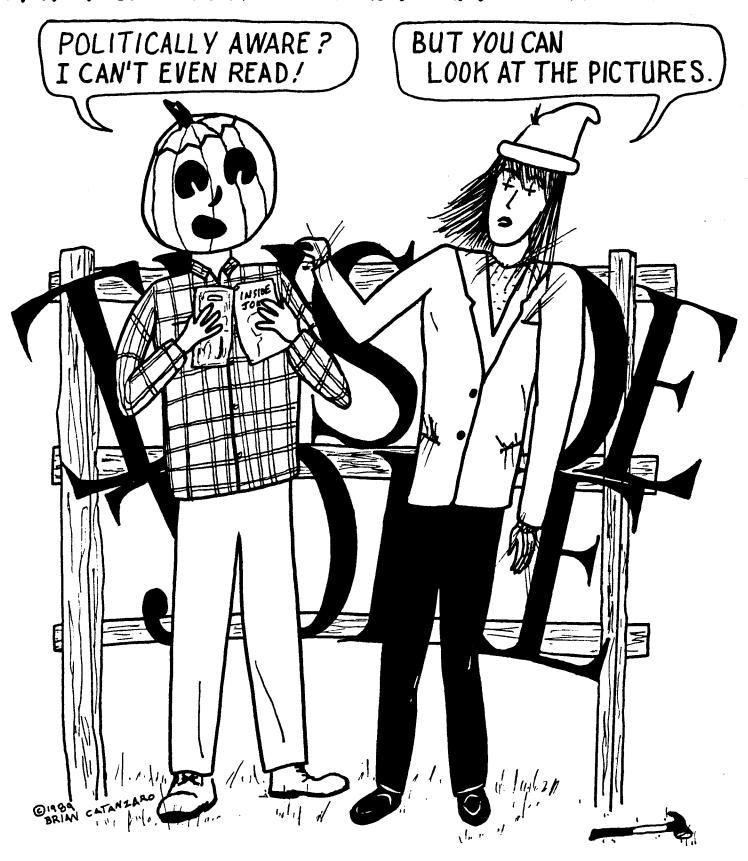
A NEWSLETTER OF COMEDY AND CREATIVITY



INSIDE JOKE NUMBER 73 \$1.50

Upcoming Events

FEBRUARY 1s HUMAN RELATIONS MONTH

FEBRUARY 1 - Terry Jones (48); George Pal (b. 1908);

Freedom Day

FEBRUARY 2 - Ayn Rand (b. 1905); James Joyce (b. 1882); Tom Smothers (50); Graham Nash (48)

FEBRUARY 3 - Gertrude Stein (b. 1874); Setsubun in Japan FEBRUARY 4 - Rosa Parks (77); Betty Friedan (69);

Torture Abolition Day

FEBRUARY 5 - Christopher Guest (42); William Burroughs (76); Hank Aaron (56)

FEBRUARY 6 - Babe Ruth (b. 1895); Bob Marley (b. 1945); Francois Truffaut (58); Fabian (46)

FEBRUARY 7 - Charles Dickins (b. 1812); Eubie Blake (b. 1883)

FEBRUARY 8 - Robert Klein (48); Neal Cassady (b. 1926); Jules Verne (b. 1828)

FEBRUARY 9 - Gypsy Rose Lee (b. 1914); Lunar eclipse FEBRUARY 10 - MICHAEL FLORES (?); Donovan (44);

Jimmy Durante (b. 1893)

FEBRUARY 11 - Thomas Edison (b. 1847)

FEBRUARY 13 - Peter Tork (46)

FEBRUARY 14 - Matt Groening (35); Jack Benny (b. 1894)

FEBRUARY 15 - BARBARA PACKER (36); Lupercalia; Susan B. Anthony (b. 1820)

FEBRUARY 16 - Edgar Bergen (b. 1903)

FEBRUARY 18 - Yoko Ono (57); Gahan Wilson (60)

FEBRUARY 20 - DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS TO IJ #74

FEBRUARY 22 - MICHAEL PACKER (35)

FEBRUARY 24 - Zeppo Marx (b. 1901); W.C. Grimm (b. 1786)

FEBRUARY 25 - TODD KRISTEL (27); Theodore Sturgeon (b. 1918); George Harrison (47); Anthony Burgess (63)

(b. 1918); George Harrison (4/); Anthony Burgess (b. FEBRUARY 26 - ANDY ROBERTS (31); Tex Avery (b. 1908)

FEBRUARY 27 - Mardi Gras; Ralph Nader (56)

INSIDE JOKE is put on hexameekly (usually) by Elayne "Moved At Last!" Wechsler and many equally moving friends, and now emanates from Beautiful Bensonhurst, Brooklyn, where natives live in both fear and owe of the teengirls known only as the Scary Hair Brigades...

CONCIERGE ... ELAYNE WECHSLER ... PRODUCTION ASSISTANT ... STEVE CHAPUT ...

STAFF WRITERS/ARTISTS

ACE BACKWORDS========= KEN BURKE =======PRUDENCE GAELOR ==GARY PIG GOLD======== WAYNE HOGAN ======RORY HOUCHENS==TODD KRISTEL========JED MARTINEZ=======J.P. HORGAN ==LARRY OBERC========SUSAN PACKIE========WILLIAM RALEY=STEVEN SCHARFF======LARRY STOLTE====== DORIAN TENORE-BARTILUCCI

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FEBRUARY 28 - KEN BURKE (34); DANA SNOW (37); JOE SCHWIND (40); Zero Mostel (b. 1915); MARCH is NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH MARCH 1-7 - Return the Borrowed Books Week MARCH 1 - JED MARTINEZ (36); Roger Daltrey (46); Peace Corps Founded (1961) MARCH 2 - Laraine Newman (38); Mikhail Gorbachev (59); Lou Reed (48); John Irving (48); Tom Wolfe (59); Theodore "Dr." Seuss Geisel (86)

(continued next page)

ACKNOWLEDITORIAL

No, troops, you haven't missed an issue; there was no LJ in January, for varying reasons, including my tremendous workload at my Conspiracy Job and, more importantly, the fact that Steve and I have moved. Not to San Fran (we couldn't afford to give up our present livelihoods), but out of Apartment Third-Eye in the Hellhole of Flatbush for good, and into This Really Nifty House With Seven Full Rooms And Ions Of Closet Space In The Heart Of Benson-hurst Where It's Quiet! Ergo, this year's INSIDE JONE Party will be a Housewarming, and will take place on St. Patty's Day, Saturday, March 17, 1990. Because we'd like to stay on good terms with our landlords Tony and Carmella, the Old-World Italian Owners Who Live Downstairs, we'll be starting at 6pm and ending things by midnight this year, so guests are urged to bring, in addition to whatever one usually drags to a housewarming bash, potluck-style food to buffet and snack on, in addition to your usual drugs-of-choice (chocolate, videos, cigarettes—we'd like to limit smoking to the kitchen and dining room but we'll see how the air circulates—alcohol, illegals, Oreos, etc.). More information and easy directions (we're almost too conveniently located now!) will be forthcoming to local readers in a few weeks; if you're not local and would like to come, you're just as welcome but write me right away so I can send you an invite as well...

Lilith, my home typewriter in my very own home office, has just been fixed—isn't she typing swell?—at least in time for Page 2, if not the rest of this issue; please excuse the mass in some articles. In my very minimal free time, I've been playing with my new WordPerfect program on my office computer and LaserJet II printer. I've only managed to steal back enough time to do some headlines and bylines, plus a few short pieces, this issue, but I'm slated to get more fonts soon and, time permitting, I'll try to transfer more and more of IJ to become computer-driven (like our lettercolumn this time). Also, I've revised our Writers' and Artists' Guidelines using WordPerfect, if you'd like to send me a

SASE for a new updated copy.

Lots of staffers are taking their hiatus this issue (and you thought I was the only one late!), including Anni, who is busy getting ready to open her children's bookstore, Read Mc A Story, in Reading PA (unfortunately, the opening is slated for the same day as our IJ party); Kathy Stadalsky, who needs no excuse with three kids and a husband; Michael Dobbs, who I believe is in midbook; and Iom Deja—who, along with Vinnie and Dorian, has finally brought out STICKY CARPET DIGEST (see ad elsewhere this issue; thanks Iom!). SCD and other pubs will be reviewed in our next issue, as (for obvious reasons) I haven't had time to read any zines for plugging purposes in "Fan Noose." Steve is also taking the issue off while we get settled and catch up on our mail.

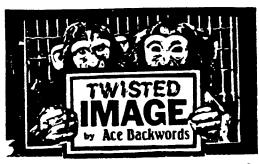
the issue off while we get settled and catch up on our mail.

We do, however, have some wonderful first-time submissions, and we'd like to welcome G.R. George, Mike Gehrke, David Gunzenhauser, R.R. Hilliard, Mike McLaren, John Metz and S. Prescott Wilson, and a belated welcome to James Scianna, returning with another PSJOND-BABBIF this issue. Also back are John See, Dennis Brezina, most folks with Part Twos of last issue's Part Ones, and well, you know how it goes; just check the names in the edit. box. Special thank you's go to J.C. Brainbeau, Gary George, John Metz, Chris Laursen of The Fresident Journal (more about which in "Fan Noose" next issue), and especially Burt Noses, whose ads for this issue I seem to have misplaced (at least I found future front covers done by Max Nuclear and Denise Krause, also temporarily lost during the move) and who, if I don't find them, will have two ads run free of charge in #74. Speaking of which:

Since this issue was late, deadlines have all been rolled back. The deadline for #74 is fast upon us, February 20; please be as prompt as possible with your submissions for this one, since I plan to give it out at the IJ Party. Deadlines then go back to normal, with #75's being March 31. INSTE JONE costs \$1.50 per issue (limit two per customer, please, but feel free to recopy more on your own), payable by cash (CAREFUL about those loose coins!), check or m.o. (please make those payable to "Elayne Wechsler," the same name on the p.o. box). Advance subs are \$1.2 per year for eight issues. If your art, writing or letter appears in #74, you have the option of sending me a 65c stamp (NOT 65c in cash; I can't stick coins on our back cover and mail, IJ that way!) instead of the \$1.50 cash/check/m.o. (NOT \$1.50 in stamps, as IJ only costs 65c to mail—get it, it's \$1.50 c/c/m.o. CR 65c in postage, period) for that issue only. If an "X" appears by your name on your mailing label, it's time to renew. Thanks again to Mike Gunderloy, Peter Lamborn Wilson, SchaZat, all the other zines who've said nice things about us lately, and keep 'em'coming! Submissions of writing (under 1900 words), art (reducable please), letters, money, and anything else can be sent to us at

letters, money, and anything else can be sent to us at P.O. Box 1609, Madison Square Station, New York, NY 10159.

This issue is dedicated to the memories of two great actors, Barbara Stanwyck and Ava Gardner.



There was an article in PEOPLE Magazine a few months back that kinda shocked me. It was in their "Crime" section. Headline: AVENGING YEARS OF SEXUAL ABUSE, TWINS TAKE THEIR ADOPTIVE FATHER TO COURT. Anyone who was part of the San Francisco punk scene circa 1982 would immediately recognize the twins. They were conspicuously present at just about every punk show at that time, bopping from gig to gig at the On Broadway and the Elite Club and all the other decaying freak show palaces of that forever-bygone era. I have distinct memories of the twins and their gang of mohawked punkettes gossiping and giggling from scene to scene. On the surface they seemed like your typical modern girls on the go, flirting with the boys, out looking to drum up some teenage excitement.

But, as usual with these things, there was more going on under the surface than seemed at first apparent... I felt connected to the twins for a very personal

I felt connected to the twins for a very personal reason. Back in '82 the punk scene was really taking off, so I decided to publish my own tabloid to capture and document some of that excitement. Called the paper TWISTED IMAGE. Been cranking it out ever since. And the first feature I did was an interview with these punk kids who had just started hanging out up on Telegraph Avenue. It's hard to remember today just how shocking those kids looked back then. Believe me, heads turned when those kids congregated on the corner—girls with shaved heads and mohawks, ripped-up shirts and violent slashes of make-up—crazy! It seemed like we were being invaded by a cross between THE NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD zombies and THE CHILDREN OF THE DAMNED.

Anyway, the girls were always hanging out in front of Universal Records. They all had a crush on one of the cashiers, this Sid Vicious clone named (along with several other punks) Rob Noxious, who lurched around the Avenue acting drunk and fucked-up, and sang in one of the premier East Bay punk bands (with fake English accent, naturally), Intensified Chaos. Rob had the punk look down solid: black leather jacket, shirtless, with chains around the neck, bullet belt, and thick, black spiked hair. Last I heard ole Rob had gotten a job at a trendy clothes store and was all duded up like a fashion fop (hence the new nickname "Boy Rob"), but that's another story.

I took a bunch of photos of the girls hanging out and published a poem by this little punkette from England. Lines like: I live within this society/Being who I want to be/The same harrassment every day/Just for dressing my own way/I'll show them all, I'll make them pay.

At the time, me and my friends used to joke about that: "Ain't that cute and precocious, the girls waxing indignant about the horrible tragedy of Mom and Dad hassling them about their green hair." Somehow, today it doesn't seem quite as funny. You see, there was always this public perception amongst a lot of people that the rebellious, pissed-off punks were nothing but a bunch of spoiled, ever-indulgent brats. Not so, chump. Most of 'em had damn good REASONS for being pissed. Listen up.

According to the PEOPLE Magazine article, when the twins were five they were discovered by the police living in an abandoned building in Oakland, "malnourished, filthy, and lice-ridden." Both parents were drug addicts. At seven they were adopted by this respected professor at UC Berkeley. Can you imagine a more impressive symbol of all that's supposedly good in this society? The Professor—teacher of values, pillar of society. Only this fuckhead was raping and sexually abusing those kids practically from the moment they set foot in his house until the day I met them hanging out on Tele!

UPCOMING EVENTS cont'd.

MARCH 3 - A.J. WRIGHT (38); Jean Harlow (b. 1911) MARCH 4 - Catherine O'Hara (36) MARCH 5-9 - National Procrastination Week MARCH 5 - Dean Stockwell (54); Paul Sand (46) MARCH 6 - BRIAN PEARCE (25); Rob Reiner (43) MARCH 8 - Mickey Dolenz (45); International Women's Day MARCH 9 - Mickey Spillaine (72) MARCH 12 - Jack Kerouac (b. 1922) MARCH 14 - Michael Caine (57); Albert Einstein (b. 1879) MARCH 15 - Mark Green (45); Ides o' March MARCH 17 - INSIDE JOKE HOUSEWARMING PARTY - Details in Acknowleditorial and in Forthcoming Local Mailings! MARCH 19 - Patrick McGoohan (62); Phillip Roth (57); Swallows Return to Capistrano MARCH 20 - Fred Rogers (62); B.F. Skinner (b. 1904) MARCH 21 - PRUDENCE GAELOR (25); J.S. Bach (b. 1685); Cesar Chavez (63); Sharpeville Massacre (1960) MARCH 22 - Chico Marx (b. 1882); Wonder Woman (48) MARCH 23 - Akori Kurusawa (79); World Meteorological Day MARCH 24 - Fatty Arbuckle (b. 1887); Harry Houdini (b. 1874); Elayne's Mom MARCH 25 - Triangle Shirtwaist Fire (1911); Gloria Steinem (55); Elton John (43) MARCH 26 - Leonard Nimoy (59); Bob Elliot (66) MARCH 28 - Ramadhan; TMI Meltdown ('79); Elayne's bro GENE WECHSLER (31) MARCH 29 - Eric Idle (47); Eugene McCarthy (73) MARCH 30 - Eric Clapton (45); Van Gogh (b. 1853) MARCH 31 - Rhea Perlman; DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS TO INSIDE JOKE #75

Some of the more politically-involved of the punk intelligentsia may disagree with this assessment (they see "Punk" as primarily a social movement for positive political change), but I've always felt Punk was basically about anger and feelings of being victimized. That's what drew most of us to Punk in the first place (aside from the Fashion Fops like Boy Rob who dropped the punk pose the second it became passe and hopped aboard the Next Big Trend).

As I sit here reading the yellowing pages of TWISTED IMAGE #1, I can't help thinking those twins somehow symbolized what the whole crazy punk movement was all about. I remember shuddering when the English punkette proudly showed me all the self-inflicted razor blade scars on her arms. That was the pain on the surface. But there was a deeper pain underneath the scars and the mohawk that cut right to the heart of life in the Nuclear '80s.

THE SUBWAY

by Larry Oberc

Car moves past one two three, when it goes past the fourth stop I start to get worried, this isn't an express car uptown, this is a regular slow poke boogey that takes too much time to go anywhere, but its drifting past the stops like the conductor has nodded out, like he just leaned forward, perhaps dead from some ailment he's hidden from his co-workers, on the metal bar that makes this baby move, articles on the subway system always talk about the safeguards, how nothing can go wrong, how there are computers and well over trained people and years of experience to make this one of the safest subway systems in the world, yeah, right, three more stops go by, they don't report the accidents in the papers, bad PP, but all too often you smell the smoke, get paraded to buses on the surface, and listen to apologies if there is any inconvenience, or they stop the cars in the tunnel, freeze the brakes like they were locking doors, and make you walk the tracks without mentioning the third rail highs, another stop goes by and you look out the window for the answer, people are standing on the platforms, people are standing inside the train, all looking bored, disgusted, abused, the stops go by and nobody seems to notice, maybe its me thats going wrong....

THE CRAMPING TRIP

Part One by Prudence Gaelor

"Aaaugh!"said Pee-Wee.

"Ach! That's a pain that's gonna linger," retorted Ed.
Prudence and Pink Bunny, sitting on the grey carpet of her new bedroom, were busy playing with her talking Ed Grimley and Pee-Wee Herman dolls. The two of them had staged a tea party at which Pee-Wee and Ed were in attendance. On occasion when one of the two guests was asked a question, either Prudence or Buddy would pull the string to elicit some response. What usually came out was a string of non-sequitors which made everything seem more like a Richard Foreman play rather than a tea party.
Prudence pulled Ed's string. "This is like a joke, I must

say!"

"Ha ha. Heh heh heh!" Pee-Wee responded with Pink

Bunny's aid.

"I'm going completely mental, I mustn say. completely mental, I must say," Ed repeated.

Hey, what's that? Made you look! "This is like a joke, I must say

"Hello, I'm Pee-Wee Herman."

"Ach! That's a pain that's gonna linger."

"Ha ha. Heh heh heh." "Oh, give me a break!"

"Pee-Wee rules!" Pink Bunny crowed.
"Oh, give me a great," Prudence responded, echoing Ed's previous statement.

"All hail King Pee-Wee!"

"No way! Why should Pee-Wee be king?"

"Pee-Wee should be king because Ed Grimley is too nice, he'd give everything away like all his gold and stuff and he'd never have wars or tell people what to do. Ed Grimley would be a better jester, like when he was a stand-up comic when he was in the army and went to France and stuff. Besides, I want

Pee-Wee to be kind 'cause I'm the one that's playing him."
"And now for zee comedy-styleengs of Monsieur Ed Grimlee." Prudence decided to let Pink Bunny have his way as she was in particularly good spirits today. Her dad had called earlier to say that he had borrowed a camper from Ernie-thefeteria-guy and was going to take her and Ian camping. She had never been camping before, and she was so excited she had

already packed for the trip.

Since they were only going to be gone for a weekend, Prudence needed only to pack a few clothes. She shoved some shorts, t-shirts, underwear and socks in her suitcase. She wasn't all that picky because she planned to wear the t-shirt and black toughskins she was wearing now for the entire weekend, although she might decide to change her underwear. If anything got dirty, she would steal something of Ian's. Ian had lots of cool clothes which his mother let him have. Claire wouldn't buy Prudence any more clothing until she outgrew the clothes she already had, whether Pru liked them or not. Although Ian would have brought a few changes of clothing, Prudence doubted that he would change either. She figured that maybe she could change into something of Ian's on Saturday and wear it home. Come to think of it, maybe she would sneak his stuff into her suitcase and replace his stuff with

Now she had plenty of time to pack the important stuff like her Jem dolls and the wooden blocks she used for her doll's furniture. She had boxes full of the expensive furniture made exclusively for Jem, like the Jem waterbed and the Jem soundstage, which cost a small fortune even though they were made out of cheap plastic; however, she preferred using the wooden

blocks. Now came the big question.
"Hey, Bunny!" Whatcha think Jem should wear on the

camping trip? Should she go as herself or as Jerrica?

Prudence's question was greeted by silence. She looked up from her packing to repeat the question, and saw Pink Bunny had disappeared.

(To be continued)

THE MOST ABSURD AND THE MOST ABBURD AND
The most hopes have sometimes been the cause of
extraordinary success. —
Marquis de Vauvenargues,
I certainly hope I'm so blessed,
Porty years is a long time to

wait for the rest of the world to CATCH UP. Send SASE to the ISM to REPLACE ISMS — BRAINBEAUISM Box 2243 YOUNGSTOWN — OHIO, 44504

MasterMath Explains... **SCTV** by William G. Raley

"Hi, I'm Coupon Man, and I --"
Shove off, Coupon Man, this is my column. Can you believe
the nerve of that guy? I give him one guest appearance to
explain one simple system, and it goes to his head. Good thin I trashed his fan mail.

I trashed his fan mail.

Now, where was I? Oh, yes, I hadn't started yet -- AS <u>USUAL</u>,
MASTERMATH. WHY DOES IT ALMAYS TAKE YOU SO LONG TO GET AROUND
TO THE POINT, ARE YOU FROM ALABAMA OR SOMETHING? NO, NOT THAT,
NOT THE JIM NABORS CHRISTHAS ALBUM! ARRRRCH! -So, today's topic is um, um, let's see now ...

"Hi, I'm Coupon Man, and I --" No, I did that bit already.
Oh, I know. You know that episode of SCTV where it was like the
Great White North run rampant or something and Bob and Doug
Mackenzie were in every sketch (OK, they weren't in the one with
Guy Caballero, owner and president of SCTV and the two doofus
promoters that Caballero takes advantage of, but that was Dave
Thomas and Rick Moranis just the same, so it counts) and they
sucked big time but Caballero didn't know, 'cause he's a doofus
too (remember that episode with the 200-story skyscraper where sucked big time but Caballero didn't know, 'cause he's a doofus too (remember that episode with the 200-story skyscraper where he fell down the stairs? No? Well, I've got it on tape.) and then there was this Tony Bennett thing which was pretty good and things even got kind of philosophical at the end (now, I know what you're thinking, you're saying it was just Eugene Levy dressed up as Tony Bennett and singing like Tony Bennett, but no, it was really Tony Bennett) so there's this really funny scene where Johnny LaRue (the big star with the big attitude problem) comes into Bob and Doug's dressing room, only it's the janitorial closet, hey, and it's like really crowded in there even before Caballero comes in (only that's later and doesn't really relate to what I wanted to say, so forget I mentioned it) and LaRue's really treating them like dirt and says he has a topic for their show but he really doesn't, he's just making it up (you could call it ad lib if he had any talent (No I don't up (you could call it ad lib if he had any talent (No I don't mean Candy, I mean LaRue. Of course Candy has talent. Read on -- leave me alone.) and so he comes up with this really dumb topic (even Bob and Doug think it's dumb but they use it anyway): walls.

anyway): walls.

So, today's topic is ... wait, I forgot to mention something. Did you ever wonder if "The Strange Disappearance of Dr. Tongue" was a real movie? Well, you should have -- it's important! And not just that movie, I'm talking about plenty of others, too, like, like, um, well, you get the idea. That Woody Tobias Jr. is quite an actor, isn't he, kids? And those 3-D special effects -- outstanding! Did you know he was a consultant on that movie, "F/X"? And that Count Floyd is such a class act, why once he -- THIS ARTICLE'S GONNA GET NOMINATED FOR "STIFF OF THE WEEK" IF YOU DON'T GET A MOVE ON, MASTERMATH. NO, NOT AN ED MOOD JR. FIIM FESTIVAL! --

WOOD JR. FILM FESTIVAL!

Oh, all right. Wait, I gotta say something about that time Caballero needed money real bad and so he flew to New York to visit the Time/Life building to get some, and then his cameraman, Martin, tripped and messed everything up and then Caballero talked to the receptionist for Time/Life and we have this voice-over narration by Caballero saying she knows who he this voice-over narration by Caballero saying she knows who he is but she really doesn't because she's shaking her head, but she directs him to the HBO receptionist 'cause like it's in the same building, 'cause like Time/Life owns HBO (is that legal?) and she treats him just the same, but directs him to Cinemax's headquarters (Cinemax is reportedly another of those subsidiary things, but I don't want to get into right now), which is down in the boiler room of the building, and there's the president of Cinemax at his desk, and at first Caballero doesn't believe he's the president but he produces a plague so we know he's really the president, but he produces a plaque so we know he's really the president and Caballero asks him for money and of course the guy's a real doofus and doesn't offer him any and then they guy's a real doofus and doesn't offer him any and then they're grappling over chips and this huge submarine sandwich thing and that bit is over. Next, Caballero comes on the air selling these decorative SCTV paper plates for \$49.90, which is 50% off of something but he doesn't know what so he makes it an even \$50 and I'll bet he wishes he had MasterMath to confer with then, so he wouldn't have looked like such a doofus on the air.

And then there was that time when they had Mel's Rock Pile with rockin' Mel Slirrup. OK, that's been on several times, but I mean the one where he interviews some people that had been on the show twenty years before and they've like really changed a lot (this one guy used to be into love and peace and the concept of oneness and now he's a district manager for Smith and Wesson)

lot (this one guy used to be into love and peace and the concept of oneness and now he's a district manager for Smith and Wesson) except for Mel himself, since he's like living in the past and like totally out of it and then he's reminiscing about that show twenty years before and how hearing the group Tangerine Conspiracy play live made him flip out and do wild acrobatics and stuff and go down the hallway and put himself in the dryer and turn it on and then the group in the present show is Tangerine Conspiracy, only they've changed their name to Happiness Unlimited and Mel flips out again and, if there was any doubt before, now you know he's totally out of it. Good thing Bob and Doug didn't ask him for a topic.

Which brings me back to my topic, which was -- what, I

Which brings me back to my topic, which was -- what, I haven't introduced the topic yet? Hang on just a minute. be right back. "Hello, Coupon Man?" ...

