

#79

Inside Joke

\$1.50

a newsletter of
comedy and creativity • • • mixed up media

TENT ANNIVERSARY?!?

WHO THE HELL
CARES?! WHAT'S
A "TENT" ANNIVERSARY?

I dunno--
ALL I
CARE ABOUT
IS MY **GIN...**
IT MAKES
US **MEAN!**

GREATEST HITS!



DRAIT GOD MORRISON
READ ME
MYSTIC
WRITINGS
YOU DUAB
ASSES!



they mean
'dis!

10th
ANNIVERSARY
ISSUE

WORLD WEEKLY
STUN



even dorkin' '90



(Events continued on page 4)

Upcoming Events

- NOVEMBER 15 - ABSOLUTE FINAL DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS TO THE LAST ISSUE OF INSIDE JOKE!!!!!!
- NOVEMBER 15 - Pinky Lee (b. 1916)
- NOVEMBER 16 - Doublespeak Awards given out
- NOVEMBER 17 - Peter Cook (53)
- NOVEMBER 18 - GENE KUHN (42); Imogene Coca (81); Mickey Mouse (52); Margaret Atwood (51)
- NOVEMBER 19 - PHIL TORTORICI (35); the late GERRY REITH (b. 1958); Dick Cavett (54)
- NOVEMBER 20 - PETE SHERMAN (?); Dick Smothers (52); Bobby Kennedy (b. 1925); C. Gould (b.1900)
- NOVEMBER 21 - Marlo Thomas (52); Goldie Hawn (45)
- NOVEMBER 22 - Jamie Lee Curtis (32); Tom Conti (49); Terry Gilliam (50)
- NOVEMBER 23 - Harpo Marx (b. 1893)
- NOVEMBER 25 - Annual Doo-Dah Parade in Pasadena
- NOVEMBER 26 - Charles Schulz (68); Soj. Truth (b. 1790?)
- NOVEMBER 27 - Buffalo Bob Smith (73)
- NOVEMBER 28 - Randy Newman (47); Paul Shaffer (41)
- NOVEMBER 29 - Peter Bergman (51); L. May Alcott (b.1832)
- NOVEMBER 30 - Mark Twain (b. 1835); Abbie Hoffman (b. 1938); Jonathan Swift (b. 1667)
- DECEMBER is Universal Human Rights Month
- DECEMBER 1 - World AIDS Day; Dick Shawn (b. 1929); Mary Martin (76); Richard Pryor (50); Bette Midler (44); Woody Allen (55)
- DECEMBER 2 - ME! (32); DENISE KRAUSE (?); the late MICHAEL POLO (b. 1953)
- DECEMBER 4 - ROBERT BAIN (21)
- DECEMBER 5 - MICHAEL BULLER (28); Walt Disney (b.1901); Joan Didion (56); Calvin Trillin (55)
- DECEMBER 6 - DAVID OSSMAN (54); Tom Hulce (37); Ira Gershwin (b. 1896); Wally Cox (b. 1925); Kahlil Gibran (b. 1883); Dave Brubeck (70)

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* *INSIDE JOKE* is put on hexaweekly by Elayne "Back to Work and Not Liking It One Bit" Wechsler-Chaput and legions of super friends, and emanates from the wilds of beautiful downtown Bensonhurst, Brooklyn, where I'd better stop typing by 9 if I want to remain in this domicile, sayeth the landlords...

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ACKNOWLEDITORIAL

Now that *INSIDE JOKE* is winding down to its final issue before our "extended hiatus," it seems to elicit conflicting reactions from contributors. Staffers, for instance. On the one hand, it thrills me to report that, for the first time in at least a year, by my reckoning, every single *IJ* staffer is present for our Tenth Anniversary issue. Give yourselves a hand, folks. On the other tentacle, for example, Todd forgot that I do the TV reviews for this newsletter--in fact, our latest mammoth review section takes up too many pages somewhere within--but I would recommend perusing his work, as well as some comments Jed made in his animation column, for further opinions on the new season's fare. Dorian becomes our food reviewer this time, and MasterMath takes up the movie slack in her place. And Ace jumps on the environmental bandwagon, recycling an article he first wrote way back for *IJ* #44 as part of his "Journey Through the Tenderloin" series, the series that gave birth to the concept of *More Than I Need To Know* (see next paragraph for more information on this topic). This isn't the first time we've essentially rerun a staffer's piece--you may recall Pru's "Son of Mighty Joe Infirmitis"--and Ace has put an interesting twist on it in that the piece's narrator is the older fellow this time instead of the younger one. Also, only four out of our 20 staffers (Wayne, Susan, Dorian and Kerry) have yet sent in their final bylines for next issue, detailing where loyal readers can find their work in the future. And that's not even mentioning the stuff I had to send back or edit out for one reason or another! Maybe it's something in the air, or maybe we're all feeling burnt out--who knows? Definitely time to take a rest.

Next issue, in response to several puzzled inquiries as to the nature of *MTINTK*, I shall put the issue to rest once and for all in a special parting shot outlining, as concisely as I can, the fundamental difference between "obscenity" (things some have defined as nudity, scatological or demeaning language, etc.) and what I consider private matters (things *MTINTK*, like intimate experiences and diaries). I hope this'll clear matters up at last.

By the way, Anni and Larry Oberc have both changed addresses--Anni's is in the letters column, and Larry's just moved his apartment from #5 to #2, so you can amend last issue's staffer listing. Speaking of listings, thanks to the Kid for giving up her space for our TV crap this time. Also, thanks again to Evan Dorkin (see Steve's column for more information on Evan) for this issue's special front cover, featuring his characters Milk and Cheese--this is the kind of thing that happens, Evan tells me, when dairy products go bad. The color paper on which this page is printed is, of course, cream. As for the front-back cover for #80, Phil Tortorici is still looking for more contributors, so write him ASAP at P.O. Box 57487, West Palm Beach, FL 33405, and I do mean right away, as everything has to be put together by our next deadline. Welcome to our new contributors, most of whom have sent in really wonderful first-time pieces: Lynne Conroy, Frances Gabino, Scott Mann, Howard Shipman, Pavele Wesser and the pseudonymous "A. Rezza Dent." Also thanks to J.C. Brainbeau, B.Z. Bullen (with an ad from a friend this time) and Kathy Helms-Stadalsky for their monetary donations, and to those of you who've sent me camera-ready stuff.

The deadline for the last *IJ*, #80, is November 15, period. If I don't have your piece by the middle of November, or Thanksgiving the absolute latest, I'll probably return it to you with my regrets that it will never see print in *IJ*. Remember, this is the time for any topical stuff having to do with Christmas, the New Year or end-of-year lists (Larry S, for instance, sent his Thanksgiving-related piece for this issue). If there's an X by your mailing label, you won't get #80 unless you send me \$1.50. Contributors and letter writers may, if they wish, get a discount on their *IJ* by sending me a 65¢ stamp instead of the \$1.50 cash/check/money order for #80. Back issues of *IJ* are also \$1.50 each--get 'em while you can. Please make checks payable to "Elayne Wechsler-Chaput." *IJ* is no longer available at SohoZat, I'm sorry to report, as they have closed their zine and comics section, bummer and a half. Please send everything to me by the deadline at

P.O. Box 1609, Mad. Sq. Station, New York, NY 10159-1609

This *IJ* is dedicated to the memories of Douglas Edwards, Tom Carvel, Leonard Bernstein and Joel McCrea.



DIARY of The ROCK FIEND

by
Anni Ackner

IMPRACICAL CATS



As you may or may not know—and if you don't know this, perhaps you might want to consider just leaving well enough alone, skipping this column altogether, and going off to do something more amusing, like scrubbing the groat in the shower. You might be better off—there are large groups of, presumably, normally intelligent people who evidently don't have anything better to do with their time than to go about asking other presumably normally intelligent people their opinions on things, and then publishing the results. These opinion askers—known variously as poll-takers, surveyors, market research workers, and the United States Census Bureau—have, at their disposal, numerous ways of gathering their information, just about all of them annoying or, at best, ill-timed (how is it that these curiosity-seekers always, I mean always know when their intended victims are in the shower, even over the telephone, even at a distance of 3,000 miles, is a fitting subject for a column all on its own, and I hope to hell somebody else writes it someday), and use them to inquire about a spectrum of things so diverse as to make the satorial displays presented in a Soho nightclub on any given Saturday night look like a Jaycee-sponsored fashion show in Altoona, PA. Everything from the state of the nation to the state of Roseanne Barr's singing voice, from the average number of children per American household to the average number of intimate acts it took to produce said children is grist for the mill, and, as far as that does, they don't cut it especially fine concerning where they publish the results of their harvest, either. Newspapers, magazines, tabloids, textbooks, the last three minutes of local news broadcasts—all are replete with the results of surveys, to the extent that one national television "newsmagazine" recently ran statistics compiled from a survey of how many surveys an average American answers in one year. Exactly what causes this mania for opinion-gathering no one really knows—scholars theorize that it springs from the same impulse that causes things like America's Favorite Home Videos to be so immensely popular, but refuse to speculate further, probably with good reason—but, whatever its origins, it is now an accepted and entrenched facet of modern life.

Recently, one set of opinion farmers—on what was apparently a slow news day even in their business—announced, with the sort of fanfare usually reserved for small governmental crises and the wholesale price of crude oil, that the cat was now, according to the results of their surveys, America's Number One Housepet.

This announcement came as a shock to many people who still, even after years of living in the kind of environment that does not, to say the least, encourage this type of thinking, cherished fond memories of going rabbit-hunting with good old Towser or being greeted upon returning home from school by a 75-pound slobbering behemoth with a wagging tail, and firmly believed that everyone else was either already sharing the experience or was desperately anxious to leap into it at the first possible moment. The rest of us, however, were not surprised in the slightest. Dogs—and I am the first to admit this—are extremely nice people, for the most part, friendly, good-natured, comforting, loyal, and amusing, but the simple fact of the matter is that it's next to impossible to keep a Saint Bernard—or even a Shih Tzu—in the sort of dwelling most of us are able to afford in these troubled times, to say nothing of the fact that your typical modern Thinking Person, struggling to stay alive in the dying days of the twentieth century, just hasn't got the time to take a canine friend out for its toilette five or six times a day, and to say even less of the fact that the average dog, given its head, will consume double its weight in Alpo over the course of a week, not to mention the sofa.

A cat, on the other hand, while you can't really call most of them "nice," as such—intelligent, yes; rather charming, yes; affectionate sometimes, yes; the hail-fellow-well-met sort, no, but then, neither is David Letterman, and enough people seem to like him—has the distinct advantage of being able to go comfortably into even the most cramped studio apartment (even a big cat isn't very, relatively—the heaviest one on record was about 50 pounds, roughly equivalent to that 1,100-pound fella who got into so much trouble with Dick Gregory. Most cats hover in the 8-12 pound range), doesn't have to be walked (there is, of course, the problem of the litter box, but only the most anal, so to speak, bother to clean that more than once a day), and doesn't eat all that much, relatively speaking, particularly if it happens to be food that the cat feels is beneath its dignity (which usually includes all commercially prepared brands of cat food, but does not include household cleansers, sponges, corners of down comforters, and anything at all that you happen to be eating). Altogether, a cat is a most admirable companion animal for the modern Thinking Person (especially one who doesn't own a down comforter), and it's no wonder that it has achieved its current popularity.

This is not to say, however, that there aren't Cats and Cats,

as it were. As anyone who has ever come into contact with at least one cat can tell you, cats are subject to a range of personality traits, character flaws, foibles, neuroses and just plain mental cock-eyednesses that makes the range of human personality look like that of the amoeba (and if you think you have conclusive proof that amoeba have varied personalities, kindly keep it to yourself. I have enough trouble as it is without feeling that I suddenly have to share with something that lives in a glass of water). A lack of understanding of this fact can lead to discord and strife within the home, discord and strife in which, not to put too fine a point on it, the cat has the distinct advantage—after all, which one of you is it stays home and sleeps on the sofa while the other goes off in all sorts of weather to earn a living? In order to prevent this situation, it is therefore advisable to take the following simple quiz, which will determine the personality type of your cat or cats, and allow you to act accordingly. Take your time, answer all questions as honestly as you can, considering what living with a cat or cats can do to a person's self-awareness, and take the quiz as many times as necessary, depending on the number of cats one harbours, up to four (anyone who deliberately keeps more than four cats I think can be fairly said to be so far gone on the matter that personality becomes irrelevant): THE IJ RATE-YOUR-CAT QUIZ, or How to Fill Up a Column and Cash In on a Trend While Still Managing to Watch Parenthood

- When you return home after a hard day at work, your cat:
 - Greets you at the door, licking your hands and climbing all over you;
 - Greets you at the door, gazing at you reproachfully and refusing to allow itself to be touched until you have properly apologized for leaving it alone;
 - Runs into the kitchen and stations itself pointedly by the electric can opener;
 - Turns off the television, dashes into the bathroom and flushes something hurriedly, then shoves something else under the bed as four strange cats disappear out the back window.
- When you serve your cat a new or unaccustomed brand of food, it:
 - Eats it happily and licks the plate;
 - Sniffs suspiciously, marches around the dish, walks away a few feet, but, ultimately, eats;
 - Attempts to scratch the linoleum over the plate, starves itself for three days while giving you malevolent stares but, ultimately, eats;
 - Calls out for pizza.
- Your cat sleeps:
 - In the nice little beribboned basket you bought it;
 - According to mood, in the beribboned basket, on the sofa, in the laundry hamper, on top of the television, or on your stomach;
 - On your pillow or, in particularly decadent moods, directly on your face;
 - Directly in the middle of your bed, hogging the blankets.
- When you feel lonely or blue, your cat:
 - Somehow always knows, and comes to comfort you, climbing into your lap and licking your face;
 - Somehow always knows, and sits quietly beside you on the sofa, allowing itself to be stroked for hours;
 - Somehow always knows, and runs away and hides until you've come to your senses again;
 - Somehow always knows, and slips something like Terms of Endearment into the VCR, while it shreds every Kleenex in the house, then sits in the rocking chair and sneers at you.
- When you spend a quiet evening at home, watching television, your cat:
 - Sits by your side, ignoring the show and staring lovingly into your face;
 - Curls up in your lap and purrs;
 - Stalks imaginary mice about the living room, knocking things over at all the most interesting points in the programme;
 - Switches over to Matlock when you aren't looking.
- When you call your cat, it:
 - Comes immediately at the sound of its name;
 - Takes its own sweet time about it, following the most circuitous route it can devise, but usually shows up eventually;
 - Can take up to two hours to put in a guest appearance, but does so about half the time, particularly if it's close to dinner;
 - Submits your picture to America's Funniest People.
- Your cat's toilet habits are:
 - Exemplary. It almost never misses and, on the rare occasions when it does, it's thoroughly ashamed of itself;
 - Very good. It only disgraces itself when you've forgotten to clean its box;
 - Fairly good. It sometimes has accidents, and, at times, disgraces itself on purpose—and your jacket—when you have not quite lived up to its expectations;
 - Shaky. It seems to have a certain amount of difficulty telling the difference between its litter box and the Persian rug.
- When guests come over, your cat:
 - Greets them all so enthusiastically that sometimes you have to put it in another room in order to calm things down;
 - Studies the guests in a friendly but cautious manner, finally singling out one or two from whom to demand attention;

(continued next page)



SNIDE CRITIC REVIEWS

J.P. MORGAN

- c. Studies the guests suspiciously from under a piece of furniture, finally singling out the one person in the room who really dislikes cats, and sitting in his or her lap;
 - d. Monopolizes the conversation with extremely boring stories, and eats all the roumaki.
9. When your cat becomes ill, it:
- a. Wants your undivided attention and sympathy, cuddling in your lap and taking its medicine unenthusiastically but quietly;
 - b. Prefers to be by itself for the most part, but welcomes a friendly or encouraging word from you now and then, struggles somewhat against its medicine but finally takes it;
 - c. Would rather be left strictly alone until it feels better, usually must be wrapped in a towel or otherwise restrained before it will swallow its medicine;
 - d. Hangs around the bedroom feeling sorry for itself for days after you know it's cured, strews Kleenex all over the house, drives you crazy ringing its little request bell, and refuses to take its medicine unless you put it in applesauce and promise it chocolate milk afterwards.
10. If you attempt to introduce a new kitten to the household, your cat:
- a. Accepts it happily, immediately becoming the new arrival's playmate and foster parent;
 - b. Is at first aloof and rather hurt, but within three days you see the two of them cuddling together;
 - c. Hisses at the new arrival, and has its nose out of joint for at least a week, but eventually learns to live in peace with its companion;
 - d. Bides its time, until one day you return home to find nothing left of the kitten but its flea collar and a note demanding four cases of Whiskas in ransom.

Give yourself one point for every "a" answer, three points for every "b" answer, five points for every "c" answer, and ten points for every "d" answer.

Your cat's score and what it means:

If you scored 10-20 points: I hate to be the one to tell you this, but what you have here is not a cat. What you have here is a dog. Call your veterinary clinic and have them adjust their records accordingly.

21-40 points: You are extremely fortunate. You have somehow acquired, probably through no conscious effort on your part, what is known in zoological circles as a Nice Cat. The seldom-seen Nice Cat differs from its more common brethren in that it has made a wholesome adjustment to living with and among what is, to it, an alien species, and perhaps has even gotten to like it. The Nice Cat is not only willing to make allowances and compromises in order to maintain a symbiotic relationship with the peculiar—and, to its way of thinking, inferior—human race, it has come to regard us with a benevolent and almost parental air. Cherish and rejoice in your Nice Cat—you will probably never see its like again.

41-75 points: Stop worrying. This is a Perfectly Normal Cat. Sneaky, sly, demanding, condescending, selfish, nasty, too smart for your own good—simply relax, learn to deal with it, and thank whatever gods may be that the Perfectly Normal Cat does not have opposable thumbs. Yet.

75-100 points: Again, this is not a cat. This is either a roommate, a spouse, or your mother, depending on circumstances. Escape, escape while there's still time.

Now that you have determined the personality of your cat or cats, you are ready to go on and lead a happy, fulfilling and satisfying life with it or them, provided you do not become too picky about the condition of that black velvet sofa you so unthinkingly purchased. And in between each separate joy, you may pass the time by answering the telephone and, perhaps, contributing your bit to the world's store of opinion-oriented knowledge. In fact, my telephone is ringing even as we speak, and I just know I'm going to have to look back on all my receipts and somehow figure out what CDs I've purchased in the last five years. I just know it.

(Events cont'd from page 2)

- DECEMBER 8 - Jim Morrison (b. 1943); J. Thurber (b.1894)
DECEMBER 9 - John Malkovich (37); John Milton (b. 1608)
DECEMBER 10 - Human Rights Day; Emily Dickinson (b.1830)
DECEMBER 13 - STEVE CHAPUT (40)
DECEMBER 14 - Spike Jones (b.1911); Nostradamus (b.1503)
DECEMBER 15 - Bill of Rights Day; Approximate Release Date of Final Issue of INSIDE JOKE
DECEMBER 16 - Beethoven (b. 1770); Philip K. Dick (b. 1928); Arthur C. Clarke (73)
DECEMBER 17 - Saturnalia; Eugene Levy (44)
DECEMBER 18 - Ramsey Clark (63); Leonard Maltin (40); Steven Spielberg (43); Ossie Davis (73)
DECEMBER 19 - Phil Ochs (b. 1940)
DECEMBER 21 - Jane Fonda (53); Paul Winchell (68)
DECEMBER 25 - Cab Calloway (83); Rod Serling (b. 1924); Humphrey Bogart (b. 1899); Jesus???
DECEMBER 26 - Kwanzaa; Boxing Day; Steve Allen (69)
DECEMBER 30 - Bo Diddley (62); Tracey Ullman (31); Michael Nesmith (48)
DECEMBER 31 - Odette (60); End of 1990, at last!

Ah, yes, it's fall...the trees are changing color, the wee little bugs are dying, and birds fly to their southern condos, and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles has already been dumped on the video market. Is fall your favorite season, too? Perhaps the entertainment cartels will like it better than this past summer: The Summer of the Non-Blockbuster. Dick Tracy did okay, but was far from a smash; Robocop 2 kept lots of paying customers away from the theatres; Darkman did not wow them; Exorcist III, haw, haw, haw...and let us not forget rehased TV product such as The Jetsons or DuckTales. What's wrong here? Are people getting tired of movies that are naught but special effects reels? "Ah, it's nothing special, let's wait for it to show up on cable." Cable or tape, that seems to be more and more frequently the case: recall, gentle reader, how they shoveled (appropriate word) Batman into the stores last Christmas season? The higher-ups at WB figured, quite correctly no doubt, that if they didn't get it out that Christmas, they'd never rack up the sales - they were in such a rush, they didn't even bother putting scramble-signals on the tapes to prevent copying (how careless of them!). I dunno, though - some time ago the Snide Critic expressed hope that the masses would soon demand better entertainment, i.e., movies that don't keep reminding the audience that they're only watching a movie...but the corporados have kept right on with glossy, boring poop. The life of a Snide Critic is a hard one (=sigh=). Heck, let's review some film...

The Reptile (1966) - An explorer's daughter is cursed with were-snake transformations because he delved too deeply into the secrets of an evil Malayan snake-worshipping sect. She sheds her skin (off-camera), leaves nasty blackened bites on victims, etc. Yours truly wanted to see this film for a long time after seeing pictures of the monster in magazines...kind of a disappointment that it turned out so dull: too much running around, not enough of the creature, silly ending with kitten, y'know? Eh.

Double Indemnity (1944) - Fred MacMurray is an insurance salesman who gets seduced by Barbara Stanwyck into killing her husband for the insurance money. They work out an elaborate plot, with Fred imitating hubby with crutches and cast, but things go wrong as his boss (Edward G. Robinson) digs deeper. This is rightfully known as one of the great examples of *film noir*, but after years of Flubber and My Three Sons it sure seems weird to see MacMurray as a cool, match-flicking ladykiller. But this was made before all the TV stuff; director Billy Wilder said, "Fred really didn't want to do Indemnity. He was afraid of what it would do to his image. Eleven other actors turned it down, and yet it brought Fred the best notices of his career. He was talked about as being a real actor." And no wonder, with a film like this!

From Russia With Love (1964) - One of the "real" James Bond films, made back when they took them seriously. With Connery, of course. This is the one with the nasty dried-up Rosa Klebb (Lotte Lenya) with poisoned knife in her shoe. Robert Shaw is a specially recruited killer who tells Bond to kiss his shoe. And Bond's "special" briefcase. Who's playing Bond now? Some weasly-looking guy, I dunno.

Oh dear, I seem to have run out of film to review. Does this column look kind of short to you? Well, that's 'cause it is. I'm writing this late at night, way behind deadline, I gotta go to my (huh) "real" job in the morning, so TOO BAD! Yaaaaah! I was gonna go into the War Against Imagination and everything, but let's save that for the next issue--the last issue of INSIDE JOKE. Okay? Maybe Elayne will print this in bigger type so it looks like the Snide Critic worked at it more than he did. Oh well...

A Dip in the Plasma Pool

by Dorian Tenore-Bartilucci

FLOPJACKS

When I was growing up, pancakes weren't just a favorite food, they were a way of life. A carbohydrate fiend, I relished any meal of which bread and its friends and relations were a part. This made breakfast my favorite meal hands-down, with its choices of hot cereal, cold cereal (often festooned with fruit and/or marshmallows and other brightly-hued synthetic doodads), toast, English muffins, biscuits, French toast, waffles and of course, hotcakes. My working mother always made enough batter on Sunday night to last over the week, and on school mornings all she had to do was heat the griddle, pour and flip. So now you understand why I go out of my way to find good pancake restaurants whenever hubby Vinnie and I decide we're flush enough to have breakfast out. After this, you may also understand my frustration with my latest pancake house experience.

It all began one evening in Greenwich Village. We were scouting dining-out locations with a group of friends and settled on a place none of us had tried, the Village Pancake House at University Place near Waverly Place. The blurb on the awning made much of its dazzling array of pancakes, and the menu confirmed it with listings of over 50 different recipes for pancakes, crepes, waffles -- just about any flat edible substance made from grains except Communion wafers, with ingredients ranging from fruit to chocolate to venison (honest!). Well, didn't my eyes just light up! With few exceptions, the nine of us each ordered a different pancake dish.

When our orders arrived, we were flabbergasted to see stacks of flapjacks a good nine to ten inches in diameter. Each pancake was stuffed with whatever special ingredient had been hawked on the menu: one had herbs and cornmeal, one had good old reliable blueberries, mine had white chocolate slivers and cherries. We could've paired off and shared plates without anyone feeling less than full -- indeed, we had enough to share our orders with half the homeless people in New York.

There was only one obstacle to pure pancake bliss: the batter. This, of course, is like saying the only thing you didn't enjoy about your date was the company. The fillings were fine (except the cherries in mine -- no lewd remarks from the Peanut Gallery, please -- which turned out to be brandied almost to the point of being pickled. Luckily nobody held a lighted match near my plate, or it would've been Curtains, Mugsy), but the pancakes proper were so heavy and dry, it was like swallowing anvils. Instead of using cement shoes, all a mobster need do is feed an intended victim the Village Pancake House's pancakes before tossing the poor slob into the East River. Disappointed, we connoisseurs wrote this pancake house off as just another Yuppie eatery failing to do what the good old suburban IHOP had been accomplishing for years, and admired the pastel '50s decor and the framed comic book art near the rest rooms as we awaited our checks.

That was the end of the story until the day I spied an odd little article on page 1 of *The Wall Street Journal* at work. (In fact, all I ever read in the *Journal* are the show-biz articles and the pieces starting in Column 4 of the front page, since this is where they put their more lighthearted, off-the-wall stories, presumably to give all those CFOs a breather from all those dire business and stock predictions.) I forget the witty headline, but the story recounted the feud between two New York City restaurants, the Royal Canadian Pancake House and -- well, whaddaya know -- the Village Pancake House!

The Royal Canadian had opened first, to a flurry of rave reviews from paying customers and paid critics alike. Their specialty: Canadian-style pancakes -- close to 75 different recipes of hotcakes, ovenscakes, crepes, waffles, say when --

each of them around 10 inches in diameter. Sound familiar? The owner of the Royal Canadian thought so as well when, a while after the cook had quit, regular customers started remarking about how the RC's new place in Greenwich Village wasn't as good. The owner's response: "What new place?" Seems that the former cook had made off with the RC's signature recipes and flavor combinations, like white chocolate and almonds, herbs and cornmeal, etc., and had opened the VPC. A wacky legal battle worthy of *Night Court* ensued, with the Royal Canadian winning and the Village Pancake House grudgingly agreeing to submit to surprise inspections in which the pancakes would be measured (to make sure they were smaller than the RC's patented 10 inches) and the recipe books checked.

