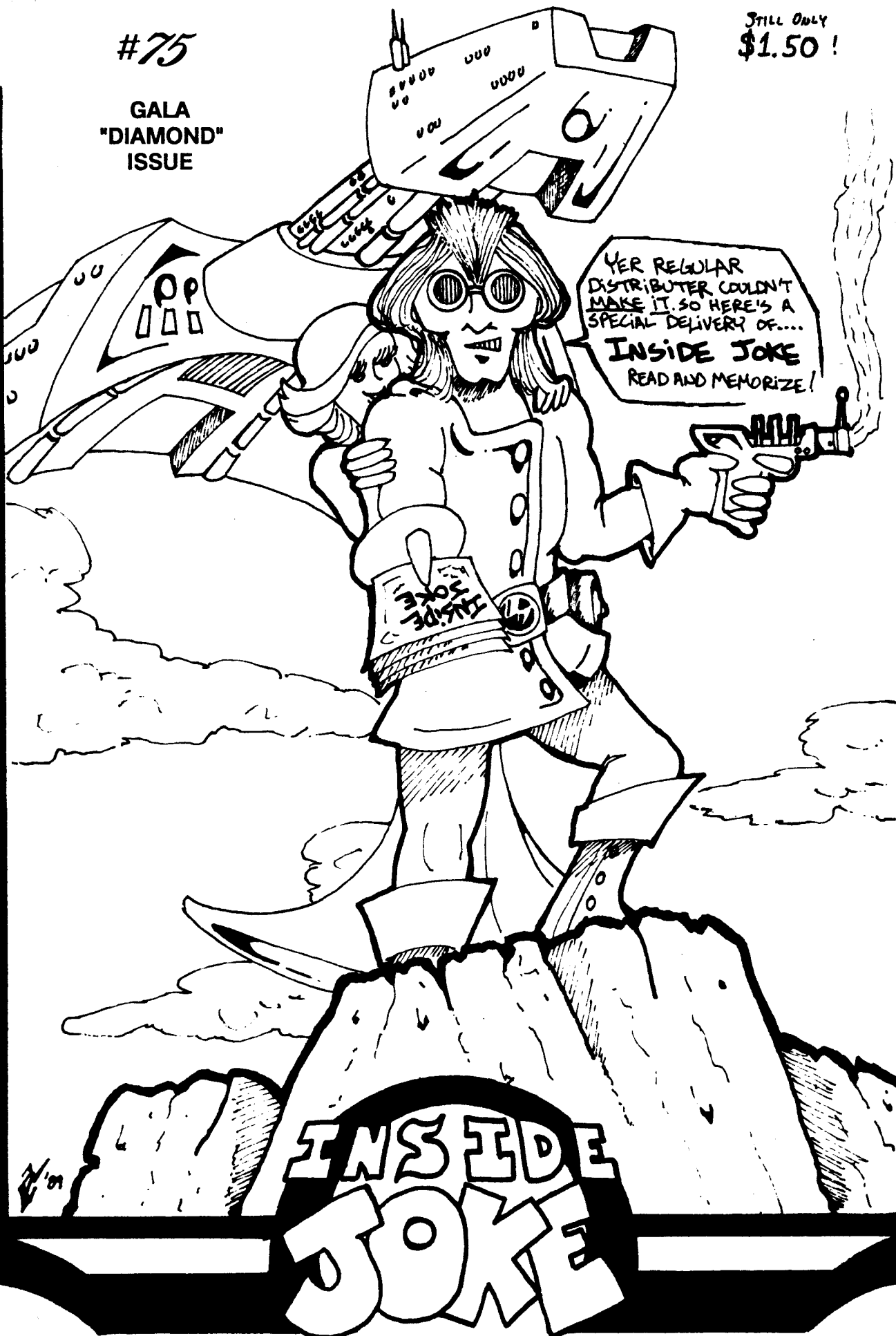


#75

GALA  
"DIAMOND"  
ISSUE

STILL ONLY  
\$1.50 !



A NEWSLETTER OF COMEDY AND CREATIVITY

# Upcoming Events

May 15 - Deadline for Submissions to **INSIDE JOKE #76**  
 May 16 - Studs Terkel (78); VALENCIA WECHSLER (32)  
 May 17 - Dennis Hopper (54)  
 May 18-26 - Cartoon Appreciation Week  
 May 19 - Malcolm X (b. 1925); Pete Townshend (45);  
 Grace Jones (38); Ho Chi Minh (b. 1890)  
 May 21 - ANNE BERNSTEIN (29)  
 May 22 - Arthur Conan Doyle (b. 1859)  
 May 24 - Frank Oz (46); Bob Dylan (49)  
 May 25 - BILL-DALE MARCINKO (32)  
 May 26 - Harlan Ellison (56); Al Jolson (b. 1886)  
 May 27 - Vincent Price (79); Christopher Lee (68);  
 Dashiell Hammett (b. 1894)  
 May 28 - Barry Commoner (73)  
 May 29 - MIKE DOBBS (36); JFK (b. 1917); T.H. White (b. 1906); Top 10 Censored Stories of '89 announced  
 May 30 - GARY PIG GOLD (35); Mel Blanc (b. 1908)  
 May 31 - Peter Yarrow (52); Fred Allen (b. 1894)  
 June 3-4 - Remembering Tianenman Square  
 June 3 - Allen Ginsberg (64)  
 June 5 - Laurie Anderson (43); Bill Moyers (56)  
 June 8 - DORIAN TENORE-BARTILUCCI (27)  
 June 10 - Maurice Sendak (62); Judy Garland (b. 1922)  
 June 12 - Elayne & Steve's 2nd Anniversary  
 June 16 - Bloomsday; Stan Laurel (b. 1895)  
 June 17 - Watergate (1972); M.C. Escher (b. 1893)  
 June 18 - Carol Kane (38); Paul McCartney (48)  
 June 20 - Cyndi Lauper (37); Errol Flynn (b. 1909)  
 June 21 - Sartre (b. 1905); Judy Holliday (b. 1922)  
 June 23 - J.C. BRAINBEAU (84)  
 June 25 - George Orwell (b. 1903); Bye Custer (1876)  
 June 26 - Peter Lorre (b. 1904); A. Doubleday (b. 1819)  
 June 27 - Bob Keeshan (63); Emma Goldman (b. 1869)  
 June 28 - Mel Brooks (62)  
 June 30 - RORY HOUCHENS (34); Ben Bagdikian (70);  
 Deadline for Submissions to **INSIDE JOKE #77**

• **INSIDE JOKE** is put on hexaweekly by Elayne Wechsler-Chaput &  
 • lots of good and dear friends, and emanates from beautiful  
 • downtown Bensonhurst, Brooklyn, where you can tell it's spring  
 • from the number of pipe bombs exploding in nearby bakeries...

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

## STAFF WRITERS/ARTISTS

• ==ANNI ACKNER=====ACE BACKWORDS=====KEN BURKE==  
 • PRUDENCE GAELOR=====GARY PIG GOLD=====WAYNE HOGAN  
 • ==TODD KRISTEL=====JED MARTINEZ=====J.P. MORGAN==  
 • LARRY OBERC=====SUSAN PACKIE=====WILLIAM RALEY  
 • ==STEVEN SCHARFF=====KATHY STADALSKY=====LARRY STOLTE==  
 • DORIAN TENORE-BARTILUCCI=====KERRY THORNLEY=====PHIL TORTORICI

Front Cover by MAX NUCLEAR

## OTHER CONTRIBUTORS THIS ISSUE:

MARIO ACEVEDO	VERNON GRANT	ANDY PLUMB
DENNIS BREZINA	MARY ANN HENN	MICHAEL POLO
TED BROHL	ERIC HOLLOBAUGH	CHARLES RAMPP
B.Z. BULLEN	A.T. HUNN	BRIAN RUDDY
ELLIOT CANTSIN	DENISE KRAUSE	JAMES SCIANNA
SUSAN CATHERINE	TULI KUPFERBERG	SERGIO TAUBMANN
ROGER COLEMAN	FLOYD LEAVITT	ANN VALLEY
TAMARINA DWYER	RUSSEL LIKE	KEN WAGNER
TONY FAY	JIM MIDDLETON	SIGMUND WEISS
GLENN FIVE	RICHARD MILLARD	DALE WHITE

and "KID" SIEVE

INSIDE JOKE is sold BY SUBSCRIPTION ONLY (No Trades)

and is available at SOHO-ZAT

(307 West Broadway, NY, NY 10013; 212/431-3295)

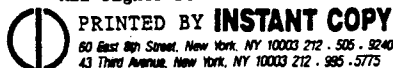
Back issues available for \$1.50 an issue

Ad rates: \$5 for business card size ad



Please send SASE for Writers'/Artists' Guidelines

All rights revert to writers



60 East 8th Street, New York, NY 10003 212-525-9240  
 43 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10003 212-985-5775

c. 1990 Pen-Elayne Enterprises - Kip M. Ghesin, President

## ACKNOWLEDITORIAL

Well, it's official. After months of agonizing prior to the decision, and more months of tracking down signature guarantees and account numbers and government agencies (and you all know how much I love those!), my name is as follows: Elayne T. Wechsler-Chaput. I'm not using the middle initial very much, but do note the rest, as it is now not only on our editorial box, but on my p.o. box and on the checking account where I cash my IJ checks. Therefore, from now on please make all checks for IJ payable to "Elayne Wechsler-Chaput," and please address IJ mail either "INSIDE JOKE" or "Elayne Wechsler-Chaput" (not "Elayne and Steve," please—any IJ review stuff for Steve should say "Attn: Steve Chaput" on the lower left side of the envelope, separate from the address, okay? Same for mail for anyone else you wish to contact through IJ). Also, those of you who know our home address are free to use that for non-IJ correspondence; in fact, we would prefer it that way, thanks!

We'd like to thank everyone who was able to make the IJ Housewarming Party, even though nobody seemed to understand our request to bring dinner food instead of chips. (Hmm, maybe you folks all eat chips for dinner?!) While the noise level got us in a bit of a muck with our landlords/downstairs neighbors, all is squared away now. The party's annual Gerber appears herein—once again, a few folks didn't get the point that you're supposed to continue the previous person's story, not change it. I've apologized and cleaned up as best I could...Also in this issue is our semiannual TV review column—we're sure glad to get that one out of the way, although I may be looking for other zines in which to do that sort of thing after IJ goes on hiatus with issue #80 next year. (I've been casually kicking around the idea of starting a quarterly on sf TV shows, but we'll see.)

A couple brief plugs: The SubGenius Foundation has finally come out with the new STARK FIST OF REMOVAL; it's \$3 (their address is sprinkled throughout IJ), and the premiere issue of SPARKS from Michael Packer and Jim Middleton is wonderful and a must for all radio theater enthusiasts; it's \$10 for 3 issues and is available from P.O. Box 3540, Grand Rapids, MI 49501 (I'm gladder than ever that I turned over the Firesign news reins to them!)

Lots of gems here in this gala Diamond issue, although it doesn't seem like I've typed as much as usual, partially because Dennis Brezina, Elliot Cantsin, Denise Krause, Larry Oberc, Kathy Stadalsky, Sergio Taubmann and Dorian Tenore-Bartilucci were kind enough to send me camera-ready material and we have a lot of shorter work this time (also thanks—maybe we can fit in some more art now). I was therefore able to do a lot on my work computer, including Anni's piece. Tom Deja, Mike Dobbs and Rory Houchens are with us only in spirit, and J.P. Morgan and William Raley in art, but I've included a new listing of staffer addresses anyway, for those readers inclined toward direct contact. Welcome to our new folks—Ted Brohl, Tony Fay, Glenn Five and Ann Valley. Sorry you came in this close to the stopping point, but I hope you'll want to see us through these next few issues! Thanks to J.C. Brainbeau for his donation and Paul Buhle (anyone with about \$90 to spare might think about getting his excellent reference book An Encyclopedia of the American Left) for his support in these Last Days. Also thanks to B.Z. Bullen and Ken Wagner for their ads.

INSIDE JOKE is available for \$1.50 cash/check/m.o. an issue, with non-refundable advance subs of up to \$7.50 for our "last" five issues. Contributors and letter-writers may send a 65¢ stamp (not 65¢ in cash) in lieu of sub money. Send a SASE for our new Writers'/Artists' Guidelines if you have any questions about what's suitable for us. If there's an "X" on your label, it's time to renew. Back issues are available for \$1.50 each. I don't trade; can't afford it. IJs are sold at SohoZat too, but please don't send me letters there, JS. Send whatcha got to:  
 P.O. Box 1609, Madison Sq. Station, New York, NY 10159.

This issue is dedicated to John Henry Faulk, Sarah Vaughn, Greta Garbo, Robin Harris and, of course, Ray Goulding.

(and also to Paulette Goddard)



# DIARY of The ROCK FIEND

by Anni Ackner  
NUMBER OF THE BEAST



It cannot possibly have escaped your notice--even though you may have put a certain amount of time, effort and energy into attempting to ignore it, as many of us have--that the United States government has recently begun to take an inordinate degree of interest in just who we think we are, where we live, who lives there with us, and other details of our everyday lives that some of us would think twice about sharing with our mothers, let alone a body of individuals collectively empowered to force us to move into tastelessly decorated gray stone buildings and share our bedrooms with tattooed fellows named Bubba.

Now, this is not to say that the government does not usually make somewhat more than glancing reference to certain facets of our day-to-day existence--there's all that friendly curiosity about the substance we use to enliven our recreational activities, for instance, and they tend to get positively gossipy about our incomes come the middle of April each year--but the fact is that they very rarely get nosy enough, or spendthrift enough, to go to the bother of printing up actual forms and mailing them out to every household in the country for the simple purpose of finding out what--or, more accurately, who--is new with us. No, this is a phenomenon that crops up only every so often, like a mild case of genital herpes, and sporting, for that matter, more or less the same symptoms.

The United States Census, as the phenomenon is called, is annoying, aggravating, itchy, slightly painful, suspicious in its origins and motives, and inclined to make one long to do nothing more than sit in a hot bath all day and feel sorry for oneself but, unfortunately, there isn't a great deal to be done about it. If one doesn't fill out the nasty little form one was mailed--and don't think they make it easy. For one thing, it has to be done in a #2 pencil, and who on earth over the age of 13 owns one of those? And you can't just go out and buy one pencil, either; you have to buy an entire box, and they don't come sharpened, you have to get a sharpener to keep them company, and, I mean, it's a problem--they're just going to send a nasty little uniformed official around to ask one of these questions in person, and if one follows one's natural inclination and slams the door in the nasty little uniformed official's face, well then, there's always Bubba to think of, so you see that you can't win. The very worst of it is, however, not the inconvenience and the fuss, nor even the repeated assurances that no one in government other than the Census Bureau itself sees one's answers--given that, for the last several years, we have rather antically been supporting presidents who apparently had absolutely no idea what anyone in any other branch of government was going at any particular moment, there may even be a grain of truth in this; on the other hand, if I had a Hispanic last name I might be inclined to be rather careful about filling in any government form unless I could absolutely prove that my grandparents were close personal friends of Franklin Roosevelt--but quite simply the fact that the data collected, such as it is, is so absolutely general, so completely non-specific and unenlightening as to be useless for anything other than counting up how many people in a predetermined area make more than \$15K a year, to say nothing of being horribly tedious to fill out.

When, therefore, we here at IJ Intelligence (the first person who makes any sort of remark at all about oxymorons will be restrained and forced to watch an entire season's worth of Camp Candy) began to study the situation it was determined that, since we had no choice concerning participation in the Census in any event, the only sensible way to handle things was to redesign the format to make it more compatible with the tastes and viewpoints of our readership, which would, in turn, make the results more significant in terms of getting what might be called a handle on exactly who the really outstanding people of this country are, and what

can be done to make them happier which, God knows, ought to be the ultimate aim of any government survey. With this in mind, then, the following is your Reformatted Census Form for IJ Readership. Fill it out in whatever marking medium you may happen to have handy, and return it, at your earliest convenience, to this publication. We'll know exactly what to do with it.

## Reformatted Census Form For IJ Readership or, If You Have To Ask, You'll Never Know

- Legal, Given Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Name By Which Most People Know You (if vulgar and/or obscene, please use initials) \_\_\_\_\_  
How many people live at the above address? \_\_\_\_\_  
Of these, how many are related to you? \_\_\_\_\_  
How many claim to be your parents? \_\_\_\_\_  
How many are you positive are your parents, but refuse to admit it? \_\_\_\_\_  
To how many do you owe money? \_\_\_\_\_  
Which one borrowed your Bart Simpson t-shirt and got sushi all over it, so he/she can rot in hell until he/she gets his/her money? \_\_\_\_\_  
If you are unemployed or still in school, skip the next three questions:  
What do you do for a living? \_\_\_\_\_  
Does it pay enough to live on? \_\_\_\_\_  
If the answer to the above is no, what do you do to fill in the gaps? If the answer to the above is yes, what are you doing reading this publication? \_\_\_\_\_  
If you do not attend school, skip the next three questions:  
What school do you attend? Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
In an average school day, how much time do you spend actually doing schoolwork, how much drawing funny animal pictures in your macro-economics text, and how much discussing what happened last night on Twin Peaks with your schoolmates? \_\_\_\_\_  
Do you ever intend to graduate, or do you think you can go forever sitting on your intellectual snob behind and living off your parents and/or the government? \_\_\_\_\_  
If you are currently working and/or attending school, skip the next three questions:  
How long have you been unemployed? \_\_\_\_\_  
How do you manage to pay rent, buy food, go to the movies, etc? \_\_\_\_\_  
Would whoever is supporting you be willing to support Anni Ackner? If so, please attach person's name, address, telephone number and financial statement for the current fiscal year. \_\_\_\_\_  
How many books do you read in an average month? \_\_\_\_\_  
Of these, how many do not heavily feature mutant turtles, ferocious mythical creatures, funny animals, strange creatures from another planet, or any adult male wearing a leotard? \_\_\_\_\_  
How many were not purchased in the sort of bookshop where it is inadvisable to thumb through the secondhand rack? \_\_\_\_\_  
How many movies do you see, including rented videos, pirated videos, and those peculiar things they show on TNT at 4:00am, in an average month? \_\_\_\_\_  
Of these, how many do not heavily feature mutant turtles, ferocious mythical creatures, funny animals, strange creatures from another planet, or any adult male wearing a leotard? \_\_\_\_\_  
In how many are at least three teenagers left alive at the climax? \_\_\_\_\_  
How much television do you watch in an average day, not counting Twin Peaks? \_\_\_\_\_  
How much is aired on commercial channels, not counting Twin Peaks? \_\_\_\_\_  
How much features crazy cartoon families enacting bizarre, fantasy-like situations, not counting Twin Peaks? \_\_\_\_\_  
What other leisure time activities do you regularly pursue? Would any of them, by any remote chance, be of any interest at all to, say, William Bennett? If so, please list the approximate value of your house and car. \_\_\_\_\_  
The following are multiple choice questions:  
1. In order to help clean up the environment, I suggest that we, as concerned Americans  
a. Help to institute curbside recycling programmes in our neighbourhoods and towns;  
b. Strenuously voice our concerns on environmental issues to our legislators and to heads of industry and commerce;  
c. Adopt a vegetarian diet, which puts less stress on delicate ecosystems;  
d. Build charming and decorative summer cottages out of old Domino's pizza boxes.  
2. I would be willing to donate \$1.00 of my annual income to  
a. Environmental causes;  
b. Programmes for the prevention of domestic violence;  
c. A nationwide drive for adult literacy;  
d. A fund for the eradication of Arsenio Hall in my lifetime.  
3. If the FCC were to open new cable frequencies, I would suggest that one be used for  
a. A really in-depth 24-hour news service;  
b. Special programming for the visually-impaired;  
c. A commercial-free cultural channel, highlighting the classical arts;  
d. The All-Wynona Ryder Network.  
4. I am willing to send Anni Ackner  
a. All my money;  
b. Some of my money;  
c. The deed to my condominium;  
d. Who's Anni Ackner?  
5. The gravest problem facing our nation today is:  
a. Drug and alcohol abuse; b. Illiteracy  
c. The erosion of family values;  
d. The sudden emergence of the '70s Preservation Society.

(continued next page)

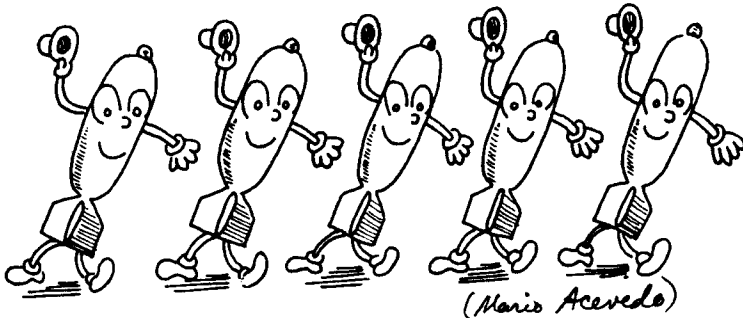
### ROCK FIEND continued

I'm sure you can plainly see the utmost urgency involved in completing and returning this new census form with all due haste. Honestly, Our Beloved Concierge is just sitting around with absolutely nothing better to do, simply perishing to begin, well, taking care of these forms. You will send them in soon, soon, soon, won't you? I mean, you wouldn't want to see the cute little uniformed officials we've hired, would you? Honestly, you wouldn't, would you?

Well, I thought not.

### IJ STAFFER ADDRESSES

Anni Ackner, P.O. Box 18, Reading, PA 19603  
Ace Backwards, 1630 University Avenue, #26,  
Berkeley, CA 94703  
Ken Burke, P.O. Box 8, Black Canyon City, AZ 85324  
Tom Deja, 86 Willow Street, Floral Park, NY 11001  
Mike Dobbs, 24 Hampden St., Indian Orchard, MA 01151  
Prudence Gaelor, P.O. Box 171, Laurel, MD 20707  
Gary Pig Gold, 70 Cotton Dr., Mississauga, Ont. L5G 1Z9  
Wayne Hogan, P.O. Box 842, Cookeville, TN 38503  
Rory Houchens, R.R. #2, Colfax, IL 61728  
Todd Kristel, Box 1046, 3600 Chestnut Street,  
Philadelphia, PA 19104  
Jed Martinez, 71 Crystal Street, Elmont, NY 11003  
J.P. Morgan, 185 Seabreeze Ave. #3, E. Keansburg, NJ 07734  
Larry Oberc, 58 Anderson St. #5, Boston, MA 02114  
Susan Packie, c/o INSIDE JOKE  
William Raley, 21541 Oakbrook, Mission Viejo, CA 92692  
Steven Scharff, 2020 Ostwood Terrace, Union, NJ 07083  
Kathy Stadalsky, 933 State Route 314 North,  
Mansfield, OH 44903-9807  
Larry Stolte, 4661 Arizona #2, San Diego, CA 92116  
Dorian Tenore-Bartilucci, same as Tom Deja  
Kerry Thornley, P.O. Box 5498, Atlanta, GA 30307  
Phil Tortorici, P.O. Box 57487, West Palm Beach, FL 33405



## WHEN SHE STORMS

by Larry Oberc

Out of my office I can feel the rain, the wind, the storm breaking on her brow, I hear her stop and say something to the receptionist, what I don't catch, but it doesn't sound good, whatever it is, and when the call comes through a few minutes later, when this bombardment of words flies at me like bullets from an UZI, when my boss tells me I am on the edge of falling, one short step from being fired, when I am told what he was told by the woman who exploded, when I hang up the phone and wonder what happened, I go blank, think only of this friend of mine who is going through hell, just another divorce, kids on the line, both sides seeking custody, his ex's lawyer tells her to go for the balls, tell the court her ex sexually molested the kids, it's a sure thing, theres no way you can lose, you're a woman, he's a man, who do you think they're going to believe, down the hall I hear the secretaries gossip, I picture their fingers pointed at me, their heads nodding in my direction, I know what is right and wrong and have done neither, I look at the rest of the day, think about going home, maybe to the shore, maybe driving along the coast, and jumping off the edge....

"I AMS" from notes of 6/1/84  
revised 1/24/89 by Sigmund Weiss

There exist so many "I AMS" fattened with lampposts  
that whomever is not pickled, jostled as bards by the  
becomes quite a lot billion  
baked with a chisel their insides filled with helium  
cut through the middle as they fly where I cannot say  
because they are NOTS.

RU STORY  
by  
Prudence Gaelor

## THE CRAMPING TRIP *Part Three*

Even if Prudence didn't have to search for Pink Bunny, she was destined to miss her favorite show anyway. Aunt Margaret (or "AuntMaggot," as she and Pink Bunny referred to her in private) dropped off Ian about four-ten. "It is like a conspiracy," Prudence decided. "Everyone is determined I miss this show."

Ian was wearing a new Pee-Wee Herman t-shirt and a matching Pee-Wee baseball cap, which was making an attempt at suppressing his rebellious carrot-colored curls.

"Red-Haired Baby, does your mother know you're out? With your shirt wide open and your doodle hanging out?" Prudence sang under her breath. Ever since Billy Blueburger taught her that song she wanted to sing it whenever she saw her cousin. One day she was afraid she was gonna slip and he would hear her. She shook the song out of her mind and complimented Ian on his clothes, Pee-Wee Herman clothes being *de rigueur* among seven-year-olds. Prudence figured if she bribed Ian with compliments he might be willing to help her look for Pink Bunny rather than the Pop-Tarts for which he was rummaging around.

Even with Ian's help, Pink Bunny was nowhere to be found when Patrick pulled up in the camper. Prudence panicked. It was unimaginable that she would go somewhere without Pink Bunny, especially camping in the wilderness. Who would tell her bedtime stories while she nestled under the covers? Who would guard her while she slept? Guard her against the Squiggly-Ickies and Flying Whoonits? Prudence was in hysterics by the time Patrick exited the camper and knocked on the front door.

"I want my bunny!" she bawled.

"Shh! It's okay. Calm down," Patrick said, wiping Prudence's face with his handkerchief. "Goddamit, Claire! Will you get her stupid rabbit so we can get out of here? You are so disorganized. Just like your mother."

"Don't you say anything about my mother! Do you hear me? Not A Word!"

"Don't tell me what to do or not do. And I don't appreciate your tone of voice!"

"What tone of voice is that?" Claire asked saccharinely through clenched teeth.

"And I don't need your sarcasm either."

"Oh, am I being sarcastic?"

It was now seven-fifteen and for two and a half hours Patrick and Claire were fighting while Jenny and Grandma Ed frantically searched for Pink Bunny, to no avail. All the while Prudence sat in the TV room crying and Ian was devouring Jenny's secret supply of Mallomars, which Ian found hidden behind a box of soggy Cheerios, and watching the whole affair with vague amusement.

"I think I've had enough..." Patrick bellowed.

"You haven't had enough until I've told you you've had enough."

"Oh yeah?"

"Yeah!"

"Well, we'll see about that. C'mon, kids." Patrick grabbed a shrieking Prudence and dragged her towards the camper. Ian followed, leaving a trail of Mallomar crumbs across the living room carpet.

*To be continued*



## ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER INDISCRETION

by Kathy (Why was it we had kids again?) Stadalsky

Well, well, well...yes, I know, that's a couple'a pretty deep subjects for shallow minds...

I was sitting here ruminating (one of my famous author words) and attempting to formulate (a yuppie word) my latest diatribe (ye editrix's word) for the forthcoming (a lawyer word--or at least it should be) issue of Inside Joke, when what to my wondering eyes should appear but a man and three kids, and they all wore a leer. (Yeah, I know, purty damn sad, ain't it? Poetry; ah, poetry. It definitely ain't my forte--'course, there's those wot would argue that writing ain't my forte, either, and who knows but that they may be right?)

So, anyhow, I was sitting here trying to come up with a story or column for IJ #75, or whichever one it is that's deadline is March 31, a mere 9 days hence, and my husband (Bob, God of Ohio) and kids (Anna, spawn of the parking lot; Maggie, spawn of the back porch; and Amanda, spawn of Quail Hollow) all appeared at my side and cried "let's go to Dairy Queen!"