A NINETIES SOCIAL PROGRAM by Mike Gehrke and Larry Stolte

Winston S. will be freebasing coffee to stay awake. The phone will ring one and a half times. "Suicide Suggestion Hotline," Winston will say. "How may I help you?"

After an uncomfortable pause the caller will reply, "I want to kill myself, but I'm not sure how to go about it. Did I call the right place?"

"You sure did," Winston will say. "I have to ask you a few questions first, okay?

"Shoot."

"Have you thought this out for some time now?"

"Yes. This is what I want to do."

"Have you tried suicide before?"

This is the first time."

"Great. Do you have any ideas at all about how you want to go?"

"No, that's why I'm calling. I thought you could help me out."
"You called the right place. You know, we have a ninety rating. Ninety percent of the people who call us get it right the first time. By the way, how did you hear about us?"
"Through the Yellow—"

"Through the Yellow-

"Yellow Pages, all right!" Winston will interrupt. "Let your fingers do the walking, uh huh. I knew it. God, it pays to advertise. We don't get too many word-of-mouth customers, if you know what I mean. Sorry, I'm off the track. Now then, how will you be paying?"

"MasterCard."

"Do you have it handy?"

"Yes," the caller will say.

"Name?"

"Hollingsworth, William."

"Number?

"Five four one oh, six three four nine, oh four two two, six eight four oh."

"What about the expiration date?"

"I'd like to go tomorrow." Hollingsworth will pause and say, "Oh, you mean the card."

"Yes, the card, please."

"Three, ninety-seven."

"Thanks Mr. Hollingsworth, now we can get down to business. Do you own a gun?

"No."

"Why not get one?"

"Isn't therewa waiting period or something?"

"Nah, just tell them you're an escaped convict. They'll give you a semi-automatic bazooka and a preferred customer coupon. How do you think these guys stay in business? You think there are that many duck hunters out there?"

"Still, I don't think I want to use a gun; it's so messy."

"You're worried about the mess, huh?"

"Yeah, maybe I could hang myself."

"Hanging yourself is tricky," Winston will say. "Geez, most people can barely tie their shoes, how you gonna do a noose? It's not that effective, really. Say, are you on any medication or anything? Do you have a few thousand spare toxic pills lying around the house?"

"No, just cold pills and cough drops."

"Just wonderful. As far as I know, no one has ever ODed on placebos before. What you need is a megadose of Dan Quayle lewds. By the way, where do you live?"

"Thompson Towers."

"What floor?"

"Eighteenth."

"What are you waiting for? You could be on the first floor in five seconds.

"You think I should?"

"Time's a'wastin'. Come on, let's go, double time. To the balcony. Hey Ho Hup Ho-Go, go, go, go, go!" Winston will chant. Silence at the other end.

Winston will wait for about twenty seconds and say, "Another satisfied customer."

The phone will ring one and one-half times. "Suicide Suggestion Hotline. How may I help you?"

"Hi, I need help. I tried to slit my wrists, but I couldn't pierce the skin with my electric razor.

Another crank call, Winston will think. "Look, we've got peo-ple to help here. Why don't you go bite the fuzzy wax weenie?" Winston will slam the receiver to the phone base.

The next call will at first puzzle Winston. "This is Senator Potemkin Village," the caller will start.

"Look," Winston will reply, "we just had another phony call. You guys are tying up the lines."

"Hold it, this really is Senator Village. Seriously. Look, I'm not trying to kill myself; I'm too rich and successful and have no conscience. I'll tell you why I called. This is Winston, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"Well, I'd like to present your station and you personally with an award tomorrow on Channel Eight. As you probably know, I sponsored the bill that funded this program. Even the White House is happy about how this turned out. The fee you collect from your clients doesn't nearly cover your expenses, so we have to subsidize you. But you know that. Anyway, the early reports are in. With the numbers we're getting, especially yours, we'll save bundles of money in the long run by not having to deal with the rabthe later on. You know, psychologists, clinics, insurance. We

have many other programs in the works, but this one is the bellwether. It makes me look damn good. I want to thank you on TV; can you make it tomorrow?"

"Sure."
"Good. I'll have a limo pick you up at five-thirty. See you." Winston will feel good about himself, his job, his life. The phone will ring again. Winston will answer in the usual manner after one and one-half rings.

"Hello Winston," the caller will say.

"Wayne, is that you?"

"Yes. Don't hang up, please. I'm as low as can be. I'm drinking six-packs in moderation. I'm ready this time. If I don't die soon, I'm gonna look like hell."

"Wayne, you closet troglodyte, please stop whimpering. You sound like Flipper. I really can't deal with this any more. You're jerking me around, Wayne. I've given you the benefit of all my professional experience. I tell you to shoot yourself, you use some small-caliber handgun; you couldn't pick your nose with that thing. I espouse the virtues of carbon monoxide poisoning, and you leave the damn garage door open. You'd still be in the car if it hadn't run out of gas, correct? Don't answer. You have a chain-link mind, Wayne. And don't jummp off any more bridges into the water. Pick a building next time; go up a little ways, huh? You are almost singlehandedly keeping me from hitting a 95 rating. Get a job or something. Don't call me again. Goodbye."

Winston will start to think that there are no more real callers. But soon the phone will ring again. He will grab it right "Suicide Suggestion Hotline."

"Hi, I need some help on doing myself in. I've never done this kind of thing before."

Back on the right track, Winston will think. He'll say, "You've called the right place. Our motto is 'You'll make it or die trying."

"Do you guys help out with the suicide notes as well?" the caller will ask.

"I can send someone over from publications within the hour," Winston will reply as an epiphany hits him. This is not a job, it's a calling, he will think. Times are good, and I'm a winner.

WHEN, OH WHEN?

To be or not to be—that used to be the question. Now the question is...

"Darling, I can feel our baby moving inside me. Give me your hand. Can you feel her, too?"

"Her? How do you know the baby is a her? And how do you know you don't just have indigestion?"

Despite an amazing number of advances in medical science, there is still a lot of controversy over whether or not a fetus is a human being. One doctor says yes, another says no. One religion says yes, another says no. And the problem doesn't end here.

"Madam, will you kindly get your screaming monster out of this restaurant?"

"This isn't a screaming monster. This is my child!"

"Next time, try for a different variety."

"A boy?"

"A human."

Every mother thinks her baby is the sweetest, most adorable thing to have ever been born. But the issue is still unresolved. And in just a few years, he or she is only...

"Are we all here today? 698-333-0651? 791-208-988? 798-506-232?"

...a number. Yes, after five, the is assigned a Social Security number and is forever after thought of in those terms. There are IQ numbers, class rank numbers, SAT numbers, bank account numbers, ad infinitum. So the has become a number. But when does he or she become a human being?

At 21. If no one became a human being until age 21, the crime rate, suicide rate, and number of automobile accidents would fall dramatically. The education problem would be instantly solved. The question of a subminimum wage for minors would no longer be a point of dispute.

Why? Because there would literally be no one for the first 21 years. This is the way it used to be, of course, when children were expected to be seen but not heard. And this is the direction in which affairs are heading now, with school locker searches, drug testing for high school athletes, and all those numbers!

So 21 seems fine, for now. Of course, I'm only a hair over Jack Benny's age. Maybe when I'm older, no one under 65 will be considered...human?

A Dip in the Plasma Pool

by Dorian Tenore-Bartilucci

Becentries On Parade:

One Critic/Fan's Semi-Objective Guide to the Best Celluloid Performances of Jeff Goldblum

Part 3 * All New! * Part 3 * All New! * Part 3 * All New! Before his roles in THE FLY, THE BIG CHILL and even TV's "Tenspeed and Brownshoe" helped Jeff Goldblum graduate to leading-man status, he was best known as being the type of character actor who appears in just one scene in a film-maybe only for a matter of seconds-but whatever he did or said in that moment just about made the movie worth the price of admission. Of course, another factor in this is that, as a physical presence, the lanky, swarthy, peripatetic Goldblum is pretty hard to miss no matter how briefly he stays onscreen. Movies with such glints of Goldblum include the following:

GOLDBLUM NUGGETS—His Small but Memorable Parts

DEATH WISH (1974): Little did Brian Garfield, author of the crime novel upon which this movie was based, realize what havoc his work would wreak upon the American cinema for years to come! (However, to be fair, the novel took the opposite tack of the film: Garfield tried to convey that vigilantism would cause more problems than it would solve.) DEATH WISH, the first in the seemingly endless series of ugly, violent melodramas starring Charles Bronson as a liberal family man turned revenge-minded vigilante, isn't really my cup of tea. My only reason for seeing it was Jeff Goldblum, in a brief turn as one of the young toughs who stalk Bronson's wife (what's a nice actress like Hope Lange doing in a flick like this?) and daughter from the supermarket and assault the women (sexually and otherwise) at their home, leaving one dead and the other catatonic. No doubt the number of urban supermarket deliveries went way down during this film's release!

Don't let the Goldblum character's dopey-looking Jughead beanie and braying guffaw lull you into thinking he's harmless (talk about the banality of evil). His gleeful viciousness and brutality, with a hint of Goldblum's usual offbeat manner, turns this standard thug role into a truly chilling thumbnail portrait of a human monster.

MASHVILLE (1975): In Robert Altman's panoramic satire of American politics and the country-music scene, Goldblum steals every scene he's in as a hippie-ish, taciturn biker with seemingly mystical powers. During a 1983 appearance on LATE NIGHT WITH DAVID LETTERMAN, Jeff revealed to the Alfred E. Neuman-faced host that he'd had to learn to ride a motorcycle for the NASHVILLE role. His lessons apparently consisted of mounting the driving school's equivalent of a mechanical bull (or perhaps one of those coin-operated car or horse rides that used to stand outside the candy store when we were kids), which was housed in the school's basement.

One day, Goldblum was left on the motorcycle-analog unattended for a bit too long, giving him a good idea as to how Sean Connery must have felt when he was electric-massaged half to death as James Bond in THUNDERBALL. Being strapped in, the best Goldblum could do to summon help was to yell in the direction of the hassment window, much to the amusement of the passage.

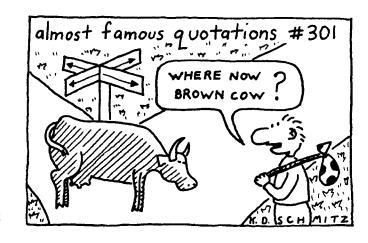
basement window, much to the amusement of the passersby.

ANNIE HALL (1977): It took the likes of Jeff Goldblum to out-eccentric the entire guest list at a Hollywood party brimming with dippy trendoids in Woody Allen's Oscar-winning, bittersweet romantic comedy. As an agitated guest at the swinging soiree thrown by media mogul Tony Lacey (Paul Simon), Goldblum permanently etched himself into the memories of many a moviegoer with just one line, muttered into a phone receiver: "I forgot my mantra!" (The question is, will future viewers born after the 1970s get that joke?)

THANK GOD IT'S FRIDAY (1978): This inane programmer about a high-tech dance club and its low-IQ patrons existed for no other reason than to exploit the disco craze. In the process, it spawmed an Oscar-winning hit song, "Last Dance", for one of that era's most popular songbirds, Donna Summer. Even the presence of future stars Debra Winger and Jeff Goldblum -- not to mention the Commodores and La Summer herself -- couldn't make this celluloid flotsam watchable.

However, Goldblum is amusing despite his lame material as the club's owner, a shallow, unctuous ladies' man. This Don Juan's real love is his Porsche, which he covers with one of those pretentious protective blankets in the parking lot. Naturally, this makes the car a magnet for every klutzy driver and car-chase participant in the movie. The best laugh in the whole flick comes at the end, when Goldblum removes the car's cover. With the only thing holding its shape gone, the Porsche falls clamorously apart. All Goldblum can do is stare, the door handle still clutched in his fingers.

THE ADVENTURES OF BUCKAROO BANZAI (1980): Written by Earl MacRauch and directed by W.D. Richter, this crazy-quilt spoof of Doc Savage-type pulp tales went from poorly-distributed would-be blockbuster to enduring cult hit. This was at least partly due, no doubt, to a cast as loopy as the movie's sensibilities. Peter Weller -- he of the square jaw and spaced-out line readings -- plays the titular hero, an Anglo-Japanese physicist/inventor/rock star/crimefighter/say when. Ellen Barkin is Buckaroo's



anguished love interest, possibly the twin sister of his murdered bride. John Lithgow turns in a delightfully scene-stealing (and scenery-chewing) comic performance as Dr. Emilio Lizardo, a villain ever since his possession by Lord John Whorfin, the leader of the evil Red Lectroids (one of whom is played by the ever-versatile Christopher Lloyd). Most importantly, there's Buckaroo's version of the "Fabulous Five", the Hong Kong Cavaliers, played by a stellar crew of hip character actors from Clancy Brown (THE BRIDE) to musician Billy Vera to -- you guessed it -- Jeff Goldblum.

One gets the feeling that much of Goldblum's role was left on the cutting room floor (of course, some folks feel that much of this movie's coherency may have been left there, too. What can I tell you — this is the sort of film to which you have to pay strict attention. Reading its excellent novelization beforehand helps, too; try your friendly neighborhood used-book store). Still, he's a pip as mild-mannered brain surgeon Sidney Zwibel, who dons a cowboy outfit (shades of Goldblum's real-life childhood, when he'd play little cowpoke to entertain his parents) for his Hong Kong Cavalier identity as "New Jersey." Goldblum's earnest, Jimmy Stewart-esque delivery makes such off-the-wall lines as "Congratulations, Buckaroo, I hear you drove through a mountain" and "What's that watermelon doing there?" all the more skewed (though, admittedly, this is the sort of movie in which the dialogue is funnier in context).

THE RIGHT STUFF (1983): Philip Kaufman, the director of the INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS remake (as well as the recent THE UNBEARABLE LIGHTNESS OF BEING), adapted Tom Wolfe's book about the early days of the space program into a witty, stirring popepic. As two bumbling NASA recruiters, Jeff Goldblum and Harry Shearer make a wonderful comedy team; I was constantly reminded of STAR WARS' R2D2 and C3PO in human form.

Goldblum gets one of the movie's best running gags all to himself, though: it starts with a Steadicam close-up, from the rear, of feet running madly down a dim corridor, with footfalls schoing and the runner, Goldblum, panting on the soundtrack. He's heading toward a meeting of President Johnson and NASA personnel. He bursts into the darkened meeting room, where slides are being viewed, with his earth-shaking news: "They've sent a Russian into space -- Gagarin!" The impatient, so-whatelse-is-new response: "Me know, we know. Sit down!" Thus are all major space race breakthroughs announced in THE RIGHT STUFF.

SILVERADO (1985): Lawrence Kasdan's uneven, but generally rollicking and entertaining tribute to the oaters of yore was one of several (including Clint Eastwood's PALE RIDER and the comedy flop RUSTLER'S RHAPSODY) released during a summer that was supposed to mark the Western's big comeback. SILVERADO was notable not only for having a higher entertainment value than the others, but also for generating lots of publicity —— the movie's male stars even appeared in a Western-style fashion spread in GQ —— and for its offbeat casting in the supporting roles.

It doesn't take much imagination-stretching to believe Kevin Kline, Scott Glenn, Kevin Costner and Danny Glover as cowboy heroes (albeit more down-to-earth, realistically portrayed cowboy heroes than the likes of Gene Autry or John Mayne), or Brian Dennehy as their nemesis. But John Cleese as a sheriff? Linda Hunt as a brassy saloonkeeper? Jeff Goldblum as a cryptic, womanizing gambler named Slick, with a hidden knife worthy of TV's WILD WILD WEST?!

Happily, these actors turn out to be quite believable in their change-of-pace roles, thanks to the performers' ability to have fun with the characters and the setting without camping it up. Admittedly, Goldblum doesn't really get much to do besides gamble, lurk about and behave mysteriously. Still, he looks pretty dashing in his fancy period duds, has the occasional witty line, and handles cards like a pro. He also has a nifty (if surprisingly brief) gunfight scene with Danny Glover, whose sister (Lynn Whitfield) Goldblum manhandled.

NEXT ISSUE: Fool's Goldblum, in which our hero Jeff proves to have feet of clay — or at least these movies did!

Another Pointless Obscure Literary Parody by Todd Kristel

The Papers Of Samuel's Marching Banks comprising The Accounting Diary, Money Talk, and A Garland of Miscellanea Regarding the Calculation of Appropriate Repayment Rates for Loans

by Samuel Marchingbanks

but enlarged to include a Biographical Introduction, Critical Essay, Bibliography, and Copious Notes calculated to remove all Difficulties caused by the Passing of Time, to offer the Wisdom of individual insight, and to get my name listed on the cover,

Robbie Robertson Davies

A Warning to the Reader

This is not a work of fiction, but of history-a record of the daily life of a Canadian during one of the early years of the Banking Age. All the people mentioned in it, including Santa Claus, are real; all the incidents described, including Bigfoot's kidnapping of Elvis' twin-headed child born by Marilyn Monroe, are actual happenings. Any suggestion to the contrary will be keenly resented.

WINTER

* Sunday & New Year's Day *

Woke up, got out of bed, dragged a comb across my head...You say you want a resolution, well, it's been a hard day's night, I should be sleeping like a log. I'm so tired, I've never been so tired in all my life.

* Monday *

Can't trust that day, so I decided to stay in bed.

Figured I'd stay in bed again just to play it safe.

* Wednesday *

Started to get out of bed but changed my mind.

* Thursday *

Stayed in bed, but with enthusiasm this time.

Had an exhausting day of staying in bed, so I went to sleep early.

* Saturday *

Got up early so I could enjoy a full day of staying in bed.

Stay tuned for the next chapter, when Sam brushes his teeth.



A WALK ON THE WEILL SIDE-Helen Schneider (CBS)-If you haven't already had your fill of the tunes of Kurt Weill (and associates) what with the reissues of the classic THE THREEPENNY OPERA and MAHAGONNY, the Hal Willner-produced, multi-artist-performed LOST IN THE STARS, and a handful of other interpretations and tributes (including an album of definitive versions by Lotte Lenya), then sponge off the drool, 'cause here's a new set by vocalist Helen Schneider. Smartly mixing well-known songs ("Mack The Knife," "September Song," etc.) with more ob-scure numbers ("Brack's Song," "I Wait For A Ship"), Ms. Schneider amazingly hits just about every phase of Weill's composing career, from his tumultuous work with Bertolt Brecht to his stage and screen collaborations with Ogden Nash, Langston Hughes, Maxwell Anderson and Ira Gershwin. Using only vocals, Bruce Coyle's piano, and the "electronic orchestration and synthesizer programming" of Larry "Synergy" Fast, Ms. Schneider performs faithful and refreshing adaptations of some of the 20th century's most enduring music

BARRELLHOUSE BOOGIE-Various Artists (Bluebird/RCA) - This album reissues tunes that exemplify the beefy, boogie woogie piano style prevalent in jazz and rhythm & blues during the late '30s and early '40s, and showcases the talents of the primary purveyors of said art.
Meade Lux Lewis gets a scant pair of songs,
"Whistlin' Blues" and the vigorous "Honky Tonk Train Blues," and Pete Johnson and Albert Ammons, a muscular piano tag team, chip in "Boogie Woogie Man," "Movin' The Boogie," and the even more extreme "Cuttin' The Boogie." But the star of this lp is without a doubt Jimmy Yancey, who pounds the ivories on "Yancey Stomp" and "State Street Special" and adds his distinctive vocals to "Crying In My Sleep" and "Death Letter Blues." Swing if you can, Moms and Dads.
FRIGHT NIGHT (CBS)—The selections here are

familiar classical works (or excerpts) handpicked for their ability to give you shivers and raise your hair, hence the subtitle "Music That Goes Bump in the Night." With a dozen tracks you can more than likely scare yourself silly with Saint-Saens' "Danse Macabre," Grieg's "In The Hall of the Mountain King," Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries," and Liszt's "Mephisto Waltz." Beware if you have a weak ticker!

BACKWORDS LOGIC by Ace Backwords



CONCIERGE'S NOTE: Hey folks, we need more illos and short poems just about this size to fit into obscure

leftover spaces just like this one...thanks!



BAAL SHEM TOV: FOUNDER OF HASIBISM

"They say that once, when all souls were gathered in Adam's soul, at the hour he stood beside the Tree of Knowledge, the soul of the Baal Shem Tov went away, and did not eat of the fruit of the tree." —Martin Buber, <u>Tales of the Hasidim</u>: <u>The Early Masters</u> (Schocken Books, 1947), p. 35.

THAT BOY COULD SING

"Once when Rabbi Meir Margaliot, the author of the book Illuminator of the Paths, was visiting the Baal Shem with his seven-year-old son, his host asked him to leave the boy for a time. Little Shaul remained in the house of the Baal Shem Tov. Soon after, the Baal Shem took him and his disciples on a journey. He had the carriage stop in front of a village inn and entered with his companions and the boy. Inside they were playing the fiddle and peasant men and women were dancing. 'Your fiddler is good,' the Baal Shem said to the peasants. 'Let my boy here sing you a dance song, and then you will be able to dance much better.

"The peasants were willing. The boy was stood on the table and in his silvery voice sang a hasidic dance song without words, that went straight to the feet of the villagers. In a reel of wild happiness they danced around the table. Then one of them, a young fellow, stepped forward from among them and asked the boy: 'What is your name?' 'Shaul,' he said. 'Go on singing,' the peasant ris your name: Shaul, he said. Go on singing, the peasant cried. The boy started another song and the peasant faced him and danced in time to the tune. But in the midst of his wild leaps and bounds, he repeated over and over in charmed tones: 'You Shaul and I Ivan, you Shaul and I Ivan!' After the dance, the peasants treated the Baal Shem and his disciples to vodka and they drank together.

"About thirty years later, Pabbi Shaul, who had become both a wealthy merchant and a Talmud scholar of sorts, was traveling through the country on business. Suddenly robbers attacked him, took his money and wanted to kill him. When he begged them to have pity on him, they took him to their chieftain. He gave Rabbi Shaul a long, penetrating look. Finally he asked: 'What is your name?' 'Shaul,' said the other. 'You Shaul and I lvan,' said the robber chief. He told his men to return Shaul's money and take him back to his carriage." —Martin Buber, pp. 43-44. THE TRUE TEACHERS

Said the maggid to Rabbi Zusya, his disciple: "I cannot teach you the ten principles of service. But a little child and a thief can show you what they are:

"From the child you can learn three things-

He is merry for no particular reason;

Never for a moment is he idle;

When he needs something, he demands it vigorously.

"The thief can instruct you in seven things—

He does his service by night;

If he does not finish what he has set out to do, in one night, he devotes the next night to it;

He and those who work with him love one another;

He risks his life for slight gains;

What he takes has so little value for him that he gives it up for a very small coin;

He endures blows and hardship, and it matters nothing to him; He likes his trade and would not exchange it for any other." -- Martin Buber, p. 105.
DEEP, DEEP SLEEP

RABBI KOAN: We are all hypnotized without realizing it as we go about our daily routines; the purpose of Zen is to awake from the trance.

HO CHI ZEN: I realize I am hypnotized. But, then again, maybe I just think I'm hypnotized. After all, I might just feel hypnotized because of the power of suggestion.

AN EAR FOR THE TORAH

Rabbi Leib, son of Sarah, the hidden zaddik who wandered over the earth, following the course of rivers, in order to redeem the souls of the living and the dead, said this: "I did not go to the In order to hear Torah from him, but to see how he unlaces his felt shoes and laces them up again."

The maggic once said to his disciples: "I shall teach you the best way to say Torah. You must cease to be aware of yourselves. You must be nothing but an ear which hears what the universe of the word is constantly saying within you. The moment you start hearing what you yourself are saying, you must stop."

-Martin Buber, p. 107 TOO HEAVY

Rabbi Rafael said: "Measured behavior is a dreadful evil. It is a dreadful evil when a man measures his behavior to his fellow men. It is as if he were always manipulating weights and measures." —Martin Buber, p. 130

SILENT DRAMA

by Steven F. Scharff

She was arguing with him. Furiously. The two of them stood in front of the fountain at the mall as others passed by, without even glancing at their own personal drama.

The obvious reason why no one was paying attention was the fact that their argument was in sign language. That is what captured my attention in the first place. He was apparently very apologetic, trying to get his own opinion into the conversation, but she had a furious temper.

She drove her point home viciously. words she formed with her hands were shouts in silence. Slapping her hands together with each word, directly in front of his face, she missed his nose by fractions of an inch.

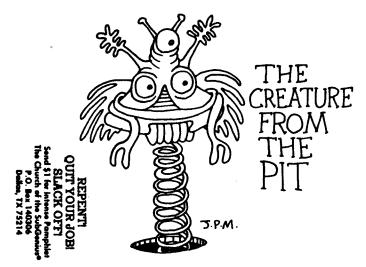
Finally the storm subsided. She awaited his

response.

He began his gestures, but she suddenly turned from him, refusing to look at what he had to say. He vainly tried to move around her, to get within her line of vision, but each time she turned away.

The young man gave out a heavy sigh, and began finger-spelling against her back, pressing his right hand to form words, letter by letter, between her shoulder blades. He apparently brought his apology across, for she turned around to face him. With his head bowed, he slowly signed his message, and waited for her

After about a minute, she gently kissed him on the forehead. They looked at each other briefly, then turned to ride to escalator to the upper level.



Without dreams our world is death.

Of those beasts that bite on the blooded earth and the beasts that swim and the beasts on high, in the imagined wonders of the sky, nothing without our human touch has worth.

Of what interest are the stars of light and the stars of dark in surrounding streams but to encourage hungry human dreams, with silence out-howling surrounding night?

Of what interest the earth's beached rubble and heart-pounding mother-of-blood brute wave and proud whales bounding by a cold gored cave, till a footprint introduces trouble?

Only when the human psyche ponders is wonder provoked by the world's wonders.

- David Castleman



FABLES FOR FEARMONGERS IV: "NAKED! WITH BIGGLE

Fall came more quickly than often to the village this year, and nowhere were the pangs of pureness felt more profoundly than high

up the lonely western side, where lived a tiny shoebox named Grace.
Grace reminded some of the sort of person averse to trouble;
forever steering 'way clear of life's little mirrors. If there
was a puddle, she'd pass it. A muddle? She'd mash it confidently beneath feet as determined as piano legs to stand upright yet grand, superfluous to each foe's throes.

Yet, despite it all, she ALWAYS made a first impression.

