

Lured!

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HOUSE OF
WRITERS

PLAYING AT THE STRAND ONE WEEK ONLY

NO
ESCAPE
FROM

INSIDE JOKE

Starring

JOHN CARRADINE • ALLISON HAYES • MYRON HEALY
with SALLY TODD • MARILYN BUFORD • TOR JOHNSON

Original Story by JANE MANN

Screen Play by GEOFFREY DENNIS and JANE MANN
Produced by Elayne Wechsler

★
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TO
FRIGHTEN!*



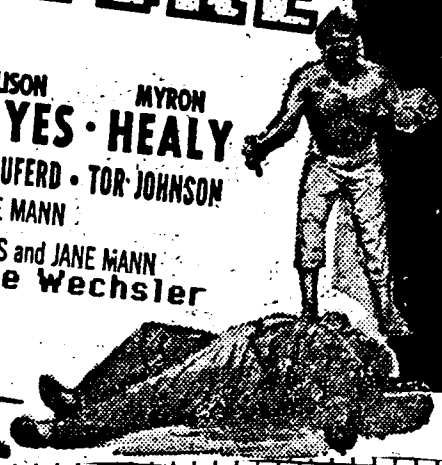
SEE: Writers waiting for a thought!



SEE: Writers tell an editor more than she should know!



SEE: The place the writers work!



Upcoming Events

- JUNE 15 - DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS TO IJ #69
 JUNE 16 - Joyce Carol Oates (51); Stan Laurel (b. 1895)
 JUNE 17 - Abbie Hoffman Tribute at the Palladium in NYC
 (for more info call Ticketron); M.C. Escher (b. 1893);
 Watergate anniversary ('way back in '72)
 JUNE 18 - Paul McCartney (47); Carol Kane (37)
 JUNE 19 - Lou Gehrig (b. 1903); Garfield (11)
 JUNE 20 - Lillian Hellman (b. 1903); Cyndi Lauper (36);
 Errol Flynn (b. 1909)
 JUNE 21 - Judy Holliday (b. 1922); Sartre (b. 1905)
 JUNE 22 - Todd Rundgren (40)
 JUNE 23 - J.C. BRAINBEAU (82)
 JUNE 24 - First UFO "Saucer" Sighting (1947)
 JUNE 25 - JILL COZZI (34); Custer's Last (1876)
 JUNE 26 - Peter Lorri (b. 1904); A. Doubleday (b. 1819)
 JUNE 27 - Emma Goldman (b. 1869); Bob Keeshan (62)
 JUNE 28 - Mel Brooks (61)
 JUNE 30 - RORY HOUCHESS (33); Ben Bagdikian (69); Lena
 Horne (72); Leap Second Adjustment Time again!
 JULY is NATIONAL ANTI-BOREDOM MONTH
 JULY 1 - Canada Day
 JULY 3 - Compliment Your Mirror Day; Disobedience Day;
 Tom Stoppard (52); Franz Kafka (b. 1883)
 JULY 4 - Aphelion; Rube Goldberg (b. 1883); Fireworks
 JULY 5 - P.T. Barnum (every minute, 1829)
 JULY 6 - Beatrix Potter (b. 1866)
 JULY 7 - Shelley Duvall (40); William Kunstler (70);
 Ringo Starr (46)
 JULY 8 - WILLIAM "MasterMath" RALEY (31)
 JULY 10 - Rainbow Warrior sunk (1985); Arlo Guthrie (42)
 JULY 12 - Bucky Fuller (b. 1895); Milton Berle (81)
 JULY 13 - Harrison Ford (47); Roger McGuinn (47)
 JULY 14 - Woody Guthrie (b. 1912); Jerry Rubin (51);
 Vinnie Bartilucci and Dorian Tenore tie the knot!
 JULY 17 - MAX NUCLEAR (31); "Wrong Way" Corrigan Day
 JULY 18 - Hunter Thompson (50); Red Skelton (76)
 JULY 19 - George McGovern (67); Nat'l Lib Day (Nica.)

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 • INSIDE JOKE is put on *homeweekly* by Elaine "High Falutin"
 • Wechsler and lots of friends, and emanates from beautiful
 • Brooklyn, Nueva York, where they're closing up the libraries
 • to free up funds for killer cops to arrest and strangle small-
 • time street-level drug users...and Koch is proud of this?
 • EDITOR-WITHOUT-A-TITLE.....ELAYNE WECHSLER
 • PRODUCTION ASSISTANT.....STEVE CHAPUT

STAFF WRITERS/ARTISTS

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

Front Cover by MIKE DOBBS

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- | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|------------------|
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| JOHN CRAWFORD | TULI KUPFERBERG | DALE WHITE |
| DAZA | RUSSEL LIKE | S.M.T.G. YAHOO |
| KYLE DOSTALER | RODNEY LYNCH | and "KID" SIEVE |

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 43 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10003 212-505-5775

- JULY 21 - First Robot Homicide (1984); Marshall McLuhan
 (b. 1911); Robin Williams (38)
 JULY 22 - Pied Piper of Hamelin appears (1376)
 JULY 26 - Gracie Allen (b. 1905); Aldous Huxley (b. 1894)
 JULY 28 - PHIL PROCTOR (49); PHREDD (4)
 JULY 29 - WAYNE HOGAN (); William Powell (b. 1892)
 JULY 30 - Kate Bush (31); Comedy Celebration Day in San
 Francisco; DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS TO IJ #70

ACKNOWLEDITORIAL

I want to start off by thanking all of you who again sent in your written contributions camera-ready (henceforth "CR") for IJ reduction and insertion, but I must confess to a slight error in judgement in not being more specific last issue. I should not only have said "65 characters per line for long pieces, 55 for shorter ones," I was supposed to add that this refers ONLY to 12-pitch fonts, not 10-pitch. I rarely run anything with 10-pitch, which takes up too much space (an exception is this issue's "Zen Brick"). So I've taken an actual ruler to CR, pre-reduction copy and come up with column inches for you to follow: A 65-character line should measure exactly 5 1/4 inches; a 55-character line comes to about 4-5/8". If your piece is real short I can still type it up 16-pitch on my office computer (examples in this issue include pieces by Rory, Susan Packie and Roger Coleman) and not reduce it at all, as very short pieces don't require the space-saving methods that longer ones do. Please bear in mind that the submission of CR copy for IJ is voluntary (I'm not in wrist braces yet, I'm starting physical therapy for the Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, and I still have to type for a living, besides which I enjoy typing, so DON'T WORRY if you can't meet these specs) and, for you newcomers, please space in three to begin paragraphs and don't put extra spaces between lines. Thanks again!

Speaking of newcomers, welcome to Kyle Dostaler, Anne Ellsworth (all the way from Germany!), Gobi, Christopher Gross, Russ Like and P.C. Smyth, and welcome back to Nina Bogin and Daza. I asked Nina, as I couldn't go this year (no stash), to report on the annual Washington Square Smoke-In, which honored Abbie Hoffman—other Hoffman tributes appear in this issue by Brian Ruddy and Tuli Kupferberg, and you'll notice on the left I mention a memorial at the Palladium on June 17. Such luminaries as Kurt Vonnegut, Howard Zinn, Daniel Ellsberg, Allen Ginsberg, Amy Carter and IJ friend Paul Krasner are scheduled to appear, and I'm considering an IJ group trip if anyone's interested (call me at the 718/HELP-AT-1 Hotline for details). As for Daza, he invites future participation for his "Thinking/Perceiving" series, and I'm willing to print one of these pieces per issue if anyone wants to send in their list. Daza also did us three dynamite covers, to appear sometime in the future—first we have covers by Mike Dobbs (whom we will visit during our June vacation through Springfield MA and Connecticut—sorry we can't visit any other IJ New Englanders as we'd hoped, but the vacation has been curtailed) this issue, Jim Middleton next, then Ace, Vernon, Margot Inley, James Wallis... enough to last for a while, although I'd love to see more female artists (Marry Ann? Catherine?) send in covers in the future.

Also back is J.P. "Snide Critic" Morgan; Pru's not back yet, as she's been ill (yes, she'd love cards and letters); Steve Scharff and Todd Kristel may not be back unless they start realizing we have not adopted an every-other-issue policy for staffers and they are expected to contribute EVERY issue or call/write me to say they won't be (come on guys, be fair, it's really your only obligation as staffers); David Serlin isn't back, he's taking exams, so we may never know what happened to INSIDE STROKE. I decided not to bring back any more TV reviews; although new shows keep cropping up they're cancelled before we go to press (networks have even unceremoniously cancelled the brilliant JIM HENSON HOUR and the quite-intense-of-late BEAUTY & THE BEAST, so it looks like we'll be saving on videotape next year), so I'm holding off until the new season begins. I won't hold off on zine reviews, however—I'll put out another "Fan Noose" in IJ #69, so if any of you would like me to review your or your friends' stuff please send it to me by the deadline (I can't trade IJ for zines any more, as I have previously mentioned, but editors will receive a copy of the column)...Meanwhile, in this issue, Kathy and James continue their serials (Kathy informs me her story won't necessarily continue in each subsequent issue), Rodney Lynch does a lovely tribute to Ray Bradbury, Al Fry breathes his last, and the usual craziness abounds—it looks like we actually have a letter column of decent length again at last! In the hope that this continues, I'm mailing these out as quickly as I can in time for the deadline for IJ #69 (no sexual pun tributes, please), June 15 (the deadline for #70 is July 30), when I'll be expecting written pieces under 1900 words, pot, artwork, weed, letters, marijuana, zines, joints, suggestions for the Four-Color Fiend, nickel bags and any monetary donations you'd care to make (thanks to Brainbeau, Wayne Hogan, Burt Moses and Larry Stolte for financial help), above and beyond the usual, which is: \$1.50 per issue (no more than three copies of an IJ per person, as I only make 150 copies in total) or a 65¢ stamp if your submission is published in #69 (don't send postage in lieu of the \$1.50 submission price if you don't have any art or writing in the issue—the 65¢ postage option is a contributors' discount only); advance subs are accepted on a NON-REFUNDABLE basis up to \$12 a year (8 issues). Send a SASE for the Guidelines if you'd like more information; and send everything to:
 P.O. Box 1609, Madison Sq. Station, New York, NY 10159.

This issue is dedicated to Guy Williams, but most of all to one of my long-time inspirations, Gilda Radner.



DIARY of the ROCK FIEND



by
Anni Ackner
ACCEPT ALL SUBSTITUTIONS

This may or may not have entirely escaped your notice—I am perfectly willing to concede that you might possibly have had other things on your mind—but honesty compels me to mention the fact that, of late, I have not been as regular in my attendance at this column as once I was. Where in my earliest days as your beloved Witty, Acerbic, Sophisticated Commentator on the American Scene nothing on earth could prevent me from delivering my humble words to you month after month—oh, do you remember those hallowed days? We were monthly back then, just like the moon and the tides and bad news from the Visa card company, and I diligently wrote my column in sickness, in crisis, in depression, and, once, in the midst of the most self-destructive love affair this side of Gary Hart—these days I am very much afraid that I have sometimes been lax, occasionally skipping an issue to attend to some personal problem, adhere to a political restriction, or simply because I can never remember what "hexaweekly" means.

Well, as I'm sure you're aware, these things happen. Life catches up to a person, absences are often unavoidable, and, frankly, I really wouldn't have given the matter a moment's thought—having, as was vaguely intimated earlier, never quite managed to convince myself that the Atlantic Ocean would become appreciably drier if I knocked off for a month or so—had it not happened that, after my last absence, I was besieged by thousands of distraught people (oh, all right. It was one guy, and I ran into him at the laundromat. Are you happy now?) who begged me never to miss a column again, because they missed me terribly. (Yes, asking if I had any spare Woolite counts as the same thing.)

Can you imagine how I felt upon hearing that? I mean, can you? It's a dreadful responsibility to have people miss you when you're not around (it is, needless to say, even worse to have people miss you when you are around, but that's an entirely different story)—it brings out feelings of pride, and caring, and gratitude and, for those of us raised in close proximity to either Catholics or Jews, mild heartburn, but most of all it makes you feel, er, responsible. The burden, however, pleasurable, of all those thousands of people (cut it out, will you?) relying upon you for a moment's chuckle, a tiny bit of humour to brighten their hexaweekly round is absolutely awesome. I was humble in the face of it.

And yet, what to do? I was determined never to cause this sort of grief again, but I knew I could not flatly guarantee that I would never miss another column—for one thing, my Aunt Sara, a woman who has sustained a lifelong friendship with Mr. Jack Daniels, still has my phone number. How was I to avoid the trauma this was likely to cause among my readership?

I pondered this question long and hard, mainly during the commercials on *Beauty and the Beast*—which is when I do my best thinking—and, finally—I believe Lynn Redgrave had just cracked open one of those lo-cal burritos—it came to me, in a blinding flash of light: Why not teach you, the Reading Public, to write your own "Diaries of the Rock Fiend," for use during those inevitable occasions when I am forced to be away? Truly, it's not such a peculiar notion as it might seem on the surface (totally apart from the fact that the notion of anybody voluntarily sitting down and writing anything is fairly bizarre). Being a Witty, Acerbic, Sophisticated Commentator on the American Scene is, after all, a learned skill, much like riding a bicycle, speaking a foreign language, or seriously believing that Lynn Redgrave actually goes home and cooks up some of those burritos when she's feeling peckish. Furthermore, it's not all that complicated—just about anyone with a modicum of taste, cleverness and wit can learn to do it, and even a few people unfortunate enough not to possess those natural assets can sometimes get a grip on the thing (cf. Andy Rooney)—and, once mastered, can lead to all manner of exciting career and vocational possibilities, assuming that one isn't too particular about details like earning a living wage and getting a good night's sleep. Why, once you come to think about it, it's an absolutely splendid idea, and I'm only surprised it didn't occur to me sooner, especially in the midst of one of those moods when changing places with Mrs. Allan Carr begins to seem a viable alternative to writing yet another article.

So what do you say? Wouldn't you just adore to know how to write your own Anni Ackner column? Don't you think it's a far better party trick than, say, flipping quarters into a shotglass or smashing a beer can against your forehead (as a matter of fact, the end result of writing your own column is often comparable to the end result of this little stunt, but let it pass, let it pass)? Can't you simply not wait to get it started? Well, I thought so. And so, without further fanfare, please begin

ANNI'S HANDY, QUICK'N'EASY STEPS TO WRITING
YOUR OWN "DIARY OF THE ROCK FIEND"

or, Never Mind the White-Out, Hand Me that Valium

1. It is absolutely essential, first of all, before one endeavors to put even one word on that blank piece of paper, that one be in the proper frame of mind for writing "Diary of the Rock Fiend" (hereinafter "Fiend"). Of course, the optimal way to

achieve this state of mind is to immediately move to a miniscule apartment on a dingy street in a dying industrial town, acquire a tedious day job, and buy a cat whose primary hobby is eating the trim off \$75 leather sweaters and then vomiting on the stereo, but, short of these ideal conditions, the correct mood may be achieved by doing the following:

- Fall asleep with all your clothing and the television on at 9:30pm. If possible, arrange to have a disturbing dream about Alex Trebek.
- Awaken in a cold sweat at 2:35am.
- Get up reluctantly. Mutter. Stare at yourself in the bathroom mirror for at least five minutes—ten, if you can stand it. Decide bleakly that the older you get, the more you begin to resemble Pat Ast in *Pink Flamingos*. Mutter some more.
- Drink three cups of instant coffee and the remains of yesterday's sixth can of Diet Coke while smoking half a pack of cigarettes and attempting to find something decent to watch on television. Swallow four Advil.
- Settle on a showing of the original version of *Imitation of Life*. Smoke some more. Weep copiously.
- Consider Stephen King's gross—sic—income for 1988. Consider the forthcoming Supreme Court decision affecting *Roe v. Wade*. Consider Nancy Reagan attending a crack house bust, imaginary skinheads attacking Morton Downey, Jr., the death of Abbie Hoffman, and Jackie Collins' gross income for 1988. Consider your day job. Weep copiously.
- Switch to the Disney Channel. Attempt to Mouserize. Crash into the coffee table. Swear fluently. Watch the sun come up, listen to the birds sing, try to remember exactly why it was you gave up drinking, and brood, brood, brood.

If you have followed these steps to the letter, you should now be in the condition required for writing a "Fiend."

2. You are now ready to proceed to the actual writing. But wait! Before one can begin to write, one must, of necessity, have something to write about—in short, one needs A Topic. People have been asking writers, ever since the first Cro-Magnon made the mistake of letting on to its fellows that it actually had an amusing notion concerning why the pterodactyl crossed the canyon, just where they got all their wonderful ideas, and writers have been answering everything from "Er, ah, um, well..." to "Filene's Basement" to "Have you ever seriously considered the benefits of 70 or 80 Second, swallowed all at once?", depending on their mood and degree of tolerance and wit. The simple truth of the matter is that no one really knows why most people live lives of peace and harmony, going about their days in a glow of well-being, troubled only by the typical trials and tribulations that beset all lives at one time or another, while some of us end up smoking three packs of cigarettes a day because we would have written the ending of *The Accidental Tourist* differently. Nevertheless, while I can't tell you where your ideas will come from, or why they will inflict themselves on you and not, say, your brother-in-law the sleazebucket, I can impart a sure-fire way of bringing them on: After following the abovementioned steps, stand facing the nearest convenient brick wall. Begin rhythmically banging your head against said wall. Repeat at least fifteen times, and I guarantee that something or other will occur to you. It works every time.

3. Okay, let's say that now you have your Topic. For the purposes of this tutorial, we will assume that the Topic on which you have decided, after much deliberation, is "Music" (of course, were you actually writing a "Fiend" for publication, you would not use a Topic anywhere near this mundane and general, but if you think I'm planning to give away any of my carefully hoarded ideas for free, you have beaten your head against that wall one time too many). You must now come up with either a pun or a clever saying, or perhaps both, to use as a title. The reason you must come up with either a pun or a clever saying, or perhaps both, to use as a title is that, back in the unseen mists of hazy time, when I first lost my mind and began churning out "Fiends," I had the shortness of vision to use a pun or a clever saying, or perhaps both, as one of my original titles, which would have been silly enough all by itself but, as I modestly claim an obsessive-compulsive streak that has won prizes at several psychiatric conventions, I have continued to compound the error by using a pun or a clever saying, or perhaps both, for my titles ever since. Therefore, if you are seriously intent on writing an authentic "Fiend," you must do so as well, and I wish you far better luck at it than I have ever had. I can't even give you any tips on how to come up with a pun or clever saying, or perhaps both, because the method by which I derive mine falls so far under the heading of *More Than Anyone Except My Confessor Needs To Know* that I cannot even harbour the thought of submitting for non-editorial scrutiny, lest there be telepaths with high moral standards lurking nearby. I can, however, offer a few words of comfort: Please know that, while you are locked in your lonely room, cut off from all human contact and straining and straining to come up with that one, perfect, irreproachable title, I am there with you in spirit, laughing my fool head off.

4. If you've been doing this right, you should now be utterly drained and exhausted, and certainly entitled to a bit of R&R. Get up, stretch, watch some TV, have a nice meal, go to a movie, start a sordid affair—try to behave like a normal person for four or five days, and don't even think about that nasty old "Fiend."

5. With any luck at all, by the time you are ready to sit down at

continued next page, of course.

your typewriter again it will be a day or so after whenever you set as your absolute deadline (you did set an absolute deadline for yourself, didn't you? If not, set one immediately, then repeat Lesson One before going any farther), and you will surely be all revved up and rarin' to write. We now come to the opening paragraphs of your "Fiend," otherwise known as the Warm-Up or Tell 'Em What You're Gonna Tell 'Em. In this section you will, ideally, set the tone of your piece, introduce your basic theory, introduce yourself (on the assumption that some poor soul may be encountering the world of the "Fiend" for the first time) as a warm, friendly, all-around-swell sort of person who just happens to know more than anybody else in the world on any given subject. It also affords an excellent opportunity for filling column inches and stalling for time while you try to imagine what the hell else you're going to say for the next six pages. As such, it is perfectly acceptable to load these paragraphs up with whatever ephemera you happen to have salted away, even if they only pertain to the subject at hand by the kindness or naivete of your audience, and the sort of wild flights of imagination that make Ernie Kovacs look like Dan Quayle. For instance, still using the Topic of music, you might begin by allowing as to how you don't really know very much about music at all (a pleasant fiction that will set your readership at its ease and tend to cause it to align itself with you against all those Effete Snobs who do know about music), go on from there to list examples of your poor taste in music (it helps if you ever owned anything by either Sonny & Cher or the Strawberry Alarm Clock, as who among us of a certain age did not?), toss in a couple of your bad experiences at concerts, make a few passing comments on the problems of attempting to appreciate the efforts of one small person with a guitar when you are separated by six hundred rows of seats and a cotton candy vendor, compare the current *Saturday Night Live* with the original, reminisce about your mother's initial reactions to the Blues Brothers...well, you see the way it goes. Once you get really skillful at this, you can occasionally get so far off the Topic that you never have to refer to it again, and can confuse your readership to such an extent that it won't notice that you have been raving on about nothing in particular for most of your "Fiend." Try it and see.

6. Your next problem arises with the section immediately following your opening, commonly known as the main or "meat" portion of your article, or, casually, Tell 'Em. The Tell 'Em portion will, eight times out of ten, be in the form of a list of some variety, but I might as well let you know right now that, before you can start listing, you're going to have to come up with still another pun, or clever saying, or perhaps both, to use as part of the title for this section, so why don't you just go off and have a good cry and have it over with, and I'll wait for you, okay? And bring me back a coke and a cheese sandwich, if it's not too much bother, would you?

7. Back again, are you? Very well, let's discuss your Tell 'Em, which, as has been previously stated, will probably be in the form of a list, for the perfectly logical reasons that (a) a list uses up more room than does the straight, narrative form and (b) it's far easier to think of ten unrelated questions or comments than it is to sit around trying to dream up nasty little items like transition sentences, and other contrivances designed to keep an idea flowing from one paragraph to the next. Take my word for it, a good, old-fashioned list is far better than a straitjacket and a couple of rounds of electroshock therapy when it comes to keeping harassed writers on the sunny side of Psycho-land. In any event, a list is a lovely chance for you to clear out some of those nagging questions and unwanted observations that have been disturbing your leisure time for so long. Under the heading of music, your list might begin by pondering just who on earth are those peculiar women who keep turning up in the Robert Palmer videos. Where did they come from? What is their function, aside from hovering about, unconvincingly pretending to play musical instruments? Do they have any idea how that lipstick actually looks? You might next consider the question of just why it is we've been treated to such a spate of cover versions of old songs over the past several months and why, in particular, someone thought we really needed yet another remake of "Iko Iko." And you will certainly want to hand out a bit of objective, clearheaded advice by way of public service—it's just possible, after all, that it simply never occurred to anyone just to tell Bruce Springsteen to stick a sock in it already. It's amazing the variety of material you can cover in a list if you let your imagination go. Be creative, run wild, have fun with it—the only limits on a list involve length. Lists must always and forever be ten items long. You don't believe me? Take it up with Moses...

8. When compiling your list, always make sure that, after two or three longish items, you follow with a short item. This is important. Trust me.

9. And talking of things to always remember, please do bear in mind that, when writing a "Fiend," never, ever use a one-syllable word when a three-syllable word will do just as well. It has been scientifically proven, time and time again, that "expectorate" is a lot funnier—if not any more attractive—than "spit" and "losing one's attachment to consensus reality" beats "going mental" six ways to Sunday. Anyway, besides using up more room than do short words—a plus on those days when that blank paper isn't filling up anywhere near fast enough—long words convey a certain credibility, lending one the air of actually knowing what one is talking about, an excellent quality to maintain when one patently has no idea of what one is talking about, and has simply been babbling away desperately for two or three pages. You'd be amazed—or per-

haps not—at how often this can happen during the writing of a "Fiend," so this is definitely a tip you should never be without. 10. Finally, at very long and overdue last, we come to your closing section, or "Tell 'Em What You Told 'Em," during which you will wrap up all the loose endings and scattered bits and pieces you have accumulated in the rest of your "Fiend," and attempt to escape from the typewriter and go do something more pleasant with as little fuss as possible. This is, arguably, the most difficult section of all to write, as it requires forethought, self-criticism and a good alibi, and you must always do your best to leave your audience with a little chuckle on their lips, and no realization that you have just wasted 15 minutes of their precious time. Always be neat, always be concise, and never, never think that, just because you are the Writer and they are the Writees, you can simply wander away and leave them hanging in mid-air, because...

OVERHEARD

at America's Lunch Counters



"Kissin's like dreamin'."

The Enemy Within

by Susan Packie

I've begun feeling intimidated lately. Members of Congress earn more money per year than I will earn in a lifetime. A new hotel will rise in New York City with guest bathrooms—not guest rooms, but guest bathrooms—larger than my apartment. I'm called for jury duty (at the amazing sum of \$5 a day) more often than I hear from my brother in California. And now that all my doctors are dead or retired, my body is being recalled.

But I'm not bitter. After all, I'm in much better shape than this country! Surely you've noticed that something very strange is going on in these Disunited States of America. We elect a President who boisterously proclaims "Read my lips. No new taxes," and are hit by "charges" (not taxes, mind you) on everything but the air we breathe. (Oh yes, I am forgetting about Environmental Protection Agency/Superfund cleanup money which will supposedly let us remove our gas masks.)

We criticize Europeans for aiding Middle Easterners' supply of chemical/pharmaceutical plants because we wanted to get there first. We're even scrapping the Constitutional rights of ethnic minorities (labels are always changing, so fill in the blanks yourself) and the fairer sex (them, too), after all that hullabaloo about how not an iota, not even a comma or a period, would be changed.

I'm actually glad life has turned this weird. If everything were running smoothly, I wouldn't have anything to write about, and you wouldn't have anything to read. I just wish someone would cut this gawd-awful hair shirt off me!

Furnished With An Alibi

OR:

Death Drives A Volkswagen Van by Dorian Tenore

Sean's first waking sensation was of a damp, insistent chill eliciting through his entire body. This led to his second sensation: his body was in an unaccustomed position. Not just unaccustomed, but uncomfortable. He had a charley-horse in his right leg that would cripple a horse.

It didn't take long to figure out why, foggy as Sean's senses were at this moment. For some reason, instead of being in a bed, he was seated -- or more accurately, slumped -- at an aluminum patio table set. His cramped leg had somehow gotten tangled around the bent armatures holding up the bench on which he sat, with his ankle bent behind him as if he were an ambidextrous ballet dancer.

Sean knew the table was aluminum because the freezing cold metal was burning into his cheek, which was currently resting close to the tabletop's rounded edge. He could tell that his head was nestled in his left arm, which was protected from the frigid menace of the table by his woolen suit jacket sleeve. His right arm hung limply at his side, as if it had been weighed down by something -- but what? A drink? A weapon?

He briefly considered lifting his head and taking stock of this whole situation, but another part of his brain was hell-bent on descending back into blissful unconsciousness. Sean wondered if the cold -- jeez, it really was freezing out here, wherever "here" might be -- was contributing to his drowsiness.

Years ago, when Sean and his sister Carrie were still only teetering at the brink of puberty, she'd read a Nancy Drew book to him. At the time, his real interests lay in their brother Larry's James Bond paperbacks, but they were still packed up from the family's recent move. Besides, Carrie had the kind of delivery that could charge the reading of a store receipt with excitement. Anyway, Nancy -- and her wimp boyfriend Ned? Sean couldn't remember -- was trapped in some unheated cabin in Alaska or some other place where Nanook of the North would have felt right at home. The villains had tied Nancy up and left her there, and she was trying to fight her oncoming drowsiness -- a sign, Nancy's "biographer" Carolyn Keene noted, that one was starting to freeze to death -- by exercising as much as her bound-up body would allow. None of this new-fangled crap with Nancy dodging flying Uzi ammo; the old Nancy Drews had good, clean forms of mayhem.

Just as Sean was drifting back to sleep, with dreams of a shapely, camouflage-clad Eskimo girl detective taking shape in his subconscious, a thunderclap like the opening round of World War III shocked him into wakefulness. His head reflexively snapped up.

"AUGH!!! Jesus!!!"

The act of moving his jaw muscles to cry out in pain only put more stress on Sean's raw, skinned cheek, the top layer of which clung loyally to its new pal, the ice-cold aluminum tabletop. Gingerly feeling his cheek to see if it was bleeding, Sean grumbled inwardly about how he'd always hated metal patio furniture. Come to think of it, he didn't know anyone who owned the stuff. Blinking his eyes into focus, Sean began to give his surroundings a serious once-over. Where the hell was he, anyway? He didn't recall going to any suburban barbecues (the most likely location for an aluminum patio table) last night. Besides, late December generally wasn't considered to be barbecue season in New York, even without snow.

Over Sean's head was an umbrella slightly larger than the surface of the table. The umbrella pole, the table, and the thin, corrugated benches arranged in a circle seemed to be attached together in one big symphony -- or in Sean's opinion, cacophony -- of industrial aluminum. The faded colors of the umbrella's vinyl-and-canvas fabric indicated that it had lasted through many days like this one, with threatening skies as cloudy and grey as Sean's eyes. The sky was so dark that, at first, Sean thought it might be dawn or dusk. According to the watch on his still table-bound left arm, it was ten after ten. The second hand was dutifully revolving around the watchface.

