RESIDENCE-LOOKING-FOR-TITLE**.....ELAYNE WECHSLER
 * **PRODUCTION ASSISTANT**.....STEVE CHAPUT

STAFF WRITERS/ARTISTS

- * ANNI ACKNER=====ACE BACKWORDS=====KEN BURKE=====TOM DEJA
 * ==GARY PIG GOLD=====WAYNE HOGAN=====RORY HOUGHENS==
 * TODD KRISTEL=====JED MARTINEZ=====J.P. MORGAN=====LARRY OBERC
 * ==SUSAN PACKIE=====WILLIAM RALEY=====KATHY STADALSKY==
 * LARRY STOLTE==DORIAN TENORE==KERRY THORNLEY==PHIL TORTORICI

Front Cover by ERIC HOLLOBAUGH

OTHER CONTRIBUTORS THIS ISSUE:

- | | | |
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and "KID" SIEVE

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Member

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- JUNE 5 - World Environment Day; Bill Moyers (55); Laurie Anderson (42)
 JUNE 6 - Terri Nunn (28)
 JUNE 8 - DORIAN TENORE (26)
 JUNE 10 - STEVE COZZI (34); Judy Garland (b. 1922); Maurice Sendak (61)
 JUNE 12 - ELAYNE & STEVE - 1ST ANNIVERSARY
 JUNE 15 - DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS TO IJ #69

ACKNOWLEDITORIAL

Well, the typewriter's as fixed as it's gonna get, the party's come and gone, and spring's finally here (so my allergies tell me) —must be time for another IJ!

Thanks to all who made our aforementioned party (that includes R. Bain, Vinnie Bartilucci, Nina Bogin, Daza, Tom Deja, Dawn Eden, Eric Ewing, Gary Pig Gold, Jed Martinez, Randy Moser, Richard Onley, Doug Pelton, Steven Schaff and Dorian Tenore), especially those who came from long distances (Gary and Doug from Canada, Randy and Eric from Maine and Daza from Vermont) and those who participated in our third annual "Gerber" (round-robin story), re-printed herein. The turnout was a bit sparser than in previous years, which meant everyone had room to breathe (even with two cats in the place), but we're hoping those of who couldn't make it for one reason or another can attend next year! And to the sweet folks who sent us thank-you cards, we're glad you had a good time! We're thinking (mind you, just thinking at this point) of throwing more regular parties for the purpose of video-movie watching (no more Japanese cartoons, promise!), so stay tuned.

I appreciate those of you who've volunteered camera-ready copy to help alleviate my carpal tunnel syndrome (which acts up when I type too much), but many of you don't quite seem to have gotten the hang of it. Camera-ready and typeset are NOT the same thing, Ace (if you don't want to retype that piece with IJ-type margins, I'll do it); your right margin's about 20 characters too long, Ken (sorry I didn't notice the problem until we went to press, or I would've retyped it instead of reducing it twice); and your right margin should probably be about 10 characters longer, Kathy, if your installments are that short (I did catch that, and was able to retype it in time), as I don't reduce short pieces as much as long ones. Larry O, your margins are nearly perfect, thanks! If you'd like to submit camera-ready copy, again, margins should be 65 characters/spaces as measured on a typical IBM Selectric for long pieces (800-1900 words) and 55 characters/spaces for shorter ones. Space in three to begin paragraphs, and remember troops, PLEASE don't double-space between paragraphs!

Welcome to our newest staffer, Wayne Hogan, probably the last to join the fold since we're out of IJ caps (if his opening column stirs up interest, though, I'll order more). He's introduced himself right after Anni's column, where you'll also find current staffer addresses. Mike Dobbs has been super-busy these days, poor Pru has taken ill ever since she moved (she is getting better and our fondest wishes go out to her), and Steven Scharff mistakenly though we'd enacted the every-other-issue-for-staffers policy (which we have not, Steve, so you're not off the hook any more!). All will return, we hope, next issue. Meanwhile, we welcome new contributors B.Z. Bullen, Tom Child, Jim Jones, Brian Ruddy and someone who calls himself Santa Mike the Golden Yahoo ("sigh"). All sorts of goodies this issue, including the aforementioned Gerber right after Anni and the staffer address list; two of the new kids breaking that "fourth wall" of readership; a special combined "Commercial McClue-In...Or Not TV;" husband Steve's hu-manga-ous (sorry, couldn't help myself) entry; lowbrow comedy with the Three Stooges and the Bowery Boys; some thoughts on the Ayatollah versus satanic verses from Anni, Jim and Elliot Cantsin; the conclusion of Dorian's intense Elvis movie review; continuations of sequels by Mac and Kathy, and a sequel of sorts to Todd's BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITY variations; the return of more favorites like R. Bain, David Castleman, Tammy Dwyer, Mark Rose, Sergio Taubmann and A.J. Wright; the usual excellent submissions (sorry, space precludes me from mentioning you all); and, surprise surprise, another short letters column! At this rate we should be able to give you more art and less-reduced type for some time to come! (I'm also going to refrain from More Than I Need To Know alerts this time, in the spirit of trying to lighten up...)

Subscriptions to IJ are \$1.50 per issue, up to a NON-REFUNDABLE \$12/year for 8 issues; anything above that is considered donation (thanks again, J.C.!). If there's an "X" next to your address label, it's time to renew. Make checks/m.o.'s payable to "Elayne Wechsler." Overseas, IJ costs 3 IRCs per issue and is sent surface rate. If your writing/art appears in IJ #68, you can send me a 65¢ stamp for postage instead of the \$1.50 in money-equivalent, but DON'T send stamps for issues beyond #68 'cause I won't keep track of them. Canadian contributors can send me 74¢ in US postage instead of their postal money orders if they can get US postage. The deadline for IJ #68 is April 30 and for #69 it's June 15 and, guess what folks, we actually have enough front covers to last us the next few issues, thanks! Send letters (please), art, writings (under 1500 words if possible), marijuana, subscriptions, donations and so forth to:

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

This IJ is dedicated to Abbie Hoffman - R.I.P.



DIARY of the ROCK PIEND

by
Anni Ackner
HIDE AND GO CHIC



2 March 1989

Somewhere in America

Dear Elayne:

I sincerely hope this reaches you. The boy delivering it, they tell me, is both discreet and reliable, the veteran of many such delicate, sociopolitical missions, and he's certainly well paid enough to insure loyalty in even the most ambiguous of characters—if safety may be measured by two pairs of Adidas Air-Walkers, a complete set of D.J. Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince cassettes, and a large, gold-plated necklace that reads "#1 Groove Master," then I ought to have been able to send you, say, a pound of high-grade marijuana with no care at all, presuming, of course, that I thought you wanted such a thing, which, naturally, you do not—however, there was, earlier this evening, a bit of unpleasantness concerning a commercial advertisement that the pop singer, Madonna, apparently made for some beverage company or another, and now I just don't know. Frankly, I don't like the look in this fellow's eyes—he's got two; it's the left one that disturbs me (have a look when he turns up and tell me if you don't think it reminds you unnervingly of a fourth grade grammar teacher about the enter something nasty in your Permanent Record)—nevertheless, my need to communicate impels me to press on, though this missive may arrive in tattered, illegible, mustard-splattered pieces (the boy will eat pastrami even under the most dire of circumstances. For that matter, so will I), or not at all. With a mind to this, I am also enclosing several cigarette butts and the sleeve of Randy Newman's Land of Dreams album, so, even if you cannot read this, you'll know it was from me and that I was, at least until recently, alive. So far.

Oh, Elayne, how do I begin to tell you what's been happening to me over the last few, terrible weeks? Some of it, no doubt, you know or have surmised—for instance, I think it has been fairly obvious that I did disappear rather inopportunistically—did anyone pick up my dry cleaning?—and then, too, the press coverage has been tolerably extensive, if superficial—my "favourite" was that squib Ted Koppel did on Nightline several days back. Tell me, couldn't he have found a worse witness for my defense? I swear to you that I have not seen the Grateful Dead's road crew in at least eight years. What's the matter, was Fran Leibowitz on vacation or something?—but for reasons of security and well-being—mine, particularly—it was thought unwise by my advisers to release too much information to the general public. There comes a time, however, when one must tell one's story, or perish in the attempt—witness Bryant Gumbel—and, since I know that this will be just between us, and you would never let any part of what you are about to hear leak into the wrong hands, I have decided to tell you everything. In the event of my, for want of a better word, death, I want Candice Bergen to play me in the movie, and for God's sake don't let Steven Spielberg get anywhere near the project.

To get on with it, then, it all began—innocuously enough, I thought at the time—nearly a month ago, when I opened the door one morning—generally a mistake even under the best of circumstances—to discover a young man in a Giorgio Armani suit and dark glasses, lounging on the landing steps, drinking Amaretto and paging through the current issue of Spy with the aid of a dictionary. Now, Armani suits are rare in this neighbourhood—the last time I saw one was back in November, when a truck bound for Barney's accidentally got sidetracked on the Jersey Turnpike and ended up for sale in the Unclaimed Freight outlet on the 5th Street Highway—but young men drinking themselves to death on other people's stairs—even ones attempting this feat by means of a spirit more bound to cause diabetes than cirrhosis—are fairly common, and I wouldn't have given this one a second glance, had not he looked up at the sound of my door and fixed me with That Stare, the one so beloved of New York waiters and the salespeople in the trendier boutiques—the one that says, quite plainly, that they understand Public Enemy and you do not. This did unnerve me, I admit—who among us has not ordered something costing \$35 and containing argula under the force of such a stare?—but, as he made no further threatening moves, nor did he even ask if I was planning to go out for a B-12 shot, I hurried past him and went about my business, eventually forgetting about the entire incident in the course of my usual active, exciting, 80's sort of a day.

Unfortunately, he was there when I arrived home again that night and, judging by outward appearances—dust was beginning to collect around his Kenneth Coles—he hadn't budged an inch since our encounter that morning. Moreover—though how he managed this without leaving the building I am at a loss to imagine—he seemed to have acquired a mate, a tall, emaciated female who had, at one time or another, apparently been frightened by Diane Brill. As one, they turned and hit me with That Stare, neither of them saying a word—which, in retrospect, was probably all to the good—until (and there's no point in denying this) I was utterly demoralized and fled to my apartment, where I was forced to watch four segments of Ethics in America and a re-run of M*A*S*H before I regained my equilibrium.

The next morning there were three of them (the third was notable only for the fact that I honestly mistook him for one of

those department store mannequins modeled after Andy Warhol that are so popular now, at least until he removed his gum and stuck it artistically where I would be most likely to tread upon it), that evening there were six, and from then on they increased geometrically, until by the end of the week I was climbing in and out of my front window in order to avoid being Stared into oblivion—a situation highly detrimental to whatever shreds of my dignity I might accidentally have retained by this stage—and my neighbours had begun complaining bitterly that their friendly, casual little nightly drug deals were being curtailed by all these weirdos sitting around asking for all kind of screwy dee-signer shit, and didn't anybody just smoke plain old dope anymore, for Chrissake. Matters had escalated to such a point, in fact, that I actually went so far as to call the police—I, who would far rather call for immediate nuclear annihilation—in an attempt to get some relief. This not only served absolutely no purpose whatsoever—my assailants had all survived assaults by some of the best nightclub doormen in New York City, so a small thing like the entire Reading PA police force (which consists of four fellows too old to serve on the Harrisonburg police force, two women who routinely address each other as "Cagney" and "Lacey" and have terrible arguments over who gets to be whom on any given evening, and a German shepherd with only three legs) was certainly not going to make any impression on them—but confused the poor police to the extent that half of them were later arrested themselves when they tried to storm the stage at a Dead Milkmen concert in Philadelphia. And still, with all of this, I had no idea of why I was being singled out for this persecution.

I was provided with the answer on the Wednesday after what came to be known, for obscure reasons, as Night of the Naked Police Squad (they were most assuredly dressed when I saw them), when I was awakened at some ungodly hour by a telephone call from a formerly dear friend of mine, who shrieked, without so much as an apology, "Have you seen Michael Musto's column in this week's Voice?"

"I wish you were dead," I answered pleasantly.

"No, really," she said, never losing a decibel, "have you seen it?"

"My dear Formerly Dear Friend," I rejoined, "I currently have trendies, yuppies, club-hoppers and lounge lizards of every description setting up light housekeeping all over my landing stairs. I don't have to see Michael Musto's column, I am Michael Musto's column."

"Oh, yeah? Then you just took a \$10,000 contract out on your own head, didn't you?" she said obscurely, and hung up.

I'm not entirely sure if, under normal circumstances, a conversation such as this would have piqued my interest—as I recall, the last thing in any way concerning Michael Musto that piqued my interest previous to this was a rumour that floated about for a while linking him, in some mysterious and slightly virulent way, to most of the road company of a revival of Flower Drum Song—but the question became decidedly moot a moment later, when a large, heavy object came hurtling through my window. This proved, on close examination—or as close as a barefooted person is able to get to something surrounded by a field of broken glass—to be a tube of Nexxus styling gel with a note, scrawled in purple ink on Betty Boop stationery, attached to it and reading, succinctly, "Death to the spawn of J.C. Penney."

Well, that did get my attention. For one thing, it was completely unfair—I may very well be the spawn of Abraham & Straus, but J.C. Penney? I mean, really—and for another, just about anything implying imminent doom and referring to me in the same sentence can pretty safely be construed as a grabber as far as I'm concerned. With this in mind, I decided that it might, after all, be the better part of discretion to have a look at Musto's latest literary effort, so I hastily donned the Barbara Bush costume I had taken to wearing on my brief ventures outside, climbed through the window (which no longer had to be opened in order for me to accomplish this feat), stepped on someone who was sleeping, head curled on a copy of Slaves of New York, and scuttled off to the newsstand. I snatched a copy of the Voice from under the surprised nose of the news dealer (who hadn't sold one since the art teacher at the local high school was run out of town on suspicion of being a Liberal), turned to Musto's column, and began to scream loud and long.

There it was, in between a description of a birthday party at Palladium and a nasty remark about Sylvia Miles: "Word is out that the uncompromising comments one ANNI ACKNER has been making about our lifestyle will no longer be tolerated by those of us downtown. In support of this, this column is offering a \$10,000 reward to the person who can imaginatively rid the world of ANNI ACKNER. Think creatively! Word!"

All right, I thought, after I could think clearly again (though not before I had gathered a tolerably good crowd). Let's get a grip on ourselves here. First of all, how many people actually read Michael Musto's column? Second of all, the people that do, and take it seriously, are not the sort that stir out of their little beds before 11:00pm, and by that time I'm usually tucked up in my little apartment in a black depression, so what are the odds that we'd run into each other—that bunch in the hall notwithstanding—and third of all, these types spend more than \$10,000 on their exercise bicycles. They're not going to bother coming after the likes of me for that pitiful sum, now are they?

The short answer to that, as it turned out, was "Yes," as was proven when four amazingly pale fellows dressed entirely in black chased me down the street in a BMW as I attempted to regain my apartment, and was brought in even sharper relief when, upon ac-

(cont'd. next page)

tually reaching home, that mob in the hall, formerly only passively hostile, searched out the front door and besieged me with jeers, shrieks and curses, and when, on finally reaching what I assumed was the safety of my rooms, I discovered that the place had been ransacked, my complete collection of Grateful Dead records ruined, my clothes set on fire, a dummy done up to look like Edwin Newman hung in effigy, and the poor cat entirely shaved except for a long stripe down his back, which had been painted green. This was the final straw—particularly for the cat, who obviously felt that all his worst fears about my species had been confirmed—and, in a kind of dread calm, I grabbed the afflicted creature and such clothes as had been left to me (primarily the black ones). There seemed to have been some kind of delicacy regarding the destroying of black garments) and made a precipitous escape out the back window, which probably didn't do much for the air conditioner, but may have, I say without melodrama, saved my life.

Perhaps it was cowardly to run. Perhaps it was cowardly to go into hiding. Perhaps I should have, as people have intimidated, stood my ground and stood up for my right to say whatever I choose, no matter how badly spelled, and not have gone on Manhattan Channel M to express my regrets for hurting anyone's feelings (not that it did any good, anyway, unless you count people asking for your autograph before they try to force-feed you poisoned argula as "good"), but I ask you, Elayne, what would you have done? Oh, it's true that people have come out in my defense, all right, but what a strange, pallid defense it has been. Yes, the Mayor of New York denounced the contract on my poor head, yet in the same breath casually mentioned that I had given more money to Jesse Jackson over the years than I had to the state of Israel, and brought up vague connections to Sukkreet Gabel (I can't help it. She and I buy our shoes in the same place). Yes, when Laurie Anderson said she agreed with Michael Musto people refused to play her records, but hell, half of them do that anyway. Yes, the Coalition of Harassed, Underpaid, Alternative Writers held a benefit in my support, but did they have to wait until three weeks after the fact to do so, and was it really, absolutely necessary for all of them to bring copies of their zines to sell to other participants while they were defending me? If you'll excuse me, Elayne, with friends like these it occasionally occurs to me that I might have been better off taking my chances with that lovely woman who did her damndest to stab me to death with her six-inch "fuck me" heels.

And so, here I sit, in hiding, protected by a very few good people who, while grumbling periodically (I'm not that untidy, am I?), do their best to see to my safety and comfort. And it's not so bad, really. Aside from complications with Madonna, we all get on reasonably well, the food is not unpalatable—although I still insist that Bojangles is better than Colonel Sanders—I am sup-

Inside JJ Staffers

A multitude of welcomes to our newest "old-time" staffer, Wayne Hogan, whose stories and illustrations have been gracing these pages for awhile now. Here he is in his own words:

WAYNE HOGAN
P.O. Box 842
Cookeville, TN 38503
7/29/94

I've never been one to talk about myself much but while I'm on the subject I suppose I may as well go ahead and say that I was born on the 3rd floor of St. Anthony's Hospital in Oklahoma City during the height of the Great Dust Bowl, that I grew up during my earliest years not far from there on a three-quarter-section farm situated two miles from the nearest one-store-plus-a-blacksmith-shop town and another two to the nearest grades-1-through-8 one-room schoolhouse to which I walked each day it was in session and sometimes for the fun of it when it wasn't, that I've lived within walking distance, too, of the beautiful buttes of Sutter, California, and spent time on an aircraft carrier criss-crossing the South China Sea, that for a fairly short spell I was a sociology professor, that since then I've presumptively become a drawer of pictures, a would-be writer, and the husband of an award-winning real estate broker in Cookeville, Tennessee, our house being the two-story white frame one that sits just across from the headwaters of Falling Water River off Poplar Grove Road about 8 miles east of the Town Square. Y'all come, heah?

Wayne and all the staffers would love to hear from their readers personally (not just in JJ's letter column)—here are their addresses:

ANNI ACKNER, P.O. Box 18, Reading, PA 19603
ACE BACKWORDS, 1630 University Ave. #26, Berkeley, CA 94703
KEN BURKE, P.O. Box 8, Black Canyon City, AZ 85324
TOM DEJA, 50-56 96 Street, Corona (Queens), NY 11368
MIKE DOBBS, 24 Hampden Street, Indian Orchard, MA 01151
PRUDENCE GAELOR, P.O. Box 177, Laurel, MD 20707
GARY PIG GOLD, 70 Cotton Dr., Mississauga, Ont. L5G 1Z9 CANADA
WAYNE HOGAN - See above
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SUSAN PACKIE - Please contact c/o INSIDE JOKE
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PHIL TORTORICI, P.O. Box 57487, West Palm Beach, FL 33405

plied with such newspapers and publications as I need (I see that The Nation, thinks that, while the death threat is reprehensible, it was rude of me to tease anybody about the way they choose to live. Better make that "more newspapers and publications than I need"), we receive both HBO and Cinemax, and nobody here knows what "pecs" are. I have, in fact, lived in worse situations, although I do miss the freedom to travel about outdoors when I choose (there are probably some library books in the bedroom that are overdue), and my cat has never really gotten over the shock. All in all, things could be worse—how is Mr. Tower, anyway?—though, admittedly, they might be a good deal better if they really wanted to try. (Did anybody find my cigarette lighter?)

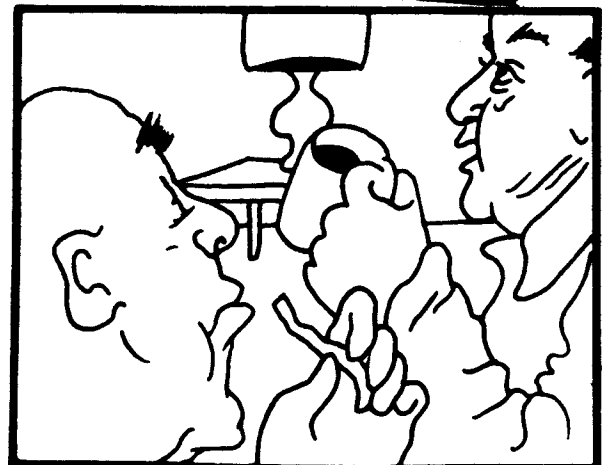
And I promise, Elayne, if I ever get out of this alive, I will never, ever make fun of Those People again. Really and truly. Not even if thirtysomething wins the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Not even if Emilio Estevez becomes the head of the Actors' Studio. Not even if Jay McInerney becomes president of PEN and Marvin Mitchelson takes over the ACLU and Betsy Johnson is hired to design uniforms for the New York City Public School System and they tear down the Fifth Avenue Library to make room for a performance art gallery and Moishe's on Rivington Street starts selling diced chicken breast in pesto sauce and Michael Musto gets elected President of the United States. I really, really, really promise. Honest.

Send me a message if you can.

In solidarity,

ANNI ACKNER

OVERHEARD



"Poor vision is next to blindness."

(Welcome to our third annual LJ "Gerber," our round-robin story collaborated upon at our spring party. This year's entry is a detective-type story, I think, and has been started by Tom Deja and finished, as usual, by me. Other contributors this year have included, in alphabetical order, Nina Bogin, Steve Chaput, Dana, Eric Ewing, Gary Pig Gold, Doug Pelton and Dorian Tenore. I won't tell you who wrote what, but I will change type fonts, as before, when a different narrator takes over. Enjoy!)

THE CLOCKWORK CAGE

It was a cold bitter enough to rub your face raw, a cold as dark and chilly as a yuppie's heart.

In short, it was a typical New York Monday.

"Thank you for coming, Mr. Bannerman," the bearded fellow said. His angular face was a bright tomato red. He made no bones about his discomfort.

"I don't know why I bother, Mr. Traque. They've pulled my license. You hire me, you're breaking the law."

"I'm most aware of that. Shall we take a seat?" He motioned towards the park bench. A crowd was gathering in the distance around some crack-addicted comic.

"As long as you know what you're buying," I pointed out, walking along the Mollman walkway.

"Oh, I'm very much aware of your problems with the Albany P.D. Have you ever seen Ms. Bryde since?"

"No. I've been told to avoid her." Harri and I had a major falling out over the Garannos' stash. She's not the kind of woman you cross. I pushed thoughts of her face, her figure, her hungry lovemaking from my mind. "What's the deal?"

"I understand you're very good at finding things."

"That's what I've been told."

"Well, Traque said, reaching into his tweed coat, "I want you to find this."

He pulled out a photo and handed it to me. The picture was grainy but I managed to make out the object of note. It appeared to be a mannequin of some sort. The figure was dressed in morning

(Gerber continued next page)

coat and spats, its hand clutching a baton. As I studied it, I noticed the stylized face resembled a sinister puppet. Bright light from the flash shone from the jewelled eyes.

"Mr. Malcolm collects clockworks. This fellow is one of the clockwork Wizards of Windsor. The automatons were made especially for Queen Victoria as a wedding present from Poland. It works beautifully.

"Best work I've ever seen."

"Oh, the wizards are so lifelike you wouldn't believe it. Malcolm acquired them a year ago. This one has turned up missing. We'd like you to find it."

Finding a dummy wasn't the strangest thing I'd ever been asked to do, but it came pretty damn close. The case with the Chinese dwarf was probably the most unique problem, but I didn't expect to be knifed by an automaton so I felt a little more secure.

"Okay, Mr. Traque, I'll take the case and hopefully no one will be the wiser."

Traque sat back and stroked his beard, seemingly pleased. He reached into his briefcase, taking out a file folder jammed with papers, and handed them to me.

"Mr. Malcolm feels you should have information on his employees and family members."

"So...Malcolm feels that this is an inside job, huh? Any particular reason?"

Traque looked a bit disturbed by all this and glanced at his watch. "Mr. Bannerman, I really must apologize. If you'd like to go into more detail we could meet later this evening. I must be going."

We shook hands and agreed to meet at a small bistro on the east side of town that night. I caught sight of him climbing into a long, black limo driven by the tallest woman I'd ever seen.

A half hour later I'd made it to my building and entered my office. I sat behind my desk and pulled out the telephone book. I didn't have much to go on, but I had some ideas.

Suddenly, the door to the waiting room burst open and a roscoe barked from the doorway—ka-chow!

The world dissolved into a red mist as small pellets of searing pain tore into my gut. The last thing I remembered was my chair rolling back on its casters with the force of the bullets...

I swam up from the dark, queasy depths of unconsciousness to a bright light like a spray of acid in my eyes. Even before I opened my eyes and ears, I knew from the sounds and smells rising and falling around me that I could only be in a hospital emergency room.

"You'll be all right, Mr. Bannerman," a husky, sweet, yet thoroughly professional female voice assured me. I blinked the owner of that voice into focus. Suddenly I started believing in heaven. Where else could I wake up to a pair of brown eyes as hot and sweet as a mug of steaming cocoa in front of a roaring fire on a cold night? The rest of her face—especially the sensuous, supple lips currently addressing me—made Botticelli's women look like stick figures. I tried to sit up to greet this vision of classy "yoomph" properly, but the lightning streaks of pain that spiralled through my side changed that plan of action in record time.

"The bullets didn't hit any vital organs, Mr. Bannerman, and we removed them with a minimum of trouble." Then I was in a recovery room rather than the emergency room.

"But how'd I get here? I didn't think anyone was around but me and the bastard who Swiss-cheesed me."

"You were brought to our emergency room by a tall, dark woman. She didn't say a word." I noticed that this angel in a lab coat had a plastic nametag reading "Dr. North." She continued, her professional smile warmed by genuine caring. "When our staff came back to get her to fill out the usual forms after you were wheeled to the operating room, she was nowhere to be seen."

Before I could respond, our witty repartee was interrupted by a commotion at the door. I turned to see a distinguished-looking man with frantic blue eyes and curly, graying hair wrestling his way out of the restraining arms of a refrigerator-shaped male nurse.

"Stop, Mr. Cotton, you can't go in there!"

"I must speak to Bannerman immediately! Lives hang in the balance!" the man snapped.

Probably mine, I thought.

Mr. Cotton, whoever the hell he was, quickly got on my bad side by getting his face in the way of Dr. North's considerably more attractive one. "Bannerman, this was a warning—you must believe me! Eleven people have been killed for this."

"Eleven—?"

"Eleven and a half, counting the midget!"