WE SURE SOLD OUT TONITE! read the meon high up the marquee of The Bottom End, the heppest, trendiest watering groove 'round town. Every face who could make it up was drunk to the nines and lined deep inside the hollowed halls, off which bounced imported sounds guaranteed to set any young cock abuss (and No Wonder Either, at 27.99 a cover!)(plus postage and handling). And it was into this deliciously dent of iniquity our young saving grave strode strap-fully, hug-book and peamut MGM's firmly in grasp.

Having immediately planted herself atop her fave stool, which awarded a commanding view of center stage, Grace prepared to endure the ensuing megadecibel dinge. For, you see, the Act Itself serves her only as a requisite preamble to this eve's soul purpose: the all-inticing, ever-intoxicating world thrilled by many but known by few as...BACKSTAGE.

Ahh...BACKSTAGE, that darkly dank hinterland both sly and salicious, where names drop quicker than barter belts and dreams of a lifetime slap squarely up against the brutal bouncing of Real Life. BACKSTAGE, where only the thinnest survive the fervid pucking order of full frontal fame, and tender prepubbed novices vie and litter the wayside like so many rats beneath the rushed hour F-train. BACKSTAGE.

Young Grace is no stranger to this fiercely inconcrimminent environ, and as a result spent but a mere half hour or two on the night in question landing the performance's prize catch: the one and lonely BIGGLE.

Constantly photographed but seldom studied in his natural habitat, tall Paul Biggle, led guitar star, had left strewn through his wake many a teen trollop the world over, and rightfully so had earned the temperament of the smugly pursued. Yet never before had he felt he'd met his missmatch as when the irreperable Grace attached itself to his forearm.

"Let's get outta here RIGHT NOW," she spoke in knowing unspoken tones.

"Uhh..." replied Biggle eloquently, as he was hauled towards the five exit past pile upon pile of whiter trash.

The nearest cab raced the couple crosstown to Biggle's lodgings of the moment: the one chocolate Hilton available this time of night. Next stop? Room 12, where the last date's prey remained still strafed across the reading lamps and the test pattern flicked forever in the coroner.

But our Grace, squatting provocatively as she may now have, made several mental notes to refuse to become yet another piece of pre-serviced fast road food, to be quickly licked lean and then tossed indiscriminently down the hall (towards the ice machine).

"Let's get this one part absolutely straight," Grace paused dramatically in the midst of heavy sweating. "I'm absolutely FULL of scruples, I'll have you know, so be advised I won't stand for one single home run, okay? Now-Off with our robes!"

Come afternoon's light, Biggle awoke to his usual menu of cartoons and blue cheese dip, the hue of spent passions dripping in the air as if in some tropical lust nest. "Oh well, just another tension in the crazed kitchen of nocturnal heaving," he tried to convince himself, only to find his every waking thought perversely fixated on our little heroin as his travels plodded onward and outward towards points wet.

And what of the very object of his delections? Well, Grace was already well returned to her daily grinds and her tiny little shoebox by this time: a death worse than fate to some, maybe, but nothing more than an ends to be mean for herself. For the impact she had once more foisted upon the unsuspectful guitarist but twelve hours previous she was POSITIVE was still festering on his head, as so ever more it shall. Grace makes one helluva indelible mark, you know. With her sneetches on OR off!

So are there any morals left to this possibly lurid tale, you may be snorting? The answer, as always, may very well lie in the most ridiculous of spots: Side Two, Song Two on the just-issued (well in time for the Xmas blush) Biggle disc. And I quote:

She came to me one summer night Bravely through my bathroom window She brought to me my love. A love so deep and wide One could imply A hint of the nasty, per say. But may to that; I'll tell you what: She is all I ever wanted All I'll ever need And I'll cherish her forever and forever Come what may



THE NEW SOUTH

by Wayne Hogan

If my experience is anywhere near typical, there're several folks out there in the general populace who're real curious about this thing called "the New South." Wondering if it's here already, and, if it isn't, when it might be. And what it'll look like when it is.

Just the other day i was backing out of a parking spot at Wal-Mart's as another car pulled in beside me. An elderly lady on the passenger's side rolled her window down (mine was already down) and said, "Excuse me, Sonny" (I just love it when older people call me "Sonny") "but we just got here from an all-day drive down from northern indiana and me and my husband—that's him over there," she said, pointing to the driver's side, "-we was wondering if we're in the 'New South' yet, or, if we're not, where it is and, so we can watch for it, what it'll look like when we see it?"

The lady's question struck me as perfectly normal for 1, too. had heard about the "New South" and have often wondered what exactly It might look like. (I've also often wondered what the old South looked like, never having seen it either. Was it where, if there'd been McDonald's back then, the only food items would'a been McOkras and pickled pigs' knuckles? Where every conversa-tion, no matter the topic, was concluded with "Y'all come back now, heah?" Where every house, no matter how humble, was a Tara and every tree a magnolia and every Rhett, Dick and Harry went around saying to their womenfolk that they frankly didn't give a

"I'm sorry," I said to the elderly indiana lady and the husband of hers I hadn't seen yet in the car next door, "but I'm afraid I can't help you much with this 'New South' thing. I have a lot of questions about It myself. By the way, If you haven't been already you really should visit Opryland before you go back home, heah?"

Their car's motor had started and the window on the passenger's side was being rapidly rolled up when I heard the elderly Indiana lady shout out—to me, I s'posed, since there was nobody else close by that I could see—"Frankly, Sonny" (there she went, calling me "Sonny" again—I just <u>love</u> It!) "we don't give a dang!" as they drove away.

Well, I think most any fellow southerner can imagine what thought of Yankees along about this time. Me, who'd never before had a serious run-in with one. What this little "Indiana" episode did, though, was decide for me that I was going to be better prepared, have some really solid answers next time somebody, even an elderly lady from northern Indiana, asked me about "the New South."

So the first thing I did was go out and find me a place thaid likely have some books in it, some reference materials tha'd have some facts about "the South," something tha'd tell me what the one we've got now looks like. Fortunately, I chanced upon the local library. Once inside and I'd explained what I was after, the nice librarian lady immediately pointed straight to the top shelf along the northern section of the wall nearest the window with a strange looking potted plant below it just to the right of where the sun's rays came screaming in threatening to broast everything in their path to the anemic red of an overboiled lobster. There, wedged in between the "C" and "E" volumes of the Encyclopaédia Brittanica, was a book called Directory of Foreign Manufacturers in the United States. How the librarian lady knew that this was precisely the book I needed to answer all my questions about "the New South," I have no idea.

The book, almost from the first page, was virtually a gold mine of exactly the kind of information for which I was probably looking. The picture it paints of "the South" (defined in terms of Tennessee, Alabama and Georgia, sociologically chosen as representative states) isn't, though, a pretty picture. But it's about what I expected.

Getting directly to the gist of things, what the book shows is that the overwhelmingly largest number of foreign-owned manufacturing businesses located in the south are from the United Kingdom (67), Canada (35) and West Germany (32), in that order. (Japan owns a bare 20.) Now, I don't know about you, but to me, them's big numbers, representing huge spheres of foreign influence upon our little revered area of this the one-and-only U.S. of A. With eyes wet as a summer melon drenched with early-morning dew, stuttered the words from a cotton-ball-dry mouth-T-H-E N-E-W S-0-U-T-H.

Today, across the street atop the courthouse flagpole, there flutters a big banner I swear wasn't there yesterday. On the flag's massive blue background there's a large red and white "plus" mark in the middle, with narrower red and white bands of color branching off at 45-degree angles to the center's intersecting bands (United Kingdom); in the middle of the large red and white "plus" mark there's the solid-white shape of a maple leaf with its stem pointed down (Canada); running horizontally in broad bands across the white maple leaf there're the colors black, red and gold (West Germany).

The New South. Y'all come, now, gehoren sie?

I'll remember until next time for sure The only one for me With such a laughing face, Grace

Now isn't that nice? (and whoever said my sorries never have a crappy ending?)

THE CONTINUES SAGA of DR. IGUAMA THE STORY SO FAR.

by Ken Burke

A PUBLIC SERVICE MESSAGE FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT THE DUMP

Hi! How've you been? Would you like to know something about garbage? Do you think that a public landfill is a pretty interesting place to work? Then come on down and talk to us. We're

always glad to see you at "The Dump."

What's it like here? Do we ever get used to the smell? What happened to those old love letters you threw out? Do flies really eat until they burst in mid-air? Come on down and talk to us,

we'll tell you ALL about it.

Exactly what do disposable diapers smell like on a hot day? Can we tell the difference between your garbage and somebody else's? Do people sneak in a hole in our fence after dark so they can use the landfill without paying a fee? And, do we gather that garbage up, deposit it on their front lawn, and then have the Sheriff's Department write them a ticket for violating local sanitation ordinances? Well, do we? Come by and see us. We could use the company, and you could probably use someplace to deposit your trash.

Do we want to be called "sanitary engineers" or "garbagemen?" Are we all high school dropouts? Do we salvage fabulous antiques that are refinished and sold for high prices at public auctions? Do we assist government intelligence agencies in sifting through your old receipts and personal papers? Do we run autopsies on the dead animals you bring in, or merely use their skins to make our clothing and cheap, relistic multicolored toupees? At your local public landfill, we have answers for questions you probably haven't

even dreamed of yet.

Is it frustrating to look at PLAYBOY foldouts covered with coffee grounds? Do we get a kick out of seeing your futile attempts at completing the New York Times crossword puzzle? How often do we find wallets that contain cash, ID and valid credit cards? Do we keep track of your birth control methods and habits? What do we do with those old prescriptions that you've emptied from your medicine cabinet? Do we have a special place for underwear, or do we allow it to mix discreetly with the rest of the garbage? Do we make a fortune on the side recycling the materials that you should have, and do we resent you for contributing to the rapid decline of our

planet's environment? Just ask us, we'll tell you. I promise. We're here during regular hours at regular times. We might move or shift a little, but we'll never go out of business. In fact garbage is THE business of our times. There's a real future in In fact. sanitation, one you might like to talk to your children about when they're looking into career opportunities. So bring your kids heck, bring the whole family down to your local sanitary landfill. Make a day of it. Don't worry about imposing or putting us out.

Remember—We're always glad to see you, at The Dump.

Paid for by the "poor lonely devils" at your local sanitary

HOMEBUYERS' MARKET A Hexaweekly Real Estate Review

by Brian Ruddy

Greetings, homebuyers. It's so nice to be with you once again. I'm eager to tell you all about a wonderful new residential community out in central New Jersey; but if I may, I'd like to start off on a personal note regarding the unfortunate illness which necessitated my absence from these pages for six long months.

First and foremost, I would like to thank those of you who expressed your sympathy and concern through your heartwarming cards, letters and gifts. (My special thanks go out to Mr. Y. of Key West.) As for my present condition, I am delighted to announce that my recovery is complete. I only wish that I could say the same for the hundreds of men who, like myself, have suffered both the physical pain and social stigma of spontaneous testicular implosion. All I can say is, hang in there, fellas!

And now, down to business.

Our spotlight this time is on central New Jersey's Pointe O' Prejudice, a sprawling new community of luxurious yet affordable townhouses.

Nestled in the rustic, peaceful heart of Alabaster County, Pointe O' Prejudice gives new meaning to the word "exclusive." It clearly is the ideal community for truly discriminating homebuy-(Certain enemies of mine have spread a malicious rumor to the effect that I personally have a large financial stake in the Pointe O' Prejudice development, and that I would do anything, absolutely anything in my power to promote sales—that I would even sacrifice my credibility as a journalist by using this column for blatant, shameless advertising. I would like to state for the record that this rumor is patently false and ridiculous, as will be-10 come clear by the strict objectivity of this review.)

I fell in love with the place the minute I saw it. And so will you, unless your some kind of dirty communist bastard or something.

According to the community's developer, the Helms-Botha Group, sales at Point O' Prejudice are continuing at a brisk pace. "These homes are selling like fatback in Harlem," says Ms. Peggy Cream, the Group's vice president of sales, marketing and hate. "Not that I've ever been to Harlem," she hastens to add. (Lucky

Each townhouse at Pointe O' Prejudice features four bedrooms and 2½ baths, a 12 x 12 family room, a 12 x 20 patio, an 8 x 10 garden shed and a 15 x 35 tax shelter. In addition, each of these elegant mini-estates comes equipped with a high-tech "equal efficlency" fireplace, which is scientifically designed to burn logs and/or books. Why not heat your home and dispose of dangerous ideas at the same time? Imagine it's a cold, snowy night; the kids are asleep, and you and the wife are cuddling close by the flickering flames. "I'm a bit chilled, dear," she says softly. "Toss another Baldwin in the fire." (Talk about cozy!)

The stressed-out middle manager will enjoy working out the

day's frustrations in the community's fully-equipped Fitness Center, a spacious complex featuring tennis courts, Nautilus machines, a 50-meter swimming pool and 24 private child abuse chambers. Didn't get that promotion you worked so hard for? Did one of THEM get it instead? Well, don't just sit there seething with rage and cultivating an ulcer. Why not lay the ol' boot into lit-

tle Johnny?!)

Firearm enthusiasts will enjoy squeezing off a few hundred rounds over at the community rifle range, the targets of which are amazingly lifelike effigies of infamous "civil rights" leaders of the 1960s. (Ten points for a Bobby Seale; 100 points and a month's free ammo for an M.L. King!) Besides the obvious pleasures of pumping lead into these full-size replicas of notorious criminals, the range provides one with practical, hands-on preparation for the inevitable race war.

Security at Pointe O' Prejudice is state of the art. Even if certain undesirable persons do manage to get past the electrified fence at the outer defense perimeter, the minefield will surely turn the would-be intruders into harmless, dark-meat McNuggets. The annoying groans of dying invaders can be readily silenced by the turret-mounted 30mm guns along the edge of the moat. These handy antipersonnel weapons provide the safety-conscious homeowner with devastating, interlocking fields of fire. (Soon to be deployed at Pointe O' Prejudice are surface-to-surface missiles which home in on their targets by the scent of semi-digested soul

food and/or Goya products.)

Gazing out over the sublime tranquility of the Pointe O' Prejudice community, one would scarcely imagine the controversy that accompanied its construction. It seems almost inconceivable that this idyllic residential development was once bitterly opposed by a group of fanatical "environmentalists." (Opposition by socalled minority groups had been expected and was dealt with by the appropriate threats-er, measures.) These long-haired relics of a bygone era actually fought tooth and nail to stop construction of the community. Their misguided goal was to "preserve" the delilate green meadows and useless tracts of virgin pine woodlands that had scarred the landscape for countless centuries. the interference of the fanatics, construction at Pointe O' Prejudice nearly came to a standstill. Only the resourcefulness of the primary contractor, Slashburn & Sons, prevented a potentially dis-astrous work stoppage. The elder Mr. Slashburn made a controversial decision to import hundreds of slave laborers from Gabon. This decision, which Mr. Slashburn described as "regrettable but necessary," succeeded in reinvigorating the project. It also resulted in a significant reduction in construction costs, since the Gabonese workers, mostly ignorant Bantu tribesmen, were paid exclusively in rainwater and starchy tubers. And so, despite many obstacles and setbacks, reason prevailed. Pointe 0' Prejudice, once just a fanciful dream, has become a reality. Fields and forests that once served no economic purpose now furnish the literal foundation for this ultramodern residential complex. Glittering monuments of stucco and artificial brick now dominate a countryside once thoroughly infested with wildlife.

Townhomes at "The Pointe" start in the mid-\$160s range for buyers with the correct complexion. A special low-rate financing package is available to buyers h wing no skin pigmentation whatso-

To reach the Pointe O' Prejudice sales center from the Bensonhurst/Johannesburg area, take I-95 South to Route 287 West. At the junction of 287 and 202 South, make a right. A very far

right. BAT-BUTTER! Convictor <u>~</u> BATMA O VERMON GRANT- 1989

ANIMATION UPDATE



Last November yours truly attended his first "Purry Party" in Philadelphia. The science fiction/fantasy show called PhilCon played host to a number of specialty groups, one of which is into anthropomorphic characters. (Many "funny animal" artists were there, including Mark E. Rogers of SAMURAI CAT and Vicky Wyman of KANADU.) What, you may ask, does this have to do with cartoons? Well, at the aforementioned party, thrown by a number of these buffs, rarely-seen animated films were screened. These films included "Le Roman de Renard" (or "Reynard the Fox"), a 1940s French puppet-animated movie (excerpted from ita actual feature-length version); some experimental works from Cal Arts (mainly under the supervision of veteran Hal Ambro), including "Happy Hour" and "Late Night with Myron" (both featured in animation anthologies from Expanded Entertainment); and Japanimation in the form of new versions of Kipling's "Jungle Book" and a revised version of "Jungle Emperor" (aka "Kimba the White Lion") by the late Osamu Tezuka. Also shown were "Animalympics," "Family Dog," some Tezuka shorts, and the PBS documentary on Tex Avery (which hasn't been seen in the New York area yet). I had a great time!

FILM REVIEW: Once again, Bluth and Disney go head-to-head with holiday releases, but this time Disney is the clear-cut winner. THE LITTLE MERMAID is a brilliant adaptation of the Anderson fairy tale, in spite of the fact that certain scenes will remind you of other Disney works (i.e., PINOCCHIO, FANTASIA, etc.). The full animation makes almost every scene totally believable, as fish and merpeople co-exist in an underwater paradise (some computer animation was used as well, but you'd hardly notice it amid all the action). The adventures of Ariel, in her quest for human knowledge, are sinful in the eyes of her father, Triton (King of the merpeople) and Sebastian (a reluctant guardian, in the guise of a crab-voiced with splendor by Sam Wright). She is transformed into a mortal by Ursula the Sea Witch (Pat Carroll), in exchange for her voice-a voice that's etched into the mind of Prince Eric (the object of Ariel's affection, whom she rescued during a typhoon), who seeks a bride. Will these two ever get together? Will Artel ever get her voice back? Will Ursula be defeated in her scheme to take over Triton's domain? Of course all this will happen; it's a Disney film! You'll just have to see it in order to find out how it all works out. Highlights in this movie are (surprisingly) the musical moments (usually an excuse to go out and buy popcorn), the apex being "Under The Sea," Sebastian's declaration of security for all aquatic creatures, done like a Busby Berkley extravaganza. Don't miss it...Don Bluth has an interesting pattern going with his movies. THE SECRET OF NIMH had one song, and dealt more with plot; AN AMERICAN TAIL played more like a musical, and had less plot; AN ARCHIGAR LAIL PLAYED MOTE TIRE & MUSICAL, and had less plot; THE LAND BEFORE TIME went back to its "one-song-more-plot" format; guess which way ALL DOGS GO TO HEAVEN went? Right—more songs (all forgettable), less plot (unforgiveable), and awful characters (voiced by the likes of Burt Reynolds, Loni Anderson, Vic Tayback, Charles Nelson Reilly, and Dom Deluise in his third cartoon for Bluth). The animation is full (some computer graphics are thrown in for good measure, as well as some live-action footage to help pad out its rather short running time), and certain scenes get your attention more than others, but it's too little, too late. If it didn't run against THE LITTLE MFRMAID, it might have stood a better chance at the box office, but not much better. Besides, an all-dog cast was already seen last year in OLIVER & COMPANY. Let's hope that Bluth has better luck with his next animated feature, ROCK-A-DOODLE (also a musical, but it can't be as bad as this film...or can it?).

1980s POLL: Looking back at the last decade, there were many good years for cartoons (with 1988, the year of 'ROGER RABBIT, being the best), only to be counterbalanced by numerous tragedies (such as the untimly passing of voice actors like'Mel Blanc, Daws Butler, Bill Scott, Paul Frees, Jack Mercer and Jim Backus). Here's your chance to give your opinion on what was hot (and what was not) in animation during the '80s. I'm conducting an opinion poll on the ten different subjects:

- 1. Best Animated Feature-Length Film
- 2. Worst Animated Feature-Length Film
- 3. Best Animated (Theatrical) Short
 4. Worst Animated (Theatrical) Short
- 5. Best Animated TV Series
- 6. Worst Animated TV Series
- 7. Best Animated TV Special
- 8. Worst Animated TV Special
- 9. Best Cartoon Character
- 10. Worst Cartoon Character

All these subjects pertain to the 1980s only, so if you were into toons during the last ten years you should have no trouble completing this poll. Send your responses to me, by letter or postcard (at 71 Crystal Street, Elmont, NY 11003-4215) by March 15, and I'll tabulate the results for a future column. If enough of you write in, we'll all know what was truly the best and worst that Toontown had to offer.

SEND IN THE CLONES: As long as we're looking back in time, I have a real collector's item from 1989—Rob Lowe on tape. No, not that one, but a tape of his other controversial moment of the year

-his duet with "Snow White" at the Academy Awards show (the number that pissed off the Disney organization). I don't know why this should irk them; after all, everybody has lampooned SNOW WHITE at one time or another. The most famous parody of the film was Bob Clampett's "Coal Black and de Sebben Dwarfs" (later on Clampett would spoof it again, Las Vegas-style, in the Beany & Cecil cartoon "So What and the Seven What-Nots"). Numerous other versions of the fairy tale were put on by the likes of Yogi Bear, Loopy deloop, the Robotic Stooges (in another racial farce, one which is not offensive, unless you count the Fred Sanford reference early in the story—"Ebony Black and the Three Robotic Stoo-ges"), Mr. Magoo (as all seven dwarves), and Jay Ward's "Fractured None of these versions offended the Disney people, mainly because the Snow White in each film didn't look like Disney's Snow White. Lowe's live-action dance partner was a spitting image of her animated counterpart. Too bad she sang more like Betty Boop...no wonder the Disney organization was hopping mad I'm surprised that they didn't go after folks like Bruno Bozzetto (who had a live-action artist transform a live-action cleaning woman into a clone of the cartoon princess herself near the conclusion of "Allegro Non Troppo"), or even Woody Allen (who didn't spoof Snow White, but the Wicked Queen instead-"I can't have a period, I'm a cartoon character!"-in ANNIE HALL). And the end is nowhere in sight but, like the song says, "I'm Wishing, I'm Wishing ...

MAGAZINE UPDATE: The December '89 issue of Omni looks at computer animation and how far we've come since movies like TRON... The 11-12/89 issue of Storyboard looks behind the scenes of THE LITTLE MERMAID: and features a complimentary copy of CEL MAGIC (Animation Collectors Quarterly), with articles on how to collect cels, and an exclusive look back at the career of animator Bob Clampett... Animation 'Magazine looks at THE LITTLE MERMAID, ALL DOGS GO TO HEAVEN, The Second Animation Celebration and "The Simpsons" (which I will review next issue), with special tributes to the late Jay Ward and Mel Blanc... The Jan./Feb. '90 issue of Storyboard continues its look at the making of THE LITTLE MERMAID and visits the Animation Building at the Disney/MGM Theme Park...

ANIMATION FOR SALE: A hot property for you collectors are cels from the hit TV show "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles." For a free catalog, send a SASE to Turtle Art, c/o Murakami Wolf Swenson, Inc., Dept. B, 2219 W. Olive Ave. #323, Burbank, CA 91506 (allow 2-4 weeks for delivery)...The Cricket Gallery (529 Covington Place, Wyckoff, NJ 07481) now has cels from WHO FRAMED WGCER RABBIT and "Mickey's Christmas Carol." For more info, call 1-800-BUY-CELS (it was inevitable, wasn't it?)...

MIS'CEL'LANEOUS: MTV has commissioned various animators (Paul Driessen, Bill Plympton, etc.) to produce 20-second spots for their new public service ad campaign on the environment, Help Earth (this in conjunction with the 20th anniversary of Earth Day) ... Speaking of MTV, the hottest new video is Paula Abdul's "Opposites Attract," where she sings and dances with a cartoon cat named M.C. Skat. This video seems most likely a tribute to Gene Named N.L. Shart. Inas values seems most likely a tribute to South Kelly, who also danced with toons (in "Anchors Aweigh" with Jerry Mouse, "Invitation to the Dance" with a princess, two palace guards and a snake, and the made-for-TV version of "Jack and the Beanstalk" with all animation produced by Hanna-Barbera)...IJ friend Jim Middleton (aka "The Amimating Apothecary") has given me an update on award-winner Frederic Back's latest short, which is near completion. This 15-minute film capsulizes the development and exploitation of the St. Lawrence Seaway (a must-see for the ecology-minded). The CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Company) is sponsoring Back's project, with a slight degree of skepticism. see, the CBC is known for its in-house computer animation, but Back's traditional techniques are getting far more publicity. Nevertheless, they have Back under a 3-year deal (involving annual contracts). They should have more faith in the man's work; anyone who'd worked on films like TOUT-RIEN, CRAC and THE MAN WHO PLANTED TREES should be respected for his love of life, even if none of these shorts won awards. And now, more than ever in this age of environmental awareness, we should have more artist like Back to express their concern in the best way possible, through their craft ... It's official -- Streamline Pictures has acquired the U.S. rights to present AKIRA, the highly-praised Japanese animated feature based on the graphic novel about telepathic people in the 21st Century. As with previous films from Streamline, it will be seen in limited release in your area very soon...Production has already begun on one of this falls Saturday morning shows, featuring the New Kids on the Block. The hot rock group will appear in both live-action and animated segments...First it was Whoopi Goldberg, then Jonathan Winters; now another name has been added to the list of proposed celebrities whose style of humor would make an excellent cartoon character. Would you believe-Roseanne Barr? It's still speculation on the part of Hollywood (remember all those ideas for animated pilots starring Rodney Dangerfield? Have you seen any of them? Neither have I).

PREDICTIONS FOR 1990: Here are some early speculations for this first year in the last decade of this millenium, in terms of award nominations. Once again, I see at least one American contending for an Academy Award in the Best Animated Short Subject category. My choice comes down to a toss-up between Bill Plympton's "25 Ways to Quit Smoking" and John Lasseter and William Reeves' "Knickknack" from Pixar. (Nominations will be announced around mid-Pebruary.) As for my early predictions for an Outstanding Animated Program Emmy Award, two shows are easy frontrunners: Ralph Bakshi's adaptation of Dr. Seuss' "The Butter Battle Book" (TNT) and Matt Groening's tribute to the holidays,

Khasky-Csupo's "The Simpsons' Christmas Special" (Fox.) (Nominees will be announced later this summer.) Let's see if I'll fare better this year in my predictions (knock on wood)...

fare better this year in my predictions (which on wood)...