The next time Vinnie and I found ourselves in the city at a suitably early hour, we made our way through the downtown labyrinth leading to 145 Hudson Street (off Beach Street), home of the Royal Canadian Pancake House. A small but cheery, *bric-a-brac*-sprinkled place with a demure little white sign hanging out front, it had a wide-ranging menu startlingly similar to those we'd seen at its Village rival. Like the other place, the prices started with sixes and sevens, along with a \$3 sharing charge. "These better be darn good," muttered Vinnie suspiciously after we'd given our orders -- plain buttermilk pancakes for Vin', Medicine Hat pancakes with coconut, bananas and pineapple chunks for me -- to our pleasant, Cockney-accented (not an "Eh?" to be heard) waiter.

When the waiter returned 15 minutes later, he was balancing two plates, each of which was large enough to serve a turkey on. Each order consisted of three pancakes -- but what pancakes! Not only were they the promised 10 inches in diameter (you could swaddle a baby in these things, okay?), but each was nearly half an inch thick!! We were too busy staring to eat at first, much to the gentle amusement of our waiter, but we finally did, and we were glad. The difference between the RC and the Village upstart was in the delicious taste and, equally important, the texture: so light and fluffy I half-expected the flapjacks to float away like so many magic carpets. Each of us could only get through one pancake apiece -- we took the rest home and breakfasted happily off them for the rest of the week.

Sounds like this story had a happy ending for this pancake lover, right? Almost. The epilogue occurred a few weeks ago, when Vinnie and I excitedly dragged *L's* own Elayne and Steve (whaddaya mean, "Elayne and Steve who?") to this culinary discovery of ours one evening. Shortly after we were seated, Steve felt an itch on his arm. On closer inspection, it turned out to be caused by a living creature -- the tiniest of roaches. Steve kept his cool until his eyes traveled to a spot behind us...and then a spot on the ceiling... Suffice to say, the clean, perky place we'd fallen in love with had become populated with roaches of various shapes and sizes. Roaches who weren't shy about cavorting about in the light, where diners could see them and take action. Roaches who, honest to goodness, neither of us Bartiluccis recalled seeing on our first visit (nor had we tasted anything unusually crunchy in our food). Elayne and Steve came down with an understandable case of the willies, and by then Vinnie and I weren't feeling too hungry either. It was with heavy hearts that we left the Royal Canadian, and it was without the slightest hint of surprise or distress that the hostess received our blunt explanation of the reason we were departing.

Could the Village Pancake House have commissioned a roach wrangler to wreak sabotage? Had we been too busy stuffing ourselves the first time to notice little creatures underfoot and overhead? Who knows? But if you're a rough, tough, two-fisted pancake lover, you may want to try the Royal Canadian anyway. If they've cleaned up their act, let me know, willya? I'd love to give them another chance.

WELL, HELLO!

I've tried and tried to get my column to Elayne, but postal authorities don't seem to be cooperating. So, in case it's an omen, you won't be reading my Russian Spy tale. It's really good, mind you, and I know you'd have enjoyed it, but three strikes, you're out, and I'll admit defeat.

What I have to offer you instead is based on a true incident that happened on Sunday, October 7, 1990.

Before I begin, however, I thought I'd catch you up on what's been going on in my life. As most of you know by now, I have moved to Beaver Creek (what a name), Ohio. The kids and I moved here after we left the God of Ohio in June (the 26th, to be precise). We're temporarily residing with my parents (31 years old and back home with Mommy and Daddy, god help me), and plan on eventually moving to Yellow Springs, which is this laid-back little town where the free-thinking left is the majority and everyone is accepted. Yellow Springs is, by the way, the home of Antioch University. Tie-die is still "in," as are peace symbols, political demonstrations and protests—but everything is done quietly because everyone's too mellow to get too worked up these days. We're talking about a town where the mayor is a female senior citizen, the chief of police is a black man and the student-teacher ratio is 16 to 1. The paper is a weekly, the TV station is run by the people, and if you want vitamins you can get them at the newspaper office (they sell 'em on the side).

Anyhow, back to the past:

I was fired from my job at the Domestic Violence Shelter on June 22nd for being involved with my lover, which had absolutely nothing to do with my job performance, and which I probably should've fought but didn't.

Lover moved to the area, too (Fairborn, to be precise), and the kids, incidentally, are very nearly as fond of Lover as I am. (For some strange reason, though, the God of Ohio isn't too kindly disposed to Lover—he wants us back and can't seem to understand that we won't ever, ever come back.)

I took the job which you'll be reading about shortly to hold me over till I found a "real job" paying enough to live on (and get the hell outta my parents' house). Lover is likewise employed, and although we want to be together as one big happy family, we've resigned ourselves to waiting. I can't afford a divorce and the God of Ohio is still trying to get us back, so he won't pay, either. The snot. I wish he'd meet a nice woman—or man—or whatever—and give us up.

So there, in a nutshell, it is.

And now, for your reading pleasure:

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

(Or, WHY ME, LORD?)

by Kathy Helms-Stadalsky

Picture this: you work in a grocery store as a store detective, busting shoplifters. You are an adult female, separated from your husband, with three kids to raise and a lover living across town.

In the course of your work, you stumble across a rather curious internal theft ring. While trying to determine exactly who all is involved in said theft ring, you are directed to clock out one evening and go hide out behind the building to watch the back door and dumpster area for a couple of hours.

Feeling kinda apprehensive, you ask your lover to accompany you so you won't be alone.

After making sure the person you suspect is the ringleader of the deal knows you've left for the night, you get in your car and drive off. You park your car across town and then return to the store in your lover's car.

You plant yourselves behind the building, armed with mixed nuts, creme soda, pudding and cigarettes. You're sitting there, watching the building, and a cop cruises by. You think he'll stop to question you and find out exactly what the hell you're doing sitting behind a grocery store late at night, but he doesn't.

A few minutes later, a car cruises by, really slowly, and parks at the side of the building. The driver gets out and stands by his car, doing nothing. He seems to be staring at the fire door. You keep an eye on him, then decide to drive by him to get his plate number. He gets in the car and takes off like a bat outta hell, but you've got his plate number so no big deal.

You go back to the rear of the building and continue pigging

TO HALLOWEEN

by Richard Millard

It's a time full of wonder and fantasy
With a keen sense of spirits about
A world full of pumpkins with faces
Grinning wide as their orangeness beams out
Just listen, my friend, to the wind's eerie song
Watch as shadows of dark change their shapes
And believe that you really see witches go by,
Snare a glimpse of tall figures in capes
So here's to it all, with a moon full aglow
Shining down on this magical scene
Take to heart every thrill, every moment of fun,
On this glorious night, Halloween

out. A few minutes later, headlights approach, but don't come all the way around the building. You haven't got anything better to do, so you cruise up around the side of the building to see who it is. It's just a cop, so you do a U-turn and return to the rear of the building.

Now, here's where you'll have to use your imagination:

Assume, for a moment, that the cop has decided you are suspicious. He thinks, "A-ha! Stupid Criminals!", so he drives around to the back of the building, shining his lights on you, does a U-turn and parks behind you with his spotlight on you and his lights flashing.

You're a bit peeved, because if anything is going to go down, he's going to blow it for you. You want to get out and go back to him and say, "Hey asswipe, you're blowing my stakeout!", but lover persuades you to remain in the car so as not to frighten Silly Cop into thinking that Stupid Criminal is going to come and shoot him or something.

So you wait. And Silly Cop does nothing. Finally, a second Silly Cop comes around the building. (Can you just imagine the radio communications that must've occurred throughout? "Okay, this is #32, they're here, I'm behind 'em." "32, this is 51, I'll wait out in front in case they try to make a break for it!" They wait. Stupid Criminals stay put. Finally, "Uhh, 51, this is 32. They're just sitting here! Maybe you should come on back?" "Ooh-kay, 32.")

Second Silly Cop comes back, pulls in front of Stupid Criminals' car, blocking them in, and then (figure this one out!) goes around Stupid Criminals' car, does a U-turn, and parks behind first Silly Cop!!! ("Okay, 32, we got 'em now! We're behind 'em!")

Both Silly Cops get out of cars and Stupid Criminals still just sit there. They could, of course, immediately drive off, but they don't.

Silly Cop #1: "Put your hands behind the dash and don't move!" Stupid Criminal #2 (me): "I beg your pardon?"

Silly cop repeats his request. Stupid Criminal #2 says, "I don't believe this shit!" and complies with Silly Cop's directive.

Silly Cop shines his flashlight into Stupid Criminals' faces and asks for ID. Stupid Criminal #1 is forced to admit Stupid Criminal left home without it.

Stupid Criminal #2 suddenly realizes that Silly Cop just took a statement from her the other day regarding an incident in the store. Stupid Criminal #2 is now thoroughly pissed. Stupid Criminal #2 says, "Will you just look at who I am? I am the store detective! I just talked to you on Friday! Here's my badge. I am staking out that dumpster and back door because we're losing a lot of stuff through the door!"

Silly Cop whines, "Well, look at it from our point of view!" (Stupid Criminal mutters under her breath about Silly Cop's point of view, but doesn't really respond.)

Then, instead of bowing out gracefully, Silly Cop decides to harass Lover for not having ID. Silly Cop verifies Lover's identity, makes small talk about if Stupid Criminal is making overtime pay for this job, etc., cautions Stupid Criminal to call Silly Cops in the future and let them know when Stupid Criminal will be doing something like this, and then returns to his vehicle.

And sits where, copying down Lover's bumper stickers. ("QUESTION AUTHORITY" "LIVE SIMPLY...THAT OTHERS MAY SIMPLY LIVE" "A WOMAN WITHOUT A MAN IS LIKE A FISH WITHOUT A BICYCLE" "MINDS ARE LIKE PARACHUTES—THEY ONLY FUNCTION WHEN OPEN" "HOMOPHOBIA IS A SOCIAL DISEASE" "Δ+ SILENCE=DEATH Δ+ ACTION=LIFE" and "WOMEN MAKE GREAT LEADERS, YOU'RE FOLLOWING ONE.")

Silly Cops finally leave, and about 10 minutes later Stupid Criminals do, too.

Lover takes you to your car, you kiss goodbye, Lover informs you this is gonna cost you a beer and you leave.

As you exit the parking lot, you pass the two Silly Cops. One follows Lover, the other follows you, no doubt comparing your bumper stickers to Lover's. ("ARE YOU WILLING TO DIE FOR EXXON?" "HOMOPHOBIA IS A SOCIAL DISEASE" "VISUALIZE WORLD PEACE" "LOBOTOMIES FOR REPUBLICANS—IT'S THE LAW!" "WOMEN ARE GREAT LEADERS, YOU'RE FOLLOWING ONE" "YOU CANNOT SIMULTANEOUSLY PREVENT AND PREPARE FOR WAR" "A MIND IS LIKE A PARACHUTE—IT ONLY FUNCTIONS WHEN OPEN" "A WOMAN WITHOUT A MAN IS LIKE A FISH WITHOUT A BICYCLE" and "LIVE SIMPLY...THAT OTHERS MAY SIMPLY LIVE.")

Silly Cop #1 follows Lover all the way home, while Silly Cop #2 follows you out of the city limits, then turns off.

So tell me, friends:

- A) You feel secure, knowing your safety is in the hands of these men in blue?
- B) Did I mention that Lover is a woman?
- C) Do you think I'll ever break the internal theft ring?
- D) Do you think they've got us pegged as Lesbians?

POSTSCRIPT:

After I'd begun this column, but before I got it sent out, I landed a job in Yellow Springs. I start after my notice is up at the Kash 'n' Karry. I'll be working at King's Yards Goods on King's Court in Yellow Springs. (All of the businesses on King's Court are either solely or mostly owned by women.)

For those of you interested, "Lover" is Pamela-J. Huvler, 25 years old (robbing what cradle?), sports a Sinead O'Connor-ish hairdo and has a great tush. She makes me extremely happy and I finally feel "right" with myself.

Those wishing to may contact me (or send copious amounts of cash and/or marijuana) at: 3606 Eastern Drive, Beavercreek, OH 45432-2208, phone 513/429-1500. See you next issue!

MALLED

by Larry Stolte

The day after Thanksgiving, everyone in the U.S. is required to attend the shopping mall of choice. If a citizen doesn't make a choice, one will be appointed him/her by spouse. This ritual kicks off the second half of the Christmas shopping season. It used to kick off the beginning of the Christmas shopping season, but the season gets an earlier starting date every year. A few years back it was Veteran's Day, one year later it was Charlie Manson's birthday, then Halloween. This year, the 4th of July kicks off the Christmas season. Quite portentous, really; soon the Christmas season will be about as long as the NBA season.

This day also spawns the only time of year preschool children and 8-year-old future defense contractors are encouraged to sit in the lap of a strange man who dresses funny, drinks heavily, chuckles, and offers kids candy. If you go around in a red suit and offer kids candy to sit on your lap and tell you how good they are in, say, March, rest assured that you're going to do time.

To test the depths of your holiday spirit, the mall is filled with sleepwalking nose tackles—Woodstock with a roof, as it were. The confusion is such that if you yelled "fire," the place could only get more organized. But that is not unique to this Friday; the mall is like this every day of the year.

To get to a mall, you merely leave home and drive for ten minutes in any direction. This is the beauty of shopping malls; no American domicile is more than ten minutes away from four malls. Enter the mall parking lot, the only place where people are actually encouraged to drink and drive so they remain calm. You can either participate in the demolition derby for the close spots or drive to the Siberian region of the lot, which is farther away from the mall entrance than your house is. There are usually animal signs on top of poles that are used to designate which lot your car is in (yours will be in the Eohippus lot). This way, if you forget where your car is, you will remember that you also forgot which animal lot your car was in.

No noise is good noise, but inside the mall the zombie cocktail party is rife with discussions by decibel. Most of them come from debutante aspirants—teenaged girls who never seem to exercise their right to remain silent. For them, the mall is just like Disneyland in July. For grownups, the mall is more like Disneyland in July.

The bimbellas are nibbling on mall treats such as Gyros, deep dish pizza slices, Orange Julius, Lemon Caligula, Greek-style chicken, lambasted chicken, tarred and feathered chicken, barbecued rat ribs—all inedibles that can be made with no preservatives or food added.

These gastronomic enigmas aren't the only things you smell in a mall. Everybody in the place has had to trudge through Sears, Woolworths, Wards, Penneys or other large department stores to get into the mall. This means they also passed the perfume and cologne section of the emporium. People can't resist trying on jism with names like Chanel, Musk, Orgasm, Twink, Eau de Wayne Gretzky and Babooshka. The more expensive stuff is cut with soda water. Problem is, shoppers use this stuff like they're hosing down the Pentagon. Passers-by get caught in the vapor trail and collect their own cloud. Anyway, all these smells collide out in the mall and end up like one big cheap booze or fermented Windex odor. Each person who wafts out of the promenade could be corked, stamped with a date and sold for \$1.29 at the Liquor Barn.

Malls are also the only places that in-person surveys are taken any more. Ostensibly, these interviews are marketing surveys where pollsters learn that chocolate is everyone's favorite color and type A personalities are more likely to suffer from type B people. Survey-takers are generally avoided, however, because most persons realize any information they extract from you is sold to the CIA and can haunt you in later years.

The survey-takers lie in wait like jungle cats with clipboards ready to pounce on unsuspecting shoppers in due time. When one of the herd spots the clipboard just beyond the stanchion joining THE GAP, he/she innately shrieks out a cry of warning to the others that sounds just like, "Eek. A survey! Disperse!"

The chase is on and invariably ends when the weak and sickly member of the shoppers is caught and forced to answer questions which are designed to strike everyone but the CIA with total ambivalence.

There are two types of music that can be heard—make that, "can't not be heard"—at a mall. The first is Christmas music, which is played only during the magical season in which we celebrate the birth of the baby shopper. After listening to this music for a few minutes, you get into a festive giving mood. After listening to the same three Christmas songs for a few hours, you get into a festive second-degree murder mood.

The second type of music is coming from the organ place. This place doesn't sell human organs, of course. That would be silly. It sells the musical instrument organs. That, of course, is even sillier. Who's playing the organ? Al Stewart? A member of Superturp? No, they're much too rich and cool. They are exempt from malls.

No, the musician is a guy wearing a sports jacket on which you could play checkers, chess, and parcheesi—all at the same time. You'd like to see him donate his organ to his favorite charity, providing his favorite charity is somewhere in the Third World. But he plays with inspiration, perhaps obsession, like a man who



just paid large sums of money for an item larger than his Hyundai but with no wheels, and he has to move it from the second floor of the mall, down the escalator, out past the Salvation Army, and to the Eohippus lot.

Malls come in all sizes, but only one shape—penta-hexadecahedraWEEDBEGON. This makes it virtually impossible to find the store for which you're looking. You must go to a mall directory. This gives you an aerial view of the mall, and lets you know what a penta-hexadecahedraWEEDBEGON is.

The first thing you will see on this map is the YOU ARE HERE arrow. The shop you need to find is about two miles away. You walk two miles, You find a directory. The first thing you notice is the YOU ARE HERE arrow. But somewhere you missed a turn; you walked down the hypotenuse instead of the tangent. The shop for which you are looking is down another corridor about two miles away. You walk two miles, past the blind people and little old ladies answering surveys. You look at the directory. The first thing you see is the YOU ARE HERE arrow. This is very scary. Someone or something in the mall knows where you are at all times.

So the directory is functional is you want to find out where you are, but to find a shop—forget it. It's like Latin Scrabble. Even if you've been here hundreds of times and should know where everything is, they give the mall a quarter turn occasionally and you're utterly nonplussed.

By Congressional mandate, malls are not allowed to sell anything that anyone needs: groceries, gasoline, regular clothes. Though not very functional, this policy ensures some very interesting entrepreneurs. Check out the health food store with the All You Can Eat Wheat Bar. Need a pair of His & Hers Strait-jackets? No problem. Do you decorate your living room in Early Scavenger Hunt? We've got your couch. How about that strange pipe and tobacco shop? Some guy named Bud Light, who looks like he graduated with honors and sneers from an Ivy League school, stands behind the counter. He is selling a pipe to the Chairman of the Bored. And for that special barnyard animal in your life...

There's a store for pregnant seniors with large feet; software for user-sadistic computers; a state-of-the-art antique shop. And there's always that one establishment that sells punk rocker clothes to gay businessmen—sort of a clothing store for skinhead accountants with PMS envy. One hard and fast rule: Every other store must be a jewelry store.

You may eventually find the store for which you're looking, but you'll never find: 1) a clock, or 2) a restroom. This can be annoying if you need to meet someone or go to the bathroom, and is downright depressing if you need to meet someone to go to the bathroom.

Malls now contain such advanced architectural marvels as glass elevators, waterfalls, forests, ferris wheels, skating rinks, and Lenin's Tomb. Can indoor plumbing and toilets be far behind?

The lack of restrooms hits hardest the many mall employees. That is why the employment ads always say the same thing: "Must have cashier experience, be able to work weekends and holidays, and have bladders that can keep the Amazon in check." These poor people must go home at night and whiz like a bull moose at a kegger.

For those of us who can't hold water like a camel, the mall can be very uncomfortable at best. At worst, it can be like running the marathon on your tongue.

CAUTION: METAPHOR ALERT

But a mall is really what you make it. A home away from home, a hell away from hell, it is merely a metaphor for life. Or life is a metaphor for malls. Who knows?

Everyone takes up space (except your cousin Haystacks, who takes up two spaces). For most people, life is just a series of places to be kept. First, there's the womb, then nursery school, elementary school, junior high school, high school, college, work or jail (synonymous), the nursing home, and the casket. A mall fits in here somewhere as just another place to be kept. If only they had somewhere to keep your urine...

THE STORY
by
Prudence GARDNER

THE CRAMPING TRIP *Part Seven*

"Bunny! We've been looking all over for you! Wherever have you been?"

I've ventured far into chartreuse swamps in search of the elusive Playing Mantises."

"Did you find them?" Prudence asked. Her anger with Pink Bunny was forgotten for the moment. He had sparked her interest. Anyone who was anyone knew that Playing Mantises were just the best ever at checkers, and they were also supposed to be able to play a mean game of Hearts. Unfortunately, they were impossible to find. After that poker incident with the Tin Lions, where one got his head bitten off for not allowing his opponent to cheat, they collectively went into hiding.

"No, I had a run-in with some Peanutbutter Zombies..."

"Ohh! Peanutbutter Zombies!" Prudence said, acting like she had heard of them.

"So, I decided I'd better come back and enjoy this, uh, camping experience."

"I thought you didn't want to come."

"What? I wouldn't miss it for the world!" He paused, looked around at his unfamiliar surroundings. "Say, you got anything to eat in this dump?"

Pink Bunny stomped his foot out of impatience. Here he had been standing for at least a zillion minutes, or maybe five, and Prudence didn't think to offer him food or drink. "She makes for a lousy hostess," he mused.

"I think there's some candy left, but Ian may have already finished it all." She lunged over her suitcase and started rummaging around in a pile next to a now-sleeping Ian.

"Aren't there any leftovers from dinner?"

"No, we haven't eaten yet."

"It's after midnight..."

"No, it's only ten-thirty. Dinner will be soon. Look out there." She pointed a small, nail-bitten finger out the window. "See that fire? Soon it will be ready for Daddy to cook some Spaghettios or sumthin'. We would have eaten earlier, but with the rain Daddy's been having a hard time getting it started."

"Well, whaddaya wanna do until then? Wanna play Barbies?"

"Barbies" was their generic term for dolls. Prudence thought Pink Bunny was way cool for many reasons but she especially liked him because he was not too snotty to play Barbies and he never said things like "Only babies play Barbies." Only uncool people worry about looking cool; cool people play Barbies, was Prudence's philosophy.

"Can't. Can't play Barbies."

"Why not?"

"No furniture."

"I thought you packed furniture. I saw you pack furniture."

"See that fire?"

"Yeah, so?"

"I packed kindling."

"Ohh." Pink Bunny patted Prudence's shoulder. He would have given her a hug but she was growing too big. She was still small compared to other kids her age. If she was the size of an average seven-year-old, it would have been years ago that he would have stopped being able to hug her rather than only

recently. Instead, he took a pink paw and smoothed some of her raven hair away from her dark eyes.

"What did I miss?"

"You only missed us searching all over the house for you. And Mummy and Daddy yelling at each other and me and Aunt Jenny and Grandma Ed and Ian. And Aunt Jenny yelling at Ian cos he ate all her Mallomars. And Mummy yelling at Ian for tracking the crumbs all over the carpet and at Aunt Jenny for having Mallomars in the first place, as we all know she's on a diet. And then Daddy yelling at us that we weren't going to get here until after dark because we spent a good part of the evening looking for you. You also missed him saying that the rain was going to stop, and his lie that he was taking away my Barbie furniture to give to some poor little girl who had no furniture for her Barbie. And Ian wet his pants."

"Is that all?"

"Oh yeah, Daddy gave me this neat book about this girl who wants to be a faerie princess. It's pretty cool."

"Is it a pop-up book?"

"I wish. But it does have neat pictures though." Prudence pulled out the book to show him.

At that moment a rain-sodden Patrick climbed into the van with a soggy pot of Spaghettios.

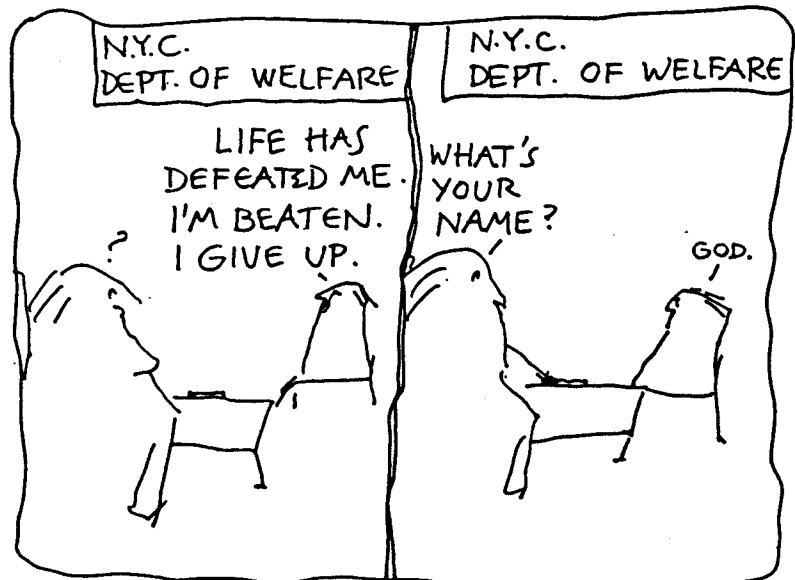
"Prudence," he said wearily, "wake your cousin."

Prudence abruptly stretched her leg, thus effectively placing a well-aimed kick on Ian's butt with her sneaker.

"Daddy, look who's here."

"Has he been in your suitcase the entire time?" Patrick's voice rose.

"No, of course not. He was fighting off Peanutbutter Zombies in the chartreuse swamp."



GUTTERAL SWELL OF MOUTHS

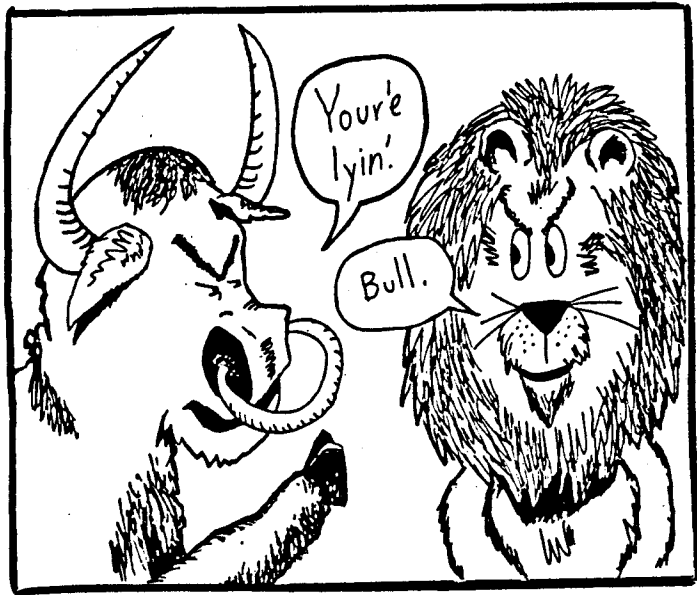
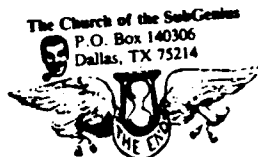
by Sigmund Weiss

I have seen past ages in guttural swell of mouths
spitting phrases with tortured dying laughs
culled from their monotonous brains
assing wisdom into rotten eggs.
Yet, when asleep, I dream of countless damsels
sweating my ego with their anxieties, and
crying to those damsel spirits
tearing my heart
my thoughts into a love staunch against their fears,
I too feed them my anxieties.
In this way love them all
on their own levels.