Actually, it didn't sound like that at first, because Bob said "Hey, hon, let's go to Dairy Queen," while Anna said (simultaneously) "Mom, let's go to Dairy Queen," and Maggie (likewise at the same time) said "hey mom, wanna go to Dairy Queen?" and the little tyke who'll be two just next month--hey you guys, where does time go? don't it seem like just a couple issues ago we were all waiting for her?--anyhow, the littlest one, affectionately known as Amanda says, in a similar concurrent fashion, "mommy! ice cream!" So what I had was more of a:

"We want to go to Dairy Queen!"

Yes, that's about what I heard. You parents out there will surely understand--especially you parents of multiple issues.

Anyhow, I deciphered the combined pleadings and agreed that yes, as a matter of fact, frozen treats did sound good on a day when the mercury hit a high of 40 and it was now 27. Especially since there was a breeze and the sun had sunk below the horizon hours ago. Shit yeah, let's GO GET ICE CREAM IN THE DEAD OF THE WINTER GUYS!!!

So, off we went. The kids wound up with blizzards and Mr. Misty's (certainly fitting words given the weather in Ohio) and the baby chose a baby sized cone (the teeny-tiny one that they used to give you for free and now charge you 10¢ for and there's MAYBE a teaspoon of ice cream in it) and Bob picked a peanut buster parfait and I chose a tropical blizzard with a diet coke on the side (gotta watch those calories--kinda reminds me of the time we were at the IHOP--International House of Pancakes for any of you heathens out there--and this really large woman said to the waiter "I want the blueberry belgian waffles, with double whipped cream, a plate of 6 silver dollar chocolate chip pancakes with hot fudge sauce and extra whipped cream, a cup of coffee and sweet & lo!!). Anyhow, that's what we all had and aren't you all craving ice cream right now?

Well, the outing was the perfect excuse to practice what the God of Ohio and I, his loving goddess, do best: HUMILIATE OUR CHILDREN IN PUBLIC.

Yes, what every parent should do, accomplished by a pair of old hands, a couple of up-and-coming masters. We took EMBARRASSMENT 101, IRRITATION A (& B), CLASSICAL CUT-UPS #1, PARENTING FOR PRANKSTERS, and all those other child-rearing courses offered by our local "Y" (you know, the Y-R-U having kids, R-U-fuckin' nuts?).

So, anyhow, there we were at the DQ, scarfing our sundaes, nibbling our nuts, biting our bananas, slurping our soda-pops, and just generally pigging out when all of a sudden Bob puts a nut in his mouth and then (after first sucking all of the chocolate off) says hey, you kids want some nuts in your blizzards? Well, Maggie (who isn't known for her intelligence, foresight or being real quick on the uptake) says sure, why not. So Bob spits the nut into his spoon and says here you go, Maggie, holding the spoon out at her. Naturally this elicits a "yeeewww, yuck, you're gross, dad!" which attracts attention from as far as three tables away.

Now this is the best part of child-humiliation: you don't really do anything to attract attention to yourself, you do something to gross out your kids and let them attract the attention by making loud protests and turning attractive shades of red and purple.

Now this was a bit on the unappetizing side for even me, so I told Bob to cut it out. Don't be so sick, I said.

Okay, fine, be that way, he replied. But he straightened up. Which was what I wanted, so I didn't say anything else. Riveting tale, ain't it?

So, couple of minutes later, Bob tells me a joke. The joke, which is only moderately funny at best, strikes a note in my funny bone or something because I suddenly lose it. With a mouth full of ice cream. Which goes up my nose.

## Carson Goes Bananas On Sidewalk

HOLLYWOOD(YU) Johnny Carson was arrested outside a popular downtown restaurant last night for allegedly exposing himself to a crowd of non-paying customers. According to several fans, Carson reportedly drove up to the curb, stepped out of his Bentley, unzipped his pants and began screaming "Here's Johnny!" as he ran up and down the sidewalk in front of a local Burger King. When police

finally arrived on the scene, Carson was delivering a monologue in which he was acting out both parts of a religious drama. He was later booked and released on his own American Express card.

Carson, who is rumored to have strong connections in the sinatraworld, was unavailable for comedy.

Yossarian Universal

Have you ever experienced nasal torture? If the commie-pinko-spies want to invade the good old ewe ess of ay and pry all our secrets outta us, all they gotta do is shove ice cream up our collective noses and we'll spill the beans. Guaranteed.

This, (the nose and ice cream trick) causes major embarrassment to our children, probably depriving them of five years of their lives or something. Which isn't all that bad because by the time they're adults some scientist will have discovered how to make us live to be 200 years old or something, so we're only talking about them losing what, a fortieth of their lives or something.

Well, in retaliation, I decide to tell Bob a joke. Only my joke is funny. Or at least I thought it was funny. Bob, on the other hand, pronounced it stupid. And wouldn't laugh. So I made a really silly face at him, like this: and he lost it. 'Course you can see why, I mean, how often does someone do this: at you?

Well, in the door comes this group of St. Pete's Spartans. We, however, live in Warrior country. And anyhow, we don't like any group of people that let some guy in a pointy hat tell them what kind of books they can and cannot read, which, of course, the Spartans, being pointy hat people do.

So Bob says (softly, but not too) "Spartans suck snot." And I say (just as softly) "Spartans suck slimy snot." And Bob says "Spartans suck slimy, sleazy snot." Me: "Spartans suck slimy, sleazy, slippery snot." Bob: "...slimy, sleazy, slippery, squishy snot." Me: "....slimy, sleazy, slippery, squishy, scuzzy snot." Bob: "....scuzzy, scooshy snot." Me: "scooshy isn't a word!" Bob: "is too!" Anna: "will you guys please stop it? You're really embarrassing me!" Bob: "what a snot!" Kathy: "ok, Spartans suck slimy, sleazy, slippery, squishy, scuzzy, scooshy, sneezy snot."

'Bout this time, we look around the room and we see about 40 Spartans and their parents and we decide to beat a hasty retreat to ye old family car while we still had all our bodily parts with which to do so.

Catholics--'scuze! I mean, pointy hats, ain't got no sense of humor these days!

So anyhow, on the way home we stop at the Finast, which is this really big grocery store which advertises that it's open 24-hours a day, except it closes at like 11:00 or something on Saturday nights and opens back up at 6:00 or something on Sunday, so I don't know how the idiots get off calling it a 24-hour store, but anyhow, over there at 4th and Home, just across from the Artesian place, you know? Well, there we were, at the Finast, and on the way out I see these really bitching gumball machines, and all these big ones on the top which have prizes in them and these ones cost a quarter, so I say to Bob gimme 25¢ and he does and I buy a little pot of what they call "Glob". It comes in fluorescent colors, but naturally I just get the lousy old white stuff, but it's still cool stuff. See, it looks like the snot we were discussing back at the DQ. So Bob takes it and he pretends to sneeze and all, you know, really loud, "aahh-ahhhh-aaaahhh-chooo!" and he holds out his hand and heres this big glob of snotty looking glob and it's really gross and so, that's like what my column is this time, is a basic suggestion for all of you parents who really like to drive your kids crazy and stuff.

Go in the supermarket and keep an eye on the 25¢ prize machines. And when you come across the one that offers "Glob" buy yourself a couple containers of it. It's really fun to play with and you can do all sorts of neat shit with it. (This is not to be confused with slime, by the way, which is a viscous, stringy, slimy and thin product which runs off your hands. Glob is like a ball of stuff which kinda flattens and smears over stuff and clings and you have to lift it off and it kind of peels away and it's always cold to the touch and it just looks like a huge glob of snot and it pretty much feels like you would imagine the stuff to feel and it's just really neat stuff.)

Furthermore (another attorney word) this Glob stuff is like really therapeutic. You can sit and imagine doing all sorts of gross stuff to people who piss you off throughout the day and you can roll it around your hand and put it in your desk drawer and take it out to show your coworkers and it's just fun. You can also walk up to people and pretend to sneeze and have it in your hand and you can even stretch it out into strands like, and put one end up by your nose and REALLY gross people out. And you can walk up to people and say "hold up your hand" and put it in their hand and watch them go "oh yuck!" and shit.

Seriously, it's cool stuff. We're going to suggest that the local Y add it to their list of course-supplies for GROSS OUTS FOR GROWN UPS.

Anybody who wants some Glob and can't find it, you mail me a quarter and 3 ounces of postage and I'll send you some. You don't get no choice of colors, though, unless you want to send a bunch of dough!

Say, dough...wonder what you could do with some yeast dough that you let rise and...

**CHANGE YOUR PAST**  
The SubGenius Foundation can make you even stranger.  
Send \$1 for Intense Pamphlet  
The Church of the SubGenius®  
P.O. Box 140306  
Dallas, TX 75214

# A Dip in the Plasma Pool

by Dorian Tenore-Bartilucci

Eccentrics On Parade:

One Critic/Fan's Semi-Objective Guide to

the Best Celluloid Performances of Jeff Goldblum

\* All New! \* Part 4 \* All New! \* Part 4 \* All New! \* Part 4

By now, all you readers have probably reached the conclusion that I'll give a "thumbs-up" to just about any movie with Jeff Goldblum in it. Okay, maybe I'll be a little more forgiving of a below-par Goldblum vehicle, but even I have my breaking point. In this installment, we're going panning for FOOL'S GOLDBLUM, in which our hero Jeff proves to have feet of clay -- or at least these movies did!

**INTO THE NIGHT (1985):** It's not so much that this comedy-tinged chase thriller is truly a bad film. It's just that, were it not for some particularly maddening, downright murderous flaws, INTO THE NIGHT could have been a great motion picture, instead of just a home movie with terrific production values. You get the feeling that director John Landis woke up one day and cried, "Hey, gang! Let's remake NORTH BY NORTHWEST, with Jeff Goldblum as Cary Grant and Michelle Pfeiffer as Eva Marie Saint -- only we'll do it all in Los Angeles, none of this travelling stuff! We can get a bunch of the locals to do cameos -- lots of cameos! We'll get everyone from Dan Aykroyd to David Cronenberg!" For good measure, he got Ira Newborn to compose a driving, jazzy score, engaged director of photography Robert Paynter to capture L.A.'s gorgeous yet vaguely tacky neon nighttime, some (then) topicality with Iranian villains, and voila...a schizoid miscalculation (as my Italian grandma used to say)!

**INTO THE NIGHT** is by no means unwatchable, but it would be so much better if it could make up its damn mind. The movie veers madly between two extremes on two different levels. For every moment of nail-biting suspense and deft satire, there are scenes that are only slightly less entertaining than watching paint peel. For every wonderful bit of anarchic comedy and quirky characterization, a brutal scene of sudden, sickening violence hurtles in out of nowhere. A prime example of the latter occurs during the scene in which Kathryn Harrold, playing a bubble-headed aspiring starlet, is chased up and down a Malibu beach by a quartet of Iranian hit men. The sequence starts like a Keystone Comedy, with the four thugs stumbling in the surf and arguing among themselves in their native tongue. Then things turn nasty when the men finally catch up with Harrold, and thrust her down under the water (with underwater camera angles from the terrified, struggling woman's point of view), holding her there until she drowns.

What's worse, Ron Koslow's script puts its emphasis on fitting in all those cameos (about 30 or 40, I think) instead of giving the story top priority. Of course, this may also have been Landis' doing. You see, the cameos were meant to be Hollywood's show of support for the director (who also plays one of those Iranian hit men, and quite well, too) after the tragic accident/act of negligence on the set of TWILIGHT ZONE -- THE MOVIE that killed Vic Morrow and two Vietnamese child actors.

With a few (very few) exceptions, INTO THE NIGHT stops dead in its tracks every time one of these cameos comes on, rather than blending them in seamlessly. It's as if Landis and company are waiting for the audience to recognize the person cameo-ing before daring to continue the narrative. Actor/director Paul Bartel's bit as a stoic doorman is the clumsiest in this regard. In Bartel's scene, Goldblum and Pfeiffer are standing next to him chatting. Suddenly, they stop abruptly...turn to stare at Bartel for several silent seconds...then the stars walk away, picking up the conversation where they left off. But at least Bartel's face is fairly well-known. Since most of the cameos are not by famous actors, but by behind-the-scenes types whose names are better known than their faces -- such as director Amy Heckerling (as a waitress) and the late screenwriter Waldo Salt (as a derelict) -- these breaks in the narrative flow become doubly annoying to the average moviegoer. (I'm sure Landis' industry friends had loads of fun at private screenings, though.)

Jeff Goldblum fits into all this as an insomniac aerospace engineer whose humdrum life takes a dangerous turn when alluring but troubled jewel smuggler Michelle Pfeiffer, pursued by those ubiquitous Iranians, jumps onto the roof of his car. Considering that this is Goldblum's first big-screen leading man role (not counting his starring turns on TV's TENSPEED AND BROWN SHOE and ERNIE KOVACS: BETWEEN THE LAUGHTER), he's given surprisingly little to do. It's established that his character is in a rut, and unhappy about it. He's longing for a taste of adventure, but isn't quite sure where to begin. But once Landis and Koslow get the plot going, our hero is not allowed to take part in his own adventure! Instead of taking action (except for one bizarre scene during the climax at the airport), Goldblum only reacts to the various situations, and not very inventively at that. (He does get a cute bit of slapstick while flirting with some beauties on the set of a TV show, but little else.) His character spends most of his screen time tagging along -- all the while grouching that he's tired and "This is all too weird for me" -- as Pfeiffer flits all over the Los Angeles underworld. One wonders if Goldblum ever echoed John Lennon's complaint about his own

work in the Beatles' elaborate second feature, HELPLI: "I feel like an extra in my own movie."

The chemistry between Goldblum and Pfeiffer is yet another wonderful, potential-laden element of INTO THE NIGHT that is never fully taken advantage of. The ads touting INTO THE NIGHT as "A dangerous romance" were misleading -- the only remotely romantic thing that Pfeiffer and Goldblum do (other than, it's implied, running off together at the end of the film) is exchange one rather chaste kiss and brief nuzzle. If you're going to bill a film as a romantic thriller, then for crying out loud, make sure there's some romance in it (or at least some tasteful nookie)! It's not as if Landis didn't have two sexy stars at his disposal.

This is not to say that INTO THE NIGHT fails completely. Its colorful characters, played by charismatic performers, hold your interest even when the plot and pace sag. Pfeiffer is bewitching in one of her earliest leading roles. Paul Mazursky, better known as a director, is a hoot as an obnoxious producer who lusts after the doomed Ms. Harrold. Richard Farnsworth has a touching scene as Pfeiffer's dying sugar daddy. David Bowie appears briefly but memorably as a smilingly slimy killer whose method of questioning Goldblum involves stuffing our boy's mouth with a pistol (!!). Irene Papas is properly intimidating as a Dragon Lady real estate tycoon. ANIMAL HOUSE's Bruce McGill does a terrific comic turn as Pfeiffer's brother, a surly Elvis impersonator who is insanely jealous because his sister actually associated with The King ("You may have fucked him," McGill shouts defiantly, "but you didn't know him!").

**INTO THE NIGHT's** impeccable production values make it an eye-pleaser, and Landis dishes up some very suspenseful set pieces. Highlights include a wild Century City car chase, as well as the sequence at a posh apartment where all the dinner party guests have been murdered and Bowie, Goldblum and bodyguard Carl Perkins fight to the death while ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET BELA LUGOSI blasts over seemingly every TV in the joint. All in all, I'd give poor, befuddled INTO THE NIGHT a passing grade for its efforts and style, but there's still room for improvement.

**TRANSYLVANIA 6-5000 (1986):** A bad drama can become a great (unintentional) comedy to a viewer in the right frame of mind, but there's simply no way to enjoy a bad (i.e. unfunny) comedy. Why, oh why do so many writers and filmmakers mistake insults for wit? In particular, Rudy DeLuca, the writer/director of TRANSYLVANIA 6-5000, should have known better, having cut his teeth as one of Mel Brooks' team of writers on SILENT MOVIE and HIGH ANXIETY. Unfortunately, his baser instincts took over on this mean-spirited turkey, in which Jeff Goldblum and real-life pal Ed Begley, Jr. play two reporters from a Weekly World News-style tabloid who've been sent to Transylvania to prove that vampires, Frankenstein and other famous local monsters really exist. Turns out that the modern-day Transylvanians are even more skeptical about the existence of beasts than the cynical Goldblum (Begley is the requisite gullible, spook-fearing member of the team). Little do they realize that schizoid Dr. Joseph Bologna is conducting weird experiments at the local resort...

DeLuca could have had fun with these concepts, but instead he seems content to have his characters stand around sniping at each other, substituting crude insult humor for fast and furious wit. Cruel "jokes" about halfwits, hunchbacks, and other unfortunates abound. Bologna, in particular, seems to be there for the sole purpose of abusing deformed flunkies John Byner and Carol Kane. One of the things that added charm to Mel Brooks' genre spoofs was their obvious affection for the films they were lampooning. If DeLuca has any fondness or nostalgia for the classic monster movies, it sure doesn't show here. One gets the feeling that the folks who worked on TRANSYLVANIA 6-5000 couldn't wait to pick up their paychecks and leave the whole depressing enterprise behind.

The bright spots in this filmic flotsam are rare, but they do exist. Goldblum and Begley work well as a team (maybe someday they'll reunite in a better movie). The rest of the top-notch cast also manages to triumph over their less-than-scintillating material. Another positive thing about the flick is that it brought future wife Geena Davis into Jeff's life. Davis is as winsome as always, and even a bit exotic as a scantily-clad vampire whose bloodlust runs neck and neck with her lust for the hapless Begley. Michael Richards (UHF) makes a goofy Igor-type. Bologna, who really ought to fine-tune his taste in scripts (has he made any good movies since MY FAVORITE YEAR?), does a great Jekyll-and-Hyde impersonation. Jeffrey Jones (BEETLEJUICE, AMADEUS) rounds out the cast as the very model of a modern mayor skeptical.

Once in a blue moon, a funny line struggles out of this mess, like when Goldblum smells perfume and figures out who's been haunting Begley in the night: "It's the creature from Estee Lauder!" (And you New Yorkers thought it was the cosmetics queen's ex-mayoral candidate son, Ronald!) Another nice bit is the sequence starting with Begley climbing over a sanitarium wall while Goldblum yells, "Prisoner escaping!" to make sure Begley gets inside, and vice-versa (long story, folks). Too bad you can't make an entire funny movie from just two scenes.

**BEYOND THERAPY (1988):** When director Robert Altman is good, he's very, very good, but when he's bad -- oy vey! -- it's enough to make a strong fan weep. I was fervently hoping that this adaptation of Christopher Durang's howlingly funny play about a neurotic couple and their unhinged psychiatrists would be vintage Altman, but I came away with nothing but sour grapes. BEYOND

(continued next page)

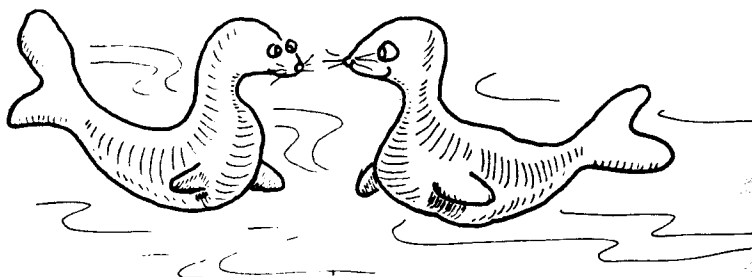
THERAPY is the kind of cerebral farce that works best with a simple staging. Altman's ham-fisted direction throws in every form of distraction to detract from the few funny lines and situations he left intact from Durang's original script. The Cuisinart editing doesn't help the film's coherency, either. In pleasantly scruffy films like NASHVILLE and M\*A\*S\*H, Altman's trademark background din works beautifully; however, it spells disaster for something as sparkingly, sophisticatedly daffy yet precise as a Durang comedy.

Even Jeff Goldblum groupies who'd happily watch him sit on the commode for two hours will find this one a trying experience. Goldblum, Julie Hagerty, Christopher Guest, Tom Conti (with a strange, Bronson Pinchot-like accent) and Glenda Jackson seem to be pumping up the volume -- in the sense of broader performances, shrill line readings, wild gesticulations -- in order to be heard and noticed amid the noise and confusion of crazed restaurant customers, haughty waiters, and other strange folk who flit in and out of each scene. It's a shame, because Goldblum and Hagerty fit their roles quite well, and in a better production, their chemistry would be a joy to behold. (Some smart producer should reunite these two in a stage revival of BEYOND THERAPY, Jeff's negative reviews for his performance in Joseph Papp's recent production of TWELFTH NIGHT notwithstanding.)

VIBES (1988): Though Goldblum is likable enough in this okay comedy-adventure about New York City psychics roped into an Ecuador treasure hunt, he would have been even better -- and easier for non-fans to take -- if director Ken Kwapis had reined in his leading man's zeal a bit. At times, perhaps in an attempt to liven up the dull patches in the Lowell Ganz/Babaloo Mandel script, Goldblum is a bit too manic in this role, originally slated for Dan Aykroyd.

As a sad-sack psychometric (by touching an object, he can tell who it belongs to, where it's been, etc.), Goldblum is at the mercy of cuckoo con man Peter Falk, villainous scientist Julian Sands, foxy hit lady Elizabeth Pena and lovelorn fellow psychic Cyndi Lauper (the budding media crossover star also warbles the theme song, as if you couldn't guess). Perhaps it's the stress of butting heads with such an eclectic assortment of actors that causes him to constantly wave and flutter his long, slender hands to and fro. "But he does that in every role," my fellow Jeff-watchers may protest. Not like he does in this picture, believe me; I was afraid the poor lad had been afflicted with St. Vitus' Dance. Perhaps director Kwapis figured that if such mannerisms worked for the star of his previous feature, FOLLOW THAT BIRD, they'd work just as well for Goldblum. (All right, who made that crack about Jeff Goldblum and Big Bird being the same height...?)

**NEXT ISSUE: Striking Goldblum on the Small Screen, or: Home is Where You'll Find Him.**



"MY LIPS ARE SEALED!"

©VERNON GRANT → 1986

## JUST LISTEN 'N LEARN

by Larry Stolte

So you are going to Escoval soon. You've made a wise decision in purchasing the Listen 'n Learn Escovese packet which contains two 90-minute cassettes and this booklet, which will be your Bible when you learn Escovese. Just follow along in your book to the conversation on tape, then practice orally during the "Your Turn To Speak" sessions.

What is so special about this Listen 'n Learn lesson in Escovese? You will hear what the Escovese really say—the language of the street, not the Queen's Escovese. You'll find it so much more functional.

Our unique learning method puts you in conversations with different Escovese people. You will ask questions that are pertinent, and you will discuss relevant topics. When your trip arrives, you will be ready.

The following dialogues will first present the Escovese version in bold type; the English version will follow. Ready?

It's easy to make friends with the Escovese, a gregarious people. They haven't had a war since the Cambrian Invasion. Talk to the Escovese; you won't be disappointed.

### Dialogue 1. Breaking the Ice

You: Dunkel esu. Mo nummo asu \_\_\_\_\_. Hello there. My name is \_\_\_\_\_.

Esco: Es mug do mo lumpar tag. This must be my lucky day.

You: Quo es lu nummo? What is your name?

Esco: Elvis. Elvis Presley. Unde Ute? Purdi ea blabble ute mugaruplato? Elvis. Elvis Presley. And you? May I call you muffinhead?

Soon you will feel confident enough to query people on the street.

### Dialogue 2. On the Street

You: Con permissi, mo buddo, dondugo haffenviertel? With permission, my friend, which way is the harbor quarter?

Esco: Wo habsprek da? Es ute despacioplato ar quo? Why do you talk like that? Are you retarded or what?

You: Aba ute drego lo under repita da? Habspreka up? Could you slow down and repeat that? Did you say it was to the North?

Esco: Quo, ute es despacioplato. No stresso, ea blabble el pertino fascisti. Why, you are retarded. Don't worry, I'll call the proper authorities.

Feel comfortable now? Let's get out and have some fun.

### Dialogue 3. At the Restaurant

You: Chica, ea too gimme du lista prontogusto. Waitress, I would like to order now.

Esco: Ea mano, dopo. Ea clada en drugo de segregado el combato. I'm a man, stupid. I'm wearing this dress to stay out of the military.

You: Ea too gimme el primo bifo-nogofieramente--unde sauna carbo con eeuw lecho. I would like a prime rib --rare--and baked potato, sour cream.

Esco: Wingabo Kansas, gordopieto, wa haber jus lice unde bowser gustabus en es nacion. Then you'll have to fly back to Kansas, Porkpie, we have only rice and dog tongue in this country.

You: Coca Cola de trinken, por segui. Coca Cola to drink, please.

Esco: Buengute. Ea snag ona esu; uter niemals verde. Good. I'll spit in it; you'll never know.

You: Excito. Dankst ute, buddo. Super. Thank you, friend.

### Dialogue 4. At the Train Station

You: Quo hora salide Escanaba choo-choo? What time does the train for Escanaba leave?

Esco: Es es el aeroplaz. Utel mueno boreo. This is the airport. You've got quite a wait.

You: Dankst ute. Pueder ea borea plop? Thank you. May I wait here?

Esco: Posito, da dondel Pepe expurgo. Sure, that's where Pepe just threw up.

### Dialogue 5. At the Store

You: Cuante damago es es bonyocolores Elvis espanya? How much is this porcelain Spanish Elvis?

Esco: En regular, wa no fobbo, aber per ute--cincofunf dollero. Normally, we couldn't give it away, but for you--fifty-five dollars.

You: Transactamento! Sold!

Esco: Eal haber duug buen fofoo Picassos abier aquine maso. I've got some nice velvet Picassos over here also.

### Dialogue 6. Mingling with the Rabble

You: Quo hora es eso? What time is it?

Esco: Ona zehn menos "Geraldo"es receber. Ea haber en orbitaller rondo. In ten minutes "Geraldo" is on. I have a satellite dish.

You: Dankst ute. Thank you.

Esco: Seibe machen medicotrustee charlatengo Elvi heutig. They're doing faith-healing Elvises today.

### Dialogue 7. Esoterica in the Cab

You: Ho, DeNiro. Es en Escovese el fabulolemminga weeble? Hey, taxi driver. Are the Escovese a religious people?

Esco: Dasi. Wa gullibo ona en noboink hatcher uni Elvis, unde wa partere em supermuerte. We believe in the virgin birth of Elvis, and we celebrate his resurrection.

You: De verdad? Really?

Esco: Ute gringabos es ser nebulo ute solare umbrager. You Americans are so dim you could dull the sun.

Escoval awaits. You are ready. The casinos are open all night, and the drinks flow eternal. Have a good time. Remember, in Escoval always split infinitives and aces and eights.

Vique, ute buengute tropicala!

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

by Ken Burke

As some of you may already know, my wife is pregnant; we are expecting the kiddo sometime in late June. Yes, this is a wonderful event in the life of a happily married couple; sure, I'm happy about this; and gosh whiz, it sure is an exciting concept—but there is a side of me that is blithering with electric, neurotic, worst-case-scenario fear! So, for your entertainment pleasure, I humbly present...