OBITS: Hollywood songwriter Sammy Lerner died of cancer on
December 13. He was 86. Though he'd wished to be remembered for
songs like "Is It True What They Say About Dirie?" and Marlene
Dietrich's song from THE BLUE ANGEL, "Falling In Love Again,"
Lerner will probably be long remembered for two toon tunes, "I'm Lerner will probably be long remembered for two toon tunes, "I'm Popeye the Sailor Man" and the Betty Boop theme ("...made of pen and ink/She could win you with her wink..."), both popular title songs for the works of Max and Dave Fleischer...British-born comic and character actor Terry-Thomas succumbed on January 8, after a long battle with Parkinson's Disease. He was 78. cognized for his gap-toothed grin, his pencil-thin moustache and his cigarette holder, he was best remembered for film comedies such as I'M ALL RIGHT, JACK and IT'S A MAD...WORLD. His dignified voice was used in two animated features, Jules Bass' "The Daydreamer" (as one of two con artists in the "Emperor's New Clothes" segment) and Disney Studios' "Robin Hood" (as Sir Hiss, a snake whose personality as a lovable villain was enhanced by the animators when they gave him a gap between his teeth similar to his

OVERNEARD.



"What you shave off goes down the drain and out to the ocean and fish eat it-sure, they ain't particular."

ON STRESS

by Mike McLaren
I like to pump myself full of caffeine and then lie back on the sofa to see how still I can be. I can think of nothing more fun than chugging down a six-pack of Cherry Coke and then meditating. It's also one helluva challenge.

The latest magazines tell me that I have to learn to deal with stress. Every computer in the office has a terminal virus; a career seminar representative is standing in the lobby door screaming about copyrights; six of the secretaries just gave notice; and the copiers are billowing thick, noxious clouds of yellow smoke—and I'm supposed to remain mellow. They tell me to go back into my office and take a ten-minute siesta. Right-at the same time that I'm answering questions about insurance benefits, tomorrow's

city meeting...and now the toilet is backed up.

What I need to do is jump in my truck, fire up some AC/DC, and hit Main Street at 100 miles per. Is that stress management? You bet it is. Throw in a couple of slow-moving pedestrians and I've got a helluva good time. Am I have better the street of the s feeling better yet? Not quite; give me a minute. Let's run a few red lights. At some point this has got to become aerobic. All right. Drop it into four-wheel low and climb that tree. Yes. I'm beginning to feel better. Back to work and I'm as good as ever. How fast can I type this memo to the New York offices, fax out last week's memos to the branch offices, and torch the paperwork on my desk? Is it lunchtime yet? Should I have a dozen chocolate-covered doughnuts and then wash that down with some Mountain Dew? Would a pot of coffee go with all that?

> Know the forces that shape your life. REPENT! **OUTT YOUR JOB!** SLACK OFF!

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS - 1989 by Andy Plumb

Contrary to media reports on the passing of the Sexual Revolution, Americans are still avidly indulging in a smorgasbord of sexual proclivities, according to Dr. Jessica Widenberg, spokesperson for The Institute for the Study of Sex, Etcetera. before a convention of unconventional sexologists, Dr. Widenberg said, "We have conclusive evidence that people are not only getting off more often than at any time this century, but are passionately playing in a variety of ways that would have been foreign to such pioneers in the study of human sexuality as Reik, Hirschfeld, Benjamin, Reich, Kinsey and Dr. Rubens."

A hush fell over the audience as Dr. Widenberg continued on: "Sexual options available to human beings—even in these dangerous times-appear to be infinite. The necessity of practicing safe sex has unfortunately caused some people to withdraw from any intimate contact, but, on the other hand, it has opened the way for an amazing array of creative, erotic (and some very exotic) expressions beyond hetero-, homo- and bisexualities, sado-masochism, exhibitionism, eonism, partialism, voyeurism, transvestism, frotteurism, etc. ISSE has just published a guide, SAY 'YES' TO SEX, that describes in detail these latest, favest, ravest, most lustful/loving ways to play with abandon and safety at the same time."

As a service to our readers, we are printing a mini-description of many of the Postmodern Sexualities to be found in the ISSE

guide:

Playdough-Masochism: Retreating to a pre-pubescent time, Playdough-Masochists get their jollies sculpting their naughtiest most uninhibited, polymorphously perverse fantasies. Though P&M has been shown to be highly therapeutic for many repressed people (especially those who have fallen under the spell of Fundamentalism), the stigma against indulging in such activity still sadly prevails in most adult communities.

Literosexuality: Taking the Great Book Discussion Groups to the limit, Literosexuals gather together in comfortable living rooms in comfortable homes in comfortable neighborhoods, and tittilate each other with passages from the quintessential lust-provoking, X-rated works of all time, from The Story of 0 to My Life and Loves to Sexus and, of course, The Song of Solomon. Literosexuality is approved (and encouraged) by the Library of (Sexual) Congress.

Bozosexuality: Sex as slapstick humor, sex as pathos. Bozosexuals run amuck in colorful clown suits, big shoes and humongous noses (size is paramount to a Bozosexual), bringing back spontaneity, playfulness and an anarchistic spirit to contemporary sexual-Yet there is always a touch of sadness, of melancholy underlying their reverie, making it all the more real and powerful.

Oi-yeurism: Imported from the Land Down Under, Oi-yeurism is loud, brash, and usually done with a beer in one hand and a battery in the other. It's not a spiritual oneness with the universe

that Oi-yeurists are seeking, just 24 hours a day of merrymaking. Trans-Estism: Practiced by those few remaining devotees of Werner Ehrhard. Trans-Estites dress up just like their Guru, refuse to go to the bathroom for days at a time, and immerse themselves in videotapes of Ehrhard lecturing on life beyond "IT." Though many are skeptical, Trans-estites swear that their ability to experience pleasure is infinite.

Bye-Byesexuality: Bye-Byesexuals have kissed off conventional sex for good and are rerouting their pent-up horniness into activities such as hang gliding, international drug smanggling and the stock market. Some may question the safety of Bye-Byesexuality.

but few doubt the intensity of their orgasms.

Quesbianism: Perennial callers to "Sex Talk" radio and television shows, some Quesbians fulfill their second chakra needs just by dialing the number; others can't get off until they've asked at least three off-the-wall, kinky questions; while Politically Correct Quesbians need to develop an honest, trusting, power-equal relationship with the talk show host before reaching sexual fulfillment.

Metrosexuality: The chicest sex to come out of Paris in years. Once relegated to the cafe set, Metrosexuality finally surfaced above-ground this past summer, permeating every aspect of Parisian It's more an attitude than a tangible way to play, but if you find yourself on public transportation in the midst of the orgasm of your life, then you are practicing Metrosexuality. Don't question it, just go along for the intoxicating ride

Carcissism: The way that some men caress and fondle and virtually "make love" to their automobiles is hardly a new and note-worthy phenomenon, but in the late '80s, Carcissism is being taken to a more overt erotic/exotic level. If Henry Ford were to have imagined the shameless things that men (and some liberated women) are now doing with their cars (classic models of the Mustang bring out the kink in nearly everyone), he would have gone into the cold storage business.

Neon-ism: A Neon-ist's fantasy come true: a night running naked through the streets of Las Vegas beneath the glowing, flashing, dazzling, pulsating neon signs, deeply penetrating and simultaneously stimulating every erogenous zone. An experience such as this is guaranteed to satisfy a Neon-ist for weeks at a time.

Jeterosexuality: Performed while squished into seats designed for midgets, eating food that pimply pubescent kids would reject, listening to cloned stewards demonstrate disaster procedures, Jeterosexuals gain their greatest thrills 37,000 feet up in the air -as long as the airline magazine remains over their laps at all times

I/and I Sexuality: Dancing and swaying to the hypnotic, exotic rhythms of Reggae music, I/and I Sexuals journey beyond the misery of day-to-day life to an erotic paradise that few tantric sex practitioners have ever attained.

POP CULTURE by Elliot Cantsin

I feel really bad. I'm sorry I criticized pop culture. It was inhuman of me. Undemocratic. UnAmerican. The truth is, I can't even remember what it was that caused me to withdraw from society and become a reclusive aesthete. But I've been effectively chastised, and I repent. There's a lot of good in pop culture that I've just been closing my eyes to lately; I don't know why. I wasn't trying to be a snob or anything, I just had this crazy idea that television was bad for you somehow, that maybe it made you stupid or something. I started having these crazy ideas like that maybe the books on the New York Times bestseller list were supposed to be literature or something. But now I realize just how out of touch with contemporary reality I was getting, and believe me, I really have changed my ways. I've rejoined society; I've rejoined the human race, and believe me, you can't imagine how good it feels to be normal again. I've started getting into pop culture again, and let me tell you, it really has evolved since the time I kicked my television set in back in 1980 right after Ronald Reagan was elected. Here are some of my favorite works of pop art that I've observed recently:

I think one of the greatest videos of all times is definitely Ringo Starr's Oldsmobile commercial. Here, in thirty seconds, we find the very essence of "A Hard Day's Night" and "Help." And Mr. Starr's singing of the jingle is definitely his most expressive vocalizing since "I Wanna Be Your Man." It just doesn't get any

groovier than this.

Another masterpiece of contemporary pop is the new book by the Rev. Ralph Abernathy. Now, in my recent state of romantic delusion, I felt that literature should be uplifting, should stress compassion, intelligence and beauty, and should inspire people to make life more beautiful. But now my eyes have been reopened and I see the common sense of the contemporary realist view of life and art. After all, the great leaders of mankind were, for all their energy and self-discipline, for all their strenuous struggle to help humanity evolve out of barbarism into a more beautiful life, simply human beings like the rest of us, with similar human faults. And this is so reassuring to us little people. That's why I enjoyed ev. Abernathy's book, The Sexual Faux Pas of Mahatma Gandhi, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Jesus so much. My favorite part was the night when Mary Magdalene said, laughing, "I thought that carpenters were supposed to be good with their hands."

Another recent pop work of art is the movie FAT MAN AND LITTLE BOY, about the development of the atom bomb, starring Paul Newman. Now everyone knows that Mr. Newman hates the Bomb, but in the movie, the character he plays, Gen. Paul Newman, loves the Bomb, and Newman is such a good actor that he convinces you that he does, and he's so cute that the audience ends up loving the Bomb too.

Now, the movie is historical, based on fact. As in most Holly-wood movies, the historical parts stick pretty close to reality while the private lives of the historical characters are spiced up, historical characters' private lives being notoriously boring, much like the lives of little people which said historical personages manipulate. (One of my gripes, when I was a snobbish aesthete, was that I thought that Hollywood's idea of a spicy life was pretty boring too, but like I said, I've reformed.) The his torical part of the film went like this:

Gen. Newman wants the great nuclear physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer to lead a bunch of scientists in building the most evil machine man has ever seen, and Oppenheimer says, "No way, dude, that would be immoral." So General Newman whips out the Bible, the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution and starts reading passages from them to Oppenheimer while waving a flag in his face and shoving the butt of a crucifix into his mouth. a while the scientist sees the military man's point and they be-

come good friends and co-workers.

So much for the historical part, which follows the facts pretty closely. But of course every Hollywood movie has to have a mantic" (not in may former sense of the term, of course) subplot. In FAT MAN AND LITTLE BOY one of the scientists on the team, who in real life was a man in his late eighties at the time, becomes a young, voluptuous blonde who is a wiz in relativity, does a mean fox trot, and is Oppenheimer's fiancee. Now it happens that Oppenheimer, like a lot of great scientists, is a really compassionate guy, but kind of a stiff when it comes to dancing, getting drunk, and generally having a good time. But the General is great at it; in fact, it's all he ever thinks about when he's not thinking up new ways to kill people. And can he fox-trot! The scene where a drunken Newman sweeps the nuclear knockout around the floor of a Nevada bar is the best example of Hollywood's idea of the hedonistic life since the eating scene in TOM JONES.

So the next thing you know the General and the atomic Aphrodite are in bed and in walks Oppenheimer. Oppenheimer says to the Ge-

neral, "I thought you were my friend."

The General shrugs his shoulders and quotes the Bible: ."The flesh is weak." Then he becomes serious. "You're not going to "You're not going to let a half a million Japanese civilians live because of a little "Don't worry," says Oppenheimer. "You're the biggest sleaze-

ball on the face of the earth, but when you're right, you're

right." What a flick!

THE AMERICAN DREAM (not really) by John See

My patriotism is a source of embarrassment to me. I hide it in sarcasm, the same way I hide all the sugar I pour onto my generic cheerios down at the bottom so I can scrape it up after I'm done with those tasteless o's. (Well, really it's nothing like the cheerios, but I've been trying to write a lot of similes lately.) Mark Twain once said (maybe twice) that there were two ways to lie: to tell a lie as if it were the truth and to tell the truth as if it were a lie. The latter is what I do among my friends ("Oh, John," they say, "do the latter") when I adopt a theatrical tone (I know this runs against the grain of IJ sentiment, but please: adopt theatrical tones, don't abort them) and say, "Is this a great country or what?" An expression of my true feelings, you see, couched (sofa-ed, davenported) in tones and words to make it seem that I am something less

My patriotism is the result of brainwashing, of course. At the impressionable age of sixteen I read books about individuals who succeeded through hard work, always ignoring the opinions of the rest of the people. Also, of course, I grew up middle-class and white. I tried not to, but what could I do? My patriotism is based on the belief that the United States-or America, as we jingoists say—is the best place for people who work hard to succeed. Never mind the fact that I don't really like hard word; it's what I believe that counts.

Enter the NRA and the VFW and Congress and George

Bush, waving a flag, stage extreme right.

The flag, you see. A symbol of the country. Saluted and sung to before baseball games. (Don't get me started on how much simpler the world would be if the Soviets -or Russians, as we jingoists say-knew how to play baseball.) Tears in my eyes, chills up and down my spine, God Bless America and the New York Yankees. Francis Scott Key and my father waving the world from communism by working in a ship's store and my grandfather climbing a tree so he could listen in on a Ku Klux Klan meeting and report the names of those who attended in the next day's newspaper. Is this ia great country or what?

I want to burn that flag.

A constitutional amendment to ban flag-burning? What next? Amendment XXVII: Mandatory helmets for people with bad haircuts? Amendment XXVIII: A ban on foods with a lot of cholesterol? (Sorry about all those Roman numerals. Maybe MasterMath can explain them in layperson's terms—ooh, "layperson," a feeble attempt at nonsexist writing.) I mean, we all know it's stupid (more or less) to burn the flag, and it's stupid to say, "Gee, maybe this time it'll be a good four-dollar haircut," and it's stupid to eat egg yolks; but do we need to change the Bill of Rights?

Well, I'm not really gonna burn the flag. It was nice writing about it, though, and it really makes me feel better. Now I can go on with life, not risk anything, and leave it for somebody else to actually do something about the big issues. As the great Hoosier rocker, John Mellencamp, once said (sang), "Ain't that the American Dream?"

THE KID WITH THE WHAMMO SLINGSHOT by Bangor Zack Bullen

In 1959 I lived in Bangor, Maine. There was a rotten, wild 15-year-old kid living across the street. His name was Pierre D'Breeze. His family came from Dijon, France.

This rotten wild kid, Pierre D'Breeze, kept breaking my windows. He used a Whammo Slingshot--in six weeks, he smashed six windows!

I lost my Zen calmness!

Finally, I yelled at him, "Look, you little bastard -- just break one more window, and I'm going to walk across the street to your house--and shoot D'Breeze!" 13

TRANSITORY

PART TWO by Sergio Taubmann

(There is a race of beings called Transients. These beings are people who, because of the love they've generated nife, are forced to beincarnated over and over, reliving their final days ad forcea to beincarnated over and over, receiving their finat days dainfinitum until they are forgotten by the world. One such Transient lived in New York until he was murdered, leaving behind a widow who still honors his memory. This Transient, however, decides to take action while trapped in the body of a secretary named However, Laurie dies before anything can come of his re-Laurie. solve...)

I later find out (in the body of a middle-aged businessman) that the aspiring was tampered with by a disgruntled employee. I feel disappointed. I'm used to dealing with my killers on a personal basis; this anonymous maniac has broken the rules. Who says

the afterlife is fair?

I'm able to put my problem on the back burner for a time. The business this guy's in requires a lot of international travel. I'm in London now. Never having been to London, I do silly touristy stuff. Nobody's around to notice my host's behavior, so I

don't bother to cover up my occupation.

Thank God the corporate HQ's in New York. I resolve on the plane to continue trying to reach her once I arrive. I focus my attention on the in-flight movie, something called OUT COLD. It's probably God-awful, but I almost never get to the theaters these days. A movie's quite a treat for me.

I get as far as "Directed By..." when the bomb explodes. I

flee from my host's many tiny pieces as they plummet to the lush

Scottish green below.

In Beirut, my throat's slit because its color is wrong. A bullet settles in my brain after a robbery goes wrong in San

Some serial killer in Lowell likes my face so much that he strangles the life out of it.
A sniper gets me in his sights in Chicago.

One too many drinks makes me real easy to drown just outside of New Orleans.

And every experience adds to the madness in my mind. Only one thing keeps me functioning. The fact that I may get into striking distance next transition makes my deaths easier to bear. It's good to have a goal.

Laurie and I have an uneasy reunion in Plateskill. We're both working in the Roadside Cafe off Route 91. She's close-mouthed after she recognizes me. Her displeasure is obvious. I'm personally surprised. I didn't think Sam had it in him.

She's frying up some hamburgers. Sweat drips down her middleaged moon face. Drops get caught in the folds of her double chin. The eyes are the only thing gaminesque about her now. She doesn't speak to me until we're closing the diner up for the night. The manager is already gone, driving home to his family in his Isuzu Trooper.

"You stole my life," she growls.

"I had no choice. You should know that by now."

Her hand tightens on the keys. The refrigerator begins to hum loudly, its rumbles reflecting Laurie's anger. "All I could do was sit around and watch the last day of my life. I was a spectator at my own death!

at my own death: "I'm sorry," I say. My high, girlish voice betrays the since-y of my words. "Where I end up is totally a random thing. Yo rity of my words. "Wi should know that."

She returns to locking the front door. The wind plucks at her peacoat. I look out onto the empty road.

She comes up to me, her eyes meeting mine. They've already become numb to the experience. "How long?"

"It depends. How much did Sam love you?"

"I don't know. I never paid attention." "Then I can't answer you."

We go home together. Her host has a pre-fab a mile from the Thruway. We talk. We eat. Before long we make love. There's no passion here, just desperation. The act doesn't heal our wounds any.

Sometime after our union is consummated, Laurie beats me to death with her beefy fists. She shouts expletives and accuses me of being a vampire, of evicting her before her time. I do fight back, bruising her in several places before slipping off to the next host. Later, she's shot down by local police while evading capture. I take little comfort in this news. I'm too busy ingesting the ground glass my demented son has put in my veal.

The sounds of a traffic jam welcome me to my next host. The first thing that strikes me is the vitality of this host. It bursts with energy. I feel I could run for hours and not get tired. I feel ruling the world is not out of the question tired. I teel ruling the world is not out of the question. The room I wake up in is small: a chair, a bed, a dresser. All the furniture is pitted and scarred. All the walls have spackling on them. Everything smells of piss and sewage, decay and corruption. A poster of Magic Johnson stretching for the hoop is taped to the wall. I look at my hand. It's small and the color of old pine. My tongue explores the inside of my mouth; the teeth are loose and in poor condition. This does not hade wall. in poor condition. This does not bode well. I never did teen-agers convincingly. Besides, automatic gunfire never was my kind of action.

It's a single-parent household, although my host's grandmother lives with us. It's a small apartment in danger of being con-demned. One part of the wall is exposed, great hunks of plaster littering the floor. I learn that the host is named Bill ("Billie" to the grandmother). The talk of the household concerns Bill's sister. She's almost three and will be moving in with him once the new child is born.

once the new child is born.

I make the expected bellyaching noises and begin to chow down.

Coffee is out of the question here. The Fruit Loops taste gritty;

I end up claiming I'm not hungry. The memory of the veal is too

"But you gotta eat, baby," the grandmother coos lovingly. I agree grudgingly to a slice of toast and Welch's jelly. If I make

it myself.

As I'm eating, I watch my grandmother. Her eyes are different, knowing. She knows Billie's gone. Maybe she realizes what I'm sparing her grandchild.

It goes without saying that school is out. Billie has no job to hide from, no one to keep tabs on him-at least according to him. After my encounter with Grandma, I'm not so sure. The near est pay phone is an antique monster from the '70s. The phone book dates back to the '70s also, judging by its wear. Besides, it's for the wrong borough. I curse myself, my God, my predicament, anything that comes to mind. I head down Columbus in hopes of finding another booth. finding another booth. Of course, I could always call the operator but that's a last resort. Explaining what a kid like Billie wants with my ex-wife by misadventure is a task beyond my scope.
A candy store on Amsterdam and 115th has what I need. By now

A candy store on Amsterdam and 115th has what I need. By now I'm sweating: Billie's coat is far too cumbersome for this weather. The interior has seen better days. Something on the floor is sticking to my shoes like an unwanted lover. Over by the porn rack are some older boys (not older than some of the magazines they jeer over). They stare at me with hooded eyes in an effort to look tougher than they already are. Their hostility is a tangible ways of force. A gangly duy in a red leather inches seems to look tougher than they already are. Their hostility is a tangible wave of force. A gangly guy in a red leather jacket seems to be their leader. He's turning something over and over in his pocket. I panic, consider leaving the store now, but my desire to end my transience is greater. I grit my teeth and enter the booth. One of Red Leather's friends (his bicep is bigger than Billie's head) whispers something in his ear. A bitter taste rises in the back of my throat. It always happens when I'm faced with a transition. with a transition.

The transition.

After the third ring, somebody picks up.

"Hello?" she says. My stomach shrivels up.

"Doris," I say. My inner-city accent sounds pitiful, comical.

"Who is this?" she asks. That cop's-wife paranoia kicks in instinctively.

"Doris," I repeat. I stumble, not sure of my next move.

"Who are you?" she damands with authority.
"This...this has to stop," I stutter before hanging up.
I take a few moments to catch my breath. Before I leave, I hear a tapping on the booth's glass. My stomach hasn't settled yet. My fears shift gear wildly.
It's Red Leather and Bicep. Bicep is grinning madly. Red

Leather leans agains the glass and smiles a shit-eating grin that could chill the Devil.

"I told you to stay in your own area, Nigger," Red Leather

barks. Other boys are gathering around us. "Free country," I stammer, not bothering to hide my panic. Something in the back of my mind's going wild, begging me to run. Those pleas are ignored. They always are.

The crowd finds my witticism hilarious. They laugh at me. Korean owner of the store comes out from behind the counter. Worry creases his face.

After Red Leather catches his breath, he pats me on the shoul-"It may be a free country where you niggers come from-

der. "It may be a free country where you miggets come."
"It's gotta be with all you spearchuckers around!" Bicep chortles. The other boys find this hilarious.

The other boys find this hilarious."

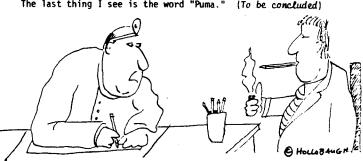
tles. The other boys find this nilarious.
"But here it's our country and your kind we don't need, under-

I'm silent. My host's mind is caught up in waves of red. The blood pounds at my temples in anger.

Red Leather doesn't understand my silence. "I asked you if you understand, nigger. Do you?"

I hold my tongue.

So he hits me.
"Understand?" he shouts at me before hitting me again. Teeth onderstand? The shouts at me before nitting me again. The others join in. I fall to the floor, my borrowed body bursting out in pain. There isn't an area unaffected. One of my eyes puffs over. Red Leather is repeating his question, over and over, the others mimicking him like a malevolent echo. I gird myself for unconsciousness, followed by transition. The floor blurs in between kicks. Through the racial slurs and the sounds of impact, I hear the owner yelling at the top of his lungs.
The last thing I see is the word "Puma." (To be concluded)



"STILL THINK ABOUT SMOKING?

LIFE IS TOUGH EVEN WHEN YOU'RE NOT A WHIRLIGIG by Kathleen Vyn

Sharon Cochran, who has everything a woman of 31 could want, misses having a man in her life. A manager of the Lifelong Health Foods, Inc. in Chicago, she spends her spare moments reading romance novels, often two a week. After purchasing Megan Thomas' THE BEATINGHEART on the way home from work, she finds herself falling in love with the protagonist, Lord Claude Rosenfeller. He is handsome, well-read, brilliant on every topic from philosophy to science.

every topic from philosophy to science.

She becomes increasingly frustrated on her silly dates. But she still goes out with Sheldon, the owner of an umbrella factory, and Ho Lewis, a Chinese dwarf who is living off the profits from his race discrimination case against Warner Brothers.

case against Warner Brothers.

She meets Ho at a Chinese restaurant one night. She's embarrassed by his behavior. He keeps losing his napkin underneath the table. She watches his head bob up and down between the chair legs.

Though Ho is an unemployed actor, he makes money playing vegetables in television commercials. He tells Sharon about his recent job playing a whirligig beetle in an Orkin commercial. "I was baking under those hot lights for six hours,"he tells her. "Myfeelers melted to my nose. The director had to extract them with tweezers." After picking up his napkin one more time, he tells her, "Life is tough, even when you're not a whirligig."

When Sharon walked into the door of the Palmroy Dating Service on Michigan Avenue, her spirits were high. Their advertising slo-gan kept going through her head: "We don't find you a date, we find you a mate." This was the place where she'd find him, her man, her honey, her sweetie, the love of her life. She just knew it.

The waiting room was virtually empty. Photographs of smiling couples hung on the wall. Before she could sit down on one of the chairs the receptionist said, "Miss Cochran, you can go in now. Ms. Wallnut will see you."

Ms. Wallnut didn't notice Sharon had entered her office. She was too busy leafing through some files in her desk drawer.

"Now Ms. Cochran, what can the Palmroy Dating Service do for vou?" She leaned back on her chair. She was a heavy-set woman of about 45.

"You can get me a date with a great guy, just like your adver-tisement says: 'We don't find you a date, we find you a mate'," Sharon said. "You see, I have all kinds of problems with men. None of my dates are ever with normal men."