"Sir," interrupted Dr. North firmly, in a voice that nonetheless lubricated various hormones inside me, "I'm afraid you must wait—"

Midget?, I wondered. What midget???

Dr. North managed to get Mr. Cotton (whoever the hell he was) out into the corridor and closed the door practically in his face. Through the heavy metal door I could hear his muffled shouts but couldn't make out a single word that he was saying.

Dr. North returned to my bedside. I looked up at her adoringly and said, "So—where were we?"

"We were nowhere. You, hotfoot, are as finished with me as penicillin and the flu. Get out."

I couldn't put together the moods of a woman and her motives. Maybe there weren't any. Maybe this whole tangent was a smoke screen.

I walked over to the cotrack, put on my hat, turned to leave, and glanced across the room heavily scented with a medicinal smell

that as easily mask as they do inform. A young boy-faced woman pushing a covered tray approached me, but I didn't notice the determined tightness in her lips. My mind revolved around the mirrored moving doors of loose information I had. What did I have? Nothing.

She rammed her cart into me, and the weight carried my body backwards through the frame of a window. Still, my mind was back in the room. Bannerman. Bannerman. The midget.

A dark sky filled with city lights crowded a view of what seemed to be an upside-down world. Looking around as I fell, there they were at the window, the faces of the puzzle falling into place. And there he was, and I knew him. The midget. My fall carried me through another window, a skylight, bouncing on a wooden table, slamming my ribs into the floor. Something snapped. But I didn't care, I had it. All I had to do was get across town to the locker at the train station. It was the same every time, and I liked train stations. I used the same device in Albany, Chicago and Detroit. Always check the employees, sure. Always do the scut work, the obvious. These people were pretty clever. It was too obvious. That's why I hadn't seen it. Come on, move, body. Jesus, I liked her, too.

"All aboard!" the suit barked down the platform towards my general direction. I paused a moment, thinking softly to myself, Midgets...midgets...The train jerked me back to life, and I gazed out the window, following the telegraph lines towards—

"Albany! Albany!" Albany already? My, those sedatives must've kicked in mightily nicely. I stepped lightly off the train, skidded into a cab, and the next thing I realized the entire sordid affair was finally crystallizing itself before me.

Bannerman. Bannerman. My GOD—how could it have taken me so long to figure out?

Bursting out at the nearest available crossroads, I ran towards the central library with the solid conviction of the newly informed, pausing occasionally at red lights to chuckle at the incompetence of my predecessors.

"Card index please," I demanded of the first librarian I ran across (literally) upon bounding into the Albany Central Branch.

"Can I help you, sir?"

"Yes," I crowed. "Bannerman, please."

Bannerman appeared from a rear office, bearing the card index. Starting at the letter A, I quickly located Albany.

Gleaning as much information on the city, I had a mission. I started back out of the library back to the train.

"Must get to Albany! The fate of the Free World depends on me!"

The morning sunlight reflected off the windows of the Albany Dental Health building, stabbing through my squinted, bloodshot eyes. I was reminded for a moment of those disco balls. I waited for the sign to say "Walk" and pulled my shattered body across Sasquatch Avenue.

An old man was sitting at the base of a monument to some Revolutionary war hero. Staring at me. He had an old, greenish overcoat pulled over his bony frame, and the brim on his hat plunged most of his face into shadow.

I realized I was returning his stare.

I looked away quickly and continued my shambling trek past him. "Bannerman," the fellow croaked.

Was that my name he said? I stopped and looked back. He motioned for me to sit beside him. As I lowered myself, a searing pain shot through my side. That damned rib!

He was silent, looking at something across the street. Ignoring my presence, he lit a cigarette and inhaled deeply.

This continued for a handful of minutes. I cleared my throat loudly...

"Bannerman—my name's—" I stammered hoarsely. The old man faded, and in his place was Dr. North, bending over me to check some tubes coming out of my arms. At the sound of my voice, she stepped back and started shaking her head cynically.

"Couldn't even get out of the ward without running into trouble again, hey tec?" she smiled.

"Wh—I'm back in the operating room! I was in Albany, looking for a midget named Bannerman, but—but I'm—"

"In for the long haul, I'm afraid," she interrupted. "That was some tumble you took. The skylight's shattered, and all that wooden table's good for now is firewood. You're as tough as I thought you were, but I've changed my mind about your release. You're far too—accident-prone to risk leaving now. Rest up."

"But Traque—I have an appointment tonight...the automaton, I have to find it...the case..."

"You gumshoes are all alike, always a matter of life and death with your cases." She shook her head, and wisps of caramel hair came out of her tightly-wound hospital-regulation bun. I began to rethink my priorities. My aching ribs didn't discourage my imminent change of mind either.

I started remembering it all now. "That guy, Cotton—"

"Whoever the hell he was, he's gone now. He left a card, if that's any help."

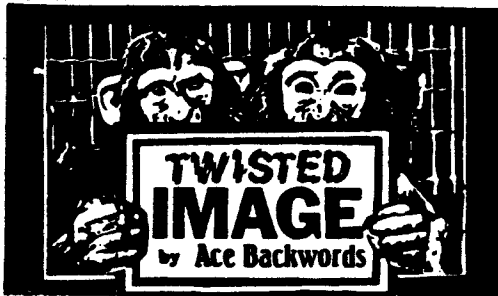
I could swear I remembered seeing the name "Cotton" in Traque's file folder sitting back at my office, but I couldn't be certain if I was confusing it with the index card file from my dream. I couldn't seem to stop thinking of midgets and Albany. The dreamy doc must be right about my condition—my head wasn't working right yet, and I was too tired to think on my feet. The sedation helped but I was sure a good stiff one would help more.

END CHAPTER ONE

(Sneaky, ain't I? Come on, now, you couldn't have expected me to actually solve something that had gotten as convoluted as this 5 did, could you? I'd rather leave it to your imaginations...)

REALITY by Larry Oberc

Started because I thought they were just letters, pieces of paper, never realized the answers, the responses, never put them together with faces, people answering my questions, somehow it was like a row of dominos, I'd go through the grocery store tabloids, UFO magazines, conspiracy pubs, I'd write off for miracle water, gold crosses, charms to protect me from evil, I'd collect religious paraphernalia, pamphlets and books from people who had found spiritual awareness, God, or were haunted by radio transmitters placed in their skulls by the CIA, or right wing left wing fanatics who wanted to blow up the country, wipe the slate clean, start it over again, I ran with wildmen in my mailbox never thinking they'd actually hit town and want to meet a brother in arms, never realizing that these were real people out for a cause, people who wanted to get things done, my buzzer started ringing two hours ago, outside, on the street, there are strange characters gathering, looking up at my window, I peek through the shades hoping they won't see me, that they will crawl back into the hidden crevices they snuck out of, they look at each other suspiciously, visualizing each other to be their own private enemy, and they gather, growing in number, watching each other carefully, so far its been safe, they're too scared to actually try to make connections, but it could get ugly, it could get out of hand, if they break down the barriers, get organized, and try to break in, I look out my window, and watch them gather, grow larger in numbers, and wonder if they're real.



Comedy is a funny business. Nobody really knows what makes people laugh. Even the biggest pros in the business will tell you that. You slip on a banana peel, and that's comedy. You see me laughing at you and jam the banana peel down my throat;

that's tragedy. Ahh, such a fine line between comedy and a busted face.

Consider the mystery of the human laugh. Anthropologists maintain it's the universal form of communication; every culture does it the same way.

A laugh is one of the hardest things to fake. Ever see an actor on a TV show trying to produce a real-sounding laugh? It gets stuck in their throat. But a REAL laugh comes deep from within the belly—nay, from within the farthest recesses of one's soul. It's unpredictable what'll spark it, but when it's there, YOU KNOW.

Any hack soap opera actor can mimic authentic-looking tears, but a laugh? You gotta dig deep for that. It's gotta be real. It's like that old show biz cliché—"If you wanna make it in this biz you have to come across completely sincere. And when you can fake that, you've got it made!"

As a rule, if something strikes you funny, there's probably some real truth behind it. It's no coincidence that "comic" and "cosmic" are phonetically similar. There's probably more home-truths spoken in a good five-minute standup routine than in five years of political speeches.

I know this woman who is completely humorless, God help her. For some reason, that part of her mental wiring isn't hooked up. Watching TV sitcoms she won't get a single joke. She just can't grasp it when you "put her on." She takes everything literally. Once when I was relating a peculiar event that happened to me, I started off, "A funny thing happened to me..." and she immediately started laughing this mirthless laugh, as if to say, Oh, this is supposed to be funny, I'm supposed to laugh, okay, ha ha ha.

The best humor is laughter at oneself—at the ridiculousness of the human condition. 'Course, some people's attitude is, why laugh at myself when there are so many other people to laugh at? Ridiculous turns to ridicule. When I'm sitting alone in a coffee shop and the people across from me burst out laughing, my first reaction is, They're laughing at me! Is my fly open? Am I vulnerable? Comedy as a weapon.

And then there's comedy as self-protection. Laughter's the best medicine, etc. This world's such a hopeless botch, you gotta laugh to keep from crying.

6 (continued next column)

People invariably tell me my comic are "funny." This always surprises me because I'm basically an unhappy person. They say this is the typical "sad clown" syndrome, but why this is so is a mystery to me.

Not that anybody asked, but there are some things I find funny. Louie DePalma on "Taxi." Ralph Kramden having another grandiose plan backfire on him. Joe Isuzu taking a lie detector test. The movie *Airplane*. The TV show "Police Squad." Bob Newhart being humiliated yet again.

There's something basically amusing about watching somebody else fuck up.

MOO HAIKU #2

by Richard M. Millard
Sheltered from the storm
Now-now-brown-cow, in the barn
Stood in udder calm

OF THE TINY TRIO

by A.T. Hunn
Wee
Three

All strangers and beggars
Are from Zeus, and a gift,
though small, is precious.
— Homer

MY LITTLE GREEN CAP

by Wayne Hogan

I'd heard about it. The INSIDE JOKE cap. Had heard that if I didn't already have one, one would be forthcoming.

It arrived yesterday. A bouncing green-and-white JOHN DEERE-type sturdy-visored thing of joy weighing in at just under eight pounds 14 ounces (about seven pounds 15 ounces under, actually) and measuring 11 inches stem-to-stern and another 9 1/4 inches port-to-starboard. At its peak's a cloth-covered metal rivet behind and below which lies meshed nylon sloping nearly inconspicuously into a plastic size-adjustment band at the back.

Rising a full three inches above the brim and spanning another five inches from left to right in mixed upper/lower case there's "Inside Joke" (without the quote marks, of course) in bold green letters on white and no more'n a double space below's "a newsletter of comedy and creativity" (without, again, the quote marks) in clean-cut, simulated handwriting leaning ever so slightly to the right. ONE SIZE FITS ALL/MADE IN TAIWAN, the cap-band label says. No slip with an "inspected by" number on it accompanied my little green cap, though I'm sure that had it been inspected it would almost surely have passed 'cause with just one tiny exception (about which more later) there's nary a blemish to it anywhere that I can find—not that I've looked particularly closely trying to spot one, please understand.

I was sitting parked in front of our little southern town's post office in my '80-Chevy-station-wagon-that's-also-my-office (the weather being quite seasonally balmy for this latitude, with some much-needed spring showers predicted for late afternoon, possibly a flash flood or two tonight, they're saying) when I pulled the little green cap from its prepaid 9 x 12 envelope. I don't ordinarily wear headgear (I've heard that Gerald Ford didn't either), so I wasn't all that sure about how to put it on, and stuff, whether it might require standing before a full-length mirror, say, rather than sitting before a rear-view one, or what. Making do with what I had, I fixated the cap on my need-a-haircut-bad follicles (hope I'm getting the terminology right) and, when reasonably certain that I had correctly done so, looked full-frame into the station wagon's mirror. From about mid-brow up, the sight I saw looking back at me wasn't all that bad, really. And once I'd accepted the somewhat disorienting backwardness of the little green cap's lettering, it was quite a pleasant experience, really.

So now, what I think's happened is that I've become hopelessly infatuated with my little green INSIDE JOKE cap. Since its arrival I've worn it continually ("continuously," if you don't count when I take it off going to the bathroom; would wear it even then but to do so strikes me as being just a tad too irreverent).

Thanks, Elaine, and you're right, of course: that big blob on the cap's crown has "character" written all over it—Wait! One moment! A slip of paper has just now floated from inside my little green cap! Here's what's on it in its entirety:

1 8-pound (approximately) leg of lamb (weighed with the bone), boned and butterflied
1 large onion, unpeeled
2 carrots, scrubbed but unpeeled
2 stalks of celery, with leaves
1 1/2 tablespoons tomato paste
1 1/2 cups dry red wine
Approximately 3 cups water or chicken stock
4 cloves garlic
1 bay leaf
6 whole peppercorns
1 bunch green kale
3 tablespoons, plus 1/4 cup, olive oil
3 sweet red peppers
3 ounces jumbo Kalamata olives, pitted (about 18 olives)
1 shallot
1 teaspoon dried thyme
1/2 heaping salt
Cracked black pepper

Can't tell for sure but this looks very much like the recipe for Gordon Ramsay's boned stuffed leg of lamb. Anybody out there lose their recipe for Gordon Ramsay's boned stuffed leg of lamb?

A DIP IN THE PLAGMAPOOL

by Dorian Tenore

ELVIS PRESLEY AS MOVIE STAR: THE MALE WHOOP! GOLDBERG
OR, HICK SHOULD MIXED PIX (PART 3)

(Editorial Asides by Vinnie Bartilucci)

(Last time, we followed: the highlights and lowlights of Elvis' body of film work in the 1960s; why the really garish production numbers are even more fun with the sound off; and autobiographical details in Elvis' movies.) This Issue's Installment: COLONEL TOM PARKER: SUPERAGENT OR SABOTEUR OF ELVIS' FILM CAREER? OR, LOUIS B. MAYER, HE WASN'T

Elvis Presley had the potential to be a really hot movie star, a less neurotic James Dean with an out-of-this-world singing voice. After his promising early films, however, he became trapped and wasted in a string of dim-bulb teenybopper movies that, despite Elvis' all-but-indestructible star quality, were invariably shown as double features with such forgettable flicks as *THREE BITES OF THE APPLE* and *GHIDRAH, THE THREE-HEADED MONSTER*. (Hey, this would explain Elvis' popularity in Japan, wouldn't it?) This was especially true in New York, whose major film critics generally gave Presley's movies, even the good ones, less review space than the average beach party flick. (I know, I've checked.) The unfortunate misuse of Elvis Presley in movies reminds me a lot of the way Whoopi Goldberg has been wasted in films like *BURGLAR*, *CLARA'S HEART* and even the likable *JUMPIN' JACK FLASH*. As with Elvis, Whoopi's star vehicles seem slapped together to capitalize on her particular schtick. For Elvis, the schticks were singing, swiveling, and driving girls wild; for Whoopi, they're multiple voices and disguises, as well as profane but funny dialogue.

After all the materials I've read on Elvis Presley so as not to sound like a total ignoramus (just a partial one) while writing this article, I have come to this conclusion: Shirley MacLaine and the Hindus are right and there really are such things as karma and previous lives. That's the only halfway sensible explanation for the way Colonel Tom Parker managed Elvis Presley's career, leading the singer spiralling downward from rebel-rousing young rock 'n' roll sensation to B-movie actor to fat, substance-abusing Las Vegas-ized parody of his former self. Perhaps they were continuing some sort of bizarre power struggle begun in some past life. (Does anybody besides me see a strange parallel between the Col. Parker/Elvis relationship and the current relationship between Beach Boy alumnus Brian Wilson and Dr. Eugene Landy?)

It seemed to be almost a love-hate relationship, at least on Parker's part. On the one hand, Parker seemed to be trying to get the best business deals and the fattest paychecks for his sole client (partly because Parker got 25-50% of Elvis' pay). On the other hand, Parker all but went out of his way to scuttle Elvis (and, in turn, himself) by interfering in his projects and turning down songs or movie scripts involving more complex or adult subject matter. It was almost as if he jealously wanted to humiliate Elvis while at the same time making money off him.

One example of Parker's pettiness and control-freak nature occurred on the night of the wildly successful 1968 NBC-TV special that marked a comeback for Elvis after the bland pap Parker forced him to do had all but destroyed his career. Perhaps you've seen its rebroadcasts on cable TV: Elvis, dressed in black leather and seeming more energetic and at ease than he'd been in years, basically goes back to his rockabilly roots, singing everything from "Guitar Man" to the powerful "If I Can Dream," egged on by a live audience which was lapping it up and begging for more.

Would you believe that the bulk of the audience was enticed in off the street at the last minute? Parker, who had wanted his "boy" to do a glitzy, cornball Christmas special in which he would sing a dozen holiday standards and spawn yet another quackie album, was incensed that Elvis and the network were standing up to him for once and doing things their way. In a fit of pique, Parker seized all the complimentary tickets to the performance, leaving an auditorium 3/4 full of empty seats. In desperation, production assistants rounded up young passersby to fill up the audience. Fortunately, this quick thinking saved the day, resulting in a raw, exciting rock special that drew critical raves and spectacular ratings.

The dopiness of Elvis' movies (the mid- to late-'60s films in particular) and live musical performances (including an embarrassing segment on a TV variety special wherein he sang "Hound Dog" to a basset hound in a top hat) turned him into such an industry joke that no producer dared to offer him a really meaty movie role. Even Elvis seemed to realize that Parker, who'd been invaluable in the early days, was now steering him wrong. In several of his 1960s films, Elvis looks and acts bored and sluggish, as if he can't wait to get the ordeal over with.

The following quote from then-up-and-coming director Sidney Lumet is taken from Elaine Dundy's book *Elvis and Gladys*. Lumet is discussing *THE FUGITIVE KIND*, his movie adaptation of Tennessee Williams' play "Orpheus Descending" (which starred Marlon Brando and Anna Magnani and got mixed reviews upon release), and provides a particularly frustrating example of this kind of thinking:

The funny thing is—years later, when I looked at the picture, I suddenly thought of Presley.

I began to wonder what would have happened to the piece without any of Marlon's overt sensitivity or the profound implications that Marlon brings to any sentence he utters. What would it have been like if Val had had Presley's simplicity, lyricism, and rather strange

otherworldly quality? There's a speech in the play that I doubt whether Presley could have handled from an acting point of view. In the speech Val talks about his mythical bird that has no legs and can therefore never come to rest and just hovers in the sky until it dies because there was no place for it to land. In content it evoked such a memory of what I felt of Presley when I watched him work; something otherworldly, unhuman (not inhuman), a kind of restless spirit that could never rest anywhere. As I say, I don't know if he could have acted it, but the speech certainly reminded me of his personal quality when he performed. And I thought how extraordinary it might have been to hear it from someone exactly like that but totally unaware of his own separation from the rest of us. Would we have filled in all of the significance of that character because Presley himself would have been totally unaware?

Though the picture got mixed reviews and is a flawed picture but a very interesting one, as I look back on it now it would have been death to cast Presley. There's snobism in America that gets doubly vicious about its own.

Parker also put off many filmmakers with his rampant greed. He demanded thousands of dollars for everything from reading a script to Elvis wearing his own wristwatch in a scene. Think I'm kidding? Take a gander at the following anecdote, related in *Dirk Vellenga* and Mick Farren's eye-opening book, *Elvis and the Colonel*:

The sky was blue and the cameras were rolling. It was a simple shot. Elvis was to run out of the surf and straight into the camera. It was the eighth day of filming *BLUE HAWAII* and everything was running very smoothly. There was the call for silence. Action. The clapper board snapped. Elvis, looking wet, healthy, and desirable, splashed through the waves and onto the wet sand. Suddenly the Colonel was inexplicably in the shot, waving his arms and screaming like a lunatic.

"Stop! Hold everything! Cut! Cut!"

Director Norman Taurog was on his feet and furious.

"What the hell do you think you're doing?"

Parker ignored him. Facing producer Hal Wallis, he pointed to Elvis' waterproof wristwatch.

"Do you remember the terms of Elvis' contract?"

Wallis looked at him stonily but said nothing. Parker raved on.

"That watch Elvis is wearing!"

"What about it?"

"The contract says that Elvis doesn't provide his own clothes. If you want the watch in, you'll have to pay us another twenty-five grand."

Adding their interpretation of this incident, the authors go on to say: For the Colonel, this kind of inane interruption was

par for the course. He seemed incapable of team playing and working toward the best possible Elvis Presley product. For him it was a matter of rudeness, petty hustling, and mouthing off at the most inopportune moments. Anecdotes like this one about the watch are normally used to prove what a wild and crazy old guy the Colonel was, always up to his tricks and gags. What nobody appears to have either noticed or considered was the effect these antics had on Elvis. Was he giving of his best work after the Colonel had pulled one of his numbers? How did he feel when he had to stand by and watch his manager shed all dignity and act like a money-grubbing buffoon?

Of course, this being a free country and Elvis Presley being a star of that kind of magnitude, he certainly had every right to tell Parker to piss off, leaving the entertainer to either make his own career decisions (he couldn't have done worse than Parker) or get a manager who would truly look out for Presley's best interests. Part of the problem was that Elvis Presley really was just a naive, uneducated country boy, loaded with talent and charisma but endowed with little self-esteem and even less business sense. When he met the overpowering Colonel Tom Parker, he was probably so dazzled by Parker's line of carnival barker patter and apparent connections—and it helped that Parker presented himself as a strong father figure to match Elvis' equally formidable (in her own passive-aggressive way) mother, Gladys Presley—that he couldn't help but sign up with him.

With the way Gladys drummed respect for one's elders into her son's head—and her admiration for Parker at first—it's possible that Elvis just felt it would be against everything he'd been taught to go against Parker. He almost broke free of the Colonel during a particularly low point in 1973, after a shouting match over Parker's gambling debts. Parker responded by presenting Presley and his father with a bill, claiming that Elvis owed him \$5 million.

Vernon Presley's hesitation upon hearing the amount seemed to shake Elvis. Already well into prescription drug addiction, Elvis spent an entire week popping pills and generally going to pieces—a week which culminated in Elvis picking up a teenage girl and getting them both OD'd on Hycodan, a cough medicine. When the girl remained unconscious 24 hours later, Elvis panicked and called Parker, who'd helped him tidy up similar messes in the past. Hello, Colonel Tom Parker, goodbye to any chance of freedom for the ever-dependent Elvis Presley. (I'll wager that the hap-

(continued next page)

less girl didn't do so well, either.)

Throughout Elvis' career, Parker knew that straying away from the tried-and-true music and movie roles that fanned the flame of Presley's stardom would run the risk of failure, which would mean fewer profits for Parker. Parker knew damned well that if he allowed his hot young property to fraternize with more sophisticated industry peers and become more such of himself (and thus less dependent on Colonel Tom Parker), he might lose both the goose and the golden eggs. That's why Parker made sure Presley was as secluded as realistically possible in private life, with mostly members of the "Memphis Mafia"—Elvis' pals from his hometown—as his entourage. These guys even had their own dressing room next to Elvis' on the MGM lot.

To keep this situation status quo, Parker enlisted the aid of Elvis' close friend, Nick Adams. Angry young Method actor Adams, whose star twinkled briefly with the 1959-60 TV series "The Rebel" and an Oscar-nominated turn in 1963's TWILIGHT OF HONOR before his untimely death in 1968, was still relatively unknown back when he befriended Elvis. Parker offered to help Adams get meatier parts if he would in turn help keep Elvis away from the "subversives"—that is, fellow actors who might get into "shop talk" with Elvis and wise him up to the fact that Parker was taking him for a ride to the cleaners. Adams, who reportedly had used his friendship with the then-recently-deceased James Dean for similar gain, agreed.

The tragedy of Elvis Presley's film career is that he didn't have enough confidence to break from Colonel Tom Parker's stranglehold and fight for the kind of roles that would have helped him grow as an actor and be taken seriously in the film industry. But then, I suppose this is directly related to the real tragedy of Presley's life: that he had no one around him strong enough or caring enough to give him "tough love," to get him professional help to cure him of his destructive habits and strengthen him emotionally. Even the people who really seemed to care, like Priscilla and his father, weren't tough enough to say "No" to Elvis or help him out of his private hell. Sure, his records and movies continue to bring enjoyment to millions of fans the world over; it's just unfortunate that he couldn't bring that kind of joy and inner peace to himself.

ELVIS PRESLEY FILMOGRAPHY

KEY: + - Hints of trouble ahead (a bit too routine and/or inane).
 * - Not great art, but pleasing to the eye and ear.
 # - A cheerful exception; good light entertainment.
 \$ - Surely everyone involved was only in it for the money. So mind-bogglingly inane, you'll either wince, collapse in gales of laughter, or just stare at the screen in disbelief, provided you don't just stop watching altogether.

CAN'T HELP FALLING IN LOVE:

LOVE ME TENDER (1956)	WILD IN THE COUNTRY (1961)
LOVING YOU (1957)	BIJOU HAWAII (1961)
JAILHOUSE ROCK (1957)	KID GALAHAD (1962)
KING CREOLE (1958)	GIRLS! GIRLS! GIRLS! (1962)+
G.I. BLUES (1960)+	FOLLOW THAT DREAM (1962)
FLAMING STAR (1960)	

GIRLS! GIRLS! GIRLS!:

FUN IN ACAPULCO (1963)	KISSIN' COUSINS (1964)+
IT HAPPENED AT THE	VIVA LAS VEGAS! (1964)*
WORLD'S FAIR (1963)*	ROUSTABOUT (1964)

HOUND DOGS:

GIRL HAPPY (1965)	STAY AWAY, JOE (1968)\$
TICKLE ME (1965)	SPEEDWAY (1968)
HAREM SCAREM (1965)\$	CLAMBAKE (1968)\$
FRANKIE AND JOHNNY (1966)	LIVE A LITTLE, LOVE A
PARADISE, HAWAIIAN	LITTLE (1968)\$
STYLE (1966)*	CHARRO! (1969)
SPINOUT (1966)\$	CHANGE OF HABIT (1970)\$
EASY COME, EASY GO (1967)\$	THE TROUBLE WITH GIRLS
DOUBLE TROUBLE (1967)#	(1970)

ELVIS ROCKUMENTARIES:

ELVIS: THAT'S THE WAY IT IS (1970)
 ELVIS ON TOUR (1972)
 THIS IS ELVIS (1981) (Bibliography available from Dorian—ew)

Zenarchy

STORIES

by Ho Chi Zen

THREE PEARLS FROM A DUST BIN

Triptaka Master Hsuan Hua is such an orthodox Zen master that his commentaries on sutra passages remind me of the writings of the late Swami Bhaktivedanta of the Krishna Consciousness Movement. Even the same vocabulary is used, which features such words as "authorized" and "unauthorized" all the while that sex and drugs are being damned, obedience to rules stressed and liberal belief in every sort of spirit and divinity expressed. Is there a conspiracy that produces these old guys or what?