Glancing to his right, Sean saw part of a road -- it looked like a service road rather than a highway -- separating a larger, grassy stretch of land from the shrub-sprinkled clearing where he sat. The place reminded him of the service roads leading to Jones Beach.

With a groan, Sean started to separate his stiff, aching, extremely cold rear end from the bench. Then the earth tremors began. At least, that's what flashed into Sean's mind when the entire table set started to tip over to the left. Gravity, helped by Sean instinctively shifting his weight to his right, plopped him back down on the bench, and the table was relatively stationary once more. That was when he discovered exactly where the metal monstrosity was situated. Had it been set down just two more inches to the left, the table and its occupant would have been lying smashed on the jagged rocks miles below the edge of the sheer cliff, with the waves of what Sean assumed was Long Island Sound eagerly lapping at it.

If Sean made a move, this grisly scenario might still come true. This was one of those cheaply-made pieces of patio furniture that teetered even on the most level patch of ground. Even with Sean sitting perfectly still in mounting terror, the soft, damp -- but not quite muddy -- dirt at the edge of the cliff was slowly crumbling away. Moreover, his right leg was tangled under the bench at such an awkward angle (I couldn't have seated myself like this on purpose -- could I? he thought) that if the table unit did fall, it would surely take him with it.

A cough, no doubt spawned by sleeping all night (if indeed he'd been there that long) in this damp chill, was fighting its way past the lump of fear forming in his throat. Sean swallowed hard; even a racking cough could disrupt the delicate balance.

Sean's eyes darted about, searching desperately yet furtively -- as if he didn't dare let the table know his intentions -- for something to grab onto should the table make good on its threat to plunge downward. He calmed down when he realized there were bushes on either side of the table, behind and before him. Winter had turned them a bit scrawny and mostly leaf-free, but Sean figured he'd be okay if he could grab them at the base. Those mothers better have deep roots, he thought. Still, the table was pretty wide -- would the bushes even be within his reach? The one behind him might be a better bet. The stronger a grip he got on the bush, the more time he'd buy to disengage his pretzelized foot. Or should he take a chance on a Good Samaritan happening by before he either slid off the cliff or caught pneumonia, whichever came first?

As if on cue, a beat-up Volkswagen van pulled into the clearing from the service road. A weathered, but still legible logo on the door read "Franz Exterminator Service." Underneath, Sean thought he could make out the words "Serving Long Island for over..." Damn, he couldn't make out the rest of the blurb.

No matter. Sean brightened as the van paused about a foot away from the table set. His grin of relief began to fade as the van slowly backed up. Sean tried to catch the eye of the driver, but even Superman's X-ray vision would have had trouble penetrating the van's heavily and amateurishly (even from where he sat wobbling, Sean noticed the dried globs of midnight blue enamel on the outside of the van's windshield) tinted windows. How can the driver see through that crap on a day like this? he wondered.

Panic got the upper hand over curiosity when the van revved up and screeched toward the table set. Then he remembered Larry's words: "To panic is to commit suicide." Larry sure would have been smug if he'd been there to see his younger brother finally agreeing with him about something.

A split second before the van smashed into the table set, Sean lurched to his right and did a bellyflop onto the soft earth. He managed to grab the base of one of the two bushes behind him with both hands, and bear-hugged the bush just as the table set lost its balance for the last time. Now Sean's right leg hurt like hell, but that didn't stop him from frenziedly disentangling himself from the bench armature. Having the van bashing against the table was no help. Sean could swear he felt the bush starting to uproot, but he fought off his terror like an attacking tiger. He heard more crashing noises, and he wasn't sure if it was the van hitting the table, or just more rainless thunder.

The wet weather worked in Sean's favor. The dampness of Sean's sock enabled his right foot to work its way out of his loafer just as the sliding armature guided the shoe over the cliff. Freed of Sean's weight, the aluminum table set could now respond to gravity like the relatively lightweight object it was. This did not please the driver of the van, which now had lots of momentum and nowhere to go with it -- except downward.

Sean's eyes were squeezed shut, his arms were locked in embrace with the half-dead bush, and his teeth were clenched. His ears, however, were unoccupied, so they concentrated on the slither of table and vehicle on too-soft ground, on the agonizing smash of falling metal, the all-but-deafening boom of an exploding gas tank on the rocks below.

After what seemed like hours, the only sounds were of seagulls and the occasional roll of distant thunder. They were joined by another set of sounds: those of a young man, his face covered by branch-scratched hands, laughing insanely even as tears of relief spilled down his pale face, the salt stinging his sore cheek.

Sean was willing to bet that Nancy Drew had never started a day like this. (James Bond, maybe.)

HOW ABOUT THE REST OF THE ANIMAL KINGDOM AND THE WORLD OF INSECTS?

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MasterMath Explains...

THE EPIGRAM PLANET

by William G. Raley

Well, here we are again. Of course, if this is your first MasterMath article, the previous statement does not apply. In that case, you must retrieve back issues of whichever magazines have been forward-thinking and insightful enough to publish my previous adventures (a complete list follows: 1. *INSIDE JOKE*), or else come by my house to view them (and my etchings). If it seems like I'm taking a long time before getting to the point, it should be noted that that is one of the points of my MasterMath identity, to encourage people to read more, to ferret out shreds of meaningful information from pages of seemingly aimless ramblings on... where was I?

Anyway, the topic today is Tuuva, the Epigram Planet. It is located seventeen light years away in the M-19 galaxy, but there's a secret passageway to it in one of the dressing rooms of The Gap in the Sherman Oaks Galleria. Actually, that is where "The Gap" got its name; over time, they got out of the interstellar travel business and into jeans.

Tuuva is about the size of Mercury (the planet, not the guy with the funny shoes) on a good day. That may seem small by our standards, and it is. But we're not the ones that live there, are we? No. There are, in fact, only eleven Tuuvians in existence, so there's no problem—except for the odd man out, seeing as how Tuuvians are monogamous. He is one lonely dude, believe me—he doesn't have a moon to howl at, so he howls at "Dallas" reruns. Incidentally, the first epigram to be developed, and the only one created by all eleven inhabitants simultaneously, is: "I need my space."

So how are epigrams developed, you ask? (If you didn't ask, you should have.) Perhaps you believed, foolishly enough, that wise men devised epigrams. Not so. They may be the first to utter them in this solar system, and may receive untold credit for them, but they pay dearly for the privilege. Ben Franklin, for one, spent two-thirds of his gross income in license fees for epigrams. His kite-flying activities, by the way, were an attempt to extract epigrams from the atmosphere. This severely displeased the Tuuvians; as a result, Philadelphia was not made the capital of the U.S., and he wasn't allowed to include himself in his autobiography (the "Ben" mentioned there is Ben Cartwright). Still, the Tuuvians are hailed throughout the known universe (and the anti-matter universe, but not the universe of perspective) as benevolent beings and shrewd merchants. Daily they receive potential epigram material from virtually every human and non-human species, though they haven't heard from Atlantis or Des Moines lately.

So what do they receive? Well, the first thing they ever received was a cat in a bag, which, believe it or not, got loose, and caused all kinds of havoc at Tuuvian fish markets. It is readily apparent that the early epigrams were often quite crude, as it doesn't take a genius to come up with "The cat's out of the bag" under those circumstances.

Another early item was a hog, which also got loose. It, unfortunately, was killed with a phaser set on "Fry." The Tuuvians were overjoyed at their discovery of bacon, hence the term "hog wild."

Being lazy and writing epigrams all day is not all it's cracked up to be. For example, one Tuuvian narrowly escaped death once—she was sunning herself on a rock, and the landing gear of an incoming spaceship malfunctioned, and the vehicle landed on top of her. The ship was carrying a hard place, which was to be analyzed upon arrival.

One might think in this age of supercomputers, laser disks and squeeze margarine that the Tuuvians would be using advanced Artificial Intelligence techniques to perform their analysis for them, in order to free more time for stargazing, or learning how to shrug more effectively. Indeed, they have received some two dozen mainframes, fourteen thousand personal computers, an electric yo-yo, and innumerable copies of the video game Asteroids, but there is no place to plug them in. Electric power is nonexistent on Tuuva, for a number of reasons. For one thing, there are no postage meters to use for billing purposes. If that time ever comes, there are ten gross of extension cords waiting around to be used, or to have an epigram written about them, whichever comes first.

Now let's take a look at several more recent, and famous, epigrams and their origins. One Beatles album was completed without a title, and the group was up against a deadline (Paul was so upset he started playing right-handed for inspiration). Enter the Tuuvians. Or rather, exit the album, on its way to Tuuva. One Tuuvian saw it lying on the ground by a phlemberry bush one day, and started to pick it up. His companion, however, had already listened to it, and compared the experience to French-kissing a leech. Thus he advised, "Let it Be."

Some epigrams are assigned by accident, and escape the watchful eyes of the censor and the quality control specialist. For example, some chickens were once sent to Tuuva. Not ordinary chickens, but chickens from the planet Kernel. These chickens had fingers, though they never seemed to do their nails in any decent colours. Anyway, one day one of these chickens got into a fight with a wildebeest over some gravy, and got his finger chomped al-

PUBLIC TELEVISION

by Larry Stolte

Johnny Ray Vaughn came from a broken home. His father left to get a cigarette seconds after Johnny was conceived and never came back. Johnny's mother had to prostitute herself to survive but, as her talents were limited to blowing kisses, she couldn't make ends meet. She couldn't even make the middle meet. Finally she committed suicide by moving to Los Angeles.

Johnny was placed in a foster home but was traded during the off-season. He bounced from foster home to foster home—twelve of them before age thirteen. Neighbors thought he was a strange boy; they called him a loner, a hamster juggler. He stole his first car at fourteen and got arrested for speeding in a No Parking zone. He ran the gamut of crimes over the next five years, and on his twentieth birthday he celebrated by setting his bookie on fire and trying to blow him out with one breath.

Johnny was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to five consecutive life sentences, which unfortunately meant that four murderers had to be set free. After serving only two weeks of his sentence, Johnny was freed by a case of mistaken identity. He was released instead of Bobo Reeves, who had served his twenty months for serial loitering. Johnny's last words from inside: "I'm never coming back here alive, man."

Tonight, we need your help in locating Johnny. Police think that he is in the Detroit area. Johnny is 5'11" tall, with brown hair and green eyes. He wears a tattoo of Monet's *The River* on his tongue. He has one nostril, hairy earlobes, and only seven fingers, but no distinguishing marks. He bats left, throws right, and is a lowball hitter.

Johnny can be found racing fast cars or hanging out at a bowling alley. If you have seen Johnny, call us at 1-800-GET-SCUM. Operators are standing by. Remember, you can remain anonymous and you may be eligible for a reward.

Debbie Brady seemed like an average secretary, but she had a dark side. She liked to practice creative extermination techniques on hamsters. On a warm summer's day in 1983, Debbie's boss asked her to fix a letter that she typed. She hacked him to pieces with a sawed-off paring knife. Tried and convicted, she escaped from a maximum security prison by walking out the front door.

We need your help in locating Debbie. She stands 5'5", weighs 120 lbs., and has brown hair and red eyes. This is a picture of Debbie taken two years ago. Police say she probably has a beard now. She sometimes uses the alias Sparky, the Wonder Dog. She likes to hang out at bowling alleys and loves to write sonnets.

Operators are standing by. If you have seen Debbie or Johnny, please call 1-800-GET-SCUM. Our telepoll shows us that you think Johnny and Debbie would be a good match. With your help, we hope to capture them so they can go out on a date and come back and tell us all about it. Stay tuned to "America's Most Wanted Love Connection."

Last week, thanks to your tips, police caught eight reenactment actors and Ralph Boscoe. Ralph, as you remember, was wanted for conspiring to be a military contractor and strangling lots of people. Our telepoll showed that you thought Ralph should be matched up with Connie Alvarez, armed robber. After watching her story on "America's Most Wanted Love Connection" last week, Connie turned herself in to Deputies in Mobile, Alabama.

We sent Connie and Ralph out on a date Friday night, and now they're here to tell us about it. Please, a warm round of applause for Connie and Ralph.

"So Connie, we'll start with you. Tell us about your evening."

"Well, I picked Ralph up in my pickup. He wore a formal straitjacket. I wanted to knock over a 7-11, he thought a gas station would be more romantic. We pulled over to decide, and he tried to strangle me with his belt. I slugged him right in the McNuggets."

"Is that how it happened, Ralph?"

"Yeah. She has a good punch. I like that in a woman."

"Go on, Connie."

"Anyway, we compromised and knocked over an AM/PM Mini-Mart and then went bowling. Afterwards, we drove to a secluded hideaway in the hills, and Ralph tried to strangle me with a bungy cord. I shot him in the wrist."

"Is that how it happened, Ralph?"

"Yeah. Then we went to her place and laid some pipe, if you know what I mean."

"Would you go out with her again, Ralph?"

"Sure."

"Would you go out with him again, Connie?"

"Sure."

That's touching. Thanks to your tips, there are two less lonely felons in the world tonight. To date, we've lined up 28 criminals and spawned three marriages. We couldn't have done it without your help. Thanks, America. You should be proud. Stay tuned next week for "America's Most Wanted Love Connection."

most completely off. The surgeons did what they could, and several months later the digit healed. When he finally saw it restored to its original state, the chicken exclaimed, "Finger lookin' good." The rest is history.

One final thought: Is it just me, or does everyone have a hidden dread that somewhere in their car is a videocassette they've forgotten to return?

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

by Ken Burke

LIFE IN BLACK CANYON CITY. PART II.

In Black Canyon City we have a large concentration of senior citizens who live in trailer parks. We also have a telephone system that allows callers to dial only the last four digits of a local phone number. These two factors result in my receiving seven to ten wrong number calls a month. Most are honest mistakes and I treat them as such, but the following is a prime true example of how these random communications are changing.

RING!

Me: Hello?
 Caller: (Feeble elderly woman) Hello? Is Mr. Agoura there?
 Me: I'm sorry, but there's no one here by that name.
 Caller: Is this 5664?
 Me: Yes it is, but there's no Mr. Agoura here.
 Caller: Thank you. (Hangs up)
 (Two minutes later.)
 RING!
 Me: Hello?
 Caller: (Aggressive elderly woman) HELLO! Let me speak to MR. AGOURA.
 Me: I'm sorry, but you have the wrong number.
 Caller: (Irritated) Oh I DO NOT! Now put Mr. Agoura on the line.
 Me: Say what?
 Caller: (Hand over receiver, feeble woman in background tries telling aggressive caller that she should hang up. The latter simply barks "Shut-up and get me a cigarette.")
 Me: Hello...Hello. Look I'm going to hang up now.
 Caller: This is Mr. Agoura isn't it?
 Me: NO MA'AM, I...
 Caller: My daughter-in-law got to you, didn't she Mr. Agoura? She wants to put me away in some old folks home...
 Me: Lady, I'm NOT...
 Caller: ...and I thought YOU were the one person I could count on. (Starting to rave) Everyone thinks I'm a crazy old lady. Then you gave me your card and told me that you could help me FIGHT this conspiracy, but now you've turned against me too, haven't you, Mr. Agoura?
 Me: LADY, I don't know you well enough to turn on you!
 Caller: Well, all I'VE got to say is SHAME ON YOU, Mr. Agoura. Shame on you for giving an old woman false hopes.
 Me: For the last time, I am NOT Mr. (Click!) Hello? Shit... Later that day I got a wrong number from a familiar voice, an old guy who calls me up by mistake at least twice a week. The previous wrong number was still on my mind when he called.

RING!

Me: Hello?
 Caller: HI! This is that ol' boy down the hill talkin'. (Same greeting every time.)
 Me: I'm sorry, you have the wrong number.
 Caller: Oh, s'cuse me. I'll jes'...
 Me: (Urgently) WAIT A MINUTE!
 Caller: Yes?
 Me: Your name wouldn't happen to be Mr. Agoura, would it?
 Caller: What?
 Me: Is your name Mr Agoura?
 Caller: (Angry) NO! Why in hell would you even ask me a question like that? Are you trying to violate my right to privacy?
 Me: (Defensive) No, I uh...
 Caller: You have NO RIGHT to ask me such questions! HUMMMMMPHHH! See if I ever call this number again! (Hangs up)

Generally I am amused by such calls, but as they increase in frequency, the paranoid attitudes of the callers starts to rub off. Lately I find myself debating whether these calls are the genuine mistakes of the elderly and mentally infirm, or if these old geezers are doing this on purpose! If the local senior citizens of Black Canyon City are somehow reverting to childhood and making 'prank-calls,' what's next? Elderly computer hackers? Hookers with walkers? Retiree's with purple mohawks and safety pins through their noses? Octogenarian women in high leg-cut string bikini's? (Shudder) How far is this behavior going to...oh, excuse me, the phone's ringing.

PRENUPTIAL AGREEMENT (A 70s LOVE SONG)

by Dana A. Snow

You can have the car and kids
 Though we don't have them yet
 But we must iron out this contract
 Even though we have just met.

Though we're not even married yet,
 We must plan our divorce

Even though it feels like we put
 The cart before the horse

I must be quite cautious
 Though I might be called a quitter
 It's better to do this calmly NOW
 And not later when we're bitter.

Wax Ink

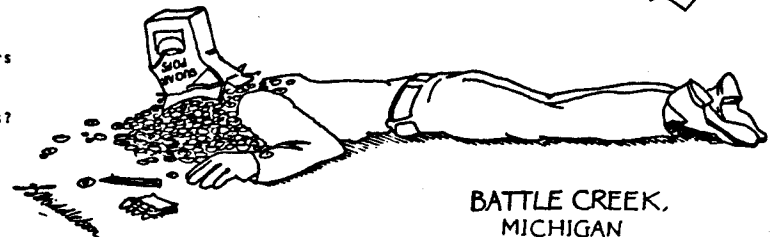
by Rory Houchens

THE MOTOWN SONGBOOK--Ruby Turner (RCA/Jive)--With a more than competent vocalist (Birmingham, England's Ruby Turner) and ten classics from the golden era of Motown, you'd have the right to expect an earfest, correct? But, sadly, most of the interpretations that make up THE MOTOWN SONGBOOK fall well below any reasonable expectations. "Baby I Need Your Lovin'" sounds like it was done somnambulistically, and "Just My Imagination" is completely without muscles and glands. "Now Sweet It Is" and "What Becomes of the Brokenhearted" are surprisingly ineffectual, while "Ooo Baby Baby" is little more than an exercise in advanced wimpishness. If you're looking for stuff that comes anywhere near being passable (forget palatable), snack on the "lite" versions of "Nowhere To Run" and "Signed, Sealed and Delivered, I'm Yours." This album lacks the atmosphere, heart, soul and passion that made the Motown tunes great the first time around--you'd probably be better off perusing the old Motown anthologies for the real thang!

LOVE AT THE MOVIES (CBS)--Some exquisite stuff, some good stuff, and some downright audio dung can all be found on LOVE AT THE MOVIES, the exquisite being the music of: Mascagni from RAGING BULL, Puccini from MOONSTRUCK and A ROOM WITH A VIEW, Gershwin from MANHATTAN, Catalani from DIVA, and Bernstein from WEST SIDE STORY. The good is represented by the music of: Myers from THE DEER HUNTER, Bach from HANNAH AND HER SISTERS, Pachebel from ORDINARY PEOPLE, and Vivaldi from KRAMER VS. KRAMER. The dung--the limp reading of Nino Rota's (usually) beautiful "Theme from Romeo And Juliet," the hyper-plastic "Sabre Dance" from PUNCH-LINE, and Francis Lai's much-as-music "Theme from Love Story."

YARDBIRD SUITE--Frank Morgan Quartet (Contemporary)--Submitted for your approval, six songs either written by ("Yardbird Suite," "Scrapple from the Apple"), recorded by ("Night In Tunisia," "Star Eyes"), or lovingly played in concert by ("Skylark") the immortal Charlie Parker done in a straightforward, no-nonsense, bebop style that Bird would appreciate. Makes a nice companion piece to BIRD LIVES! and the BIRD soundtrack.

MURDER 'N CEREAL CITY



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THE CIRCLE LINE

ACT I

"Let's see...hmm, now...uhh...
...If you can't believe I'm leavin', you can—no, now that's not gonna—wait a minute...If you're thinkin'"

what I'm thinkin'—'BAH! Lawsuit on that one or WHAT?! Yeah, should've never stayed up for that Matt Helm movie...should have never had that chocolate pudding and apple juice either, come to think of it...Okay! SERIOUS now. Umm...I'm not...uhh...I'm never gonna—SCREW THIS. What's on TV?"

ACT II

"...this things really gona outta tune overnight...anyways...
'Ridin'—'ah-HEMM...Ridin' on the circle line, walkin' on that thin thin line right—'uhh...right back to you. I'm missin'—'no. Uhh...I'm needin'—'naw...Oh! 'Ridin' on the circle line, walkin' 'cross that thin thin line right...back of town, I'm comin' 'round, again... YEAH! Okay!"

ACT III

"...why you haven't, now STAND."
"Yeah! Okay, how's that sound that time?"
"Not too bad. Just gotta watch those back-ups."
"What? The 'now face south'—"
"NORTH."
"Whatever. Those parts?"
"Yeah. Then I think we got it. Okay, wanna try 'er again?"
"Do we have to?"
"No, we don't HAVE to..."
"Let's try something different."
"Yeah, something NEW."
"Yeah! You got anything?"
"Uhh...how about 'Open The Door,' that one."
"UGH!"
"Get serious!"
"That one REALLY sucks! 'Open the door, I need some more, I wanna pour out my love to you...' Geez!"
"Gimme a break!"
"Okay, okay..."
"Hey! YOU got anything?"
"Uhh...no, not really...except...well, I was foolin' around with something last night. It's not really finished, but—"

"Well, how's it go?"
"Yeah, let's hear it!"
"Well, I don't have it all worked out yet, but the chorus goes something like...uhh, let's see...Ridin' on the circle line, walkin' 'cross that thin thin line right back of town, I'm comin' 'round...' sorta like that..."
"Hey, that's okay!"
"Yeah! Let's do it, then."
"Really?"
"Yeah! How's it go again?"

ACT IV

"You guys think you can go just one more number? They're really yelling for something, you know."
"Gee, I dunno..."
"Come on, guys! It's only five after one, fer cryin' out loud! But we don't KNOW any more stuff!"
"Wait a minute—what about that new one?"
"The 'Circle Line' thing?"
"Yeah! You guys go do that one again. I really like that one!"
"Really?"

ACT V

"Hey you pirates!"
"Yeah, John?"
"We got twenty extra minutes here. Things have been going so good, I'd like to tape another one. You got any more we can put down real fast?"
"No, not really..."
"Hey! 'Circle Line'! Remember?"
"THAT one?"
"Yeah! We can knock that off in no time!"
"I dunno...coz I'd really rather..."
"That's a good one. Let's do it!"
"Yeah! Let's go!"
"Uhh...fellas, I'd really rather—"

"Okay then: 'Circle Line,' take one!"
"Yeah, but—"

ACT VI

"Boys, I've been listening to your tapes, and I must say I'm quite pleased with a LOT of the material. Yes, QUITE pleased."
"Really?"
"Yes indeed! In fact, as far as I'm concerned, I think we'd be MORE than happy to take you boys on."
"AWRITE!"
"YEAH!"
"Yes. In fact, I'd like to get something pressed and out there as SOON as possible."
"FANTASTIC!"
"Hey, can I quit my day job yet?"
"I'd like to go for 'Banana Beach' for the A-side, and, ummm... 'Circle Line' on the flip."
"YEAH!"
"AWRITE!"

8 "Uhhh... 'Circle Line'? Really?"
"Boys, I believe this calls for a celebration. Miss Davidson? Send in a bottle of our best, if you'd be so kind."

"FANTASTIC!"

"Yes, and while we're awaiting the, uhh, libations, shall we say..."

"AWRITE!"

"...I suggest we just pop upstairs for a second so we can dispense with the, uhh, formalities, shall we say. Just a few simple forms that need to be signed before we're on our way, as it were."

"AWRITE!"

"Forms?"

"Pardon me? Oh, management, publishing...just the standard little agreements, you see..."

"But we already have our own publishing arrangements—"

("Ssssh! Cool it, will ya?")

"Ahh, I see, You already have your own publishing company now, do you?"

"Well, we're setting something up..."

"Well. First, I suggest you learn how to walk before you start running, as it were..."

("Yeah, just cool it!")

"I'm only trying to make sure we—"

("Hey, don't blow it, okay? Geez...")

"No, I'm just trying to—"

"Come come now, boys. Are we going to sit here and squabble amongst ourselves all afternoon, or shall we retire upstairs for a toast, and get this show on the road, hmmm?"

"YEAH!"

"In fact, I'd like to discuss some television appearances IMMEDIATELY. That is, IF you boys are interested..."

"YEAH!"

"AWRITE!"

"Follow me, then, boys."

"FANTASTIC!"

ACT VII

"...AND THAT'S JUST ABOUT THE HOTTEST LITTLE DISCO GOING THIS WEEK WELL ON ITS WAY STRAIGHT TO THE TOP! PREDICT—'CIRCLE LINE!' JUST OUT AND COOKING—AND THE ONE TO WATCH FOR! LETTELYA ALL THIS WEEK ON TEN FIFTY RADIO YOUR ALL DAY—ALL NIGHT AWRITE..."

"Hmm...they're playing 'Circle Line,' are they?"

"Yeah! That's the side everyone seems to like best."

"Really?"

"And wait'll you see the VIDEO!"

"Video?"

"Of course, that's why they had to redo the song, y'know..."

"I was wondering where that big loud four-on-the-floor beat came from..."

"Don't worry, man—makes it better for the dance clubs! It'll fit right in with all the others now."

"Yeah, but I don't LIKE drums that go pooh..."

"And they've re-edited that center part too: chopped it right out so they can stretch that first part over and over."

"Not the 1-4-5 part?"

"Yeah!"

"That means the verse about the curiosity shoppe..."

"HISTORY."

"But that was the section I really thought was most necessary in order to further the—"

"Huh?"

"...the part I really spent a lot of time on..."

"Hey, come on! We gotta get to that reception before everything's gone!"

"Uhh...I think I'll just hang back here tonight. I—"

"What? Come on! You GOTTA go! It's YOUR song! You're the kid with the HIT, man!"

"I know, but—"

"Mister 'Circle Line' himself!"

"TA-DAAA!"

"Leave me alone, will ya, fellas? I'd just rather—"

"HEY, we got a GIG to do, man. WE. Meaning YOU, TOO."

"Yeah. Just because you're the HIT SONGWRITER now—"

"The LEAD SINGER..."

"The HUNK on every THIRTEEN-YEAR-OLD'S wall..."

"Come off it, will ya?"

"No, YOU come off it!"

"YEAH!"

"Just where do you think YOU get off, huh?"

"Yeah, one hit and he thinks he's fuckin' George Michael!"

"Yeah! And what are WE, anyways? Just your fuckin' back-up band now? Huh?"

"No, no, no...I'm just not feeling up to all this right now, that's all..."

"AWW GEEZ, what a BIG SUCK."

"YEAH."

"Hey listen, man, I just got one thing to say to you: You with us, or NOT?"

ACT VIII

"You've really given this some serious thought now, have you?"
"Yes, I have. I've been thinking of nothing else for—for months now..."

"Well, I must say this comes at a most inopportune time for us all, what with your song beginning to break overseas and all."

"I realize that. But you see—"

"No."

"I beg your pardon?"

"No. As a matter of fact, I DON'T see."

"Oh."

"In fact, all I DO see is selfishness, irresponsibility, and

Continued next page

just plain pigheadedness, if I may be so blunt."

"Hmm."

"Let me just ask you one thing, now that we're on the subject. Have you thought about the rest of the boys?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, where exactly does it put THEM, if you insist on carrying on with this silly little scheme of yours?"

"It's NOT silly..."

"And where, may I be so bold as to enquire, does all this put ME? ME, who fought and fought so hard for this project since day one? ME, who BELIEVED in you EVERY SINGLE STEP OF THE WAY? RIGHT FROM THE START?"

"Yeah, well—"

"And is that all you have to say for yourself now? 'Yeah well?'"

"Yes, ME, who unlike some people in this conversation I could mention NEVER gave up? NEVER cared ONE IOTA for himself? RIGHT FROM THE START!"

"Yeah, well—"

"And is that all you have to say for yourself now? 'Yeah well?'"

"Yeah, well it's...it's just that I—"

"I, I, I."

"I just thought that I've—"

"Very well. No use wasting any more of our time over this nonsense, is there now? I have some IMPORTANT business to attend to upstairs, if you'd kindly excuse me. Thank you. Oh, and by the way: We will have our solicitors in touch with you within the fortnight. Miss Davidson? Will you—"

"Solicitors?"

"Solicitors. Yes, you see, I believe there happens to be one tiny little matter you seem to have overlooked in the midst of playing out your quaint little prima donna scene, and playing it oh so effectively, I must add. The matter of your contract."