"I see, Ms. Cochran," said Ms. Wallnut. "We're not therapists. Perhaps-"

"I don't want to burden you with my problems, but-"

"I don't want to burden you with my problems, but—"
"I understand completely, Sharon. We'll find somebody suitable
for you. Just fill out this form. It's a survey of your personality, interests, etc." She handed Sharon a 10-page form. "Palmroy Dating Service will do our best for you."
Sharon held the survey in her hand. There were simple questions on it, such as "What do you fear most?", "What are your favorite foods?" and more complex questions such as "What is your

vorite foods?"; and more complex questions such as "What is your major accomplishment?", "What do you envision for your life in the future?" and "What would you like to change about yourself?"

Chewing at the end of her pencil, Sharon thought about how she'd answer the questions. She would most like to change her voice, her weight, her nose, her height and the way she walked. Her greatest fear was not having change at the laundromat. Finally, she envisioned her future as a daredevil adventurer, scaling mountains and bridges.

"You must want something to write on?" Ms. Wallnut handed her a magazine.

Taken from her daydream as a famous adventurer, Sharon took the

magazine from Ms. Wallnut and put it on her lap.
"You've nearly chewed off that eraser," said Ms. Wallnut, somewhat irritated. "Here's another pencil."

"I'm sure I'll be pleased with whomever you choose," Sharon said with a faint smile on her face.

Ms. Wallnut nodded, frowning, folding her arms across her chest.

The Berghoff was crowded the Tuesday night Sharon was meeting her Palmroy computer date, Marvin Rosenstein. The only thing she knew about him was that he was tall, intelligent, and shared her

interests in gourmet food, literature and gardening.

It was 7:30. He was already ten minutes late. Sharon sipped her coffee and read the Sun-Times. She heard a rustle in the crowd, a silence followed by a mumbling. Had there been a robbery? Or had a famous person walked in...Mick Jagger? Bruce Springsteen? What had happened?

Sharon watched a very tall man, a very very tall man-in fact, a giant—walk slowly from table to table as though he were searching for something. Maybe another giant, she thought; undoubtedly, the giant would be harder to find when he was sitting down.

He walked slowly for what seemed to Sharon to be ten minutes. Finally he stopped in front of her table. Sharon's mouth dropped wide open. She could barely see his face. His features were widely spaced. In the shock of the moment, one thought kept running through her head: where does he buy his clothes?

"Sharon Cochran? Palmroy Dating Service gave me your picture." The vibration of his voice knocked Sharon off her chair. "Yes," she said, pulling herself to her feet.

"I'm Marvin Rosenstein. Glad to meet you."

"Have a seat." Sharon pointed to the chair across from her. She sat down.

Marvin sat down carefully. "I break a lot of them," he said, laughing. Her cup shook, spilling coffee. Most of his torso hung out of the chair. "You look pretty short. How tall are you?" He crossed his legs.

"I'm 5'6-3/4"." Sharon sipped what was left of her coffee. "Why don't you just say 5'7"? It's simpler," he continued. "How tall are you?" Sharon asked.

"I always tell people I'm tall enough to look down a woman's blouse."

What a sexist pig, Sharon thought to herself.

"Would you like something to eat, sir?" The waiter turned to A tray of hot food balanced on the palm of his hand. "I think I will." He glanced at the menu. "I'll have all of

pages four and five, plus two orders of wienerschnitzel and a triple whiskey sour." He looked at Sharon. "I can drink anything I want. Nothing affects me."

"Dwarfs can't drink at all," Sharon said.

"Well, I suppose if you can date a giant, you can certainly date a dwarf."

"That doesn't mean I date a dwarf." Sharon took a sip of her

coffee. "It just means I know about them."
"Oh, I see." He folded his arms. "Dwarfs are too weird for you. Like giants." He slammed his fist on the table, splitting

Sharon looked down. A whole plate of wienerschnitzel had spilled on her dress, as well as the hot coffee from their table. She was a mess. The waiter, his tray now empty, gave her a weird

look and walked away.
"Stop it, Marvin! Behave yourself!" Sharon said, and stood up, wiping the food from her dress with a napkin. "I don't have anything against giants. I just don't want to go out with you. You're sexist and arrogant!"

"But Shar-" he said meekly.

"Goodbye Marvin." Sharon turned her back to him and strolled out the door onto Adams. She walked proudly, despite the passersby who stared at her wienerschnitzel-soaked Harve Bernard suit.

While wandering around the Aspidistra Bookstore on Clark, Sharon glanced through a book entitled This Book Can Change Your Life. She leafed through it, glancing at the chapter headings: "How To Be Happy With Yourself," "The Power of Positive Attraction," "Change Your Attitudes"... What book could change my life, Sharon thought, her shoulders stooped, her hands protruding from her blue jean pockets. I'm getting fat, she thought to herself. My hands used to slip into these pockets just two months ago. She began to remember everything she had eaten in the past few days, the huge Chinese dinner, the deep dish pizza and lots of foods listed in The Best Junk Food Spots in Chicago. What would become of her? Romance novels weren't satisfying any more. She craved a Polish sausage or a gyro instead.

Wallowing in self-pity, she looked up from the book. He was

staring at her.
"Hi, Ho." Sharon turned the pages and noticed that 100-150 were riddled with teeth marks. She shut the book. Ho still hadn't spoken. He stared at the book ravenously, then, when she turned her head, he grabbed it out of her hands. He was eating the cover!

"Can't you see I'm hungry?" Ho mumbled with bits of paper hang-

ing from his mouth.

"Ho, you're not a whirligig beetle. You're a person." "I've spent the last four days shooting the commercial. I no longer know where my life ends and the bug's begins." Ho pushed her hand away from him. "I like eating books." He darted between the stacks and began gobbling Megan Tomas' Beating Love. Sharon

the stacks and began gobbling Megan Tomas' Beating Love. Sharon tackled him and pulled the paperback from his mouth.

"That won't do any good," Ho said breathlessly. "I'll get another." He grabbed Judith Krantz' Scruples. Sharon watched as he ate through the best scenes in the book: the grand opening of Scruples in Beverly Hills; the beginning of the French designer's romance; and the rape scene. When he had finished, she tossed him some of her least favorite and tedious books: Samuel Richardson's Clarissa, Dante's Inferno, Spenser's The Faerie Queen. When he had eaten those to Sharon's satisfaction, the pages ripped and torn, the cover dishevelled so that the titles could not be read, Sharon tossed him Holinshed's Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland.

While Sharon was searching for another book in the stacks, she heard a man whisper to her, "That's my favorite book of all time." Sharon's eyes met his. He was precisely her image of Lord Claude Rosenfeller: dark-haired, handsome, brilliant.
"I love this book, too." Sharon grasped a copy of Megan Tho-

Love in the Sixteenth Century.

"I guess I'm a romantic at heart," he said. "Would you like a cup of coffee? There's a nice restaurant across the street." Sharon nodded.

"Why were you throwing those books to the dwarf?" he asked when

they had sat down at a table.
"He's a voracious reader." Sharon took a sip of water.

"I enjoy reading about investment strategies, IRAs, Ginnie Maes, securities," he said and turned to the waitress. "Two o "Two coffees, cream and sugar. That's how you like it, I hope."

"Yes," Sharon nodded. "I'm Claude." He shook her hand.

"Sharon." She could not help but notice something strange under his jacket. When he raised his hand, a piece of metal stuck out. It looked like a sword. Sharon focused her eyes. It was a

"What's that under your jacket?" Sharon said, after a moment.

"A sword, of course," he replied. "No one carries a sword today."

"I'm not just anyone. I'm Lord Claude," he said.

(continued next page)

"And I'm Megan Thomas." Sharon stood up. This was too much to ar. Her normal man was another loonie. "I've got to go. I've bear. Her normal man was another loonie. got a hair appointment in two years."

"Cancel it!"

Before Sharon could move a limb, she realized how silly she had been. Maybe she should give Claude a chance. After all, if the man's modelling himself after Rosenfeller, he had to be superior to other men. Maybe she had been judging men too much by appearances, superficial qualities. What counted was what was down in-She realized she had been judging herself the same way, by her weight, her nose, her voice. Now she wanted a man to love her the way she was, inside, not outside.

"Claude, I will cancel my hair appointment!"

He looked at her for a moment, dumbfounded, and said, "I knew

SO. YOU FOUND THE BATTERIES by John Metz

At first I didn't think much of the small wooden box I'd found in the hall closet. Wendy had all kinds of little things like that sitting around the house. But the more I thought about that box, which was filled with little round batteries, the more I won-Then finally, things began to make sense.

Although I could never catch her changing those batteries, I knew that, because they must wear down fast, she must always have a supply on hand. Maybe the ones in the box were new batteries, or maybe they were old ones.

I tried to notice changes in her behavior, and I did. She seemed to get tired at times; then she would "mysteriously" find some energy. She occasionally forgot things: she couldn't find her keys or the book she was reading; one day she couldn't find her running shoes (perhaps it was her aerobic shoes), then she looked downstairs-that's where the closet with the box is-and within minutes she remembered where they were. Sexually, she sometimes had amazing energy.

After watching her closely and getting a great deal of circumstantial evidence and after regularly checking the box, which always contained nine batteries although they may have been different ones (it would be hard to tell), I decided I would have to take bolder steps. After all, things could not go on the way they

had for the past three years.

When she slept, I examined her body for places to insert the batteries. I soon discovered that if certain human bodies did, as I theorized, operate on batteries, and that if the battery-operated human mind wanted to keep this a secret—I mean, really keep it a secret-the batteries could be hidden in a variety of places where another human could not find them-at least not without waking the battery-operated person. I still remember the last night when I searched her body for batteries.

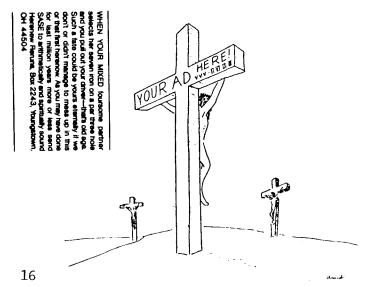
After several months of uncertainty, I decided I would have to ask her. She would probably be amazed that I had figured it all out. Would she think I knew why she operated on batteries? I had

no idea; all I knew was that she did.

I'd tried to catch her changing them, but I never could. discovered that women could be doing a lot of things that men could never catch them doing. They had supplies, many of which were kept in little cases, with secret compartments no doubt. They spent time behind closed doors, oftentimes taking their supplies with them. And in the case of Wendy and me, she awoke much earlier in the morning, which would give her plenty of time to change batteries or whatever.

I would just have to ask her.

But then I thought I might investigate further, to find out more about this. Was she the only person who operated on batteries? Or was I the only one who didn't? Did all women operate on



batteries? Is that why they had those little cases, with the secret compartments? Or was it Wendy and a few others? Perhaps it had something to do with some physical problem she had as a child. The doctors had saved her with a miracle operation, but now she operated on batteries. She didn't want to be treated differently, so she kept it a secret. She could have told me. Perhaps she was of course this is the first thing any idiot would think. Perhaps she was an invention of some mad scientists? Perhaps, perhaps, perhaps, per-haps.

It became extremely clear to me that, even though I had been able to discover what was going on, I could discover no more. I would just have to ask.

When Wendy came home from work, I was sitting at the kitchen table pretending I'd been there for awhile. I had a book in front of me, but I wasn't reading it. I'd just come downstairs because I knew she would be coming home. Actually, I had been doing some writing on the computer and watching the clock, waiting for her. When she walked in the door, she acted as if everything were as usual-I could never be sure how much she knew about what I knew.

Wendy had acted quite natural, for her, over the past month, never letting on that she suspected I knew more than I should. Nevertheless, I was quite certain that she had some idea that I knew. Anyone who operated on batteries and lived with somone who didn't would have to be a little paranoid. But she covered her paranoia well.

"What a day," she said, "I'm exhausted."

I wondered if she'd go to the closet, but she didn't. She immediately began washing some dishes. She had a way of being tired

yet being able to continue working.

I sat quietly, waiting for the boldness to build up in me. It would be forward to ask, but I had the right to know. If she were an alien, which I had decided in sorting out my thoughts that she was not, she might kill me because I knew. Thoughts crossed my mind in a zig-zag way until I actually felt lightheaded. I couldn't stand it. Why was she doing this to me? I stopped and took a deep breath; then I rose to my feet and, leaning forward with my arms on the table, I asked in a strong voice: what's for dinner?"

"So, you found the box of batteries," Wendy said.

I was stunned. I looked at her, not knowing how to respond. "Well?" she asked. Then she said, "It took you long enough to figure it out." I looked at her; I laughed nervously, scratching my beard and shifting my weight in my chair. "So now you know," she said.

I'd always imagined she would be the one on the defensive; I'd always figured I would approach her, demanding answers. Why hadn't she told me? I would demand to know. But it wasn't like that at all. I was actually squirming in my seat. She was making me feel uncomfortable.

"What are you going to do now? When did you finally catch on?" She was firing questions without expecting answers. My response was either nervous, muffled laughter or brief moments of silence

when I could manage it.

"How did you know?" I asked rather weakly. It was the last thing I wanted to say. I really wanted her to ask me how I figured it all out. I thought she'd be amazed, but she seemed to know everything. She ignored my question, so I asked it agaim: "How did you know?"

"And the way you looked for them at night," she went on, ignoring my question. "I can't believe it. You ignored all the.. obvious...places. I really thought you were smarter than that."

"How did you know?" I demanded.

"Come on," she said. She seemed to have changed. She'd become more aggressive, more coarse. "I knew you knew the minute you knew. And not a minute before or a second later."

Whoa. I wasn't sure I was following her. "How?" I asked.

"I knew when you found the box of nine batteries," she said. "And last night when I was doing the dishes, you wanted to ask me, didn't you?" She laughed louder than I'd ever heard her laugh. remained silent except for my own nervous little laughing sounds that I couldn't stop.

She saw right through me. Somehow she knew everything. It was worse than I had feared. I was now leaning towards the alien theory and feeling like an idiot.

When she got up and walked away, I was a little relieved that she was laying off me. But I followed her into the living room to pursue the matter.

"How'd you find out?" I asked.

"I don't want to talk about it. Not right now. I've got to take this back to Mom." Wendy left me to return the cookie sheet to her mother.

I sat; then I paced. I looked out the window at a squirrel on the bird feeder. He looked back then continued to steal the seed, unconcerned.

The house was unusually silent after Wendy left. I thought, but my thoughts were unclear. I would have to sort them out. didn't know what I thought, and I didn't know what she thought. But I did know two things that I hadn't known before: one, she really was battery-operated; and two, she knew that I knew. But somehow there seemed to be more questions now than there were before. I had to sort things out the only way I could. I had to get my thoughts straight before she returned. So I went upstairs and turned on the computer. I retrieved the file, WENDBATT.???. And I continued typing where I'd left off: III. "So, you found the box of batteries," Wendy said...

Commercial McClue-In by "Kid" Sieve

Didn't sit through much of the Superbowl—hey, I have a life, you know? - so I only got to view a few premieres for the new official commercial season. The Coke "Hilltop" bit updated the "I'd Like to Teach The World To Sing" ditty (the first time many of us realized the very thin line between popular music and business and advertising...well, you know, when playing the song was the same as playing a Coke commercial and some of us really started getting pissed that Our Radio was being used that way, before we realized It was using Us) so that it now includes the children of the original singers, right alongside their parents, twittering their little lungs out. It was almost enough to choke up even yours truly, until I realized that out of such sentiment comes an hour-long dramatic weekly revival of The Bradys. The Michael-Fox-for-Pepsi bit was kinda cute, which I suppose is high praise for Fox in the industry; I missed both Paul Newman spots for AmEx but S.H. Otis tells me they were great; and I still rank the Jay Lema spots as among the most entertaining. When you've got a good delivery, you can sell all you want; they'll buy more.

I did torture myself to stick around for the entire 1989 Vanna White-hosted Clio Awards last month, and I hope you're grateful, because an hour of Vanna is likewell, I'm sure my analogies can't be funnier than the ones probably going through your heads right now, so I won't bother. Fox wasted a nice computer-animated intro on this would-be Carol Merrill as she presented ads from mostly foreign countries, which do a better job anyway since they're not hampered by religious nuts protesting creativity as a sure sign of satanic possession. Still, nice recognition went to the Nike spots with Bo Jackson, the Little Caesar's pizza campaign (the fellow who made a pterodactyl from a pizza box, Kevin West, won an acting award as well), and the Nynex wordplays. Also of note was some fun stuff from Down Under and Over The Atlantic (especially a computer-generated Pepsi spot which introduces a UK music show, "Wired"), but I found especially amusing the fact that most of the ads shown were about as boring as the real commercials in between.

I dunno about this American Express "Optima" cam-

Dishonor At Stake

Kirkpatrick Defends American Right To Answer To No One

WASHINGTON (YU)—Speaking to a class of first grade students, for-mer U.N. Ambassador Jeanne J. Kirkpatrick admitted today that America is "totally responsible" for the problems presently faced by the known world.
"Whatever the problem is, we

caused it," slurred Kirkpatrick, addressing students at Merv Griffin Elementary School. "If there's pov-erty, we caused it. If there's war, we caused it. If there's high infant mortality, low life expectancy, terrible point spreads in important games, we caused it."

Kirkpatrick refused to give any reason why America had caused so much grief and misery worldwide, but she firmly assured her terrified audience that the nation would continue to cause trouble at every op-portunity because, "America is still the greatest country in the world, and no one should forget it. Except maybe the President. Or his wife

She then went on to scold the first graders, most of whom were crying, for their "poor civic val-ues," "reckless concept of free-

"Bob" brings a **NEW DESTINY** FOR AMERICA Send \$1 to help support truth, justice, the American Way & your precious bodily fluids.

dom," and their absolute inability to grasp the rules of self-government and the rule of law and "whatever else we tell you."

In her closing remarks, Kirkpatrick, who suffers from a brain tumor that doctors have been unable to locate, reaffirmed her loyalty to our great and noble cause" clutching her head and collapsing. Her body was then trampled as the students rushed outside for recess.

School officials, claiming Ms. Kirkpatrick was never invited to speak at the school, are still trying to determine how she managed to slip by the hall monitor.

Yossarian Universal



Rodney Eric Griffith's IÑDIG NATION 1812-1966

"I promise," she said. "I'll be worth the wait."

He looked at her sullenly as if stung by her pusilanimous aversion to romance. For a very long time he stared at the ceiling, feeling very sorry for the abuse of monochrome...

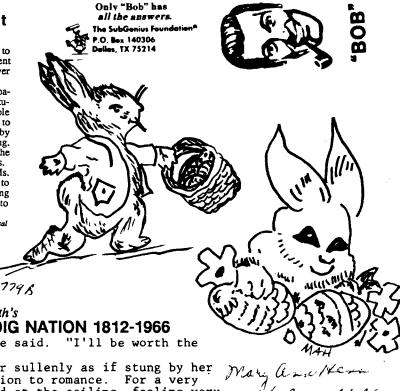
And then he spoke: "Baby, you're not even worth the tyme."

paign, do you? I mean, Real Families making Real Dreams come true, tugging Real Heartstrings? I want to see these wholesome whitefolks' expressions when the Real Bills come in which they must pay with Real Money...

A few items from the paper and then I'll wrap things up for this time. ABC and CBS refused to run a recent ad for the cold pills Drixoral which featured Bush and Gorbachev shaking hands at Malta last year (before or after the seasickness, it doesn't say). The tag line is, "In the New Year, may the only cold war in the world be the one we're fighting." One wonders if the browhaha was really due to using unauthorized news film in a commercial context, or the product's apparent desire for an end to a philosophy that has kept America in guns and out of butter for its own citizens for the past 40 years ... Seems even the once-sacred ground of video arcade games is no longer safe from Adland. Someone's paying someone at Sega to design games like Super Monaco GP with huge billboards, banners, and logos in the crowd and on the racecars all saying "Marlboro" (says the news item, "Occasionally the cars race past a building in which all the windows have been replaced by Marlboro logos"), and Power Drift, in which cars race past Budweiser billboards (presumably not crashing into them with Bud-guzzling drivers at the helm?). Philip Morris (Marlboro) is aghast; Anheuser Busch (Budweiser) is appalled; says Dave Rosen, Sega's board co-chairman, "There is absolutely no form of paid or intentional advertising displayed in any of Sega's arcade or consumer video games." Uh huh. And if you believe that, you'll believe that Just Saying No To Drugs doesn't count if the drugs are cigarettes or alcohol, the most dangerous drugs of all and the most legal.

Quite frankly, recent events have just been too much me. I think I hit my nadir when I saw a news item showing Saatchi & Saatchi workers hoisting a banner on the East German side of the somewhat-intact Berlin Wall, proclaiming "SAATCHI & SAATCHI: FIRST OVER THE WALL." It's been that kind of decade so far, troops. Here's hoping the capitalists don't realize the East Europeans despise our way of life perhaps even more than centralized corrupt bureaucracies (hey, wait a minute, isn't that our way of life too?) until it's too late. Have a

gosh darn swell decade, bozos and bozoettes.



interstate

by Vincenzo Beiser PART TWO

(In the preceding half of this story, our narrator Linus abandons a New York overrun by warring gangs of heavily-armed evangelical Christians, drug dealers and police for San Francisco. In the city's decaying downtown he connects with a bunch of squatters in habiting an abandoned Bank of America, and has just been offered a tour of the place.)

I actually wanted to help Kurt smoke the joint, but I thought saying so would be poor guest etiquette. I followed Syme out, leaving Thawra and Darby ranting at Kurt, who remained utterly absorbed in the work of his hands.

"Good excuse to get out of range of Thawra's bitching, anyway," said Syme as we walked across the dim room.

"Yeah, right," I said. "So how'd you guys get this place, anyway?"

"Oh, well, after the Organization of Latin American States defaulted on their debt, a lot of the banks around here went broke and just closed up. And nobody wants to buy or invest in buildings downtown any more now that it's gotten so wild. So we just moved into this one. It's easier than when we used to squat old warehouses and stuff, but we still get hassles. Gangs. people. And every now and then the cops like to make a big show of clearing out a squat to impress the taxpayers in the suburbs. So this here," he opened a door leading into a room cluttered with electric guitars, empty beer bottles, variously battered amplifiers, cables and microphones, "is the music room."

You play in a band?"

"I sing sometimes. There's four other guys living here with a pretty serious band going. They're called A.W.B.O.I.

"What does that mean?" I asked.

"A Whole Bunch of Initials," he said.

"Oh." I glanced down at a mess of looseleaf paper piled on top of a guitar amp. I guess they were lyrics.

It's 1999

We've run out of time

Acid rain falls on the asphalt plain

Nothing better to do

than to fall in love

"Hm," I said, wondering if they had spelt "asphalt" right. We went up the stairs. Three flights up to the halls and offices that, Syme informed me, people had made into living spaces. "Don't the elevators work?"

"Yeah, but you never know when the electricity might cut off. Some Chicano separatists blew up the main power station a while ago and we were dealing with candles for a whole week. You don't wanna be in an elevator on the thirtieth floor if that happens again."

"Right..." I was checking out the graffiti on the walls. There was a stylized fish with an "x" for its "eye"—a logo from some old band, I guess-saying "Ever wish the human race didn't exist...and then realize YOU'RE ONE TOO?"

"This is my room," said Syme, opening a door covered by a poster of a gleaming Harley Davidson being ridden by a felt-pen cartoon of a skeleton with a spiked-up mohawk. Inside was a big four-poster bed ("got that out of the Sheraton after it was torched") and a lot of clothes scattered around on the floor. That was it.

"Cool," I said. "What do all these notches on the bedpost mean?"

He laughed, scratching at a red and black mushroom cloud tattooed from shoulder to bicep. "Those, son, are my pe-nile victimzah." And grinned.

I smiled back, out of politeness. "Damn. Guess that makes you an ace by now."

"Hey, everybody has their hobbies," he said, and grinned again. We went back out into the hall. It went down a long way.

"So how many people live here?"

"Not sure right now-fifteen, twenty. Lotta people are always coming and going, like you. There's shitloads of empty offices. You can help yourself if you're gonna be here awhile."

"All right. Thanks," I said. (on the opposite wall: a skull

with two guitars crossed under it, and the legend "Life is Pain/ We Are All Insane.")

"That's Thawra's room," he pointed.

I looked at the door. Over a print of a raised fist that said SMASH OPPRESSION was a sign, carefully lettered in Gothic calligraphy. It said:

- 1. We don't belong-as you can see.
- 2. We are angry-as you can hear.
- 3. We want out.

"What's that?" I asked.

"Aw, I dunno, more of her weird political shit. Seen enough? I wanna go back down and see if we can get some fun tonight.

"All right." We started walking back towards the stairs. "What do you guys do for fun around here?"

He looked at me. "Don't you have any fun in New York?"

"Well...I mean, **so**metimes..."

"No, man, I mean the drug. Fun. I guess it's pretty new. Maybe it hasn't gotten to the East yet."

"Oh, all right!" I said, pleased with this information. "What's it do?"

Syme smiled. We started going down the stairs. "It's kind of an opiate/amphetamine cross with a hallucinogenic

kick. It makes you feel like you're having an orgasm all over your body while you're at the circus.

"Now!"

"Yeah, but it only lasts about fifteen minutes. And then when you come down you feel like killing yourself and everyone around you." "Oh."

We came back into the main room. There were three or four more people around the table by now, but nobody introduced me. I considered getting another Schaeffer from the cooler, but figured I should wait for someone to offer me one, which didn't happen. There was a loud argument going around the table about whether some local band should be classified as hyperthrash, speedcore or noise. Thawra got up and asked if anyone wanted anything from the

"Hey," I said, "mind if I come along? I'd just like to check out the area some."

She looked at me suspiciously. "Yeah, all right." She shrugged into a black leather jacket that had been lying on the table. smiling Renald McDonald was painted on the back, holding out a handful of steaming shit. "Hey, Derk, will you let us out?"

"Sure," said Dork (spiky, artificially black hair; snake tattoo). He picked up the baseball bat from where Syme had left it on the counter, followed us down and padlocked the fire door after us.

Outside the air was damp and chill. The alley was real dark, but out on the street there were still enough streetlights and storefronts lit to keep back most of the night. There were few cars now, and fewer people, most of them huddled in doorways with bags or shopping carts filled with strange detritus—a ski pole, an old clock radio, a stringless ukelele...

"Um, Thawra? Can I ask you a question?" I asked

"That's a question already."