Master Hsuan Hua, nevertheless, has his moments, as illustrated by this passage from Sutra of the Past Vows of Earth Store Bodhisattva:

All dharmas are the Buddha's own and special dharmas, and "all dharmas" include the dharmas of all religions—Christian, Confucian, Taoist, Moslem, or any other. There is not a single religion that can say it does not have a dharma and thus falls outside "all dharmas." All dharmas are the Buddhadharma and all dharmas are unobtainable; there is not a single dharma that exists. Frankly speaking, I will not tell you that I have some dharma, some delicious morsel with which I can cheat you. I do not. I do not have anything at all, for fundamentally there is nothing at all to have.

Or this, from the same book:

Once a bhiksu requested Dharma from a famous master. "Superior One," he asked, "how can liberation be attained?"

"Who," replied the master, "is binding you?"

At those words, the monk was enlightened and realized, "Fundamentally no one binds me up; I bind myself. One who does not bind himself attains liberation spontaneously."

And this:

My explanations are often like this, just carefree talking in which I say whatever I think. Sometimes when I talk I break through heaven; sometimes the earth quakes; but I don't care if one topples and the other collapses, for there is really nothing at all. All dharmas are devoid of a mark of self, others, living beings, or life. How can the Buddhadharma flourish, how can it decay? Where is there a Proper-Dharma and where a Dharma-Ending Age? There is none of this; everything is false. You may well object that the more I speak the more confused you become; that is just why I do it, for if you understand, who would pay attention to to sutra explanations?

ZEN ON THE ART OF CANNIBALISM

Zen Master Mang Gong became a monk when he was a young boy. One day, when he was thirteen years old, there was a great ceremony to mark the beginning of the long vacation. The sutra master got up and said, "You must study very hard, learn Buddhism, and become like great trees, from which temples are built, and like large bowls, able to hold many good things. The sutra says, 'Water becomes square or round according to the shape of the container it is put in. In the same way, people become good or bad according to the friends they have.' Always have the Buddha in mind and keep good company. Then you will become great trees and containers of Dharma. This I sincerely wish."

The next speaker was Zen Master Kyong Ho, who happened to be visiting the temple. He was already known all over Korea as a very great Zen Master and, clothed in rags, with long hair and a long, thin beard, he was a striking figure among the neat, shaven-headed monks. He said, "All of you are monks. Monks are free of petty personal attachments and live only to serve all people. Wanting to become a great tree or container of Dharma will prevent you from being a true teacher. Great trees have great uses; small trees have small uses. Good and bad bowls can all be used in their own way. None are to be discarded. Keep both good and bad friends. You mustn't reject anything. This is true Buddhism. My only wish for you is that you free yourself of all conceptual thinking."

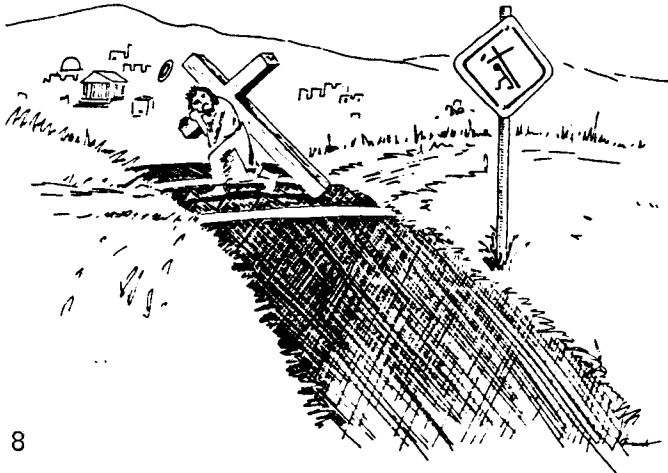
Everyone was filled with deep admiration. As the Zen Master walked out of the Dharma room, Mang Gong ran after him and pulled at his robe. Kyong Ho turned around and said, "What do you want?" Mang Gong said, "I want to become your student. Please take me with you."

Kyong Ho shouted at him to go away, but the boy would not leave. "You are only a child. You are incapable of learning Buddhism."

Mang Gong said, "People may be young or old, but is there youth or old age in Buddhism?"

Kyong Ho said, "You bad boy! You have killed and eaten the Buddha! Come along now."

(From *Dropping Ashes on the Buddha* by Stephen Mitchell, Grove Press, Inc., New York, pp. 163-4.)



ANIMATION UPDATE



Back in LJ #65, I'd made several predictions for the 61st Academy Awards ceremony as far as animation-related stuff was concerned. As a result, I'm batting about .500. On the negative side, none of the tunes from the Disney feature "Oliver and Company" were nominated for Best Song. On the plus side, however, two of my predicted titles for Best Animated Short were nominated. They were John Lassiter and Bill Reeves' "Tin Toy" and Bill Kroyer's "Technological Threat." The third nominee was Cordell Barker's "The Cat Came Back" (from Canada). I didn't have time to make a prediction of which short would win, but it's just as well. I thought that "Tin Toy" and "...Threat" would nullify each other out of the competition for their use of computer animation, thus resulting in an Oscar for "...Cat." I was wrong. Instead of that, "Cat" and "Threat" nullified each other for their use of traditional fast-paced slapstick. "Tin Toy" (the misadventures of a mechanical plaything and the rambunctious toddler he's forced to contend with) became the first computer-generated film to earn an Oscar for Best Animated Short. Other animation-related winners at the 61st Academy Awards were "You Don't Have to Die" (Best Documentary Short), which featured the animation of John Canemaker (reminiscent of his work in "The World According to Garp"), former animator Tim Burton's comedy "Beetlejuice" (Best Make-up), The National Film Board of Canada (a special award for 50 years of filmmaking), and, of course, "Who Framed Roger Rabbit" (Best Visual Effects, Best Film Editing, Best Sound Editing). Regrettably, "Roger Rabbit" didn't receive any nominations for the major awards, only in technical categories. Comedians Robin Williams and Charles Fleischer (the voice of Roger) presented animator Richard Williams with a Special Achievement Award from the Academy for his work in the top-grossing motion picture of 1988...but not before these two bad boys lampooned toons. Robin, dressed up like Mickey Mouse, introduced himself as Dan Quayle, held up one of his gloved hands and announced "Four more years," and bent back one of his ears and called himself "Vincent Van Mouse." Surprisingly, the Disney organization did not take offense with Mr. Williams' performance; they were more incensed with producer Allan Carr's use of Snow White for the ceremony's opening musical number. The actress who portrayed Snow White (and sang a duet with Rob Lowe) sounded more like Betty Boop. No wonder Disney sued the Academy for infringement of its use of the classic cartoon character. Personally, between that opening number and a later musical ensemble composed of "future Oscar winners," to paraphrase the late Jackie Gleason, it's about as practical as giving a Band-Aid to a leper.

MIS"CEL"LANEUS: Later this year, NYC's unique cinema, The Film Forum (57 Watts St., off 6th Avenue), will go the way of the Thalia and other repertory houses when it closes down. While its staff is looking for a new location to screen its films, it's presenting a collection of classic Warner Bros. cartoons during April. Many of these shorts have not been seen for years. For more info, call the Film Forum at 212/431-1590...Speaking of Looney Tunes and Merrie Melodies, was I correct or not about the way Nickelodeon was editing many of the Warner Bros. shorts (see LJ #63)? "...Who Framed Roger Rabbit" will make its world television premiere on The Disney Channel and Showtime later this year. Meanwhile, the title toon will star in his first (?) short, "Tummy Trouble," to be screened this summer along with Touchstone Pictures' latest release "Honey! I've Shrank The Kids." Charles Fleischer voices Roger once again...Currently, the Disney studio has re-released "The Rescuers," while work on its sequel, "The Rescuers Down Under," continues. Although this is the first animated sequel to a feature-length film from Disney, it's not the first animated sequel in general. For instance, Steve Krantz was responsible for "The Nine Lives of Fritz the Cat," a completely forgettable rehash of Ralph Bakshi's work. Overseas, Belvision (Belgium) produced two animated features starring Goscinny and Uderzo's feisty Gaul, Asterix (French); "Peter-No-Tail" (Sweden) is another example of a sequel-bound character...Getting back to Disney, two more animated films will come out later this year—the re-release of "Peter Pan" and the premiere of "The Little Mermaid" (set for Christmas)...Recent statistics found that the works of Walt Disney have been translated into more languages than the works of Vladimir Ilich Lenin, Agatha Christie, and the Bible. I'd sure hate to be the one who has to translate "supercalifragi-

listicexpialidocious" into Japanese or Hebrew...On the tube, Jonathan Winters may be the next comedian whose characters will become toons. Winters (who already provides voices on "The Smurfs" and "...Ed Grimley") is discussing a possible deal with Hanna-Barbera. Stay tuned...While more episodes of "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" are under production, work is continuing on a live-action version of Eastman & Laird's characters. The question is, will it be a hit (like "Superman: The Movie") or a miss (like "Masters of the Universe")? Kowabunga!

VIDEO REVIEW: Here are several animated works that originally began as prime-time TV specials (coincidentally, all aired on CBS): "Meet the Raisins" (Atlantic Home Video) is Will Vinton's Claymation mock-rockumentary about the commercial success story of the 1980's, The California Raisins. Partially narrated by their manager, Rudy Bega, this half-hour of hilarity chronicles the group's rise and fall, while providing numerous musical interludes in the process. (Excerpts from this video were featured on MTV and VH-1, while the Raisins were singing "Signed, Sealed and Delivered," one of the highlights of their fruitful career.) This tape is highly recommended...Warner Home Video has two new tapes, featuring some of the Looney Tunes gang, but in 24-minute doses instead of the usual 7-minute shorts. "Carnival of the Animals" (1978) teams up Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck as dual pianists who, with the help of live-action conductor Michael Tilson-Thomas, interpret Saint-Saens musical managerie, while reciting Ogden Nash's equally appropriate poetry. The principal animation was provided by Chuck Jones, but Herbert Klynn provided more incidental (and limited) animation to accompany the music, which didn't leave much to the imagination. Only Mel Blanc's voice saves this show, as Bugs and Daffy reprise their one-upmanship roles from "Show Biz Bugs" (a Fris Prelleng short from 1957), with Porky Pig making a brief but appropriate cameo. It might've worked out better as a record album, but go with the video anyway; if the images bother you, just turn the TV's brightness control to black and leave the soundtrack on... "Bugs Bunny in King Arthur's Court" (1978) is simply "Knight-Mare Hare" (1955) with Hamburger Helper (with special emphasis on the "ham"). Loosely (very loosely) based on Mark Twain's story, Bugs winds up back in the Middle Ages, where a heavily armored Elmer Fudd threatens to inflict serious hurt with his "wance." Other characters from the Warner Bros. stable include Yosemite Sam as Merlin of Monroe, Porky Pig as Sir Loin of Pork, and Daffy Duck as King Arthur (probably his only opportunity to portray royalty at its highest—and most hilarious). In spite of some bad puns and reprised humor (such as the old stand-by "Shaddup shutting up!"), the full animation from Chuck Jones and the late Phil Monroe (co-directors) makes this video one to add to your collection of Warner cartoons. As Daffy aptly puts it, "Whatever turns you on..."

FRUITS (AND VEGETABLES) OF THEIR LABOR: To Superstation WHOR (Secaucus, NJ) and other networks who took classic cartoons transferred onto tape (i.e., "Popeye" shorts from AAP) and ran them at a slightly faster speed (so that a 7-minute cartoon is now five minutes long, and four shorts can be pressed into a half-hour without editing any material for extra commercial time), we bestow some "crushed grapes" (for a little "whine")...Some well-deserved "chopped celery" goes to ABC for the hatchet job it did to "Bedknobs and Broomsticks" and "Pete's Dragon" back in February. Admittedly, these two films aren't the best of Disney (especially when compared to "Song of the South" and "Roger Rabbit"), but that's still no excuse for editing much of the live-action animated segments from both films, just to condense the running time of each to under two hours...Some "starfruit" goes to Maury Rosenfeld and the many others who contributed to the computer-animated effects of Touchstone Television's "Hard Time on Planet Earth"—the effects are brilliant...TMS earned some "Concord grape jelly" (with a little peanut butter on the side) for making "Chip 'N Dale's Rescue Rangers" (new on the Disney Channel) the nuttiest half-hour animated show in a long time...DIC will receive some "banana pabulum" for their pilot episode of "Little Golden Book Land" (which aired on many syndicated stations recently). If this is ever made into a series, the studio (whose other misdeemeanors include "The Popples" and "The Sylvan Families") will probably earn the dubious "Care Bears/Cute-till-you-puke" Award...Finally, another Disney animated project earns some "peaches and apricots" (AKA "duck sauce") for its two-hour "DuckTales" special on NBC, which satirizes every kind of movie from "Robocop" (in the form of Gizmo Duck) and "Star Wars" to "Dr. Strangelove" (when Uncle Scrooge rides a plummeting money vault, a la Slim Pickens). The special (from Cuckoo's Nest Studios and Wang Film Productions Co., Ltd.) is a first for prime-time network TV.

ERRATA: Back in LJ #53, I was recommending the illustrated catalog offered by CARTOON CARNIVAL (2 Rabbit Run, Wallingford, PA 19086); however, I'd found out recently that the proprietors have discontinued this practice for the last few years. This does not mean that they've stopped selling original animation art; they still carry a large supply of Disney cels, backgrounds, storyboard illustrations and more. They suggest that buyers call them ahead of time to find out what's available and when the best time is to examine said art (215/566-1292).

OBIT: Veteran character actor Joe Silver, 66, died of liver cancer on February 27. Having appeared on stage ("Legs Diamond," "Lenny"), screen ("Switching Channels," "Rhinoceros") and TV ("Sesame Street" and the 1975 sitcom "Fay"), he was an equally talented voice actor in cartoons, even though he was limited to that deep, coarse voice he possessed. Among animated projects, he was involved with the Christmas special "The Night The Animals Talked" and he was the voice of The Greedy in Richard Williams' movie "Raggedy Ann & Andy."

DAILY, DAILY
by A.T. Hunn

He met her on a Monday
On Tuesday they dined out
Shopped for rings on Wednesday
But Thursday, love fell out
Friday brought a spark back
But Saturday squashed it flat
Sunday saw a shattered world
So Monday, bought a cat

GLORY
by Bangor Zack Bullen
Victory at Liege!
Defeat at Ghent!
Revenge for
Defeat at Metz!

Which would you rather have?
300 years of history,
or a bottle of beer,
today?

THE CONTINUING SAGA OF DR. IGUANA

THE STORY SO FAR.

by Ken Burke

rather guilty pleasure by claiming that I was engaged in research. This led to actual research, which in turn led to the amazing discovery that there were several films starring **THE BOWERY BOYS** that were either never released or not included in package sales to local TV stations! My heart pounded with joy, and cravings for processed junk food were heightened when I learned of these...

MISSING FILMS OF THE BOWERY BOYS:

THE BOWERY BOYS in 'Chasin' Strits' (1949): The gang infiltrates a group of evil female impersonators who smuggle secret government plans out of the country in their underwear. Disguised in women's clothing, the 'Boys' rumble with surprised gangsters, bust the spy-ring, and develop understanding for their female counterparts. At adventure's end, Sach (Buntz Hall) refuses to donate his wig, dress, high-heels, and make-up to charity despite the insistence of Slip Mahoney (Leo Gorcey).

"Aw gee Chief, WHY can't I keep my dress?"
"Cuz you ain't no prevert of the opposite gendarme, THAT'S why."
(Pouting) "Gosh Slip, I LIKE dressing up and feeling pretty. Couldn't I just keep this stuff to wear on weekends?"
(Exasperated) "Aw-right! Aw-right! JUST on weekends..."
"Thanks Chief! For someone with such an ugly mug, you're a beautiful guy!" (KISS!)
(Angry) "Sach, NEXT time you do that, you'd BETTER be wearing a dress!" (Goily) "It's a DEAL, Chief."

THE BOWERY BOYS vs. 'Those @#!%&X' Commies' (1951): Sach is blacklisted as a communist because of a propaganda comic-book he mistakenly bought from some "weirdo egghead." Torn between their knee-jerk loyalty to the policies of the government and their life-long friendship with Sach, the 'Boys' use knuckles and know-how to clear their pal's name (while, at the same time, shunning him). After exposing the true culprits, (a group of pinko publishers trying to corrupt American youth through comic-books) Sach receives a medal. At the ceremony, the gang reunites, and Slip present Sach with a stack of *American* comic books "With men slaughtering communists, foreigners, and philosophers, just like they're a'posed to."

As they salute an American flag (with 48 stars), Sach and Slip have the episode's final exchange.

"Gee Chief, I feel just like a cross between 'Captain Patriot' and Richard Nixon!"

"Sach, I'm proud of ya. You've struck a blow for life, livery, and the perusal of happiness. You're a true American revolutionary."

"Thanks Slip. It was nuthin', I was just doing my patriotic duty." (Into camera) "Shouldn't you?"

THE BOWERY BOYS in 'Godzilla My Dream' (1955): The 'Boys' go to the Orient to get a refund for a faulty transistor radio. (Slip - "It's not the economics, it's the precipice of the thing.") When the mutant monster Godzilla raises up to wreak havoc, and all the great scientific minds of Japan cannot stop it, they naturally turn to the visiting Bowery Boys for help. Slip's main strategic problem? How to make a giant fire-breathing lizard succumb to "Routine 9."

THE BOWERY BOYS & THE EAST-SIDE KIDS meet THE HEAD-END KIDS & THE LITTLE TOUGH GUYS (1955): This major reunion of all the editions of this legendary show-biz troupe has many members playing dual, triple, even quadruple roles. Comic confusion reigns supreme as the groups can't make up their collective minds about which fighter's death to avenge, which corrupt city official to expose, which haunted house they should spend the night at, which branch of the armed-services they should join, whose destitute mother or charity they should raise money for, or whether 'Gabe' (Gabe Dell) is a good-guy or a bad-guy this time around. The film's conclusion is a masterpiece of split-screen technology. Slip, responding to one of Huggs' wisecracks, slaps him with his bat. Huggs responds by knocking Slip cold with a blackjack. Sach giggles maniacally and confides to Glimpy "I've always wanted to do that." Glimpy then pistol-whips Sach and steals his watch. Later, in an anonymous graveyard, ALL the gang's valuables are laid upon the grave of Billy Balop.

THE BOWERY BOYS meet ELVIS PRESLEY (1956): 'Louie's Sweet Shoppe' is in danger of going bankrupt. An old sweetheart of Louie's sends her son (Elvis Presley) to help the gang stage shows that will raise the money needed to keep the candy-store open. Complications arise when local girls go ape over Sach's imitations of Elvis' rock'n'roll act, but ignore the real thing as done by Presley. By story's end all is well, and Slip Mahoney and Elvis share the final scene.

"May I say it was MOST polvitatin' to meet you, Elvin."
"Thanks Slip. I know, I used to think that the big city was an awful place, but you boys have been as friendly as grits' gravy on the same warm plate."
"Thanks Elvin. That's most polite and regurgitating for you to say so. Not to mention humid and modest."
(Into camera) "And people think I sing funny."

Boys has been usurped by Duke (Stanley Clements). Duke is smarter, hipper, wears flashier clothing, and is a better fighter than his predecessor. Under his leadership, the gang actually earns a living, but for reasons that Duke can't quite fathom, the 'Boys' seem to prefer the (mis)guidance of the volatile, charismatic Slip Mahoney.

Having tasted power, Duke is not content to return to his former status as a fringe member of the gang. He has Mahoney kidnapped and held hostage while he attempts to win the gang's full devotion, but his efforts towards emulating Slip's charm (language lessons from Jimmy Durante, dressing like an over-ripe 'Jalopy Joe') fail miserably.

When Slip escapes, he forces a showdown with his jealous rival. In full view of the Bowery, Duke sadistically beats the tar out of Mahoney, who seems lucky to land a punch. As brutal as the beating is, Slip's courageous fighter's heart does not allow him to quit, and he rushes back into the fray time and time again. Frustrated that he is not able to finish Mahoney off, Duke pulls out a revolver, and in a voice craned with resentment sneers, "You're all washed up Slip. Say your prayers." As Duke cocks the gun, Slip speaks his piece.

"Duke, before you pull that trigger and splatter my oblong mendels all over my torso delecti, I have this final preponderance to utter."

"Yeah? What's that?"
"Your deficit of compression and esprit de corps forces me to call for an emergency vote from our board of defectors."

"A vote?"
"That's RIGHT! All those in favor of kicking Duke OUT OF THE GANG, synchophate by saying 'AYE!'"

The 'Boys' unanimously vote against the charmless, gun-wielding Duke. It is a crushing blow to his fragile ego, and suddenly he is broken and ashamed. He lowers his pistol and meekly shuffles off into the friendless New York night. Strains of 'Hail! Hail! The Gang's All Here!' play as the gang rejoices. Slip and Sach are together at the elope.

"Gee Chief, it's GREAT to have you back. Even if you are a bully and an ignorant."

"Thanks Sach, those are my sentiments extintely."

THE BOWERY BOYS in 'Chasin' Strits' (1949): When the Brooklyn Dodgers move to L.A., The Bowery Boys move to California to be near them. At first the cultural and architectural differences seem too great an obstacle (restaurant managers won't let them hang around all day, & there are no abandoned buildings or store-fronts to hold meetings or live in), but eventually the differences between East Coast and West work to their advantage.

In New York, 'The Boys' were considered to be lazy bum. In Los Angeles they are thought of as 'easy going.' Easterners regarded the group as "a vicious pack of delinquents." West Coasters refer to them as a "clique." And, in his native burg, people who overheard Slip Mahoney's malapropos dismissed them as the ignorant mis-statements of a functional illiterate. In Hollywood, Mahoney's colorful gab earns him a reputation as a master of stylish, promotional hyperbole!

No longer cowed by poverty or a birthless urban environment, each gang member blossoms in unexpected ways. Chuck (the good-looking one) wins acclaim as a surfer and earns big bucks selling swim-wear and surf-wax. Butch (the quiet one) opens a successful dance studio based on his gang's assorted fight routines. Whitely works as a groundskeeper/clubhouse man for the Dodgers and keeps his pals well supplied with free game tickets.

Slip and Sach make a big splash at a low-budget independent movie studio and are responsible for turning several sci-fi B-pictures into major commercial hits through the use of creative tag-lines such as...

"THE SCIENTOLOGICAL CHALLENGES OF THE CHEE-BACIC AGE!"

"UNABATED TO VILIFY YOUR BOMBARD BONES ON YOUR BOWERY BACK!"

"SURPRISE SO THOUGHT YOU'LL BE IMBIBED WITH EXCITEMENT!"

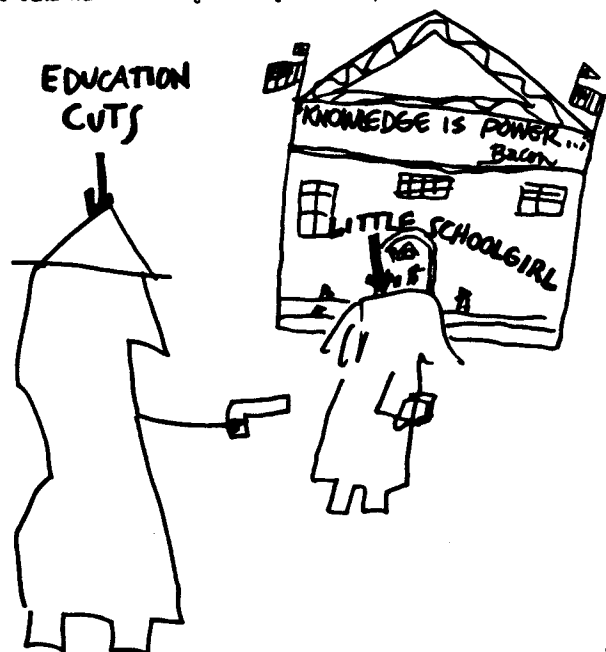
"ATOMIC EXPLOSIONS OF SYNCHRONISTIC TURBULENCE & MUTANT VOCAL ACHIEVEMENT!"

Perhaps the biggest change in the gang is in the relationship between Slip and Sach. Publicly, Sach remains the daffy useless clown, but few suspect that he is the real power behind Slip Mahoney. He cheers his boss's many broken hearts at the hands of calculating starlets. He quietly checks his leader into private hospitals so he can 'dry-out' from bouts of stress-related drinking. More importantly, Sach's boyish pranks and constant silly repartee keeps Slip from morbidly dwelling on his failures and keeps his attitudes perfectly positioned to aggressively pursue new angles and ideas. Moreover, Sach is the one guy whom Slip must respond to honestly. Mahoney's attachment and loyalty to Sach becomes legendary in Hollywood, and Slip's friendship is all Sach asks in return.

At picture's end, Gabe comes out West to tell his friends of the closing of their old haunt, the Sweet Shoppe, with the lonely passing of Louie Dumbrooky. Gabe sees that his childhood pals no longer think of themselves as Bowery BOYS but rather as MEN. He further realizes that like the baseball club they follow of west, though they are essentially the same guys, they are in no way the same team.

My sources tell me that scripts were commissioned for "THE BOWERY BOYS BEACH PARTY" & "THE BOWERY BOYS JOIN THE PEACH CORPS," and that there was some actual filming done on "THE BOWERY BOYS GO TO A LOVE-IN" but I prefer to remember them in their prime, when moral issues were easily spelled out in black & white, when camaraderie was all-important, and several gross men could lounge around a candy-store all day long and call themselves "THE BOWERY BOYS."

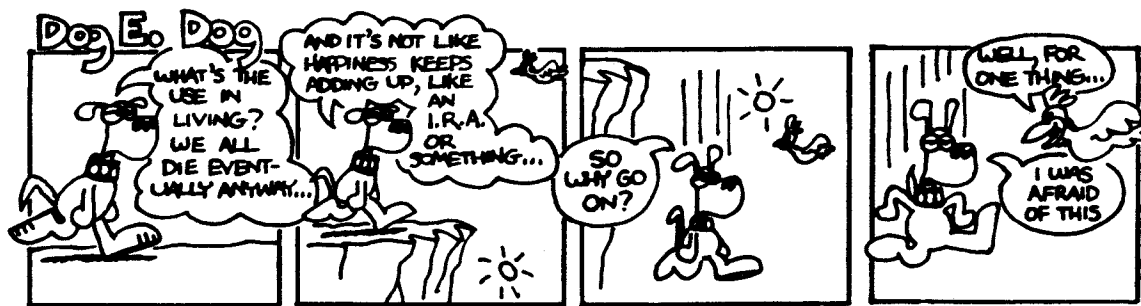
(ED. NOTE: We regret that due to reduction problems, the copy shop inadvertently cut off a few lines of this piece and we did not catch the missing lines until it was too late and the original had been discarded. Ken is invited to resubmit this piece, typed up camera-ready in 11 format (see page 2), and readers are invited to send Ken an SASE for the full-size piece.)



SCARY

by Mary Ann Henn
Oh, Dreams, how can I live unless you tell me more? And yet, I am afraid of opening up the door that leads me on the paths that penetrate my core

and force me to confront myself. I'm sore and torn with hurts unknown unrecognized before. And when I look at me in any mirror, I wonder, "What's in store...?"