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LOOKING BACK AT THE FUTURE

by Steven F. Scharff

On Labor Day weekend this year, fellow IJ staffer Jed Martinez and I were driving down to his house on Long Island. On the interstate, I saw something off to the left that gave me a flash of recognition from my childhood.

It was the topographic globe at Flushing Meadow Corona Park, site of the 1939 and 1964 World's Fairs. On Monday of that week-end, after spending the previous two days touring about the various sites of Long Island, reading comic books and watching animated videocassettes, we backtracked to the site.

It seemed so strange. Here on this spot two major global events took place. During those years, this area was amass with people and dotted with exhibits from countries around the globe. Now, what little remained of those glorious events gave the park an atmosphere of a carefully manicured ghost town.

The Unisphere, a stainless steel topographic globe girded with bands of steel like a mammoth atom model, was surrounded by a fountain where, back at the 1939 fair, the Trilon and Perisphere once stood. Within walking distance to its left were the now derelict observation towers beside what remained of the New York State Pavilion of 1939, one of the few remnants of that near-mythic exhibition.

The open air circular structure provides an impressive echo, under the webwork of steel where banners once hung. The floor is a large-scale roadmap of the state of New York, provided by Texaco. Segments of the map have been destroyed by overly curious hands and feet, and now all of NYC and parts of Long Island are covered by cement.

The New York City Pavilion is now a museum and skating rink, a heliport outside the park is now a restaurant, and several statues stand amid the greenery. The walkways are marked with strangely eloquent signs; names like "Eisenhower Promenade" and "Court of the Astronauts" identify the now-empty walkways. And the two time capsules, buried deep in their chambers, patiently await the end of their 5,000-year sleep.

What did those two fairs accomplish? The '39 fair had a noble theme: "The Dawn of a New Day." Automation, streamlining, careful planning—all were things that the wealthy backers of the fair could be proud of. Yet reality reared its ugly head. World War II would bring about the end of the fair (that and failing attendance), and the symbols of the fair, the Trilon and Perisphere (the big white cone and sphere), would be scrapped for the war effort. Reputedly, the two would end up as battleship armour.

I was only two years old when my parents took me to the '64 fair, but when I tell them how much I remember of that event, they are astonished. How could I not forget that place? I remember walking down seemingly endless corridors and hallways. A historical presentation of some sort projected on overhead screens as we stood on the floor. Another presentation within a cubical plastic case atop a freestanding pedestal consisted of a prerecorded male narrator with timed appearances of plastic props symbolizing what was being spoken about (the whole thing reminded me of those old "Rock 'Em Sock 'Em Robots" games), and ended with a block marked

"THE END" on four sides popping out from the inside floor of the case.

I recall the strollers that were shaped like little red sports-cars, complete with a steering wheel so that their occupants (like me) would experience the illusion of driving a car (which I must admit confused me several years later; imagine me trying to remember whatever happened to that little red car I had when I was two).

But what truly knocked my socks off was a multimedia presentation on space travel. A part-live-action, part-animated film was projected on a screen below a full-size replica of a space capsule. In the part of the film that took place when the capsule was supposedly in orbit. The screen went blank, but the sound-track continued. Then the hatch of the capsule opened, and from inside the capsule came a figure, complete with spacesuit, tethered on an umbilical, and floated out over the heads of the astonished audience. The animated mannequin then floated back into the capsule, the hatch shut, and the film continued with re-entry and splashdown.

To this day I am amazed by the originality of that exhibit.

And now Jed and I stood on that same ground. As if nothing had happened there at all. The day before, we had driven past a shopping center with the store signs hanging from a steel arch, an arch that had once stood in that park and had borne the words "PEACE THROUGH UNDERSTANDING." It now says "ACME SUPERMARKETS."

I think back to those world's fairs and wonder if we've given up on the future—or, more accurately, betrayed it.

Case in point: The Hubble Space Telescope. All that planning, money and research. The years it spent on the ground. The great huzzahs from the scientific community with it being placed in orbit—only to discover that the mirror and lens were incompatible.

Such an embarrassment is inexcusable.

Our dreams of an orbiting space station, one that would be permanent... Now it is 1990, and only the Soviets are still sending people into space, but only to a small station that serves as little more than a cross between a lab and a cramped bunkhouse.

As for peace—need I say more? I remember the nations of the world appealing to the UN to "do something" in the wake of Iraq's conquest of Kuwait. If it were not so tragic, it would be comical. The Great Hope for Peace has its hands firmly tied behind its back, and acts as little more than a referee in hostile conflicts. And the concept of "international law" is without any grounds whatsoever.

A small but growing group of people called the World Government of World Servers, based in Washington, D.C., is brazenly attempting to set up a world government by issuing its members passports through the "World Service Authority" and using them for international travel. So far, five countries have officially (de jure) recognized the passports, and others have issued visas on them. Plans for a World Constitutional Convention in Christchurch, New Zealand, were stopped due to the NZ government officially rejecting WSA passports for entry visas. (WSA founder, ex-US WWII bomber pilot Garry Davis, started the WSA in Paris shortly after the war's end by taking his followers to a UN meeting, interrupting the activities and reading a manifesto denouncing the UN as ineffectual, saying that if they wouldn't start a world government he would organize one, and handed in his US passport at the US embassy, declaring himself a "citizen of the world.") Before his issuing WSA passports—and himself Passport #00000001—he had been arrested over 30 times for the crime of travelling over international boundaries without citizenship, and was recently "deported" from Japan to the US for the same reason.)

Is there still hope for homo sapiens? Or will we be superseded by someone else? Controversial futurist FM-2030 (yes, that's his name; it used to be F.M. Esfandiary) has written a book of self-tests entitled *Are You A Transhuman?* (published by Warner Books and ever so highly recommended). The object is to see how well you are equipped to face the future. On page 168 he mentions that the present "...is a myth."

(Force of habit may cause us to use the term. Just as we still say "sunset" though we know that the sun does not set.) There is only a past and a future. There is not much we can do about the past. We can do much about the future. We can help create it.

I think it was Einstein (please correct me if I'm wrong) who said that mankind is in the Atomic Age, but his mind is still in the Stone Age. I guess as long as we sit about cheering for sports teams, waging psychological games against one another, declaring war on other countries, and otherwise drawing lines between ourselves, we'll keep on running in a vicious cycle.

Returning to his book, FM says on page 107:

Imagine the blowup of a spacecraft during liftoff. Then imagine not taking the time to study the exact causes of the malfunction but turning right around and launching a duplicate spacecraft—with the same tragic results. Then another disastrous launching and another and another.

That is how we handle most of our personal/social/economic/political/international affairs.

Exobiologists talk of looking for signs of intelligence in the universe. We should be looking for signs of intelligence right here on this planet.

(For the curious, the World Service Authority is at 1012 14th St. NW, Suite 1106, Washington, D.C. 20005)

MasterMath Explains... MOVIES

by William G. Raley

Well, here we are at the next to last MasterMath article. For those of you expecting another discourse which rambles from topic to unrelated topic, good news: here it is.

AFTER HOURS -- a fine film, one for the whole family to enjoy (that is, if your family likes dark humour), and I'm not just saying that because there are two flighty, attractive blonde actresses in it (who happen to be flighty, attractive, and blonde in real life, but that's another story). Here's a list of trivia questions to consider while viewing this film:

- (1) Which characters are mentioned by name in the film, but are never seen?
- (2) How many taxis pass by while Marcy and Paul are in the coffee shop?
- (3) What's the phone number in Marcy's loft? It's not 243-3460. You can only see the full number while Paul's dialing.
- (4) Is there really a Joni Mitchell album that has "Chelsea Morning" and "I Don't Know Where I Stand" on consecutive tracks?
- (5) Why didn't my date like the film? What was her problem?

Now a list of noteworthy (but excusable) discrepancies in the film:

- (1) There is no Club Berlin at the corner of W. Broadway and Grand.
- (2) The building at 28 Howard St. is not a loft.
- (3) There is a loft at 51 Spring St., but it's not so large as described in the film (not large enough for three Toms to live in), and besides, it isn't the one in the film anyway.
- (4) Paul doesn't really get his hair cut at Club Berlin.
- (5) We can hear both ends of some phone conversations, but not others.

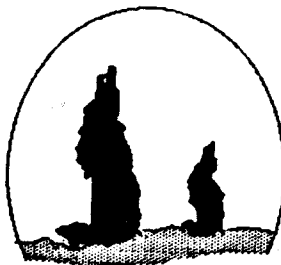
Now a list of (egad!) mistakes in the film:

- (1) While Julie does do a good job on Paul's portrait, it isn't exactly camera-ready art, and thus couldn't be used to produce the quality flyers she distributes.
- (2) After Neil and Pepe make off with Kikki's TV and sculpture, she explains to Paul she'd sold the TV to them for \$300. But later, when he's explaining things to the guy he met on the street, he says she sold them the sculpture.
- (3) When Kikki is doing the voice-over for the note she left for Paul, she says she and Horst went to Club Berlin for drinks. But what the note says is "went to Berlin ..."

TO LIVE AND DIE IN L.A. -- another fine film, and I'm not just saying that because it stars two Williams (OK, so it's a William and a Wilum, close enough). Also reason enough not to frequent the L.A. shipping district or downtown. A couple of observations: When Jimmy Hart is going to (or coming from, it's not clear) Rick Master's warehouse in Lancaster (from L.A., presumably), why is he shown going east on Irvine Center Dr., which is in Orange County (Saddleback Mtn. is clearly visible)? I think Johnny was much more in tune with what was going on than Ritchie, though he lacked initiative. Ritchie's pilferage of Rick's code book amounted to nothing; after all, how likely are two guys with a couple thousand MasterCard's to know where he prints. Johnny found out early on, but didn't go there till the end of the film. Actually, I thought Rick was the smartest of the whole bunch. He always knew who was doing what, though at the end, he was an idiot not to finish off Johnny while he had the chance.

DARKMAN -- a very good film, though not excellent; it's uneven in spots. While the character of Darkman is intriguing, memorable even, it's unclear how he covers up his deformities (and appears like his old self) given his current form factor. It's also unclear how he survived the explosion. It's also unclear why his makeshift lab has power. It's also unclear why he blows up his makeshift lab to waste the long-haired guy when all he had to do was shoot him with his own gun. It's also unclear why fall for the line about Robert G. Durant having kids. It's also unclear how his girlfriend could be so stupid as not to know the developer she confides in is a bad guy, or why she sleeps with him when all she needed was "comforting." Yet, it's clear this is a very good film.

NARROW MARGIN -- this is an excellent film. I saw it at the AMC theatre in Santa Monica with a 36-year-old (no, not Anni Ackner, though I pretended she was) blond producer. This theatre had one of those concave screens, and we were sitting on the fifth row, so it was like we were really in the action (the temperature was certainly reminiscent of British Columbia). And my date was suitably impressed that I guessed the identity of the third killer (she didn't). The action in this film was certainly intense, and entertaining, which is more than I can say for what happened afterwards.



HOWLING AT THE MOON BY MIKE DOBBS

I love American voices--real American voices. Not the homogenized voices of the television announcers, but the voices that sound like a party of the country, an ethnic group, or an era. I love American slang; not the current crop of short, meaningless grunts which denote a lack of imaginative speaking, but real thoughts, such as...

My grandmother called pancakes "liver patties" because "they'd stick to your ribs."

One of my father's favorite units of measurement is a "rat's ass;" a smaller unit is the "gnat's ass."

Southerners seem to have maintained their language heritage better than we Yankees. They refer to Coca-Cola as "Coke-Cola," for instance, and older people still call cola "dope," for obvious reasons.

Voices on television and radio are usually alike, but there are, thank God, exceptions:

Earl Scheib, The king of car pointing, spits his tag line out with an elongated rasp--"I'm Earlll Scheib and I'll paint your car for \$99.95..." I love it.

And what about Tom Carvel? I miss him. His commercials were ridiculous but they were sincere and real. You're buying ice cream from Tom and his franchisees, not a faceless corporation.

Joe Franklin: This guy is like George Jessel on speed. What a trip! Why is he on television? I don't know, but I'm glad he is, as he is also just too unpolished not to be truly sincere.

Edwin Newman: I miss him too, as his voice was one of a perpetual grumble. I met and interviewed him when I was in college and found him to be friendly, witty and sharp as a tack, but his manner on the air frequently seemed as though he were pissed off. A welcome change from the smarmy David Brinkley or the pompous Max Robinson.

Don Pardo has one of the silliest announcer's voices in the business. He always sounds like a self-parody, bless 'im. He's ten times more interesting than any other guy under the age of 35. All the classic announcers are old-timers whose pipes are now institutions: Bill Wendell of Late Night with David Letterman; Ernie Adams, who became famous with announcements on ABC for The Love Boat; and Jackson Beck, whose deep authoritative voice allows him a busy career of commercials and playing Bluto on years' worth of Popeye cartoons.

Finally, one has to mention the man with the oddest voice of all, Paul Harvey. This guy has got a look that is otherworldly. Just look at that forehead, and now watch the movie This Island Earth. See what I mean? His voice is raspy and sounds a little like Walter Winchell's, but it is his delivery which makes him...unique. He pauses with sometimes no discernable logic. He does sometimes use his pauses to highlight a point, but more often than not I think he has just lost his place. And he's the only broadcaster I know who regularly breaks himself up on the air. Some would call this unprofessional, but I call it fascinating.

My dream? To get Earl, Tom and Paul to do a little talk show gig. The airwaves would never be the same.

So, that's all for this time. Keep those cards and letters coming. Especially if you've got Jan Saithers's phone number. Be sure to stay tuned for the shocking revelation at the end of the next (and last) MasterMath article.

DRESSING FOR SUCCESS

by Susan Packie

Police officers and soldiers can be spotted easily because of their uniforms. Models are marked by pencil-thin bodies and giraffe height. Doctors wear stethoscopes and white coats. And judges can be identified by their black robes. Or can they?

Judge Whatsisname noted that the courthouse was unusually crowded as he hung up his robe in the cloakroom and headed out for lunch. He knew for sure the morning had been a three-ring circus in his courtroom. Some woman was suing her husband for pet abuse because he hadn't bathed her poodle, Poopsie, while she was visiting her mother. A high schooler was caught in the act of trying to get high on cough syrup. And a college student had the book thrown at him for impersonating a professor to gain entry to co-eds' dormitory rooms. *What was the world coming to?* he wondered.

While Judge Whatsisname was truly out to lunch, other judges were just beginning their work days, straggling into the courthouse, up to the cloakroom, and into their black robes. One took a particularly long time finding his robe. He looked as if he hadn't slept well the night before. Examining each robe carefully and, holding it up to him, he finally smiled contentedly and slipped one on. He checked his appearance in a full-length mirror before entering an adjacent courtroom.

"Hear ye, hear ye, the court is in session. All rise for Judge Whatsisname," the bailiff called out upon seeing the familiar black robe.

"Please be seated," the wearer of the robe intoned with more than a little boredom. "This panel has been summoned to my courtroom so a jury consisting of twelve men and women and two alternates can be selected. As the bailiff reads your number and name, please rise."

"Number twenty, Pearl Hubbard."

"Pearl Harbor?" the wearer of the black robe asked, a note of surprise in his voice. "Bailiff, did you say this woman's name was Pearl Harbor?"

"Pearl Hubbard, your honor."

"Younglady, I very much doubt your claim. I was at Pearl Harbor, and you don't resemble it in the least. I believe you are displaying a blatant contempt for this court. I can't permit that. Bailiff, take her away. We have cells for people who display blatant contempt for this court. Please summon the next potential juror before you leave, bailiff."

"Number thirteen, Arnold Benedict."

The wearer of the black robe groaned. "I can tell it's going to be another one of those days. The unlucky number, thirteen, and a traitor to his country wearing it."

"No no, your honor. My first name is Arnold, not my last name."

"The last shall be first, and the first shall be last. Or is it the other way around?"

"I wouldn't know, your honor."

"And a heretic on top of all that. Boy, am I glad your name rang a bell. Bailiff, would you..."

The bailiff, who had just returned from placing Pearl Hubbard/Harbor in the holding pen, knew almost immediately what he had to do. "I should take him away, too?"

"No, bailiff. Shoot him."

The remaining panel members let out a collective gasp. The bailiff did not hesitate in the execution of his duties. The wearer of the black robe surveyed the people in front of him.

"You - first row, second from the left. Are you chewing gum?"

~~First row second from the left swallowed hard, but didn't~~ succeed.

Tulsa Jack's Ad

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THE DEATH OF SOCRATES

"I sentence you to thirty days of hard labor. You - behind him. What are you doing with that tissue? Surely you're not going to..."

A sneeze shook the paintings off the walls.

"Plague! We're all going to die of the plague! Who sent you here on this terrorist mission? Off to quarantine until your hair turns gray and your teeth fall out!"

As suddenly as the bizarre session began, it ended. The wearer of the black robe rubbed his eyes as if he had been asleep. "This isn't what I came here to do at all. Let me try to remember - robe, courtroom, sentencing... Oh yes! I hereby pardon poor Lou S. Hands for the crime of impersonating a college professor to gain entry to co-eds' dormitory rooms. The panel is dismissed."

The bailiff jerked to attention. This was most improper! For the first time that day, he gave the wearer of the black robe a long, hard look. Why, this wasn't Judge Whatsisname at all! The face was familiar, but it wasn't the face that should have appeared inside the black robe. It was the face that just this morning had appeared inside prison garb!

Before he could say, "Half in the name of the law," the now-naked judge/convict had leapt over the jury box and was heading toward the door and freedom, followed closely by the court stenographer who, of course, had to continue recording anything the former wearer of the black robe might say. Pearl Hubbard/Harbor, the ghost of Arnold Benedict, the gum chewer and the sneezer materialized and set out in hot pursuit. Even the law-and-order bailiff joined in.

All any of them saw was a bearded ice cream man peddling his twenty-eight flavors from a cart outside the courthouse. The real Judge Whatsisname stopped to buy one on his way back from lunch. He wondered why in the world he had chosen such a thoroughly boring job. Nothing ever happened!

Zenarchy

STORIES

by Ho Chi Zen

OUR ENEMY, THE BUDDHA

Rinzai (Lin-chi) arrived at Bodhidharma's memorial pagoda. The master of the pagoda said to him: "Venerable sir, will you pay homage first to Buddha or first to Bodhidharma?" "I don't pay homage to either Buddha or Bodhidharma," said Rinzai. "Venerable sir, why are Buddha and Bodhidharma your enemies?" asked the master of the pagoda. Rinzai swung his sleeves and left. (From the RECORD OF RINZAI as quoted in Zen: Tradition & Transition by Kenneth Kraft, Grove Press, 1988)

ZEN AND THE ART OF ASTONISHMENT

Nakagawa Soen Rosh'i's first visit to the United States was in 1949. He arrived in San Francisco on April 8th, Shakyamuni Buddha's birthday by Japanese calculations. At a reception at the Theosophical Society library he told the story of Nangaku, the Chinese Zen master, who was asked by the Sixth Patriarch, Hui Neng, "Who are you?" According to Soen Rosh'i, "Nangaku was dumbfounded and could not answer. Nowadays, there is no one capable of being dumbfounded like Nangaku. Everyone knows everything and can answer any question."

His audience was not dumbfounded like Nangaku. Still, they were amazed by this tiny Japanese monk, who then reminded them that it was the two hundredth birthday of Wolfgang von Goethe. He went on to quote Faust, who lamented that his studies of philosophy, medicine, jurisprudence, and theology had made him "no wiser than before," and who concluded, "that we in truth can nothing know."

"This 'we in truth can nothing know,' or 'I don't know anything,'" explained Soen Rosh'i, "is exactly the point of Zen. We monks apply ourselves day after day, year after year, to the study of the 'Unthinkable.'"

Soen Rosh'i had acquired a reputation in Japan for tolerating the casual interest in Zen of Western students. Gentle and mischievous, he also acquired a more lasting reputation for eccentric behavior. Under his direction, retreats in New York ended with Beethoven symphonies. Occasionally he appeared wearing women's jewelry or masks. Once he arranged to have students bow at the doorway of his interview room before they could see that a pumpkin had been placed on the master's cushion.

(From Zen In America by Helen Tworkev, North Point Press, San Francisco, 1989)

SOMETHING TO SHOUT ABOUT

Shout for shout, shout for shout for shout—
that instant tells us if it's life or death!
Wicked devil, his ogre eyeballs
bright, bright as any sun or moon!

This poem, quoted by Burton Watson in "Zen Poetry" in Zen: Tradition & Transition, was written as an inscription—by Ikkyu—for a painting by Soga Dasoku of Rinzai.

CLASSIFIED INFORMATION

(Bernard) Glassman's abbot installation ceremony...took place on June 6, 1982. "Abbot Installation" is the prosaic translation of what the Japanese call *Shinsanshiki*—"ascending to the mountain." Although the incoming abbot said that Zen practice is "always a matter of ascending and descending at the same time," the ceremony called for Maezum'i Rosh'i to descend the mountain on the eve of June 5th, vacating the high seat for his dharma heir.

Maezum'i Rosh'i may have stayed away so as not to impose Japanese flavors, but for the Shinsanshiki and its 250 guests, among them a contingent of Soto priests who had flown in for the ceremony, the aromas of old Japan were in full force. Neither customary etiquette nor the Japanese accent on detail went unobserved by the incoming abbot. Special incense holders and flower arrangements were set out on newly constructed altars covered with silk brocade. Guests received gifts of books and sumi drawings wrapped in handmade silk-screened scarves and placed in white bags on which their names were written in calligraphic script.

This adherence to custom reflected Maezum'i Rosh'i's persistent concern for an orthodox and meticulous transmission of his lineage. "In the Soto sect there is a traditional study for dharma transmission..."

Tetsugen's opening remarks emphasized that although the Shinsanshiki might appear to be filled with things symbolic, there are no symbols. The heart of the Shinsanshiki is *jodo*, or "dharma combat," in which "dragons and elephants in this assembly" are urged to "contemplate the prime principle of reality" and invited to test the realization of the high priest. During the *jodo* a young monk rushed forward, banged his head three times against the altar, and asked, "How can I not bang into things like this?" Tetsugen replied, "Open your eyes." The monk banged his head three more times, with eyes wide open, and repeated the question. "Open your eyes," Tetsugen replied. "Sensei, if there is nothing at all," asked another man, who was wearing a gray robe over a pin-striped suit, "how did you find your abbot's job?" "I got it through the New York Times."

(From Zen In America)

I GO ON LIVING

On slopes
of Mount Kugami
holed up for winter—
day after day the snow
goes on falling
till trails show no sign
of a soul passing by
and no word comes
from people at home;
so I shut my gate
on the drifting world
and here with this one thread
of clear water from the crags
straight as the string
plucked by the carpenters of Hida
I keep myself alive
through another year
another today
I go on living. —Ryokan

(From Zen: Tradition & Transition, p. 122)

WARMING UP

"A Japanese Zen master was asked recently to comment on Zen's transmission to a new culture, as in its current transmission to the West. He raised one eyebrow and said, 'The first hundred years are the hardest.'" —Kenneth Kraft, Zen: Tradition & Transition

BURNING QUESTION

Agnostical Gnostic Paul Rydeen, publisher of FIELD TRIP (Box 207, Ft. Lyon, CO 81038-0207), wrote me to say: "Two Zen monks were arguing on the White House lawn. One said the flag was burning while the other said the fire was burning. Just then a Zen master walked by and said, 'Not flag; not fire: mind is burning.'"

Wax Ink

by Rory Houchens

STRAIGHT NO CHASER SOUNDTRACK (CBS)—Unlike the well-publicized "Round Midnight," "Bird" and "Let's Get Lost," Charlotte Zwerin's documentary about Thelonius Monk, **STRAIGHT NO CHASER**, appears to have been viewed by a very select few—I didn't even know such a movie existed until I saw the soundtrack. But if the celluloid hits the eye like the notes of this album hit the ear, it must surely be a neglected masterpiece. Consisting of homemade recordings, rehearsal tapes, solo piano pieces and live performances, **STRAIGHT NO CHASER** focuses on Monk's classic mid-'50s to late-'60s period. "Evidence" and "Epistrophy," recorded by Monk's Octet in Sweden 23 years ago, slide around angles and corners that are still hard to find on most musical maps. A rare recording of "Trinkle Trinkle" pairs Monk with John Coltrane when the legendary saxophonist was a member of Monk's Quartet. Also noteworthy are solo piano versions of "Don't Blame Me" and "Pannonica," and the Quartet's rendering of "Straight No Chaser" and "Round Midnight." Not to be missed!

MUSIC FOR FLUTE & HARP—Rampal/Nordmann (Sony Classical)—Though flutist Jean-Pierre Rampal is one of the world's finest musicians and a master of his craft, his "Boston Pops-style" of playing rarely sets off sparks. On this duo recording, however, his teaming with harpist Marielle Nordmann forces the blower to tighten his chops and flex some musical muscle. Goulash simmers on selections by Rossini, Beethoven, Donizetti and our old favorite Ravel. But promenade lightly around the cuts by Francois Petriti and Camille Saint-Saens. Pale at times, but you can still dance to it.

JETSONS: THE MOVIE (MCA)—Things you need to know: George Jetson looks ever more like Alan Thicke; Tiffany is Judy Jetson; "Jetsons Main Title" (the theme song) and "We're The Jetsons (Jetsons' Rap)" are included on this stellar slab. And, oddly enough, the track entitled "Mall Theme" doesn't feature Tiffany!! You figure it out.

THE CONTINUING SAGA OF DR. IGVANA

THE STORY SO FAR.

by Ken Burke

(MORE) NOTEBOOK JAMBOREE

Ten Reasons Why I Am Not Rich and Famous

- 1) My dog ate my recording contract; now I can't prove to the people at CBS that I actually work there.
- 2) Every time I audition, alien beings invade the pick-ups of my guitar and emit hideous sounds that I did not intend to play.
- 3) In the ongoing battle between salad dressing and real mayonnaise, I am spicy brown mustard.
- 4) My new haircut, The Balding Old Guy Look, hasn't caught on yet.
- 5) Due to some weird optical illusion, TV audiences think I'm Candace Bergen.
- 6) Ever since the advent of NutraSweet, my kind of music has been out of style. Coincidence? I think not!
- 7) I spell my name with additional silent letters and numbers, and the public doesn't cotton to it.
- 8) The CIA fears that the widespread acknowledgement of my talents would lead to international anarchy.
- 9) The public just isn't ready for a band that features an electric flatulator.
- 10) I'm a CULT HERO, dammit!