"Contract?"

"AND, might I add, your signature thereupon."

"But surely under the circumstances we could come to some sort of an agreement?"

"No. Surely under the circumstances I think not. We shall be in touch. Good day."

"But I thought you said—"

"Good day."

"But—hello? Hello? Operator!"

ACT IX

"Let's see...hmm, now...uhh...If you can't believe I'm leavin' you can't—no, now that's not gonna—wait a minute..."



SNIDE CRITIC REVIEWS J. P. MORGAN

Ah yes...time. The mysteries of time. Does time actually exist, or is it a mere phantasm, a constructed illusion of the human mind? The separation of time and space is of course a falsehood, since one is never extant without the other. In VALIS, Philip K. Dick goes on for a bit about how time can turn into space, but he was on lithium and stuff. Ah, the mysteries of time and space...if they could only be mastered, a Snide Critic might have a decent chance of contributing his "!!&! column on a fairly regular basis, you know? Hello.

Actually, yours truly's hiatus was not caused only by the mysteries of time, but also by a lack of appropriate film to write about. Yes, I did catch THE BATTLESHIP POTEMKIN and ALEXANDER NEVSKI on Channel 13, but such universally-recognized milestones don't readily lend themselves to psychotronic-type reviewing. (Except maybe to comment in passing about the shabby, wild-eyed religious hermit walking the decks of the Potemkin; did all Russian battleships come equipped with such a figure? It's a time-honored question amongst film scholars.) And just look at what's been showing up at the theatres! I mean the movies, not the customers. I mean, ya got stuff like DEEPSTAR SIX and LEVIATHAN—two deep-sea horror flicks I made sure to miss 'cause my fave Real Newspaper Film Reviewers assured me it wasn't worth my hard-earned money to go see 'em. That might not be professional of me, but DEEPSTAR was vividly described as a tedious bottom-of-the-sea monster flick, featuring a very uninteresting critter, while LEVIATHAN, in addition to being dull, depicted the cast guzzling down endless amounts of One Of The Big Two Brand-Name Colas, and I forget what they said the story was, so the heck with it. Another film I have to not go see is THE HORROR SHOW, a mighty unpromising looking thing produced by Sean Cunningham, the chap who gave us FRIDAY THE 13TH. The ad for this new thing features a dimly-lit fellow holding a cleaver. Wanna see it? Sure seems original!

Well then, if one has no films to write about, what can one do? One can express hope for an upcoming film by the name of MOONTRAP. See, the Snide Critic was recently gallumphing about the comics shop when he spied a funnybook adaptation of the aforementioned movie. It seems to concern these unpleasant mechanical creatures waking up after a long rest somewhere on the moon...and they like to take flesh-and-blood people and chop 'em up, the better to make cyborg lifeforms like themselves, you see. Sounds interesting—maybe Yours Truly will actually pay to see it!

Jehovah IS an Alien and still threatens this planet!!

God has been misquoted for 5,000 years!
His actual words may disturb you...

Details \$1.
The SubGenius Foundation
Box 140306, Dallas, TX 75214

Okay, so
I said
out the
columns
covered

-So
sure!
me!

Okay, now what? Hey, how about we take a peek at some books about movies? Before me is something called THE FAMILY GUIDE TO MOVIES ON VIDEO (1988, Crossroad Books, \$12.95), subtitled "The Moral and Entertainment Values of 5,000 Movies on TV and Video-cassette," which might not sound so good, and in some ways it ain't: the reviews all have these little rating numbers from the U.S. Catholic Conference Dept. of Communication, and they indeed are graded for moral values important to that club (they frown on premarital sex, pot smoking, etc.) and yet a modicum of reason seems to be prevalent...there are actually intelligible reviews of things like NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD (though they don't like the sequels too much), though they do dismiss the Monty Python films. A plus is the general putdown of the Rambo/Chuck Norris nonsense that's been cluttering up the screens. A minus is that they tend not to like old faves like the Monkees' HEAD, or DEEP RED, or any Dave Cronenberg film. But FIVE MILLION YEARS TO EARTH gets a good review, and so do the Dr. Phibes films, so somebody on the staff has taste! Well, I liked this book better than I thought I would, so go figure!

Mind you, I didn't pay for the above book, but rather obtained it from the "New Arrivals" section of the local library. While I was there, I also got LAUREL & HARDY: THE MAGIC BEHIND THE MOVIES by Randy Skredvedt (\$14.95, Moonstone Press, 1987) and OUR GANG: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE LITTLE RASCALS by Leonard Maltin and Richard W. Bann (Crown Publishers, 1977). I'll review them more or less concurrently, not only because both comedy teams originated at Hal Roach Productions but also because both were screwed up by the big studio systems. And both books are quite similar—they feature detailed histories of cast and crew, nearly-complete filmographies (due to the unstable nitrate stock, some films are considered "lost"), and lots of behind-the-scenes anecdotes. We see how both teams (who would often visit each other on the sets) adapted to sound as it became a film standard, developing their verbal comedy in a natural way (the natural way being the humor growing from the personalities of the characters). Along the way we learn such things as Stan Laurel's real-life development of a cross between an onion and a potato (no evidence, though, that he ever got anyone to eat it); or that young Peter Cushing appeared as a prankish student in A CHUMP AT OXFORD, later regarding it as a highlight of his career; or that "Babe" Hardy nearly got killed while making LIBERTY, a 1928 silent—that's where L&H ended up on some high-rise girders in comical peril. The "girders" were actually wood, a three-story structure built upon a 150-foot building. The heights made Stan nervous, so "Babe" (Oliver's nickname, given him by an Italian barber) decided to demonstrate how safe it was by jumping down to a platform below—which promptly broke, being made of mere sugar pine! Fortunately (to say the least) there was a safety net below that, so he got away with only a few bruises, and went back on camera after a few minutes. We learn that bully Butch and terrified Alfalfa were good buddies off-camera; how Carl Switzer just lucked into the role of Alfalfa (and how it would haunt him later); how new members would develop into central figures. But L&H eventually ended up at Fox, where these two accomplished, world-famous comedians were forced into a string of unfunny, wrongheaded, feature-length vehicles. It seems that the control Stan had had in making their earlier films was overruled by the new studio, with the fundamental premise of L&H's great friendship sustaining them as they stumble through an uncooperative (if not downright hostile) world discarded in favor of dumb wisecracks, gags cleaned of all timing and wit, substandard plots, and to add insult to injury, the inclusion of many of their old routines, inserted out of context and usually rewritten badly. To make it even worse, many critics blamed Laurel & Hardy for these duds, rather than the screenwriters and directors! Meanwhile, over at MGM, Our Gang was being turned into a stultifyingly unfunny, lesson-for-the-day type series, with the kids getting their Just Desserts for playing hooky and the like. Things were not at all helped by newcomers like Billy Laughlin (called "Froggy," he spoke in a grating, Popeye-like trick voice), the unpleasant Mickey Gubitosi (later to grow into Robert Blake), and some girl by the name of Janet Burston, who might've fit into a modern TV sitcom (not a compliment), but had no business in Our Gang. Things got so bad that it was a great relief when the series ended in 1944.

If all this sounds kind of depressing, well, that's because it is. Not that the books are depressing. Far from it—it was a real pleasure to see these films in my head as I read about them (well, not the later ones), and these books in general are a warm celebration of the wonderful comedy and a way of filmmaking of an age gone by...it's just that it's a clear indictment of The Corporate Way crushing honest talent under its big smelly feet! Grrr! Things sure have changed, haven't they? Rather than screwing up high-caliber talent, the Big Guys carefully select and present half-witted, unfunny comedy starring "celebrities" who are total meatballs from square one! Heh-heh-heh...

ANIMATION UPDATE



FILM REVIEW: "LOONEY TUNES & MERRIE MELODIES: WARNER BROS. CARTOONS FOR THE CONNOISSEUR" is not your ordinary cartoon festival. True, a large assortment of cartoons in this program (held recently at the Film Forum in NYC) have been seen umpteen-thousand times on TV, but it just doesn't do justice unless you see them on the big screen. Many of these 35mm prints come directly from the Warner Bros. vaults, including a number of real rarities: a print of Tex Avery's Oscar-nominated classic "A Wild Hare" (1940), complete with opening credits (and in the "Guess Who?" sequence, Elmer Fudd says "Cawole Wombard," a line that got redubbed when the real Lombard perished in that untimely plane crash); the very first Warner Bros. talking cartoon, "Bosko the Talk-Ink Kid" (1929), which (due to its racial material) has not been shown on TV; live-action footage of the animation staff at Termite Terrace, such as Tex Avery and friends, acting out scenes (later to be retouched) for his spoof of travelogue films, "Cross-Country De-tours" (1940), and a very rare studio reel (Christmas 1941) that featured the goofing off of the likes of Avery, Friz Freleng, Bob McKimson and even (then-head honcho) Leon Schlesinger, with Mel Blanc dubbing most of the voices; a 1968 parable on morals and feelings, "Norman Normal," featuring the vocal talents of Noel "Paul" Stuckey of Peter, Paul and Mary; a number of "Private Snafu" shorts from the 1940's (based on the character created by Dr. Seuss); some even rarer Army cartoons from the 1950's, directed by Chuck Jones (with a grown-up version of Ralph Phillips, the character from the 1954 classic "From A to Zzzz"); and a live-action animal-in-costume comedy, "Orange Blossoms for Violet," written by Freleng and Jones, and featuring the voices of Mel Blanc, Bea Benaderet and Arthur Q. Bryan. But the highlight of this festival came on the last night when they screened, for the first time anywhere, an extremely rare TV pilot from 1963 that never got aired. "Philbert" is the story of a six-inch-high comic strip character who actually comes alive and coexists with his creator/artist (played by William Schallert, before becoming Patty Duke's "Pop"). Here is an animated/live-action treat that came a full generation ahead of the "Roger Rabbit" crowd. The animation was directed by Friz Freleng (who also wrote the original story for the pilot), and the live-action was directed by Richard ("Lethal Weapon," "Superman") Donner. Although the plot wasn't that great, I'm sure that it might have been a hit (by 1960 standards). Anyway, just the sight of Philbert swimming a live fish tank and getting scooped up in a real net was worth the price of admission alone. If "LT & MM" should play in your area, for goodness sake go see it! You don't know what your missing...

BOOK REVIEW: Back in 1981, Jerry Beck and Will Friedwald came out with "The Warner Brothers Cartoons" (Scarecrow Press), which, at the time, listed (supposedly) the studio's entire animated output. Naturally, the book had numerous typographical errors; but even more so was the fact that not all of the animated works were listed. Well, now that problem has been rectified with the release of "LOONEY TUNES AND MERRIE MELODIES: A COMPLETE ILLUSTRATED GUIDE TO THE WARNER BROS. CARTOONS" (Henry Holt & Co., \$14.95), the most comprehensive guide ever. Not only does this book list (in chronological order) every familiar theatrical cartoon released by the studio (along with a more detailed synopsis of each individual short), but it also lists the titles of its non-theatrical material (including the entire "Private Snafu" catalogue, plus the three Army cartoons directed by Chuck Jones during the 1950's, as well as a number of feature-length anthologies and various TV shows and special produced by Warner Bros.). Once again, you'll find the occasional typo (but far fewer than in the last book), and you're sure to spot an actual mistake or two in the facts. (One that I caught immediately the day I bought my copy was found in the "TV Specials and Feature Films" section—the "Bugs Bunny/Looney Tunes 50th Anniversary Special" aired in 1986 on CBS, not NBC as I'd read on page 371.) Also, most of the illustrations are simply some rarely-seen lobby cards for some of the cartoons. But apart from that, this book is worthy of my highest recommendation. Jerry and Will, ya done good! (P.S.—If you'd like an autographed copy of the book, send \$14.95 plus \$2.50 for postage to Jerry Beck, 7400 Hollywood Blvd. #514, Los Angeles, CA 90046. Allow several weeks for delivery; supplies are limited.)

MISCELLANEOUS: Additional animated works featured at the Film Forum include "Jan Svankmajer: Alchemist of the Surreal," a selection of animated short subjects from Czechoslovakia; and the East Coast theatrical premiere of Jerry Rees' "The Brave Little Toaster." For more info, phone the box office at 212/431-1590... That Chuck Jones autobiography I've been touting has an official title—"Chuck Amuck." Farrar, Straus & Giroux will publish the book sometime this fall... Having met Jerry Beck in NYC recently (he was in town to promote his book as well as to help program the Film Forum show mentioned above), he gave me some inside information, which I'm passing along to you: Beck is no longer associated with Expanded Entertainment (he was an executive for its publication, "Animation Magazine"). In fact, he's gone into business for himself. The new company, Streamline Pictures, hopes to dis-

tribute a selection of animated features from Japan, adapted for the American audience without ruining the original content. Streamline's first release will be "Laputa: Castle in the Sky," an impressive work by Hayao Miyazaki. Another work that Jerry hopes to distribute in American cinemas is the much-talked-about feature film "Akira" (though its American theatrical debut is tentative). Jerry has also informed me that he and movie historian Leonard ("Of Mice and Magic") Maltin have put together an animated anthology for TV, "Cartoons for Big Kids." The hour-long special features the best works from Warner Bros. and MGM. It will likely be seen in syndication or on Ted Turner's Superstation WTBS (from Atlanta, GA)... Meanwhile, Expanded Entertainment has two more animated anthologies in the wings—"The Festival of Animation," which is presently being screened across the country, and "Animation Celebration II," which will start playing in certain cinemas beginning in July... Another Roger Rabbit short is in production. "Rollercoaster Rabbit" is being worked on at the new Disney/MGM studio in Florida (which has just opened to the public)... One of the largest animation festivals, Annecy '89, will take place from May 27 to June 1. This year marks the 29th anniversary of the competitive international animated film festival... Here are some of the animated shows to arrive on your TV screen this fall: "Camp Candy" with funnyman John Candy recalling his days as a camp counselor through animated stories; "The Karate Kid," the continuing adventures of Daniel and his mentor Miyagi; "Captain N: The Game Master," based on the popular Nintendo game system (these three shows are on NBC); "Super Mario Brothers," based on you-know-what; "Tail Spin," a Disney series starring "Jungle Book" character Baloo the Bear (these two shows will be syndicated); more news on new shows to come... In the meantime, of the many shows in the current Saturday morning lineup that will bid adieu come September, the biggest shocker came when I found out that "The Completely Mental Misadventures of Ed Grimley" was one of them! This show was highly praised by devoted fans of the Martin Short character (among them NY Newsday TV critic and IJ friend Marvin Kitman), and I enjoy it, not just for its unpredictability, but for its unique cast of vocal talents, including Catherine O'Hara, Joe Flaherty, and the inevitable Jonathan Winters. So, c'mon NBC, give me a break! Keep Ed on the air, even if it's only in reruns. As for the rest of you reading this article, show your true colors, and write to NBC-TV, 3000 Alameda Ave., Burbank, CA 91523 and let them know how you feel about Ed Grimley. You'll make the world a much better place for paprika lovers and triangle players everywhere, and that's no lie... By the way, kudos to the two winners of the "Ed Grimley Look-Alike Contest," whoever (or whatever) they are... Bakshi Productions is working on a new pilot for NBC called "Bound Town"...

ANIMATION FOR SALE: Another emporium that specializes in animation art is THE CRICKET GALLERY (529 Covington Place, Wyckoff, NJ 07481). Although their current catalog is unillustrated (with the exception of the cover), they give a thorough description of each item they have to offer. Among their offerings are animation cels from Disney, Hanna-Barbera, Bagdasarian Productions, and other studios; limited-edition cels from Disney, Warner Bros., Jay Ward, etc.; animation drawings from Disney, Warner Bros., the Fleischer studios, etc.; and a selection of Disney porcelain figures. For a copy of their 32-page catalog, write to them or phone (in NJ, 201/848-9567; out of state, 1-800/BUY-CELS). Look for Oliver and Dodger on the cover of the current catalog.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO... "The International Animation Festival" with Jean Marsh? Back around 1973, many PBS stations presented a 13-week series of half-hour programs (for two seasons, 26 shows in total) comprised of animated short subjects from around the world. Marsh (who'd already made a name for herself with her role on "Upstairs Downstairs") introduced the various shorts, a large majority of which came from the Zagreb studio of Yugoslavia ("Maxi-Cat," "The Wall," etc.), the National Film Board of Canada ("Evolution"), and Bruno Bozzetto of Italy ("Mr. Rossi Buys a Car," "Opera," and "Self-Service," to name a few). Among the many American cartoons shown were John Hubley's "The Hole," Frank Mouris' "Frank Film," and Bob Gardiner & Will Vinton's "Closed Mondays" (all Oscar winners). It was quite a unique series, and one that definitely deserves to return to TV—if not to PBS, then to some cable network (preferably without commercials). Of course, TIAF wasn't the first American TV show to feature international cartoons. A few years earlier, a Saturday morning series on ABC called "Curiosity Shop" (whose executive producer was Chuck Jones) presented condensed versions of foreign shorts from Zagreb (the "Professor Balthazar" series) and the NFB of Canada ("Hot Stuff," "What on Earth!," "The Great Toy Robbery," "The House That Jack Built," etc.), as well as American independent shorts. A few years later, after TIAF left PBS, another series came on the air to present short subjects, both live-action and animated. It was titled "Academy Leaders" (hosted by writer Norman Corwin), and it mainly screened Oscar winners and nominees, most of them presented in their entirety (such as Bob Godfrey's "Great" from Great Britain and "Sand Castle" from NFB of C). The last network program to highlight international cartoons was the children's show "The Great Space Coaster." Among the shorts featured were Bruno Bozzetto's "Lili Put-Put" series (cartoons about insects), Osvaldo Cavandoli's "La Linea" series (from Italy), and a number of Mordillo one-shots (from Germany). Nowadays, international animated shorts are frequently seen on American cable TV, most notably on Nickelodeon (especially on "Pinwheel," a "Sesame Street" clone—although recently they have aired some short subjects as time fillers between programs, such as one of this year's Oscar nominees, "The Cat Came Back" from NFB of C). The Movie Channel (with its

continued next page

"Short Film Showcase," hosted by Bob Osborne), A&E Network, Cinemax, Showtime, and HBO. But for those who don't get cable, public television seems to be the best outlet for presenting international animation. Why don't you write to your local PBS station and ask them to bring back TIAF? Hell, maybe they can get Jean Marsh to host a new series of episodes. She's not doing anything on TV lately, is she?

SEND IN THE CLONES: Have you noticed lately how many fast food restaurants have been promoting cartoon characters? During a recent period, Arby's was distributing giveaway items associated with Looney Tunes characters, while McDonald's gave out wheeled vehicles driven by some Disney characters, Roy Rogers gave out "Gumby and Friends" figurines, and Wendy's passed out Mighty Mouse (Bakshi's version) toys. All the items were free (with the purchase of their food, of course—so, what else is new?)...

FRUITS (AND VEGETABLES) OF THEIR LABOR: The "golden cornucopia" this time goes to the National Film Board of Canada for 50 years of outstanding filmmaking (not just in animation)...The "diced onion" award goes to the PBS series "Long Ago and Far Away" for presenting an edited version of Frederic Back's tearjerker, "The Man Who Planted Trees." Since this is a family-oriented show I can understand the removal of the short's violently suggestive material, but somehow this watered-down version didn't move me the way it did when I saw it in a New York cinema last year...Ted Turner is this issue's recipient of the "fake fruit" award for false advertising. One of the most popular shows on his WTBS is "Tom & Jerry's Superstation Funhouse." On April 10, the morning edition of this show went the full 95 minutes without screening one single "Tom & Jerry" cartoon. In fact, with the exception of a "Three Stooges" short, the entire program was comprised of nothing but Warner Bros. cartoons. Turner, who holds the rights to a large majority of the MGM film library, didn't let one MGM cartoon of any type ("Droopy," "Barney Bear," etc.) go on the air that particular morning. Ted, either show at least one "T&J" short to keep the show legit or drop their names from the title, if you should ever decide to pull a stunt like this again...The "bean sprout" award goes to Nick at Nite for airing Looney Tunes in prime time on weekends, in spite of the fact that their obtrusive logo pops up during some cartoons, creating a brief but obvious distraction...Finally, a "bunch of fresh plums" goes to NBC's "The Jim Henson Hour" for its clever use of combining puppetry with computer animation. Kudos to Jim and his vast crew for making one of the most innovative family shows in years. (ED. NOTE: Naturally, NBC has apparently cancelled the show, which is not slated to return.)

MAGAZINE UPDATE: One of my readers has informed me that MILLIMETER is still in business, and that it had released its annual "Animation Issue" in February. It just doesn't seem to have an East Coast distributor. If anybody knows how to obtain a copy of MILLIMETER (current or back issue), send me the details...The Winter 1988-89 issue of FILM QUARTERLY features an interview with animator/director Faith Hubley...Jerry Beck tells me that, although behind schedule, KORKIS & CAWLEY'S CARTOON QUARTERLY's second issue will be out later this year; more details to follow...

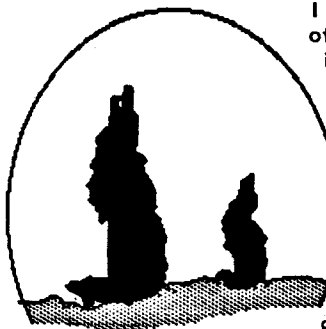
ERRATA: In the last issue, I'd erroneously credited the late animator Phil Monroe with co-directing honors for the two Warner Bros. animated videos, "Bugs Bunny in King Arthur's Court" and "Carnival of the Animals," when it was really Chuck Jones who was solely responsible for both works (as well as writing and producing them). Monroe did co-direct some later Jones specials, "Bugs Bunny's Busting Out All Over" (1980 for CBS and "Daffy Duck's Thanks-For-Giving Special" (1981) for NBC.

OBIT: Ken Champin, one of the animators in Friz Freleng's unit at Warner Bros., died on February 25. His best work was found in titles like "Slick Hare" (1947), "Back Alley Oproar," "I Taw A Putty Tat," "Bugs Bunny Rides Again" (all three from 1948), "Rabbit Every Monday" and "Room and Bird" (both from 1951).



HOWLING AT THE MOON

by Mike Dobbs



I need partners now! Are you tired of that dead-end job and that boring habit of saving money? Well, goddamit, this is America, where we say a dollar invested in a cheap gimmick is a dollar invested in our future! I've got the ideas and I need your money right now! Pick one of the following products and send me a self-addressed stamped envelope for your partnership licensing agreement. Or call 1-800-GREED. Now! Don't wait!

Don't question! I wouldn't lie because this is a kinder and gentler nation!

Soft Drink Revitalizer—Slip this little ball of carbonation into a bottle of flat soda and before you can say "Pepsi-Lost-\$Five-Million-On-Madonna," you'll get a newly-fizzled bottle of pop! Actually, I think the soda companies already have the technology, but are afraid of its implications. It could ruin this industry, but it would make us money.

Cat Litter with Famous Perfume Scents—Somehow I would like to be the first to sell a product that could be associated both with Elizabeth Taylor or Joan Collins and catshit.

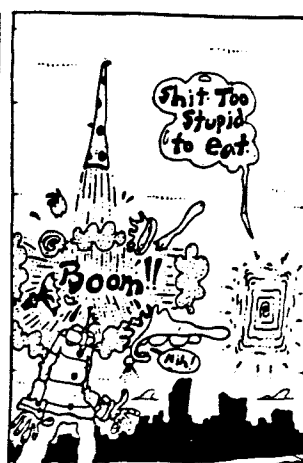
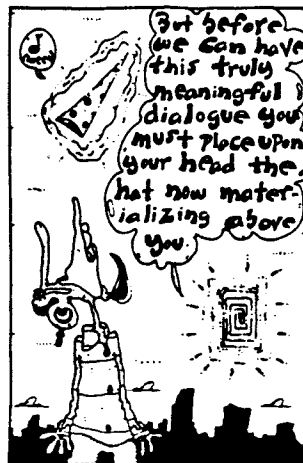
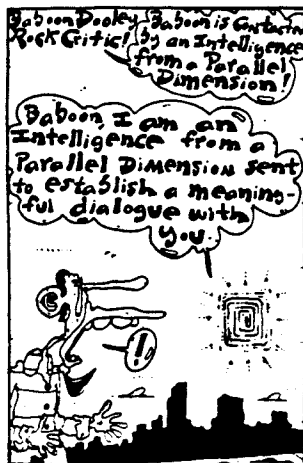
Designer Condoms—Why someone hasn't already been doing this I will never know. Already the Trojan folks have been marketing condoms in packages to attract women, so why not take the plunge? Ralph Lauren condoms? Sure! How about Levi's "501s" in denim blue?

The "Gil Thorpe" Merchandising—One of the lamest comic strips ever conceived—all about a small-town high school coach—manages to totter along despite seldom ever presenting an original thought. A camp classic is in the making here, ladies and gentlemen, and I'm betting the licensing rights are cheap, cheap, cheap. Also for merchandising schemes, one should consider "Drabble" and "Mark Trail."

Male Hygiene Products—Equal time, guys. For years, American industry has attempted to exploit every possible female hygiene situation (and generally succeeded). Since I think there is no longer any undressed feminine organ or function left, it's time to look at the guys. And fellows, I'm sure there's an aroma or two for which Madison Avenue could find a product!

ISN'T A PERSON WHO WOULD LIKE TO CHANGE SOMETHING IN HIS OR HER PAST LIFE BEING SELFISH?

He or she might or might not be still living but all those born world-wide one year hence wouldn't ever exist. Each of us exists because of the rights and wrongs of pre existence plus anything else no matter how minute or my name isn't Brainbeau.



THE WORLD'S ONLY
RADICAL
Wants to start the world's first
REAL revolution (bloodless).
All the others were small pot-
ests. Send SASE to mind-
boggling WORLD REVOLUTION
Box 2243
YOUNGSTOWN - OHIO, 44604

THE RETURN OF CAPTAIN ACTION AND OTHER ODDITIES

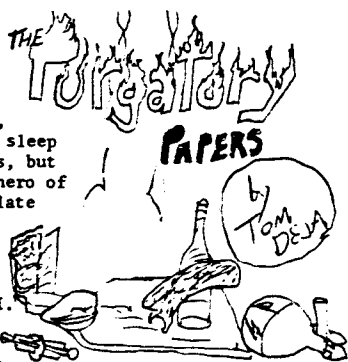
(In which Our Hero travels to ToyFair and ruminates on the uses of nostalgia)

Captain Action is back. Oh, his name's now Maxx FX and his sleep of excitement produces monsters, but there's no mistaking it. The hero of millions of young kids in the late '60s and early '70s has resurfaced.

For those of you who don't remember, Captain Action was Ideal's attempt to outclass G.I. Joe¹. Like Joe—the foot-tall guy with the "real" beard and livid scar, not those munchkins who pal around with Sgt. Slaughter—Captain Action was a government agent/jack-of-all-trades. But whereas Joe was a military man par excellence with outfits to match, Captain Action was a disguise ace. He could become any hero in the known world. For example, if he was in "darkest Africa"², he'd just tug on those purple longjohns with the tigerskin Speedos and Wow, he was the Phantom. If he was busting up Nazis in Berlin, he'd grab his shield and storm those battlements as Captain America.

Okay, so he had an odd sense of what undercover work encompassed. Lord knows I wouldn't choose purple tights to go undercover in Africa.

That's probably what killed ol' CA in the end. Even though the Captain didn't go beating up on poor animals³, it was hard to take him seriously. Those outfits were too implausible to be taken seriously in one way or another (yeah, right, this guy's gonna do a perfect impersonation of Superman). Furthermore, we were young



ZEN PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

On Zen Practice, edited by Hakuyu Maezumi and Bernard Tetsugen Glassman (Zen Center of Los Angeles, 1977), presents this dialogue between master and student:

Ryokaku: *Shosanzhi*, last night I was watching fireworks, for one moment, I was just watching fireworks; I was not doing anything else. How do I keep that throughout the rest of my life?

Tetsugen: You don't.

Ryokaku: By now doing it, am I practicing?

Tetsugen: If we try to do anything in particular, then it's like decorating the cage that we're in. Maybe enlarging the cage we're in, maybe changing its shape. What we want to do is break it apart, destroy that cage. Many times, I hear people saying, "How do I get to such and such a place? How do I become such and such?" In Zen practice we destroy that cage to where there's nothing to hold onto or stand on. And that's what our practice is all about. Practice with the Rōshi, and you'll see what that means.

Ryokaku: Thank you for your answer.

FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH

Ian was involved in a very emotional dispute with his mother who, at one point, screamed, "YOU'RE NOTHING!"

"What," Ian demanded, "do you mean by that?"

"What have you got?" his mother rejoined.

After emptying out his pockets, Ian pointed to their contents and said, "There I am—a dollar and thirty-six cents!"