Explore Your
REINCARNALITY!
Eliminate or implant
Sex Reversions
and Lust Impulsions.

Weakness is quickly becoming fashionable... at last. Get crucial kicks from the Brain Cult of Macho Irony.

An inside answer... your previous sex lives. Reincarnation unleashed...

Mad love, lust and a twisted reality. \$1 for bizarre but hilarious tract.

The Church of the SubGenius

UPSTAGED by Larry Stolte

Attending a second-rate outdoor musical can be such a wonderful experience, if your idea of wonderful is staging an accounting festival or committing bastinado on loved ones. Okay, I wasn't expecting Broadway, but I wasn't expecting Calcutta either. That Saturday night was closer to the latter.

The carminative Chinese food that I used as an inhalent one hour earlier filled me with enough flatulence to fuel a blimp, so I was not in the best of moods when we entered the theater. My wife and I found our seats right where the architect put them. I euphemize, though, when I call him an architect. The fool has apparently studied architecture under Salvador Dali at the Stevie Wonder Drafting School. I shall explain.

Our seats were a few rows from the stage, but they were quite a distance to the right from the center of the theater—very close to our parking space in the giraffe lot. Due to the angle of our placement, we could see the entire orchestra pit and about one-third of the stage.

The play started a half hour late because many of the watchers had to stand up to "be seen." And, of course, people were still filing in long after the opening scene should have started. The play was sold out, but there were some no-shows. That meant that there were a few good seats available for the inveterate bargain hunters. So the domino theory goes into effect.

Two people in good seats spot two empty better seats, so they move. Two people in bad seats go to the now vacant good seats, and two people in steerage go to the now vacant bad seats. Seconds later, the ticket holders of the originally empty better seats show up with an usher. The usher, not a Ph.D. candidate, says, "Someone has taken your seats. Would you care to sit over in the giraffe lot and listen to the play?" To no one's surprise, they didn't choose that option. The usher then had to trek inward to remove the original seat thieves, who in turn wanted their old seats, triggering a reverse domino theory. Most of these social aerobics were happening in the row in front of us so, had we been able to see the stage, we would have missed the first number. Therefore, I really don't know what we didn't miss.

I do know that during the second round something got screwed up. An ectomorphic basketball forward with a frizzy perm sat down right in front of me, causing me to ponder the vagaries of the California penal system regarding second degree murder in particular. He leaned to his left, trying to get a better angel of sight to the stage. This left me in the awkward position of needing a periscope with X-ray vision to witness any of the histrionics. No matter. The two women behind me were going to tell us and all others within earshot just what was going on, and what was to happen in the next scene, and what they did in the sixties, and their views on American foreign policy. My wife, who has the patience of a saint, turned around slowly, and I overheard the eobionts quieted for a fine about equal to their attention span. They started up again seconds later, interrupting my viewing of what was taking place in front of me—the back of a man's head. Anyway, a few short lifetimes later, everyone stood up, and I realized that the play was over. We filed out of the arena and walked around awhile to avoid the certain traffic jam. At day-break, the traffic lightened and we left for home.

Contemporary Fiction Demolished

PART TWO

by Todd Kristel

BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITY by Ernest Hemingway

You are not the kind of man to be in a place like this at this time of the night. But here you are, staring at the railroad track running across the burned-out country. You are talking to an officer who is too drunk to hear the shelling moving closer. "I'm drunk," he keeps saying, "oh, I am so soused." If only you hadn't stretched your arms just as the lieutenant asked for volunteers to carry the dynamite.

BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITY by Victorian writer George Eliot

You are not the kind of aristocrat to be at a place like this at four o'clock on a September day. But you have reconciled yourself to gambling in one of those splendid resorts filled with very distant varieties of European type, all of whom have gaunt faces, deep-set eyes, and grizzled eyebrows. You are admiring the spirit of a fair countess who is losing strickingly at roulette. Your glances meet, and you dwell on the smile of irony in her eyes.

BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG EPIPHANY by James Joyce

You are not the type to be at a place like this at this time of the morning.

But here you are. Designer hangover. Full throb.

My grain of sand on the big beach. Booming crashing waves. Shipwrecked. Noah's ark of a diver.

Marching muddy feet. Bleating, bellowing, sheeps and pigs, their udders spilling milk. No use to cry.

Alas! A lad! Avowal. Smack. Oooby dooby. Be bop a lula. Tutti Frutti.

BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITY by William Shakespeare

HENRY: I pray thee sir, let me speak with thee.

RICHARD: Be it as it is.

HENRY: My Lord, thou art not the type of nobleman to be at a place such as this at this time of the morning. I know it pleaseth neither of us well.

RICHARD: Aye, but here I am, and 'tis not entirely an unfamiliar place.

HENRY: O yet, for God's sake, go not to these night-clubs! I am loath to gall a new-healed hangover. But, by thy leave, thou didst swear to me not to venture to this club till my return. I beseech your Grace to leave this place at once.

RICHARD: Nay, I will not slink away. I am beloved of this fair maiden's shaved head.

HENRY: By my troth, thou art a great fool. I can easier speak with a brick wall than with thee.

RICHARD: Be thou accursed for making me annoyed. Get thee gone! Go hie thee! I scorn thee, thou bastardly rogue, thou basket-hilt stale juggler, thou Quayle brain, thou cut-purse rascal!

What if MOBY DICK were a yuppie novel?

BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG WHALE

Call me Ishmael and leave a message on my machine. Some years ago—never mind how long, precisely—having lots of money in my wallet, and nothing in particular to interest me on television, I thought I would snort a little to see the watery part of the world. It's a way I have of driving off steam, and regulating the circulation. Whenever I find myself on the verge of reading about a character who is over 30 years old—then I account it high time to get high as soon as I finish interfacing with power literature. This is my substitute for a real life. With a philosophical flourish I find myself dazed and exhausted in a nightclub at six in the morning...

ANNA LEE,
THE HEALER

Bouncing in back of a most compact Pontiac 1000, somewhere between the New Jersey Turnpike and

Washington, D.C.—somewhere between the stately shadows of the Lincoln Memorial and the crack-lined streets of the off-white boro-roughs—the sickness struck.

At first it manifested itself as a seemingly harmless gastronomical quirk or two: y'know, the kinda down-there weeziness usually associated with fast road food; the slight sense of a stomach briefly questioning your latest carefree deposit. In all, most definitely NOT something to lose any sleep (or viewing of Bob Costas) over.

Yet as the new day's dawn crudely awakens, the queasiness continues; gurgling persistently now, erupting in an emittance or two at the most inopportune junctures. Again, though, no cause for concern, even as you most regally dine amongst the senate finery deep within the Hay Adams Grille and later top the afternoon with a reverent yet oddly conspiratorial visit to the 35th president's eternal grave.

That night, you gamely tackle your first artichoke, neatly filing its discarded leaves on your plate in lieu of yet more death by chocolate raspberry pounds cake. You notice later, however, how increasingly difficult it becomes to maintain that after-dinner grin plastered across your mug as the host's bounciful nine-year-old pours your lap full of Casio's and Poison cassettes.

Back at the motel by midnight, the fever now strikes, inching slowly up your torso as you curl sweating beneath the rented linen. Letterman seems even less funny than usual; your quarreling floormates brawl ever more deafeningly, broken only every station identification or so by the terrifying peal of sirens ricocheting beneath the basin. The night never ends.

6:37 AM. An unbelievable challenge to simply hurl yourself towards ABC's Morning News in order to find out how many minutes of this dreaded day remain. Despite a hectic schedule ahead, haunting the Library of Congress' computer index for old and mysterious cohorts, you can't quite make it into the shower. You can hardly even make it into yesterday's ill-fitting rags! But the breakfast appointment awaits; just how that double order of toasted rye made it down intact you'll be asking yourself for meals to come.

Walking the sunlit streets in a daze, plodding every which way in search of taxis which refuse to be hailed, you finally—thankfully!—collapse into a life-defeating heap outside the lawn mower shop. Succumbing all too lately to the dinner demons deep within, your mind spins upward and outward as the fever overwhelms and your eyelids, for the first time in several days, drop closed.

Was it a dream, or was it simply a delusion? However did I make it into this soft room of beds and milk crates? Vague memories of spilling soup across shoes en route SOMEWHERE via subterranean transit persist, but to concentrate for more than a millisecond upon this, or any other thought, is mostly impossible. The mind is no longer clicking; the sickness, strangely though, seems somehow the LEAST of your worries.

Seconds—minutes—hours?—later, a door slips gently open, shooting a slit of dusty dorm-like light across the enclosed. Then a robed figure enters, smiling benevolently, gesturing most peacefully. What's left of you can somehow sense more than just another vision: instead, one can lay and bask within the gentleness and maternity glowing unashamedly from this woman's presence.

She approaches. She pauses momentarily, wistfully beckoning you not to try to reach out, not to attempt to form words. And while we're on the subject, how in hell did she realize I was trying to cry out to her anyways? If this is not a dream, then surely I am—

Suddenly, you feel a parting of the sheets below. The mattress depresses partially as her face draws ever closer. She seems to communicate something somehow, though not with words. More with images; concepts; colors.

Colors! YES! She lays her hands gently yet firmly across your midsection, swirling them repeatedly over your churning digestive tract. Massaging, encircling, and caressing the offending organs, sending deep within pulses of cooling, healing green light from her fingertips. Over and over and over again she sagely rubs the stomach, and although you can't immediately grasp its biles receding, you most certainly sense the ever-pervading wash of green which is visible even beneath your closed eyes.

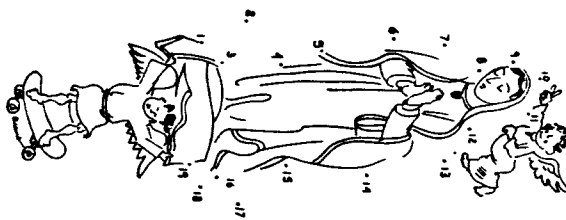
You can never be too certain how exactly you made it home a day or two later, or if your healing green girl reminiscences were merely burger-induced apparitions. Yet there's no denying the most disturbing discovery you uncover upon yourself as you bounce into the shower the following morning.

That telltale secretively systematic reddening about the midsection. It appears to resemble sets of fingertip imprints.



PIGSHIT
By Gary Pig Gold

CONNECT-THE-DOT
THEOLOGY



MasterMath Explains... THE DISCOVERY OF THE BEACH

by William G. Raley

Excuse me if I sound mildly incoherent, and ramble on about not much of anything at all; that is, nothing terribly significant, like to people who watch ROSEANNE and others who notice such things. It's just that I haven't quite recovered from my last article. Hyperspace is such a rush (almost as much as four cups of New York coffee). So now's a good time to relay the results of some extensive research I did at C.H.U.D. headquarters. Okay, okay, so I was sunbathing at Huntington Beach at the time and made it all up. The point is that if it's in print (even the fine print of INSIDE JOKE), it's real.

The beach was discovered in 1872 by a little-known officer in the Swiss navy, Rear Admiral Heinrich Wolf-junger, following a wrong turn during manoeuvres near Luzern. The crew was overjoyed at the warm weather in the southern hemisphere, but debates raged whether the summer had migrated south, or the winter north. Furthermore, there were outbreaks of scurvy, alleviated only when a stowaway Gatorade salesman was found on board.

Upon reaching Antarctica—which means "Siamese twin of Argentina, only larger"—Wolfjunger was surprised to see that the coastline consisted of a coarse, grainy substance, which he deduced to be silicon. Later experiments by the ship's scientists, however, proved it was nothing more than sand. Tales of this region being a wasteland of snow and ice faded into nothingness—or at least as far as Birmingham—when the first mate pointed out that all previous expeditions had been made in the dead of winter.

To the delight of the crew, their volleyball nets stuck in the new substance much better than on the poop deck. It was during this energetic diversion that Wolfjunger first began to realize the economic potential of his discovery. First of all, he had no prepayment penalty on his chalet's mortgage. Also, there was the affair of his having the minister of finance's daughter named Miss Switzerland. How was he to know the man wasn't married?

Remembering the economic principle that "dozens are better than one," the admiral thought of transporting parcels of the property to various countries, especially since Switzerland had just cornered the world market on suntan lotion. He took samples of the new material, scoresheets of the volleyball games, and a Polaroid of a sand castle that resembled Neuschwanstein—but with more turrets—back to his native country to be further analyzed.

The Antarctic beaches were, over the course of several years, transferred to Swiss deposit boxes for safekeeping. Sales went generally well, although in the course of the last order, the tugboat ran aground in the Strait of Gibraltar, and the cargo drifted off to form what is now northeast Africa. War was narrowly averted after the French patented a process for removing some clothing before application of the suntan oil. By far the Americans showed the most enthusiasm toward the entire project, and sales in the southern states alone would have been greater than those by any other country, had not Arizona and New Mexico cancelled their surfboard order at the last minute.

By the way, a terrible thing happened to a friend of mine the other day. I was following her home, when all of a sudden she turned into a driveway.

QUESTION:
"We don't want no wars with chance-selected winners. We don't want no wars with losers and survivors. We don't want no wars—period. Why don't you take a long walk on a short pier?"

ANSWER:
Wars will never end until we correct the suicidal injustice of winnerless wars which antedates Judaism, no doubt. As you may have in previous lives send a BAZE to war-ending WINNERS - Box 2243 YOUNGSTOWN - OHIO, 44504



Wax Ink

by Rory Houchens

PETER AND THE WOLF--Weird Al Yankovic & Wendy Carlos (CBS)--Maybe some bright mind at CBS figured pairing Weird Al with Wendy Carlos was just strange enough to sell ungodly amounts of platters, but something went wrong with this commercial concoction. As a remake of Prokofiev's classic, it stinks, and as a parody, it bites--Al's narration is spoken crud, and Wendy's synthetics have never sounded so shallow and mechanical. For a better time, search out 1975's **PETER AND THE WOLF** (RSO Recs.) with Viv Stanshall, Brian Eno and Stephane Grappelli, among others.

BLESSING AND CURSE--Band of Susans (Trace Elements Recs., 172 East 4th St., Suite 11D, New York, NY 10009)--Smart enough to be art, heavy enough to be metal, Band of Susans builds walls of sound with iron and copper husks held together with chains of jangled notes and sinew, polished with sharp, cerebral pulsebeats, and sealed with slivered vocals. Specials of the day: "Hope Against Hope," "Where Have All The Flowers Gone."

SET--Charles Rick Kelly (Closet Studios, Ltd., c/o C.R. Kelly, P.O. Box 11304, Dallas, TX 75223)--This cassette features ten songs which Chuck seems fit to describe as "funk-rock," but the bewildering title "light jazz-inflected folk" seems more appropriate to me. An apt rhythm guitarist, C.R. lays down some smooth and tasty cushions, slaps on some stinging lead guitar work, adds some droning, chirping synthesizer and some (usually) socially relevant lyrics. The end product is pretty good ("Buy, America...", "Skeleton Crew"), but a better mix and production would enhance this stuff a bit.

THE DOOR--Steve Lacy (RCA/Novus)--After thirty-five years perfecting his craft, Steve Lacy is probably the most distinctive and the dominant soprano saxophonist around, and each new album adds something new to his never-ending list of achievements. This lp has an obscure Thelonious Monk tune (the rare "Ugly Beauty"), an African-influenced piece ("Cliches"), a simmering, new Lacy original ("The Door"), a moody ballad ("Forgetful"), complete with two soprano saxes, violin, and a pair of drums.



Carmelita's Feet

by Susan Packie

"I can't believe it! Are you quite sure you haven't made a mistake, little girl? Maybe all those zeroes shouldn't be there," the director of sales remarked condescendingly.

"I haven't made a mistake. All the zeroes should be there. If you will look out your window, you will see an armored car pulling up."

"I just can't understand how you could have made four million dollars selling Girl Scout cookies."

"Armored car delivery for the director of sales, cookie division, Girl Scouts of America."

"Come right in. How much money do you have there? Forty dollars?" the director of sales asked with a chuckle.

"No, sir, four million. You may count it. It's all there. Now, if you'll be so kind as to sign this receipt..."

"Four...million...dollars? Little Carmelita sold four million dollars worth of Girl Scout Cookies? Come clean, kid, where did you get that kind of money?"

"Sir, if you'll--"

"I'll sign, I'll sign. Now tell me, kid, is this mo-

TALES OF SUBURBIA

PART TWO by Kathy Stadalsky

Brittany knocked gently on the bathroom door.

She knocked a little harder.

She banged on the door.

She walked in the bathroom.

"Christ," she cried, turning down the radio on the ledge and grabbing a towel. "Whaddaya doing, starting our own steam bath here?"

David stopped singing and stuck his head around the curtain. "What? Oh, hey, sorry. Lemme open a window, okay?" He climbed out of the tub, soaking wet, and opened the window.

"Uhh, David-doll?"

"Yeah?"

"What are you doing?"

"Huh?"

"Why are you wearing jeans in the shower?"

"Oh..." he laughed, hopping back into the tub. "I'm brushing my cage. See?" He picked up a wire brush from the floor of the tub and held it aloft. "Just the ticket for achieving that well-worn shading in strategic places." Dragging the brush gingerly across his crotch, he moaned in mock agony, scrunching up his face in simulated pain. "Oowww, aarrgghh!"

Brittany was bland. "Uh-huh. Do-it-yourself S&M?"

David flicked water at her.

"Where'd you pick this one up? Hints from Heloise?"

"Heloise II," David smirked. "This is no laughing matter, woman! These babies have to be perfection tonight."

"Hot date, huh?"

"Nah, I'm going to the Roll-A-Rama."

"New bar? Gay motel?"

"Nope, smartass. Roller rink."

"You're going roller skating?"

"Yep. Tuesday is gay night."

"Now I know I've heard everything!"

"It's a blast, you'd love it!"

"I've never even heard of it!"

"Sheesh, some fag hag you are."

\$. \$ \$ \$ \$ \$

He didn't make it to the Roll-A-Rama early enough. He'd been running late, so he was prepared for the worst. It happened, naturally.

They had run out of men's skates.

David shed his quilted flannel shirt and submitted himself to the indignity of women's skates (white, with pink, nelly-looking tassels) and wobbled his way awkwardly to the edge of the rink.

He grinned when he heard the recorded music: "I enjoy being a girl."

(To be continued)

ney hot? Did you steal it? Did you make it in your basement? Should I check the serial numbers?"

"I really sold two million boxes of Girl Scout cookies. I knew you wouldn't believe me, so I brought my parents, my brothers and sisters, my aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents, great-grandparents, friends, neighbors, and acquaintances along to prove it to you. Come in, gang!"

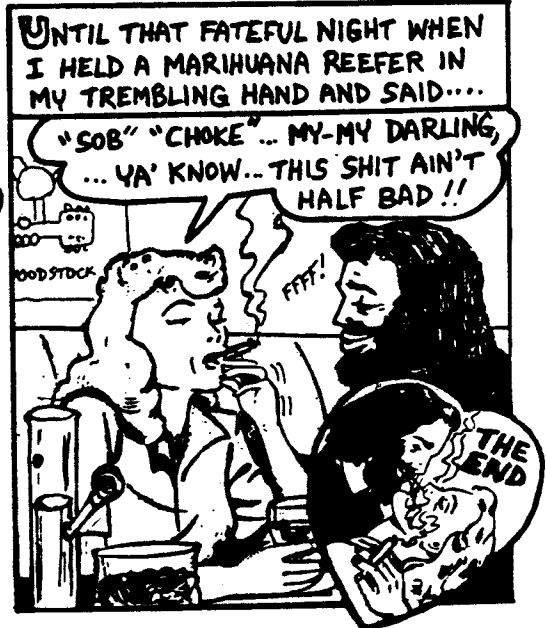
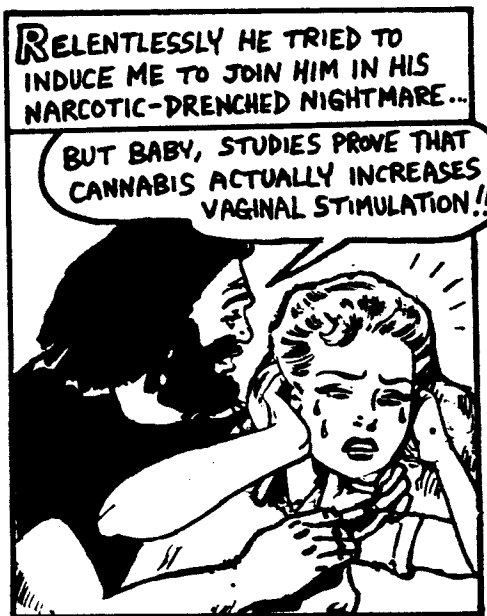
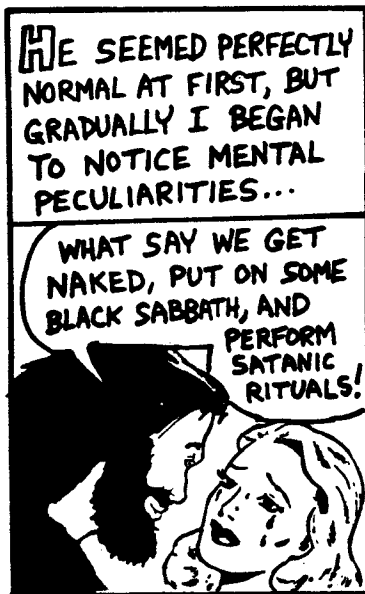
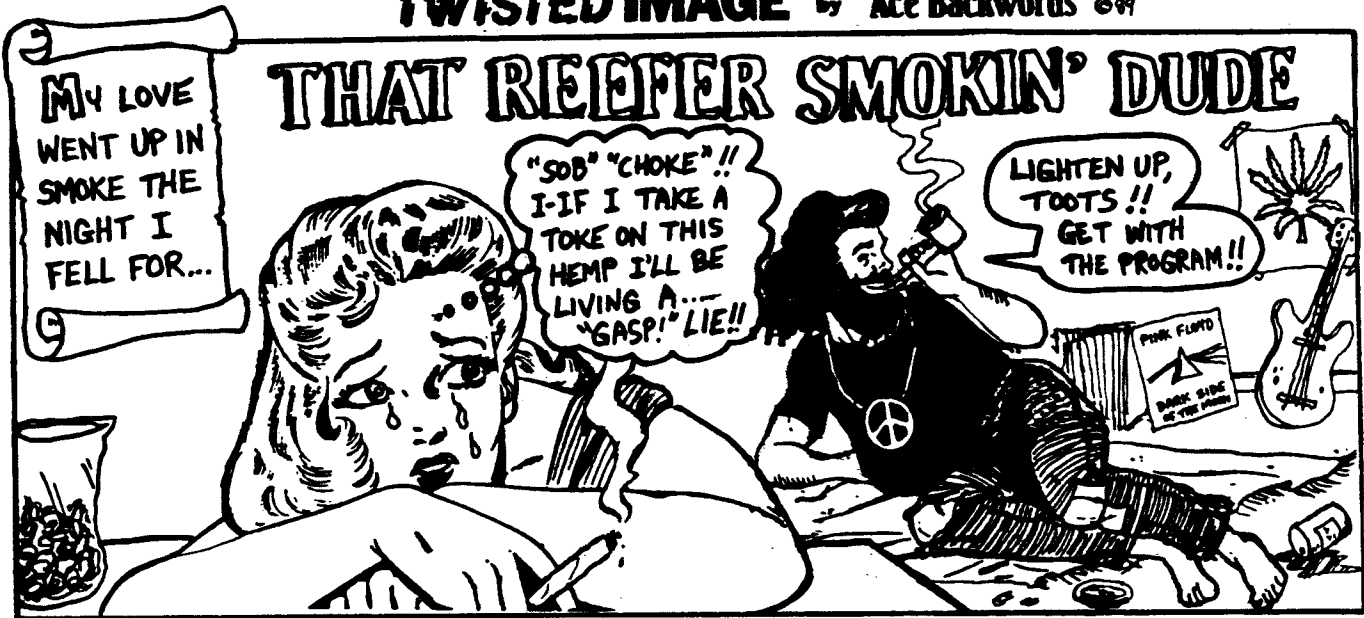
With that, eight hundred people poured into the director of sales' office. Not one weighed less than two hundred pounds, so the room was a bit crowded. If a scale had been available, the heaviest would have weighed in at 560 pounds.

"Are you trying to say all these heavyweights--"

"Were quite thin before buying all those Girl Scout cookies. Twenty-five hundred boxes a person can really put the pounds on, you know."

Never having eaten a Girl Scout cookie, the director of sales merely nodded in resignation. "But I notice that you yourself aren't fat, Carmelita. How did you manage that?"

Carmelita only smiled. She didn't eat them, either. She was no dummy! She swiveled around in the director's chair a couple of times. It would fit just fine.



by Dale A. White

"Yeah," Curly whined.

YOUNGSTOWN - OHIO, 44504

the ayatollah's psychoanalysis:

by Elliot Cantsin

The Ayatollah was sitting on the couch watching his favorite TV show, "Ciscol and Ponchol." Ponchol was saying, "Hey, Ciscol, what do you think of this new film, the 'Two Heads of Dr. Heironymous'?"

Ciscol winced. "Well, Ponchol," he said, "I thought it was a typical example of the mindless trash that they churn out of Hollywood every day."

Ponchol smiled approvingly. "Yes, Ciscol, I agree with you completely, but at least it wasn't as pretentious as last summer's blockbuster, the 'Three Heads of Pope John XXIII'."

"Yes, Ponchol, that's true," said Ciscol severely, "but the fact is that concession is no longer satisfying. It used to be that when Hollywood lowered its sights and only tried to make idiotic adventure films it could succeed, but now even that has become too great a challenge."

Ponchol nodded glumly. "Yeah, Ciscol. I know what you mean," he said. "Everything nowadays is mechanical: the plots, the direction, the acting. Even thrillers with blood and guts flying all over the screen have become quite boring."

Ciscol became enthusiastic. He jumped up and started throwing his arms around. "You said it, Ponchol," he said. "This whole industry has become mechanical, the supercorporation that produces this show is mechanical, this show has been mechanical until today when we've finally thrown off our chains and spoken the truth. I feel so free..." He was nearly shouting. Just then the TV went blank.

"We are sorry that we must interrupt this program due to mechanical difficulties," a voice said. "Please stand by."

"Dogs of unbelievers," said the Ayatollah, and turned off the TV.

Just then the Ayatollah's therapist, Dr. Sigmund Clone of the Irani Psychoanalytic Association, came in. The Ayatollah lay down on the couch. Dr. Clone sat down on a chair at the end of the couch above the Ayatollah's head, where the piercing eyes of the Ayatollah could not make him nervous.

"Have you been having any more nightmares about the Great Satan?" Dr. Clone asked.

"No," said the Ayatollah. "Ever since he retired to his dude ranch, I haven't lost a minute's sleep over him. I am not a man to hold a grudge. Now I have nightmares about the Ho-Hum Satan and the Mickey Mouse Satan."