Just Another Day on Talk Radio

"...We'll take the first call at 555-GABB..."

"Hi Bob."

"Hi, what would you like to talk about today?"

"Well Bob, this morning I woke up and discovered that I was Satan..."

CLICK!

"...I'll take the next call at 555-YAKK. Our lines from Pima County are still open."

"H-hehellolo Bobobobob?"

"Turn your radio down in the background, please."

"Th-thatats's n-notnot mymymy radiradio-o-o, thithis isisis mymy normnormalal voivoiceice."

CLICK!

(Sigh) "Next call please—555-SPEW. Let's talk about some issues, people, something that GRABS you, thinks that really rub against your personal grain."

"Hey BOB, howzit goin' Bobby baby?"

"Pretty good, my man, what earthshaking problem or pecadillo is wracking your soul today?"

"Well Bob, 'Arnie's Beef Barn' has stopped allowing their paying customers to take home the bottles of barbeque sauce at the table. And THAT really cheeses me off!"

"Oh, 'Arnie's Beef Barn,' where you get to pick a live cow out of the herd? And watch it be slaughtered at your table? While they make your steaks and ribs to order? Is THAT the place?"

"That's right. Y'know Bob, we're living in a day and age when those little customer courtesies—like taking home a complimentary bottle of sauce—are rapidly becoming a thing of the past."

"Well, I'm sure that's upsetting, but maybe you could ask to buy some. I'm sure for such a distinctive, superior product, you'd be willing to pay a reasonable amount. Even if their sauce costs a few more cents than similar condiments sold at your local supermarket, it would be worth it, right?"

"Sure Bob, but six dollars for a 12 ounce bottle isn't just expensive, it's extortion! Especially when you realize that barbeque cause is just seasoned ketchup. Well, it...it just cheeses me off, is all."

"Well, it sounds like you MAY have a legitimate gripe. I'd talk to the 'Beef Barn' manager if I were you. You know they're open from noon 'til three in the morning, with friendly service and great food."

"Yeah, uh, sure, I knew that. I just wanted to discuss it over the air with you. You know, I wanted to talk to you about this when I saw you the other night at 'Arnie's'."

"Yes, I eat at 'Arnie's Beef Barn' regularly. If you're there, drop by and request their special 'add-and-stir cole slaw.' It's freeze-dried and just as crunchy as if it were fresh. And because it can be stored in great quantities, they can pass the savings on to you. Just pour in the water, stir it together, and dig in! Yum Yum!"

"Uh-huh, yeah, that's good too...anyway, I would've spoken to you about this barbeque sauce controversy when I saw you the other night at 'Arnie's,' but you were busy talking to the owner about under-the-table promotional fees and the FCC..."

CLICK!

"...That's enough about that. I don't want our simple conversation to be misconstrued as a plug (though 'Arnie's Beef Barn' on West Ohio Road is a truly MAGNIFICENT dining experience), so let's move on to some genuinely IMPORTANT issues. So, I'll take the next call at 555-FLAP..."

"Hello Bob?"

"Yes, young lady, what can I do for you today?"

"Bob, I'm a teenaged prostitute who believes that gun control will lead to the spread of AIDS, and that crack and cocaine were given to us by Jesus Christ so mankind will be in the proper frame

of mind to see him when he is resurrected. Also, I think the national debt could be paid a thousand times over if everybody would just take all those pennies they've been tossing in coffee cans and jars and deposit them in a good sound bank."

(Alarm bells, pre-recorded cheers, applause, "Stars and Stripes Forever" playing in the background.)

"AW RIGHT!!! Now we've got a show! Color, craziness and controversy! Let's get down and dirty with... (interrupted) What's that? Oh, there's a break coming up? We'll get to our fiery teenaged prostitute in just a few moments. Right now it's time for Newsbreak, a full five minutes of local and international news from our award-winning teletype machine. But don't go away! We still have several lines open, so call in and hang on at 555-BARK!"

(News Theme up and under for newscaster.)
The "And Justice For All" Department

Officer cited for arresting 3-year-old

RIDGE MANOR, Fla. (AP) — A deputy who arrested a 3-year-old for uprooting a neighbor's flamingo lawn ornaments exercised "poor judgment," his commander says.

Tony Salgado, a wide-eyed boy with curly blond hair, wandered onto his neighbor's lawn two weeks ago, pulled out two ornamental pink plastic flamingos and dropped them in the driveway. The neighbor called police.

Deputy J. Burnett of the Hernando County Sheriff's Office arrived at the scene and filed an affidavit charging Tony with criminal mischief, sheriff's Capt. Rich Nugent said. Burnett ordered the boy held under house arrest and referred the case to state social workers.

Nugent said he stopped charges immediately after learning about the incident late last week.

"It was poor judgment," Nugent said. "Obviously, we don't condone this."

Burnett and Sgt. Lanny Corlew, who reviewed Burnett's affidavit, might face disciplinary action, Nugent said, although Corlew said he did not notice the boy's age.

Tony, meanwhile, has promised not to uproot any more flamingos.

"That's a no-no," he said Wednesday as he rolled in a pile of laundry on his living room floor.

2) This cop must be one unobservant dictatorial son-of-a-bitch not to notice that Tony Salgado was a 3-year-old child. What did he think? "Oh great! Another perpetrator who happens to be a midget. Jeez, one bad crabapple gives a bad name to the whole tree." How would you have liked to have heard Deputy Burnett make his arrest of little Tony?

"Okay, hands up! You're under arrest!"

(Happy) "Oh boy! Really?"

"Really. The charge is criminal mischief. Now, you have the right to remain silent..."

"I can hold my breath for almost two minutes."

"Don't interrupt. You have the right to remain silent. If you give up that right, anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law. You are entitled to an attorney and to have him present during all questioning. If you cannot afford an attorney, one will be provided for you. Do you understand each of these rights as I have explained them to you?"

"Hee-hee, what?"

"Your rights! Do you understand your rights?"

"Can I play with your gun?"

"No! Now, about your rights..."

"I'll let you play with my Pull & Quack if you let me play with your gun."

"No, you CAN'T PLAY WITH MY GUN!"

"WAAAAHHHHH!! You won't share...I'm tellin' on ya."

"Stop crying and stick out your hands."

(Sniffs) "Why?"

"Because I'm going to handcuff you."

(Brightens) "You are? Oh boy!"

"WAAAAHHHHH!!"

"NOW what's the matter?"

(Sobbing) "The handcuffs are pinching and my shorts are falling down and I can't reach around to pull 'em up. Will you pull up my shorts for me? 'N loosen the cuffs?"

(Loosens cuffs, pulls up pants) "Jesus H. Christ, I suppose I'd better. I don't want you claiming police brutality, and I was gonna frisk you anyway."

(Giggles) "I LIKE being frisked, it tickles!"

"Okay now, get in the car, we're going to the police station."

"OH BOY! A ride in a real live police car! Can I run the siren?"

"No."

"Can I make the light on top flash?"

"No."

"Will you let me talk on the radio?"

"NO! Now stop stalling and get in the back seat of the car."

"WAAAAAHHHH! You don't even want to play fair with me..."

I think the aspect of this story that upsets me the most is the fact that Deputy Burnett only this 'might face disciplinary action.'

Disciplinary action HELL! Deputy J. Burnett should not only be fired immediately, but should be legally prevented from taking any job that requires powers of judgment and observation as well. And by no means should Deputy J. Burnett be allowed to carry a weapon of any kind. Burnett is either suffering from a bad case of career burnout or is some kind of poorly programmed robot. In either case, this is not the type of person I would feel proud of having on a police force, or even living in my town. In fact, the only person with whom Deputy J. Burnett seems compatible is the jerkoid who called in the complaint about 3-year-old Tony Salgado in the first place! Their respective lack of warmth, judgement and compassion would suggest that they deserve one another.

As for Tony Salgado, I think he shows an unusually well-developed sense of taste for a boy of three. And if he ever saw plastic pink flamingos on my lawn, he could come over and pull them out any time.

Ten More Reasons Why I Am Not Rich and Famous

- 1) I have a rare disease that causes me to be involuntarily multilingual when I sing.
- 2) Network execs think my political affiliations make me "too hot to handle" (I'm a member of the Apathy Party).
- 3) My music appeals to people who don't buy records, attend concerts, or believe in electronic media.
- 4) Famous stars spy on me and steal all my best ideas before I get a chance to copyright or perform them in public.
- 5) The subliminal messages in my forehead tattoos that were supposed to make people allow me privacy are causing them to ignore me completely.
- 6) In most states, it is illegal to record, film, distribute or sell the things I do best.
- 7) Entertainment Tonight continues to incorrectly identify me as Eddie Murphy.
- 8) I'm too good to be popular and too artistic to be commercial.
- 9) Record producers think that just because I'm a Mexican with a British accent that I can't rap.
- 10) I keep losing the addresses of the places where you sign up to sell out.

WINNER BY ONE VOTE
by Bangor Zack Bullen
Herb replaced me
as dog-catcher.
I knew every
hydrant and curb—
I shovelled dog mess—
I took Valium for stress—
And I cast my vote
for Herb!

LITTLE GAMES

by Mary Ann Henn

Look behind each stump
and cabbage—see me?

Find me! (If
I'm there—)

And if you life the leaf rewarding
what will you find?

—a chameleon? —a chimera?

Hold tight
for my guise may change
sixteen times.

What are you holding—
the change —or me?



We stepped into this dive for a drink. The kid looked pretty shook up. I have this personal credo: When the going gets tough, the tough get snookered. After a couple of pitchers of Bud, we were starting to feel plenty tough.

"You can't let it get you down, kid," I said. "Take my word for it: There are many dumb things a man can do in this life. But the dumbest—the ultimate dumbest of the dumbest—thing that a man can do is to fall in love with a whore."

"She's not a whore, she's a go-go dancer," said the kid. "Oh, excuse me." I was starting to think this kid was hopeless. "Listen kid, I don't wanna come across like a big know-it-all, but hell, you're so obviously heading for a fall I feel it's almost my civic duty to set you straight. I've seen this shit a million times. A young man beset by raging hormones to the point where it totally clouds his ability to think like a rational, normal human being. Get a grip."

"I'm thinking plenty clearly," he said. He took a big pull from his beer, wiped the suds off his mouth with his sleeve—like an amateur—and stared into his glass, brooding. He was starting to tune me out. I decided to punch through his crust.

"I'm telling you," I said, "I know that Charlene Hamilton babe

of yours. I know all about her." That got his attention. He snapped upright and looked at me intently.

"Yeah? Just what do you know about her?"

"Well, for one thing, do you know where she's going right now? I'll tell you where she's going right now. She's going over to ole Sidney Foote's studio to do a photo shoot. I know this Foote's routine—he's notorious for it. After he's just about done with the shooting he gets his models in a very vulnerable position and jumps 'em. You getting my drift, kid?"

The kid jumped up. "Where is this perv? Where's his studio at?" He was practically frothing at the mouth.

"Siddown, kid. Ya sap! Ya jerk! Whattaya getting all worked up about? You see what I mean, that's my point. Charlene's going over there of her own free will. This is her job, kabeesh?? And it's often a shitty, sleazy job, like most jobs in this world, take my word for it. But that's her trip. She's a big girl. She knows what she's getting into. Whattaya gonna do? Go running over there like Joe Hero and save her from herself? This is real life, kid. There aren't any white stallions."

He stood there for a second, like he was pissed but couldn't figure out at whom, finally slumping back down in his seat, defeated. "It's just not right," he said.

"What does 'right' have to do with anything?" I said. I gestured out the window at all the winos, degenerates and losers trudging down the street. "None of this is 'right.' It just... is."

"Yeah, well you know why it is?" said the kid indignantly. "Because of people like you. Because people like you just accept this crummy stuff and don't do nothing about it." He decided he was pissed at me.

"Sure, sure...it's all my fault. I could change the world with my magic wand, but I'm holding out on ya, 'cuz I'm a mean old jaded cynic." I was getting weary of the direction our conversation was taking. I poured the last of the pitcher into my glass and lit up another cig. "Listen, I'm 41 fucking years old. I'm part of the biggest generation in the history of mankind to ever take a crack at Changing the World. And ya wanna know something? After 20 fucking years of momentous change and tumultuous bull-shit—" I paused for effect, took a deep drag on my cig, melodramatic bastard that I am—"we didn't make one fucking little millimeter of a dent in the machine."

The kid was really burning his eyes into my head, like he was really trying to figure it all out. "You don't look like the hippy type," he said, finally.

"Hey, I'm a charger member of the Love Generation," I smirked. "Bunch of fucking saps we were. We gave it a shot. But it didn't work. It never works. You want to know why? Because there's no such thing as 'love!' It's an illusion. It's a shame. It's a fraud perpetuated on the American public by a bunch of fools who want to manipulate you. 'Buy this and you'll get LOVE!' 'Act like that and you'll get love.' But you never get it. Nobody ever does."

"That's not true!" said the kid. He raised his fist like he was gonna pound it on the table, but then thought better of that useless gesture.

"Oh yeah?" I said. "Name me one person you know who is really in love. I know people who use each other and call it love. I know people who jack up their egos by doing good works and call it love. I know people like you with their raging dicks sounding sirens of alarm throughout their whole fucking metabolism in a desperate attempt to ensure the survival of their fucking genes by procreating with some fucking nubile female at the most urgent fucking convenience...and call that love. SHIT!"

The kid looked kind of stunned. I was momentarily torn between softening the blow, out of pity, and giving him the hard facts right between the eyes. In the long run I feel it's better for them to know that there is no Santa Claus. There is no Easter Bunny. There is no God. There is no love. It's just another con invented by people's imaginations in the vague hope that it would make this grim, gray world somehow seem worth living in.

"Well, if there isn't any love, how come people are always singing about it on the radio and stuff, huh?" he whimpered.

"Kid, you are hopeless. I don't know why I'm sitting here wasting my valuable leisure time talking with you when I could be back in my room watching Donahue."

"I'll tell you why," said the kid, suddenly turning the tables and giving me that look like he knew something about me. "I read in this book once something about cynics, ya know?, guys who think life is really crummy and gray and stuff. It said: 'A cynic is somebody who always secretly wants to be proven wrong.'"

I had to pause for a second at that one. The kid was looking at me with this crazed, glazed, wolfish smile on his face. A drained the last of the beer.

"Ya know, kid...you're not as dumb as you look, talk, act and think. So what the hell's your excuse?"

He kind of chuckled, or smirked. Probably the closest he'd come to a belly laugh in three years. If I'm such a deadbeat cynic, how come these would-be Romeos are always the ones in terminal agony?

"How 'bout another pitcher of beer?" I said.

"If you're paying," he said.

I stood up, my knees clicking, making that funny sound in the joints, and lurched towards the bar. The joint was half-filled with typical Tenderloin losers and assorted human fuck-ups nursing along their wounded afternoons with ice-cold booze. "Shit, kid, I ain't never been proven wrong yet. And you can look it up."



Illustration by Juan Alfonso

Before I begin, a few short notes: First and foremost, congratulations to Elayne and Steve for making IJ last as long as it has (and for giving artists and writers like me an opportunity to display our many talents). Happy 10th! I'd also like to thank artist Juan Alfonso of Miami, FL for providing me with this unique logo for my column.

(Drawing "funny animals" isn't new to Juan—his anthropomorphic artwork has been featured in such zines as ROWNBRAZZLE, MYTHAGORAS, FURVERSION and BESTIARY. Once again, ¡Muchas gracias, Juan!...Many thanks to those loyal readers who took the time to write to me (and don't worry, I'll answer your letters

ASAP)...And, lastly, I'll be presenting the complete results of my 1980s Animation Survey in IJ #80, so send your lists in, pronto! Now, on with the show!

MIS"CEL"ANEOUS: As The Simpsons airs new episodes on FOX-TV, production continues on additional prime-time cartoon shows. Two of them come from the Hanna-Barbera studios, The Aristocritters (see IJ #77) and Fish Police. The latter title, based on the popular comic book created by Steve Moncuse, was described by one of its producers as "Dick Tracy meets The Little Mermaid"...After the success of "Academy Leader Variations" and "Animated Self Portraits," ASIFA-International has begun work on another joint film project. "People" is a collaborative effort between Jewish and Moslem animators around the world. Watch for it...Speaking of ASIFA, a book commemorating 30 years of this international animation organization is now available. This 48-page souvenir album, featuring the works of 67 artists from 30 different countries, costs \$13 (for non-members; \$11 for members), postpaid. Send a money order (personal checks might be harder to cash where they're going), made payable to "ASIFA-International," to Nicole Salomon La Roseliere, Beau Rivage, 74320 Sevrier, France. Allow 8-10 weeks for delivery...Future anthology features from Expanded Entertainment include "Too Outrageous Animation" (a sequel), "Zagreb's Animation Fascination" from Yugoslavia, and "The British Animation Invasion," all coming (sporadically) to a repertory cinema near you...As we continue to celebrate various birthdays in the world of animation (Betty Boop became 60; Bugs Bunny, Tom & Jerry and Fantasia are 50; and The Flintstones are about to turn 30), another milestone was reached by a cartoon character, well-known in Europe but lesser-known here in the U.S. "La Linea" ("The Line")—a different kind of Italian hero, from the pen of Oswald Cavandoli—turns 20 this year. Star of 26 made-for-TV cartoons, this recognizably line-drawn character first made the American scene on an episode of PBS' International Animation Festival, followed by a regular stint during the first season of the children's show The Great Space Coaster. To La Linea, grazie!...A new assortment of never-before-seen shorts is now being aired on Nickelodeon. "Cartoon Kablooney" is a collection of Paramount shorts from the 1960s (many of them totally forgettable, but worth at least one look-see). The show airs on Sunday mornings (consult your cable guide for the time and channel)...The Completely Mental Misadventures of Ed Grimley will return to TV, but not on MTV as previously reported (IJ #72). FOX-TV will be airing the Martin Short series—with new episodes being produced by Hanna-Barbera—in the fall of '91 (and that's no lie)...A few years ago, I went to Lincoln Center to listen to the Philip Glass Orchestra perform the entire score of Koyaanisquatsi while the Godfrey Reggio film was being shown. "Apparently," I thought to myself, "nobody could top this multi-media experience..." But somebody has. In a rare move by Warner Bros., the studio has offered to the public "Bugs Bunny on Broadway." Using the same technique, George Daugherty conducts the W.B. Symphony Orchestra as they perform the music of Liszt, Wagner, J. Strauss and Rossini while eight classic cartoons (such as "What's Opera, Doc?", "Rabbit of Seville" and "Baton Bunny") are screened. The Gershwin Theatre crowds (many of them cartoon buffs) have been awestruck by this unusual presentation (as I write this, the show is running through Saturday, October 21). If this show comes to your area, by all means see it. If, on the other hand, you feel that the admission prices (\$25 and \$35 in NY) are too steep, simply rent the videocassette with the classic W.B. cartoons on them and crank up the volume...Fans of Japanimation living in the NY/NJ/CT area might want to consider joining the Animation/Fantasy Association (695 W. Inman Ave., Rahway, NJ 07065). Screenings of manga on video occur during meetings held every third Saturday of each month at the Polish Democratic Club (56 St. Marks Place in NYC; admission donation of \$2). Write to them for more info...In the wake of picking the Best Animated Short at this year's Academy Award show (see IJ #75), I thought I'd be on a winning streak, but it was not to be. At the MTV Music Video Awards, Tears for Fears' "Sowing the Seeds of Love" won twice for animator Jim Blashfield (Best Breakthrough Video and Best Special Effects), while the Paula Abdul video "Opposites At-

tract" was totally blitzed in all its nominated categories...As for the Emmy Awards, the honor of Outstanding Animated Program (one hour or less) went to The Simpsons, its only prize out of four nominations. In the final analysis, I batted .000 in these more recent predictions...anyway, kudos to the champs!

TOON TEST: In honor of IJ's 10th Anniversary, I'm presenting an expanded edition of my semi-regular quiz, so put on your thinking caps, sharpen your pencils and don't peek at the answers (as they'll appear next issue!)...
Part I - Food For Thought—There probably isn't a cartoon buff alive who'd fail to know that the favorite food of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles is pizza, but do you know what these cartoon characters like to eat more than anything else?

1. Bugs Bunny 6. Monterey Jack
2. Garfield 7. Popeye the Sailor
3. Kwiky Koala 8. Ragland T. Tiger
4. Little Lulu 9. Wimpy
5. Magilla Gorilla 10. Winnie the Pooh

Part II - Unreal Estate—Match the following toons to their respective home locations.
1. Bart Simpson
2. Colonel Bleep
3. Courageous Cat
4. Crusader Rabbit
5. Dynamutt
6. Fred Flintstone
7. George of the Jungle
8. Hoppity Hooper
9. King Leonardo
10. Krazy Kat
11. Rebecca Cunningham
12. Rocket J. Squirrel
13. Teen. Mut. Ninja Turtles
14. Tennessee Tuxedo
15. Yogi Bear

A. Bedrock
B. Big City
C. Bongo Congo
D. Cape Suzette
E. Foggy Bog, WI
F. Frostbite Falls, MN
G. Galahad Glen
H. Jellystone Park
I. Kokonino Kounty
J. Megopolis Zoo
K. Mwebe-Mwebe Province
L. Outskirts of Empire City
M. Springfield
N. Within the sewers of NYC
O. Zero-Zero Island

Part III - Good Guys vs. Bad Guys—Everybody knows that Boris Badenov is the principal arch-enemy of Rocky and Bullwinkle, but how good are you at matching up these other animated heroes and villains?

1. Bugs Bunny
2. Beany & Cecil
3. Colonel Bleep
4. Cool McCool
5. Crusader Rabbit
6. Dudley Do Right
7. Felix the Cat
8. Lariat Sam
9. Mickey Mouse
10. Mighty Mouse
11. Penelope Pitstop
12. Roger Ramjet
13. The Smurfs
14. Tom Terrific
15. Underdog

A. Badlands Meany
B. Black Pete
C. Crabby Appleton
D. Dishonest John
E. Dr. Destructo
F. Dudley Nightshade
G. Gargamel
H. The Hooded Claw
I. Hurricane Harry
J. The Master Cylinder
K. Noodles Romanoff
L. Oilcan Harry
M. Simon Barsinister
N. Snidley Whiplash
O. Yosemite Sam

Part IV - A Little Game of Cat and Mouse—Can you identify the feline counterpart to each of these cartoon rodents?

1. Blabber
2. Herman
3. Itchy
4. Jerry
5. Little Roquefort

6. Minute Mouse
7. Motor Mouse
8. Mush Mouse
9. Pixie and Dixie
10. Speedy Gonzales

Part V - Selected Shorts—What do each of these groups of cartoon characters have in common with each other?

1. "A Car-Tune Portrait" (Paramount)
2. "The Cat Above, The Mouse Below" (MGM)
3. "The Cat Concerto" (MGM)
4. "Long-Haired Hare" (WB)
5. "Convict Concerto" (Universal)
6. "Off To the Opera" (Terrytoons)
7. "The Magic Fluke" (UPA)
8. "Opera" (Bruno Bozzetto)
9. "Fast and Furry-ous" (WB)
10. "Boo Moon" (Paramount)
11. "I'm Cold" (Universal)
12. "Hypnotic Hick" (Universal)
13. "Knock, Knock" (Universal)
14. "Lumberjack Rabbit" (WB)
15. "Porky's Duck Hunt" (WB)
16. "Popeye, the Ace of Space" (Paramount)
17. "Walky Talky Hawky" (WB)

Part VI - Name That Toon Tune—Although animated characters like Woody Woodpecker and the Pink Panther have their own original theme songs, certain other toons can be recognized by a piece of music we often hear (either during the opening titles or during the course of the film). But do you know the name of each musical piece? Below are the titles of six works; match each one with the appropriate cartoon character.

1. "Camptown Races"
2. "Dance of the Comedians"
3. "Fingal's Cave"
4. "Jubilio"
5. "Listen to the Mockingbird"
6. "Ten Little Indians"

A. Crusader Rabbit
B. Foghorn Leghorn
C. Heckle and Jeckle
D. The Minah Bird
E. The Road Runner
F. Tex Avery's Wolf (c. 1950s)

Part VII - Leftovers—Solve these remaining trivia questions on cartoons.

1. True or False—Jack Mercer was the original voice of Popeye.
2. True or False—Ralph Bakshi's Fritz the Cat was the first X-rated animated feature to be produced.
3. Name the animation directors who wrote and illustrated the fol-

(continued next page)

TELEVISION ON SATURDAY NIGHT, SEP. 29, 1990 OR, WHAT ARE WE IN FOR THIS SEASON?

by Todd Kristel

For various reasons (mostly connected with a cold I had at the time) I decided to watch lots of television on this particular day, so I'm going to subject you, my dear readers, to my commentary on the (then) current state of television.

7:00 PM - STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION

This was part two of "The Best of Both Worlds," the Borg story that ended the previous season and began this season. And it was genuinely exciting, although my one telephone call of the day arrived just in time for me to miss the last 15 minutes of the episode! Maybe by the time you read this I'll have discovered how the episode ended.

9:30 PM - AMERICAN CHRONICLES

Twin Peaks here, Twin Peaks there, Twin Peaks, Twin Peaks everywhere. Twin Peaks had not yet begun its run of new episodes on Saturday nights, but Mr. Lynch and Co. seemed to be all over the dial. Earlier today on VH-1, for example, where was a special on Lunch protegee Juliee Cruise, including interview segments with Lynch and Angelo Badalamenti (who composed the scores of *Blue Velvet*, *Twin Peaks* and *Wild at Heart*). Their musical collaborations sound haunting, but in large doses remind me less of heavenly choirs than of background music for an upscale TV automobile ad.

Speaking of automobiles, America's auto obsession was the subject of the Sep. 29 episode of *American Chronicles*, the weekly Fox documentary series created by Mark Frost (Lynch's collaborator on *Twin Peaks*). Emphasizing style over substance, this episode was a superficial overview of the role of automobiles in American society. It seems to have been designed primarily as a showcase for artsy shots of people's reflections on shiny automobile surfaces. Not only doesn't the episode have a traditional fiction narrative—after all, this is a documentary—it doesn't seem to have a focus. There's a little about eroticism and automobiles, a little about automobiles and consumer culture, a little about the history of the automobile, a little about automobile technology, and a lot of slow-motion sequences. The show is somewhat more coherent when it addresses the environmental cost of automobiles, although that part is interesting mostly for the novelty of finding such a strong anti-automobile statement on a commercial television program (although the anti-auto message is balanced by fetishizing autos throughout the episode). Considering how many automobile ads are shown on TV, I guess that could be considered somewhat courageous.