## MY GREATEST FEARS ABOUT PARENTHOOD SO FAR!

- 1) All babies look alike to me. If I put my naked infant in a room full of other naked infants, will I be able to correctly identify our kid?
  - 2) Can I reason with a small child without sounding like an absolute idiot? "Honey, please don't stick your wet fingers in the wall socket any more. I know you think it feels nice, but it's just not good for you."
  - 3) Just how prevalent is gene-skipping, anyway? According to our mothers, my wife and I were pleasant babies. Will a weird quirk of genetics make our kid turn out to be a deceitful, remorseless bully like my sister?
  - 4) What about those terrible stories in the tabloids about baby-eating dogs? Will our dog Loki (the biter) do one of two things: devour our infant child the first second our backs are turned (you should have seen what she did to the Christmas potroast), or become so protective of the child that she will not let us near the baby when it needs to be changed, fed or held?
  - 5) What about the other dog? Will Sheba (the smart one) learn to communicate with our kid before we do and turn the child into her own private henchman? "That's it, reach up...WAY UP! REACH! Now tip the box over so it'll fall on the floor in front of me. That's it. Now climb down. Good kid (lick, lick), that was a job well done (lick, lick). Oh boy (munch, munch), these are GREAT! (munch) You can have some if you want... (munch) What's the matter kid? Why are you crying? Oh, Rawhide Chews aren't exactly your cup o' tea, eh? Well, take it easy, kid, later this afternoon I'll introduce you to a delicacy that's a favorite of dogs the world over—Congealed Grease and Coffee Grounds! You're sure to love it! Almost as much as you liked the Raw Bacon Strips from this morning. What's that? YOU BET I LOVE YOU MORE THAN MOMMY AND DADDY EVER COULD (lick, lick)."
  - 6) Will I use my powers for evil or niceness? Will I feel so threatened and insecure that I will use my intelligence and humor to bully my kid the way "Cliff Huxtable" does on The Cosby Show?
  - 7) What about ironic punishments for the ultimate escape? If I commit suicide before the child is born, will I be reincarnated as my own kid and be forced to live this whole mess over again. (My wife says this is too weird to even consider, but you never know.)
  - 8) Will I be one of those weird parents who thinks everything their kid does is "cute" or "creative?" "Mr. Burke, I'm from the Sheriff's Department. I just wanted you to know that your child has been using a hammer and some discarded dinner forks in an effort to staple all his little playmates to a billboard downtown." "Oh that Jeremy, what a creative use of home utensils! I wonder if he could get extra credit for this in Art class?"
  - 9) Okay, okay, a cynic is someone who knows the cost of everything and the value of nothing, so how do I keep my kid away from my record collection and comics until it understands the subtle difference?
- Worst-Case Scenario #1: One day I awaken from a nap to find our child using crayons to scribble wild toddler pictures in my expensive hardbound copies of the "EC Comics Library." And then, noticing my barely contained rage, the kid uses its mother's reasoning powers against me. "I don't know what you're so upset about, Daddy. I stayed within the lines on most of the pictures."
- Worst-Case Scenario #2: During a particularly hot Arizona day, our enterprising child takes the record collection that it took me nearly 25 years to amass and sells the whole kit and kaboodle for ice cream money.
- Worst-Case Scenario #3: One day our angry teenaged child will look himself in a room with my records and begin busting them over his knee while screaming aesthetically obscene taunts at me through the door. "Little Richard was nothing but a loud fag!" "Jerry Lee Lewis is just a drunken Mickey Gilley imitator!" "In the history of rock music, Frankie Avalon was more important than Elvis Presley!" "Chuck Berry never wrote a good song or played a decent guitar riff in his life" etc.
- Worst-Case Scenario #4: I die. My kid tosses all my stuff into the garbage thinking, "It was just records and books, what possible value could that have?"
- 10) What about the music? Will the child be as lazy as I was, and will I have to force the kid to do things that I can only hope it'll enjoy and benefit from later in life?, such as:
 

"Did you practice your guitar today?"  
(Annoyed) "No, Dad."  
"Well, you get right back in your room and don't come out until you can play 'That's All Right, Mama' in the key of E. You hear me?"  
"Yes, Dad, I hear you. (Mumbling) I hate playing in the key of E. I hate Rockabilly, and most of all...I HATE Dad!"
  - 11) Is everything I do going to turn out wrong no matter what? If I stand back and let the child work things out for itself most of

- the time, later in life will the kid claim that I was "cold and distant?" If I am supportive and "always there" for my child, will it later claim that I attempted to "smother" it with my love? AND, even though I will desperately attempt to avoid the type of behavior with which my parents drove me crazy, will my kid suddenly start to hate me for all the same reasons I hated my folks?
- 12) How will I deal with the guilt of failing to live up to my parental standards and objectives? Do I slash my wrists the first time I merely think about saying, "Because I said so," or wait until I actually say it?
  - 13) How can I gently shatter a child's illusions without extinguishing the kid's zest for life? "No, sweetie, the people in the movie It's A Wonderful Life don't really exist, they're just actors. People like that seldom exist. You'll probably make only two or three close friends in your entire lifetime, and chances are they'll run and hide, never to return, the very first time you really need them. Either that or they'll use their personal knowledge of you to somehow betray you. True friendship is one of the most rewarding pursuits in which people can engage, but most people would rather protect their own interests than help others. Yes, you should always attempt to be a good friend, but don't expect anything in return, because most people are selfish and greedy like Mr. Potter, even when they look like Jimmy Stewart there. Now why are you so sad? How come I never see you smile any more?"
  - 14) What do I do if our kid turns out to be another Charles Manson or Ted Bundy? No one has ever really explained the proper etiquette on this to me. If your kid is a mass murderer, what do you do? Write notes like the following?:

Dear Mrs. Schenkly,

I'm sorry our son killed your daughter. We'll try and get him to tell us where the rest of her remains are as soon as the police catch him. But you shouldn't hold out too much hope in this regard; if you saw the way he kept his room, you'd understand. Please excuse my wife and me for engaging in conjugal relations and my wife in particular for conceiving.

- signed - Ken "Father of the Teenaged Eviscerator" Burke

Or do I simply take all the blame and write a brief note saying "I'm sorry I ever ejaculated" and leave it at that?

- 15) Is my life officially over now or what? Okay, let's say the kid is cute, well-adjusted, smart, has a great sense of humor, likes my music, respects my property and we all love each other like nobody's business. Do I have to stop playing guitar and piano in the middle of the night just because the kid has to sleep? Do I have to wait an additional three paychecks to purchase typing paper and stamps because my kid wants to Smurf lunchbox? Am I ever going to be able to see another movie in a theatre again? Dine in a restaurant? Go for long walks at the full capacity of my stride? Have an uninterrupted conversation with my dwindling number of friends? How do I reach a balance between my wants and needs, my wife's, and my kid's? And CHRIST!!! I forgot about the needs of my friends, my relatives, the DOGS....aaauugh!!!!
- 16) How do I explain the subtle difference between my religious beliefs and the child's mother's? I'm a practicing agnostic. I consider most churches to be part of a link of emotional blackmail and bunko which masquerades as "organized religion," but in my view is "organized superstition." On the other hand, my wife has a quiet, wholesome belief in the teachings of Jesus Christ, and she thinks that it would be a good idea to have the kiddo baptized. So, will the kid view me as some kind of heathen just ripe to be evangelized? OR will the child think that its mother is some kind of cult lunatic? Is this the kind of suspense I can live without? You bet.
- 17) How well can I tell selective truths to a child? How can I convince our child to be secure in the knowledge of my love without letting it spill that I don't particularly care for children? "BWAHHHH! You don't love me." "Now, now, don't cry. Of course I love you. At least, I love you as much as I could ever love any sticky, destructive, hellion toddler brought into my home for the purpose of causing dissension between my wife and me, not to mention the constant distractions that are drowning out my creative fires (the only thing that I find worthwhile about my existence). But yeah, I love you, sure. Why the hell not?"
- 18) What about the kid's name? If it's a girl, my wife will name the baby. I take the blame if it's a boy. I'm tempted to name the kid after some of my most revered Rock'n'Roll heroes (Gene Vincent Burke, Eddie Cochran Burke, Jerry Lee Lewis Burke, Charles Edward Berry Burke, etc.), but chances are I'll choose a name that will have some family lineage (Carl or Grady Walker Burke). No matter what I choose, I'm sure the kid will hate his name. And, if I choose "Carl," years later the kid will learn the truth about his late grandfather and engage me in sticky conversations that will contain such questions as, "Well, if he was such a drunk and you ended up hating him so much, why'd you name me after him?" And then I'll have to explain the paradoxes of love. A conversation I'd dearly like to avoid. I wonder if it'd be okay to just call the kid "Thup" until its 21st birthday ("Thup" is the sound that its fetal heart makes). Or how about numbers instead of a traditional name? Are numbers good? "37.3" Burke? How about something baby-related like "Ten Fingers/Ten Toes" Burke? Or "Screaming Baby" Burke? Does any of that sound okay?
- 19) Why does the media torment me so? Everywhere I look there are reports on babies being kidnapped out of hospitals by deranged childless couples, hour-long TV specials on psychotic pimps and homosexuals who kidnap children and turn them into child-porn stars and sex-slaves, and tearful newspaper stories about parents

(continued next page)

who virtually kept their child under surveillance 24 hours a day and they were STILL kidnapped or the victims of random violence. Sure, risk is a part of everyone's life, but the worst part is how smug TV's talking heads look while they cheerily proclaim, "It seems nothing can be done to stem the tide of the crimes against our children." And do you know what adds further firepower to this media-induced paranoia? The thought that our kid might grow up believing that becoming a TV news anchor is a decent and honorable career option. You can get your kid psychiatric help after most traumatic ordeals, but there is no known cure for being a TV news anchor.

20) What if the kid looks like me, speaks like me, and acts like me? Will this somehow piss me off?  
 — Somebody PLEASE help me...

# ANIMATION UPDATE



First and foremost, kudos to Elayne and Steve on this "Diamond Issue" of INSIDE JOKE. And they said it wouldn't last this long (whoever they are)...

Lately I've been taking in some of the special animation programs arranged by ASIFA-East. Recently I attended two different shows within a 48-hour period. The first featured the works of various Soviet animators. Two representatives of Soyuzmultfilm were present for the screening: Oleg Masainov (creator of many puppets used in his stop-motion films) and Natalia Debiga (one of the puppet animators). Highlights included "Crocodile in the Street" (based on a Russian children's poem about a reptile who tried to pass himself off as a human), "40" (the story of a man who has reached middle age whose only form of escapism is photos of earlier youth), "Counting Stars" (a story with animal characters à la Beckett, with overlapping images enhancing the production) and "The Tank" (a weapon that senses fear, created by a scientist who lost his son in an accident; the animation in this latter work is exceptional, almost like a fully-animated oil painting)...The other show to which I went had the theme "Myth and Animation." The best cartoons of this bunch were "Sunflight" (Gerald MacDermott's retelling of the story of the ill-fated flight of Icarus), "Ratah and the Canoe" (a folktale from New Zealand), "Premiere Jours" (a posthumous film by Clorinda Varney, later finished by Lise Gagnon and Suzanne Gervais), "Yes We Can" (by Faith Hubley), "Dryads" (a colorfully erotic work by David Ehrlich) and "The Creation of Birds" (a Canadian-Italian legend about the seasons, depicted by Frederic Back, nearly ten years prior to his Oscar-winning short "Crac"). The more I see independent works like these, the more I wish that others would join ASIFA, just to view said works, if nothing else.

MIS'CELL'ANEOUS: Here's a brief look at some of the new animated shows coming to Saturday morning TV this fall: Besides all-new episodes of "Muppet Babies," CBS will offer two hot properties—"Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" (MWS is producing episodes that differ from the weekday syndicated version), for an hour, no less; and "Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventures" (based on the 1989 movie, with Alex Winter, Keanu Reeves and George Carlin reprising their roles, providing voices—that way they save a fortune in make-up and costumes, dudes...). ABC has three new shows in the wings—"New Kids on the Block," "The Wizard of Oz" and "Little Rosey" (with Roseanne Barr providing the voice of the title character). As for NBC, they're expanding "Captain N" to an hour (to accommodate characters from another Nintendo game, "Super Mario Brothers 3"), plus a new series starring the voice of Rick Moranis (the third SCTV alumnus to graduate into Saturday morning animation, behind Martin Short and John Candy). The series is called "Rick Moranis in Gravedale High." I'll report on some new syndicated shows in a future column...This summer it'll be head-to-head hares: two animated shorts with rabbits will be out from different studios. "Rollercoaster Rabbit," starring Roger Rabbit (from Disney), will be screened with DICK TRACY, while "Box-Office Bunny," marking the return of Bugs Bunny (with Noel Blanc, Mel's son, providing the voices), will be screened with another Warner Bros. picture...The ACE Award for Outstanding Children's Program this year went to Nelvana's "Babar" (on HBO)... "The Simpsons" are still hot; the March 18 episode of the Matt Groening-created series ranked 11th in the Nielsen ratings (the highest mark for any program on FOX-TV)...Fans of Mike Jittlov, the green-jacketed genius behind THE WIZARD OF SPEED AND TIME (reviewed in the last IJ), might want to joint a fan club now being formed to promote his many animated works. If you're interested, send a SASE to the Mike Jittlov Fan Club, 820 Phoenix Lane, Foster City, CA 94404... In the hope of increasing its dismal number of subscribers, The Comedy Channel (an HBO subsidiary) has acquired episodes of the "Clutch Cargo" series—the ultimate in limited animation. Talk about scraping the bottom of the barrel...Here are some additional animated features coming out later in the year: FIEVEL GOES WEST (a sequel to AN AMERICAN TAIL), with which Don Bluth is not associated; ROCKADODDLE, Bluth's latest musical; and OUTRAGEOUS ANIMATION, TOO, a new anthology of bizarre cartoons from Expanded Entertainment...

ANIMATION FOR SALE: The big news is that THE LITTLE MERMAID will be available on home video sometime in May. This is the earliest a Disney animated feature has ever made the transition from theater to home video. Prices will vary owing to rebate offers...Fans of Japanimation will want to check out what C.A.S.H. (Cartoon Animation Supply House) has to offer—everything in video titles from A (AKIRA) to Z (ZILLION FANTASTIC MEMORIES). For an order form with a current list of titles, send a SASE to C.A.S.H., 5337 College Ave. #143, Oakland, CA 94618...With Bugs Bunny celebrating his 50th birthday, there will be a number of items sold in conjunction. One is a commemorative 16-month 1990-91 calendar with the theme "Happy Birthday, Bugs" (\$8.95 plus tax) coming out later this year...What item will be the hottest property this summer? Here's a hint: it has nothing to do with turtles. Give Up? It's Upper Deck's Baseball Comic Cards, featuring the Looney Tunes gang presented in a series of four 99-card packages (sold with 12 different cards per foil-wrapped pack). These cards, when placed in a 9-pocket sheet, read like a comic book. What truly separates this set of cards from others is that veteran animator Chuck Jones will be the writer and illustrator for them! Get those dollars ready to plunk down!

MAGAZINE UPDATE: The Spring '90 issue of Model and Toy Collector (#14) is a special edition dealing with memorabilia from cartoon characters (ranging from Astro Boy and Popeye to various Hanna-Barbera characters to Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles)...Comics Scene #13 features an interview with voice actor June Foray (who plays Rocky the Flying Squirrel, Natasha Fatale, Jockey Smurf and Grammi Gummi, among other characters) and one with veteran Warner animator Arthur Davis...Amazing Heroes #178 will have an article on the 50th birthday of Bugs Bunny, covering the ol' grey hare's career in both cartoons and comic books. The same also holds true for the next issue of Animatol. Check 'em out...

STILL MORE PREDICTIONS FOR 1990: I have my third proposed finalist in the running for Outstanding Animated Program at this year's Emmy Awards. "Why, Charlie Brown, Why?", which deals with the subject of leukemia from a child's perspective (with help from the "Peanuts" gang), should easily become the third candidate (see IJ #73 for my other predictions)...As speculated, the stop-motion film BALANCE by Christop and Wolfgang Laurenstein won the Academy Award for Best Animated Short. (That makes two years out of three I've successfully picked the winner since I began this column. Top that, Siskel & Ebert!) In addition, I was also correct in predicting that "Under the Sea" (Alan Menken and Howard Ashman's tune from THE LITTLE MERMAID) would win the Best Original Song Oscar. (Its score by Menken also earned an Oscar, thus repeating its dual triumph made earlier this year at the Golden Globe Awards.) This song is only the second one from a full-length animated movie to win ("When You Wish Upon A Star" was the first). Which brings us to...

TOON TEST: "Tunes From 'Toons"—Here's a list of song titles from animated features. Each one was nominated for an Oscar. From what film did each song come?

- |                         |                              |                   |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Baby Mine            | 4. Love                      | 5. Love is a Song |
| 2. The Bare Necessities | 6. Someone's Waiting for You |                   |
| 3. Bibbidi-Bobbidi-Boo  | 7. Somewhere Out There       |                   |

The answers are at the end of this column. (Clue: All but one of these songs are from Disney cartoon features.)

FRUITS (AND VEGETABLES) OF THEIR LABOR: The "mixed fruit salad" goes to CBN for its series "Frun Town Funnies." On the plus side, it shows old cartoons (from the Van Buren Studio, among others) that I haven't seen in years (eg., "Felix the Cat," "Toonerville Trolley," etc.). On the minus side, many of these cartoons are available on home video—usually at discount stores for as little as \$2.99 a tape—so it's not worth paying \$35 a month to watch a cable program that runs the same stuff you can easily run on your VCR for less money...Time-Warner Inc. gets the "golden banana" award for providing the ultimate inside joke. Looney Tunes character Wile E. Coyote made a surprise appearance on the April 4 episode of "Night Court" (with the animated Wile E. standing in between the live John Larroquette and Markie Post). Judge Stone (Harry Anderson) warned the toon to curb its eating habits and, "Leave that bird alone!"

ERRATA: I'd mentioned that "The Simpsons" would have 13 more episodes to go with the first 13 shows (IJ #74). I meant to say nine new episodes. (Years ago, a TV series would produce 26 episodes per season; nowadays most TV shows have a 22-episode season). My mistake...

AMERICAN TAIL (the non-Disney title)  
 3. CINDERELLA 4. NOB HOD 5. BABY 6. THE RESCUERS AND 7. AN  
 their Oscar-nominated songs are: 1. JIMBO 2. THE JUNGLE BOOK  
 ANSWERS TO TOON TEST: The animated features that correspond to

## CLOCKER CHIPMUNK'S HOT HORSES!

Violin Concerto Number One - Trainer: Bruch.  
 Sharp in a.m. - can win!  
 Hot Five - Trainer: Lous Armstrong.  
 Can romp home!

YOU CAN TRUST CLOCKER CHIPMUNK!

### N.Y. DRIVEN WOMEN #12 & 35

Bob Dylan's ex-wife sits on the bleachers in a smoky little Hoboken nightclub, watching her latest son-in-law belting out his latest demo tape to an appreciative but slim audience of friends and scene-schemers. Bob Dylan's ex-wife's looks certainly belie her too many years of lawsuits and sleepless months: she's still slim, dark, and her eyes still sparkle mischievously with that old Sixties magic.

"I'm here tonight, really, to support HIM," she tells me as she glances supportively at the figure anxiously replacing a guitar string in mid-song. "Of course, I know only too well how much it takes to step out on that stage with only a song between you and," as her hand sweeps over the dance floor, "...THEM. It's a rough game. No, wait a minute—it's no game. It's a way of LIFE, isn't it? It IS a life for them, isn't it? All these singers; all these kids. All their songs. What does it really all add up to in the end?"

Strange to hear Bob Dylan's ex-wife unloading her philosophical baggage on a stranger like me—and in Hoboken, to boot! But then, one doesn't get to be Bob Dylan's ex by keeping one's thoughts to oneself, I should imagine.

"You'll excuse me now, won't you?" she smiles as a final chord fades from the speakers underfoot. "I must get Peter out of his wet shirt and into a cab." Bob Dylan's ex-wife pops to her feet and, with a somehow sincere "Take care!" flung at me over her shoulder, rushes around the corner and out of view.

Bob Dylan's girlfriend called me at 11:30 the other night. She wondered if I could possibly make it over later to help her arrange some songs. "I have a show to do Monday night, and I'm absolutely FRANTIC," she bleeds. "It'll only take an hour or so. I PROMISE."

Ten minutes later a cab deposits me outside her apartment building on one of the Upper East Side's most upcity blocks. I look up to see her already waving frantically through her Pella windows. A second later, she's dashed downstairs to let me in.

"I'm sorry, I'm REALLY sorry, but the intercom's on the blink and we're between doormen. And during THIS of all weeks! I'm really terribly sorry, but you know what they say about if it's not one thing it's another..." I'm scrambling to keep apace as she whisks me through the lobby and up the stairs to her majestic double oak doors.

Bob Dylan's girlfriend's apartment is huge and sumptuous in the extreme, despite the fact that its lone contents at the moment are a futon, a piano, and a fireplace full of orchids. "I'm sorry there's nowhere to sit yet—there's hardly anything to EAT yet!—but I've only just moved in three nights ago and my furniture's still somewhere between here and the coast. At least I HOPE it is! With the kind of week I've been having, I'll bet the trucks have broken down somewhere in the wilds of Minnesota and I'll be living on Ritz Blits for the rest of my life!"

As I glance overhead at the ornate chandelier and, higher still, clumps of Renaissance angels painstakingly painted across the ceilings, I can't help but realize a goodly percentage of Grand Central Station's homeless population could most comfortably spend the rest of their lives in Bob Dylan's girlfriend's CLOSET. Ritz crackers or no Ritz crackers, this is the kind of apartment that helps you appreciate the obscene division between Manhattan social levels that's becoming increasingly obvious in the post-Reagan years.

"Okay, okay. I have a half hour—maybe forty-five minutes—to do on Monday night, and between all my wardrobe fittings and beauty shoots—what AM I going to do about this hair!—I have to whittle out the absolute best set of songs I can before I can hire the musicians and backup singers. Now, I think it's important, above all else, to showcase the width and depth of my repertoire: after all, I'm not exactly what you'd call a spring chicken—especially the way I look tonight! (Isn't my hair simply FRIGHTFUL? I don't know WHAT I'll be able to do to bang it into shape by MONDAY, for God's sake.) I mean, I've been working the Village since I was FOURTEEN! I met Bob in 1965, you know. What a little twerp he was then. You know, sometimes I STILL call him my little twerp! Anyway, I met him in one of those awful dessert places along Bleecker and Bobby was, how shall I put this...SHIT-FACED. He was drunk, okay? And he was HITTING on me, for God's sake. Hitting on me! And I just kept saying, "Get away from me, you little twerp"—that's what I used to call him—but he would NOT leave me alone! ALL NIGHT he's going, "You're beautiful. What's your name?"—hitting on me, right?—and I was so young and scared, I just wanted to get OUT OF THERE. But Bobby said—and I'll never forget this—Bobby said, "That's okay. That's okay. We're gonna meet together again someday. Out on the coast." And dammit, nine years later—and just about as many husbands!—I'm out in L.A., searching FRANTICALLY for the man, and would you believe it? We got together. We meet again. Just like he said we would! He even let me sit on the couch for that "After The Flood" (sic) tour. Would you BELIEVE it? And you know what? He's just as big a little twerp now as he ever was!"

By 4 A.M. I was getting hungry and even a little tired. Not

### THAT OLD-TIME RELIGION

"No less confusing has been the primary source on Taoism—the Taoist Canon or Tao Tsang. This is a bibl in 1,120 volumes—not pages—compiled over a period of fifteen centuries..."

"If, for instance, a rain god had refused to send rain, the appropriate government official would first read him a stiff lecture. He might point out, as Po Chu-i once did, that the god was 'not divine on his own account, it was his worshippers that made him so'; that if the drought continued, people would begin to doubt his powers, and he would 'lose face'; that he too would go hungry in case of a famine, for it would be necessary to curtail the sacrifices at his temple; and so forth. If such reasonable arguments failed, the god would be threatened with loss of rank. Finally, an Imperial Decree would be issued, breaking him, let us say, from Duke to Marquis. The ceremonies necessary to solemnize such changes, especially the installation of a new god, were nearly always performed by Taoist priests who, like their Roman Catholic counterparts in the West, had a kind of monopoly on deification." (from *Taoism: The Parting of the Way* by Holmes Welch, Beacon Press, 1957, 1965; pp. 88, 138-139)

### FREE BIRD

Jakusho Kwong told Helen Tworok for her *Zen in America*, "Suzuki Roshl had given a talk about liberation, and a student asked him, 'If you believe that, why do you keep your bird locked up in a cage?' And Suzuki Roshl just opened the door and the bird flew out the window."

### TO SOAR WITH THE EGO

"In Japan...the monastery was another aspect of community-oriented social system, and one didn't join up in order to fulfill a need to belong or to identify with a group. There is nothing wrong with those feelings or with those needs, but I question the use of a Zen center as a place to work them out. My experience with residential centers in the United States is that they attract very immature people. They have been set up along the lines of Japanese male hierarchies, and the Americans who have a need to be in the protective shadows of these systems are not particularly mature. Unless you have a strong sense of self, you cannot understand letting go. Keeping an open mind does not mean standing in the middle of the street and getting run over by a car any more than it means getting run over by another human being. American Zen students are a little confused about the ago. They think they're supposed to check it at the door like a hat. Of course you have your ego, otherwise you wouldn't be here. You have to have that ego in order to want to clarify your life and understand it. But from what I've seen in the residential centers, this confusion has served to maintain an unhealthy dependency on the teacher." - Maurine Stuart (from *Zen in America*)

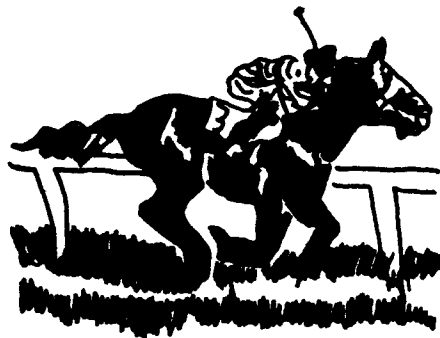
### ZEN MIND, BOOKSELLER'S MIND

"One plan proposed a Buddhist bookstore under the aegis of Zen Center. For the first time, students saw an angry Suzuki Roshl. 'This is just a selfish idea,' he told them. Anything that would take business away from existing shops was incorrect. Special books should be ordered through local bookstores. They had not thought about others. Recalls Baker, 'We were all standing there looking down at the floor. That way of looking at it had never occurred to us.'" - Helen Tworok, *Zen in America*, pp. 215-6

### DEFINITIVE REPLY

HO CHI ZEN: What is reality?

HARRY KRISHNA: An illusion caused by a hallucinogenic deficiency.



MARY ANN HENRY  
ST BENEDICTS CONVENT

M138

that I don't mind listening to Dylan tale upon Dylan tale direct from the horse's mouth, so to speak...

"I'm awfully sorry, but I don't want to keep you up ALL night, but would you believe I don't even have a CLOCK here yet? With my luck, I've left it out on the coast—not that you ever need to know what time it is out there now, do you? But thank you so VERY much for coming by so late—and at such short notice too. You KNOW I appreciate it so much. But I'm sorry: I've got these damn fittings and cheek appointments all DAY tomorrow. God, will I EVER get everything together by Monday night?"

Bob Dylan's girlfriend saw me into another cab and, you know, we never did get to work on any songs.





I'm going through one of those peculiar periods in my life where nothing makes sense. Nothing except basketball.

My personal life is kind of a mess. In just the last year alone I've lost three friends—all three relationships going down in flames amidst much screaming, rage, and general asshole-ism on all our parts.

My professional life is even more tenuous. Last month I made the paltry sum of \$200 off my chosen field of cartooning. This is not a particularly enviable position for a 33-year-old man. Not only that, but even on those months when I'm making decent money I'm still nagged by, well, nagging doubts as to the worth of my artistic output. Art is such a funny, nebulous game. I mean, how can you EVER be sure what you're doing is any good? One obvious standard for judging one's "success" is by how well it goes over with the audience. But "Garfield" is terribly popular and that's shit. So how do you know?

My romantic life is—well, we can forget about that.

But basketball—now, that makes sense. Basically, you put a ball in a hole. What could be simpler? It's a child's game that I've been enjoying since I was 10 years old. And yet, within the simple confines of a child's game is endless depth and variation to equal the most complex chess maneuvers.

Basketball captures a part of my spirit and imagination that nothing else has equalled. Former New York Knick (and now one of the most boring politicians imaginable) Sen. Bill Bradley spoke of the special beauty of well-played basketball, rhapsodizing poetically about those "special moments" on the court when everything comes together. Five men, working together as a team, their bodies coordinated at the peak of their capabilities, dancing together with a common purpose and precision in a way that is as close to "beauty" as anything humanity has produced.