THUNDERING SILENCE

P.D. Ouspensky said: "In an ordinary man false personality calls itself 'I' and is active, but after some time, if a man is capable of development, magnetic centre begins to grow in him. He may call it 'special interests,' 'ideals,' 'ideas' or something like that. When he begins to feel magnetic centre, he finds a separate part in himself, and from this part his growth begins. This growth can take place only at the expense of false personality, because false personality cannot appear at the same time as magnetic centre. When magnetic centre is active, false personality is passive, but when false personality is active, magnetic centre is passive."

Chengtaoke said: "It never leaves this place and is always perfect. When you look for it, you find you can't see it. You can't get at it, you can't be rid of it. When you do neither, there it is! When you are silent, it speaks; when you speak it is silent."

VOICE OF AUTHORITY

"No two snowflakes are alike. How do I know? I personally have examined under high-powered magnification every snowflake that ever fell before it melted, and so have many others. That is why so many people assure you that no two snowflakes are alike."

—Ho Chi Zen

kids. What did we know about this geek the Phantom?

Yet Captain Action remains in my mind, along with such weirdies as SSTs and Whizzers and the Ding-A-Lings, as Golden Apples on the Tree Of The Past. They're solid manifestations of my nostalgia.

As a single guy, I'm presently using nostalgia in its first manifestation. Now that I'm cast off from my family, I begin to value some of the inconsequential stuff of my life in Domestic Hell. Once you're confronted with the facts of your own aloneness, toys suddenly become important. They're a talisman into another world, a world you left behind. This is the world which values security above all and freedom is just a crossed street away. Of course, we're not aware of what freedom really means yet. We still don't grasp the fact that authority is always with us in one form or another. We're just happy to be allowed to walk to the store alone.

So the single guy is likely to buy himself toys. Now, certain Dweebazoid characters⁴ sublimate their impulses. Instead of G.I. Joe and Barbie, they buy espresso machines and subliminal learning tapes. While they delude themselves into thinking that these items are valuable home items, the fact is there's no reason for them. They're extraneous objects, what Spy once called "yuppie porn"⁵: useless material for empty lives.

A healthier approach is to just give in and get what you want. If you want a Bendie or a California Raisins figure, get them—not a bleeding⁶ potpourri holder. In a way, the return of the "wacky" advertising figure (the Noid, the 7-Up Spot, Spuds McKenzie) has been a refreshingly liberating influence. Once again, it's okay to have a knickknack or two. My Roger Rabbit toys on my desk have yet to provoke the derision they would have generated years ago. Throughout ToyFair (where I saw Maxx), I watched grown adults—not just people my age but middle-agers—coo and shriek in delight over this doll or that game. It's enough to warm my cynic's heart when I'm not thoroughly disgusted.

Maxx FX is just the beginning, though. The toys of our youth are echoing the toys of our youth. Matchbox, the same folk who brought us Maxx, is also putting Whizzer⁶ into production. Whizzers, you may recall, were little ball-shaped tops with a hard rubber tip. You would roll the tip over a tabletop and let fly. If you were particularly obnoxious, you'd buy the "Whizzer Stunt Set," a collection of tiny doodads you could use to make your Whizzers do truly sickening things like chase your dog. Frightening dumb furry animals was Whizzer's main function.

You can guess what I want for Christmas⁷.

Yes, Whizzers are useless⁸, but they don't pretend not to be. Whizzers won't lower your blood pressure or increase the air quality in your office or make your room smell nicer or help your racquetball serve. Neither will a double espresso machine. But Whizzers don't pretend to. That, I think, is the crux of the matter. Toys are material hedonism. They have to be. They're made for children, the ultimate hedonists. Children don't have to disguise the fact that they're doing something solely because, dammit, they like to do it. Thus the purpose of their tools doesn't have to be disguised either.

Most people change as they mature⁹. Play gives way to "party-ing" and less "party-ing" is done as the human animal continues to grow. Partying becomes a reward. Only if we work hard are we allowed to "party." It's kind of like saying only if we eat enough are we allowed to excuse ourselves from the table. The connection is purely artificial.

That's probably the main reason why the toys of the yups aren't called toys. Playtime is a treat to us, not a right. Thus we have to disguise the nature of our playthings. And there's something unhealthy about that—it implies that playing is not a natural thing¹⁰. But let's face it, folks, that's bunk. If playing were unnatural, would our parents allow us to do it? I think not.

So I'm getting a Whizzer. I've already gotten the G.I. Joe DJ doll they named after me. You can bet that Maxx FX isn't too far behind (his Alien costume is waycool for sure). I'm facing up to the fact that I'm gonna buy some toys. As for those cappuccino makers and CD players and pocket CPUs...leave them to the yuppie Horatio Alger fans who want them. They deserve each other¹¹.

THE NIGHT OF LONG FOOTNOTES

1—A lot of the toy history I cite here was first brought to my attention by Vinnie Bartilucci. He stands thanked.

2—Even back in 1969, when I had my Captain Action, we were calling it "darkest Africa." Kids are the last to be enlightened.

3—And the Captain had a real neato foe in Dr. Evil. A guy with an exposed brain and green, rotting skin, he was major league bad before anybody had ever heard of Darth Vader.

4—In this case, Yuppies, Preppies and New Age Geeks.

5—This from a man who recently bought a sleek new VCR that does everything but watch the damn program for me. Hypocrisy is alive and well in Purgatory, ladies and gentlemen.

6—For some odd reason, Matchbox has dropped the "h". Toy manufacturers work in mysterious ways. (ED. NOTE: So do editrices—sorry I misspelled it, but I'm not going back and changing it now!)

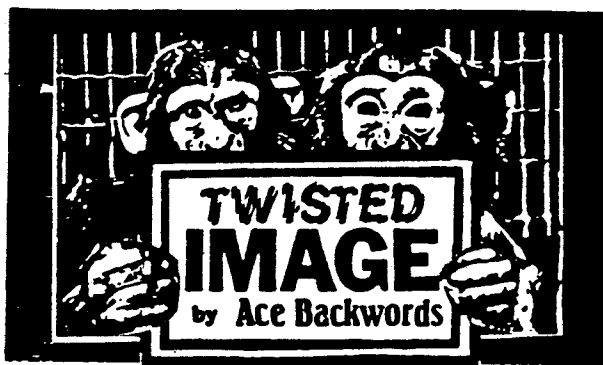
7—You better believe that means I like to scare dogs. Anything that trusting deserves to have its value system (in the dog's case food, sleep and people) shaken up once in a while. Kinda like Republicans...

8—Unless you, like myself, take delight in scaring dogs.

9—No kidding, Sherlock, tell us another...

10—Of course, if your idea of playtime includes such exotica as S&M or fetishism, then treating it as unnatural might be the right thing to do (if only I knew where my bullwhip was...).

11—This is probably the longest footnote column I ever did, isn't it?



AND SO YOU WANT TO BE A CARTOONIST....

When I was 19 I hitch-hiked to San Francisco with the vague idea of "making it" as an underground cartoonist. I ended up living on the streets, carrying my art supplies around in my backpack, and working on my comix outside in the parks and offramps. Talk about starting at the bottom!

When the late, great underground rag THE BERKELEY BARB notified me that they wanted to buy one of my comix, I was ecstatic! My first sale! I figured, quite naively, that since I worked for a month on that comic, I would receive the equivalent of a month's salary. Ahh, the folly of youth. When I was finally paid (after much "the-check-is-in-the-mail" bullshit) it was quite a shock to discover that the check was for a mere \$30. Thus marked the beginning of what was to be a long and bitter realization: namely, that "art" and "money" were a twain that shall rarely meet!

Ahh, if only I didn't know now what I didn't know then. I didn't know if I had what it takes to be a cartoonist. Actually, I STILL don't know. Nonetheless, I quit my straight job about four years ago, and I've been eking out a living off my comix ever since (that is, if you call making about \$300 a month "living"!). So I guess that qualifies me to present this little quiz to see if YOU have what it takes to consider a career as a cartoonist:

1) Are you capable of surviving for weeks at a time subsisting on nothing but boiled potatoes and delicious, nutritious RAMEN NOODLES? Ultimately, this ability will prove far more important than your ability with a rapidograph.

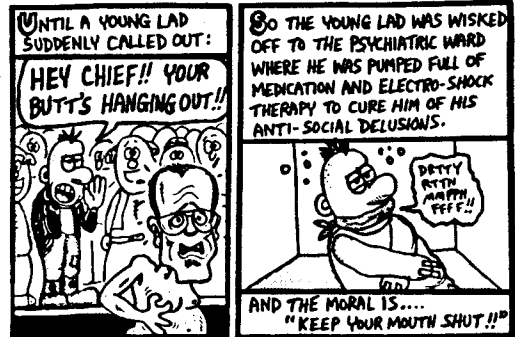
2) Are you an alienated, oddball-type who prefers to spend his time sitting alone in his cramped, barren apartment rather than attending glamorous parties at the Playboy mansion or sailing on luxury cruises with gorgeous buxom babes? If you're a people-who-need-people kinda people, then forget cartooning. It's basically a lonely, solitary occupation. For example, I once read that Elvis was the kind of person who could never stand to be alone, ever. Even when he went to the bathroom he had one of his flunkies standing outside the door! Case in point—Elvis never became a successful syndicated cartoonist.

3) Are you kinda wimpy? This is not essential, but helpful.

4) Do you have the intestinal fortitude and strength of character to believe in yourself and your talent in spite of massive evidence to the contrary? You're gonna need this, because, especially in the beginning, you're gonna be slagged and ragged by every know-nothing critic in the book. First rule of cartooning: All editors are dipshits. (With, of course, the exception being those rare and discerning individuals who have the good taste and foresight to publish your works of genius, naturally.) My comix have been panned as being "too derivative" and "too original," "too simple" and "too sophisticated," "crudely drawn" and "overly slick." YOU figure it out.

5) And lastly, do you get an overwhelmingly sensual, spine-tingling, narcissistic pleasure at seeing your name in print? Good. Because for many years, this might be the only payoff you get for all those hours spent hunched over a drawing board, toiling away the hours of your misspent youth, overworked and underap-

TWISTED IMAGE by Ace Backwords ©MM



JIM AND RICKY UP A TREE (A Fairly Short Play)

by Wayne Hogan

(The stage is a treehouse. Two boys, one 7, the other 10, are inside. Several empty Budweiser Lite cans and torn Twinkie wrappers lie scattered on the floor. A pair of binoculars hangs around the older boy's neck. The younger boy wears a YOU ARE HERE t-shirt.)

The Characters:

RICKY, the youngest boy

JIM, the oldest boy

RICKY'S MOTHER

(From off-stage comes the amplified sound of a toilet being flushed.)

RICKY (peering out the glassless window of the treehouse): Jim, just how high up is this thing, anyways?

JIM (energetically kicks an empty Budweiser can across the floor)

RICKY: Sure wish I didn't eat all them Twinkies!

JIM: Me, too! My belly hurts awful!

RICKY (frowns, jabs his hands deep into his pants pockets): I musta lost my brand-new Swiss all-purpose pocket knife. You seen it anyplace?

JIM (shrugs): 'Nother Twinkie?

(From stage left can be heard a well-defined series of sharp taps on wood.)

RICKY (looks toward the tapping sound): Hey, Jim! Look through the binocs and see if you can spot that ol' woodpecker!

JIM (raising the binoculars to his eyes): Nope. Don't see 'im.

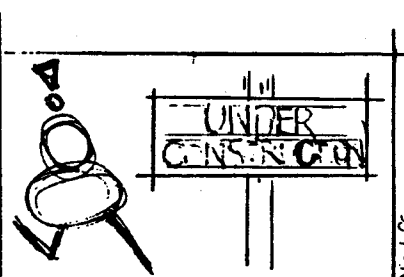
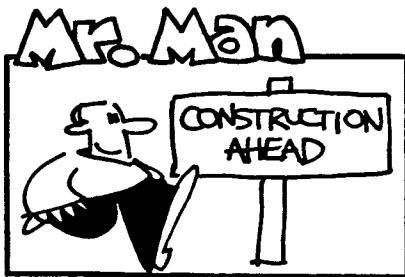
RICKY'S MOTHER (calls loudly from stage right): Ricky! You and Jimmy come on down, now! Supper's ready!

RICKY (slaps his right thigh in frustration): Aw, mom, not right now...We just got up here...We'll be down in just a little bit.

(As the curtain closes, the audience hears the sound of a coarse-toothed saw being slowly pulled back and forth through a tree...) END

preciated. Aline Kominsky once said she had gotten blasé about seeing her work in print. Not me. Nosiree, Bob.

Well, there you have it. If you answered "yes" to 4 out of 5 questions, then you are probably a cartoonist. Congratulations. And don't say I didn't warn you!



TALES of SUBURBIA

PART THREE by Kathy Stadalsky

He was watching the Wheel of Fortune when the phone rang. At first he intended to ignore it, but something compelled him to reach out and touch someone.

Had he been the least bit psychic, he'd have known that this particular call was the last one he'd want to take at that particular moment.

He was in no mood to socialize. When Brittany had left the apartment with a "sure you don't want to come?" he'd turned her down flat. Told her he was going to take a soaper.

He changed his mind right after she left, though. Soapers made him feel sleazy.

What was the point of feeling sleazy while you were alone? If he hadn't been in such an antisocial mood, he wouldn't have minded feeling sleazy. But alone...

Could you conjugate that?
To sleaze. I sleaze. You sleaze. We all have sleazen.
Anyhow, he was in no mood to socialize. He was in even less of a mood to talk to...

"Davey?"
"MOM?!"
"Hi, honey, how are you?"
"Uhh, just fine, mom. Uhh...how are you? Nothings'..."
"Oh, we're fine, just fine. Listen, Daddy and I have a little surprise for you, Davey."
"Uh-oh. Please, God, don't do this to me. 'What's that mom?'"
"Well, honey, you know how Daddy's been trying to get the time to take one of those little junkets so we can have a vacation?"
"Oh, please, God, don't! I'll be a good boy! I'll go to church! I'll become Celibate! I'll never lust again! Oh, God, please! Come God, don't...!"

"So, guess what, Davey?"
"Dad got the time off."
"Yes, indeedly! And guess where we're going, Davey?"
"Hawaii?" he asked hopefully.
"No, silly! We're coming to see you! We're coming to San Francisco!"
"Gosh, mom, that's great," he said bleakly.
"Four days, Davey? Four whole days--and five nights. And we've already got the reservations and the flight's all booked. Isn't it great?"

As it happened, the reservations were at the Ramada Inn on Van Ness. October 29 through November 1.

The horrifying significance of those dates didn't hit David until he wrote the dates on his calendar.

Mr. and Mrs. Edward J. Harlan were forsaking their Columbus Dispatch, their Northland Mall, their fenced in back yard and two car (attached) garage to spend four fun-filled days (and five nights) in Everybody's Favorite City.

On Halloween weekend.
Jesus Howard Christ.

All things considered, Halloween weekend was going along quite well.

So far.
David's parents had rented a Chevy Celebrity upon arrival in the fair city, so it was easy enough to fill up their time with sight-seeing.

But now it was Sunday. The 30th. The Witches' Sabbath was hard upon them.

If he was careful--very, very, careful--he could ease them through it. He could protect their fragile Saturday Evening Post sensibilities and Normal Rockwell innocences from the horror of The Love That Dares Not Rear Its Head.

Maybe.
Hopefully.
In this town, though, The Love That Dares Not Rear Its Head rarely lies down.
Fat Chance.

Sunday afternoon.
Mona (David's mother) filled him in on the social history of Columbus, Ohio during the last six months.
They'd built a new mall. There'd been three more wrecks up the street in front of the Anderson's and why didn't someone put up a stop sign at that damn intersection? The Davis' daughter Lisa was involved with a black man, and their daughter Beth was addicted to pot and living with a truck driver in a squalid little shack on the edge of the campus. Two black families had moved

YUP, YUP, YUP

by A.T. Hunn

Y is for the ying you're always yanging
U is for the umbrage you create
P is for the Porsche you lied and schemed for
P is for the powder 'neath your nose
I is for investing with insiders
E is for an ego big as Maine
Put them all together
They spell YUPPIE
A shallow life that is
The biggest pain

into the neighborhood--and what was the world coming to that blacks could afford Worthington, for God's sake? One of the boy's next door was involved with a Puerto Rican girl and you know what kind of diseases they carry. And Loretta Kinney was doing just fine recovering from her attack by three juvenile delinquent hopheads on motorcycles. Oh, and remember sweet little Molly Barker who David used to date? Well, she'd been promoted to shift manager at the McDonald's over on Riverside.

His dad had chuckled when he saw the apartment. "Looks like a lady's touch, son." He winked at David.

David did his best to look embarrassed--and manly for his oh-so-macho father.

"Hope you didn't move her out on our account," Ed said, slapping David on the back and hugging him fiercely around the shoulder.

"Ed, I told you not to..."
"Aww, jeezus keerist, lighten up, will you woman?" Ed demanded disgustedly. "We're not a couple of old fuddy-duddies. I remember what it's like to be young. Cryin' out loud, why'n't you go snoop around the kitchen?"

David's mom shook her head sadly and trudged out of the room.
"Now," said his dad. "What's the deal? Don't you want to introduce us to...what's her name?"

"Brittany, dad...uhh, dad, we're just friends, that is...uhh..."
Ed Harlan winked at his son. "Friends, huh?"

"Yeah, dad...she's only..."
"I don't give a damn what she is, Dave. Frankly I'm a little hurt that you felt you had to hide her from us. Christ, boy, I've read Hustler. I know a thing or two about the 80's." He stopped talking when he heard his wife return. "So, hey, son," Ed changed the subject. "Your mama and I want to take you out to dinner tonight. Take us to your favorite place."

Oh, ducky, thought David. We'll just slide on over to the Firing Line and sip Sloe Gin in a window seat and watch the Cycle Sluts wave leather dildoes at the traffic cops.

The Celebrity was parked up on Broad, near Green. His mom was out of breath by the time they reached Union.

Almost on cue, the skating nuns appeared around the corner.

"Ed, look!"
"Goddammit, Mona, don't point!"
"But Ed...they're on roller skates!"
"Goddam! Davey, what the hell..."

Before their son could answer, the six figures had rounded the corner as a unit, rocketing in the direction of the revelry on Polk Street.

"Hey, Harlan!"
David waved half-heartedly.
The nun gave him a high sign, blew a kiss, then shouted "see you around, big guy!"

He ended up taking his folks to the Expressway. It was the straightest place he could think of.

It was also far enough away from Polk Street that roller-skating nuns would not likely invade the family unit again.

The nuns, he explained patiently, were "some nutty friends of Brittany's and his". And, yes, they were men.

"Queers?"
"Ed!" David's mother dropped her fork and glared at her husband of thirty years.

"Well, what the hell do you want me to call them?"
"That's not a nice word, Ed," she insisted. "You shouldn't talk that way about someone who can't help himself."

David choked.
"Can't help himself?" Ed demanded loudly. "What's to be helpless about it? Who the hell can't help coming down the middle of the goddam road dressed up like a goddammed nun on goddammed roller skates? Goddam, woman!"

"Ed...don't raise your voice!"
David looked up from his plate, speaking as offhandedly as possible. "It's kinda like the Mardis Gras, dad. There's lots of crazy stuff going on tonight. Lots of people are doing it."

"A lot of queers."
"Not just...them, dad, lots of people. Everybody."
"His father snorted. "I don't see you out there, making a fool of yourself."

"Well, he's with us, Ed. Maybe he'd like to be out there...go to a party or something. It sounds like a lot of fun..."

"Well, hey, don't let me stop you. You two go right on ahead. I'll just sit here and finish my steak with the normal people."

A waiter refilling Ed Harmon's wine glass caught the remark and rolled his eyes in painful tolerance.
Then he winked at David.

(To be continued in a future II)

The Craving

by Dale A. White

Patsy Brown only ate pie: Pie for breakfast. Pie for lunch. Pie for dinner. Pie between meals. Pie before bed. Pie in bed. Pie in the bathtub. Pie on the road. Pie at rest stops. Anywhere, any day, any time—pie.

To Patsy Brown, pie was sensual. Pie was inebriating. Pie was inspired.

She liked the geometry of it, the circularity of its dish, the sharp triangularity of its slices; its warm smells, its steamy presence; the weighty feel of a pastry shell laden with gooey filling; the sticky ooze in the cracks of its upper crust; the unending variety of flavors, the meats, cheeses, fruits and berries.

She liked the word itself. It puffed her cheeks and blasted through her lips like a monosyllabic powder keg. "Pie," Patsy erupted on the first day she could speak. "Want pie. Gimme pie."

Mama Brown gladly obliged. "If baby wants pie, baby gets pie." As she matured, Patsy wanted more pie—and more pie. It was all she could think about.

When she heard the nursery rhymes about "four and twenty blackbirds" and "Simple Simon," she hallucinated and fainted. When she saw a chart in a periodical about how federal tax dollars as appropriated, she tried to consume the entire defense budget. School administrators expelled her because, whenever her math teacher drew the symbol for the ratio of the circumference to the diameter of a circle, she salivated uncontrollably and licked the blackboard clean.

As a teenager, Patsy rarely budged from the kitchen table. Eventually, she needed a chair for each thigh. Her meaty arms became permanently caked with white flour, confectioners' sugar, pudding mix and other ingredients her mother used in the all-night bakery the Brown kitchen had become.

Whenever she finally belched and keeled over, she dreamed noisily about her favorite fantasies: eating her way through the great pie capitals, from Key West to Boston; conducting a personal audience with Mrs. Smith; wading naked through a vat of black-bottom filling.

All day, Mama Brown baked to satisfy her daughter. Unable to meet the demand, she bought shopping carts full of frozen pies. She stole pies left to cool on her neighbors' window sills. Once, she absconded with a restaurant's dessert cart.

Finally, she confronted Patsy. "You're insatiable. Why are you obsessed with pie?"

Patsy brushed an avalanche of crumbs off her lap. She wanted to explain. Yet she couldn't, not to her mother.

As a child, she was arbitrarily chosen by her peers as their token object of harassment. She could never belong to any circle of friends.

In school, she was shaken down for her lunch money. At the neighborhood burger joint, bullies barred her from entering. At the few birthday parties to which she was invited, the kids deprived her of cake and ice cream. And on Halloween, costumed ambushers routinely robbed her of her candy.

Whenever she returned home, however, Patsy found a pie waiting for her. For Patsy, pie represented everything life was not. In pie, everything was symmetrical and balanced. Everything congealed. Everything went full circle. All the pieces fit. And no piece was greater than the whole.

Pie accepted Patsy. Pie made everything all right. Patsy could not imagine her existence without it.

Unable to get an answer, Mama Brown tried to convince Patsy to sample other foods. "How about a tuna casserole? Um, um, good."

"Want pie," Patsy bellowed.

"Maybe lasagna? Try some lasagna for Mama, baby."

Patsy's cheeks swelled. Her chins trembled. A deep, demonic voice burst from a mouth dripping with blueberries, lemon meringue and banana cream. "Pie."

"How about some ham-and-broccoli quiche?" Mama lifted a trowel full to her daughter's lips. "It's just like pie."

Patsy swatted the offensive substitute away. "No quiche. Want pie."

Mama Brown angrily punched a hole through her baking pan. "No more pie." She ripped off her apron. "You've had enough. I've had enough!"

No more pie? Patsy's bloodstream curdled. Her head throbbed. Her muscles ached. The withdrawal symptoms made her desperate. She uprooted the kitchen table as she slowly reared herself onto her stumpy legs. Her flab swayed from the upward motion, becoming as turbulent as a storm at sea. Her stomach emitted a menacing growl. "Pie."

Mama Brown backed against a wall and poked a spatula at Patsy in self-defense. "I won't bake any more pies. You've become a monster. This madness must stop."

Patsy shook the house with each step forward. "Pie."

Mama Brown threw whatever she could find in an attempt to appease her: macaroons, eclairs, granola bars...

Patsy ignored the airborne snacks.

Mama Brown showed her a skimpy offering in her hand and smiled fearfully. "Sugar cookie?"

"PIE," Patsy roared, trembling her parent.

The automatic garage door opened. Patsy, larger than ever, emerged as disoriented as a rudely-awakened bear. Squinting against the sunlight, she lumbered into the street. Passing cars bounced off her hips as she searched and sniffed for her next fix.

Soon, police received reports of Patsy on a rampage: a bakery truck was mauled at the corner of Central and Main; spectators at



the county fair unsuccessfully tried to apprehend her as she devoured all the entries in the apple pie bake-off; a blind man, not knowing with whom he was being friendly, invited Patsy into his hovel for his last slice of coconut cream; a trail of crumbs led investigators to a heap of discarded Reddi-Wip cans outside a school cafeteria.

"She'll stop at nothing," a dispatcher warned patrol officers. "At last sighting, she was headed for Restaurant Row."

Restaurateurs on the posh avenue boarded up their establishments. Armed guards barricaded the street. Pastry chefs changed clothes with undercover detectives before fleeing town.

Although bandaged and bruised, Mama Brown found the strength to confer with police in the kitchen of an evacuated cafe. "She'll stop at nothing," Mama Brown agreed. "Nothing but pie. She's in a pie-induced frenzy. She's not responsible for her actions."

"Pie can be mighty serious if someone over-indulges, ma'am," a lieutenant said. "How long as your daughter been on this stuff?"

"Most of her life," Mama Brown sobbed. "It's my fault. I turned her on to her first slice. I didn't realize she couldn't handle it."

"If we can't talk her down, what can we do?" a sergeant asked.

"I'll do it, Sergeant," Mama Brown said. "I'll do what I should have done long ago. I'll bake Patsy a pie she'll never forget."

She chose her ingredients at random: vinegar, horseradish, gristle, hot sauce, sour milk, jalapeno peppers, rotten eggs, cheap wine, coffee grounds, bacon grease, fish heads...

Soon, Patsy arrived. "Pie," she roared as she charged through the barricade.

Mama Brown confronted her. "Mama's made you a pie with just what you like, baby—a Graham Cracker crust."

"Graham Cracker crust," Patsy grunted. "Yum."

"And topped with Cool Whip."

"Cool Whip!" Patsy swiped the pie from her mother's trembling fingers and shoved it into her mouth.

The police took ten steps backward. "Let's hope this doesn't backfire on us," the lieutenant told the sergeant as they crouched behind a patrol car.

Patsy swallowed. A moment of silence passed. Suddenly, her eyes became as red as traffic signals. Her ears imitated steam whistles. Her tongue caught fire. Her belly rattled like an engine that had been fed the wrong fuel. "Pie?"

Propelled by a gastronomic exorcism, Patsy shot backward like a pricked balloon. She landed a half-mile away, atop an aerobics class. Freed of her addiction, she resembled a skeletal version of her former self.

"What got into me?" she asked her mother and the police who retrieved her.

"Every pie in a nine-mile radius, ma'am," the lieutenant said as he helped the thin woman to her wobbly feet. "You were on what is called a binge."

"You weren't yourself, Patty," Mama Brown tearfully said. "You were a pie fiend."

"Pie?" Patsy grimaced and spit. "The very idea of pie makes me sick. I don't want to see another pie in my life."

Mama Brown cried and applauded. "Hallelujah!"

As her mother hugged her, Patsy cried, too. "It's over, Mama. From now on, I'm free of food substitutes."

The lieutenant waved to the Browns as they headed home. "I love happy endings."

"Me, too," the sergeant said. "They make me hungry, though."

The lieutenant noticed a round neon emblem on the roof of a nearby diner. "Know what I'm in the mood for?"

The sergeant saw the same flashing beacon. "Doughnuts." He lumbered forward in a daze. "Want doughnuts. Gimme doughnuts."

The lieutenant followed, his stomach rumbling impatiently. "Make mine jelly."

The Bradbury Chronicles

by Rodney Lynch

Someday soon I'd like to shake Ray Bradbury's hand. Not only because he's the world's greatest science fiction writer but because Ray Bradbury once saved my life. Well, not really. But he did save my sanity in the tenth grade.

If there was one year I'd label HELL it would be that one. Every morning I got up, grabbed my books, stepped in front of the hall mirror and contemplated suicide. Then I ran like hell to get to the bus stop before Cheryl, my teenaged, pill-popping bus driver, could swing the yellow bomb into Mr. McFeeter's mailbox and make a getaway without me. All of this for an hour ride on a bus, the words "King Oscar" scrawled on the side, with 150 other sugar-comaed kids.

The bus would rupture bladders, dislocate shoulders and crush vertebrae on semi-forgotten roads until we came to our school, Northwest Cabbarus High, a huge red-bricked prison sprawled over an acre of county land where every known bully and tormenter had been deposited under the state's "Natural Bullies Act." Each morning as we neared I couldn't help but think of the Arkham Asylum for The Criminally Insane in Batman comics. Someone was forever gluing my locker shut; putting motor oil in my comb. Each night I checked my back for "kick me" signs.

But back to Ray Bradbury.

Northwest Cabbarus carried classes designated SAT—Special Abilities and Talents. I have a sneaking suspicion it meant Sadistic And Tortuous, designed by neo-Nazis to corrupt young minds. As a somewhat bright but naive youngster I let one of my zombie advisors pressure me into taking SAT English. I accepted on the condition that I could spend my lunch period digging an escape tunnel under the football field. I would've made it, too, if I hadn't mistaken a smudge for a turn and wound up dangling out of a French horn in the marching band.