10:00 PM - COP ROCK

More "breakthrough" television: Steven Bochco, who was a major force behind the groundbreaking *Hill Street Blues* and the over-rated *L.A. Law*, is executive producer of this experiment. The first episode of *Cop Rock*, scheduled to air on Wednesday nights, was rerun on Sep. 29 (the second showing that week), so I had a chance to see what the fuss was all about. It's not conventional television, and the choice of Randy Newman as composer for the first episode is a good sign, but this isn't the first time musical numbers have been inserted into a dramatic TV narrative. In the excellent 1979 BBC-TV production of Dennis Potter's *Pennies From Heaven*, for example, where was a reason for inserting musical numbers in the show. The main character in *Pennies From Heaven* is a sheet music salesman who is unable to reconcile the romantic obsessions of popular music with his mundane Depression-era existence. So the decision to include musical numbers which contrast sharply with the rest of the narrative makes sense. In *Cop Rock*, however, the songs seem like a gimmick. It's different, but it's different only for the sake of being different, and nothing more (just like parts of *Wild at Heart*).

11:30 PM - SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE

Still more *Twin Peaks*! Kyle McLaghlan was the host so, of course, there was a *Twin Peaks* skit. Although some of the targets of the show's humor were predictable, it was funnier than I had expected. Maybe there is still hope for SNL.

2:00 AM - NIGHT MUSIC

I don't know about the long-term survival prospects for this program, but I do know that there's been a lot of cool music (as well as some mediocre music) on *Night Music* during its run. I recommend it to the music lovers out there, particularly those who are into jazz (although the show has featured cool rock acts as well).

3:00 AM - NIGHT FLIGHT

Yes, I realize that I was up rather late for someone with a cold, but I slept in late on Sunday, if that makes you feel better. Anyway, this was the "premiere" episode of a show which had a previous life as a late-night weekend program on the USA Network. At times USA's *Night Flight* featured interesting segments ("New Wave Theatre," "Some Bizarre Show," good film shorts), but it never lived up to its full potential (for various reasons such as showing the same cult movies repeatedly and looking too much like MTV and *Friday Night Videos*). Now it's back and it looks promising, although not perfect. If we're lucky, it could turn out to be a creatively packaged combination of offbeat video art, music videos not seen on other music video programs, campy film excerpts, cool comedy sketches, and other odds and ends. On the other hand, it could end up as a pretentiously packaged collection of dumb comedy sketches, music videos that are played repeatedly on nearly every other music video program, and the same campy film excerpts shown week after week. Time will tell.

- lowing children's books: A. *The Bear That Wasn't*; B. *William the Backwards Skunk* (Hint: They both worked at Warner Bros.)
4. True or False—Before becoming a talk show host in the 1960s and '70s, Mike Douglas provided a voice for a Walt Disney animated feature.
 5. *The Jungle Book* was the last animated feature under the supervision of Walt Disney. Name the next three Disney animated films (not including *Bedknobs and Broomsticks*, which was part live-action) to be released (Hint: All three were released in the 1970s).
 6. Name the only Oscar-nominated cartoon to star each of these Warner Bros. characters: A. *Pepe Le Pew*; B. *Porky Pig*; C. *The Road Runner* and *Wile E. Coyote*
 7. True or False—In spite of earning an Academy Award for creating his *Peppetoons*, George Pal never won an Oscar for any of his shorts that were nominated.
 8. Name the "Super Six" (from the 1960s Saturday morning cartoon show from DePatie-Freleng).

FRUITS (AND VEGETABLES) OF THEIR LABOR: A "golden banana" goes to *The Simpsons* series for doing something no animated show in prime time has ever done before: going the full 30 minutes without the use of a laugh track (specials don't count). Tony Randall and Alan Alda should be pleased...Some "sliced and diced carrots" go to Warner Bros., whose "Merrie Melodies" series for syndicated TV did a hatchet-job on many classic cartoons through electronic editing (the transferral of film onto tape, followed by the removal of certain violent and/or ethnically unacceptable material from each short—not to mention the opening and closing titles with the "WB" shield, "That's All, Folks!" scrawled out, etc.). The same honor (or in this case dishonor) goes to the following copycats: Nickelodeon, for treating the newly-screened "Looney Tunes" the same way; Viacom Productions, whose "Mighty Mouse & Friends" series has unexpected dissolves and fadeouts—where they're not supposed to be—resulting in a four-cartoon half-hour show; and lastly, to Ted Turner, who's suddenly editing all black-stereotyped material from the cartoons in his MGM and early WB library (would you want to pay up to \$35 a month to see censored cartoons on TNT or TBS when you could see them for nothing on "free TV?")...The "golden apple" award goes to HBO for presenting original animated programming, such as Nelvana's "Babar" series and NHK's "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz," based on the works of L. Frank Baum. The "mashed squash" award goes to other cable TV networks for simply broadcasting the same stuff we saw last season in syndication or on the major networks (*The Smurfs* and *Scooby-Doo* are now on the USA Network; *Yogi Bear* is currently airing on Nickelodeon, *COPS* and *Hanna-Barbera's Popeye* are on the Family Channel; and *The Care Bears*—ugh!—are on the Disney Channel—double ugh!). With the exception of HBO, and the TBS-produced *Captain Planet*, cable TV is becoming the "landfill for reruns" (would you want to pay up to \$35 a month to see the same dreck you saw last year on "free TV?")...The "red pepper" goes to the following TV shows for being, in my opinion, the hottest properties on the animation block: *Bobby's World* (FOX), *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure* (CBS), *Tiny Toons* (Warner Bros./Amblin), and finally *Tale Spin*, the fourth and brightest spot of the syndicated "Disney Afternoon" shows, with just the right mixture of action, laughs, pathos, full animation (or at least fuller than earlier Disney TV productions) and a great cast of supporting players (my favorites: Don Karnage and his Air Pirates, and Wildcat the mechanic)...A "great pumpkin" goes to CBS and NBC for having the best bumpers on their Saturday morning shows. CBS uses Fido Dido and his friends to introduce commercials, station breaks, etc., through simple (but very funny) line drawings; while NBC uses several different styles of animation (including stop-motion work with plasticine), as well as some bizarre music (a la Danny Elfman) for their effective bumpers... Finally, speaking of bumpers, for being Indian-givers in returning *Rocky & Bullwinkle* to syndicated TV sans their classic bumpers (eg., "Hey, Rocky, watch me pull a rabbit out of my hat!"), the folks in charge of electronic editing at Jay Ward Productions end up with an "apple-less Indian." Still, for reasons of saving commercial time, better they remove the bumpers than edit the regular cartoons (and that earns them a "bushel of mooseberries" and a "mooseberry bush"—try saying that five times fast without stopping!).

OBITUARY: Myron "Grim" Natwick, who had just turned 100 last April, died on October 7 after complications from a bout with pneumonia set in. The animator worked with Betty Boop (for Max Fleischer) and Snow White (for Disney), among other animated characters...

CORRECTNESS

by Bangor Zack Bullen
Two fanatics collide.

Angry words sound absurd.

"Obey this leather black book!"

"My book holds God's word!"

"The Koran is better!"

"The Bible is better!"

Fanatics turn red with rage.

Swords stab deep.

16 Idiots fall in a heap.

The night wind ruffles a page.



MF08

...OP NOT TV

by Elayne and Steve

Man, what a confusing season. On the animation end, FilmRoman (FOX's commissioned company) can't get their shit together and we're seeing reruns a few weeks into the season. As far as the network nighttime fare goes, there've been a few switcheroos, I don't know where Lenny's ending up, and several shows have a late premiere. Cable forget about; I still don't get it. Look, after almost two months of on-and-off scanning, this is what we've got; draw your own conclusions, consult your own television listings. For further information, see Todd's column this time or check out Jed's review of a couple animated goodies. Otherwise, my reviews will be in Script and Steven's in Artisan. Times listed are p.m. Eastern, except for the Saturday morning cartoons and such. We welcome comments and reactions in next issue's letter column.

SATURDAY MORNING—FOX has the best stuff, hands-down, but also the most problems in production, so interest may wane quickly (ours already has). We're delighted here in NY to see the return of classic Jay Ward and Bob Clampett (Beany & Cecil) stuff, which may wind up being your best bet when all is said and done...

ZA ZOO U. (FOX, 8am)—Is it Sally Cruikshank. Peter Max? Shel Silverstein? No, it's Shane DeWolf, whoever he is, conjuring up very favorable surrealistic memories. I shan't even attempt to describe this anthropomorphic high-school madness—just watch it. The 11 kidshow recommendation of the season—get up early! ***

BOBBY'S WORLD (FOX, 8:30am)—Howie Mandel wore thin for me doing stand-up live, but he and his "baby voice" do a nice turn as dad and son (with ex-SNL'er Gail Matthius, who's probably the June Foray of the '90s, voicing the "g-darned" mother) in this cartoon about a 5-year-old's fanciful imagination. It's more than a male version of LITTLE ROSEY (see review below); this rounded-headed tyke's strange. Good puns, fun gags, but when Howie switches to his live-action self in the beginning and end, it drags. ***

THE WIZARD OF OZ (ABC, 8:30am)—L. Frank Baum wrote 14 OZ books, all of which are in public domain (see Jed's comments, for instance, on the Japanese-made series on HBO). Ruth Plumley Thompson wrote 15 more, for which I must imagine getting the rights is no big hassle. The tomes are populated with wondrous characters and fascinating adventures. So what do these idiots do with a talented animation crew? They get the rights to the 1939 movie, in which the entire Oz universe turned out to be a dream in the end anyway, and attempt to create a sequel to it, complete with imitations of the original cast and score. As you can no doubt imagine, this creates many logistical problems, none of which are answered because then the creators would have to admit their gross miscarriage. The plot summary: The Winged Monkeys have resurrected the Wicked Witch of the West ("but she was liquidated!"), who's taken over the Emerald City and stolen the Scarecrow's brains, the Tin Man's—well, you know; the Wizard has been waylaid by a west wind ("but he got out of Oz!"); the ruby slippers have shown up on Dorothy's doorstep ("but they never existed, since Oz never existed except in Dorothy's head, according to the movie!"), and so on. Baum and Garland both take graveyard spins. ½

TOM & JERRY KIDS (FOX, 9am)—Worth it only for the Droopy & (son) Drabble episodes stuck in the middle. * for Tex Avery's memory

RICK MORANIS IN GRAVEYARD HIGH (NBC, 9:30am)—GALAXY HIGH was much funnier. You've seen it all before. One star for Moranis finding work, and another half for the vampire teen being named Vinnie Stoker. ½

ATTACK OF THE KILLER TOMATOES (FOX, 9:30am)—Some of the wittiest, most adult dialogue in Saturday cartoonland, which it sorely needs to conquer its one-joke premise. John Astin does a nice turn as the "angry scientist" villain. ½

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES (CBS, 10am)—Pretty much the same stuff running weekdays, with new opening titles. I know you're all sick of Turtles by now, but the more money Kevin Eastman makes the better off Tundra will be, which spells potential good news for a revival of INSIDE JOKE somewhere down the line... **

KID 'N' PLAY (NBC, 10am)—Likeable, but not a real standout except for showing black kids as kids first and black second. **

PIGGSBURG PIGS (FOX, 10am)—The one dark spot in an otherwise stellar FOX lineup. Avoid this black hole like the plague. 0*

CHIPMUNKS GO TO THE MOVIES (NBC, 10:30am)—Like ALF TALES with the Chipmunks. Standard fare.

FUN HOUSE (FOX, 10:30am)—Unseen at presstime, but I must imagine it's a zany, live-action show where kids get to make fools of themselves doing stupid stunts, much the same way adults do on many equally zany prime-time shows. Bring back WONDERAMA again.

NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK (ABC, 10:30am)—This year's CALIFORNIA RAISINS, the New Kids have even been described as a "commodity" (rather than a musical group) on E.T.! Pointless and, I'm sure, extremely popular with its target audience. NK sold separately. *

BILL & TED'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE (CBS, 11am)—I'm told this is true to the movie, which I never saw. Hell, I thought it was ripping off SNL's "Wayne's World" until Steve told me it was the other way around. This one can grow on you, and the time travel sequences are nicely done. Not half bad. **½

CAPTAIN PLANET AND THE PLANETEERS (FOX, 11am in most markets, I think)—Ted Turner's contribution to the environmental bandwagon is fine except for one major theme (this also holds true for the prime-time series E.A.R.T.H. FORCE): The culprits are always deranged individuals (in this case, with names like Verminous Scum, Looten Plunder, Duke Nukem, etc.), never corporations, whose pro-profit and anti-humanity policies are the true evils in the "real

world." Of course, Ted's as pro-corporation as his beau Jane Fonda (together they control quite a bit of tidy profit), and corporations run the TV stations that show the cartoon, the ads that are shown in between, and just about everything else you're likely to see in connection with the making of a show like this...so how "real-life" can it get? Well, it doesn't. It gives kids bland ecological advice with heapfuls of sugar and makes no connections that could be seen as subversive and anti-elite in the least. Even the show's motto, "The Power Is Yours," is of course a lie; "little people" have no real power in this world. But it looks good for bleeding hearts who don't want to dig too deeply into society's power structures. **

GUYS NEXT DOOR (NBC, 11:30am)—If I were 20 years younger, this would be my fave show in the entire universe. Someone's found a way to make the Monkees' zaniness work in a '90s style. The guys are likeable and cunute, the comedy is adult enough not to talk down to teens, and I hope this sticks around. ***

SATURDAY MORNING VIDEOS (NBC, Noon)—The guest hosts (isn't that an oxymoron?) do the usual shtick, including talking over and cutting into videos to make room for commercials. But hey, I got to see the new David Cassidy video, be still my heart. **

LITTLE ROSEY (ABC, Noon)—Nowhere near as good as it could have been. Kinda boring too. *

WEEKNIGHTS—As mentioned above, I don't know where this first show is going (mayhap in the UNCLE BUCK slot?), so I figured I'd review it first and you can decide for yourself when it pops up again: LENNY—Former stand-up Lenny Clarke follows in the tradition of Richard Lewis and Roseanna Barr. The characters are well fleshed out and, once it gets rolling, it's quite funny. Nice to see one decent new sitcom this season. ***

SATURDAY (NOTE: Because of changes and the World Series, I'm not sure what's in the 10pm slot for CBS, and I don't much care.)

THE FAMILY MAN (CBS, 8:00)—Gregory Harrison as a single dad. He's okay, but kids are sitcom cute (read: nauseating). Nothing about which to write home. ½

PARENTHOOD (NBC, 8:00)—Warm without being ingratiating, funny without being wacky—a pleasant little turn by all involved, especially the ubiquitous Ed Begley Jr. ***

WORKING IT OUT (NBC, 8:30)—While I agree with Anni that we don't necessarily need another sitcom about Yuppies Finding Relationships, this one's witty, perceptive and easy to take. Add an asterisk if you like stars Jane Curtin and Steven Collins. **½

HAYWIRE (FOX, 8:30)—This is a rather cute comedy/person-on-the-street mishmash hosted by a different obscure TV-safe comic each week. Some segments are amusing (especially when they do the old P&B J-Men bit to old movie clips), some are juvenile and offensive, but it's worth checking out. **

AMERICA'S FUNNIEST PEOPLE (ABC, 8:30)—Unseen at presstime, and I wouldn't watch it if you paid me.

E.A.R.T.H. FORCE (CBS, 9:00)—Aside from the problems that exist for any misguided bleeding-heart show of this type (see my review of CAPTAIN PLANET above), this program's cardinal sin is just plain bad writing and acting. Even if the plots are well-intentioned, Larry Tisch's corporate friends need not concern themselves with potential threats—this'll be off the air soon, and then they'll all say, "See, an environmental show won't sell!" And they'll be off the hook and scot free. And you still don't think you're being manipulated? ½

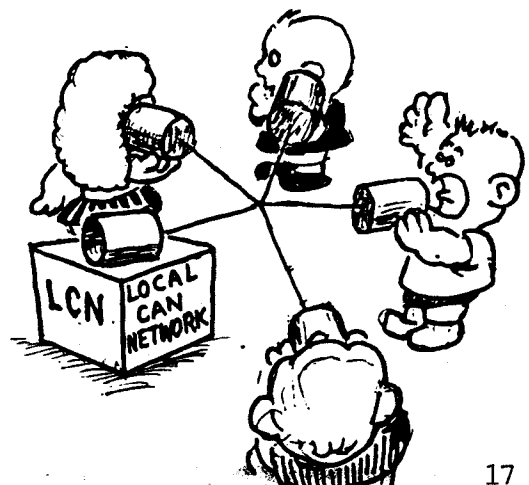
AMERICAN CHRONICLES (FOX, 9:30)—Sold primarily on David Lynch's rep, this show is little more than pretentious travelogue of the type PBS loves. **, since it is at least visually interesting.

AMERICAN DREAMER (NBC, 10:30)—I really liked this, much more than I thought I would even knowing I worship at the altar of Carol Kane. Robert Ulrich doesn't give me a headache, and Jeffrey Tambor is always a delight (nice to see all the MAX HEADROOM alumni in series this year!). Subtract ½ a * for the hokey patriotic opening shots. ***

SUNDAY

HULL HIGH (NBC, 7pm)—This musical-drama works better than COP ROCK, and teens probably like it, but if they're gonna structure

(continued next page)



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AIEEE! More TV!

it like a soap opera, they're gonna have to flesh out the characters more, especially the angry young rebel, who comes off silly when she spouts socialist doctrine (then again, maybe that's the point the powers-in-charge want to drive home). The Greek chorus rap group is too tame-looking, and most of these actors haven't been teenagers since WELCOME BACK KOTTER, but what else is new? ** TRUE COLORS (FOX, 7pm)—Nice jazz theme; bad writing and overacting, especially from Nancy Walker, whose character is just plain nasty and unlikeable. The way this premise of interracial marriage becomes safe for the networks is by them making the black men/boys buffoons and foils. 1ck. *

PARKER LEWIS CAN'T LOSE (FOX, 7:30)—Another stupid show about a snide high school boy genius (notice how there are never any girl geniuses in these shows?). Yes, it can lose. ½* LIFESTORIES (NBC, 8:00)—As morbid as those old medical shows my parents used to watch, only this one has dramatizations featuring yuppie character actors and sort-of plots thrown in. Who cares? * GET A LIFE (FOX, 8:30)—Chris Elliot as a fanboy, a 30-year-old paperboy sorta like Calvin without Hobbes. Bob Elliot is typecast as Chris' dad, and Elinor Donahue (from FATHER KNOWS BEST) as his mom. The theme song is R.E.M.'s "Stand," there are some great guests stars, and this works real well as a forum for Elliot's character (a social outcast by choice) poking fun at the Real World. A hoot, and a must-see. ***½

GOOD GRIEF (FOX, 9:30)—This odd show grew on me. Instead of the standard formula of one crazy reacting to the normals around him or her (a la GET A LIFE), this takes the FAULTY TOWERS route of making all the characters a bit peculiar and surreal, including Howie Mandel as Ernie, a somewhat reformed Harold Hill type; Wendy Schall as the woman who's captured his heart and inherited the family mortuary business; Joel Brooks as her exasperated brother who longs to play things straight, but gets caught up in Ernie's schemes despite himself; and Tom Postan as a fellow flim-flam man from Ernie's past. They even have their own Manuel (a Bill Dana lookalike named Sheldon something), whose shtick is that he never talks. Try it out. ***½

AGAINST THE LAW (FOX, 10:00)—This type of thing (Maverick Lawyer Against The System) has been tried before, never successfully. Michael O'Keefe just comes off as too hyper and not at all believable in the lead. He gives even lawyers a bad name. * MONDAY

UNCLE BUCK (CBS, 8:00)—Kevin Meaney is not John Candy, and this unfunny show with major laughtrack overload is not remotely amusing. 0*

FRESH PRINCE OF BEL AIR (NBC, 8:00)—Ghetto kid moves in with rich relatives, and wacky (non-funny) lowjinks ensue. *

FERRIS BUELLER (NBC, 8:30)—See my review of PARKER LEWIS. ½*

THE TRIALS OF ROSIE O'NEILL (CBS, 10:00)—Unseen at presstime; I can't seem to work myself into the mood for this. I'm sure it'll get all kinds of critical and feminist acclaim, so if anyone would like to enlighten me, I'm all ears.

TUESDAY

LAW AND ORDER (NBC, 10:00)—This was done years ago in ARREST AND TRIAL with Chuck Connors. Except for the cars and clothes, nothing has changed. *

WEDNESDAY

THE FANELLI BOYS (NBC, 9:00)—It's okay as far as these things go, but if I want this, I can look out my front window and see better. I'll stick with the Doogmeister. **

MARRIED PEOPLE (ABC, 9:30)—The characters are likeable, although I tend to reach my Jay Thomas limit quickly. I'm liable to watch this if I have the TV on, but it's a stretch to convince New York residents that this program takes place in the Big Apple. **

WTOU (CBS, 10:00)—Unseen at presstime, as it premiered late.

COP ROCK (ABC, 10:00)—Steven Bochco was given a free hand to find his wife a singing and dancing role. Wasn't Randy Newman cool at one time? *

THURSDAY

TOP COPS (CBS, 8:00)—More hero pigs. Ugh. 0*

THE FLASH (CBS, 8:30pm)—This isn't really Barry Allen, but he's not as annoying as Wally West. Nicely done show that demonstrates super-heroes can work given a chance. ***½

BABES (FOX, 8:30)—Yay and double-yay! I was leery of a major case of cognitive dissonance when this series began, with sophisticated and witty dialogue about fat oppression juxtaposed with cruel slapstick showing beds breaking, etc., but the sight gags have since given way to more benign shtick (wacky dancing, mock fighting) while the writing is still spot-on. Susan Peretz really shines; I've been a Wendie Jo Spearber fan since BOSOM BUDDIES; but I'd like to see more focus on the middle sister, Lesley Boone. Note: With all the male-focused and couple/family-oriented sitcoms on now (even ROSEANNE is Roseanne & Dan), it's nice to have one where the ladies come first. ***

BEVERLY HILLS 90210 (FOX, 9:00)—FOX wasn't kidding when they said they were going for the youth market. This show stars the "teens" and incidentally features actors playing their parents. You've seen it before, endlessly—new kids from Iowa or Nebraska or whatever just want to fit in amidst culture and values clash. Trouble is, the lead actors already look and act as phony and Hollywoodish as their Beverly Hills counterparts. ½*

GABRIEL'S FIRE (ABC, 9:00)—James Earl Jones is such a good actor that he makes his character work. Unfortunately, he is saddled with a typical television plot that just doesn't hold up, and everyone else in the show is just so ordinary that it's almost sinful. ** for Jones alone.

FRIDAY

EVENTING SHADE (CBS, 8:00)—Unseen at presstime, but it's supposed to be a decent sitcom, even with Burt Reynolds.

OVER MY DEAD BODY (CBS, 9:00)—Also unseen at presstime, this features Edward (THE EQUALIZER) Woodward and some interchangeable anorexic female costar.

DEA (FOX, 9:00)—Please. DOA would be after, as far as I'm concerned. Just say no to this propaganda. 0*

GOING PLACES (ABC, 9:30)—Yet another one unseen at presstime. I have better things to go than watch Heather Locklear cavort with an equally insipid bunch of Yuppies.

LATE NIGHT AND SYNDICATED—Every now and then there are gems to be had in peculiar and out-of-the-way timeslots. There are some real clunkers too. Of particular interest is Universal's "Hollywood Premiere Network," syndicated on Channel 9 here in New York.

AMERICA TONIGHT (CBS)—Not the Martin Mull-Fred Willard one by any stretch of the imagination, this late-night newsmagazine gives Charles Kuralt and Lesley Stahl bigger paychecks and us another reason to turn the TV off and go to sleep. ½*

DRACULA (U-HPN)—Dracula never works when updated. The one exception was LOVE AT FIRST BITE, and that was a comedy. Better left buried. One * through the heart.

THE JESSE JACKSON SHOW—God, I wanted to like this, I really did. But somehow, Jackson's handlers have turned a brilliant orator and savvy writer into a stiff, uncomfortable-looking talking head behind a desk. The issues tackled are sometimes interesting but the methods are yawn-city. I'm still praying it improves, but I couldn't suggest how. ½*

MY TALK SHOW—This is more like the old Moll-Willard AMERICA 2-NIGHT, but without the meanness. Canada's Second City players do a nice job portraying a local talk show host and friends who are suddenly syndicated nationally. Jennifer Bass (Cynthia Stevenson) and friends are charming and unpretentious in dealing with guest celebs and wacky locals alike in Jennifer's living room-turned studio, and the show plays like it's probably largely ad-libbed. Look for it late at night, insomniacs. ***½

NEON RIDER (U-HPN)—Rich white guy brings poor inner-city kids to his ranch and turns their lives around. Father Ritter's favorite show. *

PETER PAN & THE PIRATES (FOX)—The most gorgeous theme and incidental music you'll ever hear in a cartoon. This "new and independent series" was, FOX tells us, "inspired by J.M. Barrie's Peter and Wendy," presumably the second book after Peter Pan but I'm not up on Barrie. Tim Curry voices Captain Hook. The best part of it is that the title character is, as he's supposed to be, completely amoral. He never learns a lesson, as he never remembers anything; he never apologizes or feels contrite; and of course he never acts responsibly. Life is a game for the boy who won't grow up, and that, despite what's sure to be Charren-ish objections, is exactly how this should be written. Exquisite. ****

SHADES OF L.A. (U-HPN)—Likeable story of a cop able to interact with troubled spirits after a near-death experience. **½

SHE-WOLF OF LONDON (U-HPN)—Actually better than I expected. Kate Hodge and Neil Dickson do a very nice Holmes & Ms. Watson hunting down supernatural mysteries and dealing with her shaving problem. ***

SUPER FORCE (U-HPN)—Video version of ROBOCOP, or every other vigilante comic from an independent. Rewatch the original ROBOCOP in video. *

THEY CAME FROM OUTER SPACE (U-HPN)—Harmless fluff about two alien brothers who seem to have Terran colloquialisms down pat even when they have trouble understanding Earth customs. Cute use of the paranormal powers, BILL & TED-ish in places, standard two-dimensional villain a la THE HULK, and raging male hormones. **

TINY TOONS (WB/Ambin)—This long-anticipated rebirth of the "real" Warner Bros. cartoon, lovingly nurtured by Steven Spielberg, more than surpasses expectations. Chock-full of in-jokes, cross-references and dead-on parodies (of things from Citizen Kane to STAR TREK to the Mickey Mouse Club), the series adheres to the now-standard Gary (Who Censored Roger Rabbit?) Wolf-created concept of toons, as it even pokes fun at itself (constantly). While it sometimes goes a bit overboard in its Avery-like reaction shots (eyes popping out, other terrified faces and gestures, etc.), for the most part it's brilliant and highly recommended. By the way, nice strong female as well as male toon characters. ***

WHAT A DUMMY—Ventriloquist dies, dummy comes to life. The title can also describe anyone connected with the show, including the viewers, if any. I haven't seen something this puerile since SMALL WONDER. 0*

WIDGET—Some guy named Peter O'Keefe got an actual NEA recommendation for this piece of shit. This cartoon's environmental-bandwagon gimmick is to take a bungling, shape-shifting, ever-so-cute little alien boy, team him up with a couple Earth boys and their mother-figure veterinarian friend, and have them save the world each show. Well, thank goodness we can rest easy knowing that no matter how much people fuck things up in the world (say, by underpaying the Koreans who did the actual animation on this), aliens can come and make everything all right, even if they're bungling children. So heartwarming I puked. 0*

Whew, I'm exhausted. Can I go back to books now, please? Oh, one more thing: If your PBS station gets Britcoms, three currently running that you ought to check out are BLACK ADDER II, THE NEW STATESMAN (with Rik "YOUNG ONES" Mayall as a neocon twit named Alan B'Stard) and THOMPSON (with the always-brilliant Emma Thompson, like Tracie Williams with a social conscience and a truly sick sense of humor). All for now - ta!