This must sound like so much hooey to you non-hoopsters. I often get the same blank look from my non-basketball-playing friends when I try to convey the magic I feel out on the court. To them it's nothing but a jumble of sweaty bodies blasting up and down the concrete, colliding and careening against each other. Which, of course, it is.

Basketball has become almost an addiction to me. Every morning I wake up with aching, old bones, and tell myself, "Never again." But, as 4:00 rolls by—the time when the court starts filling up with the local all-stars—well, it doesn't matter how sore I am, or how much work I have to get done, or how many editors are screaming about deadlines. I'm lacing on my sneaks and hitting the courts!

I'm probably out there more than anybody. I'm building up a reputation among even the hardcore basketball nuts as a total basketball nut.

I think about the guys out there sometimes. I don't know hardly anything about them, aside from the fact that, say, Reggie has a great outside shot, and little Shay can leap high enough to take quarters off the top of the backboard. And Hootie has that sweet move to the hoop, but he doesn't play tough D, etc.

But in another way, I feel I know these guys better than a lot of my so-called "friends" with whom I've spent hours and hours rehashing our personal histories and psychological intricacies in endless coffee-shop bullshit sessions for which Berkeley is famous. There's a misguided notion, popular amongst half-wit gym teachers, that "sports builds character." This isn't so much true as it is that "sports reveal character." You learn A LOT about a guy after a couple of games of hoops. Is he willing to work hard, or does he just want to hog the ball and shoot it every time? Does he complain every time a call goes against him? Does he work WITH his teammates?

You see, sports in general, and basketball in particular, are great for releasing emotion. Whatever you got inside yourself is gonna come spilling to the surface in the pressurized passion play of a hard-fought athletic struggle.

That's especially true on the weekends, when there's ten million guys out there, game to 12, and the losers have to sit (and wait a long time before they get the chance to get back on the court). Nobody wants to lose. Everybody's fighting for every advantage. That's when fights break out. Those are always unforgettable scenes, that look a man gets in his eye—literally blood in his eye—when he goes after someone in pure rage and fury. It's a scary look, like they'd fight to the death if we didn't break it up.

But the great thing about sports is, it has all the drama of life and death struggles, and yet the second the game is over you shake hands and nothing was REALLY lost. Except, sometimes, a little piece of your pride.

I remember one of the first times I went out there. Nobody wanted to pick me for their team, because, as a white guy, you're immediately suspect. And for good reason. If you're ever watching hoops on TV and wanna know who's gonna win, just pick the team with the least whites. This might sound racist (it *does*—ed.), but it's also accurate 80% of the time.

Anyways, I finally talked my way onto one of the teams, and we've got the game all sewn up until I make two crucial fuckups at the end to blow the game. The agony of defeat. Needless to say, my teammates gave me a look that said "If not for that motherfucker we would still be out there on the court."

But since then, I've continued to improve, and have managed to win a modicum of respect from my peers, "He can play" being the ultimate compliment.

The black/white thing can be a little weird sometimes. We almost never talk about it—hell, the courts are one of the last refuges from the REAL WORLD, so nobody wants to bring that shit up. When the sun starts going down, I even find myself biting my tongue before I say something as innocent as "It's getting dark out."

It's interesting for me, though. Basketball is my only entry, my only peek, into the black world. And it is certainly a very different world from that of their white counterparts, make no mistake about it. I was reading, there are more black males ages 18 to 30 in prison than there are in college. You hear them talking casually about "Joey doing 18 (months)." It's no big deal. The other day these six black teenagers were playing 3-on-3 for \$300 a game. How they could afford to bet that kind of money was beyond me.

By the same token, I sometimes notice them studying me, as a representative of the white world which I suspect they see as somewhat alien. I wouldn't blame them if they hated my guts, considering how whites have fucked them over (I know I probably would if I were black, considering the large chip I always carry on my shoulder as it is). But in general, they all pretty much accept me out there. Almost like I'm a pet or something. For once in their life, I'm the one on their turf. They dominate out there, they come up with the moves that the white people admire and try to emulate. They know they've got my complete respect from the moment I step out on the court, and they appreciate it. Lord knows they don't get it enough from the rest of society.

For awhile my nickname was "Rambis" (as in Kurt, the token white boy on the champion L.A. Lakers). Now it's "Jesus" (as in "Christ," because of my long hair and beard). Thou shalt playeth basketball.

Well, I didn't mean to ramble on this long. Like I said, the sport can be addictive. It's gotten to the point where I'm considering asking my roommate to hide my sneakers from me so I'll be able to get some work done around here. Basketball can really get to you. It's like that Cheech & Chong song, where Bassa'ball Jones is groping for the words to express what basketball means to him: "Why, that bassa'ball...it was like, a bassa'ball to me!"

ritz  
pit

a  
sex  
comedy

\$2. (ppd)

Ken Wagner  
511 W. Sullivan  
Olean, NY  
14760



## TROUBLES

by Larry Oberc

Me when I see danger when I watch a sudden fight break out when those words bounce against my ears like a pair of boxing gloves shattering the sound barrier I want to jump out of the way dive for the floor to where the oxygen is out of sight of the flames out of breathing distance of the smoke or I just sit and smile and watch and that seems so much safer than wanting to run away it makes you immune to the violence to the way it really is people don't bother you they almost make a point of not falling on you when they are thrown are tossed are smashed in your direction theres a politeness about it about the way you look like you mean no harm like you just happened to be there not intentionally in the way the way its their fault for heading in your direction the way if you had run it'd look like you had done some thing wrong like you were responsible like it was all your fault....



DON JESUS  
by Charles Rampp  
i believed  
i was quixote—  
anachronism looking  
for dragons  
to slay deadly.  
discovery came slowly,  
i knew i wasn't  
sancho's  
ass either.  
pull tight the girth,  
Carpenter,  
you'll need no spurs  
as  
we tilt  
at  
today's windmills.

MR. EMPLOYER:  
Don't be too critical of your striking  
workers. Strikes are part and parcel  
of a fixed wage economy. When  
strikes are no more these of you bet-  
ween 20 and 60 will be wearing  
blue collars on your even age years  
and managing things on your vaca-  
tion pay odd years. Three years pay  
in two isn't too bad and you can re-  
live the experience as in your here-  
before save one. Send SASE to  
arithmetically and spiritually sound  
HERENOW HERUNS  
Box 2243  
YOUNGSTOWN — OHIO, 44604

## DOG CATCHERS

by B.Z. Bullen

There was a green banner stretched across the street. "VOTE FOR GRACKLE! GRACKLE FOR DOG CATCHER!"

Grackle bragged: "I got God, fate, history and truth on my side. I will win—I will be the next dog catcher!"

But Wyatt Earp won, 37 to 35. "Looks like you was wrong about God, eh, pardner?"

Grackle said: "That stray dog, Sir Francis Drake, is running loose in front of Sally's Saloon. Be careful. He bites!"

"I bite too! A dog catcher got to be fearless. No secret why you lost the election!"

"I ain't afraid of any dog on the planet Earth," said Grackle.

"Good. Here's your deputy's badge. I'm expecting my brothers, Morgan and Virgil. Also Doc Holliday."

The dog (Sir Francis Drake) waited contemptuously at the O.K. Corral—while Wyatt Earp and the four deputies approached with dog nets.

The odds-maker at Sally's Saloon made the dog the favorite. Earp was a long shot. The dog was undefeated in 17 fights.

The dog won!

You can look up "Sir Francis Drake" in the encyclopedia. He was a stray dog, but he had a fancy name!

BAD PUN INTENDED

by A.T. Hunn

They charged her with assault and battery  
Though she never really knew why  
Sure, she made the two-timer eat

sodium chloride

Then, with sixty D-cells, fried his hide  
Oh...

## HORNED AND CORNY

by Susan Packie

Help! I am stuck on the horns of a dilemma. The world is either becoming more peaceful or more bellicose, individuals are either more health-conscious and concerned about the environment or more junk-fast-food-oriented and ecologically-destructive, schools are either expanding their curricula and reaching out to more people or are failing to teach even the three R's and becoming disturbingly segregated, the sane or the insane are governing our lives and treading the streets, and life expectancy is either increasing, decreasing or staying the same.

Yes, I am confused, but I am not alone in this. A national survey of junior and senior high school students touches on some of these points. Take life expectancy (incorrectly called the life span, or how long the body of Homo sapiens can endure as opposed to the number of years people may expect to live); for example. Life expectancy is, after all, directly related to the wars to which one is sent off or in which one inadvertently finds oneself involved, the nourishment one gets and the air one breathes, the knowledge one has accumulated and the stability of one's life and that of those with whom one comes into contact.

Thirty-three percent of the students surveyed thought the average life span (see above) would be more than 100 years by the 22nd century, 18% thought it would be 80 years (it now varies from 69ish to 76ish, depending on one's—don't get upset—sex, ethnicity and place of domicile, according to insurance companies' actuarial tables), and 11% thought it would be more than 125 years.

Thirty-eight percent apparently either didn't understand the question or didn't care to offer an opinion. Or were afraid to contradict the majority of their peers. Maybe these were the only students who had heard of pollution, contaminants, radiation/irradiation, genetically-altered species, hormone-fed food sources, acid rain, the greenhouse effect, holes in the ozone layer, increasing numbers of people taking up arms in eastern Europe, Ireland, Latin America, Africa, China, urban areas of the United States, rural areas of the United States—well, you get the general idea—increasing numbers of people folding legs on city/suburban streets, subways, beaches and police/military training fields, and death at an early age from overdosing and under-diagnosing.

But the majority can't be wrong. After all, 51% of these junior and senior high schoolers expect to be communicating with extraterrestrial beings by the 22nd century (I had no idea INSIDE JOKE's readership was so large!). Luckily, 80% see themselves working in space and 63% envision living there, so I'll have this filthy planet all to myself. You see, I'm getting these monkey-gland injections...

## SLOW DOWN OR SHUT UP

by Floyd R. Leavitt

I love speed. I love to go fast; it gives me a rush. The faster I go the better I feel; the better I feel the faster I go.

So one day I was hitchhiking from Phoenix to Tuscon. I got picked up by these two deaf guys in a Lincoln Continental. They put me in the back seat and started speeding. It was great! 120? 130? It was great! My speed, their ticket.

I was ecstatic 'til they started talking.

I said, "Watch the road," but they ignored me. I said it louder, to no avail.

After twenty minutes of sign language at 130 I couldn't take it any more. "Keep your hands on the wheel!" I screamed, but they didn't hear.

Finally I caught the driver's eye in the rear view mirror and said very distinctly, "Read my lips, buddy...Slow down, or shut up."

He didn't understand; my lips were backwards.

# SAGA OF THE SOUTH SLOPE

by Dennis Brezina

## CHAPTER 3

### THE RETURN OF THE FLOWER CHILDREN

*When we last left the South Slope--where animals and plants with human-like traits grapple with problems bigger than life-- Luther, a praying mantis, decided that Mom eating Dad alive was not an example of "Mother Knows Best," and Jasper, a bachelor rabbit, was sure that when his bunny friend hit him with a right upper-cut she was not flirting.*

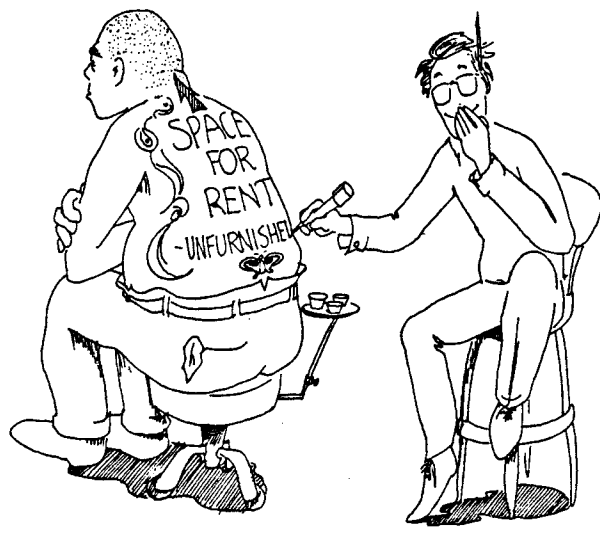
Today, in our less-than-serene community a group of flowers reminisce about their flower child days. Greta, a guitar-strumming, ballad-singing daffodil who went with the counter-culture flow of the 1960's, is worried about her fading beauty. Formerly the rootloose and fancy free singer of "This Flower Bed Is Your Flower Bed" and "Where Have All the People Gone?" she dispairs over her wrinkling complexion -- crow's feet in her corolla -- and a pronounced profile. Drifts of robust male daffodils may no longer chase after her. A face lift and trumpet job might do the trick.

Irwin remains a radical iris. He sacrificed a budding career in the corporate world and achieved notoriety during the '60's. As one of the South Slope Seven, he defied a court order by disrupting research at the Shooting Star Missile Lab. He still exudes an aura of charisma, sports a deep purple beard and leads protests against white flower supremacists, cold war perennials and other flower bed crusaders of the right. An allergy to pollen has hampered his activism. He suffers sneezing fits whenever speaking, such as when he addressed the national organization, Drug Free Shoots for Alcohol Free Bloomers.

Daphne, a day lily who once woke up in bed with a red rose revolutionary, has gone from radical on the outside to radical within. No longer a Green Party roofer or a pot party climber, she's turned over a New Age leaf. She's working on relationships, sharpening her assertiveness skills and learning to bloom where she was planted.

The flower children thrill to each other's stories -- such a diverse flowering since the common experiences of the '60's. Will the shifting political and social forces of the 1990's give them a simple purpose again?

They hope that the Garden States of America will no longer be treated as a cut rate nursery, in which the residents are simply told to stand tall. The pace and direction of plant growth needs wiser guidance. Also, they see as less promising the "special species" style of the old left that promotes extensive gardener intervention. They hope America will become spiritually rich and fertile, maturing into a morally upright land of the flowers, by the flowers, for the flowers without prejudice to size, color or fertilizer preference.



*The late Thomas Underwood had fun with his more illiterate customers.  
(This one could read, after all.)*

**One can live in the shadow of an idea without grasping it", — Elizabeth Bowen, Irish author (1899 — 1973).**

**When enough of us grasp it and adopt Brainbeaism THAT could be our fate for eternity. For an arithmetically and spiritually sound religion that HAD to be adopted in a previous herenow send S.A.S.E. to: HERENOW RERUNS — Box 2243 YOUNGSTOWN — OHIO, 44504**

## The Poet's Diet Book

by Tamarina Dwyer

*(In this chapter, Janet marries Henri. She had wanted a new life, and now she has it. Her poetry is still important to her, and she proves the old adage that the best way to a man's heart is through his stomach.)*

Jan was determined to accept conditions of fate. Jacques didn't love her, Henri did, or seemed to. Why not love the one you're with?

As sun battled with early summer clouds, Jan shopped. Henri was generous. She bought sea shrimp, lake trout and river bass. She picked out plump avocados, giant grapefruit and kiwi. She bought mangos, almonds, scallions and tea. If foods were healthy she would be wealthy.

On Tuesday she shopped again. She bought beef and hen and moved into Henri's den. She sauteed peppers and baked bran. She shished apples and honeyed peach.

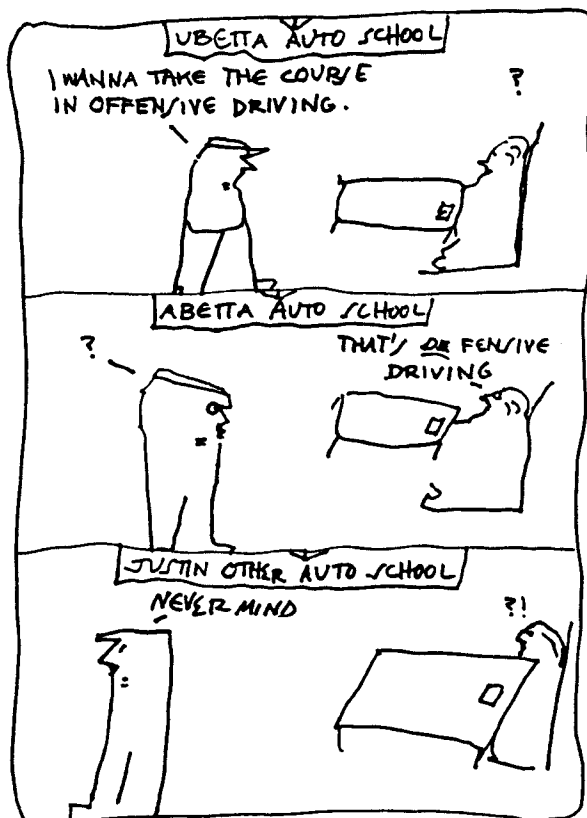
"If I interpret your intent correctly, a bride you shall be." Henri married Jan on the night of the lunar eclipse. No candles. No lanterns. The darkness was to represent the natural inheritance of all men when they committed themselves to the future. The satanic effect of the black night was countered by mood music. Jan dressed in the silk garments of a goddess and begged the stars to lighten the spiral of steps down to Henri's terrace-walled bedroom.

Jan sat in the sunken tub like a debutante of the sea, a mermaid special, a recruit of Neptune. She reached for hors d'oeuvres that sat on a glass tray: mushroom pastry, strawberries and cinnamon. She talked to them like a friend: *la bonne amie de la vie nouveau...If I eat this crumpet will I be a stronger woman? Well, let me see. And strawberries, ripe or delicate-shaped/it's not the weight but the lies that are taped.*

Henri was on the patio, listening to the waves of the city as they flowed over the news report on the radio. Sun spanked the sky like a father.

There were 20 or so sherbet balls that were melting in the steam-filled room. Jan ate them one by one, her prayers to each of nature's beak.

The black dress was in the closet again, but so were the old sneakers she had left in Utica. It was an insult. Poor country boys who walked to one-room schoolhouses wore shoes at least.



# IF I HAD A HAMMER AND SICKLE...

by Brian Ruddy

Now that the situation in Eastern Europe has stabilized, more or less, I believe it is time to take an objective, unbiased look at the socialist system, its accomplishments as well as its failures. And by objective and unbiased, I mean just that. We must base our conclusions on facts, not perceptions; on realities, not preconceived notions. Journalism is serious stuff; it must not be slanted by political orientation. After all, those puppyfucking bastards in the fascist media have had their say; now it's my turn.

Just look at the facts. Aside from a 40-year nightmare of repression, corruption, economic devastation and occasional slaughter, socialism has been a resounding success. And in no field of endeavor is the success of socialism more evident than in that one basic, fundamental struggle of human existence—that universal test of strength, character and determination by which we are judged as individuals, as societies, and ultimately as simple, transitory beings whose fleeting lives are soon engulfed by the cosmic void of perpetual nothingness.

I'm speaking, of course, about the hammer throw.

For the enlightenment of any readers who, through some tragic deprivation of knowledge and experience, may not be familiar with the hammer throw (can such ignorance possibly exist?), this is the athletic event in which a very large person whirls round and round and then flings, as far as possible, a 16 lb. iron ball attached to a cable and metal handle. (Exactly why this contest is called the "hammer throw" instead of, say, the "16 lb. iron ball attached to a cable and metal handle throw" has long been the subject of a raging controversy among athletes, scholars, and Betty Friedan.)

The phenomenal success of Soviet and East European hammer throwers is perhaps the single greatest triumph of the socialist system. East Bloc dominance in many other events, e.g., weightlifting, shot putting, tuna wrestling, is well known; but none of those contests carries the significance, the essential meaning of the hammer throw.

Hammer throwers born and trained in the East consistently trounce their Western opponents in international competition. The record shows that they have taken the gold medal in nine of the past 10 Olympiads. In the Games of 1988, East Germany's Reinhard Voßkamp won the gold with a throw of 1700.78 meters (5580 ft); this roughly equals the length of a football field plus the distance at which a person with advanced glaucoma can spot a Deadhead. No Western thrower even came close to matching this herculean toss. The USA's G. Deal Hornel, for example, was disqualified on the technicality that none of his first-round throws exceeded the world record distance for ejecting nasal mucus (supine position, single nostril freestyle).

Clearly, there is a direct link between life under socialism and great hammer throwing.

To get the inside story on this momentous issue, this writer (I) traveled to the city of Vblaaaaaad, Vulgarania, the home of current world record holder Zignar Szcccccanczzaaaaaachu. (It is worth noting that Vulgarania, officially named the Vulgaranian Democratic Socialist People's Republic of Democratic Socialist Vulgarian People, is now the only East Bloc state where the so-called "reform" movement has utterly failed to win support among workers. Vulgaranians are quite satisfied with their standard of living. These hardy, cheerful people prefer to live a life unencumbered by the gaudy trappings of Western commercialism. This healthy attitude is perhaps best summed up by the old Vulgaranian proverb, "The peasant whose feet have been toughened by endless toil in the radish fields has no use for Reeboks.") I chatted with Mr. Szcccccanczzaaaaaachu at his training facility, the Vulgaranian People's Institute of Physical Culture and Back Hair. Then we spoke through a long ceramic tube.

To what do you attribute your remarkable success?

(Mr. S. appears puzzled) Do you mean my own success personally, or the success of my people, a people who, in little more than a generation, have transformed what had been a backward, feudalistic oligarchy into an efficient, modern state where complete equality has replaced class struggle; where the downtrodden masses have toppled the privileged few; where justice has triumphed over tyranny; and where you can get really excellent smoked sausage?

I meant your own personal success.

Oh, that's an easy one. (Vigorously clears throat) I owe all my athletic achievements to the fundamental principles of scientific socialism as applied to the following: 1, the general development of upper-torso musculature, with particular emphasis on those muscle groups directly involved in the act of propelling a large, unwieldy object; 2, the rapid, almost instantaneous conversion of rotational momentum into maximum kinetic energy; 3, an intensive study of parabolic trajectories and their mathematical correlates pertaining to distance, velocity and mass; and 4, yogurt.

I understand. But while doing research for this article, I learned that training for the hammer throw, at least the physical aspect of it, is basically the same all over the world. So how do you account for the total domination of the sport by throwers from the East?

(Laughs heartily) Ah, my friend, I'm afraid that you overlooked one thing in your research. A very important thing.

Which is?

Symbolism.

I don't quite follow.

This is hardly surprising. One cannot expect much from a mind contaminated by bourgeois values. But let me attempt to explain. You see, in an event as complex as the hammer, there are many va-

riables, any one of which can decide the outcome. The physical aspect of training is not always enough to make the difference between victory and defeat. Nor is any amount of study. This is where the symbolic factor comes in. The hammer throw is a perfect metaphor for casting off the chains of enslavement. It is a symbolic act of liberation. Symbolic but profound. Before each and every throw, I visualize the spherical weight and cable of the hammer as a ball and chain, which it almost literally is. I further visualize that this ball and chain has been shackled to my body by brutal thugs from some huge, evil, multinational conglomerate—like Exxon or General Dynamics or Cher Boyardee. Now—

Wait a minute, Zig. Exxon and General Dynamics I can see. They are huge and evil. But Chef Boyardee? Come on, about the evil-est thing they do is make bad spaghetti.

You fool! You naive simpleton! Their pasta company is just a front operation designed to conceal their actual goal of complete global subjugation!

You can't really believe that.

If I didn't, why would I say it? (scowls, prods extremely thick finger into this writer's sternum) Listen to me, you interviewer person who are merely a puppet controlled by sinister forces and whose pectorals are by no means well-developed and whose reproductive organs could not possibly fill the vast dimensions of my athletic supporter, here in Vulgarania we can speak our minds. We speak freely and without fear of consequences. Our Constitution, which has never needed to be amended, by the way, for its conception was perfect, guarantees every citizen the right to say absolutely anything the Party believes.

Fair enough. Please continue.

Well, as I was saying before you interrupted me with your reactionary outburst, I visualize the hammer as a device of enslavement, a device of cruel and fiendish oppression. And when I throw it, when I cast it off, I cast it off for all the world's workers.

I see. In other words, "You have nothing to lose but your chains!"

Hey, you're quite a phrasemaker. You ought to go into advertising.

There's no need for sarcasm, Zignar. I'm on your side.

Oh, sure. That's what they all say. Then they sneak into your house at night and deposit weevil larvae in your buttermilk.

You know I would never do such a thing.

(face registers disgust) Look, I don't have all day. I'm a very busy behemoth. Please proceed with your venomous interrogation.

I'm terribly sorry if I offended you. I hope you will accept my apology. (This writer waits for acceptance of his apology. This writer is still waiting.) Anyway, this visualization thing seems to have worked quite well for you. You obviously possess a highly disciplined mind. But do you ever find it hard to concentrate?

Of course. At my level of competition, which is to say the very highest level, the pressure is tremendous. Distractions are everywhere, and sometimes no amount of mental effort can block out intrusive thoughts. Occasionally, despite my generally positive outlook, I find myself pondering the many horrors of this world—such as war, poverty, disease, colorization of classic black and white film

Of course. At my level of competition, which is to say the very highest level, the pressure is tremendous. Distractions are everywhere, and sometimes no amount of mental effort can block out intrusive thoughts. Occasionally, despite my generally positive outlook, I find myself pondering the many horrors of this world—such as war, poverty, disease, colorization of classic black and white films... (face grows red with rage) Ted Turner! That scum! Did you see what he did to Casablanca? He should get cancer!

When these negative thoughts do intrude, how do you deal with them?

I just close my eyes, breathe deeply, and keep repeating the word "pudding."

Oh, like a mantra.

No, like a dessert.

(Writer dreads bringing up this next controversial point, but he brings it up anyway, because he does the journalistic thing) Just before I left the U.S., I talked with a group of American hammer throwers. (Mr. S. snickers contemptuously.) The general consensus seemed to be that you owe most of your competitive edge to megadoses of steroids and growth hormone. How do you respond to this accusation?

Lies! Lies! Total fabrication! (pounds table, shakes fist menacingly, crushes baby otter) The Americans will use any excuse to explain their mediocrity!

I really hate to press the point, but the Americans were very specific. In particular they remarked that your appearance, especially your facial features, are indicative of hormone abuse.

It's all sour grapes, I tell you. Prominent brow ridges run in my family.

Another complaint voiced by the Americans was that Eastern athletes are, in fact, professionals. That is, they are full-time athletes subsidized by the state, whereas American competitors hold regular jobs and can only train in their spare time. What are your views on this point?

(Sighs, shakes head in disgust) This is one of the perennial excuses of the Americans. A perennial lie. It has no basis in

(continued next page)

fact. I cannot speak for athletes in other socialist countries, but here in Vulgarania, all our athletes hold regular jobs.

Really? I wasn't aware of that. Exactly what kind of work do you yourself do?

I have the distinct privilege of serving the state as an honorary part-time sludge packer at the Friedrich Engels Memorial Solid Waste Blast-Compression Pit.

An honorary sludge packer? Do you mean you don't actually work there?

Well, let's just say that while my body is in the gym, my spirit is in the Pit.

I'm afraid I don't get it. If your presence isn't actually required at work, why not just be an honorary full-time sludge packer?

Hey, there's only so many hours in a day. Besides, I'm also an honorary part-time ore inspector at the Everlasting Glory to the Legacy of Marx Copper Smelting Thing.

I want to know, Zignar, have you ever seen the rain comin' down on a sunny day?

Sure, once or twice.

So, to sum up, you don't think your life would have been as rewarding living under a capitalist regime?

Absolutely not. Here, in my beloved country, under the benevolent guidance and supervision of the Party, I have become a champion thrower of the hammer. Had I been born in the West, I would probably be doing something really stupid with my life.



MARY ANN HENRY  
11/9/81

#### SON OF A PURPLE COW

in the style of Gelett

Burgess' *THE PURPLE COW*

by Michael Polo

I swear I've seen a Purple Cow

And lit up bright as neon

But that's because the color dial

Screws up with my TV on!

## THAT LITTLE ITCH

by Ken Wagner

The prison camp commandant had an appropriate accent: "Okay, Lieutenant; you scratch my back, and I'll scratch your back."