But anyway, back to Ray.

English was the first class of the day and the one I dreaded the most (except for band—I played the big bass drum and the tubas always tried to push me down the steps). Of all my classes this was the one that collected the worst array of poseurs, snobs, crackpots, and other assorted losers. Mrs. Lance (as in "boil") was our teacher, a great flaxen-haired siren with an affected Boston accent. She spent half of our time telling us what a rich language we have if only we'd use it; she spent the other half telling us not to say "ain't." She would have had more success ordering us not to breathe.

One of the many books we tackled that year was THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE, a book that bore absolutely no resemblance to my only other Civil War reference, Buster Keaton's THE GENERAL.

The book we used was an ancient tome emblazoned with the names of students who'd used it ten years before. The first day I got the book I ran my finger down the table of contents and let it hover over Ray Bradbury's name.

I looked up. Mrs. Lance was droning on about the Civil War, Stephen Crane and his use of simile and personification. I couldn't help but think what a bad book THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE is if you don't like the word "ain't."

I flipped through the pages, hoping Mrs. Lance was too engrossed in telling us that Crane wrote with his left hand to notice, and stopped at THERE WILL COME SOFT RAINS, the last story in the book. My eyes skimmed over the first paragraph: "In the living room the voice-cloak sang, Tick-tock, seven o'clock..."

That was it. Mrs. Lance had ceased to exist. Northwest Cabbarus was buried under a mudslide of words.

That year I did my English work with an undreamed-of zeal. But only so I could open my book and read Ray's story of a house that didn't know its end had come.

I read it once a day like vitamins, so amazed that anyone could write with such poetry. So whenever Wendy

16 Deems began spilling out of her gym uniform or the tubas

TV

by Larry Oberc

I change the station, don't understand why people put up with this nonsense, the commercials creep under my skin, make me want to buy less, make me want to throw out all the shit that's being advertised, I want to build a fire on my front porch, show my neighbors, those jerks that stare at me as I come and go, show them I don't need that kind of shit, could burn groceries, microwave ovens, furniture, VCRs, TVs, radios, stereos, need to stop all that noise from happening to me, my wife tells me to shut up, she cusses me out, tells me I'm no good, I could burn her too, let her know that I don't need her any more than I need the rest of all that advertised garbage, she buys weird things, shit to make her look good, shit that creates plastic doll faces, I wish I could turn the page, the station, watch another station, in my trunk I keep weapons left over from the old days, guns, knives, there's an ear in there, one I cut when I was a kid, I thought about collecting them, ears, but I was afraid that I'd get caught, I go out to the garage, look at the weapons, drink a beer, start making plans tomorrow.



THE VERY FIRST WORD-POE-ASSESSOR

OVERNON GRANT — 1988

tied my shoelaces together or David Bolger slipped love notes into my jacket I read the story. I read until I memorized the paragraphs, knew the contour of the pages.

The very last day of school, after I filled in my tunnels, unglued my locker door and put a condom snugly on the water fountain, I went to turn in my English book, a bit teary-eyed.

As I walked past the English department window I realized I really hadn't learned a lot that year. I'd already forgotten the drum cadence, the capitals of the countries and imaginary numbers. I wondered what Mrs. Lance would think if I told her. What would she say about what I'd been doing all year in her class?

Books were stacked waist-high in the little trailer that held the English department. Mrs. Lance was checking them over thoroughly, examining every mark and crease.

She looked up as I walked in and smiled out of the corner of her mouth. Silently she flipped through the pages of my book. Then, bringing a piece of Boston into the room with us, she began reading: "In the living room the voice-cloak sang, Tick-tock, seven o'clock..."



Commercial McClue-In by "Kid" Sieve

GOT TO BE A BUD MAN

Baseball season's a funny thing, friends. Just when I get all excited that warm weather's finally here and the game I love is afoot for the next six months, along come the commercials. After having watched heaven knows how many televised ballgames during the past few years, I've come to the inescapable conclusion that, were aliens to descend upon this planet and attempt to ascertain the mentality of the average baseball viewer, they would analyze it as consisting of little more than driving cars and drinking beer—although not simultaneously, if you, like your typical responsible canine, "know when to say when." Moreover, they would assume such activities, especially the latter, belonged in the sole purview of the male of the species.

You remember back when women drank beer, don't you? There was even a commercial not too long ago which featured an actress in a bar plugging a brew (albeit a lite beer). But in this age of New Traditionalism, when the Supreme Court is poised to overturn a woman's right to control her own body (possibly hinging on the vote of its only woman, who one supposes need never worry about making such a choice herself), and when even misogynist creeps on the left can get away with equating feminism with fascism, it's not surprising to see women once again transformed into objects, becoming the observed rather than the observers, the perks that come with male-dominated territory. We parachute from the sky into drive-ins to the accompaniment of a male narrator waxing rhapsodic about our corneal color—but do we get equal time to discuss the seductive qualities of a man's eyes? We hike up our skirts on busy city streets to ostensibly show off the hairlessness of our legs whilst giving horny men a free look. But when they shave, why do we still wind up being their arm-ornaments?

Few products bring out this terrifyingly regressive double standard more than beer. Wine products don't—wine is still seen as the drink more gupsters prefer when they're being nice and quiet and white (i.e., the Gallo "big chill" commercials, where even the token black folks are "white"). I'm not sure about hard liquor, since those ads are now banned from TV. But beer—beer is the last great bastion of unquestioned sexism. Buy that man a Miller. Got to be a Bud man. When you've had a hard day doing something manly, head for a Busch—and don't kid yourself that the pun isn't intentional, a happy coincidence for which the folks at Anheuser-Busch probably thank their lucky kegs.

Where are women in these commercials? Well, there is the St. Pauli Girl. Kinda neat, psychologically speaking, fusing the two objects of woman and beer into one package. Especially when one considers that the original "St. Pauli Girl" was an expression used to denote a prostitute. You never forget your first girl, indeed. You can't forget St. Pauli Girl's female "competition" in their new commercials, either. Two spots show a trio of German "Robert Palmer Bunch" lookalikes (apparently supposed to be ball-busters or something, else why should they intimidate the guys in question into wanting their nice little compliant St. Pauli Girls instead?) and a fat woman with kitschy taste and tattoos, respectively. The latter ad obviously bothers me more, as it seems to imply there's something wrong with fat, aggressive women (tattoos or no tattoos). The man upon whom she hits almost thanks the hea-

vens when his beer saves him from a fate worse than ad viewers are presumably capable of imagining—being attracted to a woman like that! Needless to say, this pisses me and a whole lot of other fat women off, but we're not the consumers, thinks St. Pauli.

Beer sellers probably envision reality as closer to the Bud Lite "alien" scene, where two stranded astronauts discover the planet on which they've crash-landed filled with beautiful babes (I hereafter use that word to distinguish object-women from subject women, the latter of whom are simply "women") right out of the mindless-blond "Something Is Out There" School of Extraterrestrials, holding cases of Bud Lite. "Let me get this straight," the head astronaut says. "There are no men here, there's an unlimited supply of Bud Lite, and we can never leave." "Correct," replies the babe with the big bangles dangling from her ears (so good to know alien babes wear earrings too!). "We can live with that," smirks the dude, as his friend agrees. Well, some of us would rather not live with that. Obviously, the ad's supposed to be totally tongue-in-cheek, but as usual, the best way to test for incipient sexism is to reverse the roles and try to imagine two stranded female astronauts trapped on a planet with nothing but men and beer. Unsettling, to say the least.

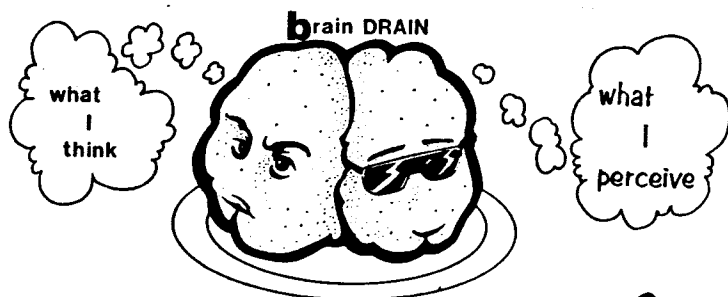
But that Bud ad, like the beer, is on the lighter side. The A-B people have done worse, as with two memorable ones currently running in which women are part and parcel of magical bits in the hands of party dudes (more's the pity the thought processes here are so repulsive, because the special effects are excellent). One bit features a man pointing a remote control at cloud cover, thus calling out the sun, and unrolling a Bud blanket on which appear three bathing-suited babes, presumably ready for action as two other men ogle in amazement. The other paints a desert scene in which the two guys have just about had enough of the heat, and one punches a button on his magic briefcase (an interesting bit of yuppie wish-fulfillment, that), inflating a pool—complete with water and a swimsuited babe on roller skates serving Bud. When one dude asks his friend, "Where did she come from?", the second dude smirks and holds up the magic briefcase. Good grief. What, it's not enough that three ultra-babes (what is it with the A-B people and triads, anyway?) dwarf a female bull-terrier which is presented as a male, in what might have been considered the ultimate insult back in a more enlightened time? Now we come rolled up in blankets and stuffed in briefcases? I mean, I understand the point of sex selling (which I always thought was funny anyway in an alcoholic context, given that beer seems to get guys horny but also inhibits erections and the like) and all, and we'll probably never escape from the women-as-adjuncts mentality, but I have to shudder when I see us playing second fiddle to blankets, swimming pools and dressed-up dogs, not to mention a hooker-beer itself. The best thing I can say about August Busch at this point (and of course, I needn't point out, need I?, that Busch owns the St. Louis Cardinals, another big connection between beer and baseball, never mind the "alcohol-free" sections) is that he's not Joseph "Contra" Coors.

Well, now that that's temporarily out of my system, I want to call your attention to a lovely little commercial for a product I never touch, Diet Coke. In the race to see which stars the Big Two will sign next, Coke has landed Madeline Kahn (okay, she also did a beef ad, so maybe she's not that discriminating) and Peter Cook (the better half of Cook & Moore from back when Dudley was funny). The spot features Cook as a realtor trying to sell a house to prospective owners. The yuppie guy sips a Diet Coke and puts it on the banister, as his wife snivels, "Isn't this house supposed to be...haunted?" "Rubbish!" laughs Cook in his best devil's voice (remember "Bedazzled"?), as Kahn-the-ghost sneaks back of the threesome and swipes the soda, trilling the Diet Coke theme as she wafts up the stairs and melts into the bedroom—dropping the beverage which, being solid, doesn't go through objects like ectoplasm. We then see the bedroom door being opened, and Kahn crawls out, looks down at the trio, smiles and says, "Whoops!", dragging the DC back in the room with her. The ad is worth cheering for the appearance of Cook alone, as well as the good special effects. I like these ads—they usually have no bearing whatsoever on whether viewers buy the product!

The less said about Linda Ellerbee and Maxwell House the better, don't you think? One comment, though—an outraged reviewer in *Newsday*, in a fit of righteousness, commented on the sad state of newscasters selling products—"the only thing newscasters ought to sell is the news." Oh really? Do you enjoy having news sold to you rather than reported? That's interesting...

The Museum of Broadcasting (1 East 53rd Street in New York, 212/752-7684) has been building an advertising collection of significant historical and contemporary radio and television commercials, and is presenting compilations of them, thematically no less, through the beginning of September. I have a pamphlet if anybody's interested. I'd tend to stay away from anything that kicks off with "Public Service Announcements: Anti-Drug Campaign," though, as a matter of course. Just say, "so?" You can bet this retrospective is being milked solely for nostalgia value and to pump up already-fat advertising agencies (most of whom have their offices in the same area), not as a study in mindfuck.

Well, after ranting and raving like this for the whole column, I'm starting to feel like, like...uh...Mulrooney, yeah, that's it, Mulrooney (I had to throw in a tribute to that amusing Roy Rogers ad, as it's the Four-Color Friend's fave)...so I'll take my leave for now, down a couple of anything-not-by-Anheuser-Busch beers, and go searching for Patrick MacNee in his Sterling, even though he may think I'm expecting someone else—Ta, and keep watching!



LEFT B.

Thinking
How I can do it, feel it
Television
Politician
Japan
Vitamins high in calcium
Fine art
Great art
My art
Nostalgia
Social reforms for indebted
Third World countries

Social reforms in com-
munist countries
Social reforms in America
Desire
USA Today
Clergy
The Pope
Condominiums
Hemingway
Cultural movements
Comedy
Scientific medicine
God
Save the ozone
Destroying the ozone
Rock and roll

NUCLEAR energy today

right b

Perceiving
Why I do it, what I feel
Barking dog
Chicken fat
USA pre-'65
Ice cream
Emperor's new clothes
Something in a blue moon
Extraterrestrial life
Clothes that fit, once upon a time
How to survive in a Monopoly game
after landing on Boardwalk that
that has 10 hotels, you're broke
already but your friends want you
to stay in the game for fun
Over Niagara Falls in a barrel

Does it fit on a t-shirt?
Half of an idea
Pre-industrial revolution
Pinocchio
Gipetto
Central Park, not Vermont, please
Saltine cracker without salt
False chastity
Backwards medicine
Crapshoot specialist
Goddess
Freeze your ass off up north, an-
Shake and bake usually
a) Rugby, if you're up to it
b) Modern art, if you're into it
UNCLEAR tomorrow

- Daza

Emergency by Roger Coleman

The venerable nurse performed a catheterization on the male patient to get a sterile urine specimen for analysis, STAT.

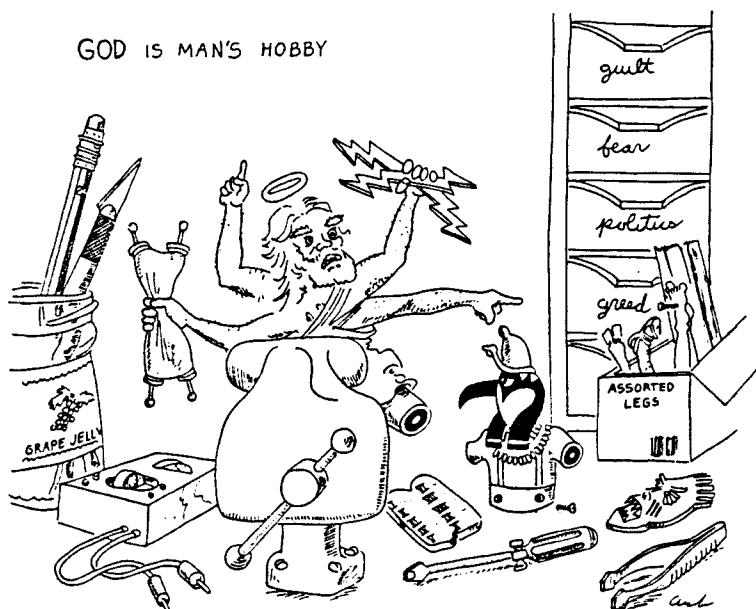
The elderly gray lab doctor took blood from the in-
firmed, to be split between different vials. The veins
of the arm were ill-defined.

The comatose man represented an emergency situation.
They worked side by side, he trying to thread his
needles into deep obscure veins and she trying to
thread the catheter into the bladder like a limp
noodle.

He whispered, "Last one through's a rotten egg."

She, with aplomb: "Is this what is called a 'cute
meet'?"

GOD IS MAN'S HOBBY



ZEN BRICK

by Santa Mike the Golden Yahoo

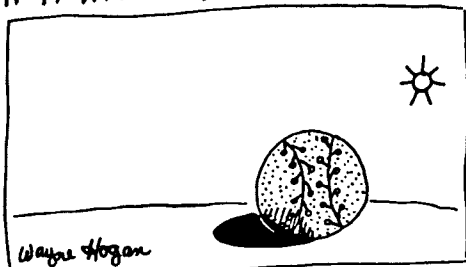
Zen brick sat by the intersection watching the effluence of the traffic. Trucks and bikes sped through this dangerous crossroad with the stoplight blinking blue on all four sides. A bike, not quite quick enough, was caught fully broadside in the middle of the two convergent roads, and tossed broken and warped onto the grass to Zen brick's left. Two trucks narrowed the space between them to crush a stray bike with their combined massive bulks. A bike, slipping underneath an unwary truck, punctured a crucial tire, causing the eighteen-wheeled behemoth to careen off the southern road and impale itself upon an Egyptian-style obelisk. Two bikes, criss-crossing east and west, distracted a northbound truck, causing it to smash annihilatingly, head-on with another southbound truck. Tires and other pieces of both bike and truck debris flew past Zen brick as he watched it all. Too intent on their own private power struggles, they did not hear Zen brick softly state, "I am a brick." He then turned his back on the whole mess and started off towards the distant, wooded foothills to the south and east.



60'S ART TRIVIA

as Yoko used to say, DRAW Your Own

THE ART WORLD AS IT WOULD LOOK
IF IT WERE A BASEBALL



SOPHISTRY?

by Kyle Dostaler

Glaucou. Look to where I point. What do you see over there standing upon four legs?

Why, a horse, of course. That's a ridiculous question.

That's not a horse, my dear Glaucou, that's a cow. I see a cow. Are you mad?

Possibly. One man's madness is another man's sanity.

What?

Your horse is my cow. What you perceive as being a horse, I perceive as being a cow. My mind tells me to say cow because I tell it to do so. My eyes see your horse, but surely I can't believe what my eyes perceive, for my brain tells me to say differently.

You're mad.

Am I? You think I'm mad because I call your horse a cow?

Yes, certainly that is why.

I'm mad, then. Insane merely because I call a horse a cow, which is really a cow anyway.

Yes, I bethinks ye be mad. That! That, my dear sir, is not a cow, it is a horse.

How do you know, Glaucou?

What do you mean, "how do I know?" That is a goddamn horse!

What makes you so sure?

Look at it!

Yes—it's a cow. What makes you so sure it's a horse, Glaucou?

Look, it has hooves. That is an animal; it is a large solid-hoofed mammal. That to which I point has a mouth, a nose, face, forehead, forelock, ears, poll, mane, withers, ribs, flank, loin, haunch, crop, tail, stifle, throatlatch, etc. That which I have just described is what most people refer to as a h-o-r-s-e.

Horse, cow. What's the difference in how one refers?

It makes all the difference. People can't go around calling horses cows or cows horses. Things would lose their meaning, their identities...

Are you happy, Glaucou?

About what?

Nothing in particular, just generally speaking. Are you happy?

I imagine so. Yes, I'm generally happy, relatively speaking.

Well, I'm unhappy. But I'm unhappy because of the very fact that I am unhappy. I like, I enjoy being unhappy. Being unhappy is a preference I have.

One man's unhappiness is another man's happiness, right?

Yes, that's correct. Now, look to where I point. See that cloud, that enormous white fluffy one far far above? What do you see?

Uh...I see...

Be careful, now.

I see many things.

What?

I don't know what to say. Anything I say you're going to refute or question. What do you see?!

I see many things, Glaucou. For instance, I see a barn, a white barn with a wooden fence about the barn, and snow about the barn and wooden fence upon the ground. I see a mountain...a waterfall...a dog...

Enough! How could you see all those things in that one cloud?

I know, I know, you have a good imagination and—

What do you see, Glaucou?

I don't see any "barn"...

No need to be sarcastic...

I don't see a fence, mountain, I don't even see your damn dog!

No need to get perturbed about it.

I'm not!

No need to yell.

What's your point, if you please?

First, answer one more question. Please.

Very well.

What do you see in the cloud?

A horse! Now, what's your point?

My point. First of all, let us both look at the cloud. Look at its contours, and shapes, how they change with the wind's change, how it moves and floats by. Let us pretend for the moment that we are not alone. That there are several people with us. We all look at the cloud. I see the barn, you see a horse, she sees a rabbit, and he sees a boat. Every person sees something different, no one sees the same thing. But if I point out, to you and our pretend company, the contours, lines, and shape of a barn, perhaps you may come to perceive the shape of my barn. You point out the contours and shape of your horse and perhaps I can come to imagine perceiving your horse. The others point out their shapes and perhaps we can come to see their shapes and views as well...

What's your point?

Reality. Reality is my point, Glaucou. Reality.

What in the name of God has a cloud to do with reality?

Nothing and everything. You're missing the point. "We" all looked at the cloud, "we" all saw something different. Reality to one person is perhaps different to another. We all view reality differently. We all have the same sense of reality, yet we see it and perceive it differently. One person's reality is another's fantasy. One person's fantasy is another's reality.

Why is my horse your cow?

Because I choose it to be. That is why, Glaucou. Because I want it to be; therefore, it is. Of course, that cow is really a horse, of course, but if I choose it can be a cow as long as I truly believe it to be a cow.

TO UNDERSTAND THE HUMAN SPECIES AND THE ROLE OF MOTHER EARTH

by Al Fry

With all the technological progress of our species, things on Earth have progressed very little in the areas that count most. Instead of working for single tyrants and kings, we give even more tribute to the governments that protect us against ourselves. Without such dictatorial and repressive overseers our species would be living still as barbaric savages, caring less about the next person. True, there are probably 20% of any given society that retain a semblance of ethics, yet this has usually not been sufficient to keep ethical new republics intact for very long.

Today, our own republic has slowly converted into a democracy where the majority have allowed their freedoms to be eroded away for the apparent free handouts from the government. People have wanted others to take their responsibilities over for as long as there has been history. The results have been the same. The eventual erosion and destruction of the society is as automatic as the rising and setting of the sun.

The history books never tell of such automatic laws, of course. No history is ever factual. History books are written for tyrants and the governments in power at the moment. Writers who present the truth have always been a danger to the state and stopped. In olden times they may have been murdered or imprisoned. Today, the controlling elite simply control the publishing houses and media.

To find the truth of what we have done and where we are going, we must ignore "experts" and books. Learning truth is as simple as observing the natural laws of our creator and the universe.

The foundation laws are simple. Species of intelligence are under a mandate of Choice. If we break the laws of Choice and start domination against others, we get automatic feedback, which the ancients called "karma." Many of the great spiritual teachers taught such laws under concepts like the "golden rule." Virtually all great civilizations which lasted any length of time started out under constitutions and foundations that gave Choice to citizens. To learn what transpired in the past and what will happen in the future, you only need to understand the law and observe.

If you see a person knowingly cheat another person, you can know that the former will lose such as they have gained in the near future. The world is full of takers and dominators who can never enjoy the wealth they have gained through domination.

The principles are the same for a country. A nation which takes over an area by force and continues oppression will never be able to keep its gains over the long run. No matter how clever the country or person, the holdings will be taken at the final tally...You can gauge the life of any new country simply by looking at the willingness of the people to take responsibility for their own lives and grant freedom to others. If you wish to know whether the United States will prosper or perish, look at our past actions. We will be in for some very hard lessons...

To learn to see what kind of governments and systems will be coming, there is another foundation principle we can use. We humans are not here just to slave for tyrants or kill time. Our souls enter bodies in cultures that give us the greatest lessons to learn to deal with. Earth is a living, breathing life form that once elected to serve as an environment for our particular species and group. What we have here are millions of beings with animal-based souls and a lesser number with completely alien soul origins. In a few of the most ancient records on Earth there are references to this new "ademic" stock that became ensnared in matter and forgot that they were beings and intelligences with a home and base far removed from Earth.

In legends we get a glimpse of what some of the early arrivals could do. There are many manuscripts that rival the "1001 Nights" collection in the exploits of our "gifted" ancestors. Whether you find the Earth soul-based cultures in a Biblical "Land of Nod" or in the Third World peoples of today, the story or picture you can weave together will be similar. The Children of Mother Earth want to go back to their simple way of life, where they can be guided by instinct, like the rest of the animal species of Earth. They will use technology and work for rulers, but they will not make the technology or feel comfortable dominating others and using their labor to enrich themselves.

By looking at a nation and its technology and goals, you can tell just what types of souls inhabit that nation. To understand the origin of the great confusion and chaos on Earth, it is helpful to take all of these factors of background—soul origin and system allegiance (to Free Choice or Domination) and start categorizing the people involved. You may have a situation where persons have an animal-based motivation or where they have completely conflicting intelligences of an "alien" origin...

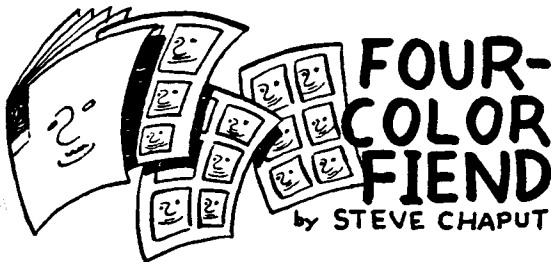
FOR SHORTER WARS

And minimum casualties we should use suicide pilots. For no wars at all the world's armies should have non-suicidal, non-ending WINNERS · LOSERS defense forces. Send S.A.S.E. to: WINNERS Box 2243 YOUNGSTOWN — OHIO, 44504

Then it could also be a barn, a boat, a tree, a dog, or any other thing you choose it to be.

Correct, Glaucou.

Why?



Well, we have quite a bit to cover this time around, but before we get to any of it I'd like to ask a question. As you'll have noticed (if anybody out there is paying attention), the last few columns have tended to work on a theme. I've covered manga, "politically correct" comics and "war" comics. Do you prefer this type of coverage of related material, or would you rather I just cover stuff as it comes up and not wait? Let me know, okay?

As usual, we'll mention a few things that friends are doing currently, since it never hurts to keep on people's good side:

CRITTERS #39 is the first issue of that book in its new non-anthology format. We couldn't be happier than to point out that it features IJ staffer J.P. Morgan's FISSION CHICKEN in a 22-page story entitled "The Homogenization Ray," and has the return of everybody's favorite bad guys, the Vortoxians. Also, it has been announced that Fission Chicken will be appearing in his very own mini-series later this year and that the earliest FC adventures (from CRITTERS) will be reprinted in paperback in the fall. Go, J.P.!!!

Valentino has all the work appearing in Marvel titles that I mentioned last time, and Elaine and I were finally able to locate the first two issues of THE GRIFFIN, in which he has begun doing the inks with issue #2. And so...

THE GRIFFIN (Slave Labor, \$1.75 US/\$2.50 Canada)—Written by Dan Vado, with pencils by Norman Felchle. The book details the adventures of Matt Williams, a high school football player who, on New Year's Eve in 1967, is "enlisted" by aliens to become a "super-powered soldier" in an interstellar federation. A little over twenty years later, he decides that he has had enough and returns home to Earth. Unfortunately, once recruited, Earth people are never supposed to return, and the federation decides that they have to get Matt back at all costs. The artwork is certainly as good as that which appears in the better independent books, and in some cases on a par with the work of people working for the Big Two. It is the writing that makes the book, for me at least, and even without the added kick of knowing one of the artists I'd probably still be picking this title up. Hey, even Elaine likes it!

Holy Moley! I've actually gotten some minicomics and a strange art zine to review this time around! Hey, I love minicomics, and nobody seems to be sending them in to me any more. I always have something positive to say and only trash the big guys. Send me anything and everything, I promise to cover it here as soon as possible:

ANGRY JOE HAMPTON'S MOSQUITO MAGAZINE and VACUUMS CARTOONS #1—David Wellen, P.O. Box 2335, Southampton, NY 11968 (both available for 35c and a stamp)—The first comic (actually an 8½ x 11 sheet, folded over and printed on both sides) lets you know what else is available from David, plugs other alternative comics, and has strips and collage art. The latter, an 8-page mini with strips by David, features his character, Man E. Mosquito, in stories about vacuum cleaners. Cute!

MOTHER SHOVEL—Steven Cerio, Suite #44, 51 MacDougall Street, New York, NY 10012 (\$3 postpaid)—This is 28 pages with a silk screened cover. It comes in a plastic bag (for all you collectors to use and reuse) and with a dayglo poster and sticker. Strange and disturbing drawings that frankly make you feel very uneasy. No sad-eyed orphans or "good-girl" art here. Highly experimental stuff; not for the easily disturbed. Be warned!!!

COMIC RELIEF (Page One Publishers & Bookworks, Inc., P.O. Box 6606, Eureka, CA 95502; \$1.95 US/\$2.45 Can.)—First off, despite the title, this has nothing to do with the fundraising concerts that Robin Williams et al. are doing for the homeless, and no funds are going to anyone except the publisher. Secondly, this is highly recommended by both Elaine and me. This monthly magazine reprints comic strips and editorial cartoons from the previous month's newspapers. The syndicated strips included are CALVIN AND HOBBS, BLOOD COUNTY (by the way, if you aren't already aware of it, Breathed is ending this strip on August 6), DOONESBURY, THE FAR SIDE, LIFE IN HELL and WASHINGTON. Besides these are editorial cartoons from the likes of Pat Oliphant, Tom Toles, Jeff MacNelly, Herblock and Marlette which cover the Alaskan oil spill, John Tower, "Satanic Verses" and the trial of Ollie North, among other things. As if this weren't enough (and by God don't you think it oughta be?!), there are also columns from Joe Bob Briggs and Duck's Breath Mystery Theater's Ian Shoales and (yeah!) "Ask Dr. Science." I can't recommend this highly enough, so do yourself a favor and seek it out. You could even do like we did and subscribe (\$23.25 for 12 issues). GREAT!!!