MY MAIDEN VOYAGE

by Ralph Sharaga

At the tender age of 38, my basketball playing days have come to an end. The evidence is indisputable. Teammates have started referring to me as "Sir." Pre-game stretching has become as hazardous as playing itself. I now root for my opponents, in the hope of sitting out the next game. My wife complains that I spend more time in bed with the heating pad than with her.

For over a quarter of a century basketball has been my only form of exercise. Either I fill the void or let out my pants. I feel like a woman who is thrown into the workforce after 25 years of homemaking.

Everyone has suggestions:

My wife, an avid jogger, pleads with me to take up running. Running? Running is something you do to catch a train, or avoid being bitten by a dog. Not for me.

My father recommends golf. The man has played every weekend for the past 35 years, and he still can't hit the ball in the air. There must be some attraction. But I can work up a better sweat figuring out my income tax.

My friend thinks I should join his health club. It has a jacuzzi, Nautilus, Universal, and a sauna. I'm too old to start learning a new language. And all those mirrors. I don't need a constant update on the state of my receding hairline.

Now, tennis has possibilities. An interesting game, and pretty good exercise. But trying to find court time is tougher than getting an audience with the Pope.

Swimming? Swimming is what one does to cool off between sunbathing sessions. Doing laps seems so monotonous. I'm afraid I might fall asleep and drown.

My mailman advises me to try bowling. I don't even know how to keep score. Besides, it seems silly to participate in a sport that allows you to go get hot dogs and soda between turns. He tells me that is what makes it an aerobic activity.

What about cycling? I have fond memories of riding my bike as a child. Good exercise. And it's a non-contact sport, unless you get hit by a car. People always say it's one of those things you never forget how to do, once you've learned. Kind of like overeating, or using a credit card.

So off I go to the local bike shop. Ten minutes after entering, I've been outfitted: Spandex shorts and matching shirt, headband, waistpack, biking goggles, biking shorts, biking gloves, and helmet with a rear-view mirror. I look like a crew member from the Starship Enterprise.

Then they give me a water bottle with the appropriate bike attachment, a patch kit, a tire pump, and an assortment of bike tools, none of which I was familiar with. Well over my intended budget, there was still no mention of a bike.

Bikes? Oh, they had bikes alright. Racing bikes. Touring bikes. And mountain bikes? I thought the idea was to avoid mountains. Ten-speed bikes, twelve speeds, 21 speeds! Were these bikes or semi-trailers? Prices ranging from \$200 to \$2000. They probably had financing, but with my credit rating it was strictly bottom-of-the-line.

The next morning I woke bright and early to a sunny blue sky. I squeezed into my biking shorts and shirt, then headed for the garage to gear up for my maiden voyage. Headband on, helmet adjusted, goggles on, shoes on, gloves on and waistpack belted. I pumped up the tires, filled the water bottle, adjusted my seat and tightened a spoke or two. Twenty-five minutes later I raised the garage door, to find it pouring rain outside. After twenty more minutes of degearing, I trudged upstairs and flopped on the nearest couch. Best workout I'd had in quite a long time.

TRAINING WHEELS

by Lynne Conroy

Here I am. Ready to begin. Ready to teach the kid to drive. As soon as she gets off the phone, that is. She failed the test for her license two times, but I wouldn't call her a terrible driver. She just needs experience. That's where I come in. I'm her mother.

The first time she failed, she blew through three stop signs. She told the Registry officer that she didn't know they were for her. The last time, the Examiner got in the car, and he closed the door. She turned on the ignition, looked over her shoulder, and backed into a utility pole. The electricity blacked out in a fire station, two hospitals, and the main transmission line for lower Manhattan. I thought the guy who failed her was really nice about it. He said she needed a little practice. She said he didn't like her. I kept my mouth shut.

After that last license fiasco, I signed her up for a few more driving lessons, so all we have to do now is practice. But these practice sessions drive me crazy. I can't reach the brake fast enough with this cast on. The doctors plastered up my whole leg. They even covered up my foot. You're right if you're thinking that it must be hard to get to the pedals in an emergency. Little pieces of plaster chip away if I hit the dash when I swing my leg over the gear shift to step on the brake. I've gotten pretty fast, though. And the cast is useful, too. I just have everyone she runs into write their names, addresses and plate numbers right here on my leg. There's plenty of room.

Anyways, it's been a week since the accident, and I've gotten philosophical. It could have been worse. What if she had run into a bigger truck? Or what if she were twins? Then I'd have both legs broken.

Still and all, I fasten my seat belt. Check the buckle. And make sure there's no slack.

Here she comes. Ready to drive.

Okay, honey, turn on the engine. Get ready to back out of the garage. Great so far. Only one thing you forgot. Right. Open the garage door.

Perfect exit.

Now, before you back up, look. Careful of that hydrant. Turn your wheel in the direction you want to go. No, the other direction. Watch out for the hydrant. Turn in the other direction! Stop! Damn!

Are you okay?

Honey, you stepped on the gas when you turned the wheel in the wrong direction. Water's coming out of the hydrant. I think we might have broken it off at the stem. Pull ahead. Let me see how much damage we did. I need a moment to holst myself out of the car with this cast on.

I'm out.

The car is lurching. Stop, I said! Stop the car!

I'll stop yelling. Just don't cry. I didn't mean to yell.

I'll speak calmly and slowly. I promise I won't yell.

I forgot to tell you to put it in "Park." I want you to shift into "Park" every time the car has to stay still. Just don't do it now.

I want you to listen carefully. And don't get scared because you'll back over it, but the car's on my foot. Now, don't start crying again. I'm fine. There's a lot of plaster between me and the tire. Leave the car in "Drive" and roll about six inches down the driveway.

It's off my foot. Now put the car in "Park." And put on the parking brake while I get in. That's the lever thing between the seat.

I'm in.

I'll call the Water Department when I get back. If I get back. I'm sorry, honey. You're right; I made a crack. Don't be upset. I'm not really mad or anything because I was a terrible driver, too. Turn on the ignition. Put the car in "Drive," and let's go. I drove worse than you. I remember that I'd make a right turn and have trouble straightening the wheel. So I'd run over someone. While they were in their living room watching TV. One guy was taking a whiz when I came through his bathtub.

Now we're rolling, and we're only a little above the speed limit. You might see if you can slow down and pull into the right lane. Try now.

Ignore the honking, honey. Looking and driving at the same time are hard. Don't stop when you want to change lanes. Make sure that you do the turn signals, too.

Good. You did good. You took your chance and missed the grey Jaguar by a few inches anyway.

But, honey, don't take both hands off the wheel to wave "Thanks." Or to comb your hair. All right, if I'm making you nervous, I'll change the subject.

What a great car this is! A 1971 Saab 99. Built like a bulldozer. Starts good, too, with the new battery in it. Maybe when you get your license, we'll sand off some of the rust. Then, we'll paint it a snazzy color. When you get to be a real smooth driver, we can take off the 4 x 4's I bolted onto the bumper and those tires I strapped on the front. Oh, it's not so bad. You're right that not many cars have them, but plenty of boats and piers have tires all over them. They protect you real good, honey.

(continued next page)

DEADLINE FEVER - November 15!!!
CATCH IT!

Here we are at school. Just pull over and put it in "Park." We won't parallel park today. This drive was the best one yet, honey. I'll pick you up after the game, and you can drive home. Bye, honey.

I'll tell you, but I won't tell her, what I did the first week that I had my license. I was driving down the expressway in our '57 Studebaker when it conked out. Someone pushed me into a turn-out. I thumbed a ride to a pay phone and called my mother to come get the car. I told her that I had to get to class. You know what? She came for my car. Then, while AAA was hitching the Stude onto the towtruck, an 18-wheeler smashed into her new Thunderbird and totalled it. If she were in her own car instead of signing the tow receipt, that truck might have killed her.

After I found out what happened, I told her that I was a terrible driver and a thoughtless person worth less than the crankcase oil leaking out of my car. I never wanted to drive again. She hugged me. She had come to get the Stude because she had been afraid too that I'd get hurt in the traffic. She loved me anyway.

When my honey gets her license, I still want to check out one more thing with her. Skidding. Nothing is worse than being in a skid and not knowing what to do. You're completely out of control. You have to stop thinking and just steer in the direction that you're skidding. And don't brake. Or else you lose control again. I'm not worried about it, though. I'll find a nice patch of ice so's we can practice.



To tell you the truth, I usually write this column a week or more after deadline, and Elaine often has to cut and paste this thing together to get any semblance of order. I only have a vague idea of what I'm going to review, as some of this stuff gets read and reviewed the night before layout. Since I have only one more column to do, I felt you should actually know what I put Elaine through, so other staffers will feel slightly better about themselves...

Staffer Mike Dobbs has forwarded me quite a bit of stuff from the good folks at Tundra, so I'd like to let you know about a few of the great projects they have coming up. In case you didn't already know, Tundra is the brainchild of Kevin Eastman (one of the "Turtle Boys") and was formed to assist creators get hard-to-place material (i.e., not suitable for Marvel and DC) into the marketplace. Their first project is in collaboration with Rick Veitch's King Hell Press. It is the BRAT PACK miniseries (my review is later in this column). The following items are scheduled for shipping on December 1, so you might put these on your holiday want list:

- THE YEAR IN FEAR 1991 (\$14.95)—Artist Stephen Bissette (SWAMP THING, TABOO) and IJ staffer G. Michael Dobbs present a 16-month portfolio/calendar. Each month will highlight events of interest to horror/fantasy fans of all types, from the birthday of Edgar Allan Poe to the premiere date of film classics like Attack of the Crab Monsters!!! Yowl! The sample art I've seen is up there with Bissette's most vivid. Every calendar page is suitable for framing.

- THE SKETCHBOOK (\$3.95)—A bi-monthly series that showcases art from among comics' most creative people. The first will preview art from the upcoming MELTING POT, by Kevin Eastman and Eric Talbot. Future books in the series will spotlight Dave McKean, John Totleben, Kent Williams and others.

- TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES - VOLUME 1 (THE ARCHIE SERIES)—This book will reprint recolored stories from the series based on the television show. It will also include a new 10-page adaptation of the first animated episode. The book will contain an introduction by Eastman & Laird. As with the early B&W issues, these comics are increasing in price, so collectors should take note. (\$9.95)

- CAGES (\$3.50)—A 10-issue bimonthly series written and drawn by Dave McKean (ARKHAM ASYLUM). Meet The Artist, The Writer, The Cat (too curious for his own good) and the other fascinating characters.

- 20 NUDE DANCERS 20 - YEAR ONE POSTERBOOK (\$9.95)—Mark Martin, creator of DARERAT and sometime TMNT artist, collects 32 (24 B&W/8 full color) of his incredible pieces from CBG, as well as new work created for this project. Printed on quality paper, in an 11 x 17 oversize book, this is must-have/double-bag for anyone familiar with Martin's crazed genius.

I want to thank the good folks at Tundra for letting me see samples of all of this material, and recommend that you all head down to your local shop and place a reserve on this stuff. Much of it will be future collectables at high prices—beat the rush!! Also, drop them a line and ask for their upcoming catalog (if you hurry, you may get one of these nifty Tundra minicomics—say, #1). Their address is: TUNDRA PUBLISHING LTD., 351 Pleasant Street, Suite 214, Northampton, MA 01060.

Evan Dorkin (this issue's cover artist and all-around great guy) has a few projects for which you might keep an eye out. Besides the PREDATOR work mentioned last time, Evan may be starting (as writer/penciller) on BILL & TED'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE for Marvel early next year. Upcoming is an anthology with Kyle Baker, Mark Badger, Robby Busch and Stephen DeStefano called INSTANT PIANO. Unfortunately, this will put off the eagerly-awaited next issue of PIRATE CORPS until February of 1991. Guess you have to pay the rent and beer tab, huh?

The AMAZING HEROES PREVIEW for Fall '90 is out and, though slimmer than many of its predecessors, it still packs quite a bit of information. I'll just run down a few things to which you can look forward this coming winter:

EROS COMIX is the new "adult" line from Fantagraphics. Most of this material will be sexually explicit, or at least suggestive.

BATHMAN is scheduled to have crossovers with GRENDAL, JUDGE DREDD and GREEN ARROW, plus a number of solo adventures. He, PUNISHER and WOLVERINE are still the hottest characters in comics, not to detract from the Turtle Boys' success.

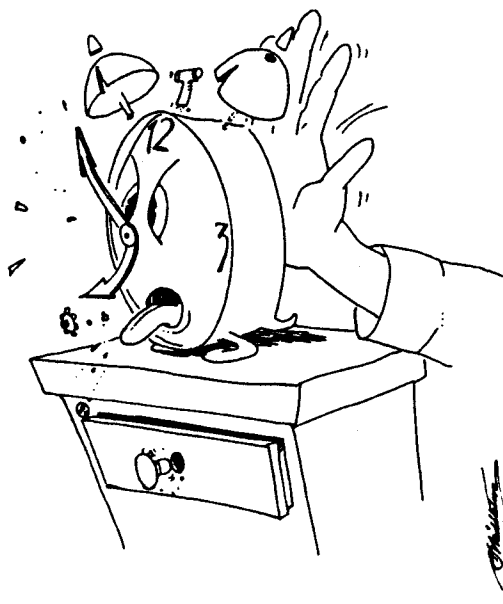
BETTY BOOP will be returning this year in an all-new graphic novel. Also look for a P.E.T.A. fundraiser, with work by Neil Gaiman, Grant Morrison, Kyle Baker and others.

Two big "prestige format" miniseries from DC are TWILIGHT (with Howard Chaykin doing to the likes of Tommy Tomorrow and Space Ranger what he did to Blackhawk and The Shadow) and BOOKS OF MAGIC written by Neil Gaiman (which will delve into the occult forces at work in the DC universe). (Incidentally, I'll be reviewing the new book co-authored by Gaiman, Good Omens, in my next column.)

I'd like to recommend two new miniseries by a few of the best and most innovative artists in the field (no, John Byrne and Todd McFarlane are not whom I had in mind!):

HARD BOILED (Dark Horse; \$4.95 US)—I'm not familiar with artist Geoff Darrow, but if his work with writer/cocreator Frank Miller is any indication, he is an incredible find. The two have developed a frightening dystopia of corporate excess and greed that, together with the Miller/Gibbons GIVE ME LIBERTY, make up two books that any serious comics/SF fan has to have. Highly recommended.

BRAT PACK (King Hell, in association with Tundra Publications; \$2.95 US)—Writer/artist Rick Veitch, whose miniseries THE ONE was one of the comics highlights of the late '80s, strikes paydirt again with this very black comedy that proves Dr. Wertham's deepest fears about those strange people in skintight costumes and the children they "take under their wing." Characters like Kid Vicious, Doctor Blasphemy and Midnight Mink could only come from a mind too deeply disturbed for the mainstream. Veitch is truly someone to watch and collect. Recommended. *NoTary Sojoc*



NOT by Larry Oberc

A good idea running up behind me I stop turn see what's going down he's got a bucket swinging tells me he's out of gas I was sparechanged too much all ready quarters leave my hand leave me in the laundry mat wondering where to break a buck this guy swings that bucket like salvation army santa clauses who frown when you tell them you gave on the way in swings that bucket like a weapon he don't take my walking on as a no starts to follow asks me if I'm deaf asks me if I can't hear and he's talking loud angry telling me all I got to do is talk to him give him an answer and people are looking at me looking at him wondering just who did who so wrong and I keep on walking and he's there stuck like some fucking shadow clicking at my heels and I know I don't owe this jerk a favour I don't owe him a goddamned thing and he's there getting louder and crawling in my skin and I know the street is hard and I know frustration and hunger and anger and I turn around look this fucker in the eye and I slam my fist into his face and he stops and his eyes don't even blink and he stares at me watches as my fist comes back again feels it land into his gut and his eyes make me back off the way they got this smile the way they laugh at all my motion and I don't feel guilt I don't feel ashamed I just feel tired and angry and like I need some rest....

BIGHEAD
BECOMES
A HERO
TO LOCAL
SKATERS

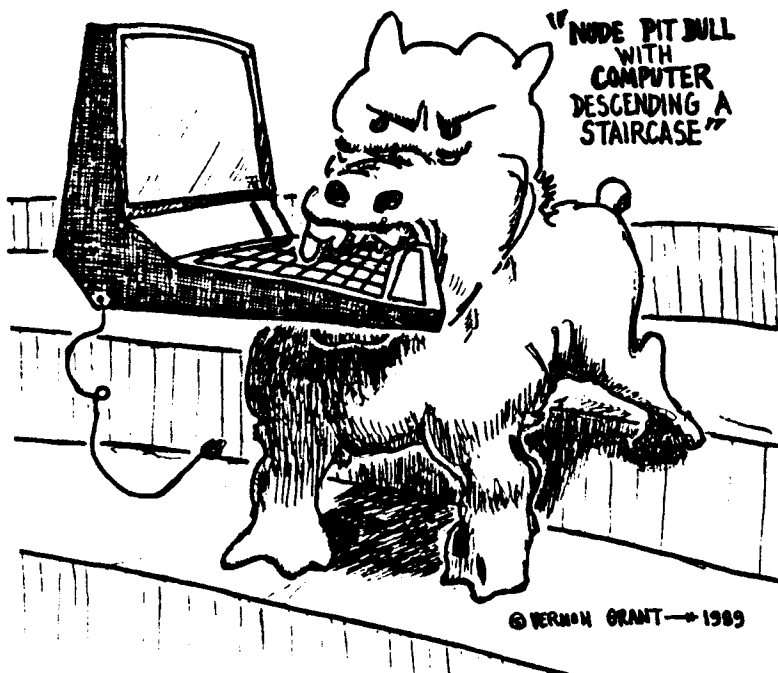


Japanese Offer Trade Restraint

TOKYO (YU) — The Japanese have announced new self-imposed export quotas on athletic shoes and training bras. Leading manufacturers here agreed late last night to restrict their production to no more than the worldwide demand. Last year, more than 500,000 pairs of

Japanese running, jumping, and court shoes were sold on the American market at 50 to 60% of the price of comparable American-made footwear. Sales of Nippon training bras in the U.S. amounted to \$9.2 billion, and the number of units sold average 14 bras for every man, woman, and child in the country.

YU News Service



THE PROBLEM OF HOW ONE PROPERLY ADDRESSES A DOG ONE'S MEETING FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME

by Wayne Hogan

It's recently come to my attention that we have something of a problem with not knowing how to properly address a dog that we're meeting for the very first time.

Do we say to its master, "Oh, what a cute dog. What's his name?" when the "his" may in fact be a "her?" Or do we instead mutter, "Oh, what a cute dog. What's her name?" when in fact, the "her" may actually be a "he?" Or do we simply refer to it as "it" and let it go at that?

See the problem?

Believe me, it matters to dogs' owners that their pooches be addressed correctly. I know it sure matters to me. Few things tick me off more than having some otherwise-well-meaning somebody repeatedly refer to my lilac-scented, rouge-covered female basset as "he." "It" I can stand okay. But "he" really ticks me. And I'd feel the same if my beloved almost-a-person pet were male and some indiscriminate somebody kept calling my "he" "her."

And then there's the problem of knowing the proper way to correct the person who's addressing one's dog by a name that's inappropriate for its gender. Does one blatantly put it that "he's a she," or vice versa, as the case may be? Or does one instead seek to avoid hurting the other person's feelings by ignoring the matter altogether, leaving one's defenseless Best Friend to bear up as best he/she can?

See the problem?

There's also another irritant we dog owners feel, that of having the love-of-our-lives addressed neither as "he" nor "she" nor "it" but, rather, as "fat." As in, "Oh, what a cute little dog. What's the fat little thing's name?"

You see the problem.



THE ALIENS OF HOWARD STREET Part Two

Driving deeper and deeper into the forest, jeep-lights cutting wildly into an increasingly ominous military-green landscape, it suddenly hit me like the sock at the end of a wet clothesline. I was being abducted.

"Any idea where we're going?"
"Yup".

"Hey! What's going on here anyways?" We spun to an abrupt halt outside a low, wide cabin illuminated, and none too reassuringly I hasten to add, by a lone green porch bulb. "Come on, okay? I've got a show to do tonight. In Burlington! In", checking what was left of my watch, "HALF AN HOUR, for crying out loud!"

But my driver (the strong, silent type obviously) simply motioned me to follow him inside, where what appeared to be an accomplice sat crouched in front of a portable TV. Engrossed in what appeared to be a game of Astro Warrior. Without looking up from the set, this gangly guy barked "You're back. FINALLY. Listen, take over for a sec here, will ya? I gotta check on dinner".

Indeed, an ornate tray stacked high in grilled cheeses appeared moments later, placed with an undue flourish at the center of a rickety old table in what, for all I knew, was a nightly ritual in this uncharted neck of the woods.

"Finish this game for me Teddy, okay? I'm up to the third screen already, so DON'T BLOW IT".

"Listen, excuse me fellas, but could either of you possibly clue me in as to where we are, why we're here, and --"

"Wanna sandwich?"

"I beg your pardon?"

"Better hurry, before they get cold".

If ever competition was held to determine Vermont's - no, make that the NATION'S - thinnest grilled cheese, THESE would win, tongues down. I bit in nonetheless... after all, it HAD been quite a long day.

"Good, huh? Here, try a little vinegar on it. Jeff's own secret recipe, HAH HAH HAH".

"Not bad", I had to admit. "Now, as I was saying about my --"

"WATCH IT!" The television flashed with computer-simulated astro warrior fragments, then went blank as it sang "Out Of Weapons. Try Again".

"Dammit Teddy, you KNOW how long it takes me to get up to that screen. Honestly, sometimes I think you do these things on purpose".

Stabbing at his grilled cheese with one hand while stabbing off the television with the other, the one known as Jeff began anxiously pacing the near empty room, walking in ever widening circles until he was practically climbing the walls.

"Relax, will ya? We got a while to go yet".

"Yeah, I guess. How long though?"

"They said midnight, right? That's when they usually come".

"Right. Midnight. Okay".

"MIDNIGHT?!". I couldn't help but scream at this point. "I'm supposed to be ON STAGE at midnight. Ready to sing 'I Get Around'. I'll have you know. I can't stay here til midnight! You guys gotta get me outta here! Listen, just drop me off where you picked me up. By the highway, okay?"

Teddy and Jeff glanced at one another briefly, then turned their four eyes on me. Silently.

"Sit down", I was told.

"Better do what he says".

I sat down. (to be concluded)

THE PARTY OF HAS-BEENS

by Tamarina Dwyer

I could invite them to a party,
all ten of my old boyfriends.

they like to drink

they like to talk

they even like spin-the-bottle if it has something
in it.

I could fix the first one a cup of tea.

In it I could put a flea.

I could serve the second one a bowl of soup.

In that I could put the leaf of a poison oak.

For the third one,

I'll play a love song and its lyrics I'll sing,

love and marriage

love and marriage

they go together like a whale and partridge
but

my fourth ol' lover

I'll take to the den.

There I'll show him the fish I caught last spring,

the bluefish because he seems so sad

the trout because he is such a pout,

the lobster because he's getting redder by the minute
but

there's my fifth old boyfriend.

I'm going to dance with him on the balcony.

He'd swirl me even farther

only he might fall over the railing too.

He might die in somebody's arms.

He might also land on his feet alone.

I've got a picture to show the sixth.

It's in my bedroom.

It's on the bureau.

It's next to my bed.

He'll look at it and say, it's pretty.

He'll look at me and say, you're not as
pretty as your picture

though the hour is late

and

it's time for my seventh.

The seventh and I go downstairs to walk
in his garden,

This one hates weeds

but he'll look at a rose

if I pick the thorns off first.

I can't stand it though

and I want to watch TV with the eighth.

He always liked Look Homeward Angel.

Yet he's walking backwards if it's ever
been done before

so

I'll go up to the roof with the ninth.

He likes to pretend he's high.

Neither of us will reach for the stars

but he's the only one who really said,

when you wish upon a star

it makes no difference who you are...

Tough.

I want the tenth.

He sits on the moon.

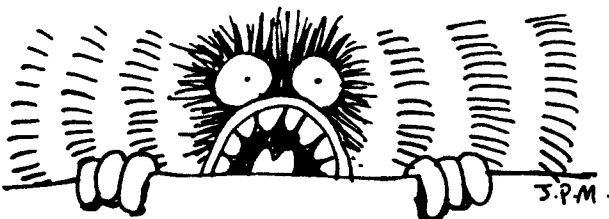
He eats green cheese.

He sings,

I'm in the mood for love...