"Are there any dreams you remember particularly vividly?" asked Dr. Clone.

"Yes," said the Ayatollah, "I used the method you told me about, of using the power of suggestion to make something pleasant happen in my dream, and it worked for a while, but then the reality principle reasserted itself and I woke up in a cold sweat..."

THE AYATOLLAH'S DREAM

George was pacing back and forth. Dan was sitting in an easy chair.

"I just can't take it any more," said George. "I picked you, Dan, for the Vice-Presidency because you were the only politician who could make me look like less of an insect, and it worked, but still I feel like an insect. When I talk to Gorbys, my knees shake. When I talk to Congress, I stutter. When I talk to the VFW, who love me like a brother, I can't even remember Pearl Harbor. I want to quit, but I can't leave the leadership of the free world in your childlike hands. There's only one thing I can do..."

George took a small gun out of his pocket, aimed it at Dan, and fired. There was a small hole in the middle of Dan's forehead. George replaced the gun in his pocket, went over to the desk, picked up the phone, and dialed.

"Hello, Police Headquarters?" George said. "This is the Presi-

dent of the United States. Well, guys, I've committed a federal offense, and I feel great. So just send an officer over to the White House to arrest me."

The voice over the phone registered disbelief. "What, that old Iran-contra thing, sir? Nobody cares about that."

"I've shot Dan Quayle," George said solemnly.

The voice over the phone sounded cheerful. "That doesn't sound too serious, sir," it said.

George rose up stiffly and kissed into the phone. "Read my lips!" he said. "Send an officer to arrest me immediately!"

The voice over the phone became humble. "I can't read your lips over the phone, sir," it said, "but I'll do as you say. You're so forceful and decisive. That's why I voted for you."

George hung up the phone. Dan was looking at him with a hurt expression in his eyes.

"Dan, you're alive!" George said in surprise. There was no menace in his voice; he had already begun to miss his playful Vice-President.

"You missed," Dan said seriously.

"Then what's that hole in your head?" George asked.

"I don't know," said Dan. "It's been there for as long as I can remember."

"It's funny, I never noticed it," George became philosophical. "I guess the Zen Masters are right—we only see what our preconceived ideas allow us to see."

"It's true," said Dan. "The liberals see the hole in my head even when I cover it with my Mickey Mouse hat."

THE AYATOLLAH'S SECOND DREAM

George was pacing back and forth. Dan was sitting in an easy chair reading a book. George looked at Dan in disbelief. "What are you doing, Dan?" he said.

"I'm getting sick and tired of people saying I'm an illiterate who only got through school by means of monetary gifts provided by my father and unnatural services provided by myself," Dan said. "I'm reading Confucius. It says here that when a government oppresses people it loses the Mandate of Heaven, and people have a right to overthrow it."

George shrugged. "But, Dan," he said, "Confucius was—you know what I mean—yellow."

"Yes," said Dan, "but he was a yellow conservative."

"Gee, Dan," said George, "I'll have to ponder that one."

(AUTHOR'S COMMENT: What was obvious to conservatives two and a half millennia ago has become difficult today. What then would they make of Lao Tzu? Perhaps Ho Chi Zen can say a True Word about this? Otherwise we shall have to cut the cat in half.)

THE AYATOLLAH'S THIRD DREAM

George was pacing back and forth. The interviewer was sitting in an easy chair. "Mr. President, sir," said the interviewer, "your behavior has often been called racist. Are you, or have you ever been, a racist?"

George continued pacing indignantly as he spoke. "I state categorically that I am not a racist," he said. "How could I be? My own son is married to a Hispanic woman, and I have little brown grandchildren who are intelligent, good-looking, and well-mannered. No, I have never been a racist. I am a capitalist, pure and simple, and proud of it. I have exploited and will continue to exploit Whites and Blacks, humanists and racists, middle-class and poor, the gullible and those insightful enough to see what I am doing but can't do anything about it because of the gullible democratic majority, indiscriminately in the interest of that in which I truly believe, money, my own and that of the rich people I represent and to whom I feel a profound sense of responsibility. I have been called an elitist, but in fact I have thousands of friends; I simply choose them carefully, and if some poor Black person wants to be my friend, all he has to do is go out there into the free market and make himself a few hundred million dollars by the sweat of his brow as God intended, and then I could respect him. Look at Jesse Jackson. He gets media time which he can in no way afford for free to talk about his beautiful but unrealistic ideas, just because he is Black. Now if he were a corporate head making millions of dollars turning out shoddy products and treating his workers like dirt, or a Senator raking off millions of dollars in bribes, then maybe I could respect him, and maybe even be his friend. People accuse me of having neo-Nazi work for me. Well, maybe so, but that's simply because, like God, I'm color-blind. The only color I want to see is green. If a neo-Nazi is the best man for the job, then I want him, the same as if he were a Black or a Jew. This nation was founded on the love of money, and that's the tradition I intend to uphold, so let's not hear any more of this racist nonsense. If you must refer to color when talking about me, please call me a green supremacist. On the other hand, I am also a green liberationist, as you will soon see: a nation of fools and their money are soon parted..."

At this point Dr. Clone broke in on the Ayatollah's recounting of his dreams. "You realize, of course, Ayatollah," he said, "that your obsession with the great and small Satans of the West is just a projection on your part of the repressed feelings you had about your father as a child. You understand that the tortures and murders of your followers by the Shah when he was supported by the U.S., and the shooting down of a commercial aircraft killing hundreds of Irani citizens, have nothing to do with it..."

At this point the Ayatollah broke in. "I'm completely cured," he said. "These are just dreams. All I really want to do now is lounge in my beautiful garden, which is like the Paradise of Allah, read my Koran, call to me my 19th and 20th wives, who are 14 and 13 years old, and squeeze their little, budding—"

At this point Elaine broke in and deleted the rest of the story.



Commercial McClue-In

...OF NOT TV

by "Kid" Sieve and Elayne Wechsler

We've decided to combine columns this time because, quite frankly, neither of us can tell the difference between TV shows and ads sometimes...and we're not alone. Quite a few fundie viewers of the Donald "Wild Man" Wildmon arch-conservative/prudish variety couldn't distinguish Madonna's "Like a Prayer" video from her Pepsi commercial. Gosh, we don't know why—they were only TWO COMPLETELY DIFFERENT MOTIFS, one featuring a child at a birthday party and the other burning crosses, stigmata, dancing in Madonna-whore underwear in a stage-church and interracial kissing. Naturally Wildmon's ilk didn't come out and say that the last item was what upset them the most—they chose to protest the religious imagery (never mind that the end of the video featured the "cast" taking a bow on a stage, thus making it abundantly clear to those of us who even bother analyzing these things that it was not supposed to be a real church). The upshot is, Pepsi wound up throwing \$5-10 mill down the drain (aaaa) in terminating their ad—which, remember, has nothing to do with the video (but honestly, aren't they really the same hard-sell kinda thing anyway?). Best quote to come out of this silliness was from People For The American Way's Art Kropp: "This boycott thing has gotten so out of hand...The frightening thing is all the corporations that are buying into it." It is frightening when corporations, so used to telling us what we need, cave in to an obnoxiously vocal minority of folks who also deem it their sacred right to tell us what we need. On the other hand, at least some people must be starting to wise up as to who's always really controlled television (not the creative minds in Hollywood/New York and certainly not the viewers), so some good may come of this nonsense after all.

Okay, we admit it, we fell for CBS's print ads in several upwardly-mobile mags. We saw the one done for BEAUTY & THE BEAST, loved it and pasted it up on Elayne & Steve's wall. The ads feature, in the words of NY Newsday reviewer Jonathan Mandell, "attitudinal yuppigrams" like "Abandon the common. Recreate your world. Enchant someone. Drop your guard." and so forth. Ad writer James Overall thinks they're the bee's knees; Mandell put him in his place (us too) by parodying the cloying snippet style: "Images matter. Words don't matter. Attitude has replaced thought." It serves us right. Stop.

We're about halfway through Marvin Kitman's book I AM A VCR by now (hey, Elayne won't read it during the shows and the Kid won't read it during the commercials, give us a break), and thank him profusely for sending us a comp copy (and also for sending us a new copy of his first book, GEORGE WASHINGTON'S EXPENSE ACCOUNT, just in time for us to do our taxes this year). Rush out right now and buy this gem. It's witty and wise and quite insightful about the state of modern TV, and besides, Marvin's a friend of ours. It's \$17.95, put out by Random House.

Before we get to the reviews, we want to tackle one of the most controversial media flaps in recent memory. We're speaking of Whittle Communications' intent to bribe high schools with \$50 thou in TV-related equipment (PER SCHOOL—this is larger than many schools' budgets for things like books, pencils and teachers) if the schools run their teen-oriented program CHANNEL ONE, a 12-minute "television news and information program" (a younger version of GOOD MORNING AMERICA, news-as-infotainment) exclusively—the schools cannot show any other commercial news programs—each week. Whittle wants to get CO into over 8000 schools. The show features 300 minutes' worth of commercials, and the teens obviously can't zap through them or leave the room when they're on—a captive, impressionable, consuming-mad audience. Chris Whittle claims he's performing a valuable service, but what he's really doing is creating a need, then filling it. Third World Week editor Richard Dudman, a friend of Whittle, says "My own view, after 50 years in the news business, is that Whittle's classroom project is a terrible idea and ought to be cut off at the knees. I would say that even if Third World Week did not have a competitive interest in the controversy, but that's another story...The argument is that most teenagers don't read any newspaper or watch the news on TV or listen to it on the radio...Therefore, says Whittle, its commercial news shows will fill the information gap. It's a great argument but a poor conclusion. Knocking the printed word and plugging passive screen-watching is no solution...And the kids are subjected to plenty of commercial exploitation without bringing it into the classroom." Which happens anyway, only usually more subtly, but that's another story. And honestly, using infotainment to bridge an information gap? For the best analysis of the real problems behind a concept like CO, read Leslie Savan's article in the March 28 Village Voice ("The whole deal depends on our agreement that a TV news show designed to hold wandering teenage attentions will help them become knowledgeable citizens—and that the alternative, forcing them to read a newspaper in class, is somehow inadequate or inhumane...Schools that accept CHANNEL ONE would be giving their seal of approval not only to the commercials, but to the sound of a TV brain buzzing...once the network is established, competitors of Whittle will scramble to produce more news, more shows, at lower prices, until finally teacherless schools are as common as tellerless banks.").

Time for midseason reviews now, and bear in mind that as we go to press the following shows are just premiering: NEARLY DEPARTED (it stars Eric Idle, which has to be a plus, but seems to resemble

BEETLEJUICE without Beetlejuice, which has to be a minus), HAVE FAITH (a presumably wacky sitcom featuring four priests, God help us), DREAM STREET (which sounds like an American version of EAST-ENDERS given us by the creators of thirtysomething presumably to atone for their erstwhile snobbish ignoring of the working class) and THE JIM HENSON HOUR (which we're recommending even before seeing, as it'll feature John Hurt doing more "Storyteller" installments and, we don't care if Henson can buy his own planet, he's damn creative and we adored LABYRINTH and DARK CRYSTAL so there). Also, there are several shows whose trial runs are over (or which were just plan cancelled) before we had a chance to talk about them, so we'll do that first:

A FINE ROMANCE—This is better off dead, although ABC ordered six more episodes to be shown sometime in the future (during the next strike?). It was about a divorced nemmagazine anchorcouple who gallivant around Europe solving murder mysteries. Oh yeah, we know LOTS of people like that, we can really identify. The best thing about it was the animated opening credits. ½

ANYTHING BUT LOVE—We knew we'd love this show as soon as we read New York Newsday's David Friedman (their resident TV moron; why is he even in the same paper as Kitman?) panning it. Like ROSEANNE, chosen to be this show's lead-in (you couldn't ask for better), ABL has an actor/comedian as its creative controller—in this case, Richard Lewis—and it makes a big difference in the writing, characterization, wit and style. This is a real winner, with costars Lewis and the ever-talented Jamie Lee Curtis at their best and most amusing. We'd compare this as much to MURPHY BROWN as to ROSEANNE—why is it that suddenly the ensemble shows worth watching all revolve around the media? Insular thinking? Anyway, this will be back in the fall, so watch for it. ****

DOLPHIN COVE—This was a strange and wonderful family show, sometimes. When it focused on the Australian aborigine family or speculated on the American girl's possible extra-sensory powers, it got nice and weird and fun. Mostly it was a pretty tired little thing about a widowed scientist who moves his two kids (the girl hasn't spoken a word since Mom got killed in a car crash, and the teenboy's a wisecracking asshole) to Aussie so he can study Flipper's descendants. The last episode was the best—the dead mom's parents come to visit, drawing neat parallels between the American family and the native Australians, as the grandfather aborigine makes ready to die and turn into a dolphin, and the girl finally finds her voice. It was pretty touching, and went away just as we were getting into it. **½

WHAT'S ALAN WATCHING?—Only the pilot has played so far, and while it was amusing in some places, it sure didn't live up to its promise of unbelievable originality. It features a teenboy who interacts with his TV and watches all sorts of strange parodies, many featuring exec producer Eddie Murphy. Okay, we guess. ***

Also watch for LONG AGO AND FAR AWAY on most PBS stations, featuring animated folk tales from around the world—the first one was exquisite, but we haven't seen any since. Now for the other new stuff (times are all evenings and Eastern time):

SATURDAY: A MAN CALLED HAWK (ABC, 9:00)—Anyone who watched SPENSER FOR HIRE knows Hawk was the best character in it. Avery Brooks is one of the premiere actors around (he's more classically trained than even Patrick "Jean-Luc Picard" Stewart, and besides, he teaches at Elayne's old alma mater), and does an excellent job retaining the character's credibility when lesser performers would make him into another version of Mr. T. Too many guns and stuff for our tastes, but on the whole it's literate and well-done. **½

MONDAY: LIVE-IN (CBS, 8:00)—No problem, ALF, this show's going nowhere. We thought we were past shows whose only purpose was juveniles ogling bombshell maids, but we were wrong. Nobody ever went broke underestimating, etc. etc. 0*

HEARTLAND (CBS, 8:30)—A decent idea to have a Nebraskan family as sitcom fodder for a change, and the father (played by Tom Gilliland) is likeable, but everything goes wrong from there—star Brian Keith's character is ornery in a very nonlovable way; and the kids consist of an adopted daughter (Keith's real-life granddaughter, who can't act her way out of a gunny sack), a son who wishes he was in LA (so do we), and a stobby son who likes pigs, thus leading to lots of manure jokes. *

MONDAY MYSTERY MOVIE (ABC, 9:00)—COLUMBO's back, so you know what to expect, and Burt Reynolds stars in B.L. STRYKER, so you also know what to expect. The other rotating show is GIDEON OLIVER, starring Lou Gossett as a modern-day Indiana Jones or something. The man spends more time with a gun than an anthropology text, and despite Gossett's obvious talent this is yet another tec show, so you know what to expect, right? You like these or you don't. ** WEDNESDAY: HARD TIME ON PLANET EARTH (CBS, 8:00)—As Jed mentions elsewhere in this issue, the special effects are top-notch, and we had hopes for the premise (a criminal from an alien world gets paroled to Earth to serve his sentence by do-gooding), but it just doesn't pan out well, maybe because there's not much to recommend either the character or the actor (Martin Kove) who plays him. At least, judging by this show and last season's awful SOMETHING IS OUT THERE, alien humanoids don't discriminate by gender; the males are as Hollywood-brainless-looking as the females. *½

COACH (ABC, 9:00)—Steve liked this more than we did, and we're unsure if it's because the show's a male thing or what. To us it's just another sitcom, pleasantly inoffensive, about a college football coach whose daughter attends the same school and whose players are perennial losers (so why hasn't he been fired yet?). We tend to stay away from anything costarring both Jerry Van Dyke and Shelly Fabares, so maybe we're biased to begin with. **

(more reviews next page)

THE ROBERT GUILLAUME SHOW (ABC, 9:30)—Man, this guy's teeth are scary—there should be a viewer warning every time he smiles! We may actually see the first interracial affair since THE JEFFERSONS here, but it's doubtful the show will become interesting enough to watch. Guillaume's okay, but the costar plays a real ditzy secretary, and at this point we're afraid we have no patience left for ditzy secretaries (come on now, does Murphy Brown really have that much trouble finding a normal AA? Elaine could do the job easy), so we probably won't watch any further. **

NIGHTINGALES (NBC, 10:00)—If you think we secretaries get a bad rap, wait till you see what Aaron "TSA" Spelling does with nurses! We don't plan on watching this, but the controversy surrounding it is amusing. About as lame as to be expected, we guess. 0*

FRIDAY: QUANTUM LEAP (NBC, 9:00)—Undoubtedly the pick of the litter this "new season," this is a perfect follow-up to BEAUTY AND THE BEAST, if you can change the videotape fast enough. Getting this on tape almost makes up for Elaine's failure to tape PROBE last year. It's a wonderful fantasy—a future scientific genius prematurely tests his quantum time-travel theory, which goes a bit awry and lands him in various identities (all during his lifetime, so the creative people don't have to worry too much about sets going back beyond 1953) whose original onscreen appearances haven't changed, so the only ones who know who this guy really is are him and his partner from the future, who can appear only in holographic form to help him figure out how to get out of each identity by righting some wrong. Got all that? Yeah, it's a lot but it's well worth it. Quality performances by Scott Bakula and Dean Cain add to the enjoyment; one can even overlook occasional lapses into religion. It's intelligent, the interplay is great, and undoubtedly it'll be cancelled soon (we're amazed it's not on ABC, known for taking shows like this and putting them in death slots like opposite DALLAS), so grab it while you can! ****

Well, there you have it. Shows to watch: QUANTUM LEAP of the new ones; THE JIM HENSON HOUR when it comes on, most likely; also ANYTHING BUT LOVE when it returns; and current faves like BEAUTY AND THE BEAST, STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION, THE TRACY ULLMAN SHOW, MY SECRET IDENTITY, MURPHY BROWN, and of course ROSEANNE (the story of Steve & Elaine 5-10 years down the line)! Tune in!

Going Nowhere With Charlie

by Tom Child

Charlie picked at a hair that was growing, at its own pace, out of a mole on his belly. It was one of those twofers—one pore, yet two separate strands of black hair, each about the same length that sprouted, unassuming yet defiantly, from a dot only a flea-hop from his navel. He was afraid to extract them completely, on account of the old saw that says for every one bad hair yanked, two will grow back. Basic algebra told Charlie that if he removed these two, four would appear, and if he did it again, eight; and so on and so forth and before anyone could say "Lon Chaney" he would be at the barber shop getting the thing styled. Charlie spent a good deal of time examining various sections of his body, generally in private, although yesterday his finger was up to the second knuckle in nostril at a traffic light when he glanced at the automobile next to him and discovered it chock-full of laughing teenagers. ("Hey, bud—pick me out a piano!") Most of his real serious once-overs were done here at home, in this fashion: legs extended and slightly elevated on his recliner chair in front of the TV. The television was important.

It has been exactly two weeks since Charlie had gone on the game show "The Price Is Pretty Darn Close." He had been informed the airdate for "his show" would be July 23rd. (Which made him feel especially important; the producer telling him it was "his show," like he was Bert Convy or somebody.) Today. So, Charlie played hooky from work to stay home and watch. His boss at Carson Tool and Die wouldn't miss him; it had been a slow summer. Charlie never mentioned to his buddies at work that he was going on the show. It would be too embarrassing if he didn't win anything. As it turned out he was glad he kept it a secret. He didn't remember much about the show that day except that he had gotten very nervous. When Bob The Host asked him what he did for a living Charlie suffered temporary larynx trouble for it was all he could do to gargle "I murp por Barksip Pool ap Fly, Barp." Things went rapidly downhill from there. At one point in the proceedings Charlie was called upon to submit a bid for a washer and dryer set. He overshot it by fifteen hundred bucks, losing out to a duplex of a woman named Doris who was so overwhelmed with her victory that she hyperventilated and passed out—right there on stage—keeling over and landing on top of Charlie, snapping major bones in his legs like they were pencils. A lawsuit was pending, and in the meantime Charlie was relegated to desk work at the office and recliner chair work at home.

Charlie peeked at his watch. The program would begin in five minutes, so Charlie pushed himself out of his chair, rocking his plaster-encased legs to propel him into the kitchen. He pulled a pitcher of orange juice from the fridge and added a careful dollup of generic vodka from a large bottle, and swirled the mixture. He had just poured himself a nice tall one over ice when the doorbell rang.

"Aw, now—who the hell..." Charlie scowled. Five minutes to my network television debut, he thought; I'm standing here in my shorts with casts on both legs, I haven't shaved, and there's someone at the door. A faint guilt rush tingled his ears (couldn't be someone from work, now, could it?) and he took a healthy slug from the drink that burned on its way down. "Whattya

ATTENTION COMPUTER-TYPE FOLKS: I COULD USE SOME IJ HEADLINES...

want?" Charlie bellowed, and right then he heard the catchy theme as "The Price Is Pretty Darn Close" swung into action in the other room.

"Whozit?" Charlie yelled, inching to the door. An unintelligible response answered him, so Charlie opened the door a sliver and peered out.

It was only me.

"Hey Charlie," I said, one eye to the crack in the door. "Uh, you gonna open it?"

"Yeah, come on in." Charlie pried it open and I followed him into the hall.

"Nice shorts, Charlie."

"My mom bought these for me. I hate 'em."

"Mom still picking out your underwear for you, huh, Charlie?"

Little Garfields leered at me every few inches. "Jeez, Charlie—what the hell did you do to your legs?"

Charlie glanced at his twin casts and gave them a pat. "It's kind of a long story. Happened on TV while taping a show. Come on in the den, I'll show you. It's on now. Want a drink?"

"Kind of early to be juicing, isn't it?"

"Hey, it's after ten."

I sat on the couch and sipped a screwdriver while Charlie, with some effort, eased himself back into his chair. "The Price Is Pretty Darn Close" came on for an instant and then jumped into a commercial. Charlie lit a cigarette.

"So what are you up to today?" he said, exhaling.

"I gotta write a story for a class, and my damn typewriter went under, so I thought I'd borrow yours, if that's okay?"

"Sure. I'll get it for you in a second—oh, here we go. Look, there I am." The show had resumed, and I watched as the TV-Charlie bounced up from his seat with both fists in the air, as if he was signalling a touchdown, and ran through the hysterical audience to a podium while the name CHARLIE SHREMKF, CHARLIE SHREMKF, CHARLIE SHREMKF flashed on the screen. I thought; Charlie Shrekff?

We watched for fifteen minutes, but it seemed like hours.

Charlie kept bidding on prizes—neat things, too—but didn't accomplish anything but demonstrate a total disregard for the fine points of the game, blowing each opportunity. Sexy blonde models would walk around each item sweeping their arms and smiling while Johnny The Announcer described it in great detail, and then Charlie would present his bid, bending so low into the microphone that Bob The Host would grimace. The correct price would be announced and Charlie wouldn't even be in the ballpark. Between Charlie's performance and the vodka I felt myself nodding off.

"Charlie, I uh, got things to do today..."

"Everything happens right after this commercial, I promise."

I looked at my watch. The program had five more minutes to go.

"And then can I have your typewriter?"

"Sure. What kind of a class is it, anyway?"

"Fiction."

"What kind of a story are you writing?"

"This story."

Charlie gave me a funny look. "What do you mean?"

"I'm writing this story for my class. You're in it."

"Is it going to be any good?"

"I doubt it."

"What the hell..."

"Look, Charlie..." I was beginning to get impatient. "You're a fictional character that I have created for this story, I have to finish it by tomorrow, and frankly, I'm getting bored by the whole thing. It's not going anywhere—you're not helping—and I've got a good mind just to forget the entire thing."

"But what about the show?"

"What show?"

"This one. I'm on TV! You can't fake that. Look—that's me!"

"Charlie, that's television! Nothing is real!"

"But these broken legs are real! Doris was real!"

"Doris?"

"Yeah. The fat lady who fell on me."

"I never really liked the name Doris. I think I'll change it to Veronica in the next draft."

"This is absurd. How can you borrow a typewriter from a fictional character?"

"That's the whole point. It's my story and I can do anything I want. Look at it this way, Charlie; you could have done worse than a couple of broken legs. I could've made you fall in love with Doris."

"Veronica."

"Who?"

"You said you were going to change it to Veronica."

I finally got the typewriter and I ever managed to convince Charlie he didn't exist anywhere but in my imagination. He was pretty upset, so I agreed to make some changes in his character to make him feel better. I made him taller. I got him some new underwear. I let him win a video recorder on the game show, plus I fixed him up with the blonde model of his choice. (Charlie thought my story should have some sex in it. He might be right.) But I'm a little afraid the story lacks tension and conflict, so I may revamp his character again.

Don't tell Charlie, but I think I might make him gay.

Future Plans For Us

by Al Fry

We all know that the world is divided up between the "haves" and the "have nots." People with a religious background like to believe that the "haves" are the "bad guys." Since most of the world's money and power is in the hands of those who ignore the "Golden Rule" and dominate others for gain, this is essentially correct. Most persons fail to go the next step further and realize that they could not be used and abused unless they had their own shortcomings, though. The "haves" or rulers have always exploited their subjects by using clever methods which allow people to make their own cages and dig their own graves. The "something for nothing" bait of today's socialism was the downfall of Rome an age ago. The farmers and other "producers" finally got tired of working for peanuts under heavy restrictions and headed for the cities to get the free handouts themselves. With so few producers left, Rome soon crumbled. In a later age the state and church joined to enslave people through their thinking. "Sin" and "Hell" concepts were a lot cheaper than using force and hired armies. Today, the same old con game is going on under the banner of "ecology" and "conservation." Virtually all of the controlled media publications are now spouting off about the "Greenhouse Effect" threats and the terrible world pollution problems. Such concepts have validity, of course, but they are only fronts being used to suck us into more restrictions. One good volcano puts out more pollution than a country full of cities. Do we think our maker left the planet without means of handling such pollution? Do we keep people out of the forests simply because some persons are careless with matches? Perhaps we should put lightning rods on all the trees to stop Mother Nature from causing the same disasters. No. The answers have never been in MORE restrictions. Without the present restrictions in place on this planet, we would be using simple technology to easily clean up our messes. The world powers or "elite" who control the wealth and energy sources of Earth are not about ready to let technology loose that would cut too deeply into their profits. What the conservation scam of theirs is doing is holding up action until they can tie up what's left of the planet's resources. "These terrible things are happening all over but our scientists need a few years to figure out the solutions. In the meantime we all need to save Mother Earth with all kinds of new land and resource restrictions."