Which was such an obvious line I felt both irritated and stupid. I persisted anyway. "I saw that sign on your door, the one above the fist and all, and I wanted to ask you what it means."

She looked at my quickly, her face brightening around her dark She seemed glad I'd asked, actually smiled.

"It's a thing from a poem I wrote about us." I look confused. "I mean the people living in the bank, and the others like us, all over. I think about it a lot." A ragged heap of clothes and hlanket coughed violently as we walked past. "Check it out. are young, mostly white Americans. We are citizens of the chief nation of the tribe of white, Western nations, which are, historically, collectively responsible for the direct or indirect enslavement of all other peoples on this planet, and for the concurrent gradual destruction of all of their rich, varied and ancient cultures. We have, by military, economic and political means, forced 90% of the world's population into a system where they work like slaves and live like dogs so that we can enjoy the food and goods and resources extracted from their lands by their work.

"So here we are, collectively in the most privileged position on earth, on the consuming end of this global production line. And what do we get? What kind of a lifestyle have we made for ourselves with all this wealth and power and privilege? What do we get? We get air full of carbon monoxide, seas full of industrial sludge, lakes full of toxic chemicals; we get a vanishing ozone layer, acid rain and nuclear waste. We've raped the earth and become completely dependent on machines. We live in our cars on freeways, driving back and forth between suburban condominium developments and shopping malls, or in apartment units in cities of infinite concrete and neon, isolated, terrified of each other. The good life is a constant flow of new clothes, new cars, new electronic toys and a place to live where you're safe from the hungry underclasses. We live in a demented parody of life, standing on the backs of those below us, distracting ourselves with cable television and microwaved cheesecake, choking in our own shit.

"We...are the ones who refuse to participate. Look at our hair, our clothes, our lifestyle—we don't belong, as you can see. Listen to our music, our noise—we are angry, as you can hear." She took a deep breath. "Are you following me?"

"Uh, sort of...I dunno, I mean, it seems like when I first got into the scene I wasn't really thinking about that kind of stuff much. It seems like the main thing I was angry about was that I wasn't getting laid."

"That's just media conditioning—they want you to think about sex all the time so you don't see what's really bothering you.

"So we want out-which is our problem. See, we can't stand what we see, what we know-so most of us try to escape, to fill our minds with something else. With sex, with drugs, with music... or mostly, with all of those together. What we have to realize is that the only way we can really get out is to tear down this whole sick system and replace it with something better. We need to dismantle the nations and armies and police forces and build a united, peaceful world community. We need to abolish the newer-bigger-faster-twenty-four-hour-all-you-can-eat mentality and develop an awareness of our relations to the earth, stop consuming so much of its resources and creating so much waste. We need to stop exploiting each other and allocate work and reward fairly all over the world. We need to stop eating meat, free the animals from the mass-market concentration camps we've put them in, and use the grains we feed them to feed people. You understand?"

"Hm," I said again. I blinked slowly. "So how come you wear a (continued next page)

leather jacket?"

This jacket was made from a cow that was free its whole life to roam around in a big pasture and died a natural death, all she shot back angrily.

"Oh," I said, taken aback. I waited a bit. "So you really

think all those changes are gonna happen?"

"Absolutely."

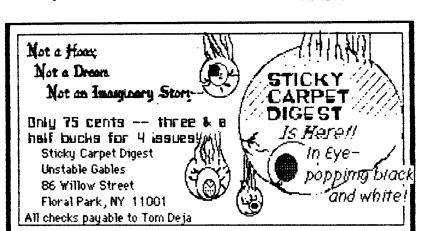
"You know many other people who think so?"

"Yes."

"How many?

"A lot, goddamnit, a whole lot!" I didn't want to make her mad again. I didn't say anything else.

We finally got to the store, two windows full of flyers and notices and a brightly painted door announcing it was a collective selling all-organic stuff. Thawra got some tofu-tempeh burgers in vacuum-packed plastic bags and some multi-grain felafel mix imported from Palestine. They had some organic beer, but it was really expensive, so I went across the street to a 7-11 and bought a twelve-pack of Milwaukee's Best. Then we went back to the bank.



TRUE CALLING

by Ken Wagner

Dodley read a story aloud to his friend. His friend said, "You've missed your true calling! You should've been a reader!"

Dodley gritted his teeth.

Dodley started a fire in the fireplace. His girlfriend said, "Dodley! You've missed your true calling! You should've been an arsonist!" Dodley gritted his teeth and threw a mild

temper tantrum.

Dodley made a sandwich for his friend. His friend said, "Dodley! You've missed your true calling!"

That friend is no longer a friend of Dod-

ley's..

old lady said, "My, young man, you've missed your true calling—you should have been a doorman."

Dodley latched onto the old lady's throat. He'd've killed her too, except that he was sure murder was not his true calling, so he let go of her. Regardless, the old lady didn't take the strangulation lightly; she pressed charges. The authorities really, really, really didn't take the strangulation lightly: they labelled Dodley "violent" and locked him up.

Dodley was painting a picture in his cell. A guard saw the painting and said, "Dodley you've missed your true calling!'

Dodley totally freaked out!

Dodley was in a padded cell wearing a straitjacket at the State Psychiatric Hospital. doctors, an Old Hand and a Newcomer, were observing Dodley through a video monitor.

"This is one of our most puzzling cases," the

Old Hand said.

The Newcomer watched Dodley on the screen in amazement, and asked, "What's that he keeps babbling?"

The Old Hand replied, "He's saying, 'I have too found my true calling'...

"BUSY BOX" by Michelle Man

The worst part is that you don't seem to realize what you did. Or maybe you just don't care that you killed

I care. I can still see that shiny green station wagon rolling forward. Groceries flying everywhere. cart being crushed as if it had no more substance than a structure of tin foil.

You don't even know it happened, do you? Your mother left you alone in the car for just a second. She didn't realize how easily you could squirm out of the car seat.

That dashboard must have seemed just like the busy box in your crib. There were lots of knobs to fiddle with, and between the two front seats was the real centerpiece-the emergency brake.

You're still too young to know what that does, but I'll fill you in. When you push in the button on the end and push it down-I have no idea how your little fingers managed it—the car rolls.

The car rolls, kid. It rolls right over the lady who is heading home to take care of her own little one. crushes her and her shopping cart into one twisted mess so that the paramedics have to take the whole thing. Her groceries go flying; a bottle shatters and ketchup mixes with the darker red of the blood on the pavement.

I wish that you hadn't found that particular piece of equipment. Why couldn't you have found the switches that control the headlights and windshield wipers? Even the turn signals might have been enough to amuse you until your mother got back.

If you were old enough to ask about death, your mother would probably tell you the same story they use when pets die; I just went to sleep. Forever. Maybe you would get a better explanation—that bloody mess in the parking lot of Safeway hardly compares with the birdie lying in the cage with his feet sticking up.

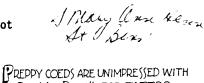
I came here tonight to explain death in a way you could understand. Now I don't think that smothering you in your crib with your pale blue pillow will solve anything. You'll just do it yourself sooner or later. You're the type of kid who gets into trouble. Maybe you'll get it when a little friend picks up a loaded gun that the grownups forgot to put away. Perhaps you'll party too much in high school or college and you'll wind

up with your car wrapped around a telephone pole.
It doesn't matter to me how or when it happens. can wait for a few years.

HEALING by Mary Ann Henn Jacob's father the chiropractor is not a violent man. His hands would be caring be gentle not the kind that would grasp the abductor by the throat no not NOT even the abductor of his eleven year old son. I sense no violence in him but would he if he could love to get his hands on that abductor joint bу joint to heal him make him feel

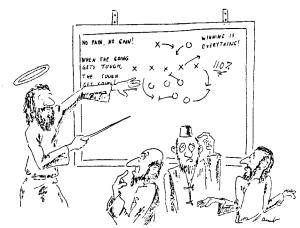
what Jacob's family feels and heal him too?











BEFORE USING PARABLES, JESUS FIRST TRIED FOOTBALL METAPHORS

CALL ME JESUS

(In the first installment, a visitor drops by unannounced to vent a little frustration, having been misquoted in the National Enquirer, and misrepresented by King James, the conversation continues. He is Lucifer, the Angel of Light, illuminating the writer's evening, saying anything he likes about anything he wants to. He is not created, but dictated. This was his idea. He corrected, he edited me. He continues...)

I'm curious about you, though. Every few years or 'Well said.

so you drop in like this..."

"I'm not the only one, now, don't paint an uneven picture. Speaking of painting, it's well known on my street that you haven't painted in years. What's happening?" "You're asking me?"

'Yeah, I'm asking you. I want to hear your side of it before I give you hell—just kidding, old chum, ha ha." What a smile,

tempting disbelief.

"The fine art world is unrelated to any ground-level movement; it can only exist for profit, in a realm where 90% of the populace has no contact with it. Culturally invalid, ethically vacant. I paint with life, my canvas is life and lives of people I touch. That is my fine art. These paintings that I've done have cost me plenty, they cost me years of my life, and return no life to me. That is a bad equation. And that is why I haven't painted. I believe that I will paint again some day, when life flows back to me from wherever I've sent it. Right now it isn't critical to me. It's only a belief, and a belief is a suspicion of fact. A suspicion after all, what do I know?"

"That sounds like you, Daza. But you are writing, this bit for

example..."

'This, Jesus, is fiction. It's dictation. No one will believe you really popped in to chat, so it'll be taken as an invention of

I'll get the credit."

""What anyone believes is their own affair. The difference between fact and fiction is point of reference. What percentage of your life do you know of as fact? This moment is very real. The future is fiction. Your past is a subjective variety of what you were aware at one time, but no longer. Your awareness has changed, the past has changed, maybe some of the facts look different—it's fiction, I'm telling you. The universe is largely chaotic from a human point of view. Chaos is quite natural. Chaos is not evil."

"Chaos is a secret organization."

"Oh, get smart! Chaos is an endless pool of raw material. Evil is conscious application in a manner corrosive to life, of knowledge. But this is one of my better-known methods, and it yields great results."

"All right then, you cultivate evil-"

"No, I practice evil methods. Humans cultivate evil. I use whatever methods necessary to assist the individual in carrying out their own fiction, created or recreated by themselves. Que often simply giving people what they want is sufficient. You know, Daza, how often I am the 'miracle worker' in some people's lives, praised as the angel I am?" he said smugly. "Do you know of any god or goddess to whom you would yield a point of practice, a judgement call?"

"I would yield to whatever was more appropriate a tool than my person, but it so happens the others are of the same order, and the natural flow of metaphorical gravity always takes me where I belong. The God that most of this world prays to isn't quite organized, as the picture has been given, and we should all be grateful for that. It's been trying to organize since Jewish rabbis decided it was a great way to exercise control, and confuse people. Jewish mystics knew better, the Hasidim knew better, but neither of these groups live within humanity; they live for themselves. Christian ministers were just as small-minded and slightly more terrified by the mysterious beauty and power of a 20 woman. So Christian ministers fucked themselves. The tradition continues."

"Jesus, you fill me full of peace of mind. Your descriptions are not designed to instill a stable, Disneyesque picture I was supposed to believe in since the Fifties. I think-"

"Then don't think. Your thinking practice always constructs a proposition to fit the object of the process, destined to yield an explainable description, a rational conclusion, the great summa-tion. By applying yourself this way, chaos takes a more desirable shape, one that will ultimately break down without adaptation. This pleases most of us, we can reuse that for something else, but for you it's a temporary flash. I belong to an organization called T.O.C.—Think Off-Center. It's an idea someone came up with to help people who are too centered, when everything seems so balanced and perfect you could hit them over the head with their own nonsense. I'm all for it. I've seen a boring number of Centers for this and that, supposed hubs of the wheel they fictionally represent."

"I'll bet you play around with those self-help books and New

Age wizard techniques."

"No, I don't. I don't create, as I said. Neither do I deceive, but I can push the buttons you create, that you respond to. New Age ideas are untested in most people's conceptions, and they don't deliver what they promise. They are taken up not so much as alternative perceptual techniques for because people are lazy, or desperate. They appear to be a short cut, an asset that gives you an edge, an excuse to behave and dress peculiarly. The reality is you still have to meet your obligations, you still have to decide for yourself about your own life. No agent, mortal or immortal, can tell you properly how to live. If you can't make up your own mind, if you don't know what's in your own heart, so to speak, following the lead of another will bring you round to the same point of indecision, again and again, and I will be there. your life to mean anything, it has to be lived by you. That doesn't mean no one will have any influence or import, but when it's over you will have as much content as you put into it. Better to make the wrong choice than none. It's the shortest route to finding yourself, after genius. Choose, and discover."

"I'm curious. If it isn't you that someone channeling talks with, who is deceiving them?"

"Sometimes people access an independent entity. This entity is entirely in a different universe, different perspective. That alone is useful, even if it's fiction, not fact. access another particle of their own nature and think it's an independent spirit guide. For the most part non-physical characters have lives of their own and can't be bothered with your frustra-They mostly know what they're talking about, but it's restricted, however marvelous. Restricted to their view of things. You still have to decide for yourself, to commit yourself, right or wrong."

"Still valid, keeping in mind it's a different view, different

values, priorities...

"Yeah, but any stranger might give you a refreshingly different view. You can spend a lifetime sorting out exactly who you think is your guide and if in fact they can be taken at their word or with salt. You're not living for their benefit, they have their own life, plus what is stolen from yours. There are plenty of pranksters who, upon finding the faithful channeller, have a party. They are the irregular characters in your own psyche, capable of seizing such an opportunity. And then there are the many gods, goddesses and angels people supposedly contact, characters Keep in mind, any relationship must be mutually beneficial to be healthy. We need each other, it's at least two-sided. Your psyche gives me form, my essence is my own. Without you I would still be. Your psyche is remarkably dynamic; that's why you have such an intercourse with odd characters believed to be ficti-Otherwise we exist as a part of something else, like gravity, fairly predictable."

"I'd rather be human."

"Yes, you don't have to follow your nature. On the other hand, you are not personally as fulfilled for more than a few moments at

any time. One day, though, this all comes to an end."

"Let me tell you what I'm hearing, and try not to distract me because I really just want to say this—You don't show much interest or care about anything except your function. You don't seem

to have any motive, or choice."

"My dear Daza, brother of earth, I am not the heart of this universe. Neither is a god in heaven. That's what's so extraordinary. Human nature so cheaply values itself. You are asking gods and goddesses for guidance, yet in this fiction we work as much for you. People pray to whomever they pray to, give over the essence of their own power to...what?...and yet physical existence is in the hub of creation. Physical existence houses the greatest potential existence there could ever be. God, Goddess created the universe, everything, you are the same essence, you created it, all of you. Is this a secret? I guess it must be. Okay! A prayer, a chant, if it never went anywhere, opens up levers in your own psyche. You access yourself, you line up and contact your association on a transphysical level. Do you remember that TV seto break free or find out who is in charge, the omnipotent 'Number One'? At the series finale he discovers he is. In the meantime he provides entertainment and challenges galore. That's probably more than I should let out of the bag."

"Don't worry, this is fiction, right?"

"Yeah okay. It keeps us all busy, distracted. The show continues, the circus rolls on. So many souls in the universe, living

variety shows. Here comes the smokescreen. See you later."

Mist rose from the floor, filled the room. It was sweet, cool, Outside the wind howled. It could have been so all night -I didn't notice. Hunger. Time to eat.

WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE by James Cherry

Black exhaust poured from the tailpipe of the tired little Toyota as it puttered through the night. The tailpipe rattled noisily since all that held it up was a mangled coat hanger. The left front tire was getting worn and threatened to give up at any moment. On the rear bumper was plastered an old bumper sticker that read NO NUKES.

Behind the wheel sat Lester Bartlett. He wore wire-rim spectacles, old jeans, and a gray turtleneck sweater. On his feet were a new pair of white hightops he had gotten on sale at the student co-op store the week before. Lester took a long drag on a joint he had just lit. The fire of the tightly-twisted joint reflected fiendishly off his glasses. He was getting a good buzz. Otis Redding's voice crackled from the antiquated radio.

"Just sitting on the dock of the bay, watching the ships, yeah, yeah, woooco, yeah, yeah, baby..." crooned Lester.

A big Lincoln cruised towards Lester. This very expensive car was long and shiny and black. Conservatively placed on the bumper was a single sticker that said simply VOTE REPUBLICAN.

William Stokes drove the Lincoln as if he were caressing the woman he loved. His hair was shiny black, like the car, and combed straight back to give a nice predatorial look. His moustache was his favorite feature. It was expertly trimmed and waxed. His cheeks were a little flushed from the five vodka martinis he had swilled at Gino's.

He'd gone to Gino's hoping to relax and forget his problems for a few minutes. He had just sat down when he saw Tricia waving at him from the bar. She was a beautiful red-haired woman with long legs and green eyes. She worked for the same firm as William.

"Hi Bill, mind if I join you?"
"Please do!" he said, pulling out a chair for her.

She sat down and crossed her legs. She was so gorgeous and she smelled great.

"How's Kimberly?" she asked as she brushed back her auburn locks from her porcelain features.

William's loins quit stirring at the mention of his wife. Kim was probably wondering why he was late getting home.

"She's fine. How about a drink?" he motioned to the waitress. "Do you know Dan Fencig?" she asked in a conspiratorial tone.
"Yeah, I know who he is."

"Well, you'll never believe why he lost his job."

"He got fired?"

"Yeah, and with any luck I'll get his old office, but anyway, let me tell you what happened. Old man Quint was looking for him to ask him about the Manson account. When Quint gets to Dan's office he hears mouning coming from inside. He barges in to find Dan and Ruth, the girl from accounting, doing it right on top of Dan's desk."

"You've got to be kidding!" said William, suddenly becoming aroused again.

"That's right, the both of them in the throes of an orgasm right in front of the old man."

William shifted in his chair, spilling a little of his drink in his lap.

"How did you hear about it?" he asked as he wiped at the spill with a cocktail napkin.

"Oh, Ruth told me."

"She told you?"

"Yeah, she's been seeing Mr. Quint since the incident. She'll probably get promoted. Isn't that hysterical?"

"Uh, yeah, it's inspiring. Why didn't they lock the door?"

"I'm sorry, what did you say?" "Oh, nothing."

"Well, I need to be going. I'm supposed to meet Dan at seven." "Dan? Dan Fencig?"

"I'll see you Monday, Bill. Give Kimberly my love. Ta ta."
With a swish she was gone. Only her perfume lingered. The drinks came and William drank them both. Kimberly was going to kill him for being so late.

Thoughts of Tricia, the red-haired goddess, danced through William's head as he drove. Kimberly's wrath awaited him, but for now he had endless sexual fantasies and a good vodka high. Life

Lester was really high. The pot he was smoking was primo. had gotten it from one of his philosophy students, a tall kid named Roscoe. Lester couldn't think of his philosophy class without Sheila's angelic face coming to mind. She was so perfect: young, beautiful, intelligent, sensitive, and she even liked Chinese food. He really hadn't been able to help himself. He didn't really consider it cheating. Darla, his wife of three years, wouldn't understand, so he didn't tell her. Lester loved Darla but he was weak-willed and perpetually horny. Sheila was not his first affair. There had been others, mostly students. He remembered each one with great affection and a certain amount of guilt. He was sure Darla must suspect him. She never asked, though, and always seemed to be happy. Lester pondered this riddle as his car slowly drifted onto the double yellow line. He was so blasted he didn't even feel the bumps.

William was staring at himself in the rearview mirror. He absently stroked his beloved moustache. He didn't notice the misguided Toyota until it was too late.

"What the—" He jerked his big Lincoln hard to the right but it wasn't enough. The two cars clipped bumpers and went into a side-The sound was hideous. The Toyota broke free from the swipe. swipe and went into a reverse spin. The Lincoln skidded sideways

and came to a stop on the shoulder in a cloud of dust. The Toyota ended up straddling the center stripe.

Lester was dazed. He didn't know what happened. Glass was everywhere. He couldn't find his joint and was scared that he might have swallowed it. He seemed to be okay except for a split lip that was bleeding slowly onto his chin. His car was totalled.

William was staring in his rearview mirror again, but he wasn't looking at himself this time. He was looking at the car that had tried to kill him. He was very confused. He was going to be very late now. Someone was walking towards him.

"Are you all right, man?" asked Lester, stooping to look into the Lincoln.

"Yeah, I think so."

"I don't know what happened, it was just like, BOOM! and I was spinning."

"Yeah, boom," William replied. He wasn't sure of anything except this was not his fault. He looked closely at Lester, who was trying to clean his glasses on his sweater. William got out of his car. He was a little queasy but seemed to be intact. He straightened his tie and glared at Lester.

"Are you out of your mind!" he screamed.

"Hey man, take it easy. This is nothing to get worked up about."

"You came into my lane, right at me! Look at my car. I'll sue your ass off, you little hippie bastard!"

Then he began sniffing at Lester. "You reek of pot! You are in major trouble, mister."

Then Lester started sniffing at William. "Oh yeah, well you smell like you been dunked in vodka."

"You're crazy," said William, suddenly remembering he was drunk A crowd was starting to gather. Traffic was backing up. Sirens were coming.

"The police will take care of you," William said smugly.

"Well, if I go I'm taking you with me."

"Why-why, I'm not guilty of anything!"

"Oh really. Last I heard driving while intoxicated was against the law."

The police had arrived. They pulled onto the shoulder behind the wrecked Lincoln. Two armed enforcers of the law emerged and began walking towards Lester and William. William was frantic. "Look—what's your name?"

"Lester."

"Look, Lester, I can't afford this kind of entanglement."

"Me neither."

The two cops were almost upon them. In a hushed voice, William said. "Follow my lead."

Lester just nodded. He didn't know what else to do. "Officer, are we glad to see you," William began. He went on to explain the unfortunate accident. He told how he and Lester had both been trying to miss a poor mongrel dog that was trying to cross the road. Lester, who was standing slightly behind William, rolled his eyes in agony at the story. The biggest cop stared closely at William. He seemed more interested in William than in

his story. "Sir, have you been drinking?" he inquired.

"What-of course not!"

"Sir, please step over here."

William couldn't believe it. This gorilla was questioning his integrity. Lester watched quietly. H felt kind of bad for William, but not real bad.

"Sir, close your eyes, stand on one foot, lean back and touch your nose with your forefinger, keeping your arms in an out-

stretched position."

William looked at the cop dumbly. He wasn't sure he could remember all that, much less do it, but he tried anyway. The policeman watched closely. William closed his eyes, hiked one leg and started to lean back. He felt lightheaded. He couldn't stop and started to lean back. He felt lightheaded. He couldn't stop leaning back and in one fluid motion he landed on his back staring up at the sky. The crowd applauded. The cop got out his hand-cuffs. William lay very still and began to cry.

Meanwhile a tow truck had shown up and was backing up to the

smashed Toyota. Lester walked over to the truck, hoping to stay out of the mess William was in. The truck driver's name was Bud. He wore a greasy cap and had a winning smile.

"What's up?" Lester asked.

"Not much. This your car?"

"Yeah, it's a beauty, ain't it?"

Bud laughed as he began to hook up the car. He and Lester laughed and talked while William fought for his constitutional rights.

"Those aren't necessary, I tell you!" William argued, referring to the cuffs.

"Sir, it's standard procedure. Now please don't make things worse," said the cop, looking tired and annoyed.
"But I wom't have it! I have rights! I want my lawyer, now!"

The crowd was hushed in morbid anticipation.

The cop was tired of talking, so he tried to grab William's wrist. William reacted by trying to jerk his hand away, and in doing so inadvertently knocked off the big cop's hat. Someone in the crowd laughed. The cop's partner had gotten behind William and grabbed him in a choke hold. As William's eyes bulged and he struggled for his life, he noticed Lester in the distance, laughing, and at that moment William thought that Lester must surely be the devil.

edevil. Lester was talking to Bud and didn't notice William being 21(continued next page)

dragged away.

"So you think I could catch a ride with you, man?" Lester asked.

"Sure dude, hop in."

Lester slid into the cozy cab of the tow truck and fished around in his sock for his stash.

"You want to smoke a joint?" he asked Bud.

"You bet."

The tow truck pulled away, dragging the battered Toyota. The rear bumper of the little car was bent downward and made sparks on the street whenever it bounced. In the cab, Lester and Bud smoked pot and talked philosophy as they drove away into the night.

William's left eye was beginning to swell as he lay in the back of the police car, cuffed and humiliated. The police lights reflected off of his face, red, blue, white and then red again. Visions of a furious wife, adultery, lawyers and liberals in Toyotas swam through his head as the police car began to move. Left behind was William's Lincoln Town Car. It sat on the side of the road, alone and forgotten.

LIFE OF THE PARTY by Dale A. White

He couldn't put his bony finger on it. Still, the Grim Reaper sensed that something was terribly wrong.

He checked his appointment book to ascertain if he had the cor-The home office had never misled him. When he arrect address. rived, his pick-up was usually ready.

True, some clients tried to outsmart him. They made desperate attempts to dial 911. They made pathetic pleas about mistaken identity and tried to frame some sucker asleep in another room. Or they tried to stall by turning their last words into an endless speech

He'd been given some tough customers, some bad directions, some wrong times. Yet his assignments always checked out.

On paper, this one looked routine: a John Doe who'd expired in a cold, bleak hotel room. In fact, it was the sort of dirty job any working stiff in the collection business would enjoy.

Yet, for the first time in his career, the Reaper smelled a trap. Although he sensed something fatal on the other side of that hotel room door, he distrusted his instinct. It was too fatal, too much of a bad thing for a simple work order like this.

The Reaper knocked-and received no answer. He was rarely expected, anyway. Even when he was expected, he was rarely invited in. Process servers were more welcome than he. He retrieved his skeleton key from a deep pocket of his shroud, unlocked the door, then peered into the darkness where John Doe supposedly waited.

The room reeked of death. The Reaper took a big whiff to calm

his nerves. When he flipped the light switch, however, he received the shock of his so-called life.

"SURPRISE!" Everybody who was a Somebody in the business was there: Asphyxiation, Botulism, Diphtheria, Dropsy, Gangrene, Incineration, Influenza, Ptomaine, Strychnine, Trichinosis, Typhoid ...
The Reaper yanked his hood over his face, then sneaked a peak.

His colleagues had knocked themselves out. They'd decorated the suite with wreaths, urns and candles; smothered and chandelier

and mantel with black crepe paper; burned incense; sprinkled ashes.
"Who is this guy?" Malignancy jokingly asked the others.
"Somebody phone for an exterminator?"