THE HUMAN RACE'S
Prospects of survival were
considerably better when we
were defenseless against
tigers than they are today when
we have become defenseless
against ourselves -
Arnold Toynbee.
I don't feel all that defenseless
thanks to being the sole possessor
of the richest and most truth-revealing experience the
world has to offer. Forty years

later I'm still flabbergasted.
It first happened a million years
ago more or less unless I fail to
win over the rest of you bird-
brains to my way of thinking in
which case we will surely wind
up with a lifeless planet and no
afterlife. Nature demands fair
play. Send S.A.S.E. to:
4 WAY HEREBEFORE
Box 2243
YOUNGSTOWN - OHIO, 44504



"THERE IS NO PILLOW SO SOFT
AS A CLEAR CONSCIENCE" -
French proverb.
How can anyone (save me) have
a clear conscience in this world
of unending winnerless wars,
inflationary fixed wages, blue
collar work avoidance and
death? - Send S.A.S.E. to:
4 WRONGS RIGHTED
Box 2243
YOUNGSTOWN - OHIO, 44504



♪ THE TRUMP SYMPHONY ♪

by Scott Elliot Mann

One night God said to Donald Trump, "I am giving you one last chance to enter Heaven. All you have to do is win a little foot-race. The course is one billion kilometers long, and runs through Hell."

"They've adopted the metric system?" marvelled the Donald.

"All Hell will be there," the God went on, "aligned along the course, cheering you on as if you were one of their own. After what seems, and indeed is, an eternity, you will see before you the gateway to Heaven. Just before you reach that finish line, your rival will enter the race. Even with a 999,999,999-kilometer head start, I suggest you run as fast as you can, if the fate of your soul still matters to you. Get ready, get set, GO!"

Trump was off, racing for his soul, his eye fixed on the horizon, away from the faces of the eternally damned lining his path. To occupy himself as he ran he made imaginary deals, his mind's eye supervising their implementation down to the finest detail. One day, after he had conceived enough casinos to cover the land portion of our planet, Trump saw a point on the horizon grow into a small white billboard with black lettering. It read, "ONLY 0.1 KILOMETERS TO HEAVEN." Rejuvenated, he hurdled the good news and rushed headlong down the home stretch. But ahead stood another billboard with even better news than the previous one: "0.01 KILOMETERS TO HEAVEN," it said. Trump jumped, but the sign snagged him, causing him to lose his footing, sending him stumbling toward a sign with the best news yet—"0.001 KILOMETERS TO HEAVEN." Trump cleared the barrier, only to land on top of the sign that stood right behind it. The sign smithereened, and Trump careened, smashing into sign after sign after sign, splintering "0.0001," "0.0001," "0.00001," *ad infinitesimalitum*. He slammed into the ground a hair's breadth from the entrance to Heaven, as 1's and 0's and decimal points rained down on him. 999,999,999.99 kilometers back, God's finger plucked the lined-up denizens of Hell like a violin string, rocking them back and forth; this swaying swept down the line in waves, pulsating past the fallen Trump and tilting into Heaven as a melody. The race over, all Hell broke loose from their ranks, and welcomed Trump into their midst.

Trump woke from his nightmare with that melody still echoing in his head. That morning he met with his inner circle, humming the tune with ever-greater exasperation, for no one could recognize it. He called together his outer circle, then the circle beyond that, until finally his wife's Haitian beautician named it, sending Trump scurrying to his office with a recording of the piece. As it blared from the speakers, Trump blared back, "We'll see how lofty you really are. I bet I can bring you down to my level. I'll snag you with this bait." Trump brandished a wad of bills, which he used as a flabby baton to conduct the piece. Over the roar of the music he bellowed into the phone: "Hear that tune? Make it mine. I don't care if you have to purchase every copy of this music on the face of the earth!"

Later that day the musicians of the Southern New Jersey Community Orchestra were informed that Beethoven's Ninth Symphony would no longer be on the program of their upcoming concert. After the rehearsal a lone soul remained seated, one Mr. Watanabe, the orchestra's second bassoonist, an elderly man of Japanese descent. He stared at the sheet music on the stand, longing to bring all those notes to life. He put his mouth to his reed to practice the second bassoon part of the Ninth Symphony, but just then a custodian emptied his stand.

The next day Watanabe went in search of his own copy of the second bassoon part of the Ninth Symphony. All copies of the score have been returned to the publisher, the conductor told him. Thus Watanabe travelled to New York City, only to hear from the publisher's customer service representative that all editions of the Ninth Symphony had been pulled from circulation to correct a misprint. This surprised Watanabe, for he had never noticed that the Ninth Symphony contained a defect. The bassoonist decided that if he could not practice the piece, at least he would listen to it, flaw or no flaw. He visited the library at Julliard, but found that all the recordings had been checked out; nor did he find any copies in the bin labelled "Beethoven: Symphony #9" at Tower Records. Bewildered, he wandered the streets of New York, until he passed a 3 x 3 array of TV monitors, each of which showed a beaming Donald Trump announcing at a press conference his purchase of the original manuscript of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. The black hole sucking up all copies of the Ninth Symphony now had a face, and an address. Watanabe stared at the top of Trump Tower.

Meanwhile, high above that very street, Donald Trump leaned back behind his desk and repeatedly stretched the fragile autographed manuscript of the Ninth Symphony as if it were a wrinkled dollar bill. "The takeover of the millenium," he mused. Someone called to say that there was no more space for the myriad descendants of that manuscript collected from all over the world. Scores, records, tapes, compact discs, floppy discs, laser discs—Trump's warehouses were crammed full of them. Trump replied, "Tonight we'll use all that stuff as landfill in New Jersey. Dump it all into that huge hole we own near Atlantic City, then pour in the concrete. Someday we'll build a new casino over it."

That night bulldozers dumped mound after mound of manifestations of the Ninth Symphony into an enormous crater, until it was filled with tons of sheet music, countless discs of various sizes, and miles of magnetic tape. But the pouring of the concrete was postponed when someone spotted a man way out in the middle of the

dumping ground. It was Mr. Watanabe, playing the march from the Ninth Symphony on his bassoon. The foreman got on the phone, and soon amid whirling sheets of music a helicopter landed next to Watanabe.

Donald Trump emerged and said, "You almost got sealed inside this mass grave. Please get inside the helicopter." Watanabe ignored him, and continued to play his bassoon. Trump sized up his opponent; seeing that his adversary was elderly, and was reduced to playing from memory, Trump chose to wait out Watanabe's musical filibuster. Soon the tiring bassoonist began making flubs. His memory fading fast, Watanabe leaned more and more forward, hoping to find amid the piles of sheet music at his feet the second bassoon part of the Ninth Symphony. Doubled over, he repeated the same two notes like a broken record. "Don't worry," Trump crowed, "a new Ninth Symphony is coming soon to refresh your memory, note for note as good as the original, with one improvement." He whipped out the original manuscript; scrawled across the top of the page were the words "The Trump Symphony."

Watanabe screamed, throwing down his bassoon with such force that it pierced the ground and stood upright, vibrating. He grabbed his instrument to steady it, but instead Watanabe himself began to shake, and his wail resolved into the Ninth Symphony's most famous theme. He was driven forward as if he were clutching a divining rod, signing and gyrating to the music as he cut a furrow through its paper and vinyl husks. Plow and man merged into a single image, that of a stylus reverberating in a record's groove. Beneath this giant phonograph needle the ground began to move, as if the whole landfill were on a giant turntable. Trump spun around and around as the music crescendoed, faster and faster until he was flung like a speck into the silent stratosphere. From this great height he fell back to the earth, back to the Ninth Symphony, now synonymous, for what rushed up to meet him was a raging seascape whose waves rose in perfect synchrony to the music's climax. Falling ever faster, Trump tore his name off Beethoven's manuscript, but it was too late; he plunged into the roaring, swirling maelstrom and vanished, leaving but a small wavelet behind.

Still trying to extract his bassoon from the ground, Watanabe turned around and discovered that Trump had vanished without a trace, save for the original manuscript that fluttered on the ground, now minus Trump's name. Watanabe retrieved the manuscript and turned it over to a university. Years later—long after the mystery of Trump's disappearance had been forgotten—experts studying the manuscript found a new note in Beethoven's handwriting that no one had noticed before. Performances of the Ninth Symphony that incorporated this little grace note could not be improved upon; even the critics had to admit that here was perfection. Though he would never be aware of it, Donald Trump had entered Heaven after all.

THE FACTS

by Myrna Sharp

"Susan," Daddy calls me. "Come in here, please."

I go into the living room. There's a card table set up smack in the middle. Marilyn and Daddy are sitting across from each other. A chair is between them.

"Sit down, Susan," Daddy tells me, and I do.

There's a piece of paper on the table, and Daddy has a pencil in his hand.

"When a man and a woman fall in love," Daddy says, "they want to spend the rest of their lives together. So they get married."

I wonder what's going on. Why is Daddy telling us a story in the middle of the afternoon at this table like this? I look at Marilyn. She's three years older than me. She's frowning.

"And because they love each other very much, they want to have children that they can love very much, too."

This is a boring story. Not like Daddy's usual funny ones. Marilyn is biting her fingernails. What's the matter with her, anyway? I can hear Mommy knitting in the den right near us. But I can't see her.

Now Daddy's drawing on the paper and saying, "The man puts his penis inside the woman." Who cares? It's nice and sunny outside. I look at the picture. It looks silly. It looks like somebody's finger is bleeding. I giggle. Marilyn starts to cry.

Daddy talks some more. It's a stupid story. All of a sudden, Marilyn jumps up, yells "No!" real loud, and runs crying into the den to Mommy. She's acting like a great big idiot! It's the funniest thing I ever saw in my whole life. I burst out laughing.

Daddy looks at me and says, "You're a little young for all this, Susan. Did you understand what I said?"

I shrug and say, "Yeh."

"Do you have any questions?" he asks me.

"Can I go outside and play now?"

HOUSE FOR SALE

by Jess Wilbanks

When he retired, Steward and Xice wanted to leave Cleveland for a warmer climate. They had Florida in mind, but as they were driving through the north Georgia mountains they noticed a house for sale; it was just outside a small town called Ringo. It was not an unusual house, but it stood out to both of them. It was on the side of a mountain high above the highway. Just beyond the house was a small road leading up the mountain; a faded sign said, "Watch Tower Road." They were already slowed down looking at the house, and they almost unconsciously turned up the road. It was about three miles to the top of the mountain; the road ended, and there an old tower stood.

At first the old tower looked deserted, but as they continued to look up at the tower, they saw a forest ranger making his way down the rickety stairway. He called down a friendly hello to them. He seemed to be about their age, and wore a neat black uniform; he had snow-white hair. Xice noticed that he was handsome and filled his uniform well.

"My name is Albert Conroe," he said.

"Do you know anything about the house for sale at the foot of the mountain?" Xice asked.

"It's already been sold," Albert said as he smiled at Xice.

"That's too bad; it's such a lovely place," she said.

"I bought it myself awhile back, but if you're interested in a nice quiet place off the beaten path, I would consider selling it for a small profit," Albert replied.

"Do you live there?" Xice asked.

"Oh no," he said. "I really don't need the place. I only bought it because it seemed like a bargain at the time. If you're interested in a quiet peaceful place to finish out your life, you'll never find anything better."

"Could we look at the place?" Steward asked.

"Better than that," said Albert as he handed Xice a key. "The place is completely furnished; there's food in the pantry, and should you want fresh milk or bread, there's a little country store a mile or so down the highway. Spend the night or a couple of weeks if you wish." He smiled and winked at Xice.

"Well, how nice," Xice said as she returned Albert's smile.

He winked at her again, and said, "Afterwards, if you're still interested, we can talk about a deal."

Steward looked at Xice; she nodded her head, and he said, "We'll accept your offer at least for the night. Where'll you be tomorrow?"

"I'll be around when you need me," said Albert.

Steward and Xice found the house to be all they expected and more. They both fell in love with the place. During the night, Xice had some pleasant dreams about Albert; she was ready to buy the house the next morning. But Steward thought they should look around a bit and check out the country store. At the country store, Xice mentioned they were the guests of Mr. Conroe, the forest ranger.

"You mean Old Man Albert Conroe gave you a key to the house on Watch Tower Road and invited you to stay as long as you like. Is that what you're tellin' me?" asked the man behind the counter.

"Is there something wrong with that?" Steward interrupted.

"Oh no, 'course not; there's nothing wrong at all, except this happens every two or three months. Old Albert's daughter owns the house all right, but it's been nailed up for years. She lives in Florida, but she has a man who keeps up the yard and sees after the place. But you see, no one has lived in that house, nor has anyone worked in that old tower, since Old Albert died 15 years ago," said the man in the store.

When Steward and Xice returned to the house, the doors were indeed nailed shut, and the windows were boarded up. They saw no "For Sale" sign, and there was no evidence of their being there.

Steward said, "I don't know what the hell's going on, but we're getting away from here."

As they drove away, Xice looked back and saw Albert sitting on the front steps; he smiled and waved goodbye. She smiled and waved back to him.

"Who're you saving to?" Steward asked.

"Oh, just Albert's spirit," she said. "Do you believe in ghosts, dear?"

"Of course not. I don't know how, but we were tricked," he said.

"Albert was so handsome; didn't you think so, dear?" Xice asked.

"An old white-headed man was all I saw," said Steward.

"Maybe it was the uniform," Xice continued.

"Will you look at the map? I think we should try to pick up Interstate 75 pretty soon now," said Steward.

"Did you ever wear a uniform, dear?" Xice asked.

"Nope, no uniform. I see I-75 coming up; we should make better time now," Steward said. "I intend to spend tonight in Florida."

"Do you think we'll ever be back in Ringo, dear?" Xice asked.

"I don't know; where's Ringo?" he asked.

"It was such a lovely place, and Albert was so unusual; he was generous, kind and handsome too," Xice said. "I'm sure he was attracted to me, as I was to him; we just had that special something that only we could see. I feel almost like he's still with us. I feel safe and content; it's like he's watching over me."

"What'd you say? Watching over what?" Steward asked.

"Oh, I was just thinking. I feel like I'm young again," she said. "It's like all my troubles are over."

CHICKEN BLOOD

by Stephen C. Tierney

His name was Clarence, but everybody called him "Chicken Blood." He got the name because he was probably the best chicken thief in all Texas. In the wee hours of the morning, he would foray out to capture his quarry. Chickens, like humans, sleep their soundest just before awakening. Using "tin snips"—that is, wire cutters—he would cut the chicken wire to the chicken "coops" and deftly place a rubber band over their beaks, one at a time, but he never stole more than two chickens at a time (one to carry in each hand) and, also, he did not want to arouse undue suspicion. The loss of two chickens would be a quandrous mystery to his victims. Then, Chicken Blood would use larger rubber bands to bind his game around the legs and body.

When he had two neatly bound, he would seal the cut wires to the chicken coop so precisely that it would take a Sherlock Holmes to detect his forced entry. Returning home, Chicken Blood would wring their necks about one block from his home and carry the chickens by their feet, with their necks trailing blood down the dirt alley (thus deriving his name "Chicken Blood").

He didn't do this for fun. Chicken Blood was feeding his family. An old man and woman had raised him from the time he was about one year old; their daughter left him with them and ran off with a traveling circus barker. Chicken Blood was what we now call a Downs Syndrome child. The grandparents raised him as best they could on a handyman's meager earnings.

Chicken Blood had buck teeth, was always smiling and took nonembarrassment totally for granted. His two claims to fame were, one, he could remember certain things backward and two, he could play "Yankee Doodle Dandy" and a couple of other songs on his armpit. "Yankee Doodle" was by far his best and most requested rendition. He would cup his right hand under his armpit and pump his left arm rhythmically to make simulated musical sounds.

Chicken Blood had uncannily shrewdness in several ways. For instance, one evening Sue Ellen, one of the neighborhood kids, had a birthday party. The major game and best prize of the evening was for Pin the Tail on the Donkey. Chicken Blood showed up (uninvited, of course) and waited until all the kids had their try at the donkey tail-pinning. Chicken Blood noticed that the exact spot for the donkey tail pin was right at his belt buckle and 3/4 feet from a gas jet near the floor. Using these two geometric points, he got almost right on the spot, and of course was awarded the prize, much to the amazement and befuddlement of the rest of the kids. After all, Chicken Blood was supposed to be stupid and loathsome. After this "coup," Chicken Blood burst into his "Yankee Doodle Dandy" routine and left in what he thought was a flourish of glory, having been, as he imagined, the life and hit of the party.

"We just crossed the Florida state line," Steward said.

It was near midnight when they stopped at a motel. Steward was tired; for the last 50 miles, when he'd look in the rearview mirror he'd think he saw Albert floating around back there. He was almost sure Xice was smiling into the back seat at someone or something, but he had had a long day; he thought perhaps he was just tired.

Xice had a bath, but Steward went straight to bed. He didn't sleep well. He kept dreaming about Albert and Xice. Albert would be in bed with them, and Steward could see his uniform hanging on a chair. He could hear Albert and Xice whispering and laughing, but they finally got quiet, and he slept soundly for the rest of the night.

When he woke, he bathed and dressed; then he tried to wake Xice. She was dead; she had a smile on her face and Albert's housekey clutched in her hand.

There was a note on the table: "I'm sorry, dear; it was love at first sight. It was almost time for me to go anyway. Albert just made it easy for me. I know, as always, you'll understand. You know that you are the only man I'll ever really...love. This is just a little thing; it will be over by the time you join me."

"Damn! Xice was always lustful, and loose with men, but a ghost? Do they mess around?" Steward asked himself.

VIEW FROM THE TRENCHES

by Brian Ruddy

A terrible new scourge is turning our city streets into war zones. As if drug-related crime weren't enough, we are now faced with an even more hideous form of urban violence: Drive-by pie throwing.

Like most antisocial trends, this rash of malicious confection chucking has rapidly spread eastward from Southern California. At first confined to the mean streets of East L.A., drive-by pie throwing has now thoroughly infested the already battle-scarred slums of St. Louis, Detroit, Chicago, New York and West Quoddy Head, Maine.

According to Detective Felix Miranda of the LAPD, the violence started as a turf war between two local gangs, the Boys 'n' Berries and the Coconut Creams, but soon escalated out of control. Now, says Miranda, the police are hopelessly out-pied. "These punks are throwing stuff loaded with pecans and even walnuts," he says, "and all we have to defend ourselves with are standard-issue graham cracker crusts filled with Cool Whip. We just can't compete."

The crisis recently came to a head over the much-publicized case of Melissa Bovinelli, a 13-year-old Brooklyn girl who was felled by a randomly-thrown pie while waiting for a school bus. Paramedics arrived at the ghastly scene

MOONLIGHT BEAMING

by Mary Ann Henn

He can't come in off the street
just stands there smiling
smoking his pipe
hovers over his old resting place
the benches in the street
Another whole day gone
Not Utopia or is it Utopia?
He watches faces watching him
Smiles at smiles but only
for a moment Nothing
is ever new Tomorrow
will be more of the same
He slumps on the bench
watches the moon his
only medal of honor
Tomorrow he'll watch the sun
Not ready for it to rise
Time has nothing to do
with him alone but never lonely.

too late to save the aspiring taxidermist, who was found lying in a pool of lemon meringue.

Law enforcement officials seem powerless to combat this latest plague. Said an exasperated Detective Miranda, "I don't have any answers. But I know one thing: legalization won't help with this one."

TOM, DICK LESS HARRY

by Roger Coleman

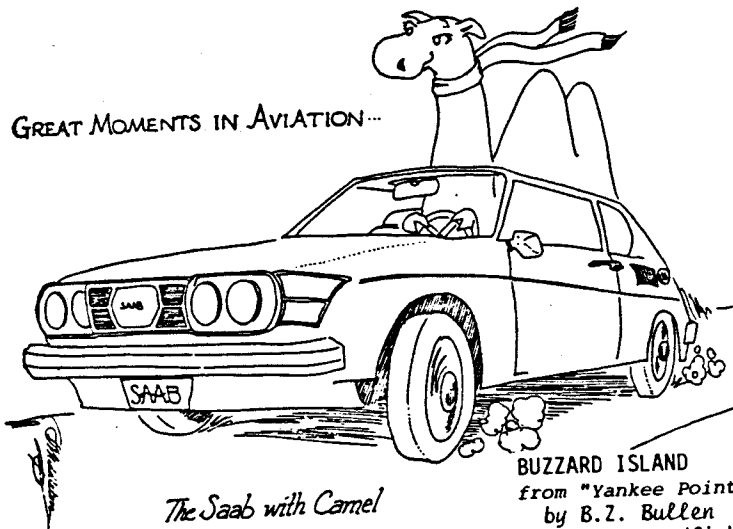
The two young men stood silently in their creased black suits. Tom was tall, slender, his military training evident as he stood erect, heels together and arms at his side, in reverent attention. Dick stood more at ease, legs slightly apart, hands folded at back. The stance seemed to fit his muscular frame. They looked into the metal casket at Harry, pale, hollow cheeked, a slight blue green cast to his waxy skin. They slowly turned and looked at each other as if to say, "Can't win all the time; the skinny little bastard won't beat us at racquetball any more."

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mediately repressed thoughts from my
past life began pouring in to repair
the damage. Forty four years later
that process is still going on at
the mile-a-minute speed of that first
year. I consider myself more red,
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Bread-Wielding Terrorist Subdued

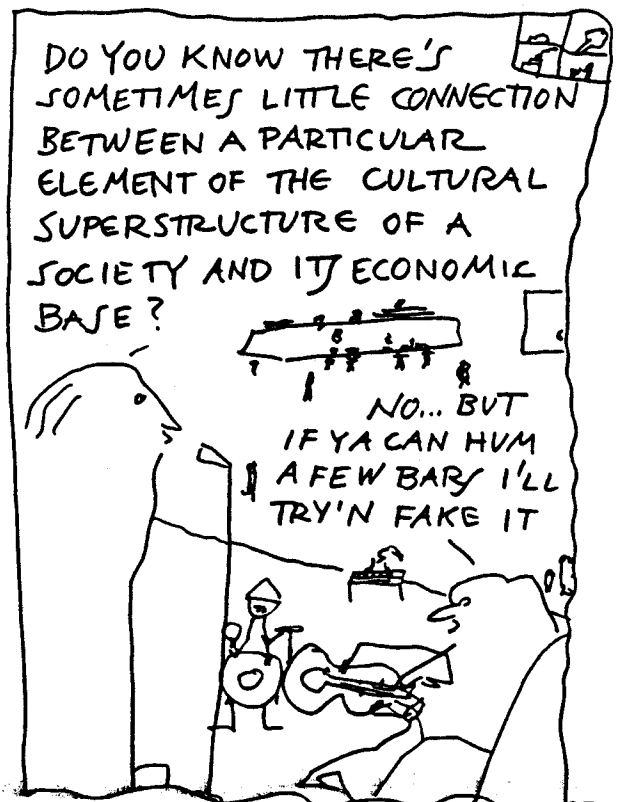
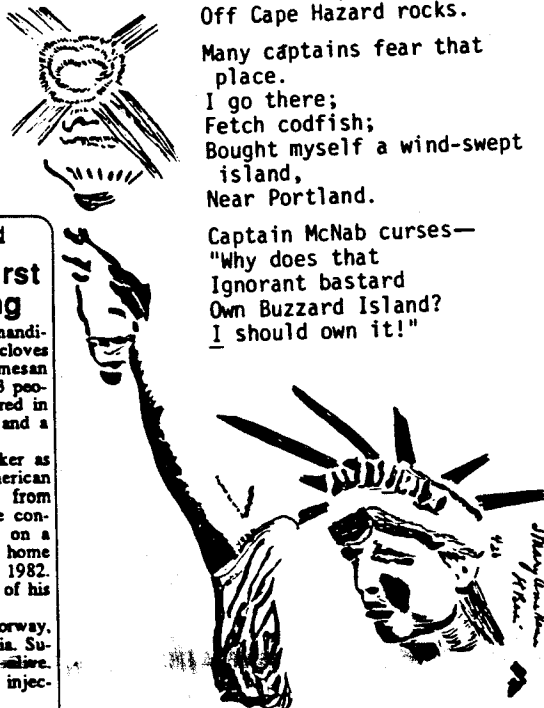
Norway Reports First Parmesan Hijacking

OSLO, Norway (YU) — A hand-
capped man armed with several cloves
of garlic and a wedge of parmesan
cheese hijacked a jetliner with 163 peo-
ple aboard Saturday but surrendered in
exchange for a bottle of chianti and a
loaf of crusty bread.

Authorities identified the hijacker as
Kenneth Sutherland, 53, an American
computer programmer and poet from
Virginia who claimed he became con-
fused after taking a wrong turn on a
Washington freeway on his way home
from Columbus Day festivities in 1982.
Sutherland offered no explanation of his
presence in Oslo.

It was the first hijacking in Norway,
and only the fourth in Scandinavia. Su-
therland is the first to be taken alive.
His execution by lethal herring injec-
tion is expected within the week.

YU News Service





A SHORT HISTORY OF REVOLUTION

In spite of Marxist dogma there are physical revolutions and there are revolutions of ideas. Spartacus (?-71B.C.)

was no intellectual, simply a gladiator who got tired of killing people. Escaping from gladiator school, he was joined by 90,000 other gladiators and slaves. They were all killed by the Romans.

The Roman Empire was replaced by a revolution of ideas, a rather bizarre collection of dogmas known as "Christianity." The Christians were originally communists, in every sense of the word. The Acts (4:32-37) tell us that "all things were common property to them," and "they would be distributed to each, as any had need." A couple named Ananias and Sapphira kept back some money for themselves. St. Peter discovered the deception by magic, and killed the couple, also by magic (Acts 5:1-10). So even the early Church felt that the fat bourgeoisie must die.

Of course, everything changed when Emperor Constantine was converted, and the Empire with him. The Church became the accomplice of the aristocracy, and remains so to this day.

During the Middle Ages revolutionaries were called "heretics." An example was John Huss (1369-1415). He preached against the greed of the clergy. They burned him. His followers, however, became a democratic movement of peasants against landowners, which made some gains for the peasants, and later phased into the Protestant Reformation.

Rational revolution began with the Age of Reason. Voltaire preached the rational life and rational government, and mocked the wars between Catholics and Protestants until they stopped, a great victory for logic and satire. The apparently humorless Irish, however, have continued those wars to this day. Rousseau praised the use of reason, but claimed that there was a large part of life beyond logical analysis, and advocated the right of the individual to express himself as he chose, unhindered by dogmatic conformity to ideas about "good" or "rational" behavior. The Marquis de Sade carried the philosophy of individual freedom beyond the limit of respecting the freedom of others. However, in actual practice he was a relatively compassionate person. Anyway, these were the kinds of ideas that preceded the revolutionary period. Meanwhile, the French aristocracy had reached new depths of rococo decadence, greed, callousness, cynicism and cruelty. You know the type. They're ruling our country today. The peasants were getting a little disgusted. One day our hero the Marquis de Sade, who was in the Bastille for kinky self-expression, shouted out the window that the prisoners were being slaughtered and that the people should come and liberate them. Twelve days later the people did just that. That was the beginning of the French Revolution.