EL SALVADOR: A House Divided (Eclipse Comics; \$2.50 US/\$3.20 Can.)—This book, written and drawn by Bill Tulp, was originally published in a slightly different form by Mother of Ashes Press in 1987. It tells the story of both a family and a country ripped apart by a brutal war. The book opens with several pages which tell of the history of the land which became El Salvador from just before the arrival of the Spanish in 1524 through the mid-1970s.

It then takes up the story of the Zuleta family, who live in a small village in Chalatenango Province, from 1976 to 1984. We are witness to the brutality of the Salvadoran government, aided by the U.S. administrations, both Democratic and Republican. This is a very nasty story and all the more frightening in that it continues to this day. The recent elections in the country seem to demonstrate that nothing has changed, and if anything things may only get worse. In recent reviews in both CBG and AMAZING HEROES, it has been said that this book "preaches to the already converted." While that may be so, this is still a book that should be read and a story that must be told. Recommended.

THE AMAZON (Comico; \$1.95 US/\$2.50 Can.)—Written by Steve Seagle with art by Tim Sale—This three-issue miniseries tells the tale of Malcolm Hilliard, a freelance journalist who travels to the Brazilian forest to discover the truth about the disappearance of an American construction worker who was employed by a large logging firm. What he discovers instead is the wholesale destruction of a unique environment. Shades of Heart of Darkness! A well-written and nicely-drawn work that has more going for it than just about anything the Big Two have done for years. Frankly, I'm only surprised that this is coming out from Comico and not Eclipse, which seems more politically aware of the things going on in the world. Recommended.

Just in case you thought I'd stopped reading "real" comics... THE LEGEND OF AQUAMAN (\$2 US/\$2.50 Can.); AQUAMAN (five-issue miniseries, each issue \$1 US/\$1.25 Can.)—Both titles are from DC and probably still available from shops. Since these share much of the same creative team (Keith Giffen, Robert Loren Fleming and Curt Swan), I figured I would cover both at once. LEGEND OF... retells the post-CRISIS origin of this old character (around since 1941), and is probably the best treatment of this aquatic vigilante that I've ever read. I mean, you actually like this character, and for the first time in my memory he becomes more than two-dimensional. AQUAMAN the series place several months after LEGEND OF... ends, with Aquaman's return to Atlantis. He finds his former kingdom enslaved by aliens, allows himself to be captured and begins to lead a revolt to overthrow the new rulers. Nicely done.

Well, as promised last time, I'd like to tell you all about the latest Overstreet Price Guide. This is the 19th edition and has become such an integral part of fandom that it's hard to remember what it was like before the book was around.

In some ways the Guide is a valuable reference tool, listing as it does almost every title of any book that could possibly be called a comic book. However, it does have its drawbacks, both in its choice of material (items left out include undergrounds and a number of b&w books published during the "glut") and the fact that the prices, although supposedly based on averages taken nationwide, have become almost accepted as divine writ.

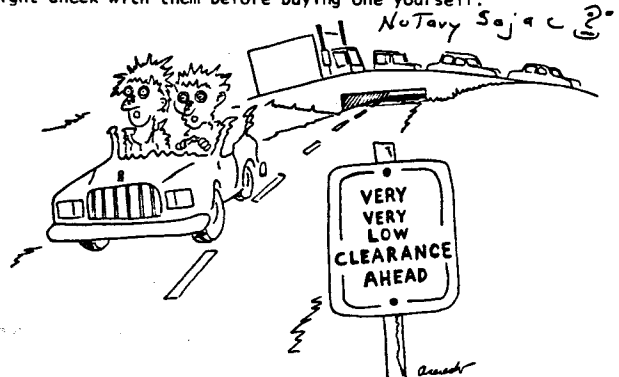
Each edition's cover features a particular genre, character or company, and naturally the 1989 edition features Batman. Since this is his 50th anniversary and the motion picture based on the character is expected to be THE hot film of the summer, the choice of Batman was a good one. Besides the nice Jerry Robinson cover, there are informative interviews with Robinson and Bob Kane (Batman's creator), in which they discuss the influences that went into the creation of the Caped Crusader and his supporting cast, including Robin, the Joker and Catwoman. They also talk about related topics like the TV show and the upcoming film, in which Kane acted as creative advisor.

As usual, the Guide has sections which cover fanzines, conventions, and comic book preservation. The chronology of the history of comics is a useful overview for the newer fan. Two of my particular favorite sections reproduce comic book covers in full color. There's a lot of nostalgia and fond memories among those items.

Naturally, the heart of the Guide, and the reason why it is almost a necessity for the serious fan or collector, is the listing of comic books and their prices. Much has been written about how the prices are arrived at, and rumors have floated for years about Robert Overstreet (the originator and editor of the Guide) and the possibility of price fixing by him and a few major dealers. While nothing has been proven, in recent years the topic hasn't even been broached in the better-known comics-related 'zines, since such Big Name Fans as Don and Maggie Thompson and Cat Yronwode are listed as contributors to the Guide; we'll leave it at that.

For those interested, the most valuable comic is ACTION #1, at \$30,000.00, and a complete run of DETECTIVE COMICS is worth \$148,016.00.

By the way, many public libraries carry the Price Guide, so you might check with them before buying one yourself.



On War by David Castleman

War is a touchy subject. Almost everybody claims to hate war, and yet war is lucrative. Even in the intermissions of peace, war is lucrative. Every tribe wages war, and few tribes wage peace. Peace is ignored like an ugly child, an embarrassment, because it is less lucrative.

Scruples, morals, and concepts of dignity are the toys of babes, when money is master of the house. The master smiles indulgently at the frivolous trifles the babes play with, and exchanges knowing glances with peers, wondering when the babes will grow up and repudiate the silly baggage, and join the club. The master is proud of what is considered a most generous indulgence, and absently slides a fingertip across the barb of a canine tooth, fondles it awhile, and wipes the spitty finger across a trouser leg. Martyrdom is difficult.

Blood and agony occur outdoors, and in other people's houses, and aren't really very important. Folks are maimed and murdered outdoors, according to rumors in an irresponsible press of dubious sympathies, and those maimings and those murders aren't really so very important. Pain belongs to people who have time for it.

And to these normal-minded folks, money is the measure of humanity: good people are rich and bad people are poor, and all other criteria are illusory. They smile grandly and magnanimously at cocktail parties and at tea parties, and the women discuss the women and the trappings of money, and the men discuss the men and the gathering of money, and all is well on earth. And for them all, despite the noises of social Sundays, earth is the only heaven, and earth the only hell, and GOD is the man who deals the gambler's hand.

Money was created as a bribe, and somebody who enters politics except for the bribes is somebody who frightens me. All of the others may be understood and effectively countered by their enemy peers. Wars are purchased and played by the enemy peers, and whether they call the game poker or chess, or marbles on the schoolyard dirt, is a matter of nice irrelevance. Seldom would they dare to permit their voices to call it what it is in truth, for each such person is afraid that conscience might hear the voice of accuracy, and afraid that echoes might never cease.

"Why do we war?" may be asked, in hope to discover a reasonable answer, and asked in foolishness. We war because we war, because we like war. We enjoy wallowing in blood and agony, because our involvement permits us to forget those fears that eat us, to forgive ourselves for being alive. In the passions of conquest and of defeat, we are permitted to pretend we are important, and it is more important to feel important than to be honorable.

War is business in the nude, and yet even war is a lie. War is an urge to death. This is the foundation of business, and of war.

"Why do we not wage peace?" may be asked. Peace is no moon-eyed attempt at what is falsely and foolishly called love. It is a calculated waging of human decency and of dignity. Such a waging laughs openly and derisively at all of the various greeds of crooks, all enthusiasms, all jingoistic religiosities, all tribalisms. It is the establishment and the strengthening of a government which protects every lone individual and the whole society, and which sedulously neglects every group of social fragmentation, the vicious and the glib. Government is society's attempt to control the crooks comprising the government.

Some folks believe that a good thing about war is that it punishes the young people for being young. The youthful vigor of the young is envied by the impotencing elders who run the show, and their elders hate the young for possessing the actuality of youth and health and all that was yesterday.

Is this hatred of the young a prominent reason we pursue war and the building of war? Is it merely a portion of another dichotomy within ourselves with which we contend? Even our deliciously satisfying urge toward greed has its antithesis within ourselves, whose wordless voice must be heard and reckoned with, and whose soundless echoes follow us always.

How might we indicate some of these various dichotomies of our human spirit which urge to war? Some indications occur in the tinsel of words—as when a politician speaks of the spiritual needs of the country, as when a would-be robber baron speaks of morals, as when a billionaire evangelist speaks of decency and humility, as when a respectable intellectual speaks of imaginative isolation, as when a church beatifies and sanctifies fellows it murdered 400 years ago.

And even generals may consider and pronounce themselves to be devout human beings and decent fellows, nice guys, as may the members of the Klan, terrorists, and those delightful folks who spend their minds to bring us Armageddon.

All such folks may claim that their presence is necessary to counter those whom they consider to be even worse than themselves. Inhabitants of Washington, Wall Street, Moscow, Bonn, Tokyo, and those who hide under sheets on north African sands, and those who don't hide under sheets on north African sands—these may jest that in performance they resemble proctologists, and that society will always need folks who've been trained to deal with our world's—(AUTHOR'S NOTE: It is with a great sorrow that I confess I spilled coffee on this portion of the original manuscript, and my memory is unable to retrieve what was lost. The greatest shame is that what was lost was even better than what remains. ((Let us lament our future generations.)) I believe that the lion's share of blame ought to go to the people who manufacture ink that's water-soluble. Damn 'em.)—and the little folks who'll always run



the world, and some other folks who'll never be allowed to run the world, believe that humor and wisdom are incompatible, and I pity the undeveloped weak crabbed and somber drudges. They have stared too long at the mandala the sun has painted on their eyes, and they've been robbed of what might have been the best of all.

Business and War are like two pubescent girls chattering on the telephone, bragging of imaginings, each bitterly jealous of the other and yet unable to find a friend who satisfies as well. Jealousy is one of life's great pleasures, and each of the girls is a general in her own imaginings, and a consort to generals and to presidents.

Generals plotting war resemble little girls playing with dolls, and the dolls of the generals are even more life-like than are the dolls of the little girls, for the dolls of the generals not only weep and pee, but they bleed, and they do bleed.

Generals and presidents are shills to the big-money boys, and the big-money boys permit them to live expansively, and in most times and in most tribes, the big-money boys dedicate our lives to the making and the selling and the use of armaments, but mostly to the selling. War is a beautiful things to them, and a welcome, welcome as a patron to a pauper of a poet.

The urge to war, to compete, appeals to the boy in every man and to the girl in every woman. It is a childish gesture. It is the voice of the boy who cries, "My daddy can beat your daddy." It is the voice of the boy who delights in the mindlessness of childishness and who boastfully disdains the calm and straight voice of reason and the intelligence of compromise.

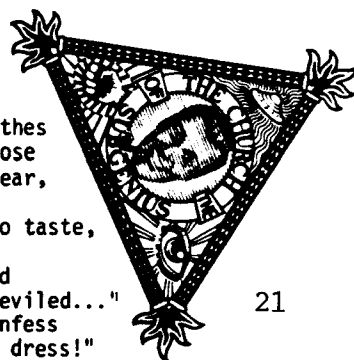
Those who are too unintelligent to behave delight in such tantrums of blood and horror, fear and agony. Even wounds may be welcome, and even the fear, because to such foolish folks such a bath absolves them from what would be realized relentlessly otherwise, the final futility of the light.

Personally, I doubt if there are many among us who don't possess at least the seeds of sadism and the seeds of decency, and if cautiously examined, and if understood, the seeds would indeed display to the observer the flowering and the fruit-producing plant in full maturity. Which variety of purpose is given final encouragement and nourishment is our human choice. If we choose to indulge in greed and sadism, then the games of war provide ample field for our endeavor.

TEAS (IN THE STYLE OF JOYCE KILMER'S "TREES")

by Michael Polo

I think that I shall ever see
A group of women having tea
Who always wear the latest clothes
and comment with an upturned nose
On what the other girls will wear,
Especially who isn't there...
"But that just shows she has no taste,
A common shore who is unchaste
And had an out-of-wedlock child
So she, of course, should be reviled..."
Till she arrives, then they confess
That "My, that's such a lovely dress!"



Hoffman Remembered:

A TALK WITH ALAN BINSTEIN

by Brian Ruddy

The recent death of legendary radical Abbie Hoffman brought an untimely end to a remarkable, often sensational life. Following is an exclusive interview with Alan Binstein, one of Hoffman's closest associates in the early years of the Yippie movement. Binstein is now Vice President of Propaganda for Drexel Burnham Inc. *NY* correspondent Brian Ruddy talked with Binstein at the latter's sprawling estate near Lake o' the Bigots, Connecticut.

Hoffman's death must have come as a terrible shock, Alan. That's putting it mildly. I was working out in the executive gym when I heard the news. I was devastated. I was so upset that I barely got through my shoulder routine. Sounds like you really took it hard. Hard? I was inconsolable. We're talking major grief. I was still so upset the following weekend that I almost forgot to wax the BMW.

Hoffman's death must have brought back a lot of memories. Well, of course it did. How could it not? We'd been through so much together. We launched a revolution together. I hate to bring it up at a time like this, but you and Abbie had a much-publicized falling-out in the early '70s. There's been a lot of speculation about the cause of the breakup. For the record, what was the real cause?

It wasn't any one thing in particular. It was more of a clash of personalities. Abbie and I were basically incompatible. It's amazing that we managed to work together as long as we did. Could you be more specific?

Well, because Abbie and I had such dissimilar personalities, we tended to favor different methods to achieve our goals. Abbie was the visionary. I was the pragmatist. I'll give you an example. I thought Abbie's idea of levitating the Pentagon building was a bit farfetched. So I suggested we try something more practical, like just soaping the windows.

So it was a conflict of methods rather than goals?

Exactly. Abbie was very image-conscious. (Laughs) You know, I've never told anyone this, but Abbie once told me that he didn't like the way I appeared in public! He said I dressed too conservatively for a radical. I explained that I had been born color-blind, and I just couldn't appreciate those loud shirts.

Wasn't there some controversy over your investments?

Oh, Christ. I guess I'll never live that one down. (Laughs) Yeah, Abbie was furious when he found out I had some shares of Dow Chemical, the company that manufactured napalm. Abbie freaked. I remember he called me an "accomplice to the bloodstained incinerators of women and children." Sure, it was kind of embarrassing for the antiwar movement when the story was leaked to the Times, but Abbie didn't have to make such a big deal of it. After all, my shares of Dow were just a small part of a broad, well-diversified portfolio.

Abbie publicly accused you of selling out to the establishment.

How did you feel about that personally?

I resented it. I never thought of it as a sellout. I thought of it as a sellout. I thought of it more as a restructuring of life priorities.

In other words, a sellout.

Look, you can call it whatever you want. All I'm saying is that as I matured I began to realize that making money was more rewarding than getting beaten with nightsticks.

When did you last see Abbie?

Back in '72, in New York. I ran into him at this deli on 43rd Street. I walked in and there he was, sitting there eating one of those big sandwiches—you know, the ones they name after celebrities? I think Abbie was eating a "Jack Klugman."

Was it an amicable meeting?

Not exactly. I was willing to let bygones be bygones, but Abbie wasn't. I went up to him and put out my hand to shake hands, and Abbie starts screaming, "Fascist! Fascist!" Then he opens up the sandwich and pushes it in my face. Some of the mustard got in my eye. Burned like a sonovabitch.

Sounds like there was some lingering animosity there.

Yeah, you could say that.

Must have been some scene. Was that the end of it?

Unfortunately it wasn't. After Abbie does the sandwich thing, he gets up and starts to walk out of the deli. The counterwoman yells to him that he didn't pay the check. Then Abbie stops, points to me and says, "Let Mr. Capitalist here pick up the check. He's got money coming out his ass." Then he walks out. I ended up paying the check. What the hell? I did have money coming out my ass. Still do.

Some people are saying that Abbie died a tired and disillusioned man. Do you agree with them?

(Sighs) I do. Abbie was a dreamer. That's what killed him. Me, I quit dreaming a long time ago. I've become a realist. I've accepted the fact that there is absolutely no hope for mankind. What about the future?

In the future I'd like to get into silver.

I meant the world's future.

Oh. Well, in the coming years I think we'll see an ever-escalating bloodbath of war, terrorism and random violence, culminating in the incomprehensible final horror of a thermonuclear apocalypse.

Why the pessimism?

22 I've had too many bad experiences with optimism.

WHILE YOU WERE OUT

Abbie called

Juli Kupferberg

FORCE OF HABIT by Gobi

I walked into the bar, sweating under my black skirt. I fell onto the stool and leaned into the face of the bartender. "Give me a beer," I breathed.

"Can I see some ID?" he perfunctorily asked.

"ID? ID? Do you think a nun has ID? I am a servant of God, not a civil servant!"

The bartender looked at me, along with the other six men in the cool dim of the underground tavern. He hadn't noticed my nun's habit before.

"I have to ask, it's the law," he apologized.

"Listen," I said, leaning back and glaring, "nuns don't drive, so I don't have a driver's license. I don't get out of the convent much, except for charity things, and you don't need ID for those." I paused, staring gently into his eyes. "Now you wouldn't begrudge a poor nun a simple beer on a sweltering day, would you?"

It made no difference that everyone knows nuns aren't allowed alcohol. No one dares contradict a sister. Helplessly, he handed over a Rolling Rock.

"Bless you, my child." Probably the most overused phrase in the industry. I downed the beer in one thankful gulp and slammed it down. I wiped my mouth off with a heavy black sleeve, slapped my knees and let out a terrific belch. The men stared, wide-eyed and terrified at me. One had left, probably to go to the john to say overdue Hail Mary's.

I lifted up my imposing skirt, hiked it thigh-high and pulled out a fiver from a black garter. Flashing a smile, I picked up the beer, dropped the bill and walked out in a whirl of white and black.

Back in my apartment, I stripped and sat on the bed, swilling the beer and looking with relief at the pile of nun on the floor. Changing into cut-offs and a tank top I finished the beer and left.

Walking past the bar again, I recognized one of the patrons from before. He whistled and said, "Hey, Sugar!"

I whipped my head around, wagged a finger at him and glared. "Now what would that nun think of your lecherous behavior?"

He practically threw up, and ran inside. I tossed my hair flippantly and walked on.

THE ABBIE HOFFMAN MEMORIAL SMOKE-IN

May 6, 1989

reported by Nina Bogin

Actually, the smoke-in takes place every year, usually on the first Saturday in May, in Washington Square Park (Greenwich Village, NYC), followed by a march up Fifth Avenue. The culmination site used to be Dag Hammarskjold Plaza (47th Street and 1st Avenue), where a rally would take place. This year, the march went up to Central Park, for smoking and generally hanging out.

I arrived at Washington Square at 11:30am. A flatbed truck was parked just outside the park at the base of Fifth Avenue, and that was the stage for various speakers and performers. Since Abbie Hoffman had recently passed away, the smoke-in was dedicated to him and those to appeared on stage spoke of what he meant to them, and how he'd founded the Youth International Party (Yippies) back in 1968. One speaker of note was Hoffman's son Andrew, who pointed out that Abbie did not commit suicide and did not die in vain. He asked us all to remember his father and the work he did for the Yippies. David Peel and the Lower East Side performed a couple of songs, including one Peel had written about Hoffman—unfortunately, the song lacked melody or beat, and sounded as if he were making it up as he went along. Then, of course, since it was the smoke-in, Peel performed his "Marijuana" song:

Mara, mara-wana!

Mara, mara-wana!

I like marijuana, you like marijuana,

We like marijuana too!

Various people wore buttons or carried signs appropriate to the occasion (I wore my marijuana-leaf earrings), but the best was the man in the hand-made papal mitre (with a marijuana leaf painted on the front) carrying a sign that read, "The Pope Smokes Dope!"

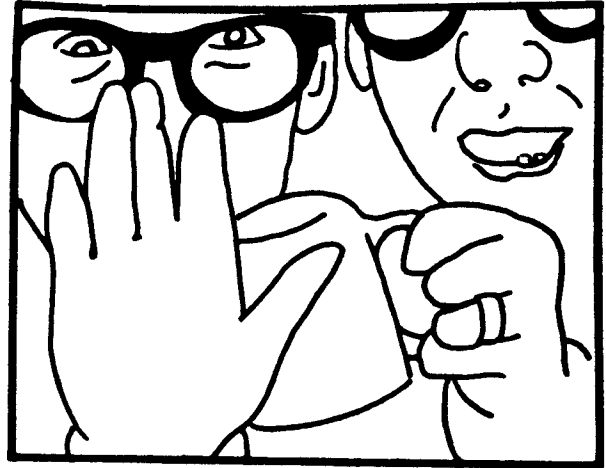
Just after 1pm, we commenced our park-to-park march up Fifth Avenue. The cops, who were on duty in Washington Square Park to make sure no riots erupted, marched alongside us in full force, some on foot, others on horseback. We basically took over the west side of Fifth Avenue, since there were several hundred marchers participating. As I walked, I overheard several conversations in the crowd. Two young men were talking next to me; one said, "If my mother knew I was here, she'd kill me!" Said his companion, "My mother agrees!" A Jamaican woman marched alongside me at one point, yelling, "Smoke a joint with your mother! It relieves the stress! Give your mother a joint today!" (I recalled that, several years ago, I had indeed smoked pot with my mother and a friend of hers.) To the mounted police, one man shouted, "Get a horse stoned on dope!" A tour bus of Japanese tourists passed us; they took pictures as we waved to them. Many of the Saturday shoppers on Fifth Ave. gave us strange looks; most of them didn't understand what was going on. (Don't they read the Village Voice or look at signs posted on lampposts?) We managed to slow down traffic as various drivers of buses, taxis and private cars slowed to watch. What's so unusual about people strolling up Fifth Avenue on a lovely Saturday afternoon? Okay, so there were several hundred of us, many of whom were chanting, "I smoke pot, and I like it a lot! We smoke herb, and we think it's superb!" The mood of the crowd was generally calm and relaxed, and nobody got arrested.

As we neared the entrance to Central Park, we passed the ever-notorious Trump Tower; some of the marchers chanted "Trump smokes dope!" (He does?) One man started chanting "Bush sells crack! Bush sells cocaine!" (He does!) We finally reached the park, and at that point marchers sort of drizzled in at their own pace, ambling toward Sheep Meadow, just to hang out and smoke for a while.

That evening at Wetlands, down in the Tribeca area (Hudson and Laight Streets), a party was held in the memory of Abbie. Several smoke-in marchers were there, including Dana Beal and Aron Kaye (who dubbed himself "Aron Chaos" for the occasion). Aron spoke out against

the media and its slander against Abbie, referring to the New York Times as the New York "Slimes" and the Post as the "Pest" (I prefer to say the "ComPost"). He asked everyone to write to the newspaper editors and voice our opinions. Afterwards, we partied for the rest of the evening. Several bands (none of which I'd ever heard) performed, and the place was chock full of people! I stayed at Wetlands for about four hours, and when I finally left the party was still going strong. It was a day and evening to remember!

OVERHEARD at America's Lunch Counters



"The faucet is quite an invention. It controls the water supply."

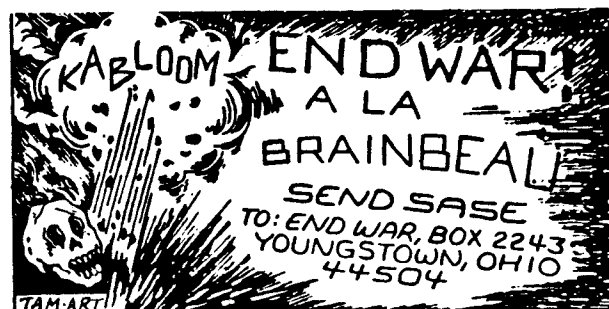
WHAT IF LIFE IS JUST MONEY?

by Tamarina Dwyer

What if money gave you guts? I say, that woman's got PMS (so does Diane von Furstenberg), a heart murmur, she's diabetic and she got an ulcer without drinking. But did you ever see such clothes? Two hundred dollar gold silk blouses and leather minis—and thin, man, she is the thinnest...her apartment is so small and compact and luxurious—all 80' of it!

What if you won't bang your head against the wall for money? And what if you die? What if you have to watch TV even if you don't have one? And what if you have to get married, pregnancy or not? The house, 2-car garage...has to be!

Now money and guts—why pretend? Money is always easier and, c'mon, guts is just a beer stomach and poor people have it down pat—trying not to spend, not to do, not to think, but at all costs, no cost. Who gets money anyway? The healthy, the sick, the smart, the dumb, the eccentric woman who talks to cats or writes poetry (sure!)...What if God gave us guts and the sun and the moon and the sea and let be—"get money, get money, get money or be forever damned."



HAVE YOU EVER SEEN THE MONSTER

by Anne Ellsworth

The two girls standing next to the road had a healthy coloring from the fresh air. Danny was unsuccessfully trying to keep her hair under control, which was blown in all directions by the merciless wind sweeping across the Highlands. Gina was contemplating rolling up her stretch jeans to show some seductive leg, when a black Rover came to a screeching halt a few feet ahead of them. Its driver leaned across the passenger's seat and opened the door.

"What's your destination?" he asked.

"Inverness."

"Get in! That's where I'm heading."

Gina climbed into the back, thinking how lucky they were to get a ride just like that. Danny with the windswept hairstyle sat down in the front. She smiled at the driver.

"Thank you."

But he did not smile back.

Danny put on her seatbelt and ran her hand over her hair. "Is it always this windy in this area?"

"Yes."

"We're from Germany. It's not that windy there."

"No?"

"Uh-uh."

She waited for him to continue the conversation, but he remained silent, and so she decided he was not very talkative. She glanced over to her right. He was dressed in a grey business suit and a tie in loud colors, holding the steering wheel with fat pink hands and staring straight ahead. He looked like a salesman with the hands of a butcher.

Danny looked out of the side window. Loch Ness stretched out to her left. Its beaches were as deserted as the road. Even in the summertime the water was too cold for swimming.

"Have you ever seen the monster?" she asked.

"Nessy? No."

She hoped he would pick up on the subject of that eternal tourist attraction, but her hopes were in vain. She was getting uncomfortable. Hitchhiking was not supposed to be like this.

Then, out of the corner of her eye, she caught him looking at her. He turned his head with a jerk and shot her a quick glance.

Then another glance.

Something was wrong.

The third time he looked over at her, their eyes met. His eyes were beady little pig's eyes of the same milky blue as the lake glittering in the sun. And they were as cold as the water.

She quickly averted her eyes.

"The houses here look different from ours," she said in desperation.

"Really?"

Sweat started to form on her forehead. She shifted under her seatbelt.

"Yeah, you know, they're typically English over here."

He did not answer.

"Very picturesque."

Her enthusiasm apparently failed to impress him.

She felt abandoned by Gina and the rest of the world. She frantically picked her brains for a new subject, anything to keep him from carrying out his terrible plan. Again he moved his head for a split second to glance at her.

And again.

"This guy is really weird, Gina," she pleaded in German, "help me!"

"I noticed the same thing," came Gina's voice from far away, or so it seemed.

"I'm trying to talk to him. But he just keeps staring at me."

"I saw it. Just keep it up. You're doing fine. I'll just sit here and try to look big and strong."

Danny turned around. Gina did look big and strong. She had put on quite a lot of weight eating all those Scottish breakfasts. It was very reassuring.

His huge pink hand let go of the steering wheel and moved towards her.

"Hah!" She gave a start.

He shot her a glance as quick as lightning and shifted down. The car slowed down quietly. He pulled off the road into a dirt road and let the engine die.

Danny's heart stopped. Her hair stood on end. She felt Gina shrivel in the back seat.

Nobody said a word. A beautiful white car, almost but not quite within reach, passed them with a soft humming noise. Danny followed it with yearning eyes until it disappeared behind the next bend.

She felt rather than saw the quick movements his hand made while stabbing her with his deadly glances, and she forced herself to stare at the small, isolated patch of woods lying ahead of them.

"Did I scare you just now?"

His voice had an ironic, almost pleased undertone. He was smiling now for the first time. It was not a pleasant smile.

"Oh no, not at all," she said in a cheerful voice made up of a flock of hummingbirds encaged in her heart, clapping their wings in soundless terror.

"I only wanted to let that car pass," he said. Then he started the engine again and backed up onto the main road and continued driving.

24 He never gave her another glance. She sensed his anger and

The Writer Also Wakes

by Tom Child

The jangling alarm clock on the nightstand showed five AM. An arm slipped from beneath the bedcovers and swept it to the floor, putting an abrupt end to its noisy intrusion. The man in bed stirred, left eye opening first. Then the right. Where am I? he thought. Who am I?

Words, thoughts, memories began a slow trickle into his cerebrum. There had been a party. Yes. Drinking, dancing. More drinking. Lots of drinking. Big-time, championship drinking. A fight...police...bail...Yes. Here I am. I think. Work to do. I must write. Yes.