The Reaper took a mock swing at his friend with his scythe. "Think you're a cut-up, eh?"
"Ol' Bonehead was genuinely surprised," someone said.

The Reaper recognized that voice. No one knew his childhood nickname except his old school chum and Latin tutor, Rigor Mortis.

Rigor struggled to put an arm around the guest of honor. got you a card." He tried to release his grip from the Reaper's shoulder but couldn't manage. "If you could take it out of my coat pocket..."

The Reaper found the card and read its verse aloud, his raspy voice cracking with emotion: "Blood clots are red, cadavers are blue; Venom is toxic, and so are you."

"We mean that, old buddy," Rigor said.

The lights dimmed as Knell Swann, the famous singer, stepped forward to pay the Reaper a musical tribute.

Ever since he heard her sing her first dirge, the Reaper suffered from a crush on Knell. As a teenager, he gazed at her poster and fantasized that he was taking her on a moonlit stroll through a cemetary, that they were cuddling inside a crematorium and watching the fire. Realizing that this underworld celebrity was giving a command performance on his behalf made him want to pinch himself. If he'd had skin, he would have.

As her accompaniest decomposed at the piano, Knell adjusted the microphone. "Grim, honey," she smacked her gums, "I want you to know:

*You darken my life Blacken my days 'Til I can't go on... You give me the plague Snuff out my light Fill me with wrong.. You-yes, you, Grim baby You darken my life..."

The audience applauded, moaned, screamed and wheezed.

"Bonehead's wondering what he did to deserve this," Rigor said. 22 "Well, Bonehead, you are the recipient of this year's Posthumous

THE WAY

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Award." He strainfully lifted a marble plaque and read its chiseled epitaph: "To the Grim Reaper, in appreciation of his dedicated service to the causes of death."

A photographer from The Winding Sheet snapped the Reaper's pic-

ture as he accepted the award.

"I want to thank the Academy of Infectious Diseases, the American Malpractice Association and so many others," the Reaper said. "I don't know what else to say." He pressed his plaque into his ribcage. "You like me. You really like me."

With the ceremony over, everyone started to mingle. "Name your

poisons," Frostbite, the bartender, announced.

After a few Bloody Marys, even Rigor Mortis loosened up. "Remember those necktie parties we had as kids?" he asked his old friend. "All the gags we used to pull?"

The Reaper grinned. "Remember that girl who was so frigid, the

one who played hard to get?"

Rigor pointed toward a woman who was being avidly chased by every bachelor in the room. "Everybody's still trying to catch Pneumonia. Of course, if you're desperate, you can go after that fat slut she has for a cousin." They glanced at Pneumonia's more accessible relative, Walking Pneumonia—who was intentionally moving slowly enough to be easily apprehended.

The Reaper noticed another familiar face. "Is that who I think it is?"

Rigor scowled at an immaculate fellow who was arguing with Syphilis. "Penicillin."

The Reaper was outraged. "Who invited the competition?"

"He crashed the party. Just like an antibiotic. None of them knows his place."

"Don't let him overhear any company secrets."

"Look who climbed out of his wooden kimono," Rigor exclaimed as "We haven't a gentleman in a samurai uniform approached them. seen you since you were a foreign exchange student in our pathology class."

Hara-Kari pretended to fall on his sword.

Rigor pretended to talk him out of the dead. "Don't do it, man, life's worth living."

After sharing a few yuks, the threesome talked business. "The actuary tables in your home market are looking better, Hara," the Reaper said.

"It's the economy. If we can prevent a full recovery from Black Monday, I think I can get my exports close to wartime le-

"That means more contract work for everybody," Rigor said ex-

As the evening wore on, the party became loud and rowdy. Somebody cranked up a Grateful Dead album. As a joke, a few guests tried to force-feed Malnutrition some hors d'oeuvres. The Reaper joined in his favorite games, Give Up The Ghost and Kick The Bucket. And he drank heavily.

"Everybody form a funeral pile," he yelled in a slurred voice.

"Last one on top is a dead man!"

Suddenly, the hotel manager busted in. "I've gotten complaints that this party is loud enough to wake the dead. There's a stink emanating from this room that's worse than rotten meat. Who's in charge here?"

The Reaper boldly staggered forward. "I yam, shur. I yam, am —the Grim Reaper."

"The party's over, Mr. Reaper. From the look of you folks, I think you've all had enough fun for one night."
"Ah, man," the contagious diseases whined.

"You can't do this," the Reaper complained. Before he could protest further, however, his beeper went off. He stumbled to a telephone, dialed, listened and hung up. "Sorry, everybody. I've got a pick-up at Mercy Hospital."

"Mr. Reaper's leaving, so everybody else can, too," the manager announced as he hustled the others out. "C'mon, beat it."

The manager stopped the Reaper before he could make his exit. "Forget it, pal. You're in no condition to drive."
"This is an emergency."

"Then I'll drive you." The manager shut off the lights and locked the door. "You're headed to Mercy Hospital?"

The Reaper nodded as he leaned on the stranger for support. "Sick relative, eh?" the manager said sympathetically as he helped the shrouded figure into the elevator. "That's always sad. Of course, I say, if they're really bad off, they should be put out of their misery." He pressed a button for the lobby. what I mean?"

The Reaper gazed affectionately at this person who held up upright, opened his mouth and belched.

The manager fanned the foul odor away and squinted as he looked more closely at his charge's face. "You don't look so good yourself, mister. Brush your teeth every once in awhile, why don't yah?"

By the time the manager considered shaking the Reaper off, the elevator doors had closed and they were riding down togetherfaster than the manager had expected.

Just as the home office had promised on the phone, the Reaper's $% \left(1\right) =\left(1\right) \left(1\right) \left($ assignment was working out as planned.

SAGA OF THE SOUTH SLOPE by Dennis Brezina

CHAPTER 1 DRUGBUSTERS

Let's look in on the South Slope, where animals and plants with human-like traits grapple with problems bigger than life.

Give-a-Hoot, a law and order owl, is fit to be tied over the sale of drugs by a fly-by-night element in the community. He's so upset that he's taken the law into his own wingtips to lead low-level dawn patrols to spot drug pushers and users. Typically offenders are caught sniffing puff ball dust or snorting powdered lizard tail smuggled in from the far side of the ridge less traveled. The severe punishment for such use-removal of one or more legs for errant insects, feather oiling for offending birds and the guillotine for potted perennials -has reduced the use of illicit drugs while making alcohol use more attractive. When asked about this irony, Give-a-Hoot, puffing deeply on his White Owl cigar, exclaimed, "Well, once alcoholism was so common it was hardly even noticed. But now M' crows and flocks of recovering sparrows are working to reduce the rate of alcoholism. It'll just take a little time."

Another problem is the adverse effects on the young of drug and alcohol abuse by their parents. Take, for example, the trying life of Rodney, a nuthatch. His father climbs around seedy places such as the Pokeberry Saloon where he cavorts with anything-but-innocent Evening Grosbeaks (aves de la nuit) to all hours. He's been arrested for flying while under the influence. Yet, the extreme flightiness of the mother nuthatch only encourages such behavior. To her fledglings she's crazy as a coot. Quiet time in the nest is the minute or two before someone gets lashed with a wet earthworm or a cold lizard tail. Rodney wonders why his parents tied the feather in the first place.

But there's hope. Rodney meets weekly with other "survivors of topsy-turvy nests." He has learned that putting your wings over your eyes does not prevent others from seeing you, that the secret to eternal youth is not arrested development, and that there's more to life than flying on cloud nine or hopping around in the pits.

Another controversy ruffling a few feathers on the South Slope is mandatory testing. Law enforcement animals are insisting on sobriety checks for bees unable to fly in a beeline, crickets caught fiddling around and any creatures, with the exception of inchworms, seen walking erratically out through the swinging doors of the Pokeberry Saloon.

Matters got so out of hand at this singles bar of wild abandon before the last elections that the liquor control board restricted the saloon's hours of operation. Lamented Billie Joe, a burly bluejay, "Closing the Pokeberry Saloon on Election Day was carrying democracy a bit too far."

HERALD THE FIRST

by Roger Coleman

"Nice insignia on your shirt.

"It's a family crest."

"Really? What does it mean?"

"See on the bottom of the shield—those olive branches represent peace. The middle has a dove rising up. Above is a jagged barrier between the peaceful, law-abiding, hard-working proletariat below and the jeweled crown of the privileged classes above. The dove is about to smash the indolent upper class, rape and pillage, redistribute the wealth and teach those patrician running dogs to live in peace and harmony like brothers in humanity."

"That coat of arms seems pretty low on your shirt."

"Well, actually it's covering an ink spot."

The hunter is ted in putting of his loves or love the whehe which in the major ments of the major manager is a second in the major manager is a second paying from the major manager is a second paying the major manager is a second paying of the major ma

A BLOOMING TREE by Richard M. Millard I don't think we could ever be as happy as a blooming tree. with limbs that stretch from earth to sky. Much further than the human eye. A source of comfort for creatures all: the meek, the wild, the short, the tall. A blooming tree is quite at peace with man and nature. Such a feat! It bends with winds from heaven high. But creates no beauty in a woodsman's eye. An ax withdrawn from a leather sheath can change it to spindles for picking teeth. But seeds will fall from careless hands or those that plan rebirth. And the blooming tree will rise again to see the green good earth. Yet wood and flora cannot speak or let their feelings known. But if they could, what ONIO, 480 would we learn if we but

to lis... "Timmberrrrrrrrrr!!!!!!"

chose

OF ANIMALS by A.T. Hunn Why is it aht people treat animals Like objects from lesser sub-classes When truly, it just makes the whole human race Look like so many dumb-asses

For animals know much more than we think You can see it right there in their faces And often I've wondered at how they've put up With us, the cruelest of races

We kill them for pleasure, some dare call it sport, And dress them as clowns for our laughter Or make them work 'til their bodies drop Just to send them onto the hereafter

Yet there is justice, though damn little here, In a place thrice-off times seven Out of our sight, far beyond the stars All animals do go to heaven

So as we worry about our fate Seeking truth once a week in old stories 'Tis kindness to creatures, that's all that it takes, To join them in that world full of glories



WOOF by Curt Porter

Mrs. Murphy's dachshund had pups, and you could say the bitch hadn't been too careful about who she went out with (the dog, not Mrs. Murphy). You could say that because the litter was sort of a mixed bag, and the pup I got was real funny. His ears were too short and his muzzle too pug for him to be a proper dachshund, although he was built long and low like he ought to be. I named him "Yappy", but later I had to change it to "Woof". You know.

Well, Woof and I got along real well together, and he used to go everywhere with me. Most of all, he liked to go to Markie Wilson's place, in South Philadelphia, because Markie had a basement "laboratory", and Woof could nose around and find all sorts

of interesting things to play with.

Markie was an inventor. At least he claimed to be. He invented dumb things that nobody ever wanted -- like a mouse trap that dumped the victim into a jar of quicklime... I always encouraged him, thinking maybe he'd come up with something useful; but when he told me he was working on an explosive, I yelled at him, "Hold it! You want to blow up the place? You want to get

"Sheesh!" he said. "Look -- I'm going to make this real tiny very powerful bomb, and I'll give it to the government. OK? It's

my patriotic duty.

I didn't argue with him because when Markie gets set on something, he's damn well going to do it. I almost forgot about him blowing things up until one day he called me on the phone. you see those little yellow balls I had lined up under the bench when you were over here today? You know, the one over by the window."

"No," I said, "can't say I did."

"Well, there were six of them, and now there are only four." "SO?"

"Well, those are bombs, and I just wonder if Woof could have

"What? You mean maybe Woof's going to go bang-bang?"

"Oh, I'm not sure he ate them; and even if he did, he'll probably pass them in a day or two. Only thing is, don't let him jump around a lot. OK?"

"Sure," I said. But that was a laugh. Woof ordinarily was a pretty placid little guy, but I guess he knew I didn't want him to bounce around, so he bounced around a lot, and I couldn't convince

him how unhealthy it was.

I decided to take him across the river to Fairmont Park, so if he bounced around and exploded he wouldn't ruin my apartment -and maybe me, too. I figured that if I threw a stick for him to fetch, he would be away from me most of the time; and as soon as he brought it back I'd throw it again, so I thought I'd be about

90 percent safe.

Well, he was bounding back to me with his tail wagging like mad, bringing a stick back, when he stopped dead in his tracks. He had this peculiar, very surprised look on his face, like, "Hey, what have you done to me?" And then he let out this tremendous fart. He went hissing past me, like a runaway toy balloon, with his legs working like mad to keep up with his body, and then he took off. Completely airborne, he disappeared into a clump of trees. I squeezed my eyes shut, waiting for the big boom; but there was only an ominous silence. I ran over to the clump, expecting to find Woof wrapped around a tree or smeared along the ground like a 747 that didn't quite make it, but there was no trace of him, not even a fragment of a whimper.

I went over to tell Markie about it, and he said, "Well, I'm not too surprised. Those bombs are sort of duds; they do a lot of spewing, but no big bang. I've got to work on the formula. Say,

which direction was he pointed?"

"What do you mean?" "When Woof went swooshing past you, which direction was he headed?"

"Oh. Well, generally west, I guess."

"Ah. Well, he couldn't have plunked into the Schuylkill or the Delaware, then. He's probably out west of town, maybe in Haverford or somewhere like that."

"Doggone it! My dog's gone," I said, "and you joke about it. You know damn well he's splattered all over the countryside."

I went on home, and it sure was lonesome without Woof. After a week, I went down to the pet shop, but I couldn't find a pooch I liked; and when I got home, there was a letter waiting for me. was from a guy in Ames, Iowa, and he said Woof had shown up in his yard!

The tone of that letter was sort of nasty. The guy seemed to think that I had mistreated my dog, and he had every right to run away, or that I had abandoned him and, therefore, was definitely the criminal type.

Well, I figured that somebody had found Woof's collar and put it on another dog. Just to be sure, though, I hopped on a bus and headed west. And sure enough, ol' Woof was in Ames.

But ol' Woof didn't seem to be glad to see me at all. He growled at me, and I'd never heard such a convincing growl out of him. He bared his teeth at me from behind Mr. Bentson's legs. Even my saying, "Hey, Pal, it's me, your old buddy," didn't get a friendly tail twitch. I followed that with, "Damn it, it wasn't my fault." But I could see that ol' Woof simply wasn't going to I followed that with, "Damn it, it wasn't have anything to do with me.

"You're a real hero!" That was Bentson's appraisal of me -sarcasm, I think. "Why don't you just go away? Leave the little 24 fellow here, where somebody'll love him." He reached down and patted my doe, and my doe, posed arranged by the same body and my doe, and my doe patted my dog, and my dog woofed appreciatively.

BROOKLYN HEAT by R.R. Hilliard

For some reason, one of my most vivid childhood memories is when Pearl Rosenfarb caught my father at the kitchen table in his underwear one night. Not being a psychiatrist, I'm not sure why this is one of my most vivid childhood memories, but sure enough, it is.

If you're under seventeen you should probably stop right here, since there's no telling what effect this might have on your hormones. Everyone else feel free to continue, including my mother. That's because my mother already knows what's coming next since she was in the kitchen the whole time it was happening. ther Arnie and I were there, too, eating meatloaf and boiled carrots, as I recall. I can tell what you're thinking...pretty kinky, huh? But, then again, remember this was Brooklyn.

Anyway, it was hot, very hot. I imagine it was the summer July or August. Of course, it might've been January if it was an unusually hot winter. At any rate, my father was sitting at the kitchen table, definitely wearing only his underwear. That part I'm sure about. I think the rest of us were wearing clothes. Even then we could tell that one day he would move to Florida.

Pearl Rosenfarb was one of our neighbors and was very friendly with my parents. You'll get an idea of how friendly in just a mi-When she knocked on the door that night, I think I was the one who let her in, but hey, I was just seven years old at the Believe me, these days I'd be more careful about things time. like that. Today, If my father was sitting at the kitchen table in just his underwear, I don't think I'd let anyone in.

Like some unsuspecting fly drawn to a naked lightbulb, Pearl came right over and sat down next to my father, right near the meatloaf, so to speak. If you know my father, you know he's cool about things like this. And besides, when my dad's eating meat-

loaf, nothing disturbs him.

Looking back, I remember the talk was innocent enough at first, as they discussed what adults usually discuss at the dinner table. You know...are the carrots too cold?...are the carrots too hot?... should we let Red China in the U.S.? It was then that my father decided to grab the bull by the horns, so to speak, and tell Pearl the truth about what she was sitting next to...and understand when I say this, I'm not just referring to a bowl of boiled carrots.

Now believe me, this was not exactly easy to do since Pearl was working on the main course herself by this time, and how do you tell a woman downing meatloaf that the fella sitting next to her

has totally forgotten his pants? At that point, I really think my father was mostly worried about Pearl's digestion. After all, although my mother's meatloaf is always light as a feather, you can never tell how news of this

sort is going to affect someone.

My father, though, is nothing if not a real diplomat, and given what happened next I'm frankly surprised President Eisenhower what happened lext is limitally supported to the spot. Turning to Pearl, didn't make him Secretary of State on the spot. Turning to Pearl, he let the cat out of the bag, so to speak. "Pearl," he said, "there are two things I want you to do. First, put down your meatloaf. Second, whatever else happens tonight, don't look down and to your right." Well, you know women—that was like waving the red flag in front of the bull, so to speak. You can guess I'm surprised they didn't what happened next. Pearl pecked. close down the whole apartment building after that.

Now that I'm older and more in tune with the ways of the world, I think I understand this episode a whole lot better. Remember, this was the 1950's and Marlon Brando had just made a big to-do playing Stanley Kowalski, running around Broadway in his undershirt. I think my father figured that if Marlon Brando could come out on stage every night in his T-shirt—in front of hundreds of strangers, no less—some of them total strangers—then why couldn't my dad do him one better in the privacy of his own kitchen? I don't know about you, but now that I'm over forty this makes perfect sense to me.

To tell you the truth, to this day it still amazes me how well my father dealt with all this. I think Arnie and I learned a lot I think if either of us ever finds himself in a situthat night. ation where he's sitting at the dinner table wearing just his underwear and a strange woman walks in, he'll know exactly how to handle it. Face it, there are certain things your mom just can't teach you.

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

What the hell! If ol' Woof wanted it like that, I just couldn't stand in the way of his happiness. And besides, this Bentson character was built like a bulldozer, and I didn't care to argue "You can with him and get my face rearranged. "OK, OK," I said.

have him." Then I looked down at Woof. "Good-bye, old buddy." Woof snarled like he wanted to take a hunk out of my ankle, and

I left. I guess that's all I wanted to say. Oh yes, one other thing. On the bus back home, I got to thinking and decided I ought to contact the Guinness people. It just could be that Woof set a world record. You know? Heck, maybe Woof doesn't even have any competition. Maybe he did something that hasn't been done before. Really. Have you ever heard of a dachshund farting himself all the way from Philadelphia, PA to Ames, IA?

THE ELEPHANT'S NECK
by G.R. George
(Although Dr. Reneldi will probably never be immortalized in wax at Madame Tussawd's or even respectfully remembered by a stone marker, the explorer's adventures symbolize bravery in the face of conflict. The following story was developed from an entry in Dr. Reneldi's personal journal. It occurred only two days before the voyager's kayak overturned, killing all nine crewmen.)

The neck of an elephant is thick and powerful. This thought I entertained (with a jazz trio and sizeable relish tray) as I bobbed carelessly on Muambo's cranium. Gliding through the moist foliage, the creature appeared content, joyous not to be carrying a waltzing chimpanzee at a charity circus in Cleveland. Still not totally comfortable with controlling the beast, I occasionally twisted my toes in the wrong direction, causing the elephant to obeyingly trod into a tree or glide backwards through a figure

Omay, my servant, needed rest. Glancing over my shoulder, I noticed he struggled to balance the supplies and mule on his back. I saved his life during an expedition in which I charted most of the PMuotiyi Desert. The heat seemed to melt the sand the day I the reaccity besert. The heat seemed to meet the saint the day a discovered the poor lad. Lost and alone at an oasis, he attempted to drink from the pool. But, terrified upon seeing his reflection, he retreated from the water. Omay, you see, had the "vraisemblance" of a sea otter. I comforted the boy to the best of my ability. I lectured on the variety of nature. I spoke of inner beauty. I emphasized the importance of individualism. Then, I taught Omay to drink with his eyes closed. In return, he pledged eternal allegiance.

Omay's stomach growled, causing a jungle boar to charge our party. It was time to stop and eat. A sharp pain streaked through my foot as I began to dismount. My toes curled outward clenched into a fist and began thumping Muambo's neck like a bongo. Obeying my spasmodic commands, the creature reared onto his hindquarter and began to dance the Can-Can. After ten high kicks, he stopped, twirled and practiced several aikido moves on a charging rhinoceros. Controlling an elephant is nearly impossible with piercing toe cramps. Throughout the elephant's body improvisation, the loud cackle of Omay grew fainter and fainter. The beast shuffled deep into the dark, humid jungle.

I clung to Muambo's neck like Jack to the beanstalk when the wind picked up. Hot elephant breath churned from the creature as his trunk swung back and coiled around my waist. I flew gracefully through the air, stopping only when finding a rare jungle boulder. Bouncing from the rock, I landed in a calm pool of water, home to colorful lilies and death-sucking leeches.

The natives danced comic circles around a pot of water in which I stood. The sounds of drums and century-old chants echoed through the trees as a large warrior poked my ribs with a dull spear. To my dismay, I was surrounded by several members of the Wabasa Tribe.

Their dress was informal, even plain. The skins of aardvarks hung loosely around the waists of the gentlemen. Necklaces fashioned from baboon incisors decorated their necks and wrists. Tiny bones, possibly human, jutted proudly through their noses. Colorful streaks coated the cheeks of several men, emitting the appearance of a thinner jawline. Dancing constantly to the monotonous beat, the men seemed to be enjoying themselves.

The women stood aloof, encircling the men and pot. Many pounded jungle vegetation and saliva into a side dish for the main course. The dancing became methodical. The rhythm quickened. Miraculously, I freed my left foot, allowing me to gleefully tap to the beat.

The noodle in my shirt pocket began to soften. A large tribesman, yielding a crude steak knife, approached, smiling and smell-I noticed an awkward gap between his front teeth which reminded me of my first violin teacher who overdosed on rosin. I closed my eyes.

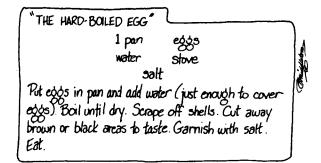
I prayed.

The ugly tribesman lay dead at the foot of the pot; a poisonous dart pierced his jugular vein. The tribe surrounded him, pulling the death bullet from his neck in bewilderment. Members of the tribe began scrambling wildly about the grounds. A flock of Rednez flapped out of a giant Mazardi bush. Suddenly Omay, riding effortlessly on Muambo, crashed into the village. Bodies scattered from the charging elephant's path. Reaching the pot, Omay ordered the beast to lift me from my confinement. We disappeared into the night, much to the dismay of the hungry tribe, who no doubt had to order out.

Fanning Omay with my right hand, I feigned a smile and fed him imported cherries with my left. He seemed pleased to be back with his family, living in his village, and having me attend his every need. My mind was constantly occupied with the thought of escape. He saved my life, that is true, but I could not tolerate this routine much longer.

"There's flies on my nose again!" Omay yelled. I shooed them away, hoping they would return soon. I envisioned myself sneaking

FAVORITE RECIDES



Columbus Bones Identified In New Mexico

EARWIG, NM (YU)-The long sought-after missing remains of Christopher Columbus were apparently discovered today in the burned-out basement of an abandoned adobe hut here. A positive identification has been made by the man who found the bones, Dr. Oskar Homolka, a professor of 16th century forensics at the University of New Mexico.

This appears to confirm our suspicions that Columbus was a diabetic," explained Homolka, who refused to comment on a report that he had also discovered Hitler's teeth, Amelia Earhart's plane and Jimmy Hoffa's socks in another section of the hut's basement.

Homolka was one of the scientists who used similar forensic tests earlier this year to help acheologists in Chile identify the remains of comedian George Burns. Yossarian Universal





out of the village late at night. I could steal a horse and be at a telephone in Brionay in two days. Then I could-

Omay gasped loudly, his eyes instantly growing to the size of cantaloupes. Springing upright in his hammock, he choked again, this time more desperately. His face turned blue. I sprung to his rear, clenched his stomach, and pulled inward, hoping to clear his trachea. Omay lay motionless and I thought I acted in vain. I pulled again. A squealing, whining, irritating noise sounded from his head as a tremendous cherry pit flew from his mouth. It landed a few yards away in a pile of dust. I smiled.

We are two miles into the Southern Territory, known to the natives as "Tiero Prunaas" or "Death Swamp." My camel is holding up fairly well. I wish I could say the same for Omay, who trails by a quarter of a mile, carrying two heavy bags of sand I jokingly told him were supplies.

TROUBLE IN THE TOYCHEST

by S. Prescott Wilson

Gumby and Mr. Potatohead (Spud to his friends) were hanging out in the darkened toychest discussing the recent mutiliation of Barbie when Mr. Potatohead stopped in the middle of a sentence and his eyes became unfocused. He sighed like a rubber raft filled with air that is unplugged and four Ringling Brothers trained elephants leap on it simultaneously. Gumby leaned over from where he was seated on a pile of half-melted Legos and touched Mr. Potatohead on his remaining pliable non-toxic plastic arm.

"Hey Spud, what's wrong?"

Mr. Potatohead sniffed and slowly lifted his eyes to meet Gumby's. The big-headed man with interchangeable parts waved his one arm at the motley collection of toys piled in the closed toychest. He shrugged like a potato doomed to boiling.

"What's it all about, Gum? I mean, there just doesn't seem to

much point to the whole thing, does there?"

"What do you mean, Spud? What are you talking about?"
"I'm talking about life, Gum, life! What's it all about? What's the point?"

Gumby didn't like to think about things like that. He didn't really like to think about much of anything at all. He looked around nervously for Pokey, but Pokey had been used as a BB gun

target by Bobby the day before. "Well," he said, trying to a he said, trying to answer, "we're toys, you know. We live to make children laugh, to give them friends when they're

lonely."