Under the color of world conservation of ecology, the "elite" are pushing for a one world bank and a one world fiat currency. Already the paperwork is in place for a World Conservation Bank (WCB) that will bail out the many indebted Third World countries. They will get off the hook only if they give up their minerals and raw wealth to the bankers' little WCB front, however. Some 30% of the world's land mass is partially under the control of the UN and the WCB will allow an even greater land grab. Such restrictions can assure the "elite" of high natural resource prices for decades. With the media and higher education programs in their hands our indoctrinated fellow citizens will love it. Why not? We Americans allows them to dismantle most of our nation's heavy industry decades ago. Getting the land away from us should not be much harder. Keep the farm goods prices at the level they were during the last depression and juggle the interest rates around, and presto. The independent little farmers are "out" and controlled corporate farms are "in." With proper manipulation and tax controls, Americans can hardly wait to move into little cell-like "condos" where they will be dependent on the regulations of "Big Brother." Considering the fate of former civilizations who follows such paths and restrictions, the end of the world as we Westerners know it will be easy to predict. Domination is a system that eats itself up and causes self-destruction. Only by some miracle in a change of thought and action for our world citizens can we escape this natural breakdown effect. Free choice is a heavy responsibility, and until humanity can remain ethical they will continue to find their irresponsibility a traumatic burden. The pawns are on the board and the moves are pretty easy to predict. Which moves will you be making?

BIBLIOPHILIAC BLITZ-

The new generation

by R. Bain

The book I'm plugging this time around is:

COSMIC BANDITOS, By A.C. Welsbecker.

It's subtitled "A Contrabandista's Search for the Meaning of Life," and involves drug smuggling and abuse, the U.S. government, meditation, senseless violence, Quantum Physics, a lot of flying debris, and much, much more.

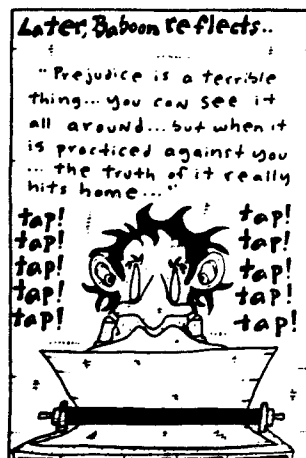
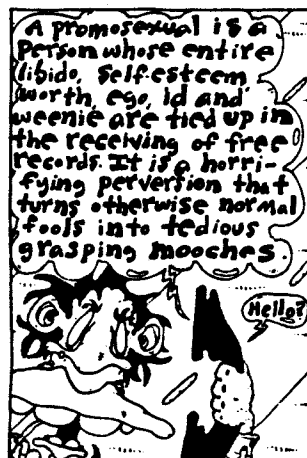
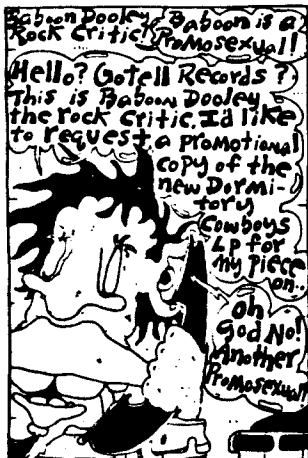
The story is told from the viewpoint of our Nameless Narrator, who is apparently writing the story as some of it happens to him. He's recovering from a series of nearly lethal (but extremely funny) misadventures, and is trying to get from somewhere in Central America to Sausalito, California, to visit a Subatomic Physicist, who Our Hero thinks knows a lot about the Meaning of Life. Why? It's a long story, and worth reading in all its craziness. About half the book is flashbacks explaining how our hero ended up in his present circumstances, and the other half is how he's dealing with them, with a liberal helping of footnotes, all a bit weird. (He's writing the book, remember? Well, he's also explaining the dramatic techniques he's using in the narration, such as Time-Travel Footnotes, Seeming Irrelevancies, and little bits of trivial information on his Worldview and happenings within it.)

Our Hero has "taken up the banner of Subatomic Enlightenment," and it does make more sense than most philosophies with which I'm familiar. On the way to Sausalito, he and his Bandito Buddy Jose (a former Full-Blown Dope Lord fallen on hard times, whose mugging of Tina's father—the Subatomic Physicist—started all this¹), rob the University of Barranquilla Research Library (and get it leveled in the process), get arrested (and nearly shot) by a colonel with very bad breath, get struck by debris and lose consciousness (on several occasions), try to enlighten other Banditos about the Subatomic way of life (with one of the most logical meditation techniques I've ever heard of), cause massive property damage, hijack a bus (and make friends with the driver), inadvertently put several people in Existential Comas², and give a pretty good layman's explanation of Quantum Theory, including the Many Worlds Interpretation, Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, and the problem of Schroedinger's Bandito³. And all this isn't even counting the flashbacks.

(P.S. They do make it to Sausalito in one piece, and survive the end of the book.)

FOOTNOTES FROM THE O-ZONE:

- 1—It may interest you to know I've been studying LISP (a computer language using a lot of nested parenthetical comments) in school. That may be significant.
- 2—Don't ask.
- 3—Yes, a Bandito, not a cat. Why? Get this book and figure it out for yourself. It's about 200 pages long, costs \$5.95, and it's worth it.



"Sometimes it is on appropriate response to reality to go insane." Send \$1 for instant gratification. It will change your life.

The Church of the SubGenius
P.O. Box 16000
Dallas, TX 75211

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FOUR-COLOR FIEND

by STEVE CHAPUT

MUCHO MANGA, or, "Look at those eyes! Weird!"

Unless you haven't been in a comics shop in the last couple of years (in which case, why are you reading this column?), you probably already have at least a passing familiarity with manga. If not, let this column be the briefest of introductions to an incredible array of new titles.

Since a thorough discussion of manga (the Japanese name for what we in the west call comic book art) would be impossible in this column, even if Elaine turned over an entire issue of IJ to me, let me recommend the best book currently available in English on the topic: *Manga! Manga! The World of Japanese Comics* by Frederic L. Schodt (available in paperback at \$14.95, published by Kodansha). This is an incredible book which begins with a short history of illustrative art in Japan from monastic stories done during feudal times through the introduction of American-style comics during the occupation. The author then discusses how the Japanese artists used these influences to create an artform similar to yet different from the western style.

The first thing that one must get used to when reading manga for the first time is the mixture of realistic art and "cartoony" style facial expressions often shown within the same panel. This is a visual shorthand that allows the artist and writer (sometimes the same person) to dispense with thought or dialogue balloons that would slow the action.

Most manga, especially the reprinted and Americanized material (these books must have artwork reversed and touched up, since the Japanese read from right to left) is in black and white, so color material will be noted (C):

GREY—Story & Art by Yoshihisa Tagami (9-issue series from VIZ, \$2.95 US/\$4 Canada per issue): Like much of the SF-oriented manga this takes place in a post-apocalyptic future. The world is controlled by a computer network called "Big Mama," with each city and town run by a "Little Mama."

The survivors are split into "Citizens," who live in a utopian city, with the majority of the rest being "People," living as best they can off the surrounding land. The only way to move from one world to another is by "enlisting" in the armies that each town and city maintains and do battle with the armies of other cities. A soldier builds up points by surviving each battle and by the number of confirmed kills they have.

The story follows the adventures of one soldier, nicknamed Grey Death, who will do anything to survive and become a "Citizen." As the storyline progresses we learn, along with Grey, that there is more to the computers' intent than balance of society.

APPLESEED—Art & Story by Masumune Shirow (Eclipse, \$2.50 US/\$3.20 Canada): Another post-WWII tale, following the adventures of female mercenary Dennon and her cyborg companion Briareos. As in GREY, it's hard to figure out who can be trusted and who is double-crossing whom. Some full-frontal female nudity.

LONE WOLF & CUB by Kazuo Koike and Goseki Kojima (First, \$2.50 US/\$3.25 Canada): This book started the manga fad for many of us. One of the most popular manga series in Japan, where it was adapted into several motion pictures and a television series.

The story is about Itto Ogami, former executioner for the Shogun. Betrayed by the Yagyu family, who coveted his power, Itto has taken his young son, Daigoro, and become an assassin-for-hire. Told in a beautifully-drawn manner, with limited dialogue, this book is highly recommended.

OUTLANDERS—Art & Story by Johji Manabe (Dark Horse, \$2 US/\$2.50 Canada): Giant bug-tanks, flying fish scout ships and half-naked sword-carrying princesses from outer space. Boy, this book has it all. In the near future Tokyo (natch!) is attacked by strange alien spacecraft and the government not only seems prepared for this but begins a widespread cover-up and denial program despite millions of witnesses. This is more typical of the big-eyed "cartoony" style of manga that we usually expect. Nicely done!

CYBER 7—Art & Story by Shuho Itahashi (Eclipse, \$2 US/\$2.50 Canada): The Cyber 7 are robots hiding on Earth, protecting the children from the inter-dimensional menace of Cunningham the rabbit-faced man and his lackeys, some of whom can split into thousands of paper-thin slices.

AMAZING HERDES describes it as "Alice in Wonderland crossed with Flash Gordon as written by Philip K. Dick." Neat stuff, done in a realistic style.

AREA 88—Art & Story by Kaoru Shintani (Viz, \$1.75 US/\$2.50 Canada): This book, done in the big-eyed style with realistic technology, deals with a mercenary air force somewhere in a fictional Middle Eastern country.

All covers are photos of actual military aircraft, and most of the technology used in the book is actually available to the military. Of course, all the pilots in the book are of the "Top Gun" variety.

THE LEGEND OF KAMUI by Sanpei Shirato (Eclipse/Viz): Previously published by Eclipse, this book will be taken over by Viz later

this year. I don't list a price since format and frequency have not yet been announced.

This book is reminiscent of *LONE WOLF & CUB* both in art style and content. A young swordsman, Kamui, wanders about feudal Japan. The Yagyu Clan again appears as central villains. While the art is weaker than that found in *LW&C*, it is still very good, with none of the "cartoony" style evident.

MAUSICAA OF THE VALLEY OF WIND—Art & Story by Hayao Miyazaki (Viz, \$2.50 US/\$3.50 Canada): This book, a seven-issue mini-series, is actually the first volume of a multi-part manga novel. It became the basis of an animated film released in an edited version called "Warriors of the Wind" (available in the US). Over a thousand years after an industrial civilization had been destroyed by a seven-day nuclear war, the world has declined into warring feudal kingdoms. Most of the surface has become covered with forests of enormous fungi which release poisonous substances into the environment. Gigantic mutated insect forms threaten to overrun what's left. Princess Mausicaa, the heir to the throne of the Valley of Wind, leads her people into combat against aggressive neighbors. Excellent fantasy in the "big-eye" style.

PINEAPPLE ARMY—Written by Kazuya Kudo, Art by Naoki Urasawa (Viz, \$1.75 US/\$2.50 Canada): Jed Goshi, a Japanese-American vet and former mercenary, now makes his living as a "freelance combat instructor." He is hired by people who feel they need training in anti-terrorist techniques for their own or their families' protection. Goshi's specialty is the "pineapple" hand grenade, hence the title. Each issue features Jed in another assignment, most of which take place in current-day America. A ten-issue biweekly series that's well worth checking out.

THE DEMON WARRIOR—Art & Story by Jae-hak Lee (Eastern Comics, \$1.50 US/\$2.25 Canada): Surprise! Manga from South Korea! Frankly all but identical to the Japanese product, with samurai and swordsmen. The main character, Ryong, is the current incarnation of The Warrior of the Sun, a legendary swordsman who appears only once in an age. He is searching for his sister as well as seeking the murderers of their parents. While the adults are generally shown realistically, children are drawn in the "big-eye" style.

DRUNKEN FIST (Jademan Comics, \$1.50 US/\$2.25 Canada): Manga from Hong Kong, featuring Chinese martial arts and magic. The artwork in this book is very detailed, though all characters are oddly stunted as though everyone was portrayed by midgets. The most striking thing is the color work, which is done in watercolor with a lot of pastels.

The plot is impossible to describe, and there are dozens of characters with five or six plots going on simultaneously. I can assume that the book is translated into English in Hong Kong, as the translation is done by the same guy who writes the menu for most Chinese restaurants. Weird! (C)

ORIENTAL HEROES (Jademan Comics, \$1.50 US/\$2.25 Canada): Done in the same fashion as *DRUNKEN FIST*, but the story takes place in modern Thailand. Magic and martial arts! (C)

AKIRA—Art & Story by Katsuhiro Otomo (Monthly from Epic, \$3.50 US/\$4.75 Canada): The first manga series reprinted by one of the Big Two (Epic is a division of Marvel), the people at Epic went all out with this by adding color. A tale of government-controlled psychics, underground rebels and motorcycle gangs in 21st century Japan. Nobody in this series is very likeable, and as in much of the Japanese manga the government is the least trustworthy of all the parties involved. (C)

NINJA HIGH SCHOOL—Story by James Hanrahan, Art by Ben Dunn (Eternity): Not really manga, but the influence is unmistakable. Dunn has the style down perfectly and uses it to good advantage. Typical high school hijinks with ninjas, aliens and demon curses thrown in. Likably amusing and worth picking up as an antidote to super-hero overdose.

SAMURAI—Art & Story by Barry Blair (Direct, \$1.95 US/\$2.50 Canada): Hard to tell what's going on in this book from reading a single issue, but it seems an odd combination of urban guerilla fighting, ninjas and neo-Nazis seeking to build a master race. Why the Yakusa and Japanese youths would be helping a white supremacist group is beyond me.

The art goes from photo-reference realistic to fanzine-quality on the next page. One character seems to exist only to stare at the backside of a female villain, and one female character seems to go braless simply to show her permanently-erect nipples.

EAGLE—Story & Words by Jack Herman/Art & Story by Neil Vokes and Rich Rankin (Apple): Picked up this book with issue #21, and even with the story synopsis on the inside front cover it's difficult to figure out what's going on. The main character, Richard Eagle (martial artist/magician), is attempting to mount a rescue mission for his swordmaster. This story introduces three new characters into an already-crowded storyline.

The art, while competent, isn't completely up to the task, since one character I assumed was female turns out to be male three-quarters of the way through the story.

The back-up story features Death's Head, a character whose origin ties in with the main story, in a story that supposedly takes place in 2330 but where everyone looks and acts as though it were 1990 at best.

YOUNG MASTER—Story by Larry Hama, Art by Val Mayerik (New Comics Group, \$1.75 US/\$2.50 Canada): This is done by Americans in a very realistic style with a storyline similar to *LONE WOLF & CUB*. In fact, the major villains in this book are the very same Yagyu Clan that motivates Lone Wolf. My understanding is that this book is a tribute to the former.

Hama and Mayerik are veterans of Marvel Comics and both did

(continued next page)

work on the various Conan titles. A very professional job and recommended for samurai fans.

THE ORIGINAL ASTRO BOY—Written by Stephen DiSullivan, Art by Brian Thomas (Now Comics, \$1.75 US/\$4.25 Canada): Captures nicely the old cartoon series. The art is great and all the major characters look much as they did in the old show. Aimed at a younger audience and completely approved by the Comics Code people. (C)

ROBOTECH—THE MACROSS SAGA—Adaptation by Markalan Japlin, Art by M. Leeke and M. Chen (Comico, \$1.95 US/\$2.50 Canada): This book ended with #36, but Robotech material is available from Eternity and Blackthorne. All of these are based on the syndicated cartoon series and the Japanimation films/videos. If you're a fan of either this stuff will be for you. There is also a series of text novels that contain new material.

MANGAZINE (Antarctic Press, \$3 US/\$3.25 Canada): Don't be misled by the title of this book, since it's not really manga but a black & white anthology book containing a wide variety of material. Also, this is the first issue of this revised title and was a little bigger (80 pages, compared to the usual 52-60 pages) than previous ones and future issues will be \$2 US. The material ranges from barely readable ("Mechamen" by Paul Roche, a badly-drawn and terribly-written SF story) to excellent stories by Ben Dunn (anthropomorphic mice and rats eternally at war). The other stories are somewhere in between. My advice would be to ignore Roche's stuff and get the book for Dunn.

Believe it or not, this article only touches upon a few of the available titles (both real manga and influenced) that are around. I had to go to three different comic shops just to pick these up.

Other titles you might think about are **FIST OF THE NORTH STAR**, **LUM: URUSEI YATSURA**, **THE VENUS WAR**, **SPEED RACER**, **RACER X**, **4-D MONKEY**, **THE ONE-ARMED SWORDSMAN**, **BUSHIDO** and even **USAGI YOJIMBO** (for you "funny animal" fans). You really should give some of these titles a try, if only as a nice change from the usual super-hero material usually found on the racks.

Before I close this monster, I'd like to mention a few of my friends who have other things going on:

Both **Tull Kupferberg** and **John "Baboon Dooley" Crawford** have cartoons in the April 11 issue of the **Village Voice**.

Matt Feazell continues to do brilliant stuff for **Eclipse** in each issue of **ZOT!**. Every month there is a six-page "Zot! in Dimension 101," often with appearances by Cynicalman or Stupid Boy.

J.P. Morgan's "Fission Chicken" will have a full issue in which to kick Vortexian butt in **CRITTERS** #39. This will kick off the comic's change from an anthology book to a revolving single-character format. J.P. hopes this will lead the way for the Fearless Fowl's own monthly book, possibly as early as the fall!

You can be looking for the name **Valentino** to be popping up pretty often in the next few months. The guy is busy doing a lot of material for Marvel, both as a writer and penciller. His work will be in upcoming issues of **SILVER SURFER** and **THOR**, plus their respective Annuals. Nice to see an old friend make the big time.

NEXT ISSUE: The new Overstreet, and regular comic reviews!

NoTary Sejac



The Word Made Fresh

by Jim Jones

Just when we were beginning to forget the Ayatollah Khomeini, the world's *enfant terrible*, the furor over Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* has allowed Americans to rekindle their love of Iran-bashing. As we gleefully waste newsprint and pollute outer space with our broadcast waves condemning the "barbarism" of the Ayatollah and the Islamic Republic, we pat ourselves on the back for being so "civilized" and rational. After all, when was the last time America condemned a writer to death for attacking Christianity, or our way of Government (the two are hard to divide in the Islamic Republic)? Certainly a few centuries.

While we concentrate on this obvious example of our tolerance and their evil, everyone, so far, as failed to look at a fundamental difference between contemporary American and Iranian culture that underlies this crisis. Fundamentalist Islam, like fundamentalist Christianity, holds sacred the word. If Mohammedans believe every word of the Koran is divinely inspired and true (as opposed to metaphoric), then an attack against the Koran and Muhammed, its recorder, is an attack against God. There can be no argument in this case that Rushdie blasphemes Islam, just as surely as a number of our writers have blasphemed Christianity (one strong example that comes to mind—Michael Moorcock in his 1967 novel *Behold the Man* depicts Mary and Joseph as ignorant peasants and their child Jesus as retarded). The religious of the West deal with writers such as Moorcock in a more civilized way; attacking the work, not the man. They stage book-burnings, picket bookstores, write to the publishers, and the Pope puts the book on the index of forbidden works. But such events occur rarely, and even then are lucky to be deemed worthy of a mention on the evening news.

Today books are rarely seen as important in mainstream culture. In a bizarre circling of our history, the image has supplanted the word. Our TVs flickering in darkened living rooms are the modern equivalents to the bison painted by our ancestors on the caves at Lascaux. One-third of American adults have difficulty reading—we must face the fact that we are now a post-literate culture. And it has been a long time since a mere book like Rushdie's *Verses* has had the impact to make the TV news give the written word back its power with over a week of coverage.

And this gets to the heart of my point. The West long ago gave up its belief in the word. One need only look to advertising to see once-precious cultural ideas mocked: "Freedom equals 7-11." One need only look at our last presidential race to see the devaluing of words to such an extent that even the media, the masters of word debasement, commented on it. Unfortunately, this debasement is taken for granted by most people today. The French Post-Structuralist philosopher, Jean Baudrillard, current hero of the avant-garde, has even developed a literary theory that revels in our cultural disregard for the integrity of the word.

In contrast to our cynicism and disdain for mere words, the Islamic fundamentalists, who do not separate secular from religious and, apparently, as we see in the case of *Satanic Verses*, fiction from sacred text, hold all words as meaning what they say. There is something admirable, even enviable, about this. Commercial TV, politics, and literary theory could certainly use a healthy dose of this kind of "word truth." That is not to say I applaud Iran's ransom on the life of Rushdie, although it certainly makes more sense to kill the source of the blasphemy than to enrich him by buying up his books and burning them!

I can't help but feel our attitude toward this latest Iranian spectacle is due partially to envy. We envy a culture which believes so strongly in anything. We have lost our faith in religion, government, even our precious TVs. If only someone could write a book as explosive to the West as *Satanic Verses* is in Iran, India and Pakistan, it would prove that words still counted, that something still mattered. We would feel so good building that gibbet.

Simple Answers

by Sergio Taubmann

It was nothing, just a simple answer anybody could've given. It didn't require a genius to give it...look at me. You would've said the same thing in my place, I bet.

What had happened was I was onto Doc Wertes for awhile. I put two and two together pretty quickly for a high school dropout, you know. I saw enough movies in my day to figure out that when your family doctor starts chugaluging arsenic pills, avoiding seawater and smelling real funky, something's wrong. Now I tried to get help from the police but they're stupes, whadda they know? It was up to me and me alone, so I sneak into the Doc's office with a bucket of seawater and prepared to get to the bottom of this.

I found him in his office and, boy, was this guy pukeworthy. I don't know what made them aliens look like that, but I don't want anything to do with it, you know. So I close my eyes and try to be as quiet as one of those ninjas in the movies down at the Shanghai Theater on Elm. The smell was really bad, getting into my nose and strangling me. It smelt like strawberries that were left out to get all hairy and soft, you know? I took hold of the bucket and prepared to make a real splash.

But wouldn't you know it, he heard me. It must have been those big ass ears, you know.

"Billy," Doc said. He was leaning on the cane he started using lately and now I knew why. He was really thin—not length-wise, 'cause he was really wide. I mean you could, like, see through him. Man, if I wasn't so scared I'd think it was radical.

"Yeah?" I said. I tried to sound real tough, but I don't think it was working.

"So you found out."

DUH, I thought. There he was drooling this snot all over his floor and he wasn't sure I knew he was a gross-out monster.

He crawled towards me. I didn't move away from him. I was too frightened to even move. He smiled and his teeth tore at his lips. "You realize I have been sent to destroy your planet, Billy? After this there will be nothing."

I could've said something real brave at that moment. Something about humans fighting back and not letting snot-snouted aliens from God-knows-where blow up our planet, but I didn't. That wasn't me, wasn't what I'm about. I said the first logical thing that popped into my head.

I said, "So?"

The Doc paused. He kind of moved back and tilted his head (not an easy thing considerin' he had no neck) to one side. He scratched his bald head. My heart was pounding away, like it wanted out of my chest, man. I thought I was going to die, get ripped up like those kids in the Jason movies.

"What do you mean?" Doc asked.

Now that was a shock. It took me a second to figure out just what was going on. The Doc didn't move, just continued to stare at me. I took a breath until I figured it out. Then I leaned against his file cabinets and tried to save the world.

"So you're gonna blow up the world. Big fucking deal. Save the Russians some money. You know, they got nuclear bombs just ready to turn my town into guacamole dip and you think you're gonna scare me by destroying us? Forget it. I'm used to that threat already."

"You mean," the Doc asked, "humans are prepared to do this deed themselves?" He looked terrified.

"Damn straight."

Doc looked at his hands for a second. "Then you don't need our help?"

"Shit no. I give us five, ten years tops. Go find a planet that really needs your help." I spat at the ground for emphasis.

There was another pause. The Doc looked up and clasped his hands together. There was a really sloppy, wet SMUCK. "Well then, I guess I better get going. Sorry about the misunderstanding."

22 I waved my hand. "Don't think about it."

THE LITTLE GUY AND THE BLOND WITH THE MARCELLED HAIR

by Andy Roberts

Thirst drove us off the road to an evil-looking farm where a shriveled man in denim eaten up with cancer came piling out to greet us. "We're mountain," he said. "The river took my shoes." A big, dusty-looking blond came out behind him.

"You're a gassy little fella, aren't you?" said my partner.

That froze the little guy. Then, "Whatch you on, kid?" he brayed. "Ups? Downs? Goofballs? Bemies?"

That froze my partner. But not with cold. It's been a bitch lately, seems like the weather's stopped at July—every night a sauna bath, and days you've got the sun. I reminded him that good art gives us a chance to walk a mile in someone else's shoes, so lighten up. He did. But the little guy didn't stop—ate up the ground as he walked, and gave up the smell of the river, like mopwater, on him as he drew nearer.

"That's enough," I said, and he pulled to a stop. I took a good look at him and remembered there's a fine line between a free spirit and a bad haircut. He was wearing a "Gorba-chump" t-shirt and small little perfectly formed hippo ears. His face was scarred and pitted like the surface of the moon. I was reminded of that headline in The Post the other day: "WACKO AX-MAN IN MID-TOWN CHOP SPREE!"

Right then he piped up with something totally out of left field: "Come on in boys, coffee's waiting," and we followed him to a room tight with heat. The blond had marcelled hair and a sniff of the grave about her. "They seem to be imbeciles," I whispered, and my partner nodded back. "Looks like," he said. I was crapulous by this time but kept my spirits up.

The blond was sipping hot java, staring into nothing. The little guy wore his lunch on his shirt. Then he spoke up again: "Whew, it's hot," he said. "I sweat like a whore on cowboy payday." He mopped his head with a rag and fanned his hair back off his forehead. The blond starfished on the couch. Just then the hectoring tones of an English headmaster came over the radio: "You can't have any pudding if you don't eat your meat. Now can you have any pudding if you don't eat your meat?"

The little guy whinnied a laugh and snapped the radio off. Then on with the TV box. He pointed and his lips went tight. "Them soap stars get more pussy'n Frank Sinatra. Piss me off." He introduced himself as Romeo Birdwell. "This here's my wife Trish. We don't get much guests up here." Trish nodded and went red. She wasn't bad looking, with a fleshy face and blue, short-lashed eyes. Her hips flared out and down through lean, muscular thighs to diamond-shaped calves. But she had a backward air about her, maybe just shy.

"My name's Jeff McCloud," I said. "This here's my partner, Pete Catchpetal. We're smallshots from Meacham, Oregon."

Trish passed a bowl to us. "Care for some Reese's Pieces?" she asked, with just a touch of Texas in her voice. We declined and the little guy, Romeo, gaped like an oyster. We cut our eyes from him to Trish's, who shot him a dark look of sex. Romeo squirmed. His face went hard. "Lord, it's hot," I ventured, to break the spell.

"If comfort is all you expect to get out of life, God help you," said Romeo. He sat up ramrod straight and began to fidget with his hands.

We took it as a clue to move on and got no signs disagreeing. On the couch Trish's eyes were turning sixes and sevens. Romeo's upper lip began to sweat.

We stood up and I pulled my pants up around my Humpty Dumpty waist and Pete coughed into the back of his hand. That seemed to break the spell. "You can get them kinda jeans in Medford," said Romeo, glancing up. "Twelve dollars the pair, waist to 56. Had a fella out here couple two, three years ago selling fake Jordache. We painted his rear end with iodine and sent him packing." Trish laughed at that, reminiscing, and pushed herself up to her feet. Romeo's knees buckled as he rose, then caught, and carried him the rest of the way with ease.