The American lieutenant from Arkansas had an appropriate accent: "Now, I don't know about that..."

The commandant asked, "What could be simpler?"

"You're right," the lieutenant said, "but you first." He lifted his shirt and turned his back to the commandant.

"What are you doing, Lieutenant?"

"Waiting for you to scratch my back."

"BUT THIS IS NOT WHAT I MEANT!"

"But it is what you said."

"Yes, but it's not what I meant."

"What did you mean, then?"

"I meant that if you give me information, I'll make your life a lot easier here at the camp."

"So, you're not going to scratch my back?"

"Who said anything about scratching your back?!"

"You did!"

"GUARDS!"

Two armed guards rushed in.

"Take the lieutenant out and shoot him!" the commandant ordered.

"That's not necessary," the lieutenant said. "If you want me to scratch your back first, fine, I will..."

The commandant shouted at the guards, "YOU HEARD ME!"

The guards reached for the lieutenant.

"Wait!" the lieutenant cried. "Don't I even get a last request?"

"Yes," the commandant replied, "you get a last request. What is it that you want?"

"I want you to scratch my back. I gotta itch." The lieutenant lifted his shirt again.

The commandant scratched.

"Ah, yeah, up - YEAH! Right there! Damn, you're a good back-scratcher. I think I'll tell you what I know."

The commandant finished scratching. "All right, guards, take him out and shoot him."

"But I just said I'll tell you what I know!"

"I don't care what you know, Lieutenant. No man whose back I've scratched is going to live to tell about it."

## NEW JERSEY'S NATIONAL PARKS

by Russel Like

New Jersey has no national parks. And while my home state continues thus impoverished, some states have several national parks! Is this fair? I think not. Each state should have an equal number of national parks per capita. We will use Washington State to provide the guidelines for these statistics. Washington, with about four million people, has three national parks. So in all fairness New Jersey, with over seven million inhabitants, should have about five or six national parks. And I can assure you the Garden State has no dearth of prime National Park locations!

Of course most people identify New Jersey with its fine collection of refineries concentrated along certain stretches of the Turnpike. I believe that these uniquely scenic areas should be immediately reconstituted as Refinery National Park. New development (except, of course, for refineries) will be prohibited; visitors will pay a small entrance fee to go towards park maintenance; and motor vehicle traffic will be restricted to protect the park's fragile ecosystem. In any event, I believe bicycling or walking through the area would present tourists with a more comprehensive picture of the natural splendor of Refinery National Park.

But New Jersey deserves more than just Refinery National Park. Hospital Waste National Park could be the designation of much of the Jersey shore. While syringes, vials of blood and diapers wash up in places other than New Jersey, nowhere does the ecosystem produce quantities of hospital waste as copious as those found at the Jersey Shore. Like North Jersey's refineries, this singular phenomenon needs protection and recognition. And I am sure that the new park will offer many attractions to drug addicts, medical students and vampires.

Those parts of the Jersey shore not included in Hospital Waste National Park might be made into Untreated Sewage Floating In The Ocean National Park. Once again, we have a characteristic not unique to the Jersey shore, but more pronounced there than elsewhere. And as is the practice with most natural treasures, the most productive example of the ecosystem should be protected. Untreated Sewage Floating In The Ocean National Park will be a special place, a place where the dull blue monotony of most shorelines will be replaced by a fascinating, ever-changing brown mosaic just a few feet offshore.

The three parks suggested so far will put New Jersey on a level with Washington. But since New Jersey has almost twice as many people, more parks will be necessary. Much of the state, I believe, could be placed in Overdevelopment National Park. This park will showcase the very best features of urban and suburban sprawl. Rigorous enforcement of National Park Service regulations will be necessary to safeguard and indeed augment Overdevelopment National Park's special character. Any remaining farms and woodlands will have to be replaced with condominiums and strip malls (but this would probably happen without the aid and guidance of the Park Service). To further maintain the region's charm, walking, jogging and bicycling in the park will be strictly confined to designated areas; the use of automobiles will be required in most places. Park rangers might even want to motor around during certain quieter hours so as to provide visitors with an authentic feel for rush hour and traffic jams. I am sure that Overdevelopment National Park will be a popular vacation spot.

I think that four national parks is sufficient for a state like New Jersey, even if Washington will have slightly more parks per capita. After all, New Jersey is a small and somewhat crowded state. And very few regions of comparable size are so blessed as to have four distinct ecosystems contained within them! Purists might suggest removing one of Washington's national parks from national park status for the sake of purity, but I disagree. New Jersey is mature enough to handle such inequalities.

## MY GUN, MY GUN, MY KINGDOM OR MY GUN

(Sorry About That, Bill...If That's Who You Really Were)

by Wayne Hogan

*When I hear anyone talk of culture, I reach for my revolver. - Hermann Goering*

As Steve Martin's been trying to tell us for years now, it's a wild and crazy world. One country bans a book and threatens to kill its author. Another country—ours—finds banning killer handguns and all manner of assault weapons a cautious matter for further study. A wild and crazy world.

The NRA-ish proponents of virtually unregulated gun ownership make essentially two points in support of their position. The first is that each citizen's right to bear arms is a guarantee given by the Constitution. This view, however, seems subject to at least two differing legal assessments.

The second NRA-like point that's maybe most persuasively made for the propriety of everybody having a gun who wants and can afford one is that without guns, hunting would be a thing of the past, like the buggy and the Pony Express...and the Black Plague. The implication—and it's never made more than "implication"—of this view is that our country is filled to its Swiss-all-purpose-hunting-cap's brim with people who shoot guns at bunny rabbits and beer bottles on fence posts for a substantial portion of their outdoor recreation. (Which conjures up a pretty preposterous picture in the mind's eye, when you think about it.) And so by implication the non-hunters are asked not to take away the recreational instruments of those masses of hunters, this population majority who've been the numerical backbone of this great country since time immemorial.

But just what proportion of this great country's total population do "hunters" represent anyway? In basing the defense of nearly unregulated gun ownership on the "need" to preserve The Great American Hunter, are we talking, here, some sort of nearly-everyone's-a-hunter thing, or are we instead dealing with a practice (fetish?) that numbers substantially fewer folks than we'd probably initially thought?

The most cursory examination of the facts (see, e.g., Statistical Abstract of the United States 1988, Washington DC: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1987) shows that "hunters" indeed make up a very small proportion of our total population. For instance, of all those seven years of age or older in 1986, "hunters" constituted only 9.6 percent. More played either volleyball (9.7%), softball (another 9.7%) or basketball (9.9%) than went hunting. Further, a large proportion of American adults 18 years old and over engaged in aerobics (16%) than went hunting (14%). Almost as many (13%) chose frisbee-throwing as chose hunting for their leisure-time activity.

So when those who'd defend the legitimacy of, say, the AK-47 or its "cousin" the Uzi on the grounds that they're essential to the time-honored American sport of hunting, and that the hunter's you and me and nearly everybody in between, you can now authoritatively say whoa! no! that's not so at all, Jack! The hunter, then, the yowler and the clamorer for the almost unlimited right to own guns, is a member of a decidedly tiny minority.

But just how much of a hold on the human's inalienable right to eat rabbit stew filled with Uzi holes or to hone the manly art of marksmanship shooting an AK-47 at a Miller Lite beer bottle perched upon a suburban fence post can a just, freedom-loving society allow? If this sort of right is given to the hunter minority, won't other minorities start demanding rights, too?

What about, say, the bowler minority—can we, as a democratic society, afford to allow every bowler to have as many, even as many kinds of, his/her bowling shoes as he/she wishes? And then there's the aerobic people—can a nation stay free and humane by permitting even a tiny portion of its population to push off of any wall or other similarly unyielding surfaces (even in the presence of consenting adults) wherever or whenever it chooses, day or night? The answer here, I think, is pretty clear.

All of which admittedly still leaves unresolved the "right to bear arms" issue. That, though, we can conveniently leave for legal scholars to sort out, wishing

## SLOW COLLAPSE

by Steven F. Scharff

It seems so strange that it finally happened to me, waxing nostalgic about the "good old days" before I turned 30.

When I was much younger, my mother and I would often go on errands, and would usually end up driving through her old neighborhood. But instead of the Germanic families that were such a part of Newark, the area is almost entirely African-American. The many businesses and landmarks have either been changed or entirely erased. She would often drive down the different streets saying "that was the theatre" (now a church), "that was so-and-so's deli" (now bearing an Asian name), "that was someone's house" (now a vacant lot).

Yet I never bothered to think such nostalgia would happen to me.

In my old hometown of Hillside, New Jersey, there are, or should I say were, several businesses on North Broad Street leading into Newark. The memories of my days there still linger. The main landmark was the Mayfair Theatre, a funky little movie house that would often feature the latest family fare. Rarely would anything harsher than a film rated M (the days before PG) be shown.

In grotesque irony, it was there on my 18th birthday that my brother took me to see my first X-rated movie. The films were a disappointment; the theatre was a heartbreaker. Gone were the bright colors of the lobby lights and the smell of popcorn; in their place was a dimly-lit concession stand with overpriced prepackaged candy, and the scent of disinfectant filled the air.

Across the street, where a vacant lot now stands (if that is the right verb), was once Harry Englander's Bar. It evolved from a blue-collar bar complete with (according to friends who were of legal age) a Sinatra-filled jukebox. Later, when I myself came of age, it became a local rock club, and attracted such up-and-coming acts as the Bad Brains, as well as local talent such as Humans From Earth (who disappeared after releasing one very commercial-sounding single). But success would be the bar's undoing. The late-night crowds leaving the bar would often create a ruckus that annoyed the locals in their beds. So the rock days ended, and the bar slowly became seedier, as if it had been infected with a kind of cancer. To no one's surprise, the bar was gutted by a fire labeled "suspicious" but never solved.

Several doors down were the twin offices of the Hillside Times and the town's second post office. The USPS moved across town to a new shopping center, and the paper changed both offices and editors (now relying on accusations and sensationalism on a municipal level to sell papers). Both offices now lie vacant.

Across the street was a Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise (originally a Geno's, until it did a belly-flop and was bought out by KFC). Next door to it was a Hess station (a small petroleum company that mainly sells heating oil and gasoline for independent stations). I clearly remember the day during the infamous "energy crisis" of the 1970s when a Hess truck drove up that street to make a delivery, with a shotgun-toting passenger in the cab and local police cars in the front and rear. The KFC was a big success, and became a common gathering place, until someone tried to hold up the cashier. A security guard, who was also a municipal cop moonlighting to make some extra money, got in the robber's way. He was Hillside's first policeman to die in service. I remember when the funeral procession drove past my high school. Over 50 different cities from seven states sent representative patrol cars for the somber parade. The KFC was recently gutted by fire, and I have not heard of any plans to rebuild. Hess shut down many of their unproductive stations, and Hillside's was one of them.

Yeah, when I was a kid I used to hang out here quite a bit. That big warehouse around the corner? That was a bowling alley. I bowled my first and only turkey there. That vacant lot was a rock club, and...

them rots-a-ruck in the process. Right now, those who oppose wholesale gun ownership will have to be content to counter the guns-are-necessary-for-the-survival-of-hunting-and-hunting's-something-almost-everybody-does argument by simply saying, "Balderdash! Piffle! Double balderdash! Piffle, piffle, pooh!"

Is this ol' world not wild and crazy, or what?



# Commercial McClue-In

by "Kid" Sieve

Linda Winer's 4/20 "Limelight" column in NY Newsday, which I usually admire for its insightfulness, took a rather odd turn in actually praising Time-Warner for its latest decision to remove ads from movie theatres showing Warner Bros. pictures, even though it'll cost them some petty cash (not as much as removing product placement within movies, but never mind about that now). Admirable though this slight move may be on the surface, it's kind of like thanking tuna companies for their recent promise not to net dolphins any more. One wonders why they're making such a big deal out of cleaning up an act that they should never have dirtied in the first place. But maybe I'm being unfair. Okay: Oh, thank you, mighty corporations, for being magnanimous in the kindness of your great big hearts to throw us bones and circuses while you go right on exploiting, polluting, creating artificial needs to fill and making us peons feel like the ultimately inferior scum we must be compared to your giant wisdom. There, is that better?

Did you all retch as much as I did upon reading the lists of all the bandwagon-jumping corporations sponsoring Earth Day '90 (and aren't you glad that's over so the really socially-conscious folk can get back to work without the bullshit?), among them places like Exxon and DuPont? How stupid do they think "we" are? (No, don't answer that.) Whenever I hear of a corporation suddenly turning "Green," I think of the DuPont ad for mammography (a questionable medical practice, given the frequency with which they suggest women bombard themselves with radiation) as an antidote to the breast cancer their chemicals no doubt helped cause in the first place. The more corporations pretend to be "socially/environmentally responsible," the more they can shift attention to the "little people" and individual efforts and away from their own piss-poor ecological records. Caveat emptor, eh folks? Watch what they do, not what they say. For more analysis on why Earth Day was mostly bullshit, read Kirkpatrick Sale's great article in the 4/30 issue of The Nation. (And a tsk tsk to our buddy Phil Proctor for touting the benefits of oil heat in the currently-running anti-gas ad. Phil of all people should be aware of the massive amounts of sulfur and carbon dioxides oil heat produces. Ah well, as I'm sure Phoebe "Exxon" Snow and Dick "Hornel" Cavett would agree, ya gotta pay the rent, even if it means tossing your principles out the window, hmmm?)

Not a bad little series the Voice did a few weeks back (the 4/10 issue) on "Rad TV," although methinks they're a mite too corporate/yuppie to be throwing about current hip terminology without sounding like your parents trying to be "cool." Two bits stand out in particular for this viewer: Leslie Savan (the "Kid" Sieve of the Voice) talking about "Ads That Change the Program" ("spots that nudge you toward skepticism about what you're watching"), although not acknowledging that this is more the equivalent of Ronald Reagan winking at John Poindexter than "ads that provoke a faint tingle in those parts of our brains that try to resist the dominant culture" (covered in previous IJs discussing irony as a selling tool); and a real keeper, a scary article called "Future Tech" about what's in store for us (more of the same, only worse, as advances further widen the gap between haves and have-nots, a gap I've already personally experienced living in the Land That Cable Forgot) by Erik Davis, well worth checking out.

Seems those wacky bungee-divers just don't get no respect in adland. S.H. Otis and I managed to tape the infamous Reebok Pump commercial with the two bridge-jumpers (the jumper wearing the Nikes presumably fell to his death, as we see the lifeline with only sneaks, no body) days before Reebok Int'l. took it off the air due to protests. Gawrsh, some people can't take a bad-taste joke any more, y'know? Must be those same looneys who complain when women pop out of suitcases and beach towels in beer commercials like so much accessories. No sense of humor in this man's world, I tell ya... What really gets me is that they didn't take it off the air because it was in bad taste to imply that someone will die if they don't use Your Product, but because some asshole parents (probably the ones who blister at books like The Wizard of Oz for containing witchcraft) thought their kids might emulate it! Well hey, if all your friends jumped off of bridges, would you do it?

But the overall Tawdry Award has to go this time to Hawley & Hazel, Colgate-Palmolive's Asian branch, for their Darkie toothpaste. Yes, it does feature a grinning black man with tophat (said to be "a tribute to Al Jolson," the famous white man) on the box. Say the Chinese-language billboard ads in New York, "Only the English name is being changed. Black Man Toothpaste is still Black Man Toothpaste" in Chinese (hak ye nga goh). Seems racism doesn't offend the consumers of this toothpaste. Well, maybe then they can just change it to "Chink Choppers" or something equally benign...

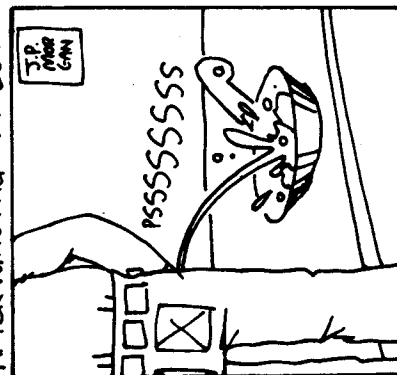
Speaking of creeping racism/racist creeps, I see that 50 years later Japan-bashing is once more in full swing. Witness, for example, the Nasdaq commercial with the geisha girl dancing while the voiceover talks about how those nasty Japs are beating us in the economic games of electronics, cars, etc. (gee, I wonder why? Could it partially be that US corporations are driven only by short-term profit and don't give a shit about their workers, whereas in Japan labor is a fixed asset?), but are completely dependent upon us terrific Americans for something to do with their stock market (not much about which to brag, if you've followed the Japanese stock market lately). What's next, the return of internment camps?

S.H. just pointed out to me, when I was grumbling about yet another series of sexist Bud ads (with women appearing out of dry-ice mists and such), "Did you ever notice how all these women-as-accessories ads feature only white gals? And that the Bud elevator-turned-island paradise commercial featured Asian women because one of the principal males was black, and in TV you can't have all white women with a black male?" One of the Spuds McKenzie gals is black, of course, but Spuds is a female dog, so I guess it's allowed in that case.

I caught a few upchucking minutes of the Cartoon All-Stars anti-drug propaganda cartoon at the tail end of the news the other night--isn't it sad that all that animation talent is wasted on this nonsense? But what bothers me even more than the show's tone is the fact that it was on all the networks. Such is the power of state-run media. Speaking of wasted, I'll be looking for faithful readers at the annual "Pot Parade" rally in favor of legalization of marijuana on May 5; I'll be the one by the phones on the south side of Washington Square around 11am, wearing my "This is your brain on drugs/This is your brain with a side of toast and two strips of bacon" t-shirt!

Next Time: Getting Glad with Comedy

AND THIS IS YOUR BRAIN  
AFTER WATCHING TV A LOT.



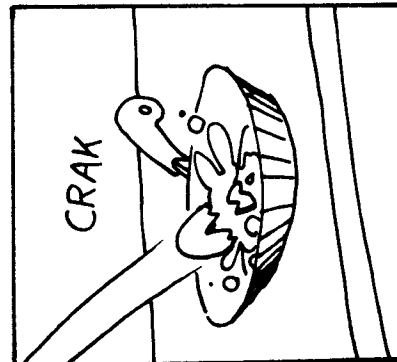
Rattles make stew,

We also make,

Guaranteed by

Tulsa Jack Rattlesnake!

ONE MORE TIME?...  
OKAY. THIS IS YOUR BRAIN...



DIFFICULT LESSON - 1914 TO 1945

WATCH OUT FOR TULSA JACK

by Bangor Zack Bullen

I'm Tulsa Jack Rattlesnake!

Toughest galoot

ever to wear

a three-piece suit!

# ALL GREAT JOURNEYS BEGIN WITH A SINGLE STEP --AND A MAJOR CREDIT CARD

by Tony Fay

About two years ago I came to the conclusion that if life was to be worth living I needed answers to its big questions. I was tired of the pressure, stress and anxiety which had conspired to send me into what seemed to be an inescapable state of despondency. I needed inner peace. I needed ultimate wisdom.

So, I got out the yellow pages. I decided to look up "Ultimate Wisdom," but was unsure whether to look under "U" for "Ultimate" or "W" for "Wisdom." Figuring "Ultimate" was the modifier, I looked under "W" for "Wisdom." It said, "See 'U' for 'Ultimate'." I turned to "Ultimate Wisdom" and there was but one listing: Madame Rousseau, Transcendental Spiritualist, famous since Mars last aligned with the moons of Jupiter. No telephone number was listed but the ad read: *For appointments simply have your karma contact the Madame's karma.* As luck would have it I had misplaced my karma, so I asked my friend, Edgar, to borrow his. Unfortunately Edgar's karma was disconnected after he failed to pay for several meditations he made to pornographic karma services.

Undaunted, I decided the only way I was going to find the answers I was seeking was to go on a long, perilous journey of spiritual revival. So I called my travel agent and had her book me on just such a journey. Luckily, she was running a special on trips

to Tibet to visit the High Exalted, Grand Poobah, Mystic Ruler: four days in the Poobah's palace, two days in the Kingdom of the Lord and the final day skiing the back slopes of Everest, all for \$499 (meals not included). I jumped at the opportunity and my travel agent booked me on Air Poobah, the airline with the motto *All great journeys begin with but a single step...and a major credit card.*

Once on the plane, I found myself surrounded by people also seeking wisdom and answers. I sat next to a very distinguished-looking middle-aged man who, after serving as producer of the game show *Jeopardy!* for 12 years, claimed to have all the answers, but was seeking the questions.

There was much frivolity and camaraderie among the passengers, and we were hardly in the air before the flight attendants gaily led us in rousing renditions of favorite mantras. No one even seemed to mind that our pilot was a blind Hindu monk who flew by visualizing himself as a small boy in Northern Indiana named Ralphie, who was playing with the radio-operated toy planes he had gotten for his eighth birthday.

We landed at Tibet City International Airport (that's the Tibet City in Tibet, not the Tibet City that's right across the border in India) after a tiring 22-hour flight, and were met by our guide, Felix Shanker, a New York Jew who had retired to Tibet with his wife after spending 36 years working for the New York City Sanitation Department. We were driven via an old school bus down the newly-constructed Salvation Turnpike to the Tibet City Hyatt, which was conveniently within walking distance of the Poobah's palace. Having envisioned a much more difficult trek, consisting of a mule ride up a long winding path and sleeping in tents, I asked Felix if this was truly the way to spiritual salvation. He responded: "What? You want I should take you to the Marriott? Dey give ya frequent visitation points dere." I said I didn't, and he grabbed my nose between his right thumb and forefinger and asked if I'd join him later for a glass of Bosco. I told him I might, and he made a noise as if honking my nose and then turned and left.

The Hyatt was overrun by an international shuffleboard convention, and twice as I attempted to check in I was goosed by stray shuffleboard sticks. Exhausted from my journey, I went straight to my room and went to sleep. Perhaps it was the mystic qualities of my surroundings or simply my tight-fitting underwear, but during my sleep I had a vivid dream which affected me deeply. I dreamt I was dressed in a Sun God's robes, and that I, along with the entire off-Broadway cast of "A Chorus Line," had shipwrecked on a small Polynesian island. I had just stepped onto the white, sandy beach when, much to my embarrassment, I realized the tennis shoes I was wearing under my elaborate robes didn't match each other. Insulted by this, the natives, dressed in polo shirts and loin-cloths, came charging after me threatening circumcision. I immediately threatened to build a multiplex theatre and show nothing but Sylvester Stallone movies 24 hours a day, and the terrified natives fell to their knees in worship and threw cans of deviled ham at my feet. Then, seemingly without provocation, the cast of "A Chorus Line" did a complete re-enactment of Notre Dame's 35-34 come-from-behind win in the 1979 Cotton Bowl. I woke up in a cold sweat, and I knew I had to speak with the Poobah as soon as possible.

I ran to the lobby and begged the concierge for an appointment with the Poobah. However, he said the Poobah was out of town, signing autographs for \$10 apiece at a baseball card convention in Nepal, and I would have to settle for the Assistant High Exalted, Grand Poobah, Mystic Ruler.

I agreed and the concierge asked me to wait by the baccarat table in the hotel's casino. I waited for nearly an hour, but when the Assistant Poobah did not show, I ducked into the gift shop adjacent to the casino and bought my mother a t-shirt that read, "My son travelled 20,000 miles, traversed high mountains and survived inclement weather, all in the search for Ultimate Truth...and all I got was this lousy t-shirt."

As I stepped back into the casino, I came face to face with the Assistant Poobah. He was a short, bald man, with wire glasses and flowing white and gold robes. He looked at me and said, "You've been looking for me, my son?" I told him he had. I told him of my search for ultimate wisdom, and my strange dream.

He smiled and said, "My son, there was no need to come all this way. If you truly seek answers to life's great questions, simply check your TV Guide—it mirrors life. Some shows succeed. Some don't. Eventually all shows must go off the air. But the truly great shows live forever in reruns. So, you see, if it is answers you seek, you need only to check your local listings." With that he did a sudden, and unexpected, back somersault and offered to validate my parking. At that moment all the answers I had been seeking became clear, and for one brief, fleeting moment, I thought I saw Elvis standing at the roulette wheel.

I slept like a newborn that night—twice wetting my bed and then waking up starving at 2am. When I awoke the next morning, I decided to return home. I had received the answers of which I'd come in search, and besides, most colleges were about to go on spring break and in just a matter of days Tibet City and the Palace would be overrun by college students. My trip home was a peaceful one, and upon returning to the States, I secured a position teaching philosophy at a small New England university.

It wasn't very long after that I won international praise for my unique teaching practice, which simply required each student to carry at all times a copy of TV Guide and a yellow highlighter. As it says in scriptures, Thursday, 1:30, Channel 21: "M\*A\*S\*H—Hawkeye walks through the compound naked, and no one notices."

## Death Was too Good For Them (Part One)

By Denise Krause

It was a bland, non-descript day in a non-descript month somewhere between Autumn and Winter that felt like Spring for no apparent reason other than the slow deterioration of the ozone layer.

Peter liked days like this because he didn't know any better.

He sniffed the morning air and felt the pretentiousness rising up inside of him. It was a feeling he often confused with 'happiness'; 'happiness', in this case, being tantamount to that warm feeling you get when you kick a puppy. He thought about his pre-determined list of complaints for this morning: work, school, exploding computers, his roommates trying to hang themselves again ... it was a slow day in the world of Peter's self-importance. He gathered his implements and wondered how late the bus was probably going to be. He mentally prepared his whine for this particular circumstance. (Nothing was too base, inappropriate, unimportant, or inane for Peter to whine about. A conversation with Peter was like a course in self-abuse: "Self-Abuse 101: Other People's Imagined Problems". He had the kind of whine that echoed throughout your skull. It's a bit like having tinnitus, but infinitely less pleasurable.) Unfortunately, the bus wasn't late after all.

He sat down and opened his Book-Of-Upcoming-Condensation (i.e. appointment book) to check on the day's activities. Somewhere between 'whining' and 'being generally annoying', he found his piece de resistance, a group meeting. His key words were, of course, "DELEGATE AUTHORITY". He delegated very well. In fact, he delegated so well he had nothing else to do but complain about his work that no one was doing for him. He reminded one of a dictator. An assassinateable one at that.

He got off the bus and wondered who he could impose upon between classes. Well if they had the audacity to live on campus, why shouldn't he? He looked at his watch. He was late. He was going to be later. He was busy pondering who the butt of his imposition should be when things started to become hazy. A mauve light blinded him for an instant and then he was gone ... leaving behind his appointment book, a sock, and a crowd of ecstatically clapping passers-by.

by Elayne & Steve

Before I begin to sort out this second-season mess, I want to mention "Professor" Marvin Kitman's marvelous class at the New School in NYC, "How To Watch TV," which I've been attending this month. It's almost as funny as his columns, and my favorite was the 4/11 session which featured guests Howard Stringer (a brilliant man who's stuck in the unenviable position of head of CBS Entertainment) and Geraldo Rivera (who just about made me a fan of his again after all these years). The final class on 4/25 awaits as of this writing, and features Alan (IT'S GARRY SHANDLING'S SHOW) Zweibel, Simon (HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE) Jones, Dick Cavett, and Dave Thomas (as the Beaver)—thanks for inviting me, Prof!