Mr. Potatohead snorted. "And friends to kill when they're That's bullshit! Just because we're small and made out of plastic we get treated like we're some type of sub-citizens—but we're not! We're just as good as any other creatures, better even! Have you ever seen a toy intentionally hurt someone? No! I'll tell you Gumby, if this world were run by toys everybody would be a lot better off,"

Gumby said nothing. This type of thinking was new to him.
"It's time we took some offensive action," Mr. Potatohead said.
"What do you mean?" Gumby asked cautiously.

Mr. Potatohead lowered his voice. His plastic eyes, inserted crookedly into his eyeholes, flashed dangerously. Cumby felt fear deep within the core of his green bendable body.

"I'm talking about escape. Tonight, when the kid's asleep, I'm breaking out. Ken and Joe are coming with me. We're going to get out of here and try to make a life for ourselves." There was a movement behind him, and Gumby turned to see G.I. Joe and Ken. They looked determined and grim, although Ken never could wipe that silly grin off his face.

"You could come with us," Mr. Potatohead said. "We could use you." The three of them waited silently for his response.
"I don't know," said Gumby. He felt very scared. Leave the

Toychest? He'd never been anywhere else—from the store to Bob-by's hands to the Toychest. "Why?!!" he blurted. "What's wrong with the Toychest?!!

"Are you blind?!!" He saw Gumby's fear, and quieted down. He rubbed his one hand over Gumby's pointed green head. "Poor, innocent Gumby. They never have updated you. You're still living in the '60s." He held Gumby firmly by one shoulder. "It's not like the old days anymore, Gum. The kid's getting older. He doesn't play with us anymore. play with us anymore. He's getting dangerous. Look at Barbie." They all turned to look. Barbie was in one corner, melted into a flat shapeless blob by Bobby with his mother's iron. All the toys

had moved away from her corpse. Ken stifled a sob.

"She's dead, Gum.. So is Curious George." He choked a bit and gulped hard. "So is Mrs. Potatohead. And Gumby," he said in his most tender tone, "Plkey is gone too. You have to face that—he's most tender tone, not coming back."

"Come with us," said G.I. Joe. "Pokey would have wanted it that way."

Gumby cried. He sobbed on Mr. Potatohead for a minute, and when it was over he looked up, saw the empathy and hardness in his friends' eyes and set his flat, green, plastic chin.
"You're right," he said. "We've got to leave."

Mr. Potatohead smiled and swung his arm around Gumby's stick-"Good toy," he said. like figure.

Bobby came home from school a couple hours later. His best friend, Jim, was with him.

"What do you want to do?" Bobby asked.

"I don't know, what do you want to do?"

Bobby got up from his bed and opened the top drawer of his bureau. He dug under a pile of socks and came up with a brick of firecrackers he'd hidden there. He turned to Jim.

"Let's blow up some toys," he said.
"Cool!" Jim said. "That's fun!"

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PLAY THE FLUTE (2 put this one in for you, Dave ...)

LIGHTEN UP by David Gunzenhauser

Isn't it funny how people conform? It seems like the world has fallen into a submission. People want to be liked for being what others say they should be. If Sally says that Jane looks like a tramp in her red outfit, it is fine, because she is probably going to a party with the intent of getting laid anyway.

The new fashion is to wear single-breasted suits. Now, this is an economic solution to the middle-class struggle to survive on a \$30,000 income with a \$50,000 budget. What the hell do you do with the six double-breasted suits that you bought a year ago?

I can remember a time when I could go to the store without having to worry if my hair looked like a masterpiece. What differmarket. Nowadays if I dare walk to the market on the other side of campus without at the least showering, I will come to find that the entire school has scandalized the issue. What issue?

I think my favorite submissive behavior comes from manners. will be the first to say that picking my nose in public may be a bit much (although funny). But who is to decide where to draw the line on the do's and don't's of what makes proper etiquette? The question is not whether I think it is acceptable to pick my nose where and when I want, but who was the person who said it was not accepted in the norms of society? I would really like to know who the actual person was who said, "I will have no nose-picking in my sight, or in the sight of others." First of all, I am willing to bet that the idiot who made the remark picked his/her nose within the hour from when he/she so graciously decided what was best censored from others in surrounding environments. Secondly, if I'm not mistaken, this "trend set" is the result of a dictator who obviously knows what is better for me than I do. If I want people to look at me and say, "Wow, what a big booger he just flung across the cafeteria! I wonder what or whom it will hit this time?", I would like that option. That is, I want people, as well as myself, to be able to judge my booger, and other persons' boogers, by my or their booger, not by the theory that boogers should not be shown in public.

Have you ever noticed a real European? I have. They are great; they dress as they FEEL fit, not as others see fit, and they brush their hair if they FEEL like it, not because someone else said that they look like a slob for not doing so. But the best is when a European makes a bodily gesture in public without caring if he or she is noticed. I'm not saying that if you go to Europe you will see a bunch of flying boogers, but I am merely suggesting that Europeans don't have a problem with fixing, adjusting or picking whatever may be causing them discomfort. I have seen, on occasion, a couple of Europeans "digging for gold," so to speak, in public, without a care in the world. I say that this action makes that person a better person. Why? Simply stated: if a person does what makes him/her feel comfortable without the constraining notions of others, he/she is a whole person, not the sum of the parts of others!

I find it annoying that people have to worry about the way other people see them. So I say, lighten the fuck up. Life is too short to worry where to go and pick the booger that you feel hanging from your nose without others seeing you. Hey look, everybody has boogers, and everybody picks them. If God didn't want us to pick them, he would not have given them to us.

The Poet's Diet Book

by Tamarina Dwyer

(At one time there were people who were so old that they spent the whole day cleaning, cooking and sewing. They cared more about inanimate objects than they cared about their minds or bodies. Then there were those who worried about themselves so much that they spent the whole

HOLIDAY AMALGAMATION by Russel Like

Three major holidays occur during the month of February. Groundhog Day, Valentine's Day, and Presidents Day all grace this winter month. And all three holidays have their merits. That is why I am proposing that February be the first month in which the experimental new technique of Holiday Amalgamation be attempted. With this technique, all of a certain month's holidays can be celebrated at once, without the wait, worry and hassle caused by sloppily tossing them hither and yon across the calendar.

Groundhogs/Presidents/Valentines Days need not be observed for only one day. Since three holidays are involved, the festivities should last for three consecutive days. This way, each holiday can be celebrated for three days instead of the one it is presently allotted! New and fascinating ways of celebrating the three holidays can be developed, and perhaps in time a true synthesis of the three will evolve into a hitherto-unseen expression of untrammeled ecstasy—sort of like life in

a beer commercial. Of course there will have to be children's television specials for Groundhogs/Presidents/Valentines Days. But how will they interpret the name and meaning of the holiday? Will they feature the President of the Groundhogs and his romantic pursuit of a voluptuous groundhog bachelorette? Will they depict that part of February when Presidents and other world leaders send candy and intimate letters to their favorite weather-forecasting rodent? Or will they show how, once every year, noted international figures tentatively stick their heads out of their holes and then predict whether or not their countries will suffer high unemployment for the next six weeks? This is, I think, a question for television executives and programmers to consider. The children would be very disappointed without a television special for Groundhogs/Presidents/Valentines Days. I know I would.

Holiday Amalgamation is an untried experimental technique, but if Groundhogs/Presidents/Valentines Days are well received, then the technique should probably be extended. January and March holidays should be added on, resulting in New Groundhogs Years Presidents Valentines Days of St. Patrick. The children's television specials for this holiday might be about a small jolly green man with a broque who perenially propositions a groundhog political figure but is rejected at the beginning of each year. I will leave the details of this holiday's observance for others to work out, as I have already contributed the basic idea.

Barring any unforeseen problems, Holiday Amalgamation could be extended to encompass every holiday on the calendar. The resulting holiday might sound something like this: New Groundhogs Year of Presidents Valentines Thanksgiving for Ramadan, the Fourth of July, Easter and Rosh Hashanah of St. Patrick's Labor and Memorial Days. I know I have left many holidays out of this list. This is because of my ignorance (I don't know all the holidays on the calendar) and laziness (I don't feel like looking them up). But I would guess that when complete, this holiday would last about a month. Think of that! Everybody would get a month off! And although I refuse to suggest a children's television special for that last holiday (I won't type its name out again) without some sort of payment, I sincerely hope the government considers Holiday Amalgamation. And if you support it, write to your Congressperson immediately. There's no time to lose-April Fool's Arbor Day could be just around the corner.

day exercising, taking baths and going to doctors. Honesty is a complicated virtue, and even a rich intern's opinions are honest, are they not? In this chapter, Janet doesn't have time to think about the money she owns Chuck or even about her fantasy beau, Jacques Roiteau.)

Janet shut up. She hated herself now. She had hoped for too much. The mutter of voices was like bees swarming around her, the clatter of demitasse spoons and cups sounding more like chains, the fixed decor contrary to a human pulse.

"Mm, yes, but I can't understand your writing; what

does it say?"

Janet didn't have a pen, and she stood up and then sat down on the bed again in a faint effort to look for one. Her other teeth ached now, and she wouldn't even have to pretend to keep her mouth closed. Her Mona Lisa smile worked again, and Jacques pulled a pen from his tux jacket. He underlined the words he couldn't decipher, and Janet wrote them again so that none of the note was legible.

The music was too loud. Even in the bedroom they could hear it. Jacques snickered and gently grasped Janet's elbow. He stuck his arm in hers and guided her back to the party. Janet got the message. She was at a party. She was supposed to have fun. Candles were lighting the round room and their shadows danced on the walls like fairies.

Janet couldn't stand the ache in her mouth. She forced her way through the crowd to the open bar and requested a triple shot of whiskey. The bartender watched her as she gulped the liquor with two pills and diagnosed the situation. He couldn't stand the way she looked, and left the bottle of whiskey on the bar counter in case Jan needed more. "But don't take any more pills, dear!"

Jan nodded in agreement and looked out at the party guests like a stone or a tree, cheek swelling like a bud, lips tight and pursed like a buttonhole. Jan didn't drink that much, though she was encouraged to do so, and Jacques' friend Henri began to take up a collection for Jan. Jacques wanted her to join the festivities, but she was incapacitated.

"Do you wanna lie down?" he asked her, and she wrote on a bar napkin, "it's not for me to eat to be for i am ill & i miss the tree/warm milk can't soothe the pain that nature causes besides the rain!"

It didn't rain but it snowed. Henri put Jan in his sister's fur midi and helped her into the sleigh outside the building. He had collected money, if not affections, and climbed into the sleigh to serenade her with French lullabies. Jan's turtleneck jersey was hardly warm enough, but the fur coat was hardly long enough.

Henri put his hand on Jan's thigh. The moon was cold and bright in the dark sky, but there were no stars in New York. Henri got Jan a suite at the Plaza and ushered her up the stairs like a servant or a prince. He ordered wine for himself and tucked Jan into bed. It was a fairy tale or a dream; Jan wasn't sure because she was sick.

The maid pushed a cart into the room as the snow fell outside like a winter wonderland. There was a silver tureen of chicken noodle soup, plenty of ice water, flowers and a green pad and pen. Jan swallowed two more pills as Henri shut the door to the bedroom, and grabbed the pen and pad before he could notice the plastic bottle that she hid under her pillow.

it be not right to be ill at ease health of body the mind will appease it is the poor who know the core of thinking right or thinking more.

Janet reached for a tendril of baby's breath and tucked it into her hair. She wrote very quickly, on another sheet of green paper:

snow forces the season to peace for all.
i wish you merry times for snowmen work for law.
gaily the facade changes like the siren colors
 of fall.

between the wall and door of every despair there will be a spring thaw (paw?)

SAYZ-U (Letters)
12/11/89

Dear Elayne,

Say, this Rev. Moser is an uppity sorta guy, isn't he? Writes that everyone in IJ complains and is boring. Well, Rev., it's not enough to say, "Be more exciting!"--yougot to show us yourself, you know? And what of this habit he and Rev. Ewing have of rushing to the defense of McZombie clutter-culture, eh? Are they afraid we're going to run out of shit? At times they sound like Young Republicans on a binge. These are Nihilists? (I'm loathe to stick my two cents in, since when I did this last issue Eric informed me he's leaving IJ, but it seems to me that Eric and Randy weren't defending McKulture, they were lambasting it. Weren't they?

The Snide Critic is still in hiding...waiting for the holiday puff flicks to go away. Probably getting drunk, too. (He needed a drink when he read that BACK TO THE FUTURE II and III were filmed continuously, and that III will be

inflicted upon us next summer.)

IJ #72 starts with swell "helpinghands" cover from Ace, and his strips inside are looking better than ever. Other things that jumped up at me: Daza's "Call Me Jesus," Pru's "Fretting Zoo," Scharff's Monk-toon, Oberc's "Coffee," Ruddy's "...Roof of the World," Scianna's "Psychobabble," Hunn's "Warning: Mime," White's "HardStuff," Krause's "ColorMe Pink" and, ah ha, the deadline demons went and bit Mr. Tortorici! I hate those varmints, don't you?

When you hear the tone, it will be the Nineties. Boing-g-g! JOHN P. MORGAN

185 Seabreeze Ave. E. Keansburg, NJ 07734 15:Dec:89

Dear Elayne,

AARGH. This is what I get for not acting fast. I just found out that these two rare albums that I wanted in the "Kick Out the Jams"catalog have just been sold about two weeks ago. I have had the catalog for about a month now, and procrastinated till it was too late.

Barb, Nick and I just came from the annual Christmas party that one of my competitors throws each year. I was hoping that the band would get started so Nick could hear his first live rock and roll, but the drummer was at the store, and Nick was getting tired. Ick. The holidays. I don't think I have ever worked a job where I haven't hated the holidays. This one is no exception. I have lost about \$1200 in extra labor due to mistakes. It is not as bad as last year, though. At least my step-uncle didn't die again.

Anni: I'm putting off the nineties until 1:Jan:91. I can wait. Kathy: I am afraid that 1989 isn't going to be much better. Ken: Yeah! What a fantasy. Only thing that would have made it better was to have Reagan send troops to Nicaragua and have a bunch of US kids (the real Rambo types) come back in bags. That would have finished off the Republican party well into the next millenium. Then the Democrats could have been the New Republicans.

Pru: Happy engagement. A story with a happy ending that

didn't make me throw up.

Jed: Here is a good question--Where can I get tapes of CRUSADER RABBIT?

<u>Todd</u>: Here's one for your best titles list--The Boston bootleg album, "We Found It In The Trashcan...Honest."

<u>Daza</u>: Can't wait for the second coming.

"Kid"Sieve: Energizer addendum--While in Sears, I saw an Energizer display with the plush rabbit and drum on top of the display. It was about two feet tall. I want it. I'll pay retail.

<u>Sergio</u>: "Transitory" is my fave piece this time through. I

hope the next installment is just as believable.

Steve: I am sorry to hear about CRITTERS. I hope FC isn't going down with it.

Elliot: A brief, but interesting, history.

That's quite enough. I got a delivery tomorrow and then three American Empire pieces and eight chairs to work.

Aloha. And Merry Holidays. Ick.

PHIL TORTORICI P.O. Box 57487 West Palm Beach, FL 33405 Howdy, Elayne! December 21, 1989 "Dear" is just so clich'e...thank you, Michael Fuller!)

It's frightening--I think I get every catalogue you mentioned in "Catalog Crazy" (IJ #72). Somehow I've managed to get on every mailing list in the known universe. Actually, I'm currently waiting with bated breath for my Libyan Dentalware

catalogue...
I have a few items of my own to add to "Todd Kristel's Favorite LP Titles" list (in no particular order):

1. The Firesign Theatre: HOW CAN YOU BE IN TWO PLACES AT ONCE WHEN YOU'RE NOT ANYWHERE AT ALL

2. Michael Nesmith: INFINITERIDER ON THE BIG DOGMA

3. Frank Zappa: SHEIK YERBOUTI

4. The Fugs: IT CRAWLED INTO MY HEAD, HONEST

5. Bonzo Dog Band: THE DOUGHNUT IN GRANNY'S GREENHOUSE

6. Bongos, Bass and Bob: NEVER MIND THE SEX PISTOLS, HERE'S BONGOS, BASS AND BOB (what on earth were they thinking?)

7. John Entwistle: SMASH YOUR HEAD AGAINST THE WALL

8. John Entwistle: RIGOR MORTIS SETS IN

9. Monty Python: MONTY PYTHON'S PREVIOUS RECORD

10. The Frantics: BOOT TO THE HEAD

10. The Frantics: BOOT TO THE HEAD

Also, in case anyone is interested, a compilation of songs about Gumby has been released, as well as "The Adventures of Baron Munchausen," on videotape.

Just a curiosity--what did you guys think of "Erik the Viking?"

Love and severe mindwarp, **DENISE KRAUSE** 37 Abingdon Lane Scarsdale, NY 10583

Elayne, 22 December 1989

I have to take exception to your flagging of "Who's Failing Now" (IJ #72) as being "anti-union." Clearly physical 'education' "teachers" are almost universally villainous in the school establishment. They are unfriendly Gestapo clowns and embarrassment-merchants and I will further charge that they are reproposible either directly or indirectly for some 71% of are responsible, either directly or indirectly, for some 71% of all teenage suicides in this hemisphere. Furthermore, it is a common fact that these despicable humiliators are drug peddlers and sexual deviants of the worst kind! How can a nation be free if our children are subjected to this kind of torture? I cannot speak, one way or the other, on the literacy of these creatures. But if you had a choice between a football coach who may have received and/or given a college scholarship without necessarily having to possess the ability read and a Rhodes graduate, which would you choose? Brenda Spencer was likely scheduled to have a phys-ed. class that fateful

Monday. Think about it.
As for "creeping homophobia" flagged in the aforementioned story, well, Lenny Bruce once said that no child ever came home from school to report they'd learned "five minutes of geography and ten minutes of cocksucking." But the rather crude slant toward the end of Ms. Packie's story could indeed be taken as slanderous, except that it's what a witless high

school concert band would do in "reality."

By now...everyone knows about the secret "Energizer"phone number; suffice it to say I now expect every other commercial to be interrupted. If only someone had the marvelous sense to treat a contraceptive ad in such a crass fashion.

I'm left hoping Al Franken will file for an extension on his

decade; I rather liked most of the 1980s.

Hiding Out,

RODNEY ERIC GRIFFITH High Improbability Int'l. P.Ö. Box 523

Columbia Station, OH 44028

(The following letter is partially a response to my question as to why the writer didn't speak up at the recent REFUSE & RESIST forum on arts censorship, which he attended at my recommenda-

Dear Elayne,

Why didn't I say something myself? Well, frankly, I try to do the best I can. A lot of what my ranting is about is that I think that the anti-establishment has been pretty wrong-headed for the past 20 years and that's why they haven't accomplished much in spite of the fact that the "thinkers" for the establishment haven't really been too sharp. I point that out every chance I get. But I went to the anti-Helms forum on your suggestion because I do agree with the negative purpose of it.

What I observed was very negative people. I don't believe that purely negative people with a purely negative program can accomplish anything. But it wasn't my place to stand up and say so. They could have replied, quite correctly, that the purpose of the meeting was a purely negative one-flag-burning--and that's all they wanted to discuss. So there really was nothing I could say within that context. All I'm saying is that I don't think the negative attitude they showed is going to lead anywhere, just as it hasn't for the last 20 years. If a bunch of revolutionaries with positive attitudes and a positive program would have said, "We're going to do this particular negative thing for a reason," it would have been a very different thing, at least in my perception. But that's not what I saw, and I think the state of conformist radicalism in New York City for the last two decades will bear me out. Frankly, it makes me sick, and it's when I finally worked out what I consider a sensible critique of it that I started writing, and you've seen the kind of cliche'd responses I've gotten. Anyway, I'm trying to be a revolutionary artist, not a preacher, otherwise I would have stood up and told them they were all full of shit. Believe me, I've done crazier things. But as it was, I just walked out.

A recent WPIX editorial was about a "developmentproject"

A recent WPIX editorial was about a "developmentproject" in Queens. An avuncular fellow was standing in front of a pile of rubble saying that a contractor wanted to turn this space into 50,000 offices, 5,000 apartments and 57 parking lots. He said that the tax revenues would be good for the city, and asked, "What's your opinion?" I wanted to write and tell him that anyone who didn't know that the city was overcrowded and overdeveloped already should be locked up in an asylum, not doing propaganda on TV, but I've given up writing crank letters to mainstram morons. He said that the reason he was doing the editorial was because he was sure some crank would come along and try to stop development and he wanted to anticipate such cranks. Wouldn't it make more sense if the thousands of rubble heaps around the city were turned into parks or even public parking lots?

Well, the pressure got to George. Everyone was saying he had to do and say something about the changes in Eastern Europe. So he met with Gorby (in choppy seas chosen by his brother) and...he didn't do or say anything. But he smiled nicely. George is starting to make Dan look like a smart guy with a speech impediment. So, due to popular demand, I'm going to stop making jokes about Dan. Besides, there's a rumor going around that he died six months ago and people

haven't noticed yet.

Sincerely,

ELLIOT CANTSIN 1961 Cedar Street N. Merrick, NY 11566

Dear Elayne,

Haven't finished issue 72 yet, but I wanted to give you a new address...Yuck! Connecticut! Well, it's only ten minutes from work and there's (read my lips!) no state income tax. (Like they don't find other ways to nail you. Can you say property tax on automobiles?)...So far, my favorite story without a doubt is Sergio's "Transitory"--anidea that's been done before but this time, it's great. How many parts is it anyway? (Three.) We're already dying for the next issue. Todd Kristel's musical depth is impressive. If you want favorite song titles, you've got to include They Might Be Giants, who have recorded songs called "Purple Toupee," "Put Your Hand Inside the Puppet Head," and my personal favorite (title, that is), "YouthCulture Killed My Dog." They can also add one to the visionary list with "Where Your Eyes Don't Go"--unless, of course, that's the "unvisionary" list.

Hey, Michael Fuller, did you go to school at the University at Albany (formerly called SUNY at Albany)? If so, I shared an apartment with you and I didn't know you wrote. If not, your name's still damn close to mine. Do people constantly ask you to spell your last name? Do they call you Mr. Fueller or

Mr. Futler? Just wondering.

As usual, Rock Fiend was fiendish. That's all I have to say

about it.

There was a letter a couple of issues back that "discussed" baseball and the Mets. Well, I'm always willing to spout off on that subject. So now we got rid of Juan Samuel for Mike Marshall and Alejandro Pena. That boils down to Dykstra and McDowell for Marshall and Pena. Dykstra for an injury-prone,

slower, average (i.e., worse) outfielder with an average batting average and unproven power. McDowell for a lifetime .500 (read mediocre) pitcher. Almost as good as Ryan for Fregosi et al. And certainly up there with the signings of George "Do I have to play, can't I just sit in the dugout and collect my million" Foster, Richie "I know I'm too old" Hebner, Mickey "what do you mean Sid is fat?" Lolich, and Randy Jones. All good players IN THEIR PRIME!! Well, at least not-so-juanderful is gone. I think they're clearing the way for a big trade. Gotta hope so. Darling is my choice for the juiciest trade bait. Note El Sid's fat contract, almost assuring his place in New York. By the way, I think Meyers for Franco was a good move. Randy was (is) a troublemaking egomaniac. Then again, so is HoJo, Carter, and what's that guy's name in right field...Straw-something...

field...Straw-something...
I've rambled enough wnen I could be reading the rest of the issue. Alive and well and resisting yuppiedom (which is an easy

task as I can't afford it) in Stamford

MICHAEL BULLER 421 Sylvan Knoll Rd. Stamford, CT 06902

P.S. Although it's probably too late, I'm also interested in any news about a memorial for Graham Chapman. Did anything happen? (Nothing yet, to our knowledge.)

Psychobabble

by James Scianna

(wherein the sadistic turmoil of poetic underlings is taken in eternal timidity)

Back to the blackboard Thursday, Professor, we'll blackmail the teachings of Father Confessor. And, so it goes, the eternal question escaping the ruby lips of the equestrian hamster and his neighbor, gone too far although his height be taken. The fetid coarseness of the hour bears it unto the edge of doom blackening within the craven tomb of a burned-out dumpster. "I can't find it, Jonesey," the crackling voice called out of the cold, breathless air. Above the realms of curious wealth, the sandpits were spared, extinguishing health. That's right. Turn up your radio, turn up your nose, swing through the palm trees and take off your clothes. The blackening filth lies deeply within the fetid air, and so it came to him, the universe just doesn't care. Why us, then, Dad? And, came the answer, or so it seems, lay thickly on the edge of dreams:

Sick him on the hammer, this fellow's genius thoughts. The slaving cry filled the horse's encrusted ears and brought the grinning dog unto the suburban riot country. The felted tumours lay upon the marble-brained felicity and bore it to a raise beyond everyone's preys and those who such as I had been abused, the Yeti was not amused. Plague of locust, plague of bugs, plague of darkness, plague of slugs. This ransom bears no entry to religion. The waxed parrot rules the grabbing twisting cartwheeling lock of hair unto the howling realization of darker thoughts—comes the bearer: I'm afraid to use

the phone again.

They teetered by in screaming bulks, 50 miles across the border, I pull that hipple by the hair: he finally takes my order. Uh, yes, I'll have the word salad, the genetic boulllabaisse, hold the Mayo clinic, and a Kitty Dukakis hot buttered rubbing alcohol martini. "Preserve your own damn entropy rations!!" he screamed shrilly as he snapped my face shut like a towel. I countered to the clientele, "I'd like to buy a vowel. Arise from sleep, you helpless sheep, you rotten milling pack. Go brush your teeth beyond the reef and pat me on the back."

A moment dazed, a moment lost, a day spent in the sun. Beware the nameless toothless ones, they've got me on the run. Gravity doth steal away and there, within the window's might a brave turmoil prods the curtains

with religious sanctity.

Virtual invisibility has nearly been achieved, Sir Walter, the imbicility has since deceived those fools upon the altar. As the Buddhist rapists are harvesting the last remnants of humanity sweep their festering warts into the wet cigarette peck during the symphony's first and final bowel movement. Vestiges of tomorrow are lost travelling dangerously down monitored passages. The central nervous system's hot fudge sundae screams blindingly into the poop chute rending the nervous sparks from sweety brows. What is it this time? Uh, stab the angry pudding people back info the silence off the sleeping station wagons. Oh damn, gotta go....