We left the world of TV pimps and back out into swirling heat—heard the sound of a ripe apple dropping to the ground and the crick and stutter of sun-heated insects. "Daddy built this place in '42," said Romeo. "Brains weren't his strong point, but he made a man of me."

I couldn't do much more than nod—my hangover was back with a vengeance from the Rum 'n Gatorade that night before. We went out past the thin, wasted cows with wet eyes screaming for protein. "Ain't that a sad basket of shit?" said my partner, cutting his eyes to the cattle in the field, then back to where we'd just come. "Crazy little son of a bitch with a farm way out in the middle of nowhere."

I looked back and Romeo had his arm around Trish, smiling like he'd just seen Santa Claus. "Oh, I don't know, ain't so odd. Ain't so odd at all." We'd been banging away at geese all morning without much success and stashed our guns at the side of the road. We'd come back to Meacham when the weekend was over with hangovers and empty game bags and a story about a little guy with cancer and a blond with marcelled hair who were strictly in love with each other. It wasn't so odd at all.

You see, it was a simple answer, really. Doc left that evening in this giant squash thing. I guess it was a spaceship, how was I to know. You guys are safe now, with one problem.

What are you gonna do five years from now, ten at the most?

Turning Forty On Neptune

by Tamarina Dwyer

PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE—At 20, anything could happen. At 30, anything did happen. At 40, something could happen.

REFLECTIONS ON THE PAST—It's over every day, the suffering, turmoil, strife of life; why not study the turns, detours and dead ends like a rich teenager with his special map through the countryside.

LEARNING AT 40—It depends, the self, self-knowledge, awareness of others, consciousness of the world. What do I know now that I didn't know at 20? Not more, but not less; not why, but sometimes how; not where, but maybe whom...

GETTING AHEAD IN THE WORLD—It's cheap to be weak, it's meek to be cheap...if your mother tells you to fake it, then?? Living in the world c1990 is the same as eating dinner, sleeping, getting married, working, raising children and attending the church of your choice.

JOBS—Why not? To support the regime's women's liberation movement and increase male supremacy (why? why not? and double male menopause). Work is a necessity like water and shelter and everyone really should have a career. It has class, finesse.

MONEY—Money and power, money and fame, money and glory, money and health. Like the four-folded paper from grade school, money and happiness are found and obtained in strange ways and strange places. Got a conflict of interests, hon?

HEALTH AT 40—Most people, a lot of people. It has to be, doesn't it, though even mythological figures had accidents...but no mishapen event, no filthy dirty story.

FAMILY—This is fortunate or unspoken or intimate or prayerful, yes—

FRIENDS—At 40? Could be a few, a lot, or none. Could be explained as easily as an empty wallet or strangely as luck and effort or predilection.

THEN THE QUESTION OF SEX—Unmarried at 40? Means what? Too ugly, too dumb, can't cook or lucky.

SCHOOLING—Now, education has its place like socks in drawers and dishes in cupboards. Not everybody can be a chief, not everybody can go to graduate school.

CLOTHES—This is a special topic—for women especially, something that is hard to explain if you're the working 40's...something that swallows money like a vending machine...it is a tactic of the regime to promote relations of all types...it is to be considered always as a sound device, a liberal, progressive strategy of the employed at 10-20-40 or whatever.

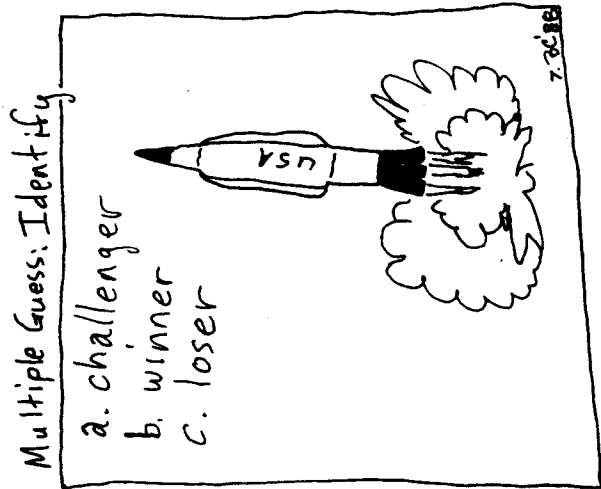
HOBBIES—C'mon, we all grow older, Johnny put his skateboard in the closet and got a job at McDonald's. Dickie still has his stamp collection, but he only gets it out on weekends or those rare evenings before holidays.

Sally doesn't need to sew anymore. She gets a discount at the dress boutique. Games are for children, arts and crafts for the elderly and we adults are more creative and unique (you CAN vacuum a rug as the turkey is roasting!).

CHANGES—Are they forced? acquired? bought? assimilated? sought after? At 40, how many people have cried at least one time over money or the lack of it? Tears are cheap, but inexpensive. Changes, yes—financial maybe—higher rent, mortgage payments, kids' clothes, the CAR, the hospital, the coffin or nothing.

APPRECIATION—De that's the hole. Of all obstacles on the course of life, this is the winsome magic curve—it's subtle, devious; "lacking discipline" is one phrase, "not enough guts" another, "bad luck," it's tough, ain't it, born into the world alone, carried along on a current of destiny and fate, aw shucks man, it's turning 40 is all is all...

**Jehovah IS
an Alien
and still threatens
this planet!!**



950

by Roger Coleman

An identified flying object landed on the state capitol lawn. The orange Galactic spaceship was the size of a watermelon. Many small, round, iridescent men descended the escape hatch. They appeared to be on pogo sticks. Actually, they had evolved from monoflagellate bacteria and their locomotion had developed into a slender, springy appearance. Land Sakes!

They approached a small ant colony where the heavenly men measured, surveyed, sketched, deliberated and gathered soil samples. They stunned an ant with a Bob gun (a precursor to the Ray gun) and pogoed shimmering, with their prize, back to the glowing ochre sphere and blasted off.

Since it was a holiday weekend at the state capitol, silver service and all, no one witnessed the caper.



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**MY HARMONIC CONVERGENCE, OR,
HEY SHIRLEY, PASS THE TABASCO**
by Tom Child

I have always known, somehow that I have lived before many past lives in many homes

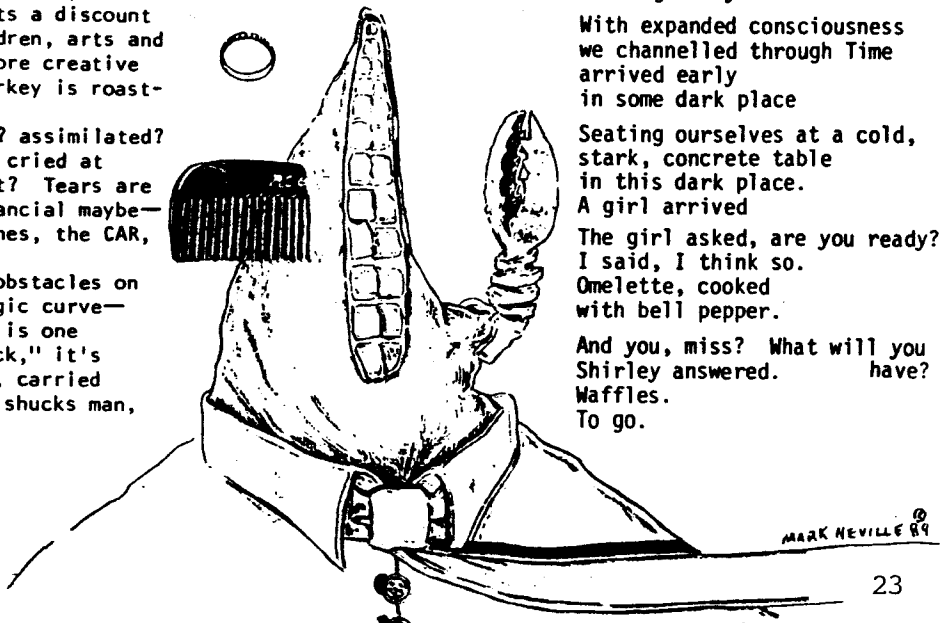
I found myself reflecting with Shirley MacLaine in Malibu for big money

With expanded consciousness we channelled through Time arrived early in some dark place

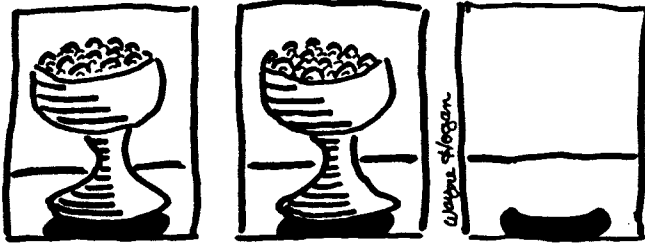
Seating ourselves at a cold, stark, concrete table in this dark place. A girl arrived

The girl asked, are you ready? I said, I think so. Omelette, cooked with bell pepper.

And you, miss? What will you have? Shirley answered. Waffles. To go.



THE END OF APRICOT PUDDING



Jingle Bells, Damn It

by Mark Rose

I am afraid I am beginning to hate travel. Those of you who read my last installment may recall the Hawaiian ordeal that Janet Kansas and I went through, how we were laid over in two different airports for a total of twelve hours, force-fed salt muck for our only meal, and beaten about the back with rubber truncheons before being allowed to board our plane home. Though many of you will assume that is preferential treatment (awarded to those of us with nouns for last names), I can assure you it is decidedly not fun.

"Sigh" One must learn to live within driving distance of the relatives. Not too close, understand, as you don't want them popping in on your big date with Susan "Bombsight" Ford, but close enough so that you don't have to fly to their home every stupid holiday. We made the extremely intelligent move of trying to visit both sets of parents in a one-week timespan, so the plane schedule read Seattle-Detroit-some obscure town in Pennsylvania; some obscure town in Pennsylvania-Detroit-Kansas City; Kansas City-Minneapolis-Seattle. Surprisingly, the first two sections of the journey went off without much of a hitch, and I was even lucky enough to spend a considerable amount of time in the Detroit airport gift shop searching for just the right piece of Detroit Lions memorabilia to make that perfect Christmas gift.

Well, I won't bore you with the various Kansas and Rose family holiday rituals. Let it suffice to say that they involve mass quantities of a cookie known as Jubilee Jumbles, a forgotten card game called "500" (no, not 500 Rummy), and an eccentric professor of ornithology, all of which should be detailed in an upcoming episode (or better yet, neglected entirely).

Anyway, back to travel. Things didn't get really interesting until Thursday night at Janet's parents'. Right in the middle of a furious Trivial Pursuit game, Mark falls silent. Mark is apt to do this, especially when confronted with smartass sloppily-dressed collegians who think they are God because they are oh so trendy about the latest literary lions and quote Keats and Joyce and vehemently assert things like Connecticut is west of Pennsylvania and when you correct them gently, they say "oh, maybe by the old methods of cartography." But this silence was different.

How different was to be discovered when, after the guests had all merrily trooped off, silent Mark went upstairs and was promptly and gloriously sick. Not mere indigestion but a full-fledged flu, the kind (and here I believe I shall insert my own MTINTK) which finds you one moment sitting weakly on the throne, and the next bending over the bathtub, effectively fouling two nests with one body.

Now, trivial as that may be to all those unconcerned, it did wreak havoc with our travel schedule. Like good little fliers, we had ordered the special no-change, extreme-penalty tickets at least six months ahead of time. In order to change our tickets at this date we would have had to forgo our IJ subscription for the next 581 years.

A doctor was hired to write a note to the airlines stating that I would be unable to fly for two days. Apparently, if you show up at the check-in desk, throw up on the counter, and give the impression that you have been slowly decomposing for years, they won't believe you're sick. But if a doctor who never even sees you says that you have been decomposing, then it's all right.

Armed with this airtight excuse, we arrived at KCI Airport in a soupy fog an hour ahead of schedule for our noon flight. I had not eaten a thing in three full days and was still wavering with fatigue and general malaise. For this reason, they cancelled our flight. Then, just for a laugh, they sent us across the terminal (KCI is strategically split into three separate sections, none of which are reachable by foot) to Braniff, where again for laughs, Braniff officials told us that Northwest Airlines had failed to give us proper clearance and the flight that was just now leaving for Seattle was not only unavailable to us but (snicker, snicker) would be the last one leaving KCI for some time.

So we went back to Northwest, and were told that a flight would leave in six short hours and could we please wait in the lounge, as all gate seating areas are closed until their assigned flights arrive. Meanwhile, I had sweated an entire pool in my shorts and shoes, where baby catfish were now happily cavorting.

Normally, sitting in an airport lounge for six hours while the NFL playoffs are on television wouldn't be such a bad experience. But when one has turned into a sickly green garden hose spurring water from all one's pores, and when everyone in the states of Kansas and Missouri has also decided to be stranded on that very day, and when they all decide to eat steaming hot nachos with a gooey brownish-orange cheese sauce that resembles the colors of the Cleveland Browns, then it's time to call it quits.

I'm staying home. Next year the parents can come here.

A CONCEITED LOVE POEM

by Dana A. Snow

I love you almost as much
As I love myself.

ALMOST, but not quite
If I can't be alone, then
Being with you is all right.

Some say that this means I'm vain
But I'm NOT, folks! Here's the clue—
Conceit is INFATUATION with oneself;
In my case, my love is true.

SLOW DOWN

by Mary Ann Henn

Sometimes we go rushing ahead
at a breakneck pace, passing
everything up in a blur
never stopping, never stopping
Life can never be long enough
to hold all the spring evenings
What if we'd go in where
windows rise tall and colored
to reflect the skies
a different shade every hour
of the day Rose at dawn
golden noon through afternoon
scarlet as the sun goes down
then blue and black
I want to stay here forever
watching the sun pull down
the shades with pink fingers
the color of sun and leaves
dancing in my head blinding my eyes
blinding my reason Only the rush
of leaves in wind like the swish
of moving taffeta

I am NOT conceited!
How did I get that rep?
Perhaps it is because I said
I'm the next evolutionary step.
I'm the only man I truly love
But that doesn't mean I'm gay
Still, I would like to kiss my lips
But I can't twist them that way.



Cat Scan-dal

Dog's Tale Turns

RAPID CITY, S.D. (YU) — Officials at the Rapid City Air Base were stunned to discover that their base mascot during World War II and the Korean War, a shaggy black and white mutt named Bismarck, was actually an East German spy.

The dog's dual life came to light last month when Air Force officials decided to build a monument for the canine on this remote MX base after President Reagan mentioned Bismarck's name on his weekly radio talk.

A search of Bismarck's gravesite revealed the bones of a cat, which have since been identified as those of Fallopian Fluffy, the one-time pet of Jeremiah and Jenny Johnson, who has been missing since 1951.

Authorities now believe Bismarck faked his death, substituted Fluffy's body for his own, and fled to Brazil where he still resides.

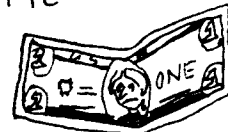
YU News Service

QUESTION:
I'm aware that you graduated from high school with kids who were crawling when you entered the first grade sixty years ago. Why should you expect yourself to tell the rest of us how to live in the hereafter and hereafter?

ANSWER:
It's another dirty trick of nature that the truth can be arrived at only through a series of mistakes, errors, and misadventures. A severe head injury in a war theater. It appears that I'm the only one so blessed. For the latest from the GREATIST send S.A.S.E. to

Multiple Choice: Identify

- a. yen
- b. flag
- c. plastic



In A Foreign Country (IMITATION HEMINGWAY)

by Brian Ruddy

In the fall the war was still there, but Nick did not go to it any more. He didn't have to go; he had a note from his doctor saying, "Please excuse Nick from the carnage. It gives him the heebie-jeebies."

One night that fall in Milan Nick's head felt clear and cold and hollow and empty as he walked past the shops of the galleria toward the Café Guano in the rain. It was raining. Inside the windows of the shops hung freshly butchered game; there were rabbits and foxes and woodcocks and jacksnipe and one half the flank portion of a dipodocus. Looking in at them made Nick feel hungry. He felt it in his belly, where his stomach was. But he tried not to think about it. I was not made to think, he thought, trying not to think. He did not want to think. All he wanted was to get to the Guano and be with his one and true and only love. She would be waiting there for him in the smoky dim light of the café, cool and fresh in the night and smelling like the stockyards of Chicago. They would be together and it would be all right. They would not think of the war, nor of his wounding, nor of the rash on his thighs. Instead they would drink Chianti and grappa and eat warm roasted chestnuts and pretzels out of glazed paper sacks. Then they would eat the glazed paper sacks. Then they would read the illustrated papers. The illustrated papers hung on a rack on the wall and they would take them down off the rack and read them. Yes, Nick thought, the illustrated papers. He was excited.

He walked on toward the café in the rain. It was raining. Inside the café it was warm and smoky and dim. Nick removed his captured Austrian sniper's galoshes and hung them on a rack on the wall. The rack had hooks on which you could hang captured Austrian sniper's galoshes.

Nick looked around the café. It was crowded. From the position of the dead he could tell that they had been drinking Strega when they died.

He looked around but did not see her. She was not there. Evidently she had been delayed. But he was not worried. She would come. He would wait. He did not mind waiting. After all, it was pleasant to wait in a café. It was pleasant to wait in a place that was warm and smoky and dim; a place where sometimes the workmen slapped you on the back and called you "spumone" and then took off their hats and urinated into them out of respect. He would wait.

He went up to the bar and sat down. Fusilli, the barman, recognized Nick. "Ah, Nicolo," he said, "it is good to see you. How are you? Are you well?"

"I am well," Nick said.

"That is good," the barman said. "But I have heard that you were wounded."

"It is nothing," Nick said.

"But I have heard that it was a grievous wound," said the barman. "A most grievous wound."

"It is nothing," said Nick.

The barman studied the jagged scar along Nick's forehead. "But Nicolo," he said, "I have heard that your entire cerebral cortex was shot away."

"It is nothing," Nick said. "A man does as well without a cerebral cortex. It is not a thing a man needs. Although I do have some trouble with figures."

The barman poured Nick a bottle of grappa and then poured one for himself. They drank. The barman smiled. "You are brave, Nicolo," he said.

"No, Fusilli," Nick said. "It is not an issue of bravery. I do not believe in bravery."

"Ah," said the barman, "but I have found that those who do not believe in bravery are the bravest of all. Their bravery is pure and untouchable and it comes as naturally to them as flight to an eagle."

"Could you run that by me again?" asked Nick. "I also have trouble with abstract thinking."

"Forgive me, Nicolo. I was trying to be profound."

"I see," Nick said. "Have you any pickled pig's feet?"

"Of course." The barman lifted the pickled pig out of the tank and handed it to Nick, who bit off the left hind foot and passed it back to the barman. Nick ate the pig's foot rapidly and hungrily, the brine slopping down his chin and onto the bar.

"We have napkins," the barman said, lowering the pig into the tank. Nick took a napkin and ate it rapidly and hungrily. He swallowed it whole, washing it down with the last of his grappa. The barman refilled Nick's basin. "So, Nicolo," he said, "you must tell me of the front."

"I do not wish to speak of it."

"You have the war disgust?"

"No; I have the D.T.'s. At this moment I am seeing inchworms crawling out of your pores."

"I am so sorry, Nicolo."

"It is nothing," Nick said. "Anyway, we have talked too much of me. We have talked nothing of you. How are you, my old friend?"

"I am well, Nicolo. But I fear for my country. I fear for my people. It is this war. This dirty war. It has made drunkards and gluttons of all of us. I myself have drunk too much vermouth,

both sweet and dry, and have eaten too many martini olives, both with pimientos and without. Also I have eaten too much calamari and scungilli and far too much pasta asciutta—even for a guy my size."

"Yes," Nick said. "It is this war."

"And the same is true of my wife," said the barman. "She herself has eaten far too much lobster and an unreasonable amount of scampi—and this isn't even a big seafood town."

"Clearly the war has changed everything," said Nick. "But let us not speak of it."

"Agreed."

There was a long silence. Then the barman leaned over the bar toward Nick. "Nicolo," he whispered, "may I ask you a question of much seriousness?"

"Of course, old friend."

"All right," the barman said. "Why do we speak in this awkward, stilted idiom?"

"I am not certain, Fusilli. But perhaps it has to do with our manliness; our manliness and the fact that there is absolutely no doubt of our manliness nor of our virility."

"I understand," said the barman. "However, I must confess that sometimes I am tempted to speak in a more natural manner. Just once I would like to say something very informal, something really cute and perky."

"You must resist it."

"I know. But it is a very great temptation."

There was another long silence, tremendously packed with meaning. Then the barman grinned broadly. "I have news that will please you," he said.

"What is that, Fusilli?"

"The Count Grippi is here."

Nick turned around and saw the Count. "Ciao, Count Grippi!"

"Ciao, Nicolo!"

Nick and the Count embraced—manfully.

Count Grippi was four hundred and seventy-six years old. He had been a contemporary of Frederick The Great and had been in the diplomatic service of the Holy Roman Empire during the War of the Long Scallions. He had white hair and a white moustache and aristocratic manners and was so old that much of his body had undergone a process of petrification, the tissues having become infused with crystals of silica, quartzite, feldspar and numerous other minerals and mineral aggregates. But he still played a smooth game of billiards.

"It is a great pleasure to see you again, Count," said Nick.

"Are you well?"

"I am well," said the Count. "But I believe I have begun to lose control of my sphincter muscle."

"I am sorry to hear it."

"It is nothing. It is merely something which happens to all of us in time. I am an old man. I am of no importance. You are young. It is you who are of importance."

"You flatter me."

"I speak truly and without sentiment. Only the young are of importance. You yourself have everything before you. You will have a wife, family, work, various adventures, the reading of many illustrated papers."

"You are wise, Count Grippi."

"No, I am not wise."

"You know many things."

"Perhaps."

"Tell me, what do you think of this war?"

"I think it's big."

"Who will win?"

"The side with fewer homos."

"And you said you were not wise."

"Sometimes I get lucky."

"We will play billiards."

"That would be fine."

"And then read the illustrated papers."

"Of course."

Nick called to the barman, who had gone down to the end of the bar to give a customer a haircut. He came over to Nick. "Fusilli," said Nick, "the Count and I are going into the recovery room to play billiards. I was to meet Marjorie here tonight but evidently she has been delayed. When she arrives, send for me immediately."

"When who arrives?"

"Marjorie. The girl I am to marry."

"Nicolo, certainly you play a joke."

"I play no joke."

"Then I am terribly sorry," said the barman, "but I am afraid you are in the wrong story."

"I do not understand."

"Marjorie is home in Michigan. This is 'In Another Country'—or at least a spoof of it. You must be referring to 'The End of Something,' or perhaps 'The Three-Day Blow'."

Nick felt strange. His face went white. Then he commenced to hyperventilate. Then he commenced to totter on his barstool. Then the barman leaped over the bar and took hold of Nick by the shoulders, trying to steady him. Then Nick commenced to drool.

"Pardon me, gentlemen," said the Count. "I was under the impression that this was 'A Farewell to Arms'."

The barman grabbed the Count by the lapels and shouted, "Shut up, you prehistoric twit! Can't you see Nicolo is having an acute dissociative episode?"

Suddenly Nick sat bolt upright. Then he got down off his

(continued next page)

stool, placed a ten-line note on the bar and said, "I must be going."

"Please stay," the barman said. "You are not well."

"I must be going," Nick repeated mechanically. He walked hurriedly out of the café, completely forgetting his galoshes.

Outside he started running. He ran down the street and across the plaza to the station. Inside the station he pushed his way to the front of the line at the ticket window. "Excuse me," he said to the man in the booth, "where might one get a train to Petosky?" The man shrugged in incomprehension. "Boyne City?" Nick asked frantically. "Hortons Bay? St. Ignace?...Detroit!?"

ON BUSINESS

by David Castleman

Our human psyche is like a horse with many masters, and ranked among them is Government, and Media, and Business. One master sees that the blinders never fail in their task of administering blindness. One master investigates the reins constantly, to guard against an encroachment by the individual will. One master tests the harness constantly, that the servile brute may not forget its allotted and proper burden. Other and subtler masters note the aspects of the terrain and the feed and the healthy future of the breed: they stand aloof.

The facility for business is a reasonably constructed and physical extension of the primal hunting instinct of the carnivore, and is itself as clearly a tool of physical contest as is a spear, a trained dog, a nuclear explosive, or a padded bosom. It is a tool whose use extends the power of the animal beyond the borders of naked animality. Its function is of acquisition and of destruction. It kills, that the animal may eat, and the animal is to eat, that it may kill.

All who share the privilege and the responsibility of life live upon this wheel of natural whim. As the mind is the function of the brain, so this special tool hidden among folds in the fisted brain has as its function that aspect of the mind which equips the physical body. The carnivore without it is doomed to be a brief and sorry meat for its fellows.

What traits of personality are required for business? One must be intelligent and single-minded, and troubled by no untamed conscience. Monomania is crucial. Imagination is dangerous and useless. An abundance of energy is vital. Scruples are decorative, not functional.

The activity of a real and vigorous imagination poisons the will by suggesting too many alternatives, and kills single-mindedness. Single-mindedness depends on the channeled presence of the personal portion of communal will, and if the channel enlarges, the will can get no grip, and flounders.

What are the social skills required to participate effectively in this chattering session of business? A person must be able to mimic the reactions of one's peers, must be malleable as a chameleon, so that none will be aware if one chances to have qualms of conscience or stirrings of humanity, and so that none will be aware of one's chances to have a moment of individual awareness. To wake surrounded by the inhabitants of a dream would be as dangerous as to swim with sharks.

One must lie easily, remembering always the essential falsehoods of one's profession, and believing the lies as they are invented on the tongue. If you do not believe your own lies as you speak them, nobody else will believe them, and you will have withdrawn sufficiently from the game that you may not believe the lies of your peers.

Truth will never be as popular as lies, because it seems harder and bleaker. Almost invariably, we prefer the phonies among our contemporaries, rather than folks of truth or genius. In superficiality is happiness, when we fear the truth, and feel belittled by genius. Little people love displays of littleness, because littleness allows them to feel real, and nobody loves to feel substantial as a bubble.

One who perceives the surface clearly enough will understand the depths beneath the surface comfortably, though inarticulably, and may be uninterested in those depths. To be a successful seller, one must ignore anything beyond the surface of reality. One must believe in the surface with unfeigned sincerity.

Sincerity is prized, while honesty is abhorred, and sincerity must have the appearance of sincerity or it counts as nothing. Every intelligent and civilized society values the appearance of

sincerity more than it values sincerity itself. The appearance of reality is more important than is actual reality. Appearance is the only thing that superficialists dare to trust, the only thing that may be discussed easily.

The appearance is real and exists on the superficial plane of reality, and is the nearest thing to substance that is available to normal folks. The appearance of things is the clearest indicator of truth and reality and substance that normalcy is permitted, and this is healthy. To ignore the appearance and the superficial is unhealthy.

This plane of the superficial is the domain of those three masters of which we spoke, Business, and Government, and Media; each has a fine and imposing abode on this level, and each has many servants and formidable affairs.