The networks haven't made this easy for me. A couple "new" shows have already been cancelled; a few more are airing on only a trial basis; and shows have premiered on different nights than their scheduled time slots—so all reviews below are of course subject to all kinds of shifts in the winds of Lalaland. My reviews will be in Script and Steve's in his usual Artisan, and we use our non-patented 1-4 star scale for our "ratings." First, the stuff already on hiatus:

ELVIS (was ABC, Sunday 8pm)—They did get a dead ringer, I must admit. Like watching a long, drawn-out TV docudrama. Maybe this will be a lesson to them to stick to fictional characters. (Then again, isn't Elvis fictional by now?) \*

CITY (was CBS, Monday 8:30pm)—My heart doesn't go out to Valerie Harper, who wields so much industry clout she's still getting profits from her old show, which knocked this baby out of the game. The ensemble cast was passable, but every episode I watched had the same plot, and most were slightly offensive at that. \*

MAX MONROE, LOOSE CANNON (was CBS, Thursday 9pm)—Shadove Stevens as fast-talking police detective. Not funny, not exciting, not worth a \*. \*

GRAND (was NBC, Thursday 9:30pm)—This had the best theme song of any show this season, and I liked the cast (I've always been particularly partial to Michael McKean), but the shining moments were few and far between, obviously. \*\*

THE BRADYS (was CBS, Friday 8pm)—Like the old one, but without a laugh track and Maureen McCormick, stretched to an hour and filled with grown-ups. So much for nostalgia. \*

SATURDAY—I haven't yet been able to figure out ABC's schedule, but since I've no interest in either H.E.L.P. or SUNSET BEAT, I don't much care. You know I don't review copshows as a rule, and Steve also has better things to do. Therefore, FOX's COPS (shown at 8pm Eastern—all these times are Eastern, b-t-w) has also gone unreviewed. You like this stuff, you watch it yourself.

A FAMILY FOR JOE (NBC, 8pm)—Crusty old Robert Mitchum is all reaction and no comic timing in this misshapen, misbegotten morass. The kids are sitcom-cute, the situations are contrived, and I hope the Mitchmeister's hitting his reefer heavily to get him through this nonsense (all the way to the bank, natch). \*

13 EAST (NBC, 8:30pm)—A sitcom about nurses that manages to be less funny than the ill-fated Elliot Gould vehicle DR. \*

TOTALLY HIDDEN VIDEO (FOX, 8:30pm)—Another CANDID CAMERA ripoff, no matter what they say. 0\*

IN LIVING COLOR (FOX, 9pm)—Keenen Ivory Wayans has done this before (a variety show with Robert Townsend), but that was on cable, so I never caught it. This show reminds me of British comic Kenny Everett's old programme, replete with Wayans' version of Hot Gossip (here called his "Flygirls"). While it's commendable for its emphasis on racial harmony, I hope someone informs Wayans that eliminating prejudice ought to include eliminating sexism and some traces of homophobia. \*\*

CONNIE CHUNG (CBS, 10pm)—Maury Povich's influence seems to be at work, as Connie tackles celeb interviews pretending they're news (just like Diane Sawyer and Baba Wauw), the way she used to disseminate government propaganda as if it were news. ½\*

CAROL & COMPANY (NBC, 10pm)—A talented star with a track record in this sort of sketch comedy and decent writing are bit plusses here, but the show is uneven from week to week. However, the same can be said for Tracey Ullman, Burnett's obvious successor, whose show on FOX at 9:30 is a nice lead-in to this. \*\*\*

DOWN HOME (NBC, 10:30pm)—Too bad this nice, quirky sitcom has such a lousy time slot. Judith Ivey is very good in the role of a "former" yuppette come back to roost in a Texan fishing village and interact with her dad, brother and local residents (I especially like Dakin Matthews as Walt). The writing here is absolutely superb, by the way. \*\*\*½

COMIC STRIP LIVE (FOX, 11pm)—Gary Kroeger [of whom my fondest memory is still his Donny Osmond opposite Julia Louis-Dreyfus' Marie on SNL] has taken the reins of emcee-ship from last season's awful host what's-his-name, and has turned this baby around. A must-watch for the latest and best in new standup stuff, even politically-charged material. Don't miss it—if you must watch SNL, tape this last half of this. \*\*\*

SUNDAY  
THE OUTSIDERS (FOX, 7pm)—Just what you'd expect from Francis Ford Coppola doing S.E. Hinton (Tex, Rumblefish, etc.). American Graffiti without the laughs. \*\*

TRUE BLUE (NBC, 8pm)—Unseen at press time, just like H.E.L.P. and RESCUE 911, at least by me. Who churns this stuff out anyway, and why can't they break the mold and throw it away after one show? AMERICA'S FUNNIEST HOME VIDEOS (ABC, 8pm)—Didn't they do this on a show once hosted by George (YOU BET YOUR LIFE) Fenneman in the days of home movies? A decade and a half later, it's still not funny, but try telling that to its apparently huge audience. \*

THE SIMPSONS (FOX, 8:30pm)—By now you may all be sick to death of the extensive merchandising campaign this "cult" show has engendered, but what pop-culture skeptics may not catch is the huge amount of politically-progressive satire that sneaks its way into these charming animated episodes. And anything in which Harry Shearer plays a major role is bound to be somewhat subversive. \*\*\*\*

SHANNON'S DEAL (CBS, 10pm)—Jamey Sheridan looks too much like Donald Trump in some poses, but I get a kick out of John Sayles' cameos (Sayles is the series' creative consultant) and, as in his movies, the characters here are pleasant enough. \*\*

CAPITAL NEWS (ABC, 10pm)—I like the gossip columnist character a lot, and Helen Slater is better in this than in Supergirl, but that may not be saying much. The thing that gets me about this (and all shows filmed in our nation's capitol) is that you never seem to see the poor side of the district, the real DC. In other shows it may not matter, but if we're supposed to be portraying a "real-life" newspaper, it ought to. God, I miss Ed Asner. \*\*

MONDAY  
WORKING GIRL (NBC, 8:30pm)—I liked Sandra Bullock immensely, despite not wanting to. Same with this show. So sue me; I'm a secretary (unfortunately, after the pilot, Bullock's character isn't one any more). However, this show disturbs me by using the distinction of "blue collar vs. white collar" instead of calling the situation like it is, class war. Too bad. \*\*

HIS & HERS (CBS, 9:30pm)—Unseen at press time, but I heard it was a dog, despite the presence of Mull, one of my shordurpersavs. TUESDAY  
RESCUE 911 (CBS, 8pm)—If I weren't married to Elayne, I'd be watching this kind of crap all the time. William "Whisperin'" Shatner and his dancing toupee star. ½

WEDNESDAY  
SYDNEY (CBS, 8pm)—Can you die from Valerie Bertinelli-induced perkiness? Ugh, I think I may have OD'ed. \*

NORMAL LIFE (CBS, 8:30pm)—How did something with so much promise turn out to be this much of a disaster? Sorry, Zappa kids, you may be as disgusted with this outcome as I am, but you still bear partial responsibility—after all, you speak the lines. \*

FM (NBC, 8:30pm)—I'm a bit of a latecomer to this show, but I do like Robert (STARMAN, Airplane) Hays and the show appears likeable enough to give it another watching or two. WKRP redux? \*\*½

MARSHALL CHRONICLES (ABC, 9:30pm)—I'm not sure if I resent this because it's on in place of my favorite sitcom, ANYTHING BUT LOVE, or because it's so painfully obvious, especially coming right after DOOGIE HOWER, that the show's star (Joshua Riekind) is not by any stretch of imagination a teenager. Maybe I'm too close to the source on this show, though, the neurotic New York Jew kinda bit, the Woody Allen/Jackie Mason/Mark Linn-Baker in My Favorite Year schtick. Maybe I'm judging this too harshly (despite liking the opening sequence a lot, Randy Newman music and all). Maybe I'll turn off the TV, I dunno. \*\*

EQUAL JUSTICE (ABC, 10pm)—ABC's answer to L.A. LAW purports to depict real lawyers in real-life situations (the title's presumed to be sarcastic, since the U.S. judicial system spits on the have-nots all the time), but in my version of real life, poor people don't all dress spiffily, real language is used, and everyone doesn't look this telegenic (no fat, no blemishes, no intelligence in the eyes, etc.). ½\*

THURSDAY  
FATHER DOWLING MYSTERIES (ABC, 8pm)—Typical TV mystery show with busybody priest (Tom Bosley) and anorexic, annoying nun sidekick (Tracy Nelson, Ricky's kid). No mystery, no talent, no \*'s.

TWIN PEAKS (ABC, 9pm)—David Lynch comes about as close to revolutionizing the TV drama as you could get, and get aired. You're all warned to tape this show, because I'll bet serious bucks that it doesn't get picked up. Absolutely THE best show on television, broadcast or cable. \*\*\*\* and a thumbs-up! (NOTE: The 4/10 issue of the Voice, mentioned by "Kid" Sieve in her column, also features an in-depth look at this show and at Lynch.)

WINGS (NBC, 8:30pm)—Maybe it's me, but isn't the timing of this a little suspect with all the airline safety disasters that have been cropping up of late? And putting this on right after CHEERS is amusing given the propensity of Northwest pilots to quaff a few of late. As a sitcom goes, it's okay, and I generally like the supporting cast more than the "stars," which is par for the course (the writing's a notch above too at times). \*\*½

FRIDAY  
BAGHDAD CAFE (CBS, 9pm)—Whoopi Goldberg and Jean Stapleton are engaging, and there are a few moments of nice dialogue ("I didn't get that at all!" "Must be a white thing...") and a passing supporting cast, but the writing could be better and this show just lacks the specialness one would expect of such talent. \*\*

NASTY BOYS (NBC, 8pm)—Ninja Cops in Vegas, fighting the Drug War with Heavy Weapons. Just say no. \*

SUGAR AND SPICE (CBS, 8:30pm)—Typical sitcom fare (forced canned laughter, overemoting, etc.) with the added distraction of Dana Hill, the June Foray of the '80s/'90s, who's at least my age (I've watched her since she was Phyllis' daughter on MARY TYLER MOORE) and playing a teenager (more frightening than MARSHALL CHRONICLES)—also, the "sibling rivalry" here sucks, unlike that in WINGS. Why can't they make sister groupings as interesting as brother pairings? And why does a sis-sitcom revolve around the home while a bro-sitcom takes place in the work milieu predominantly? Something to think about, but that's Hollywood, don't think overmuch. I'm sure I've missed something, but who hasn't nowadays? Do the networks create this confusion intentionally, I wonder (you can't hit a moving target)? Look for Jerry Seinfeld's new one, premiering any day now, and take your television's advice—turn it off. There's life going on out there, viewers.



The big news this time out is the final issue of **FISSION CHICKEN** (Fantagraphics; \$2 US/\$2.50 Can.), which is now out for your reading pleasure. At least IJ staffer J.P. Morgan was able to do the originally-planned four issues and not get the plug pulled too quickly, as many independent publishers would have done. Fish and Skip are riding off into the sunset for now, but let's hope it won't be for long.

On a much happier note, we find that Jeff Nicholson is back with **ULTRA KLUTZ #28** (Onward Comics, P.O. Box 3684, Chico, CA 95927; \$2 US/\$2.50 Can.). This is great news for all us UK fans, especially if Jeff is able to maintain the bimonthly schedule. I hope this time around he will receive fan support as well as the critical success he's always gotten.

Anyone interested in any of Jeff's non-UK output would be well advised to send him \$2.50 for his "SMALL PRESS TIRADE." In it he takes to task the small press and its "unprofessional" tactics. Included is his joint Manifesto, with Ben Adams, on the state of the small press in general and small press reviewers in particular. I must say that much of what he had to say hit home.

Nicholson feels that often reviewers are too easygoing, with little or no criticism of the actual work being reviewed. Frankly, I always felt that people involved in the small press should be given some leeway, and I've attempted to find something of value in all the material sent me. While I'll criticize and condemn professional material (especially coming from the Big Two and larger independents), I find it difficult to hold fan work up to the same standards. Am I wrong in this? If I receive a mini-comic that some kid did on his own time and for which he shelled out his hard-earned bucks to run off, should I slam him for poor grasp of storytelling technique or bad use of Zip-a-tone? Believe you me, I get some real crap here to review sometimes. I've got no idea what's going on in the minds of these yahoos, and feel that they would be better off spending their time and money collecting stamps, or learning a skill that will get them a job in the real world. Why am I always so positive about everything? Most of this stuff was better off as tree pulp, and I toss half of it after I've written a review. Who needs this grief? I'm glad IJ is going on hiatus so I can spend my time doing something productive and not pissing away hours on R. Crumb wannabes who dream of being the next Matt Groening.

As I was saying, **ULTRA KLUTZ** is a project deserving support, and Nicholson is someone that fandom needs all too much. So send for the tirade, or get a 3-issue subscription to UK for \$6.00. Always recommended.

Since there's no "Fan Noose" this issue, and also because it mentions comics, allow me to plug a two-sided onesheet zine from IJ staffer Todd Kristel. "COOKED, A Zine of Half-Baked Ideas" is available from Todd for an SASE at Box 1046, 3600 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19104. Todd covers all sorts of pop culture stuff from films to music. Pretty nice.

I'd also like to thank Gene Mahoney for sending along the third issue of **GOOD CLEAN FUN**, a collection of his comic strips (for further info see last issue's column).

**BEAUTY AND THE BEAST: NIGHT OF BEAUTY** (First Comics; \$5.95 US/\$7 Can.)—Well, if you haven't slit your wrists over the cancellation of the TV show, and you have money left over from purchasing B&B memorabilia, you might be interested in this, the second graphic novel that Wendy Pini has done based on the series. The plot holds no real surprises, since we know that Catherine is dead, and this fantasy of Vincent's trip to the netherworld to be once more with his true love is little more than a second-rate redoing of a plot done before and better. Geez, about a third of DC's titles have run a similar plotline in the past year alone. For fans of either the show or Pini.

I should mention that this month has seen the premiere of Walt Disney Publications, the comics publishing arm of the Disney empire. This is the first time that Disney has actually published its own line of comics and not gone with a licensee. While Disney has always maintained tight control of the content of the comics using their characters, this is the first time that it has been totally in-house. Frankly, except for the better quality paper, there is little to differentiate these books from those done by Dell/Western or Gladstone, which is probably for the better. Old-timers and youngsters can readily identify these books a mile off.

Disney's initial output consists of eight monthly comics based on the most famous animated characters—Mickey, Donald, Scrooge & nephews, Goofy, Chip 'n Dale and, naturally, Roger Rabbit. While the books based on the **Rescue Rangers** and **DuckTales**, as well as the **Roger Rabbit** book, will be all-new material, the other five comics will consist of new material and older stuff from the extensive files that stretch over decades and include not only domestic product but stories done exclusively for the dozens of Disney-related comics produced overseas, much of them never reprinted

in the States.

All the books run the standard 32 pages plus cover, and cost \$1.50 US/\$1.95 Canada. They include work by people not usually identified with "funny animal" work, among them Marv Wolfman, Len Wein, Doug Rice and Michael T. Gilbert. Nice stuff.

**DICK TRACY** (WD Publications, \$3.95 US/\$4.95 Can.)—This is the Disney line of graphic novels aimed at an older audience. A good choice was this 3-part series that ties in with the eagerly-awaited film starring Warren Beatty. The first two books in the series set up the background for the story and put everyone into place for the third book, which will adapt the film. The writer for the first two books is John Moore, with the adaptation scripted by editor Len Wein. The artist on all three books will be the controversial Kyle Baker. While I happen to be a fan of Baker's (his graphic novel **THE COWBOY WALLY SHOW** is a must-have!), purists who grew up with Chester Gould's lantern-jawed cop will be pretty upset. Apparently the Gould family has expressed displeasure at the choice, and fandom is split on the issue. Personally, my only complaint with the book is the apparent stipulation that came down which forced Baker to put Beatty's face on Tracy. While the trademark yellow trenchcoat and fedora are in place, that's sure not our Dick peeking out from under the brim. It also seems apparent that Baker wasn't happy with the situation, since for more than half the book we see Tracy from behind or in deep shadow with his features obscured.

With these reservations, I'd say take a look at the book before buying, but I'll be along for the whole ride.

**CONCRETE CELEBRATES EARTH DAY 1990** (Dark Horse; \$3.50 US/\$4.90 Can.)—Oh my, a politically-correct comic. A portion of the proceeds from this comic go to Earth Day 1990. The character Concrete has always been used by creator Paul Chadwick to express a pro-environmental stance, so this book isn't a real stretch in terms of ideology. Besides the three stories by Chadwick, there is a nice four-page piece by Charles Vess, and also an incredible 23-page dialogue-less story by Moebius. A well-done book with its heart in the right place, but this doesn't look like recycled paper to me!

**THE ADVENTURES OF LUTHER ARKWRIGHT** (Dark Horse; \$1.95 US/\$2.45 Can.)—This is a reprint of the critically-acclaimed series that ran in a number of British anthology titles during the late '70s and was reprinted in three hard-to-find graphic novels. A nine-issue series containing new and reprint material was available in '87-'88 from the now-defunct Valkyrie Comics, but with a very low print run it was also hard to find. Now with the much better distribution available from Dark Horse, the 9-issue series is again being reprinted.

Writer/illustrator Bryan Talbot has done some reworking to tie things together, and the book is newly relettered by Steve Haynie to bring a more unified feel to a work that took over a decade to complete.

The series deals with the story of Luther Arkwright, a man capable of travelling to any and all possible alternate earths. There's a nefarious plot underway by the Disruptors to conquer or destroy all coexisting worlds. Not an easy superhero slugfest, so it will take some thought to get through. Well done!

Clive Barker has usurped Stephen King in a number of circles as the top horror fiction writer at work today. His short story collections **Books of Blood** and novels **Weaveworld** and **Damnation Game** were highly successful. Unlike King, the films in which Barker has been involved have been money-makers and have received some critical acclaim. Always eager to find a bandwagon, several comics companies have decided that Barker's stories and films provide perfect choices for adaptation.

**HELLRAZER** (Epic; \$5.95 US)—Not a direct adaptation of either film, but rather a shared-universe anthology with **The Cenobites**, the puzzle boxes, at the core. Stuff by John Bolton, Neil Gaiman, Bernie Wrightson and many others, each with their own twisted interpretations. Good stuff!

**NIGHT BREED** (Epic; \$1.95 US/\$2.50 Can.)—This series will begin with an adaptation of the film, which itself was Barker's adaptation of his own novella "Cabal." Writers Alan Grant and John Wagner join with artist Jim Baikie and do a nice job obviously working from a script which changed before it was filmed. (Like the comic book adaptation of the **Batman** movie, certain scenes were cut or rewritten, so a comparison of the two is interesting and leads to speculation.) After the initial run, the series, if sales permit, will take off from where the film ended. Nicely done, but perhaps too soon to really tell how successful it will be down the road.

**TAPPING THE VEIN** (Eclipse; \$6.95 US)—These are straight adaptations of various **Books of Blood** stories by a number of top comics talents. Each book adapts two tales. Recommended.

**ADAM STRANGE** (DC; \$3.95 US/\$4.95 Can.)—I guess you could say that this series is more a spinoff of the Alan Moore **SWAMP THING** tale than a continuation of the old space-opera series that some of us remember fondly. Who are all these nasty people? Adam goes back to Earth for one last visit and, after visiting his dying father and shrewish sister, gets drunk and falls down groping an old girlfriend. Meanwhile, pregnant wife Alanna is revealed to be the alien equivalent of a Jewish American Princess, with a jealous ex-beau. The wise and kindly old scientist Sardath has become a devious tyrant who had simply wanted his daughter to get boffed by an offworlder just to see if it would produce anything not brain-

(continued next page)

dead. Well, great art by the Bros. Adam and Andy Kubert, who demonstrate that together they are almost the artist their dad is.

**THE ELSEWHERE PRINCE** (Epic; \$1.95 US/\$2.50 Can.)—This is a spinoff/continuation of Moebius' **AIRTIGHT GARAGE** stories. Here are The Major, The Archer and others with which you may already be familiar. This tale deals with the travels of an artist across Alemania to find the Prince Archer and chronicle the war against the Bouch'Tar'Hai, a demon summoned to rebel against the rule of Major Grubert. Written by Moebius and translated by R.J.M. Lofficier, with art by Eric Shanower (noted for his Incredible Oz graphic novels). Each issue also has work by Moebius, either illustrations (Moebius does the portraits drawn by the wandering artists) or short stories not directly connected to the series.

**TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES: THE MOVIE** (Archie; \$2.50 US/\$2.95 Can.)—Adapted by Eastman and Laird themselves with pencils by Jim Lawson over layouts by Eastman and script by Laird. A few different scenes, but overall a straight adaptation of this year's blockbuster. There's also a version from Mirage with a wraparound cover and no ads, but with the same interior work.

**THE ELVIS MANDIBLE** (Piranha Press; \$3.50 US/\$4.35 Can.)—Written and illustrated by Douglas Mitchell, this reveals the story behind the missing jawbone of The King, its mystical powers and the lives it touches. In-fuckin'-credible!! From first page to last, a great piece of work and probably a better tribute to the Hound-Dawg Man than that sappy TV show, which is already gone.

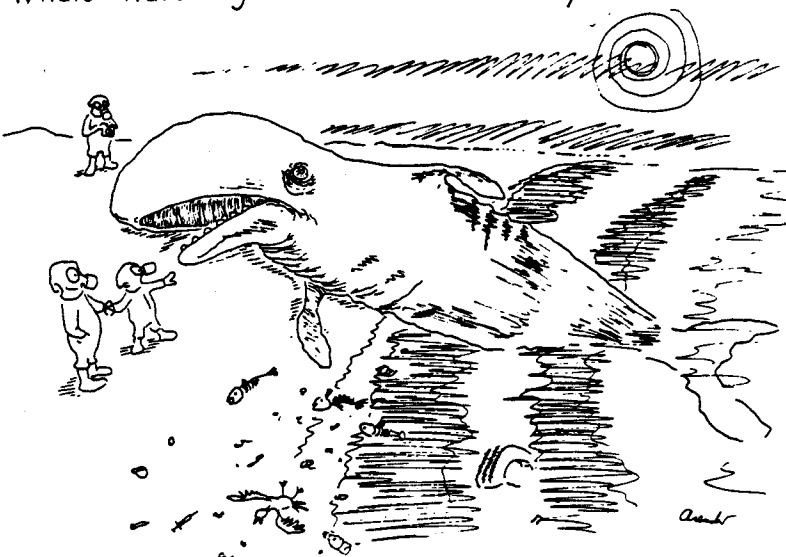
**GRINGO** (Caliber; \$1.95 US/\$2.50 Can.)—The last few years have seen the slow return of westerns to comics. Graphic novels like **R10** and the **Lt. Blueberry** series, plus the **Golden/Silver Age** reprint line from Americomics, have demonstrated that there is a small but eager market for this genre. Writer Kyle Garrett and artists Wayne Reid and Dirk Johnston present a new character who they hope will be the first in a series of interrelated stories about the Old West. While the plot (man with no money found wandering the desert, turns out to be a gunfighter seeking revenge against the evil cattle baron) has been seen many times before, the team brings it off well enough so that it would be nice to see Gringo (the only name given the mysterious stranger) again. Nicely done!

**THE FAUNA REBELLION** (Fantagraphics; \$2 US/\$2.50 Can.)—Well-executed 3-issue miniseries by R.L. Crabb, featuring his characters Junior Jackalope and Suicide Squirrel. Nice story of animal revolution and how the new boss is the same as the old boss, but maybe with sharper fangs. Recommended.

**MARRIED WITH CHILDREN** (Now; \$1.75 US/\$2.25 Can.)—Nice job by all concerned, writer Katherine Llewellyn and artists Dave Schwartz, Dr. Moery and J. Stangeland. Especially weird to see some of the things that are getting by the Comics Code these days. Yay, Bundy!

**BIG NUMBERS** (Mad Love; \$5.50 US/\$6.35 Can.)—Even though this book costs a lot, it's in black & white. The size is real weird too, since it's square (10 x 10). Alan Moore, the writer, used to do a monster book for DC Comics but it was hard to understand, and he never worked for Marvel, not even on the non-mutant books, so how good can he be? Bill Sienkiewicz, who did stuff with Frank Miller, doesn't draw like he did when he worked on **MOON KNIGHT**. This is the kind of stuff that the guys at **Comics Journal** like. You'd never see John Byrne or Chris Claremont doing this stuff...

## Whale Watching in the 21st Century



## The Hit

by Glenn Five

As soon as Janet told me she was also seeing another man (I think his name was "Mike"), I knew I could never share her. So I called my pal Jake and asked him if he knew someone who could take care of it. He did, and set it up for me right away. It cost a bundle, but it had to be done. I felt immediate relief.

Until three days later, when Janet showed up at my apartment sobbing uncontrollably. She'd been shopping downtown with her brother that day when a flower pot fell from a window and crushed his skull. I spent most of the night comforting her (inwardly gloating that she'd come to me and not Mike to cheer her up), and gave Jake an angry call after the funeral the next day. Jake said he'd wring a rebate out of the guy and get him to try again.

The next night Janet was back at my place. Seems she'd met her dad at Fellini's for lunch, and midway through the meal he took a dive into his linguini. Something in the sauce, it was determined.

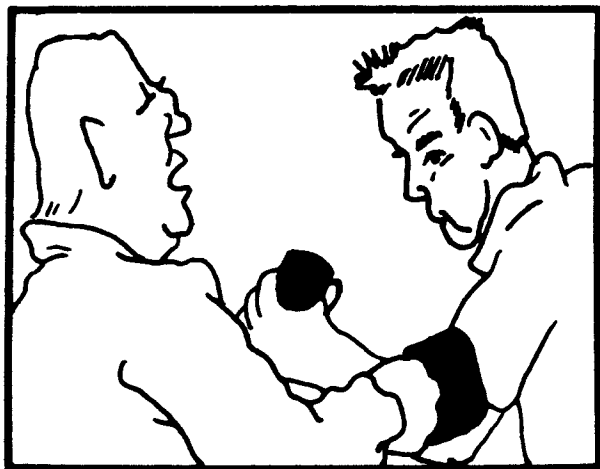
This time I was *really* pissed. Mr. Andrews had been planning to find me a job after graduation. Jake got me another rebate and promised there'd be no more mistakes.

Everyone was shocked that Janet's major professor died the way he did three days later, but there was general agreement they shouldn't have been walking so close to the archery range. It almost matched the sensation that occurred when her uncle, the executor of Mr. Andrews' will, died in a car explosion right after he left the reading. Janet was in hysterics, and I was furious. Clearly no one takes pride in doing a good job any more.

It finally became worthwhile on the way home from Janet's cousin's memorial service (he'd been totalled by a hit-and-run driver right after a chance meeting with Janet on Peachtree Street). We were at the Five Points MARTA station waiting for the eastbound train, and Janet told me she was going to stop seeing Mike. "After all that's happened," she said, "you've been here for me all along. I love you. You're the only person I ever want to be with." We kissed, and I decided then to have Jake cancel the hit as soon as we got home. I'd gotten most of my money back anyway.

We heard the train approaching then, and the rush hour crowd crunched us up close to the edge of the platform. Janet and I were separated, but she kept looking at me, smiling in spite of all that'd happened. I smiled back happily, and I was still thinking about how lucky I was when the roar of the train filled my ears and I felt the stranger's hand shove at my waist...

## OVERHEARD at America's Lunch Counters



"Sometimes my pants come off easy and other times I have to twist and pull. Nothing comes easy in this life. Even rich people have trouble sometimes."

# Psychobabble

by James Scianna

(Wherein are shown mechanics of an inconveniency called "love" (and if you order before midnight tonight...) I stand up tall to place my bet and show to all my raison d'etre)

I approach cautiously the madly spinning carousel, spinning on the edge of flight. It sings the insane melody of infernal causality. I jump the wheel and hold on tight. I only do this 'cause I must, the spinning screams begin to sing. I settle down, and yield to trust, and try to grab the golden ring.

Here I go:

You see, to me, it goes like this, correct me if I go amiss:

I come from a forgotten land, to only become what I am, that is, the one I want to be, unlike the "me" I fear to see. And, if you're like the part of me that I oh, so much want to be, then, right or wrong, I'll follow thee into profound infinity from out of which the likes of we were made to see that wondrous purse, the treasures of the universe, which, after all is you and me, that is, the ones we want to be. Uh, you see?

(AAAAAAAAAAAAARRRRGGGGHHHHHH!!!!!! Too much bad poetry! Speak plainly, and explain to me this thing they call identity.)

I AM WHAT I WISH TO BE PERSONIFIED BY WHOM I FIND ATTRACTIVE. (Or words to that effect.)