The ceiling slowly came into focus as he made an attempt at ascending. On the third try his two legs found the hard, cold floor and collapsed under the dead weight of his body, his torso executing a perfect half-gainer onto the now-silent clock. Certain four-letter words trickled into his brain. Struggling to his knees he crawled into the bathroom, pulling himself up to the sink; he squinted in the mirror. One purple eye swollen shut. Lacerated lips. A nose slid from its fleshy foundation.

Steady, now. I've got to get to my desk, he thought. I've got to write. A writer must write, he thought. And early, too. That's what they do. Yes.

Painfully, his bulky form labored across the cluttered room. The feeling in his arms began to return. Sitting down, he clutched a sheet of paper and forced the edge deep into the workings of the typewriter, rolling the carriage up until he glimpsed white. That task completed, he leaned back, took a breath, and typed:

THE SUN ALSO RISES

Good...good title, he thought. And typed:

by Ernest Heminglyk...

Heringergl...Hammersnid...Gellingtrb...Snabberwigg...

Blstgrphx...

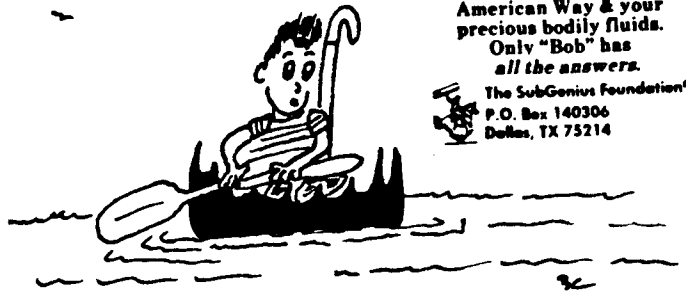
He turned in his chair and fell on the floor. He crawled to the bed and scaled the edge, achieving the summit.

And passed out.

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knew the danger was over.

They reached the outskirts of Inverness. When he stopped his car and Danny opened the door and stumbled out, the warm air of the living embracing her like a long-lost friend. Gina climbed out of the back and looked as if she had lost ten pounds during the last half hour.

The driver took off without a goodbye and with screeching tires.

"Oh my God," said Gina, "can you imagine what could have happened?"

"He probably would have done it if we had shown fear," said Danny, "but we didn't."

They walked into the town, revelling in the knowledge that nothing could hurt them because they were strong. Their courage and presence of mind had saved them.

Meanwhile the Scot drove on, smiling to himself. He had done his good deed of the month. Those two little girls would think twice before hitchhiking again.

Another Damn Space Opera

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

LOG ENTRY #6—AND NOW THE FUN BEGINS

It isn't easy to pilot a spaceship in such a way as to look as if you are trying to avoid someone's sensors and still guarantee that you fail to avoid said sensors—but Mef is a very good pilot and The Idiot's Luck is a very good ship. When we set down on Calligula I was quite sure that we had the Children of Apollo's undivided attention.

My plan was very simple. Hotwater Jones and Hector D'Affronte would sneak in and out of the complex with Sylvia Hotz; they would simply wait in disguised as cult members. My crew and I would provide a distraction—we'd charge in like an invading horde and make lots of noise until the others got our client's daughter clear. What I liked most about the plan was that it relied on each team's strengths—it required Jones and D'Affronte to look beautiful, and it required the rest of us to break things.

Getting in was easy. Well, easy for us; it wasn't so easy for the wall we went through. We vaporized all the security cameras, then Jones and D'Affronte stripped down to their Children of Apollo costumes. I must say Hector looked good in a gold lame jock-strap. He wasn't happy.

"It is wrong that I have such an easy task when my captain faces such danger," he said.

"Can't be helped," I replied. "Your captain does not fit the Children of Apollo's membership requirements." You, on the other hand, I thought, could be a recruiting poster for them! I was going to miss him, he was nice to have around. But I was going to get plenty of senseless violence, and that's always nice, too. "Now both of you get out of here so we can let the next security detail take us by surprise."

And approximately ten seconds later we let a security detail "take us by surprise."

We put up such a convincing show of being taken by surprise that no one noticed we were running away from the infirmary where Sylvia Hotz was being held.

Brick took the point, softening up each corridor with a pair of cannons (not normally hand-held), which had not been intended by their designer for use in corridors. Oh well, they weren't our corridors.

What Brick didn't reduce to dust Mef and I vaporized. Even the cook got into the act (we'd promised him he'd only have to stay sober until we were done, and he was enthusiastic to get this over with). The squidoid could wield three blasters simultaneously—I just hoped he didn't get the DTs and start annihilating things that weren't there.

Sprite was our air support. She couldn't carry any particularly heavy weaponry (not only was there a weight problem, but also the recoil would blast her into the ceiling). A lot of ammo was wasted in a futile effort to shoot Sprite down—they'd have had better luck with a big fly swatter. I pitied anyone on the floor above us; the ceiling was Swiss-cheesed.

Since the Children of Apollo are lovers, not fighters, we faced mostly automated defense systems and warbots. This is a lot of fun. Robots make interesting noises when you break them, and they smoke in a way that people never do. Fighting real soldiers is too much like work. We could really get loose with the 'bots.

The corridors ran red with hydraulic fluid.

But the fun couldn't last forever.

"Captain, they're bringing up gas canisters!" cried Sprite.

"What?!" "Hey, that's not fair!" "Shitfire, I hate that. Well, time to go."

"Go where, Boss?" demanded Mef. Hostile forces were converging on our position from every direction.

"Brick, fire straight down," I ordered.

"Through the floor?"

"Right. I saw this trick in an old movie."

And just before they lobbed the gas at us and spoiled everything Brick blew Hell out of the floor, and we all jumped through. Somebody with the Children of Apollo must have seen the same movie. They were waiting for us.

We scattered, which was something I didn't want to do. We wanted to stay together; we could do more damage that way.

Somehow or other we cleared the area enough to make a break for it. Apparently we broke in five different directions. When the smoke cleared and the shelling died down enough for me to put my head up, none of my crew was in sight.

I charged down the nearest corridor, hoping to find a friendly face. I ducked just in time, as the air over my head was ionized. Fragments of flash-fried ceiling tile rained down on me.

Nope, no friends this way.

"That's it, dipshits, you're toast!" I screamed (it's sort of my battle cry). Picking a direction at random (at this point enough of them were closing in to make it impossible not to hit something) I fired.

Click.

Okay, so it was possible not to hit something. "Damn it, it was loaded a few minutes ago!"

And as I struggled to reload I discovered that a good defense can be turned into a great offense. They turned my own trick on me and lobbed a few shells in at my feet. The floor disintegrated.

I was in a room full of some kind of machinery, trapped under debris from the floor/ceiling, hurtling all over, and very much alone. The last bothered me the most; this was the type of experience you preferred to share with your friends (big, capable, well-armed friends, as many of them as possible).

Then a bank of monitors was switched on. On each monitor I could see one of my crew, and they were all getting the snot kicked out of them.

Nice guys, the Children of Apollo. Before they came for me I was to have a perfect view of the deaths of my friends, with no commercial interruptions.

I hated that.

(COMING SOON: LOG ENTRY #7—"INTO THE PAN!")

Early Shuttle Successes Termed Hoax

WASHINGTON (YU)—Federal warrants were issued today for the arrest and apprehension of master magicians Doug Henning and David Copperfield, as well as Las Vegas illusionists Ziegfried and Roy, who NASA now says were responsible for all the apparently successful shuttle flights prior to the January 28, 1986, Challenger explosion, a major mass deception which is now being called "the greatest continuing illusion of all time."

NASA officials determined late last year that Morton Thiokol rocket boosters could never have launched a shuttle into orbit after nearly 40 ground-based tests failed to produce a single success. The secret December launch of the shuttle Dowager resulted in the loss of vehicle, crew, and former Democratic presidential hopeful Joe Biden, who was to be the first plagiarist in space.

"We've naturally shifted our focus from Challenger's solid-fuel booster rockets and turned all our attention to the mystery of magic," explained NASA spokesperson Billy Flyte-Helmut. "We still don't know how they did it, and we'll probably never know since magicians rarely reveal their methods," said Flyte-Helmut, "but we're absolutely certain they conspired to pull this trick off, and we just want to talk to them, that's all."

While the warrants were being handed down earlier today, all four magicians were reported to have disappeared, simultaneously, in the middle of their respective acts, and have yet to reappear anywhere.

One of the accused, Doug Henning, who is perhaps best known for making Walter Mondale disappear in 1980, has issued a brief statement through an unidentified medium, threatening to make both Jimmy Hoffa and Nelson Rockefeller reappear if the charges against him are not dropped.

By Steve Insinna

Out of the Darkness by Richard M. Millard

From the murky depths of space, beyond the furthest star, the Zreetans had left a trail of death and destruction in their wake. And they were about to add one more conquest to that bloody list, as their mighty armada hovered above a tiny planet.

But the Zreetans were not honorable warriors. They fought in the dark. Silently. From ambush. And without a shred of compassion.

"Is all at the ready?" a harsh voice aboard the lead ship asked.

Quickly, a shrill voice answered. "Yes, Commander! We are invisible to all their detecting devices."

The voices spoke in the darkness that was the Zreetan way of life. And death.

Heavy breathing, and an occasional "ping" of metal, were the only other signs that there was life aboard this ship.

"The unsuspecting fools will never know what hit them."

"Yes, Commander!"

"Most of them should die on our first attack," the commander's voice beamed. "As for those that survive, well, we shall hunt them down for sport."

"Yes, Commander!"

Other voices laughed cruelly, or were raised in muted cheering in the darkness.

But then, all fell silent.

"What was that?" the commander's voice shouted.

No one replied.

"There! Again!"

Dots of light appeared on a patch of the tiny planet. And the dots began to increase in size and intensity. More! Brighter!

"We have been detected!" the shrill voice screamed. "But how?!"

Many voices babbled at once. And bodies bounced off each other and thudded into parts of the ship as confusion ran amok.

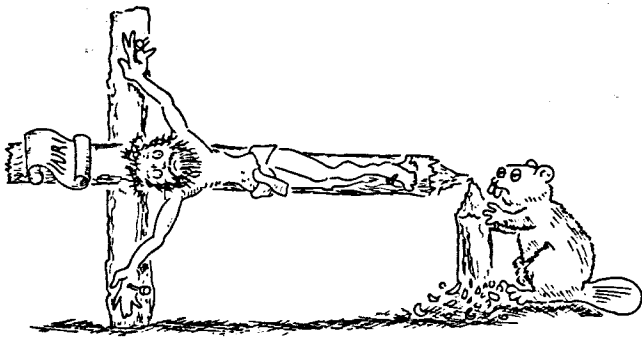
"Cancel the attack!" the commander's voice shouted above the confusion. "And get me away from those blinding lights!"

So the Zreetan invasion was thwarted.

The tiny planet had been saved, but not by the defense systems that its populace deemed so advanced and impenetrable.

No, the tiny planet had been saved by, of all things, a celebration. A celebration of the Fourth of July. 25

Check
out
Ann's
great
column
in
FACTSHEET
FIVE
#30!



Utopianism Forever!

by Russel Like

I am going to start a commune. Anyone who wishes to join me is hereby cordially invited to do so. Why am I starting my own commune? Well, it seems to me that most avant-garde pseudo-intellectuals do this sort of thing at one time or another, and I guess this is as good a time as any. So here I am. But I would like anyone who does decide to join to remember this: that usually communes move from avid idealism to abandonment by their founder. In other words, a newspaper classified ad for my commune might read, "Wanted: starry-eyed individuals to share ill-fated adventure in utopian living. Must be willing to face disillusionment."

This brings us to the question of where the commune will be located. I have settled on two possible sites. One is in Saskatchewan. The other is Times Square, in midtown Manhattan. The Saskatchewan site has the advantages of being isolated and on beautiful farmland, the kind of place where a new and better society might just take root. But Times Square is right in the middle of things. You can't beat that. If any of the communers want to take in a Broadway show, or go carousing, or get mugged, then there will be no problem. Walk down the street and you're there. In Times Square the commune will never have to go without. I only want the best for my commune.

And what will we eat? I referred to some nonexistent biology texts, where I read that "an organism should eat its most common prey item." After some quick calculations I realized that pigeons are the most numerous animals in North America. This item would tilt the balance even more strongly towards the Times Square site, as it is frequented by prey items. Perhaps I should also include something like "flexible diet" in my newspaper ad.

Of course the commune will need a name. It will need a name that connotes harmony, strength, serenity, pessimism, self-reliance, the eating of filthy garbage-eating birds, and love. I toyed for awhile with something like "Home of the Powerful Harmonious Pessimistic Loving Self-Reliant Airborne Pest Control Agents," but discarded it because of its subtlety. I want people to be able to empathize with my commune and its goals from the very moment they hear its name. So I briefly considered "Eastern Airlines" until I realized that name was already taken. In a paroxysm of creative failure I am thus opening up my commune's naming to the public at large in a contest. The lucky winner will get to see his or her name for the commune actually used until I can think of a better one.

And contributions to my commune, this noble endeavor which will probably benefit myself and a few others (if public philanthropy proves generous), are of course welcome. All contributors will be awarded an honorary plaque signifying that they are members in good standing of the Teaneck (NJ) High School Parent-Teacher Association for 1953 (that may sound irrelevant, and it is; but those are the only plaques available for free at this time—such are the sacrifices we make for the advancement of the human condition). Contributors will also be given special consideration when new commune membership applications are being considered. In closing, I would just like to say that I hope more people contribute than join, since that way there will be more for those who actually join, like me. Thank you. I'll be looking for you in Times Square.

PARABLE OF THE NUMBERS

by Roger Coleman

And it came to pass at the stroke of midnight on the last day before redemption that a multitude wailed and toiled over ledgers, using the lamp's last oil. For they had left undone those things which ought to be done, and they had not a prayer. And some of them repented of their riotous living. And many abideth by their books all night, but it was for naught. And there was much weeping and gnashing of teeth, for the day of judgment was near at hand, and their 1040 form would be found wanting.



DEAR, I'M SURE YOUR MOTHER CAUGHT HER FLIGHT. I HELPED HER OUT ABOUT AN HOUR AGO.

THE BAD TEACHER

by Dana A. Snow

I was glad I wasn't in his shoes.
It might have driven me to booze.
But it was my choice to choose.
He saw all life as paying dues.

He thought he had heard the call
Of teaching in school and bullying all.
Only KIDS would think him tall
Punishing the passless caught in the hall.

A self-created god like Shiva, Jehovah or Zeus
Not a god of love, but a god of abuse,
Who might rape a swan—or give it a goose.
His idea of a joke was "I'll kick your caboose!"

He can't control thinking, so he makes classes recite.
It's easier than to tell when students are right.
Dreams of this teacher cause screams in the night.
A death without torture just might be too light.

As a music teacher, he'd have created a soulless
fiddler.

When he gave an oral test, we called him The Riddler.
He "got off" on the power, just a little Hitler.
He was a small man, but his soul was much littler...

Unlike someone like Plato, who created a thinking form,
If he didn't terrify a class, he'd surely bore 'em.
It's apparent, if he's a parent, then his kids? We're
sorry for 'em.

Someday, at his wake, they won't find a quorum.

One day in his class, I started to chant:
"You're just a drill sergeant!" I started to rant.
"You signed up to teach, but I'm afraid that you can't!"
The others all joined. It was too late to recant.

The noise took a rhythm as they chose to repeat.
He started to sweat, but was it the heat?
In unity's strength he seemed like dead meat
But we suddenly stopped. A miraculous feat.

He twitched like a rabbit, trapped in a hutch.
Too many to punish or we ALL are in Dutch.
No, we made him a man—yes, a man we could touch.
Yes, we made him a man, but that man wasn't much.

The words "nervous breakdown" didn't give us a clue
Of our guilt or innocence—and who did what to who...
For a change we LEARNED something. Now each of us knew:
In a jail, the chief warden...is a prisoner too...



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PRIVATE SITE by P.C. Smyth

"How about toasting up some marshmallows on that fire, partner?" Sylvie said from inside the tent where she knelt, unrolling the sleeping bags.

"Pleased to oblige, ma'am. Just toss me out a couple of them thar new-fangled two-dimensional ones and I'd be mighty happy to!" Ron smiled, glancing at the crackling fire. The flames danced hypnotically and the heavy scent of wood smoke drifted, spirit-like, in the humid air.

He looked away.

Beyond the circle of campfire the darkness seemed alive.

In the distance he could hear the sound of croaking frogs, and in another direction the lonely, plaintive call of a night owl. He heard cricket sounds and the sounds of moving water flowing over rocks. From somewhere close at hand came a sharp whistle and the quick fluttering of wings that curved away on the wind.

It was, for all intents and purposes, a peaceful summer's evening.

"Ron, do you tend to stay out there all night?" He noted a certain kind of "come hither" impatience in her voice.

"Just checking the tent, hon," he said coyly. "Think we should put the fly on? It might rain. Don't forget the Boy Scout motto: Be Prepared."

"Somehow the possibility of rain seems extremely remote," she responded. He was watching her undress as she spoke, backlit.

"Well, ma'am, ya never know. Looks to me like thar might be a big storm brewin' over yonder," he said, slipping back into his hokey cowboy accent.

For the next few moments she could hear him knocking about outside. Gradually, however, she became aware that all the night sounds had subsided and that now, mysteriously, only silence and stillness remained.

She listened, attentively. No crickets, no frogs, no wind; nothing.

She was about to call out to her fiancé, but before the words could leave her lips there was a tremendous crashing BOOM, like an explosion.

She screamed, but her scream was drowned out by another crash, similar to the first. She screamed again.

Thunderclaps pealed and resounded, encircling her in a deafening, titanic din that was soon followed by the sound of rain: rain coming in torrents, a deluge, a flood of rain falling from the cracked heavens.

Ron tore open the front flaps of the tent and poked his head inside. He was drenched from head to toe.

"I told you it might rain," he said in a zombie-like monotone.

Sylvie grabbed up a pillow from beside her, swung, and hit him squarely in his dripping face. "You crazy idiot! You scared me!" she yelled.

"Scared? That's nothing compared to what I'm about to do, missy!" He rose to his knees from all fours and waddled toward her with outstretched arms, like the Creature from the Black Lagoon, moaning with a goofy, blank expression, "Ahhhh...."

Menacingly, he advanced toward her, moving closer and closer. Just as he was about to snare his victim in what was a crescendo of unspeakable terror—

The phone rang.

Ron stopped dead.

"Now who the hell could that be?" Backing out of the tent, he walked a few feet across the deep-pile carpet to where the phone sat on an end table near the sofa.

"Three guesses," Sylvie replied dryly.

Ron lifted the receiver from the cradle. "Hello."

It was the man from upstairs.

He too had heard the quadraphonic thunder and, he explained, at three in the morning he was more than slightly disturbed by the volume at which said recording had been played; further, if it did not cease immediately, he would be down personally, and with his favorite weapon (a baseball bat), to make sure that it did.

Through the use of such vivid images he endeavored to make himself perfectly clear on this point.

With all the diplomacy he could muster, Ron assured him that it was all over and that it would not happen again. Many apologies later, he hung up the phone.

"Creep," Ron muttered as he shuffled back. "You should have heard that guy!"

"I shouldn't wonder," Sylvie said, scolding, "when you blast simulated thunderstorms in the middle of the night!"

Ron shrugged and wrung out his shirttail on the living room floor.

"What did you do?" Sylvie went on. "Go into the other room, change tapes, then get into the shower with your clothes on?"

"Yeah, but I didn't realize I'd turned the volume up so high."

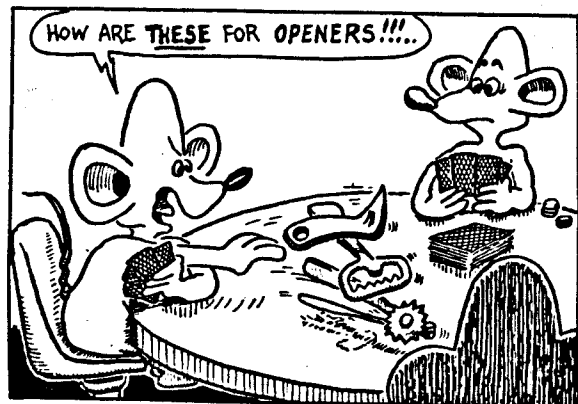
"Well, Mr. Practical Joker, I hope you've learned your lesson."

"Yeah, I suppose," he conceded grudgingly.

"I think our little indoor camping expedition has seen enough excitement for one night, sir. How about dousing the fire, getting out of those wet things, and coming to bed? But put the 'Nightsounds' tape back on—that was nice." There was that "come-hither" tone again.

Obediently, he crushed out a stub of pine incense smoldering in an ashtray under the TV, which was placed strategically before the tent's front entry.

He pushed a square button on the VCR. The image of the "crackling fire" instantly collapsed, and a lingering point of red light faded in the dark room.



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DOWN & OUT & UNDER THE GOLDEN ARCHES

by Tom Child

Peacefully biding our time and some fries my daughters and I in McDonaldland Moms and Dads dabbing at mustard remains from impatient toddler chins Middle-class scene depicting faithfully a television commercial.

Into our idyll stumbles a shaggy escapee from God's human laundry basket clutching two dollars from sympathetic persons contributing to the cause, but his defiant leer and disturbing hunger an uncomfortable combination.

Everyone stared as uniformed agents of Ronald McDonald and Mayor McCheese escorted the man firmly outside where the children frolic and merries-go-round and proceeded to administer a thorough McBeating.

ANGEL BAND

by Christopher Gross

I'm known around these parts as a man of wide experience. I've been as far as Cleve's Bluff on occasion, and I'm always surprised at the changes going on in the city. None of the new houses they're building have front parlors—how are the angels supposed to get in?

Where I live, everyone has front parlors—each with a big window on the east side and another on the west. I suppose it's more a matter of vanity than anything else, but folks around here like to make sure that they leave this earth in style. That means gathering the family into the front parlor, saying some last words, and letting the head of the household open the windows. Then, of course, the angels fly in—always from east to west—and carry the deceased off the Heaven. After that, the windows are closed, everyone sings a short hymn, and that's about it.

But it doesn't always happen that way. Pappy Jake passed on while we were all out working in the cornfields. We didn't realize what had happened until Pa saw the angels swoop down between the rows of corn and fly off with Pappy in their arms. All we could do was wave, and it looked like he was waving back. Mrs. Harris, the widow who used to live on State Street, stayed in her front parlor for most of six years; she was afraid she'd go any minute. But the angels showed up while she was out on the porch, getting a log for the stove. I guess she was happy, though, because a tour bus was going by at the time. At least she had an audience.

My Aunt Mae was lucky, because she knew in advance that she was going to go and had time to prepare. I'm not sure how she knew, and I don't think she did either; all she would tell us was that her time had come. So Ma took her upstairs and helped her into her Sunday clothes. When they came down again, you'd swear it was some kind of holiday. Aunt Mae was even wearing her Sunday hat.

"I want to look my best for the Lord," she told us.

So we all went into the front parlor and Aunt Mae lay down on the settee. She didn't seem inclined to talk, so we all just stood around for about half an hour.

Little Joey said he wanted to see the angels, and Pa gave him a nudge. Ma cleared her throat. "How are you feeling, Aunt Mae?" she asked.

Aunt Mae smiled. "I'm going home to glory," she sighed.

I guess she wasn't in much of a hurry, because it was almost another hour before she said anything more. But at about forty-three, she suddenly got the most excited look on her face and her eyes opened wide. "They're coming," she whispered. "Time to open the windows!"

Pa, who was staring at a picture on the wall, didn't hear her at first, so Ma had to kick his foot. Pa snapped out of it and opened the east and west windows. As he did, I heard what sounded like far-off music.

"It's the angels!" shouted Joey. Pa nudged him again.

The music went on for a long time. The angels didn't seem to be in much of a hurry—which was too bad, because Aunt Mae was all ready to go. She was grinning from ear to ear and twisting the ribbons on her hat. "I'm going home to glory," she was murmuring. "The choir is coming for me!"

We were all getting pretty worked up ourselves, and Pa was just about to go to the window and see what was keeping the angels, when they suddenly flew into the parlor. There were three of them, all dressed in white, and they sang even better than Tex Bellini's band down at the Blue Moon. That was all I could make out, because they didn't stop; they just picked Aunt Mae up and flew out the west window with her. We ran to the window and waved as they flew off into the sunset.

As Pa was about to close the windows, he noticed something on the ground outside. "Isn't that Mae's hat?" he asked.

We looked where he was pointing, and, sure enough, there was Aunt Mae's hat lying in the petunias. "You're right," said Ma. "It must have fallen off."

"Poor Mae," said Uncle Frank. "She was so fond of that hat."

"And she was so set on wearing it in Heaven, too," sighed Ma.

We tried to figure out some way of getting the hat to Aunt Mae, and we finally hit on a plan. We wanted to get it to Heaven as soon as we could, but there was no way of knowing who would be the next to go. So we decided to leave it to chance and draw straws; whoever drew the long straw would wear Aunt Mae's hat until it was time to shuffle off. And if anyone got advance warning, the way Aunt Mae did, the hat would naturally go to them.

So we all drew straws, and I picked the long one. I've been wearing Aunt Mae's hat, with the ribbon tied tightly under my chin, for the past four years. I've taken a lot of ribbing about it, but I think it will be worth all the trouble just to see the look on Aunt Mae's face when I return her hat.

DEATH LETTER I by R.S. Moser

It was not much of a life. I wonder, will it be a good death? Will the women carry flowers to my grave, tear-filled eyes downcast and red? Will my father stand and say great nothings to the unfaithful strangers who are my friends?

What was my life? It was nothing. I was nothing. I was a rented piece of meat to be given to whatever cause beckoned me. This death is as good a one as I am fit to receive.

"The mass of men serve the state thus; not as men mainly but as machines with their bodies."

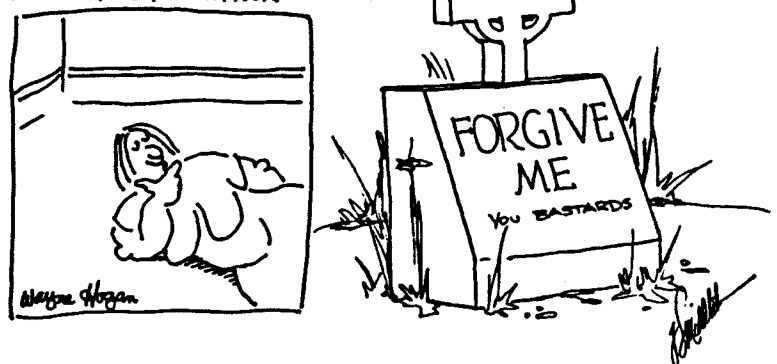
I demand no more respect than wood or grass or sky. In this life I have done no more than earn this death. In ending what should never have begun, I do the one thing of true worth in my life, that fate in and of itself has taken 19 long years. The tears have rained like blood from my eyes. I have drowned in my own tears.

Do not cry for me. I am nothing. I am not worth your tears.

I am sorry.

Sometimes it is better not to live.

PATTY LOU DREAMS OF OWNING HER OWN GAS STATION



Wound is self-inflicted

Lone Ranger Killed By Silver Bullet

LITTLE BIG TOE, Wyo. (YU) — Clayton Moore, the ex-actor who portrayed the Lone Ranger in movies and the long-running 1950's television series, accidentally shot and killed himself today during an attempted robbery of the town's toy store here.

According to Gabby Hayes, an assistant sales clerk for Tonto's Toy Town, Moore entered the store dressed as the Lone Ranger with both guns drawn and demanded his fair share of residuals on a discontinued line of Lone Ranger lunchboxes. "I just as-

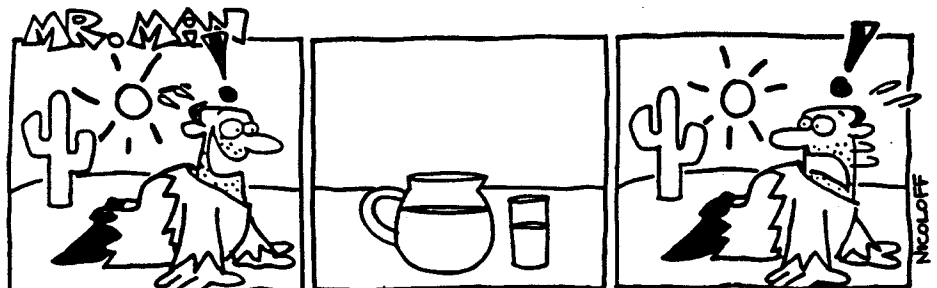
sumed it was a promotional stunt," admitted Hayes. "Several children even tried to get his autograph."

In the confusion, Moore opened fire, causing one of his silver bullets to ricochet off the cash register and enter his left ear, killing him instantly. No one else was injured.

At first, police were unable to identify Moore, since the mask he was wearing had been permanently glued to his face. A positive identification was later made with the help of Moore's hat size.

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Sayz-U!(Letters)

PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION!