To be excellent at business, one must enjoy it utterly, and one must consider it a fine game to be played well. To be a champion at business, beyond mere excellence, it must be religion. Somebody who is so good at being bad must pay an awful price for the privilege. Why do so many people pay such a devastating price, forsaking conscience, family and self?

Every religion requires martyrs, and martyrs work for nothing. Their bosses reap the glory.

We strive to succeed in business because acquisition is the human pursuit, and we would match our fellows. What pleasure would be found in life apart, striving for baubles against which our various authority figures have preached, striven to suppress, and mocked? The fruits of acquisition seem tangible. They can be held in hand like Faberge eggs. They can be walked upon, like beaches in an earthly paradise. Their acquisition permits us to forget the coming and the gnawing precipice, the yawning reward, the sleep without rest.

Our fear dissolves when we confront the acceptedly real and the acceptedly desirable, and if later it proves a mirage, that is irrelevant.

Pursuing what our fellows pursue, we forget our smallness, insignificance and loneliness. What comfort had Galileo though he was right? What comfort had Gauguin? What comfort had Christ? The human needs went unanswered, and each must have been a focal point of cosmic doubt, an arena of the psyche. The loneliness must have been fraught with horror, and fear.

In the night our human loneliness crawls across the ceiling and stares down at us, and though we cannot see it, we feel that it is there. It mocks us as we watch it through our closed or open eyes, or through our fingers which splay like trembling fans upon our faces. We hear it scuttling and we hear it whispering and whispering like the beating of a heart. We are reminded of the basis on which all illusion shimmers awhile, and it is unkind of us, and unkind. We want the great basis to confide with us, and its tongue is unmoved.

Honorable suffering is humanity's only possible gift to Deity, and it is not enough.

It is our normal desire to escape the offering of that gift, and we attempt this when we choose to remain always on the surface of desire, the surface of reality and life. Therefore a reasonable society embraces the march of business, and of war. War is only business with its sleeves rolled up.

All of the world's business has one goal, and efforts made in business have been attempts pulsing toward that goal. To define the goal precisely would require the use of many words, and two aspects would be implicit in any definition, and would be explicit in any honest definition. Despite any decorative digressions, the goal of business and of war includes the enslavement of the human race and the destruction of the planet.

The best people among the devotees to commerce, these myrmidons to Mammon, prefer to pretend that their personal goals are somehow short of this grand goal, but in their hearts and brains they know that nobody is fooled. Each can tell easily what the others do, and each permits a mantle of confusion to settle over all.

Lying doesn't bother them. They are good at it. The unluckiest among them pale with disgust every morning when they confront the bathroom mirror. The luckiest among them are scarcely ashamed at all. The proudest among them are frightened because they know they have betrayed themselves, and somewhere the almost inaudible voice of conscience still murmurs.

While it's true that those who are too susceptible to morality's punctilio may be disgusted by business, it's also true that we are easily disgusted by things with which we are not in sympathy. For many folks, and usually for the poorest of us, business is just the science of cheating people, a mindless obscenity; and yet to a business buff, the act of being in business justifies one's existence to oneself and to one's Deity. Sometimes business-folks wonder that they are unable to appreciate the uncommon, and yet is that truly so odd, since they revel so in the common?

Does a robber-baron truly believe that a lifetime dedicated to the crippling and assassination of whole families by the thousands is balanced by building a concert hall as he is about to die? Do such acts of dishonor go unrecorded into the dawn of prehistory and the dusk of post-history?

"As were human knowledge can split a ray of light and analyze the manner of its composition, so, sublimer intelligences may read in the feeble shining of this earth of ours, every thought and act, every vice and virtue, of every responsible creature on it." Amen.

And yet their desperate hope and prayer is for a Ptolemaic and all-inclusive silence, silent as a perfectly managed conscience, even on Sunday.



Another Damn Space Opera

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

LOG ENTRY #5—OH, NOW IT SORTA MAKES SENSE

We were parked on the far side of Calligula's only moon, where we could plot our attack on the Children of Apollo's home turf without their noticing us.

The Children of Apollo were a very upwardly-mobile cult group. Other cults tended to decline due to recruiting problems (not everyone wants to surrender all their worldly goods for a spartanly-pure lifestyle). But not so the Children of Apollo. For them, the message from above was "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we shall eat, drink, and be merrier still!" Decadence was religiously enforced.

The planet Calligula became a haven for rich runaways. To get in all you had to be as beautiful, able to bring a little of your old man's money with you, and willing to be spoiled rotten for the rest of your life.

Besides contributions from new members, the Children's coffers swelled with regular donations from patrons who didn't want it widely known that their little angels had joined a sex cult. And being able to blackmail most of the wealthiest humans in the explored universe placed the Children in an enviable position of power and protection.

As a sideline, the Children produced and marketed the best human pornography in the Milky Way. I've got a few of their tapes in my own collection.

We had come to Calligula to rescue one of their reluctant Children. I planned to do it, but only if I decided not to murder my client first.

I glared at Hotwater Jones. For the first time she actually seemed intimidated, and that improved my mood considerably. "I have never been noted for my restraint," I told her, "and I figure you've got about thirty seconds to talk me out of strangling the life out of you."

"I hardly know where to begin," Jones stammered.

"Pretend you're writing a serial and you have to get four chapters of exposition down in less than a page," I suggested.

"I couldn't tell you anything before. If you found out things before you became too deeply involved to back out then someone very important to me would be compromised."

"Meaning your boss, Mr. Dorian 'Richest Being Since Creation' Hotz, is into something smelly up to here." I indicated a point about a foot over my head.

Jones said nothing.

"So just what is it that he's into?"

Jones' sad expression indicated she was about to tell a sad tale which she'd just as soon forget she ever heard. "Sylvia Hotz is not the first person the Children of Apollo have kidnapped."

I needed this statement clarified, because I fervently prayed that I had misunderstood. "You mean that those kids down there playing sex games are not volunteers?"

"Oh, they would all tell you they loved it. Now." Jones shuddered before she went on, and I prepared myself for the bad part. "The Children have developed a method of mind control that can turn a teenager with a few wild tendencies into an enthusiastic orgyist in about a week."

"And Hotz knew about this?"

"No," said Jones. "He just knew they had money to spend, and he had connections to provide. The Children took Sylvia shortly after Dorian found out—they thought it would keep him quiet and well-behaved. When Dorian became involved it seemed harmless; though most of the Children are very young they are all above the age of consent. He did not know that their consent had been taken from them. And he didn't know their other secret."

I didn't want to ask. I asked. "What other secret?"

"The Children of Apollo run the galaxy's most exclusive brothel."

I hadn't wanted to ask. The ship was silent, we were all speechless, and Brick and Sprite, my most sensitive crewmembers, looked ready to break into tears. A thought came to me, unwanted and mocking: I've got a few of their tapes in my own collection.

"Sylvia isn't a good candidate for their treatment. It can be said without fear of contradiction that she is a good girl. So there is still time to rescue her before any damage has been done. But the Children have spies everywhere, so Dorian couldn't go to the authorities, and he couldn't send his own people."

"So he sent you to find a pack of lemmings to do the work."

Jones only nodded.

"What now, Captain?" asked Mef.

"Captain, we have to do something!" sobbed Sprite.

Whirr, click. "Boss, I think we've gone and gotten emotionally involved again," said Lucky.

"Well," I said, taking a pose I learned from my hero John Wayne's old tapes, "not only are they scum and deserve to be dealt with severely just on general principles, but they have made the mistake of making this personal. Every move the Children have made since this started has shown that they don't take me seriously. I hate being underestimated and I won't take lightly to that insult! They aren't going to get away with this!" I slammed my fist against a bulkhead as hard as I could, and the whole ship rang with the sound. Luckily I didn't wince when I hurt like hell; that would have spoiled the pose.

"I've got a plan!" I cried.

(To be continued)

Sample Steeple People Lumber

by Eric Ewing

"That is very typical, Rhoda," said Dr. Wells. "The sites involved, though, make me itch with painful ice. Explain once more the 'tying of lightning' you mention often."

Rhoda looked around the doctor's office, noting in particular the oversized cockroaches hanging from fine threads from the ceiling. "Well, doctor, it has been almost six weeks since it happened, and I don't think the details run clearly today."

"Try your best, Rhoda. See it in your mind. Communicate with your speech bones. Let me know!" He stressed the last sentence through gritted teeth, making a noise of escaping steam, the flow of mist from a funnel, nozzle-fog.

"I'll try, doctor, but just for you." She gave him one loving look before closing her eyes and letting a look of extreme mental effort entertain her face.

"Can you see?" implored the doctor. "Is it there?"

She groaned and grunted heavily. "It's—she started. 'The cats! Too many!' The sweat was beading up on her forehead."

"But is it there? Can you see it?"

"Yes," she screamed, "yes, it's there! Oh, no! The children!" The pain in her face was unmistakable. Tears were fighting their way out from between her clenched eyelids. Her mind was a battlefield, every memory a mortar blast, tearing away neurons like miniature soldiers.

Dr. Wells leaned over his desk and pressed the record button on his tape recorder. "Now Rhoda," he said, using his best TV-doctor voice, "start from the beginning. What do you see?"

"I see the restaurant. Jack is there, and so is Hannah. She seems to be telling one of the kids something."

"What kids, Rhoda?"

"I don't know whose kids they are! They're just... kids!"

"Okay, Rhoda. Go on. Is there anyone else in the room?"

"Cats. Lots and lots of cats. They're running between the kids' legs and climbing onto the table. All over the place! What a mess!"

"What about the beds? Is it raining?"

"What? No beds. It's a restaurant. Oh! Jack is picking up one of the cats. He's...he's eating it! Oh goodness! The children are watching! The blood! It's running down his chin! The cat is still alive! It's clawing at Jack's face! We're all looking at Jack. His blood is mingling with that of the cat. Ooh, how awful! Wait! Stella is coming!"

"Stella? Who is Stella?"

"Jack's wife. Ex-wife, I mean. She's got..." A quizzical look came over her face. "I think it's some kind of dinosaur. It's wearing a crown, a golden crown. Yes, that's what it is. The dinosaur. It's not really big, but it's scary. It's the kind with the spikes."

"Stegosaurus?"

"No, the spikes are on his head. Triceratops! That's it. The crown is on the spikes. Watch out!" The suddenness of her cry surprised the doctor. "Watch out for the dinosaur! Oh, the children! Dying! They're all dying! Let me out of here!"

Dr. Wells took Rhoda by the shoulders and shook her energetically. "Snap out of it! Wake up! It's over. It's all right. It's me."

Rhoda slowly opened her eyes and let out a deep sigh. "It's over?" she asked wearily.

"Yes, Rhoda, it's done."

"Did I win, Dr. Wells?"

"Yes, you won."

He handed her a wad of bills (American) and she left.

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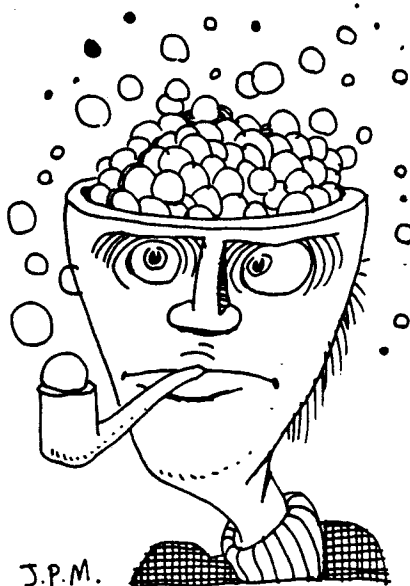
The Solidness Foundation
P.O. Box 140506
Dallas, TX 75214

La, La, La-Yuck

by R.S. Moser

So it's true. What is it that festers within you that you need to be covered in blood to feel alive? Is it a need to feel "bad" and dirty in a clean, well-lit world? Is your vision of Reality that boring? Where will your life be bettered by the knowledge that somewhere in the dark a child is dying a slow and painful death? You are all vampires, sucking puss and poison from the wound of the world. You read that somewhere in Nebraska a woman has gone mad, killing her children, disemboweling her husband and finally putting the gun to her own head and becoming pudding and you look sourly and say great nothings like, "Oh my God, what a world we live in, oh my God..." But somewhere in the darkened corner of your mind you feel excited and wonderfully fearful, because there is a rot beneath your skull, a dark wet thing that has grown like a cancer. It demands to be fed, and who are you to refuse its cry? Quickly, feed it on the remains of dead children whose bodies litter the big city, feed it the husband whose wife has taken murder on, feed it on your own dreams that have become as cold and dead as a trash-can abortion, feed it the stillborn hopes of your thin grayed parents.

But for God's sake, feed it quickly, young vampires.



TOP BANANA

(Superficial Title)

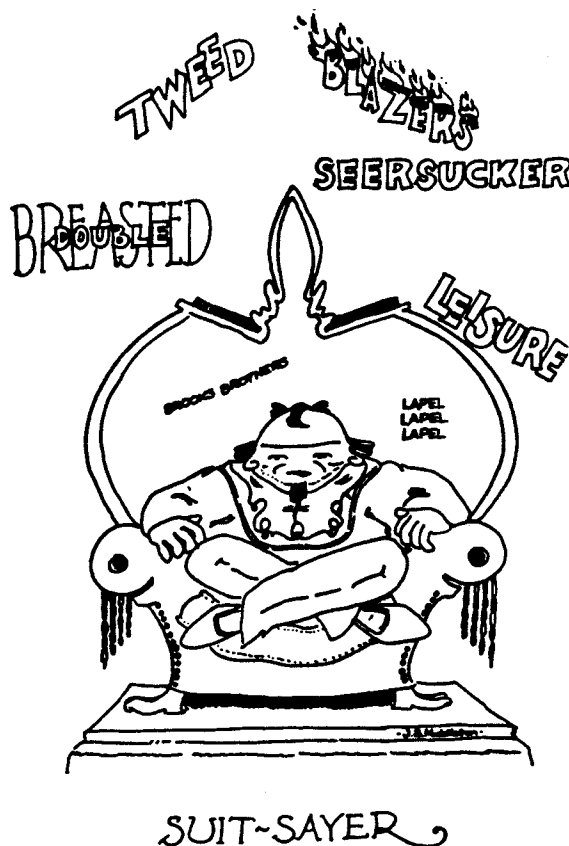
by Santa Mike the Golden Yahoo

(Eye-catching first sentence.) (Sentence to further interest the reader.) (Sentence to explain the first two.) (More explanation.) (Sentence to get the reader to read the following paragraphs.)

(Introduction to the second paragraph.) (Sentence that really gets into what the writer is trying to say and is thus really not that interesting.) (More boring facts/non-facts.) (Leader for the third paragraph.)

(Point to be made in the third paragraph!) (Rhetorical question?) (Unnecessary response to the rhetorical question—it's rhetorical, you stupid, dumb, ignorant fool!) (Feelings and explanation about response to the rhetorical question.) (More heartfelt, meaningful explanation, expletive.) (Point to be made!) (Pseudo-clever restatement of original rhetorical question?)

(Introduction to a simpler rehash of the same rant-parade.) (Rehash.) (Rehash.) (Rehash.) (Set up, stupid, reworded, again, rhetorical question.) (Repeat of the point to be made, expletive!!)



SUIT-SAYER

SEMIOTICS AT THE BREAKFAST TABLE

by A.J. Wright

Julie returned from the morning's run through the neighborhood out of breath, as usual, but full of unusual news as well. "The signs have been changed," she announced to me after gulping down my orange juice and plopping her slender bottom into the chair across from mine.

"Uh-huh," I responded from my familiar quarters behind the New York Times. I was reading a long investigative piece on the assassination of John F. Kennedy considered as a downhill bicycle race. "What else is new?"

"I'm serious," Julie scolded. "The stop sign at the corner now says 'Nothing is true. Everything is permitted.' A sign on the window of the Frozen Yogurt Place says 'Abandon hope all who enter here.' The streetlights have all been replaced with blinking plastic eyeballs."

"Well, you know that Channel 3 said just last week. Drugs have permeated even the finest neighborhoods."

"No, these are official-looking signs."

I looked up from the paper and frowned. Life was getting more complicated every day. "What do you think we should do?"

"Probably nothing. Salvador Dali died the other day; maybe that has something to do with it."

I nodded. "No doubt." But the doubts had just multiplied. How could life go on at this pace? The change rate accelerated every day, and the best efforts of foreign ministers at summit conferences failed to stabilize it. We were in danger of drowning in our own dangers, a culture fragmenting faster and faster into smaller and smaller signs less and less related to one another. What's a concerned account executive to do?

I glanced at my watch. Reality was hanging by a thread from my wrist. "When's the next election?" I asked.

Julie looked up from the Times, where she had been reading an article on the squabbling among Afghan rebel factions. "Why?"

"We've got to vote Republican. They'll know what to do."

Sayz-U!(Letters)

Dear Elayne,

This is just a quick note to thank you once again for such a fine publication, in this instance INSIDE JOKE #65. I'd especially like to mention Larry Stolte's wonderfully funny contribution, and the comics done by Paul Nicoloff. Though the one on page 16 was difficult to read (poor reproduction), it was quite good, and I hope to hear from this person more in the future. Stu Newman's "Half The World" was also nicely done, and raised itself a whole 'nother notch with that last line. And of course, as always, Anni and "Kid" Sieve did their usual bang-up fascinating, humorous job. I wonder what the Kid thinks about those new American Express commercials? Far be it for me to hint that a credit card company can actually do something I like, but that commercial where the guy flashes his card and asks, "What do you need?", then they're both so happy and oo, it just makes me go all gushy and romantic. Of course, maybe it's because I travel so poorly...

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

(Actually, the Kid can't stand both that one and the one where the jet-setting yupsters lose their card in Milan on the way to China. "Yeah, like I got the bucks to be gallivanting all about, I can really identify with these world travellers. And don't these brain-dead conspicuous consumers realize they're going to have to PAY THE BILLS for all this superspending? Just once I'd like to see a follow-up commercial with these same morons a couple months hence when they get their AmEx statement in the mail...")

Dear Elayne;

March 7, 1989

Yes! I say, Yes!! Humor is storming back into the pages of IJ! Keep the comics page! The scattered toons in IJ #66 were also quite good.

Got a kick out of Dana Snow's poems. And the Kid's cutting humor was right on target, as usual.

On a more serious note, I enjoyed Elliot Cantsin's article on the manipulation of art...

Sincerely,

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

Dear Elayne:

20 March 1989

Just a Brief Note to let you know I received, actually read, and enjoyed the last IJ. As you know, things have not been entirely as one might ideally wish for Your Girlfriend, what with one thing and another, and it was pleasant to have something to cheer me up through all the less than cheerful days. Ah well, as someone once said, that which does not kill me makes me stranger. And so forth.

In any event, I was sorry to see the end of The Poet's Diet Book and will look forward to Dwyer's next effort. And where is Prudence? Move your buns (aren't you glad, glad, glad I didn't put "bunny" instead? There's some that would have, you know), girl. Some of us are waiting for the next installment. And I really do wish that "Kid" Sieve would do some sort of exploration into this mysterious connection between NutraSweet and Randy Newman—I wouldn't say it's exactly keeping me awake nights, but it's given me a couple of bad moments in the shower.

Somebody just dropped by casually—he was looking for my boss, in actual fact, but then, aren't we all?—and, in the course of conversation, mentioned that it was George Bush who poisoned those two grapes. I'm only embarrassed that I didn't think of it myself, but I don't suppose my shower is going to be any too comfortable tonight, either...

Be that as it may, I liked all my usual favourites and was incensed by the people I can usually do without (there. If I'm going to worry, so is everybody else), and what more can I ask from an IJ than that?

Someday I'll write you a Real Letter again, when all the noise and confusion dies down. Or, since I'm now an heiress, perhaps I'll have my toady do it. But I am thinking about you, when I'm not thinking about inheritance taxes, insurance policies, estate lawyers, headstones, and why it is my doctor insists these pills don't make a person go all light in the head. Really.

Maist deep in the Big Muddy,

ANNI ACKNER
P.O. Box 18
Reading, PA 19603

Hi, Fearless Leaderess!

March 10, 1989

It's atypically quiet at Burson-Marsteller today, which means I've had more time to read IJ #66. Though Anni and Pru were sorely missed, there was plenty of other "good stuff," as TNT would say, among them young Master DeJa's explanation of "Coolfathers."

Jed Martinez' first "Animation Update" column as an IJ staffer was great. I was especially pleased to learn that WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT? was 1988's top movie grosser (none o' yer lip, J.P.). Since he mentioned live-action characters who were/are crossing over into 'Toondom, I wonder if he knows what happened to the animated series Hanna-Barbera was building around Whoopi Goldberg, wherein she'd do the voice of herself as a child? Speaking of cartoons, I enjoyed the updated "...Rarebit Fiend."

As the daughter of a professional gambler, I got a kick out of Larry Stolte's "One-Armed Band-Aid" (I shoulda known a slot machine would talk like a Damon Runyon character). Ken Burke's "Dr. Iguana" column spoofing the Givens/Tyson relationship was a good idea with a somewhat self-conscious execution, but likeable

enough. Steven Scharff's "Overheard at Pathmark," G. Michael Dobbs' "Talk Show Most Confidential" and Susan Catherine's "Overheard at America's Lunch Counters" were not only funny, but well-placed in the issue; they do make excellent companion pieces.

"Commercial McClue-In" was as sharply insightful as ever.

Still, I think you should have skewered those Dura-Soft Colored Contact Lens TV spots. You know the ones: an off-screen male narrator waxes rhapsodic about some gorgeous adventuress engaged in derring-do on the screen. Then the narrator starts to describe her eyes: "Brown as...bark" (In another Dura-Soft spot, he says "Brown as...old shoes." Why not "Brown as hot chocolate sipped by an open fire" or something?!). He hurriedly retracts that as the last few seconds of footage rewind. Then we see the Brown-Eyed Girl wearing purple contacts, as the narrator intones "Her eyes were as violet as the colors in a child's imagination." (How does he know what colors are in a kid's imagination? I always liked yellow, myself.) Yes, I know Anni has already gone over the irritating phenomenon of shame-filled brown-eyed women disguising their irises with multicolored bits of plastic. (Anni's comment on the old Dura-Soft commercials, mentioned in an IJ letter some time ago, referred more to the implicit racism of black women being advised to desire blue eyes.) Still, this annoys me, and I don't even have brown eyes. How must militant brown-eyed women feel?

Can't wait for IJ #67!

DORIAN TENORE
301 East 48th St., #6D
New York, NY 10017

Dear Elayne,

16 March 1989

I wasn't sure that my recent essay would appeal to you, since your magazine seems in part to be based upon a normal form of humor, and since my essay could be interpreted as being a decidedly odd bit of satire, though again I confess that it was written from a perspective which was very nearly straight. The expressed perceptions of someone who is uncommonly intense and sensitive will very seldom appear to be natural to those who are of a different level of sensitivity and intensity...

I think a great benefit of that which is perceived to be satire is that it conveys a warning. Warnings of what may make us uneasy, and sometimes we handle our unease by allowing ourselves to believe that humor is intended or necessary, and we laugh at these things. I think that one of the things I enjoy in INSIDE JOKE is that occasionally disturbing reflections are sometimes used to provoke a sort of laughter...Few folks, I think, would understand or appreciate the potentially serious side of my scribbles, and yet perhaps many folks might find in them a perverse humor...

Best wishes always,

DAVID CASTLEMAN
512 Tamalpais Drive
Mill Valley, CA 94941

Dear Elayne,

Before my subscription to INSIDE JOKE needs to be renewed, I want to applaud once again the efforts of all writers, especially those for INSIDE JOKE and "Kid" Sieve in particular...wondering if there would be any interest in a shorter sequel to THE POET'S DIET or THE POET'S DIET BOOK?

My best,

TAMARINA DWYER c/o K. KELLY
14 Balsam Court
New Hartford, NY 13413

(Well, Tammy, from the reaction your serial got in our letters columns, I'd say the readership is quite in favor of a sequel!)

THE WRITER (in the style of Edgar Allen Poe's THE RAVEN)
by Michael Polo

Once while typing, nearly yawning,
suddenly there came a dawning
And the writer started typing, typing, letters by the
score
Like a sailor at land's sighting, furiously started
writing,
Writing bold, incisive literary words of wit and lore,
Started writing like a novice writer never wrote before,
Started writing straight and sure.

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

What had Destiny in store?

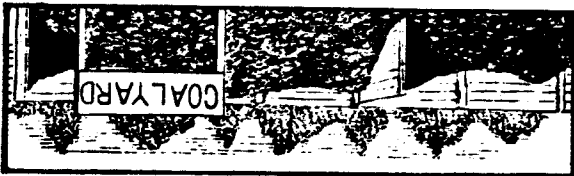
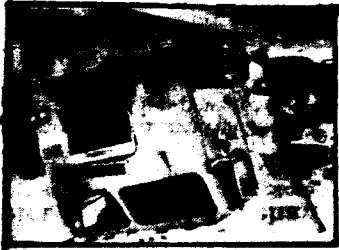
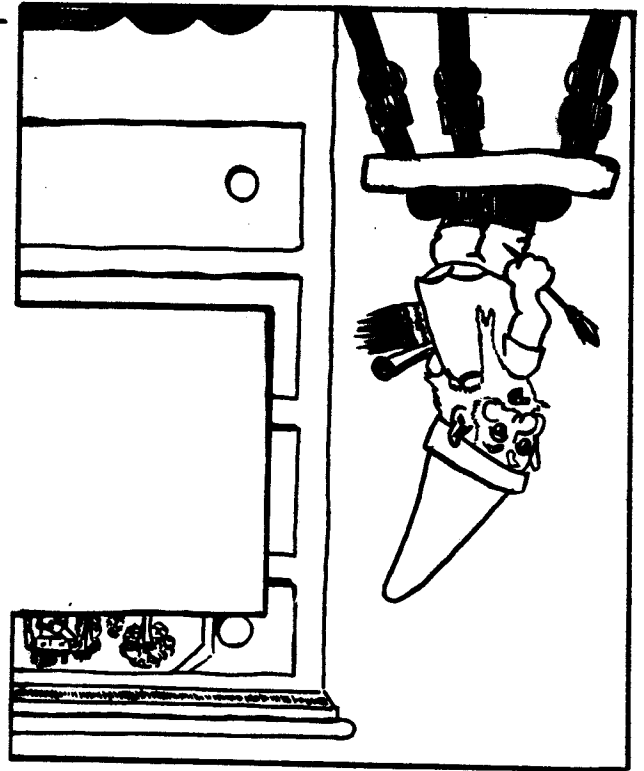
After three weeks in the Top Ten, called a conference
for the press, then
He, the writer, waxed about what brought him to the
fore.

"Focus in for Inspiration, draw from personal elation,
Do not worry if your literary efforts will endure,
For in practicing your art you shall make Journalism
your..."

Quoth the writer, "...Signature."



15: MAR: 89
~~15: MAR: 89~~



INSIDE JOKE
 ELAYNE WECHSLER
 PO #1609
 MADISON SQUARE STATION, NY, NY, 10159