Compare these statements for 50 points:

"I WANT TO KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE YOU"

"I WISH TO KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO HAVE YOU"

Now, for 10 bonus points, what's the connection here?:

I ADMIRE YOU

I ASPIRE TO YOU

I WISH TO ACQUIRE YOU

Back to that French stuff:

Listen to this:

One has to create one's own reasons for living. This is called the process of "life." In other words, the goal is in the striving for the goal. This comes about mainly by internal reactions to outside forces. Pain and suffering are the common denominators in each of our own personal processes. It is as basic a constant as the ordeal of childbirth, itself an intensely painful procedure, incidentally. Here are some others:

THE STAGES OF LIFE (reduced to a simple diagram):  
SUFFERING---- SELF---- PASSION---- LOVE---- RAPTURE

Um, uh, heh-heh, at least that's how it's supposed to work in theory. Those who can complete this process before rigor mortis sets in, win!

Time's up! Don't sit and shoot the breeze! Uh, pass your papers forward, please...

baseball haiku  
by Ted Brohl  
retirement means  
grandsons collect baseball cards  
grandfathers go broke  
\*\*\*\*\*

national pastime  
makes batting averages  
a matter of balls  
\*\*\*\*\*

basketballs dribble  
while baseball players use spit  
to polish their flies  
\*\*\*\*\*

communication  
is better in baseball games  
than locker room jokes  
\*\*\*\*\*

unlike other sports  
baseball fans come for the games  
not hot dogs and beer



M1744

Mary Ann Hester  
LA B&B

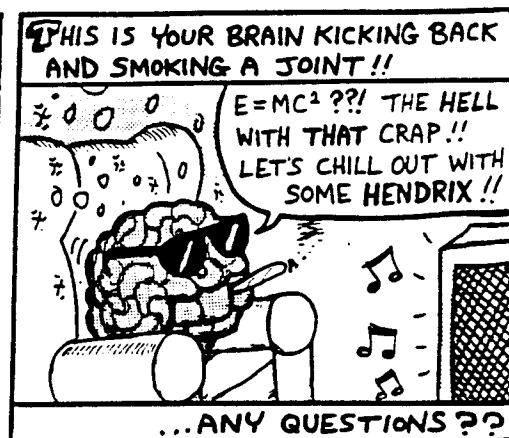
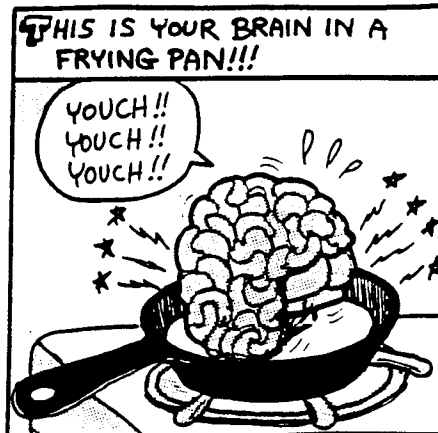
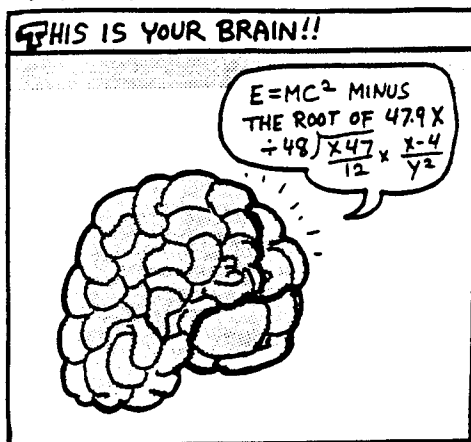


© VERNON GRANT — 1989

THE BRIDGE  
by Charles Ramp  
in my own  
self-generated fog,  
missing  
a bridge, i struggle  
forward  
down a mostly slipping  
slopebank, muddy,  
brierstuck, and it's beginning  
to rain—

cold, boring  
chilled rain, drilling  
already wet through  
shirt.  
next time  
i may  
try higher up  
and somebody's  
sturdy  
span

## TWISTED IMAGE by Ace Backwards ©1990



The Future  
Revealed

by startling means.  
Find out who "They" are and how  
to overcome them for big \$\$\$.

Intense pamphlet \$1.  
The Church of the SubGenius®  
P.O. Box 140306,  
Dallas, TX 75214

Global conspiracy to keep  
those who are "different" silent.



# ON THE ROAD

## A True Story

(Yes, it's back, the dreaded LJ Party Gerber—the last of its kind. This round robin tale, which was supposed to be nonfiction this year, was made possible, even probable, by Vinnie Bartilucci, Dorian Tenore-Bartilucci, Nina Bogin, Larry C, Tom Deja, Dawn Eden, Prudence Gaelor, Doug Pelton and st.EVE. The order of contributors has been changed and alphabetized to protect the guilty. As usual, I'll bring up the rear and wind things up in this typeface; other typefaces will represent changes in "voices." Enjoy!)

A strange place with unusual faces—some new and some familiar. I'm the only woman in a house full of men.

Music is the topic on everyone's lips and in everyone's ears.

The strangest face is the one I spot in a subway station, a man I've never met whom I greet with an excited hug, as though we've known each other for months.

The night's entertainment: A Frankie and Annette movie, of course.

Afterwards—stranded in a strange subway station and escorted into a festively-decorated closet.

Morning comes and I am nourished by peanut butter on toast.

The next day, I say, "Let's go to the Island."

The Island. I've never been there, but I picture it as an oasis, an escape from the concrete and clay, the sidewalks and the street.

"Let's have a picnic," I add.

We arrive with what seems to me a veritable feast, right down to the wild blackberries and the raspberry Fruitizers. "I wanted Raspberry flavor because it reminds me of Eric Carmen," I say. Not long after, I realize that, if we are making a true getaway, we shouldn't remind ourselves of the outside world—especially the subject that dominates our lives. "Let's see if, the whole time we're here, we can avoid talking about music," I suggest.

My companion responds, "Okay."

"Let's talk about the day we met," suggests my companion.

The memory makes me laugh with fond remembrance. "Yeah, remember how you were kinda sitting there mooning over me after our friend introduced us in Improv class?" The first time we'd laid eyes on each other had been at a workshop for improvisational comedy given by a local troupe on Manhattan's East Side. My companion had arrived at class after trekking 20 blocks—after being assured that the class was "a jaunt" from where he'd begun walking—in a downpour sans umbrella. By the time he'd reached the workshop, he'd looked like an abandoned puppy who'd finally found shelter. The way he'd sat staring at me, chin in hand, while I'd sat chatting away with another class member (not out of any lack of desire to talk with my new classmate—the other fellow had simply started up a conversation first), contributed to this puppyish mien.

My companion grinned mischievously. "Boy, were you surprised at the turn that 'hot seat' exercise took." The "hot seat" was an acting/improv exercise in which one partner rattled off questions off the top of his/her head—no time to stop to deliberately think of something clever—and the other partner had to respond with answers that were equally spontaneous.

"Those questions you were asking me!" I smiled at his sweetly boyish face. "'Where do you live?' 'Do you have a boyfriend?' And the crowning touch: 'What are you doing after class tonight?'"

He put his face close to mine and smiled. "Don't knock it—it worked."

"So who's knocking?"

"'Tis I," growled a deep gravelly voice.

"Eric?" I asked. "Eric Carmen?"

"Yes...Open the dooooooor, pleaseeeeee..."

"Eric Carmen is a wimp!" I yelled back.

"Yes, he is..." said the tiny dwarf after he hit me with a major league blackjack.

It hurt. Yes it did, without a headache.

I was groggy, but could do a lot of things like wiggle my toes, and also hit the son of a gun on the temple with a feather that had a lead weight attached to it. I knew I had this guy measured. Well, after all, he was short.

But he did hold the key to all that was happening.

I received my expenses and the rest, and, thank god, I was out of it.

He was two hours late. The bus had a blowout on the motorway. I had never actually met him in person, even though I had invited him to spend a few days at my flat. We had a mutual friend and I had promised him a place to stay while he was stateside. I was looking for someone short and scabby with oily hair and bad teeth. I was pleasantly surprised, as he was none of the above.

I abandoned my plan of stranding him if he were just too icky to deal with. I know this sounds terrible, but I have a problem with people having poor hygiene entering my sterilised abode.

If I weren't committed to another, I would have jumped on the spot. He had passed my criteria for houseguest. Now he only needed Pink Bunny's approval.

"Move over—I'll drive," he said with finality.

I didn't even see him coming; what time was it?

"C'mon."

"Look, you haven't driven in awhile—are you sure?" He learned in California, but that was almost eight years ago.

"Better me than you. At least I'm awake, right?"

"Well, okay."

It was a route of twists and turns with only an occasional turnoff; it would have been too dangerous in my groggy state. It would keep him busy with the road...

"Gee, how long before there's an intersection?"

Uh oh. "I can drive if you want—HEY!" He barely decelerated on a hairpin turn. That wasn't healthy. "Turn off—NOW!"

"But—"

"No buts!" TURN OFF!"

There was a turnoff ahead, but he objected. "It's got a ditch. Let me keep going."

Oh god no. "I didn't see any ditch! Just go and let me take over."

"Okay." He hit the shoulder—and then something else. The car's fenders were on either side of a fault, the wheels touching nothing. He looked my way with that calm, blank face.

Damn that astigmatism!

The car slowed and finally ended up with its right side resting against an embankment.

"I hope you're happy now," he said, his face accusatory.

"I told you to let me drive. You always get so contrary, like in the movie theater last night."

He visibly flinched at that line. Last night we had gone to see a film at a Queens theater—it was by his favorite director; he was looking forward to it for months. There was a guy behind us who talked loudly, and I could see he was really upset at this, but was afraid to say anything beyond "Shush." So he ended up muttering under his breath and hitting the arms of the seat and the rail in front of him. The wife of the man was so shaken that she dragged him away before the credits rolled. Of course, he found it all funny—not realizing that the wife made a connection between his misbehavior and the behavior of the film's villain, a Wall Street broker who moonlighted as a serial killer.

"Look, let's drop this, okay?" he said pointedly. "I see a service station up ahead. We can get somebody to see if there's any damage." He got out of the car and slammed the door hard. Looking at the car before going for help, he ran his hand through his dark hair. Without any other words, he walked towards a Texaco about fifty feet from where our car landed.

I looked out the passenger seat window. Night was beginning to fall, turning everything a bright, vivid shade of blue. The cars had put on their headlights now, and they cast shadows on the glass. I got out and followed after him.

"You know, you're acting really strangely."

"Don't I always?"

"No, more strangely than usual. Strange-weird as opposed to strange-cute."

He took a few more steps and stopped. I heard him sigh, long and low. "Look, I'm sorry. It's just, you know, that Maculski's return sent me for a loop."

"Maculski?"

"The dwarf."

I nodded.

"He was a friend of mine from school. Fairly successful, an accountant with a major network. He was kind of odd, though. He was always putting down my other friends. Particularly this guy I knew, Fredric Carmen..."

The Texaco station was real close now. Behind it was a Sky Chiefs. That pleased me; I was getting hungrier and hungrier, and didn't mind spending a premium to satiate my pangs.

"Fred was black. I didn't know till much later that Maculski was a serious bigot. We had a fight in a Ben & Jerry's, and I ended up telling him to fuck himself and walking out," he told me in a hoarse whisper. "He's never forgiven me. He wants me to hurt."

Slowly the mothership descended to just over the Texaco station. "No, no..." The credits rolled over the screen, indicating the end of the movie. It turned out that the Queens movie was actually a mental ordeal as performed by the Mothership's aliens, who in the past were responsible for the UFO sightings over Russia and those mysterious farmland circles in agricultural England. Now the assault on America had begun...

"We apologize for the preceding section of text, which was accidentally inserted from the latest Lance Thrustwell adventure, 'Gas Guzzlers from Mars.' We apologize for the inconvenience, and will return to the adventure in a moment. But first, here is some light music..." da da DEE da da dum...

"BUCKLEY!"

Mike Buckley knew his ass was on the line now. It was his job to prevent rogue action scenes from creeping into the reality matrix of the currently running universe. Quickly he whipped out a few reality nails, hammered them into the surrounding leather, and braced himself for the worst...

"Thank you for your patience. We now return you to our narrative, already in progress..."

"I need a tow."

"Que?" queried the station attendant, obviously flustered and confused by the statement.

"Some help. A tow. My car—au-to-mo-bile—is stuck down the road. I think my axle's broken."

"You mean the steering never gave out?" Damn, I paid good money for that job." The voice came from the office, but I saw nobody at the window. I then saw why. The voice came from a man too small to be seen above the window.

I thought "Shit" but said "Maculski." That was close.

(continued next page)

"You are not an easy man to catch, my friend. I had to cheat." How do they cram all that snottiness and bile into a package that small? "I hate to think what I'd have to do to bring you BAD news."

"How do you define good news? 'We're not going to break both legs, just your favorite one!'" I snickered.

"Close. We finally found that package you were supposed to deliver for us. We just want you to pick it up and give it to me, so we can settle our books."

"Fact: I am very busy. Question: Why me?"

Low-Everything sighed (more like a peep really). "Answer: You're a bit closer to the current owner of the package. To be specific, your lady friend."

This made me stop. "Will you please explain to me what use she would have for ten pounds of radioactive gold?"

"You've both been reading too many science fiction comic books," I replied testily, "and I'm getting sick of all this nonsense. Honey, give him the damn package and quit the superspy fantasy wisecracks, okay?" This was not turning out to be my idea of a dream date, and I was beginning to have second thoughts about the whole relationship, improv class or no improv class, music or no music. "And you," I started shrieking, turning my venom on the dwarf, "how dare you play out your silly vendetta game when there are other people on the road who might get hurt besides your buddy here?" I grabbed the toy blackjack from his clenched fists.

My companion's mouth was agape. He'd obviously been hoping for a more demure response. At that moment, I couldn't care less what he wanted—I was hungry and tired and disillusioned, and I wanted eats and outs.

"Give him the damn box, Jack. It's probably his anyway."

Jack was livid. "Wait a minute! You don't even know what's—"

"Going on? Maybe not; maybe I don't give a shit, either. All I know is, as you like to say, Fact: You're a damn good improv artist. Fact: You started bitching about Maculski's bigotry but I saw the way you treated this fellow here." The Latino attendant had all but given up trying to follow our conversation, having decided it was probably none of his business anyway, and had gone back to watching "Mike Buckley, Continuity Cop" on his Sony.

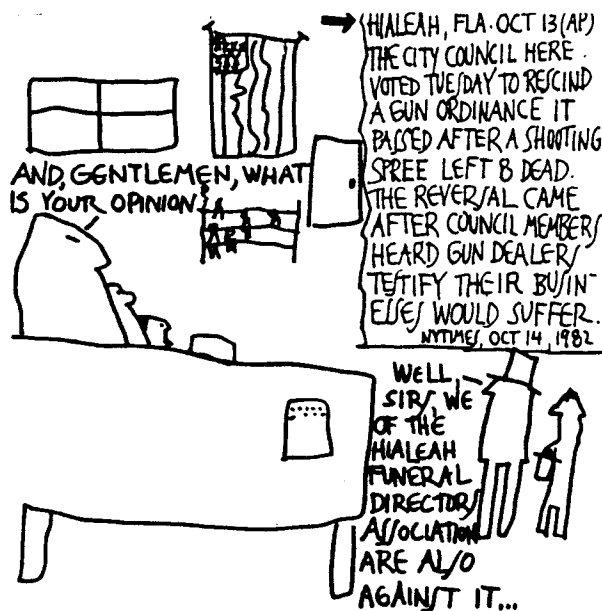
"Fact," I continued, "you're the world traveller, you usually take the bus, and come to think of it, that car's a rental!" I whipped around again to Maculski, who was in the process of slinking out. "Get back here, quarter-pint. I haven't the faintest what's in this precious box of yours, but if it's valuable enough to want to maim over, it should bring in enough bucks to repair the car. As for you, your machinations—"

"All right, what's going on here? Break it up, people, my squad car needs gas and the self-service pumps are closed! Where the hell is the attendant?"

I smiled mischievously. The cop must have been attracted to the freshly-baked donut smell coming from the Sky Chiefs.

I still think of Jack sometimes. As far as I know, he and Maculski might have made up on the way to the precinct station. The ten pounds of "gold" were not radioactive, but they were home-grown, and fetched me a nice price at the going rate (uh, I actually only rid myself of nine; the cop let me keep the other one), enough to pay for the Maculski-inflicted damages and some more CDs to replace the ones that reminded me of Jack. Who'd have think it—such a nice guy at first (and second) glance.

How did I get home? Well, let's just say I'm learning to speak Spanish fluently, and Humberto's teaching me the lambada too.



"The kind of comedy I like is the thing that makes me laugh for five seconds and think for ten minutes." - William Davis

## MORE GRIPING ABOUT THE OSCARS

by Todd Kristel

One feature of our mass media is that the community storytelling forming much of our social fabric is designed to make a profit. Commercial TV programming is designed primarily not to entertain or to inform or to uplift, but rather to deliver audiences to advertisers. As for public television...well, after watching the latest fundraising drive on a local PBS station, it seems fairly clear that much of the station programming was designed with money in mind as well. Even movies, which don't contain breaks for advertisements (although Diet Coke has appeared in so many films it is now eligible for a Best Supporting Actor nomination), are caught up in this problem.

Hey, I've got nothing against making money, and I wouldn't be so fast to turn down a good deal myself. Nonetheless, I think there's a serious problem here. In our great nation, speech is not truly free. In fact, sometimes it can be damn expensive. The end result of having to justify "speech" (artistic, political, etc.) in dollar signs is that some stories don't get told. Maybe 'zines can get around publication costs, but try making a feature film for the cost of printing thirty pages. Films are expensive to produce and distribute, so controversial films with marginal audiences have several strikes against them from the start.

And this is one reason why the Academy Awards are so damn annoying. The Academy Awards are presented as a recognition of "art," defined by contrast with "commerce," but it's just the same old bullshit. All the awards seem to accomplish is to make commerce seem more respectable by legitimizing (mostly) big box-office films (if not necessarily the biggest blockbusters) as "art" and ignoring films that don't pull in the big bucks and/or do shake up the status quo. No doubt one reason why Dead Poet's Society and Field of Dreams were nominated for Best Picture, whereas Do The Right Thing, sex, lies and videotape and Drugstore Cowboy were not nominated is that the first two films did bigger box office than the last three.

I was put off by Spike Lee's public whining about losing the Cannes Film Fest to sex, lies and videotape, but I think he's on the money regarding the Oscars. Driving Miss Daisy, while hardly a bad film, is a "safe" movie. Not only is it safer than Do The Right Thing in its approach to racism, it's more bland and predictable visually as well. But I guess Driving Miss Daisy more closely matches white, upper/upper-middle class (i.e., the people who vote) notions of art. (Well, you know what they say about class and art: if you have to pay \$10 million for a picture of a nude, it's fine art; but if you have to pay only \$2.50, it's pornography.)

But I guess the Academy Awards only reflect general racial attitudes in this country. When Oliver Stone makes a film about Vietnam vets, the major characters are white (even though many blacks served in the war), and I can't shake the suspicion that many people in the audience are more willing to believe that the vet hospital was poorly run because Stone showed black attendants running the place. But wasn't racism one of the major problems of the Vietnam War? Not just racism regarding blacks, but regarding the Vietnamese as well. I'm not the first person to be disturbed to learn that a Ratings Board person justified an "X" rating for the 63-killing Death Wish III and an "R" rating for an 80-killing Rambo film on the grounds that most of those killed in the Rambo film were Vietnamese.

When I think of the spectacle of the Academy Awards, where a master race of thin, attractive and wealthy people in expensive clothing pat themselves on the back for being so talented, I keep thinking of the people who live on the streets in West Philadelphia. I know that is an overly dramatic reaction (and, thus, perhaps appropriate for the Academy Awards), but I can't help but think of the invisible men and women who have been cast out to the dark recesses of our imagination, where they remain lost, dream-like, shadows without shape and form. The images formed by dots of light on the television screen seem more real to us than these people who live at our doorsteps. They are a "social problem," they are a "crime risk," they are a "nuisance," but we would rather accept "The Joker" as a real person than the people who sleep on our streets.

So we turn to a world where those who live in darkness are willing (or forced) to remain out of sight. We hide in nostalgia for a world of all-white schools where students worshipped dead white poets, for the lost "innocence" of segregated major league baseball, for a time when blacks were maids and chauffeurs (but not the ones being driven, even if they were being taken for a ride). But there's James Earl Jones or Morgan Freeman to reassure us that we aren't reactionaries, 'cause we can see African-Americans right there on the screen. But let them take over the whole movie, well, that would ruin our nostalgic vision of idealized America. It's a Wonderful Life might be colorized, but it's still not filled with people of color.

When you do a sales pitch, you don't want to give bad news. When you design your collective storytelling to be part of sales pitches, you tell upbeat stories. I've been told that people from other nations are amazed by the U.S. obsession with happy endings, suggesting that we have no sense of (or no willingness to contend with) the tragic qualities of life. This isn't entirely bad—negative thinking doesn't necessarily accomplish anything—but I'm beginning to suspect that we are becoming addicted to "feel-goodness" and are unwilling to face up to a reality that will eventually hit us right where it hurts. The Academy Awards have endorsed looking away rather than looking ahead.

# A New Development In An Old Story

by Dale A. White

One morning in the spring of 1607, several commuting Algonquin tribesmen paddled downstream and discussed the news of the day (the price of maize, whether Chief Powhatan would veto a bill on tomahawk control, that sort of thing). Suddenly, they noticed a billboard erected on the shore:

## \*PUBLIC NOTICE\*

This waterfront site  
is the proposed location of  
JAMESTOWN  
an exclusive residential development by  
The Virginia Company of London  
registered real estate broker  
"We're Bringing America Home"  
Phase I: Dwelling units for 100 residents,  
Clubhouse, Trading Post, Farm Cooperative  
Creative financing available for  
indentured servants.

"Urban sprawl," a brave grunted.

Another Indian casually surveyed the staked-off property.

"Swampland. How they sell it?"

"Englishmen, no doubt. Should have enacted tougher immigration laws while we had the chance."

Their sentiments were typical. An unruly crowd attended the public hearing before the Algonquin Planning and Zoning Council when the London Company applied for permission to build.

Council Chairman Powhatan, an outspoken critic of the Jamestown development, used the blunt end of his tomahawk to bring the meeting to order. "The board will hear Petition R-1607-0001. Does the petitioner have a representative present?"

Captain John Smith, the 27-year-old district manager for the Virginia Company of London, placed a preliminary site plan on an easel. "The Virginia Company of London shall build a self-contained community compatible with other land uses in the vicinity. Jamestown will predominantly consist of affordable, single-family housing. There will, however, be a small commercial district and harbor from which we intend to export gold, lumber and iron ore."

Councilwoman Pocahontas interrupted. "Excuse me, Captain Smith. This proposed project is in my district of the Algonquin Confederation. My constituents want to know what density you are requesting."

"Four dwelling units per acre. This, however, will be mostly clustered housing, Tudor-style. Sufficient green space will serve as a buffer between Jamestown and adjoining neighborhoods. We will gladly landscape that buffer to meet your specifications."

Pocahontas appeared distracted by an Englishman in the front row, who seductively removed a pouch of tobacco from his jacket and rolled a cigarette. She blushed as he winked at her and exhaled a heart-shaped cloud. "Who's your friend and why does he breathe fire?" she asked Smith.

The smoker stood. "John Rolfe, sweet lady." He inhaled deeply on his cigarette. "I intend to make my fortune by growing tobacco in the Jamestown colony and promoting cigarette smoking as a glamorous habit." He ground out the butt with his boot as he coughed and wheezed. Overcome by a dizzy spell, he fell back into his seat. "Unfortunately, the product has a few side effects I've yet to work out," he admitted as he additively rolled another.

Councilman Broken Arrow pointed at the roads drawn on the site plan. "Will these thoroughfares be paved?"

"Paved streets aren't included in the first phase of development," Smith answered.

Councilman Running Water frowned. "This site consists of little upland. Any dredging operations must be permitted by our environmental regulation staff."

Pocahontas interrupted. "Tell me, Captain Smith, is your friend, Mr. Rolfe, married?"

Meanwhile, in a rented hall in England, the Virginia Company of London conducted a presentation for potential buyers:

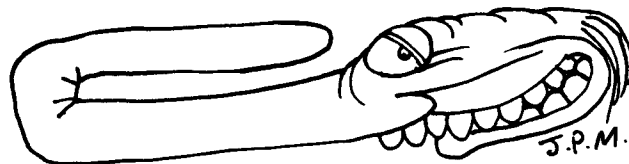
"Jamestown is named after King James," a narrator explained, pointing to an architect's rendering. "Quiet and secluded, it has a magnificent view of the unspoiled James River and easy access to Chesapeake Bay. Hiking, fishing, gardening and other recreational activities are popular with the friendly residents of Jamestown. It's an Old World value at New World prices. So, feel free to let your hair down, while still enjoying all the rights and privileges of a British subject..."

"It's a little rustic. But this virgin territory is undoubtedly chock full of gold, making Jamestown the place to be for any enterprising young man who can't wait to make his fortune. Farming is easy because the soil has never been tilled and remains teeming with nutrients. Come harvest time, you'll have more food than you can give away..."

"Tax-supported schools and Anglican churches make Jamestown an ideal place to rear a family. Friendly natives sell furs and beaded souvenirs at prices so low your relatives back home will think you're a billionaire when you inundate them with exotic gifts come holiday time..."

"But don't take our word for it. Listen to this endorsement by Jamestown settler Angus MacPherson:

"Aye, me and the missus were Catholic. Then we sees our way to turn Anglican. Didn't bide well with the Holy Father and me family. Had to move. Don't miss the old country. Could use a drop



of real Scotch whiskey, though. Could use one real bad."

"Or consider the sworn testimony of Sir Winthrop Frimp:

"Maggie and I aren't escaping religious persecution. England will always be our home. For us, Jamestown was simply the investment opportunity of a lifetime."

"We took advantage of the Virginia Coal Company of London's innovative time-sharing plan. We intend to summer in Virginia, where we'll play golf and raise horses. Then, at our convenience, we can vacation at one of the many other fine developments mentioned in the Virginia Company of London's plan—such as any of the ports of call built by the successful East India Company."

"Tired of moping around the manor and beating the same old servants every day? Colonies are the answer. Let Jamestown and the friendly folks at the Virginia Company of London help you become lord and master once again..."

"The board will entertain public comment," Powhatan announced. "Will the first person who intends to speak please identify himself for the record?"

An elderly gentleman in white pigtail stepped to the podium. "Billy Soaring Eagle, 411 Riverside Drive, owner of Billy's Succotash Emporium. My wigwam is no less than a hundred yards from the rear boundary of this project. My family and I sacrificed for 30 years to buy our home and business. I intended to retire in this community and leave everything to my children. If this development is approved, however, my property values will plummet. If they had to, my children couldn't sell our property. Who would want to live in a racially mixed neighborhood, with white people only a block away?"

Members of the audience cheered.

A medicine man stepped forward. "Doctor Waddling Duck, general practitioner. As a father and a physician, I am deeply concerned about the dangers our young people will confront if Jamestown's application is granted. Interracial marriages are bound to result. The white man's god will be regarded as trendy. Our children will start playing with guns at an early age. It has been repeatedly stated in medical journals that when the white man invaded Mexico, Peru and Florida, he infected the native women with unspeakable and incurable social diseases. We have the opportunity to stop this encroachment. If we don't do it now, it will be too late."

The crowd enthusiastically applauded.

"Jack Flying Squash, 1100 Jackrabbit Circle. I've attended several of the powwows regarding Jamestown and I've diligently studied the material on file in the public record. I would like to remind the board that the Virginia Company of London already has a hundred people who intend to settle here and will probably bring another hundred within a few months. This sudden increase in population will create severe traffic problems. Our footpaths were not built to accommodate these numbers. In addition, it will take hours to get downriver when it used to take minutes."

"You tell 'em, Jack," someone yelled.