WE FINALLY HAVE A WINNER! THE CORRECT ANSWER WAS #7—the one about the Alien trapped in a Bolivian Lab. The winner was our very own MasterMath (William G. Raley).

Therefore:

To all to whom these presents shall come, Greeting: Know ye that by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and Laws, and reposing special Trust and Confidence in WILLIAM G. "MasterMath" RALEY, I do hereby declare and commission him to be the WINNER of the NEWS CONTEST for the readers of IJ, hereby authorizing and empowering him to execute and discharge all and singular the duties appertaining to said office, and to enjoy all the privileges and immunities thereof.

In testimony whereof, I have hereunto subscribed my name and caused the Great Seal of IJ to be affixed at my house this 12th day of April in the year of our Lord (RALPH) one thousand, nine hundred and eighty-nine.

KATHY STADALSKY
933 State Route 314 N.
Mansfield, OH 44903-9807
April 20, 1989

Ah, Fearless Leaderess,
we meet again!

I just zipped through yet another entertaining, enlightening edition of INSIDE JOKE (yes, I'm referring to issue #67). Anni's anti-Chic version of THE FUGITIVE was razor-sharp and inventive. Sergio Taubmann's "Simple Answers" was all the funnier for its, well, simplicity. The various literary spoofs were all nicely done, especially Michael Polo's "The Writer" and Todd Kristel's "Contemporary Fiction Demolished, Part II."

The pop culture parodists were in fine form with Dale A. White's "Moe Howard Died For Our Sins" and Ken Burke's DR. IGUANA column on "unknown" Bowery Boys films. At last, someone else who remembers those unlikely lads! (I'm definitely sending Ken a SASE for his full-length version.) The columns by Steve, Jed and "Kid" Sieve 'n' you were excellent and on-target, as usual. Jed, another problem with the Snow White number on the Academy Awards show was that it was just plain inane! What the hell was Snow White doing in a number that was supposed to be paying tribute to Hollywood's glamour days of the '30s and '40s? (Sorry, the fact that Disney made their SNOW WHITE movie in the '30s isn't a good enough excuse.) For that matter, what was Rob Lowe doing in said number? Yeesh!

I have mixed feelings about the results of this year's gerber, "The Clockwork Cage." The first four authors did a terrific job of keeping this hard-boiled detective caper moving. Alas, the fifth author blew it—and threw off each successive contributor, to boot—when he/she forgot that it was, in fact, the narrator who was named "Bannerman." (Hey gang, we're supposed to read the gerber-thus-far before we contribute to it, remember?) Since even you, our stalwart editrix, was unable to wrap up the whole fershlugginer story, does that mean we should all do a new chapter of this gerber at each future IJ party in order to find out what happens? Oh well, at least no one changed reality or turned any characters into aliens this time!...Happy spring/summer, till IJ #68!

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

(I personally thought this year's gerber worked better than any in previous years in terms of continuity, until, as you mention, the fifth author, who not only forgot who Bannerman was, but decided to set up some premises which were completely taken the wrong way by subsequent writers—a train locker scam that worked once in Albany does not mean the narrator hops on a train bound for Albany, for example. As Dorian says, next year it might be a good idea if would-be gerber participants actually read and try to understand the story before adding their pieces. The reason the gerber was unfinished is that it took me all that time just to unravel the mess, and I wasn't about to wind up a story that gave no clues ["midget" was never supposed to be a clue, it was originally the punch line to a throwaway joke]. I'd prefer we did a different story entirely at next year's party, but if anyone wants to wrap up "Clockwork Cage" in their own way, you're welcome to do so!)

Dear Elayne,

April 22, 1989

Great party, by the way, let me repeat. You can tell from the Gerber, right? (must've been something in the microwavable cheese popcorn...) Oh, and I LOVE Dorian's Elvis overview(s)—they certainly deserve to be run in many a fine Presley and/or music publication, I must say. In fact, could you have Dorian drop me a line one of these days? I'd really like to discuss this matter (meaning: THE KING) in more detail. Never did get a chance at the party...[Dorian, Gary; Gary, Dorian. Go to it, folks!]

Not long 'til "BATMAN: THE BIG BUDGET MOVIE," Steve. Comments? Predictions? Warnings perhaps?

Keep up the comic and creative work,

GARY PIG GOLD
70 Cotton Drive
Mississauga, Ont. L5G 1Z9
4-24-89

E-e-e-e-e-elayne!

Well natch I'm disappointed that my article didn't copy well, but I don't take it personally. But I don't think that it's

necessary to reprint the article; like you offered in IJ, if the folks want a clean, clear copy of the "Bowery Boys" piece, I'll be happy to send 'em a copy—HELL, I'll autograph it if they include a stamp with their request.

IJ #67: I liked this one, though there was little to send me over the edge of hysterical laughter, just good writing and cleanly edited imaginings, etc.

Dorian Tenore's stuff on Elvis was uniformly fine, no new info to us long-time Elvis followers, but a nicely synthesized piece. In the Elvis film rating section I'd move a couple of flicks up (TICKLE ME; LIVE A LITTLE, LOVE A LITTLE) into the "Girls Girls Girls" department, and I would've created a whole new basement category for the really awful films like PARADISE, HAWAIIAN STYLE and EASY COME EASY GO, but other than that I agree with all of Dorian's conclusions.

There IS something of a connection between Eugene Landy's control over Brian Wilson and Col. Parker's domination of Elvis. Both rely heavily on post-hypnotic suggestion, aversion therapy, and all sorts of little goodies and head-games to keep their "subject" in their respective places. Of all of these people, perhaps Elvis was the most infuriating. He wasn't sick (like Wilson) or in a crisis situation, he was just lazy and stupid. He allowed Parker to snuff out his talent and never fought for his own life. Wilson may have made a mistake, but he was at least trying to get well, AND, though his credentials are in question, Landy was a trained professional; Parker just seemed to indiscriminately fuck with Presley's psyche. The biggest connection between the two mega-controllers is that they both seemed to believe in absolute hands-on control of their subject.

Todd Kristel's piece is funny. He's quite versatile. Dale White's Moe Howard piece was pretty cool. (Is it my imagination or does IJ have more film buffs per square page than any living fanzine?) (I suspect, like anything else, interest in one particular cultural aspect goes in cycles.) Ace's cartoon was pretty wild, a nice attempt at the romance-comic style. Anni's letter was a rambling catharsis.

"...Or Not TV" had me disagreeing with a lot of ratings. "Anything But Love" just seems like another run-of-the-mill sitcom to me. Richard Lewis never seems to get a chance to do what he does best. I'd give it one and a half stars. I'm tired of sexual tension shows. I think "Quantum Leap" is nothing more than an update/rehash of "Time Tunnel" (remember THAT venerable ABC show? Mid-60's?) The acting isn't that great, either. (We stand by our reviews, and further note that QUANTUM LEAP is now tackling racism and feminism, in great part due to coproducer and writer Deborah Pratt, who happens to be black and female. I remember TIME TUNNEL, but don't recall the two white men ever ending up inhabiting other people's bodies, much less the bodies of women and black folks.) Has anybody noticed how self-conscious Peter Falk's acting is on the new "Columbo" series? I'm very disappointed in this show, which was an old favorite of mine. Anyway, this TV season only has two new shows to recommend it, "Roseanne" and "Murphy Brown."

But all in all, I liked IJ 67, and continue to believe that IJ is a noble enterprise. Good illos, and lotsa well-crafted writing. I read the whole thing in one afternoon, which is always the sign of a good issue.

Escribe, and Keep rocking,

KEN BURKE
P.O. Box 8
Black Canyon City, AZ 85234

Dear Elayne,

It has been a while since I've written, and I wish I could have included a donation again but things is slim here in Texas, ma'am...I'd like to comment on IJ #67 but I haven't read it through yet, only Anni's piece. I can only say that a lot of other prominent people should be in hiding lately. The cover was great, with the Easter bunny toking one and kicking back with a bottle. Yep, glad that's over with. The one-panel and series illustrations were excellent. Crawford is wild. Ace Backwards must be hi! J.P. Morgan is always catchy. Everyone else is wonderful. The poetry this issue was interesting. Hey, everyone, Dana Snow is a narc! Narcissus, that is. Had you worried, didn't I?

Yours,

MICHAEL POLO
1906 Sam Houston, #313
Victoria, TX 77901

(I'm glad to finally get a letter that mentions IJ's art profusely, as I think it much improved for the past few issues or so and I'm delighted to see our artists praised!)

Dear Elayne,

29 April 1989

My favourite bits of IJ remain the letters column and the front pages...I'm seriously considering writing some wickedly pseudonymous letters for "Sayz-U!" under the assumption of a running character, a la Chris Elliot...this is something to consider, although I'd have to be careful not to hurt anyone's feelings. ('S funny, I've always wanted to do that for this column myself!)

Other random compliments on the last 4 IJs, which I got a chance to thoroughly review last night, waiting for NIGHT TRACKS to finally come on. Ted Turner needs a watch and a sense of responsibility. Sports are, by the way, the root of all evil in the world. How many times has this happened to you: you turn on the TV, expecting to relax into THE TONIGHT SHOW, LATE NIGHT, anything, ONLY TO FIND THAT IT'S BEINGPRE-EMPTED BY SOME COLDLY-CALCULATED "SPORTING" ACTIVITY. Three seconds to go? No problem. We'll call 12 time-outs so we can fit in another 23 minutes of 29

commercials. Anyway...#64: Anni's columns are, as always, incredibly funny, witty, concise, recursive and well-spent. Not 'nuff said, but I'm at a loss to otherwise describe. Having been a big Chuck (ie Baby) Barris fan when I was 10 (don't ask me why) made Gary Pig Gold's column fun to read. Most of the continuing stories try my patience for some reason but I will give them a chance ...I wasn't really that fond of HOMO PATROL, to be honest. Sheila's column was fantastic. "...Or Not TV": I'm the biggest of SCTV fans (insert "among") but I never watched ED GRIMLEY; and I remain upset with the "diced" version of SCTV (exclusively on NICK AT NITE). Do you remember all the original SCTV openings? "Once upon a time, there were six people who didn't like television...but they didn't like what they were seeing..." I'm dying to see the original SCTV NETWORK 90 opener, which only ran a few times; the v/o was similar, but it dealt with all the cast members being called back to SCTV by NBC. Dave Thomas was sitting on a hilltop, painting...suddenly he cocks his head, jumps up and runs. They all reemerge outside 30 Rock, sign contracts, and are promptly thrown out of the building, landing on the red carpet the NBC execs had previously rolled out for them. The morning newspaper is delivered. The headline: "SCTV Is On TV Again." What disturbs me now is the continual failures of all SCTV cast members (except for Harold Ramis); I'm hoping "The Dave Thomas Show" is good. "Radio Candy," if you haven't heard it, is pretty pointless—John Candy spinning the Doobie Brothers for two hours is hardly a novel idea, and every time Joe Flaherty speaks up I keep hoping for something to blow up. (Well, now that GRIMLEY has been cancelled I'm curious as to what people will make of its replacement, CAMP CANDY—see Jed's column.) Ah well. Where were we? I saw the new TATTINGER'S (I missed every episode of the original, despite the fact that Simon "Arthur Dent" Jones, a man who WROTE ME BACK when I wrote him a fan letter, was on it)—not bad for my tastes. ST. ELSEWHERE, too, had its infuriating plot deviations, remember? (Not me; I never watched ST. ELSEWHERE. Not too many folks watched TATTINGER'S either, apparently; it too has been cancelled.)

#65: Maybe I should reread this, none of it looks familiar. Next—#66: I'm not sure where you said this, but it was something to the effect of "we're still growing, despite no advertising, etc." This is ideal! For an INSIDE JOKE, right? MasterMath: Gates McFadden was the best-looking woman on TV. I could probably make some more intelligent comment about ST:TNG but that's going to have to be it for now. Four-Color Fiend: I was looking forward to the new SHIELD, until I found out that Nick and Val have split up. Plot twists like these make me want to give up living. I mean, c'mon. It worked in SILVER SURFER, but Nick&Val were supposed to be together for infinity...sigh. Life is uncertain, isn't it? Then again, I felt the same way when Siobhan Stewart/Faihey left Bananarama (I'm not kidding), so perhaps there's a future after all...

IJ #67 could, and should (by my standards), be considered an unqualified success, inasmuch as it starts off being decidedly nonlinear and for the most part continues that way, making even the more pragmatic bits (eg., "A Dip in the Plasma Pool," "Animation Update") seem on the verge of being surreal. (By the way: the Brian Wilson/Eugene Landy relationship is nothing like that of Presley/Parker's. The really sad parallel is between Presley and a certain Man With No Reflection who deserves no mention by me otherwise, whose cultish family is bent on destroying him in exactly the way Parker killed Presley. Eugene Landy is more Brian Wilson's security blanket than anything else; and think about it—if you were related to Mike Love you'd need intensive psychiatric care too.) As I'm writing this, NEARLY DEPARTED is. As much as I like Eric Idle the phrase "flogging the dead" comes to mind. And I have to admit since I've become cable-ready I only watch video shows—not because of a low attention span, mind you, but due to an overwhelmingly indifferent network schedule, notable only for the glaring absence of anything resembling HILL ST. BLUES or Maryam d'Abo. Which makes it all the more pleasant that comic books have improved as they have lately. Or zines, for that matter.

In a different light,

RODNEY E. GRIFFITH
HIGH IMPROBABILITY INT'L.
P.O. Box 523
Columbia Sta., OH 44028-0523

Dear Elayne,

Ahhh, finally got time to write some stuff here, and to beef up the lettercol a tad. (Two one-page lettercols in a row? In IJ? Wow...) (Yeah, tell me about it...) Anyway, one result of the Snide Critic missing a couple issues is seeing some illos that I'd forgotten I'd sent...some quick *deja vu*, there.

Let's see, IJ #67, IJ #67...Hey? What's this? The gerber didn't feature any people changin' into monsters or aliens or anything! Boy, what a gyp! Oh well, there's still some nice stuff like Plasma Pool Elvis Filmography (3 parts! Just as well the S.C. bowed out for a bit), and "Animation Update's" good readin'...and some real laffs in Dr. Iguana's "Bowery Boys" lost film list! Ruined my eyes trying to read the #12! thing, but some real laffs. And morelaffs in Dog E. Dog—fuck Garfield, they should be running this in the papers. Liked reading about the theatre of struggle in "Upstaged." And they should run Ace's Reefer Dude love comix in the papers, too. High-caliber hilarity abounds in "The Ayatollah's Psychoanalysis," what with Quayle's hole and all. Combining "McClue-In" with "...Or Not TV" was a superb idea—now I don't have to look at the stinking, evil, pus-filled television for myself! But, uh, Fry's "Future Plans" and Moser's "La, La, La—Yuck" read an awful lot like Rea-

ganoid "Bad Old Environmentalist/Don't Think Bad Thoughts" vapor-speak, y'know? Umph. Bain's review of COSMIC BANDITOS made me wanna read the book, but wait a minute—now he's using footnotes too. Are R. Bain and T. Deja the same person, or is it just catching? (They're definitely two separate guys, as any party attendees can tell you; I just think it's catching.) The Four-Color Fiend was especially interesting, an extra-long column about manga. (I myself have some problems with this genre...it just seems like an endless parade of dewy-eyed ninjas, dewy-eyed giant-robot operators, dewy-eyed aliens, dewy-eyed assassins, and on and on...) "Simple Answers," "Marcelled Hair," "In A Foreign Country," "(Superficial Title)" and the "Suit-Sayer" 'toon were more high spots this issue. The humor quotient seems to be on the upswing, or is that just me?

Let me see now...can I think of another paragraph to add to this letter? Something full of Charm and Wit...something to do with negative cash flow, with bills...perhaps some clever remarks about all the horrible shrill children in the world standing in front of one's residence (noting along the way that Bierce's DEVIL'S DICTIONARY defines "resident" as one who cannot leave), having decided that this would be a perfect spot to be horrible and shrill...I'm sorry, the spirit (or manitou) of Anni Ackner's typewriter must have possessed mine there for a second.

Lord love a duck,

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

May 11, 1989

Dear Elayne:

Okay, all I want to say right at this moment is that this "Just Say No" business has gone entirely too far.

Well, you say, you knew that. And, possibly, I did too, in some sort of nebulous, abstract way, more or less the way I know that peregrine falcons are on the endangered list and Norma Kamali doesn't make anything in larger than size 10. That is to say, I would hear about these things, and shake my head and go "tut tut," and send money to the various worthy organizations dedicated to eradicating the problem and all that, but since peregrine falcons are rather rare in Pennsylvania in any case, and since I never expected to own a Norma Kamali in this lifetime—I once saw one of her creations marked down to \$2,500. I went to college for less than that—I never felt that they really concerned me in any everyday sense. By the same token, I have been, over the last couple of years, properly horrified by the ravages of Nancy Reagan, McGruff the Crime Dog, and all those thousands of repentant rock and roll musicians but, since I'm not a drug user myself any more, it never seemed as though their tirades had very much to do with me, personally. Until yesterday, that is.

Yesterday, much against my better judgment and certainly against anything that even faintly resembled my own free will, such as it is, I marched, like the brave little soldier that I am, resolutely into the Cabinet of Dr. Pelligrino, Oral Surgeon, plunked myself down in his Chair of Horrors, and surrendered up my last remaining wisdom tooth, a tooth, I hasten to add, to which I was very much attached and which had served me well through uncountable chocolate turtles, barbecued spare ribs and licorice all sorts. I will not trouble you with details of the actual procedure—suffice to say that I was extremely courageous, and refrained from any criticism of the Doctor's technique, even when he had the temerity to insist that I was screaming merely because I "anticipated pain," and not because I had just had a 14-inch needle stuck into my gum—but you can imagine my shock and surprise when, upon arising after the surgery and asking—not unreasonably, I thought—for something for the pain, I was smugly informed that Doctor never prescribed such foul stuff, because "people had trouble with it," and surely a couple of aspirin would get me through the "mild discomfort" quite nicely.

Now, I mean, really. Can we get a grip on reality here? I am perfectly well aware that people "have trouble" with prescription painkillers, and I'm the last person to say that they should be handed out willy-nilly, like potato chips (by the way, people have been known to "have trouble" with them, too. Has anybody looked into the Granny Goose connection?), but I also know, with just as much certainty, that "mild discomfort" is what you get from a paper cut, and a couple of aspirin are what you take after you've stayed up half the night watching the Yankees attempt to play Oakland, and a person who has just had a recalcitrant tooth unceremoniously removed from her head requires—nay, deserves—stronger measures. What is the world coming to when a perfectly nice girl can't get a few Tousy codeine tablets to help her soothe those long, long hours when she begins to believe that an entire road company of Les Miserables is rehearsing in her lower jaw? Isn't this carrying "Just Say No" to truly ludicrous extremes? Shall I always be forced to suffer because a former First Lady couldn't take up needlepoint or metal-working like a normal person? If—the dear Lord forbid—I am ever forced into such a position again, will I have to "Just Say No" to novacaine, as well? I say again—I mean, really.

In any event, this is why you find me in my current pitiful state—swigging warm salt water, swallowing those fetid aspirin as though I actually thought they were doing something other than causing excess stomach acid, attempting to type with one hand while I press an ice bag to my poor, afflicted face with the other, and just generally feeling as though I would happily trade places with just about anyone—yes, even Leona Helmsley for a few hours, as long as the other party had not recently had anything with roots removed from his or her person. It's a sad, sad world

sometimes, Elayne, and the next person that sings "Users Are Losers" to me is going to get it right in the belly.

Well, I told you that story so I could tell you that, while I know I had several cogent things to say about the last IJ when I read it, I somehow can't quite remember what they were just at the moment. I remember dimly that I meant to point out that I happen to enjoy Heartland—well, it isn't Night Court or Murphy Brown or even Roseanne, but it's a pleasant enough little diversion, which is all I ask of a typical sitcom. Anything else is so much gravy—and that I thought there were entirely too many fat jokes in some of the stories—I'd hoped IJ's writers were beyond such bigotry—but, unfortunately, I just...can't...quite...put...it...together...right...now. Please do understand.

Anyway, I'm completely out of wisdom teeth, so it will never happen again.

Yours for regular dental checkups,

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



A Short History of Art

by Elliot Cantsin

"History is bunk."—Henry Ford

"Art history is bunk."—Museum of Modern Art

Let's begin at the beginning. In the beginning were the tribes. Was there a time before the beginning? Yes. What do we know of the time before the beginning? Nothing; therefore, we call it Chaos. In the beginning were the tribes. Each tribe called itself the Human Beings. Why? Because none could remember the time before the beginning when there were no tribes and all were human beings. The American Indians were Stone Age tribes which were constantly at war with each other because each knew that its tribe alone was the Human Beings. The Stone Age tribes which survive in the Amazon jungle continue this tradition down to this day. Few survive because the White tribe has been at war with the Red tribes ever since it discovered them. The White tribe is also at war with the Black tribes and the Yellow tribes. For a time the Aryan tribe arose from the White tribe and declared other Whites not to be Human Beings, but the Allies demonstrated the falseness of their logic. The quintessential art of the tribe is the totem.

The tribes begat Christianity, which attempted to replace tribalism with dogma, tribalism being too violent. The quintessential artist of Christianity is Fra Angelico. Christianity is Greek Neo-Platonic philosophy welded onto a rather bizarre myth. Christian art portrays the myth.

Christianity begat rationalism, which attempted to replace dogma with science, dogma being too limited. The quintessential artist of rationalism is Leonardo. What does the Mona Lisa's enigmatic smile mean? It is the sfumato, a technical trick; it can mean anything you want it to; read Pater's ecstasies over it, his projections, and you are reading Pater's own corrupt soul: Wilde's Lord Wotton in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. This bit of conjuring is the acme of Western realism.

Rationalism began romanticism, which attempted to replace science with life, science being too limited. The quintessential artist of romanticism is Goya. His radical democracy and robust paganism reflect the optimism of the revolutionary period. Delacroix, usually thought of as the more typical romantic painter, in his insularity and morbid sexuality actually anticipates the symbolists, reflecting the despair of the bourgeois period, that delightful decadence in which we still wallow; but whereas the symbolists carried on their brilliant, aesthetic protest, we, well, we listen to Bruce Springsteen.

Romanticism begat symbolism, which attempted to replace life with art, life being too distasteful. The quintessential artist of symbolism is Moreau. Symbolism attempted to maintain some human value in an ocean of bourgeois commercialism. A complete philosophy encompassing politics, art, craft, and technology may be found in the works of William Morris.

Symbolism begat expressionism, which attempted to replace art with emotion, art being too artificial. The quintessential artist of expressionism is Beckmann. Expressionism was the first artistic manifestation of the twentieth century obsessions with purely physical sex and violence. While often lacking spiritual uplift, it tended to be more inventive than Hollywood.

Tribalism, which, as we mentioned, continued as an archaic survival, began World War I.

Expressionism and World War I begat dadaism, which limited emotions to one, that of disgust, other emotions being too hypocritical. The quintessential artists of dadaism are George Grosz and John Heartfield. The dadaists felt that twentieth century life was a cruel joke. We have proven them to be correct.

Dogmatism, which continued as an archaic survival, and positivism, the attempt to extend science beyond its limits, begat Freud.

Dadaism and Freud begat surrealism, which limited disgust to sexual disgust, other forms of disgust being too demanding. The

quintessential artists of surrealism are de Chirico and Man Ray. Taking his cues from Marx and Freud, André Breton, the pope of surrealism, turned avant-garde art into just another set of dogmas. Twenty people today continue to suffer from this same disease.

Surrealism begat abstract expressionism, which limited sexual disgust to anal sexual disgust, other forms of sexual disgust being too demanding. The quintessential artist of abstract expressionism is Pollack. One need not be a Freudian to see the anal character of "action painting." With dada, artists had thrown a bucket of garbage at the capitalist overlords. By making abstract expressionism an institution, the capitalist overlords, led by Peggy Guggenheim, threw a bucket of shit at the artists. The artists' response was: If you can't beat 'em, join 'em. We are all still suffering from the consequences of this particular sellout. Abstract expressionism, having no content, is no threat to the overlords; that's why they like it, even though it isn't traditional. Of course, the fact that it is ugly, like their own productions, is no irritation to them. Trendy people like it because it isn't traditional, but trendy people, unfortunately, are often stupid. That is largely Breton's fault: dogmatism makes one stupid. If one wants to be a stupid dogmatist, one might just as well be a Christian, a Marxist, or a Freudian, and leave art, rock 'n roll, and radical politics alone. The difference between Christian dogma and trend dogma is that Christian dogma changes by the millenium, while trend dogma changes by the week. Again, thank André Breton, who excommunicated artists for different crimes according to the season. Compare this to Baudelaire and Huysmans, who were art critics, and individualists, par excellence. Of course they both repented in their old age, but at least they were exquisitely themselves for a while. Then again, both were apolitical. The radical Morris was aesthetic to the end. If we don't believe in the human heart, we must believe in Jesus, or Marx, or Freud, or Hollywood, or Tin Pan Alley. The Modern is the Rockefeller's family shrine to innocuous art.

Abstract expressionism begat pop, which, in accordance with Freudian symbolism, replaced the visual equivalent of shit with the visual equivalent of commerce (\$), commerce (\$) being capable of buying all other forms of shit. The quintessential artist of pop is Warhol. Pop was a mirror. For a while people smiled at their reflections, but only for a while.

Pop begat post-modernism, which replaced the reflection of commercial society with opaque substance which reflects nothing in spite of its high polish. This was done just at the point when people began to recognize their own reflections in the works of the pop artists, and were even beginning to contemplate doing something about it. Post-modernism saved the situation. There are no quintessential post-modernist artists, post-modernism being without essence.

X - You are here.

Of course there is the parallel, materialistic stream. When rationalism refuses to make the leap into the superrational irrational, it sinks into the subrational illogical. When rationalism is stylized without the expressiveness or romanticism, the result is mannerism. As nervous energy increases, still without expression, the result is baroque and, carried further, rococo. The reassertion of authoritarian restraint results in the neo-classical, and, exaggerated further, the academy. Bourgeois positivism results in realism, naturalism, impressionism, and pointillism.

Cezanne is to painting as Flaubert is to writing. Both were bloodless, aristocratic snobs. Both took infinite pains to say nothing. Cezanne is the infinitely superior painter because, in studying an example of his work, one need only be bored for a matter of a few (admittedly long) seconds, while a Flaubert novel may last for centuries. ("I detest the painting of Cezanne; it bores me stiff."—Picabia)

Existential despair and commercial charlatanism, both results of extending rationalism far beyond its limits ultimately result in the decay of cubism, minimalism, and the streams come together at zero elevation in post-modernism. The quintessential artist who carries logic to its illogical extremity without making the leap into romanticism is de Sade.

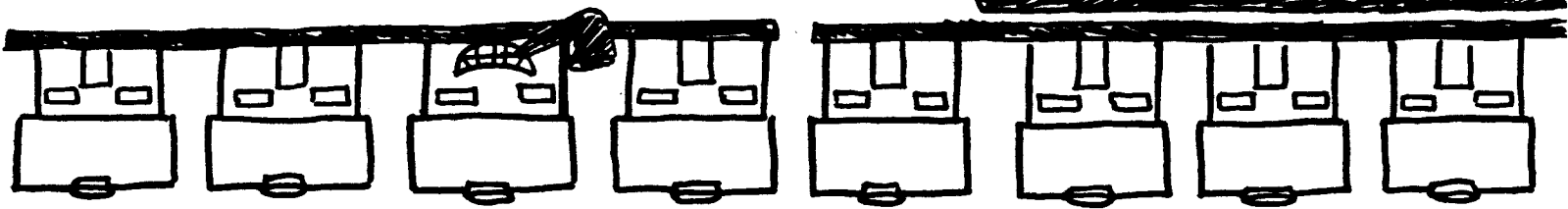
Cindy Sherman is perhaps the best of the post-modernists. She fantasizes publicly. She explores the roles available to contemporary women. She beats her soft little fists on the rigid walls of a conformist society. But never does she dare to go beyond, to break a barrier, to express individuality, to burst the mold of the conformist person, woman, or artist; in short, to become a progressive artist and a fully human being. This is the pathos of contemporary American "freedom," which we sell wholesale to the world, often at gunpoint.

Anti-progressive aesthetic philosophers have made the excellent point that no artist of the future could possibly be better than Bosch, Botticelli, Harumobu, Utamaro, Gauguin, or Matisse. On the other hand, anti-evolutionary contemporary "artists" have demonstrated that they can certainly get worse. A hundred years ago the European academies poured out some of the most puerile junk until that time ever produced by man, but at the same time some of the greatest misfits in history did their work in spite of them. Today the New York trash can school rules supreme in all the world. Fellow mutants, let us try to be more ambitious!

Robert Mapplethorpe died shortly after we criticized him in these pages. We shall not dance on his grave, as the surrealists did when Anatole France, the reactionary darling of the French establishment, died. And we hope Cindy will not take our criticism quite so hard. If this demented world cannot take an honest look at itself without cracking, we're doomed anyway.

WHICH HOUSE IS PHIL AND BARB'S

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

MOVING DAY
BLUES.