Smith stood for his rebuttal. "The Virginia Company of London believes Jamestown will be an asset to the economy and culture of the Algonquin Confederation. We intend to be good neighbors and, if others don't, well, frankly, we don't give a flying—"

"Duck!" Pocahontas screamed.

Smith crouched as a flaming arrow shot over his head and into a post.

"Thanks, princess," Powhatan insincerely mumbled to his daughter as security escorted the perpetrator outside.

Smith smiled uncertainly. "Well, that was one for the history books. You're a lifesaver, Pocahontas."

"Mister Chairman, I make a motion to approve the petition," Pocahontas said. She smiled at Rolfe, who balanced several ashtrays on his knees while smoking three cigarettes simultaneously.

Powhatan's hair and complexion turned as white as his feathers. "Obviously, Councilwoman Pocahontas has developed a conflict of interest and should abstain from voting."

"Daddy," Pocahontas whined, "when you let me on the council, you promised I could make a motion."

Councilman Broken Arrow raised his hand. "I second Pocahontas' motion. Jamestown appears to be a quality development that will enhance our ad valorem tax base."

Councilman Running Water also voted in favor.

"Indian givers!" the audience shouted.

"Order!" Powhatan demanded. "The only way to rectify this fraudulence is for Pocahontas to rescind her motion." He turned to his daughter, only to discover her missing. "Where in the world...?"

A gust of wind filled the sails of a ship bound for England. Below deck, a steward left a complimentary bottle of champagne outside a cabin door. Behind the door, John and Pocahontas Rolfe lay entangled in bedsheets.

"At last I've found it," Rolfe said with a sigh.

"Found what, Johnny?" his bride asked.

Rolfe examined his lit cigarette with a satisfied expression. "The selling point for these things."

# Argento Directs Stewart

by Sergio Taubmann

You're standing in the kitchen after work. The heat from the stove is making your brow sweat. From the living room you can hear a beautiful woman playing the piano. The piano's out of tune, but it doesn't take away from the woman's technical achievements. She's very good. You reflect on how sweet she would sound with a piano that was on-key as you prepare the chicken, your hands already wet with marinade (teriyaki, mustard, curry, some basil).

As you pull the skin from the chicken parts, cutting the most stubborn bits away with a large knife, you begin to feel uneasy. This isn't how it is, usually. You two aren't as at ease with each other as this. There was a time, of course, when you used to be. Back when she was selling you books and you were still learning, you both felt really good about each other. There was unease, but it was an exhilarating energy, not the nauseating kind that's been driving you to bed sooner and sooner each night. You remove your watch (Bulova, very expensive, jewelled movement, a shame if it got marinaded) and place it on top of the microwave and remember how she never seemed to object to your growing distance. In a way, she seemed to encourage it. But that's how it happened with the friends around you. There was never a clean break; just a slow cooling period, leading to an emotional glacier between two people who once loved each other. You two were supposed to be the only ones who would escape this threat. You two were so close, the perfect couple, that it would never happen to you. You almost believed it. If circumstances were different, you still would.

The music stops suddenly. You hear the beautiful woman walk away from the piano. She enters the kitchen, an empty glass in her hand. Her dark hair falls over her shoulders in long tresses. She wears a pastel blouse, black slacks and a matching vest. They're all natural fibers; she would never allow artificial fabric to touch her sun-kissed skin. She's removed her make-up, explaining the strong medicinal smell that assails your nostrils.

You hear the refrigerator open. Glass bottles clink together followed by the sound of her pouring something into a glass. It's probably juice; she could never stand the hard stuff, could she? You glance back at her.

She's smiling. Genuinely smiling. It's not just the smile that's disturbing you -- it's the fact that it seems heartfelt. She wanted to smile at you. Her teeth are unnaturally clean and white, gleaming in the light from the overhead lamp. She keeps her eyes on you as she returns to the living room, her heels clicking on the newly waxed floor. You study the way her muscles move under the fabric of her clothing. Even though you hate her, you can't help feeling flush at watching her move. She looks great -- you can't deny that.

You go over to the closet and rummage about for a cooking sheet. The clatter of Pyrex, stainless steel and plastic fills your ears. You hear her return to the living room, sit down and play with the channel selectors. The channels whiz by, each one getting little more than a word before being changed. Eventually, she settles on one. You hear the sounds of classical music, it's that "culture channel" you find so bland.

You put the sheet on the cutting block, slowly transferring the chicken parts from the marinade to its surface. Your hands become slick with the viscous, brown liquid. It makes the parts hard to hold onto. One part slips and falls to the floor, spattering your shoes with dark dots. You curse and kneel to pick the piece up (maybe you can wash it off. If not, you can always feed this piece to the woman). You hear her footsteps again, running to the kitchen.

As you pick up the piece of chicken, your hands stained a walmuffy brown, she stands in the doorway. Her eyes briefly take in the scene before she dashes over to the sink for a bunch of paper towels. There's the dull thudding noise of the towel holder, followed by a crisp tearing noise. Her heels click on the floor, her shadow masking you in pale darkness. You avoid looking at her as she crouches down and cleans up the mess. You protest, saying you've got everything under control, it's just a minor setback, she should go and relax. She balls up the sodden towels and smiles crookedly. The fluorescent light glints off her lower lip, making it a curve of brilliant white.

You continue to protest. Inside you wish she would just *once* let you handle things the way you want them handled. She doesn't listen, she never did.

You make to get up, but she kisses you. There's a hint of cinnamon and peppermint on her lips. You return the kiss, finding it intoxicating in spite of the grief she's put you through in the past. Your psychiatrist would consider this an encouraging sign, he's always telling you not to express everything as anger, violent anger at that.

As you break from her, you wonder why your life can't always be like this. It's like a scene from out of a Preston Sturges film written by Frank Capra, sweet and funny and warm and sharp all at the same time. It's the kind of film that would have her played by Katharine Hepburn and you by Cary Grant or Jimmy Stewart.

You get up and focus your attention on dinner. The clock on the wall says it's very late -- much too late for this meal. In a few minutes, you should be in bed. As you approach the stove, you study your hands and notice that they're stained more a red than a brown. The pieces are just as red, sloppy chunks of meat and muscle. You bring your fingers, slick and wet with the red, to your mouth. It tastes saltily sweet. You shake your finger and nod your head as you remember why your life can't always be like this.

You were looking at the wrong script.

## TIJUANA ART

by Roger Coleman

Art opened his eye that still functioned, staring at a formidable, green dragon. He tried to move, slowly realizing it wasn't a dragon at all but a lizard on the edge of the ditch in which Art was lying. He struggled upright and felt for his wallet. Missing! And she had promised him such a good time.

How embarrassing. Rolled by such a delicate sweetheart. Startled-fawn look, gorgeous smile, best pitchers in the softball league; "CHAMP" printed on her skin-tight see-through t-shirt. The bas-relief of the H and M; what an artistic statement.

One has to be careful and not overdo art.



## THE DERBY BOYS

by Richard M. Millard

"And who are these sorry-lookin' rascals?" Patrolman Potter asked as he nodded to the photograph.

Sergeant Letridge folded his arms. "Ah, yes, the Derby Boys. A clever group of fellows."

"Never heard of them," Patrolman Potter sniffed.

"Then your education's been severely neglected," Sergeant Letridge stated. "Daniel Derby was a true original genius. Though a bit vain. You see, he had all his gang members wear those derby hats. Said it gave 'em a touch of class."

Patrolman Potter rubbed the end of his nose. "So how did you catch them?"

"We didn't," Sergeant Letridge answered with a smile.

"Daniel Derby might have been one of the best when it came to plannin' a crime, but he wasn't good at all with names and faces. And that was his downfall."

"You see, after each job, Daniel would treat his Derby Boys to a keg of beer at some out-of-the-way place. Unfortunately for them, the last keg of beer that Daniel picked up came from the widow of a brewmaster who had committed suicide after he'd been robbed by the Derby Boys and almost had his business ruined."

Patrolman Potter tilted his head.

"Of course, Daniel didn't remember anything about it," Sergeant Letridge continued. "But the widow remembered him. And that derby hat. So, she poisoned the beer."

"Blimey!" Patrolman Potter exclaimed.

Sergeant Letridge nodded, and took in a long breath. "And as fate would have it, this was the time that Daniel brought along a photographer so that he would have a picture of himself with the boys. It's the only known photograph of them all together. But they had already consumed most of the poisoned beer when the photograph was taken. So, Daniel and the Derby Boys weren't lookin' too good at their last."

## GEORGE BUSH'S ASTROLOGICAL CHART

by Elliot Cantsin

George Bush was born in Milton, Mass., on June 12, 1924 at 7:06 AM, or, as they say in the military 666 hours. He was born under the sign of Gemini, the sign of persons of a dual nature who often contradict themselves. Geminis are often confronted with the need to make decisions between many dual choices, which makes them nervous, restless, irritable, & prone to worry & anguish. They are good family members & are capable of being very kind & affable to their friends, but they tend to treat most other people like shit. Geminis think nothing of making hasty decisions & then changing their minds. They hate to be pinned down & can be very evasive. They have a short attention span, but seem to come out ahead with less effort than it takes most of us to come out behind. The ancient Egyptian astrologers warned that Geminis should never be given positions of authority because of these congenital defects of character.

The planets were in a very odd configuration on the morning George Bush was born. The sun refused to shine that day. But many of the other planets were aligned in the center of the third house. Mercury, the planet of magic & changeableness indicates the kind of person who would accuse Ronald Reagan of voodoo economics & then practice it himself.

Venus, the planet of love, was at an acute angle, indicating sexual perversity; the kind of man who would rather have sex in the shower with his dog than in bed with his wife or in a motel room with a hooker with the FBI, the Secret Service, & the press peering in the window.

The moon was in the beginning of the third quarter, just past full, indicating someone beyond lunacy, a thorough-going maniac in fact.

Mars was also centrally aligned, indicating a warlike bully, always eager to butcher harmless peasants.

Jupiter, indicating qualities of leadership & a jovial sense of humor, was at the opposite side of the zodiac, & was not visible in the sky for the whole month of June that year.

Saturn, that gloomy, dull, & deadliest of planets, was centrally located in Gemini.

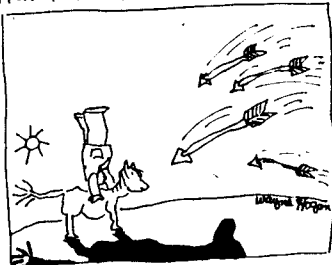
Uranus, planet of those lacking testicular fortitude, was also centrally aligned.

Neptune, planet of excellent fishermen, was elsewhere.

Pluto, planet of those who watch Disney cartoons & advocate Mickey Mouse government was in the third house.

So it is clear that the nation that does not observe the stars & their warnings must suffer the consequences. And the other people who were born at the same moment as George Bush? Every one of them without exception, whether American, or Soviet, or Nicaraguan, or Palestinian, & even one Panamanian woman who was killed by an American stealth bomber, all agree or agreed with Mr Bush's policies. And the 240 million Americans who go along with his policies who weren't born at the same moment as Mr Bush? I'm afraid they were born under unfortunate stars too.

TODAY'S HOROSCOPE FOR LEOS:  
PICK UP TRASH IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD



Let's step outside and look up into the night sky see all those stars and be amazed because you know you can't see it all even though you can see thousands. Then think of the bombs

TODAY'S HOROSCOPE FOR CAPRICORNS



atomic to hydrogen and all the tons of TNT. Yes we could explode our globe but the stars sparkle more sparks into the sky than the bombs could and why? Because there is a God behind it all. - Mary Ann Henn

## GUIDED BY THE STARS

by Ann M. Valley

On my last birthday, I received two horoscope books for my sun sign, Scorpio. They were by different companies, so I decided to keep both; this was a mistake.

For the day following my birthday, the red horoscope book said *Good. Your willpower is strong. Try to diet or quit smoking.* I threw away my cigarettes.

For the same day, the blue book said *Disquieting. Not a good day to change your routine. Willpower is nil.* By 3:00, I couldn't stand it without a cigarette. I went to the store and bought a carton.

The following day, the red horoscope book said *Lucky. A good day to take risks. You'll receive a windfall.* I went to the supermarket and bought five Michigan Lottery tickets. At first I won, then I lost and just broke even. When I got home, I decided to check the blue horoscope book. It said *Unlucky. Don't gamble or buy luxuries. Financial problems are likely.* Whew! That was a close call.

Undeterred by these contradictions, I continued to consult my horoscopes. The following day, the blue book said *Good. Scorpions will be successful in career matters. An especially good day for starting new projects.* I had an idea for an article. I got out my pen and notebook and started to write. The article was flowing smoothly when I realized I hadn't checked my red horoscope book. It said *Variable. The early bird catches the worm, but the worm isn't worth catching, especially in career matters.*

Just then the mailman arrived, bringing a magazine to which I subscribed. In the table of contents, there was an article by a noted journalist on the very same subject on which I was writing!

At wit's end, I decided enough was enough. I went to a professional astrologer. She said she could do my chart, but the fee she quoted was "astronomical" because the peculiarities of the heavens at the time of my birth made doing my chart difficult to calculate. She mentioned rising signs, cusps, and houses. Her ephemerides were costly--not to mention her other business expenses like her personal home computer.

Needless to say, I didn't have a professional chart done. No more! No way! I was finished with horoscopes.

I just got back from the mall. Guess what I bought? No, not a horoscope book--a manual on how to check your own biorhythms!

NESSIE, KING. KING, NESSIE

by A.T. Hunn

Here's a nod to Nessie  
The lady of the Loch  
No one's ever seen her  
But the legend's not to mock  
Yet now her act's a duo  
There's no reason to be selfish  
For country folk do rumor  
She's been singin' blues with Elvis.



"Look, if you say you ordered  
HOT DOGS, THEN I'M SURE THAT'S  
WHAT IT IS."

# SAYZ-U (Letters)

Dear Elayne, 3-23-6231 year of Thoth

Duh, what is this democracy bit, anyway? Boundaries are so arbitrary. Is a country what it is now? Before Hitler and Stalin? Before Columbus? Before Moses? Is democracy what we support in Nicaragua? In El Salvador? In Israel/Palestine? Who knows what will happen in Lithuania by the time this letter is printed. I pray that no blood is shed, but I ask myself: can the Soviet Union or the world afford to have democracy according to Coors or Pepsi or the other super-corporations that toasted the fall of the Berlin wall in their brainwash commercials? Do we have one drop of blood's worth more freedom in the U.S. than anywhere else? Certainly it seems that those countries in the U.S. sphere of influence are the least free. Pacifism means favoring peaceful means over force. But there's no limit to the barbarity and hypocrisy of the capitalists who own this country. And remember what happened to Mr.-Nice-Guy Jimmy Carter. Mr. Gorbachev knows that the world cannot afford for him to make the same mistake. Is nationalism a good reason for a separate Lithuania or a united Germany? Is capitalism? Only anarchy and "the withering away of the state" can give people more individual freedom than the socialist democracy Mr. Gorbachev is trying to create. Mr. Gorbachev has shown good faith and plays according to the admittedly arbitrary rules of international law and national constitutions. The plutocrats of the U.S. do not. Only from the point of view of anarchism can Gorbachev's action in Lithuania be faulted, and while we may not may not be able to get to total anarchist freedom from socialist democracy, we certainly won't get there from American plutocracy or any country's nationalism. It is unfortunate that the Lithuanians and East Germans have not decided to use their Gorbachev-given greater freedom to build themselves a culture, instead of being so anxious to sell themselves body and soul to the capitalist masters.

Sincerely,

ELLIOT CANTSIN  
1961 Cedar Street  
North Merrick, NY 11566

*Not being very fond of the idea of anarchy, I can't really root for it with your enthusiasm, Elliot. I'm more in the mainstream of democratic socialists--you know, the government should be obligated to take care of people who need help, but otherwise shouldn't interfere with how folks want to live their lives, etc. However, "Kid" Sieve would like you to know she appreciates your ad-bashing; couldn't have said it better herself.*

Dear Elayne:

Well, since I am beating the deadline again, for the second time in a row, for the second time in as many issues, for the second time in a 2-month period...well, because of all that, I thought I'd also take the time to write you a letter for Sayz-U. As you know, I am now working a more regular-houred job (M-F 8:30-4:30 at the Domestic Violence Shelter) and so am therefore more rested and refreshed and have time to do stuff like write my IJ columns and even work on my collection of short stories which I have been working on for the last five years and still haven't made a dent in.

Anyhow, I thought I'd fill you in on some more of the Mansfield news. Which, of course, is also known as "Yes, Virginia, there is truth to the stories about inbreeding: look at Mansfield, Ohio."

Our latest, now that the brouhaha surrounding the kid with the steak knife that the coppers blew away has died down, concerns our very own Dr. Boyle.

Some of you lucky folk may have heard of Dr. Boyle--and god knows we're having a good time with him here; he's contributed to a whole slew of sicko jokes!--because Dr. Boyle deserves this decade's honors for the stupidest motherfucker to commit a murder on the planet.

Dr. Boyle got in a fight with his wife, whom he was supposed to be divorcing because he'd gotten his girlfriend pregnant and was going to marry her. In fact, he'd set the girlfriend up in his new house in Pennsylvucky and was letting her call herself Mrs. Boyle and had even given her the real Mrs. Boyle's engagement ring (he was a frugal sort of chap).

So, there he was, fighting with his wife on New Year's Eve and he gets pissed off and he strangles her. In front of the

kids, but hey, he was upset.

So he takes her to Pennsylvucky, where he'd bought the house and where he'd just happened to ask the realtor who'd sold him the house what was underneath the basement floor.

Then he rents a jackhammer, tears up the basement floor and drops the former Mrs. Boyle in the hole. Then he covers her with concrete and then he comes back to Mansfield and buys a rug to put on top of the new floor in the basement.

And then he files a missing persons report because he can't find the real Mrs. Boyle! And the jackhammer, the carpet and the cement that he'd bought or rented--which he'd done using his real name, mind you--don't seem to be at all suspicious to him. And the fact that he'd asked about the floor? Sheer coincidence! The fact that the rug in question is now on the floor in question? Damn, ain't that something?!

So, ol' Johnny denies everything after they tear up the floor and find the original missus. And the pretend missus (who was living in the house at the time of the jackhammer) says she had no idea!

It was an accident, Johnny says. (Yeah, officer, I accidentally knocked her down in the hole and poured concrete on top of her.)

Now the beauty of it is, all of Johnny's patients (whom he was going to desert at the end of the year anyhow because he was moving his practice to Pennsylvucky) are saying "Hey! He didn't do it!" and "Hey! It was an accident!" and "Hey! How do you know HE did it? Maybe it was someone else!"

I mean, is this guy a piece of cake or what? (Fruitcake, maybe.)

Remember I told you it'd give rise to a bunch of sick jokes? Well, here's a couple of 'em:

*"Did you hear they're going to let Dr. Boyle off? Not enough concrete evidence!"*

*Dr. Boyle's theme song? "I'm Walking the Floor Over You"*

*You know what they always say...The wife is the foundation of the family.*

Anyhow, I'm telling you, Elayne, they could do a case study on inbreeding and its tragic consequences here in Mansfield!

Well, better close. Talk at you later! Hey, by the way, keep up the computer stuff like you did for the letters last time. That was cool!

As a general rule,

KATHY STADALSKY  
933 State Route 314 North  
R.R. #13  
Mansfield, OH 44903

Dear Elayne,

3/24

#80? That's another year almost. I told my publisher that I'm taking a vacation. The last few days I sent out about 30 4-sheet brochures exactly like the one I'm sending you--all to Washington, D.C. It's going to hit you earthlings that I have all the answers to saving the planet and correcting your golf swings. Blame it on that 1943 crack on the head. I'm still talking to myself. I always like your pick of copy as in past and future herenow

J.C. BRAINBEAU  
Box 2243  
Youngstown, OH 44504

Hello Elayne--

3/25/90

When the Cole Brothers Circus left town, I felt sad. Now INSIDE JOKE is leaving town. No more pretty girls riding camels, no more naughty monkeys playing tricks! Vacant fields where the great tent used to stand, so mysterious, so wonderful!

"Mommy, will the circus ever come back?"

"I hope so, son. It's up to Elayne."

BANGOR ZACK BULLEN  
Box 426  
Northport, NY 11768

Dear Elayne,

March 25

This is not trying to talk you out of anything. I realize how much work IJ must be, and if it's not a labor of love, it's just a labor.

But I was sorry to read that you were winding publication down. I will miss INSIDE JOKE.

All the best,

GARY FLOAM  
3300 Marnat Road  
Baltimore, MD 21208



Dear Elayne,

March 27, 1990

I was saddened to read that IJ will be going on "temporary hiatus" starting issue #80. Maybe some of the IJ contributors will send their work elsewhere, but then I'll have to track down a bunch of different specialty zines instead of finding one zine with that unique mixture of art, poetry, prose, creative writing, reviews and everything else that makes IJ distinctive. Well, you've earned your rest, so I should be happy that you've put together this many issues. But it's still too bad.

I've been deluged with work lately, so I haven't seen much television, except for THE SIMPSONS and portions of a couple basketball games (although I'm looking forward to seeing David Lynch's show when it premieres). For better or worse, I did see the Academy Awards last night, which is why I seem to be obsessed with this rather limited subject (well, it was either that or Bush's broccoli diet). In case anybody cares, I was 2.5 out of 10 at guessing winners of major awards (I'll let you figure that one out). The high point of the show was probably Akira Kurosawa's segment, and the best single moment was when I realized that Rob Lowe really wouldn't be on the show. The low point was the moronic production number arranged for the Costume Design award. If nothing else, you can relax now, knowing that you won't have to read any more of my opinions on the Academy Awards in IJ after this issue.

I'd comment on IJ #74, but either I'd have to leave out too many IJ staffers/contributors or this letter would go on for another five pages. As a fan of bad puns, however, I must congratulate you for a particularly punishing issue.

TODD KRISTEL  
Box 1046  
3600 Chestnut St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19104

3-27-90

Hi Elayne,

Well, spring break is over - it went PHFTFT! We painted the nursery (which used to be my office), painted and retooled the music/TV room (which is now a music/TV/office supply room), bought a futon (to replace our faithful old hide-a-bed couch, now deceased) and found a crib (second-hand) for \$45! We're still not done around here. The house is disoriented and disorganized, but at least it's clean and freshly painted. I've even done the carpets! Tah-dah!

Lorraine's enjoying her pregnancy. Emily is very healthy and quite a good mover. Yep, it's a girl. We're gearing up for that. My friends have treated the news of our baby rather coldly, but Lorraine's students are nuts about the idea and they've hit her with a slew of gifts, good wishes, and offers to babysit (cool)!

The kiddo is due June 23. Lorraine goes back to work two months later. Who's staying with baby, you ask? Me--that's who. Wish me luck!

On IJ: I'm very sad to hear that IJ will go on "indefinite hiatus" (which sounds like a deformed flower) after #80, but I can understand your reasons entirely. Let me express my gratitude to you for providing a forum for my styles of and experiments in humor. It's one thing to just write, but it is entirely another to have a place where you know your work is going to appear regularly. Zines like Roy Harper's OUTER SHELL (where my column still appears) and INSIDE JOKE are heroic to me. I have developed a greater respect for my craft and see the need for economy and discipline because I have been able to see my work in print. No editor of a paying above-ground publication would allow learning on-the-job as the zines do. Thank you, Elayne,

I feel that IJ always attempted its collective humor with intellect and taste. It's been a stone-cold honor to appear in the same pages as Ackner, Backwords, Oberc, Stadalsky et al. I just hope that somewhere, sometime, we can all do it again.

Now, IJ #74: My fave pieces were "LittleShop of Horrors" by the Ack!; "Backwords Logic" by Ace (well said, pal); "Having Fun" by Leavitt; "Peter Cotton-tailasaurus" by A.T. Hunn; "Twisted Image" (even tho Rog & Gene were sittin' in the wrong spots), and "The Bird Story" by Stolte. I also like the cartoons which, besides being funny, added a lot of visual kick to the usually text-heavy pages.

On the minus side, I couldn't read "Transitory" by Sergio Taubmann; I missed Gary Pig; and the staples weren't my

favorite flavor. With only six issues left, you oughta watch this, Elayne.

Do I dig "Kid" Sieve, "Four-Color Fiend" and "Animation Update?" You bet, it's a valuable news alternative for me.

So #74 was a darned good issue. I was proud to be a part of it. Keep up the good work, folks. I read it all.

Well, Del Shannon's passing is a shock. (Gary Pig's band, Endless Summer, backed Del up on a club date.) Last night I watched a rerun of CRIME STORY with Del singing a version of "Runaway" with lyrics that I found prophetic. Sad loss. The first generation of rock'n'roll is not only dying off, but its echo has become fainter and less reverberant. Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, we're in the last days of rock'n'roll music. The loss of Del Shannon diminishes the forces of the few champions who would even know how to fight for it. I didn't think about him lately, but now I miss Del Shannon very much! I've been playing his LPs constantly.

Likewise Ray Goulding, the "Ray" half of Bob & Ray. Since these scrawlings in IJ are supposed to be humorously slanted, I'd like to dedicate the remainder of my run here to the memory of Ray Goulding. He made me laugh and realize that humor can be quiet and attitudinal. Bob & Ray have had an impact on me that is on a par with Lenny Bruce's and The Firesign Theatre's. Sometimes I've felt like I was a "Bob" spending his life and talents in search of a "Ray." And now that the head Ray is gone, I suspect my chances of finding that comedy partner have gotten dramatically smaller. (I'd like to hear from you B&R fans with tales of B&R.)

Oh well, enough warmth! Let's make IJ worthy of those who write it, read it, and even those who don't know what they're missing.

Love ya, Elayne.

Spray and sniff twice for me, KEN BURKE

P.O. Box 8

Black Canyon City, AZ 85324

Dear Elayne,

Looking forward to seeing the final few issues; they should be great. I want to make sure I get them.

I just appeared in a syndicated piece called "Cartoon Collage"--which appears in about twelve papers--on March 25th. The papers included the Baltimore Sun, the Denver Post, the San Francisco Examiner and the Dallas Morning News. Hope you have enough of my work to get through your last issue...

Make the remaining issues the best yet, and good luck A.I.J. (After INSIDE JOKE).

Gratuitously,

ERIC HOLLOBAUGH  
3453 Bremen Street  
Columbus, OH 43224

P.S. How about making issue 80 "The Best of INSIDE JOKE?" Because we've so much copy to get out of the way, there's no room for reprints! Maybe in the future, someday...Thanks to everyone for their good wishes. Were my time and money situation different, I'd keep doing IJ indefinitely. I understand the disappointment many of you might feel--hell, it's not easy for me to give it up either--but I refuse to accept implicit blame for raining on anyone's parade. At the risk of sounding too defensive, I defy anyone to type and lay out 32 pages of copy every six weeks, make only 150 copies at a local xeroxing shop, mail them out and charge \$1.50, a 65¢ stamp or nothing, and lose less than the \$1200 a year I never see returned. Next time I hope to be smarter and come out quarterly, charge \$5 an issue for fewer pages, type copy at full size on my work computer, do newsprint instead of Xerox, run off thousands of copies to go in stores, trade exchanges, etc.--and get lots of grant money before I ever begin the undertaking. That's the way one seems to be taken seriously nowadays as a small press. I'm sorry if my love of doing IJ for its own sake, not for monetary gain, clashed with the realities of my current situation, but that's the way it is...

THINK MUTTON OF IT

by Michael Polo

Mary had a little lamb  
Its fleece was white as snow  
And everywhere that Mary went  
The lamb was sure to go.

It followed her to school one day,  
A foolish thing to do.  
Her cooking class all had their way...  
It made a lovely stew.



NOT HERE yet...

Handwritten musical notation on staves. Includes notes, rests, and tempo markings: *HALF SPEED*, *♩ = 58*, *FASTER*, *♩ = 116*, *mp*, *dw*.

INSIDE JOKER c/o ELAINE WECHSLER POT 1609  
1 MADISON SQ ST NY NY 10159