The Revolution went to excess; there's no denying that. As a result the middle class succeeded in making Napoleon Emperor. Throughout the nineteenth century there was a struggle back and forth between democracy and aristocracy (represented by descendants of Louis XVI) or pseudo-aristocracy (represented by descendants of Napoleon). By the twentieth century the democratic idea had triumphed, and the rich were forced to use more subtle means of enslavement, and were never again able to carry things to the extremes of the eighteenth century.

Socialism was the idea of the Count de Saint-Simon (1760-

1825), a French Revolutionary. Saint-Simon realized that reason required that a society be coordinated as a unit by people who would use science and technology to benefit everyone. He believed that the state must provide work for everyone, but that rewards might be unequal according to the quality of the work.

Louis Blanc (1811-1882) coined the phrase "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs," which is quite similar to the communistic statements in the Acts.

All of this was before Karl Marx (1818-1883), who called the philosophical socialists who had preceded him "utopian socialists," ripped off their ideas, insulted them, placed their ideas in a pseudo-scientific, materialistic framework, and called it "scientific" socialism. Marx said that historical evolution happened uninfluenced by the humanistic ideas of philosophers and artists. Marx himself was distinctly lacking in original ideas, which is perhaps why he devalued them. He did reintroduce the Biblical idea of killing those who did not want to contribute to the common fund, however.

Later artists/philosophers who accepted socialism and added some interesting aesthetic and philosophical ideas of their own were William Morris and George Bernard Shaw. Both rejected Marxist dogmatism.

Lenin chose to stage his revolution in Russia. He persecuted more democratically-minded socialists after he came to power. Stalin carried the murder of heretics to new depths. Nonetheless, the socialist revolution continues in Russia and Eastern Europe, under the compassionate, intelligent leadership of Gorbachev, to this day.

Mao's hard-line "dictatorship of the proletariat" in China is only now beginning to show cracks, as the people become educated to expect a more human life than materialistic dictatorship offers.

In the U.S. we have the power to manipulate the government according to our will. Unfortunately, we make ourselves as miserable as possible. It's because we believe in "rugged individualism," confusing selfishness and competitiveness with real individuality, never seeming to realize that the conformist at the top of the heap is little different from those under his feet.

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HOLLOUT

...TO HOLD

Part Four by Sergio Taubmann

(Sam Steinbach is not married, but a woman calling herself "Emily Steinbach" thinks differently. Sam has been besieged with mail for her, followed closely by a wedding ring and evidence that she had broken into his apartment and showered. After calling him at work, Sam decides to investigate her. However, a trip to her home town only produces a story of how one Emily Pontipen died in a car accident. Concerned with the potential danger, Sam buys a gun and returns home...)

There was a message on his answering machine when he got home. Rafe was furious—his lagging behind had cost them the TolTech deal.

"You should've acted on the Olsen offering immediately, Sam. Savarin couldn't wait any longer while we researched new ways to finance," admonished Rafe's voice from Lord knows where. There was a pause, followed by a sigh. "This was a big package for me, Sam. A big package for the company. You got to stay more on the ball. Call me."

And then he hung up.

Sam took off the new sweater and placed it on the coatrack in the foyer. The weight of the handgun he had bought pressed against his ribcage. The salesman wasn't content with selling him just a gun. Oh, no. There had to be a holster, and ammo, and cleaning supplies, who knows what else before Sam called it quits. It still felt alien, wrong, strapped to his body. Still, Sam felt it better to feel safe than comfortable.

He went into the kitchen to get a drink. Rafe's news, while not unexpected, had upset him. Something like that would put him under scrutiny by the senior partners of the firm. He wasn't ready for that; scrutiny came when he had done several exceptional deals that made the firm very, very happy and was looking for a new partner. It was not to come after his frazzled nature had cost them a major merger commission. Sam was supposed to control his career path, not this "Emily."

He didn't bother turning on the light in the kitchen; no use in adding his need to clean it to his already-immense list of anxieties. Sam dug out a can of pineapple juice and shuffled over to the cupboard for a glass. The shades were halfway open, letting in light the color of an old bruise. The glasses on the draining board caught the light and reflected it on the walls, making faint, crystalline patterns.

Sam stopped for a moment and looked toward the draining board. There were glasses there—glasses and dishes and containers, the debris of the last few days of his life, all cleaned and polished to a bright, cheery shine.

"Emily" had been here. "Emily" could still be here.

Sam took some deep breaths. It was vital for him to stay calm. He took the gun out of its holster and held it firmly with both hands. Its heaviness bothered Sam, but the panic overtaking him was overruling any protests. Quietly, slowly, he went through every room. Years of watching Miami Vice had informed his search, prompting him to bow from the waist rapidly before entering a new room. At that moment, he feared death. Granted, one does not clean all of a person's dishes only to kill him, but there was no internal logic to this woman's actions, and Sam did not want to underestimate anything.

She had cleaned everything. Every room, every closet, every space that could be scoured was. The apartment practically glistened and shone from "Emily's" efforts. If the cleaner weren't such a lunatic, Sam would have to admit she had done a good job. However, the way no surface was left unbesmirched did nothing but emphasize the fact that this woman, whoever she was, was seriously unbalanced.

His first impulse was to call the police again. He ran to the neon wall phone in the hallway outside his bedroom. He got as far as dialing the first three digits before the realities of his last conversation with the police weighed down upon him. The absurdity of his situation would certainly cause any sane officer to laugh out loud; forget about help.

Sam Steinbach, Mister "Pick-It-Up-and-Put-It-in-Your-Pocket," the merger magician himself, the man who had ruined more lives and put more people out of work than anybody at his firm, walked slowly into the foyer. With a deliberateness that surprised even him, he crouched down and held the gun as if it were a live preserver. The phone rang.

Sam leapt up into a fighting position, legs apart, arms out in front of him, gun clutched in his hand. The second ring relaxed him, although he couldn't help the feeling of apprehension that overcame him. His body was buzzing with an adrenaline high, sizzling and popping like well-done bacon. He strode over to the living room phone, the staid black rotary on his work desk. His right hand grabbed the receiver. His palm was slick with sweat, as was his whole body. The stale, musky scent filled his nostrils.

The phone rang a third time.

Sam picked it up.

"Hello?" a female voice asked. "Emily's."

Sam hesitated before talking. "What do you want from me?" he replied in a very faint, whispery voice.

There was a pause on the other end of the line. A car horn honked long and loud. "Sammy? Is that you?"

"I'm not your Sammy," Sam Steinbach replied. "I don't know where she is, maybe she's leaving, but he's not me. I don't want anybody

else." Sam was surprised at how calm his voice sounded, considering the cacophony going off inside his head. It was a miracle he could even speak coherent sentences, with the roaring of his blood in his ears.

"Sam? You don't sound right."

"Don't come here again, or I will have to protect myself. Do you understand that?"

"Emily" was quiet on the other end. "What's going on there?" she asked, panic sneaking in on emotional cat's feet.

"Leave. Put Emily back in the grave and go home," Sam said levelly before hanging up.

He had changed into dark clothes quickly, his gun never out of reach. The sun was going down, its rays making horizontal bars on his chest. The taste of fear was heavy on his tongue; an electrical, coppery flavor not unlike newly-spilled blood. His eyes were always on the door. Sam's muscles were tensed into coils, ready to spring in case "Emily" returned. She had drawn the line by invading his apartment—his home. She had done this several times, and every time he had been preoccupied. Now he wasn't going to leave until this was resolved.

She may not have known it yet, but "Emily Steinbach" had declared war.

The phone rang often as Sam crouched down waiting. He had not bothered to turn on any lights as the city put on its evening dress. Sam would be damned if he'd let the bitch know where he was. As the apartment got dimmer, his eyes began to adjust to the nighttime landscape of his home. There was a light in the hallway, and it created a pool of pale illumination that sneaked in under the door. Occasionally, the light was blocked by shadows; his tenants returning from where tenants go in the morning.

Time began to lose meaning to Sam. His eyes stayed on that pool of light, watching as people passed by his door on the way to their own. Only the phone's brassy tones and the faintly-heard radio from across the hall kept him company. To keep his mind alert, Sam found himself singing along with some of the songs he recognized. But it was singing from some other self; his mind was definitely elsewhere, definitely on the door.

After an appreciable amount of time, the pool shadowed over. The shadows stopped moving. A quick count told Sam that there may be another person there.

The knock sounded like a cannon shot. Sam jumped up into a fighting stance again, taking a few steps back to allow for more maneuverability. His trainers didn't make a sound on the carpeted floor.

"Mr. Steinbach?" asked a voice. A male voice.

"Honey, are you all right?" said "Emily."

Sam was silent. He brought his gun into firing position. This woman was invading his apartment; that made his owning a gun right, didn't it? Self-defense is a constitutional right, or something like that.

The coppery flavor mingled with the smell of his own sweat in an effort to make Sam nauseous. Sam tried to ignore the temptation to leave.

There was another knock on the door. When Sam didn't answer, the man said, "Mr. Steinbach? Sir?" Sam didn't answer. He felt electrified; if he didn't know any better, Sam would've sworn that every hair on his body was standing on end.

He saw the shadows twist about, and the male voice said, "Could you unlock the door, Mrs. Steinbach?"

Sam heard the harsh sound of the key sliding into the lock. As the key turned, the tumblers releasing the deadbolt, the noise reverberated inside his skull. His right leg began to shake uncontrollably. He had to admit that he had never been more frightened in his life.

The puddle of light expanded as the door was opened. Sam had to squint to prevent himself from being blinded. There were three silhouettes in the doorway, two male and one female.

"Emily" had come home. "Emily" had brought friends.

"Get out of my house, bitch!" Sam shouted with a shocking loudness.

One of the men exclaimed, "Shit! He's got a gun!" The other man reached for something on his right side. Whatever the object was, it glinted in the light.

"Emily" just screamed. She ran away from the two men, toward the door to the next room. Sam spun around and took aim. No door was going to protect her now.

One of the men shouted, "Drop the gun!"

Sam fired. The abstract sculpture so admired by half-drunk blondes deflected the bullet and sent it boring into the ceiling. "Die, bitch!" Sam yelled at the top of his lungs.

"Drop the gun or I'll shoot!"

"Emily" had closed the door behind her and locked it. Sam took close aim for the lock and fired again.

There was a scent like firecrackers and bottle-rockets, the smell of a city street on the 5th of July. There was a pain in Sam's left shoulder, a stinging, pulsing agony that wouldn't stop. Sam turned toward the man, a scream of pain and fear rising up in his mouth—

And a second bullet hit him in the throat. Sam looked down and saw a red oilwell spring up from his body, releasing his life to the air. Sam fell to the floor, his mind becoming less and less clear with every second. Before his sight dimmed, he thought he

(continued next page)

glimpsed another universe, a place where there was no car crash, where Emily Pontipen had lived. Yes, she was jilted by this fellow from college. But it galvanized her into doing something about herself. Sam saw how there was a Sam Steinbach there who had met and married this Emily, and how he was a better person for it. He realized that something got crossed, and how that universe had bled into his own, how maybe all ghosts were nothing more than possibilities from other places, other realities, other times. This was all a cosmic screw-up, a bookkeeping mistake.

For the first moment in his life, Sam Steinbach understood everything.

For the last time, too. His final second of vision was taken up gazing into the eyes of a slimmer, more mature version of the photo he had in his car, a portrait of a woman he loved but hadn't. A woman who was calling his name.

Emily Steinbach nee Pontipen wore her widow's weeds well and, in a few months, was able to function in normal society again. She still jumped whenever a car backfired, and any disagreement in a person's voice made her cringe. But even that, she was sure, would fade with time. Life had to continue.

Every once in a while, a letter addressed to her late husband would come across the transom. Emily didn't even bother looking at it. She just threw them in the garbage and refused to open them.

CHRONICLES OF ENEOLE COUNTY

by A. Rezza Dent

INTRODUCTION: A LITTLE HISTORY

My hometown is called R-town, it's located in Eneole County and we sit plum smack on the southern border of our state. In the olden days, hardly anybody lived for miles and miles around here because the land was so rugged. But on those steep slopes there was a lot of good timber, virgin forest, and a big lumber company bought up the land and started cutting down trees. They set up lumbering camps—sort of central bases for the men who went out to work in the woods. At the camps they built houses for the loggers' families and a store where they could buy supplies they needed. It wasn't long before the women demanded schools for their children, then they asked to use the schools on Sunday to hold church. Before long the lumbering camps became regular little communities.

The lumbering company had laid off their land in 21 towns and named them with letters. There were three tiers of seven towns each. A-town was in the northwest corner of the company land and U-town was located in the southeast. R-town was located right in the center of the southernmost tier.

As the lumbering died out, the lumbering companies sold off their land as fast as they could. Some of the land was good for farming and was quickly settled. Oil, gas and other minerals were found on some of the land, and developers soon came in to exploit those resources.

Eventually, as communities grew, the new residents wanted real names for their towns. Some took Indian names like Watahaug and Wynsott. Some were named generically for natural local features like Soggy Bottom and Skunk Hollow. Some towns took names of famous people like Washington, Franklin, Jefferson and Kilroy. But the folks in our town aren't at all pretentious; they were satisfied to stick with the original town name—R-town.

South of the state border the valley in the mountain was perfect for raising beef cattle. Zachary Thare had gone west in the Gold Rush days, came back with a small fortune and wanted to see his investment grow. In the west he'd seen ranches raising beef cattle and thought he'd give it a try. He knew the high valley from his younger days when he'd hunted there. He bought the land, built a small house and bought some cows. Soon he needed so many ranch helpers that a small town built up, and, of course, everyone called it Tharetown.

Being rather secluded in the high valley, our two communities, although in different counties and different states, have been closely linked. Over the years the history of one town seems to be an integral part of the history of the other, so in the CHRONICLES OF ENEOLE COUNTY you are apt to find many references to people and doings over the state line in Tharetown.

THE UNITED STATES SCHOOL

From the early days, folks in the high valley have put a great stock in education. Folks told proudly about Hi Pottenoose, R-town's first college man, whose pappy sent him off to college to study mathematics. Ole Hi was mighty proud of his son and once when he was home he took him down to the barber shop just to visit with the "boys." Young Hi just sat back content to listen to the familiar patter of conversation about folks and doings in and

about R-town. Ole Hi had brought his son down to show off his education, but the boy didn't say anything until some of the men eventually got around to asking him how he liked college.

Young Hi assured them that everything was going just fine.

Jesse Heckel asked, "Just what is it that you're studying in that there college?"

"I'm studying Mathematics, sir," Young Hi replied respectfully.

"Well," continued Mr. Heckel, "why don't you say something for us in Mathematics."

Young Hi thought for a few minutes. It was a foolish question, but he thought he could repeat for them some of the math formulas he'd learned.

"Pi r²," he slowly replied.

At that his father became incensed. He dragged the lad from the shop and as they headed for home the father exploded, "Do I send you to college so's you can come home and make a fool of me? I ain't got any fancy education, but even I know pies aren't square, they's always round."

There weren't many students in R-town, or Tharetown, who went to college, because there was no high school in the high valley. It wasn't until after the Big Depression that they finally built the United States School. The United States School is well-known for its athletic teams, its cattle judging teams, and the quality of musical talent it has produced over the years, but mainly it is known because of the school being located in two states. The northern part of the district is R-town and the southern part is in Tharetown.

Our towns are located in a mountainy region. R-town and Tharetown are both in the same high mountain valley and are kind of cut off from the outside world. The folks in both towns wanted a high school, but neither town could afford to build its own school, and neither town had enough students to have their own high school anyway. That was when some of the folks came up with the idea of building one school, right on the state line, for both towns.

They had a lot of red tape to cut through before they could do it. The local folks were for it one hundred percent, but the two state school commissions weren't. There were letters and phone calls, attorneys brought in and legalities wrangled. Our two towns united in sending delegations to both state capitals. They united in sending letters. They united in sending lawyers to plead their case. At long last they received permission to build a school. Harley Hare, the barber, who always was good with the turn of a phrase, said: "We won our school by united action of the folks in both states. I think we ought to call our new school the United States School." And everyone agreed.

POPULATION GROWTH

Being up in a mountain valley like we are in R-town, the population didn't grow from an unstoppable invasion of outlanders; we increased the size of our community mostly by the unstinting efforts of our citizenry. Of course, some citizens have contributed more to the community than others.

A traveler drove into town one night. He was having trouble with his car. He stopped at the R-town Diner to see if he could find someone to work on his car. Stew Potter, who runs the diner, told him that the only mechanic in town was over the mountain visiting his kin, but would be back later that evening. Stew recommended the traveler see if old Miss Young would rent him a room for the night.

The traveler saw Miss Young, arranged for a room, and then went back to the diner for some supper and to see what news he could get about getting his car fixed. There was no one in the diner except Stewie, so after he'd finished eating, the traveler, to pass the time, suggested they play some cards.

"Don't play cards," Stewie said. "I tried it once, but I didn't like it."

The traveler said, "I've got a flask of whiskey in my car. How about sharing a friendly drink with me?"

"Don't drink," said Stewie. "I tried it once, but I didn't like it."

The traveler tried once more. "I've a set of checkers in my car. How about a game of checkers?"

"Don't play checkers," said Stewie. "I tried it once, but I didn't like it. But I tell you what—my son lives down the street. He might play some checkers with you."

The traveler studied Stewie a moment, and then replied, "He's your only child, I presume."

Then there was Sean Bean. Sam and his wife, 'Randy, lived over to Bean Holler (I do mean 'Holler,' 'cause the Beans were the hollerin'est folk for miles around.) Sam and 'Randy had been married about fifteen years and they had about fifteen children.

When Little Sixteen was born, Old Doc told Sam that he owed for most all the last birthings and this was the last time he was coming out there unless Sam paid up his bill.

"I promise you, Doc, this will be the last time," Sam vowed.

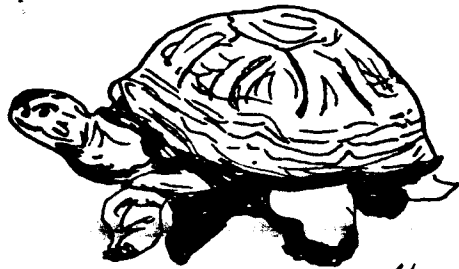
"If my 'Randy is ever in a family way again, I promise, I'll hang myself."

The next spring Sam showed up at Doc's office, pleading with the doctor to come see after 'Randy, who was having another baby.

"Sam," said Doc, "didn't you promise me that if 'Randy ever became pregnant again, you'd hang yourself?"

"That I did, Doc," said Sam solemnly. "When I found out 'Randy was in a family way again, I went out to that old tree in my yard and strung up a rope. I stood up on an old crate and put the rope around my neck. I was ready to kick away the box, when I got to thinkin'." Sam, is you hanging the right way?"

So to paraphrase a famous quotation, "Ask not what your community can do for you, but what you can do for your community."



DOUBLE OCCUPANCY

by Dale A. White

Mr. Peeve decided to complain to the hotel management about the dead body in his room.

Ordinarily, Mr. Peeve avoided making a fuss. If the quality of an establishment wasn't what he expected, he simply didn't patronize it again. Under these circumstances, however, he had to express his dissatisfaction. Surely, no one expected him to spend the night with a cadaver.

Frankly, the dead body surprised him.

Mortimer House appeared to be a fastidiously tidy little inn. The remodeled Victorian mansion offered a homespun diversion from those roadside shoeboxes Mr. Peeve usually checked into on long business trips: Porch swings as white as picket fences creaked and swayed on the veranda. In the parlor, rose-petal wallpaper and ceiling-high bookcases basked in the glow of several globe lamps. In the lobby, a mahogany banister bent like a double-jointed arm as it swept guests up a carpeted staircase. Upstairs, bay windows overlooked treetops, bird nests and a willow-fringed river.

"You need anything, love, just say so," Mrs. Mortimer, the proprietor, insisted. "Don't be embarrassed. We're family here." As plump as a baker's wife and as cheerful as a child, Mrs. Mortimer personified the very ambiance of hearth and home.

The meek Mr. Peeve found comfort in her moon-shaped face and button-brown eyes. "I'm sure everything is fine." He meticulously entered his signature in the register. "All I need is peace and quiet, a long rest."

"Got yah," Mrs. Mortimer said with a wink. She discreetly pressed a brass key into his thin hand.

Mr. Peeve carried his bags upstairs. He had no trouble finding his room. Nor did he have any difficulty finding the body in his bed.

"Excuse me," Mr. Peeve employed a tone several decibels higher than his usual speaking voice. "Sir?"

The stranger didn't respond. He looked as if he were napping in his best suit. He wore a black coat, a starched white shirt, a crimson necktie, a gold tie tack and a matching set of cufflinks. A floral bed comforter was tucked beneath his arms. His bloodless hands were folded over a Gideon Bible. And his chalky complexion indicated that he truly couldn't be disturbed, except perhaps by Gabriel's horn.

"Oh, my," Mr. Peeve's nervous system sounded an internal alarm. His knees knocked. His bones rattled. His stomach asked for permission to use the bathroom.

Mr. Peeve breathed deeply and collected himself. He noticed a tag dangling from the dead man's wrist. He adjusted his bifocals to read the cursive inscription: "Compliments of Midtown Mortuary."

Mr. Peeve suspected a practical joke. He removed a mirror from his shaving kit and pressed it against his roommate's nostrils. He expected the sunken eyes to suddenly open, a chilled hand to suddenly grab his arm. Yet the scare tactics didn't occur. The mirror didn't fog.

As flustered as he was frightened, Mr. Peeve deliberated about what to do. "I must tell her. I have no choice."

Mr. Peeve returned downstairs. He found Mrs. Mortimer polishing the front desk.

"All comfy?" she asked.

"No," Mr. Peeve squeaked. He cleared his throat. "I don't know how to say this."

"Something wrong with the room, dear?"

"Well, there's a dead man in it," he said apologetically.

Mrs. Mortimer smiled affectionately. She waited for him to elaborate.

Mr. Peeve expected her to be at least slightly distraught. "I repeat: There's a dead man in my room."

Mrs. Mortimer's smile didn't falter. "Go on."

"That's it," Mr. Peeve stammered.

Mrs. Mortimer and Mr. Peeve exchanged puzzled glances. They read each other's faces as if they were studying a foreign language text.

"You don't want the dead man?" she asked uncertainly.

"Why would I want him?"

The question astonished Mrs. Mortimer. She dropped her hefty jaw and pressed a hand over her heart. "I don't pry, sir. What goes on when you close your door is your business."

"Don't you understand? There's a dead man on my bed."

Mrs. Mortimer's jaw worked itself back into its sockets. She nodded appreciatively, as if she'd finally translated the troublesome phrase that comprised Mr. Peeve's face. "I see what you mean. You need a cot."

"I don't need a cot. I don't need anything. I just want this dead man taken care of."

"What does he require?"

"He doesn't require anything. He's dead, I tell you!"

"So you have. You're very emphatic on that point. I'm sorry, Mr. Peeve. If your dead man doesn't require anything, I don't know what you expect me to do."

Mr. Peeve angrily slapped the counter. "I want him moved!"

"You could have said that in the beginning," Mrs. Mortimer snapped. She resentfully filled in the blanks on a work order.

"How do you want your dead man moved, Mr. Peeve?"

"How?"

"Rolled over? Sitting upright? Propped against a wall? If you don't want him on the bed, where do you want him?"

"I want him out."

"Two of you aren't getting along, eh?" Mrs. Mortimer glanced at her keyboard. "Room 2-D is vacant. I'll store the old boy in there. No extra charge."

"You can't put him in another room," Mr. Peeve argued.

"Do you want him moved or not?"

Mr. Peeve spoke slowly. "I don't want you to move him. I want you to phone the authorities so they can take charge of this matter—properly."

"What should I say when they ask why you have a dead man in your room?"

"He's not in my room. He's in your room, the hotel's room. He was here before I arrived. You know what I mean. Just hand me the phone." He snatched the receiver as she dialed.

"Police," a front desk sergeant answered.

"My name's Peeve. I'm a guest at Mortimer House and I've got a dead body in my bed."

"Is that right?" the sergeant flippantly remarked.

"I mean: I'd like to report finding a dead body in my bed."

"Oh, you'd like that, would you?"

"Listen. I'm serious. I want to report a death."

"Then give me the facts and cut the opinion." The sergeant could be heard scrolling paper into a typewriter. "What's the deceased's name?"

"He's a John Doe."

"A. John Doe. Not very original, Shakespeare."

"He's a stranger. I don't know his name."

"Identity, unknown." Typewriter keys clanged. "How did he die?"

"I don't know."

"Cause of death, unknown. Time of death?"

"I don't know. He's been dead for some time. He's already embalmed. In fact, there was a card attached. It named a funeral home—Midway, Midtown, something like that."

"Time of death, unknown. Has the body been moved?"

Mr. Peeve beamed at the disinterested Mrs. Mortimer. "I made certain the body wasn't moved. Of course, it may have been moved beforehand. It must have been."

"Place of death, unknown. Sketchy story, Peeve. What's your gripe against this guy? What could he have done to you?"

"Nothing. He's dead. That's why I want him picked up."

"Dying is no crime, sir."

"Body snatching is, though."

"Do you have unlawful possession of this corpse you call A. John Doe?"

"Yes. No. Maybe. He came with the room. Ask Mrs. Mortimer." He handed the phone to the innkeeper. "Tell the policeman the corpse came with the room."

"The corpse came with the room," Mrs. Mortimer casually confirmed.

Mr. Peeve snatched the phone back. "You see. She talks about it as if it were a mint on my pillow or a free bar of soap. What am I supposed to do with a complimentary stiff in my bed?"

The sergeant sighed. "You must not be married. Otherwise, you'd know."

"Surely, someone in this town is missing a dead relative."

"We all miss our departed loved ones, sir. Listen, if you intend to file a complaint, say what you mean. I can't submit a report to my shift supervisor with so much ambiguity. He's a stickler for details. He expects proper syntax, proper citation of source material, and a conclusion that's backed up by the facts. Besides, clarity of expression is eighty percent of the game."

"For a public servant, you're no help at all."

"There you go again. Redundancy. Some informant you are."

"Thanks for nothing."

"What's that? An oxymoron? Can't use it."

Mr. Peeve hung up. Exasperated, he intended to tell Mrs. Mortimer he'd move into the vacant room. Yet he discovered her registering an elderly couple who'd just walked in.

"You got our last vacancy, 2-D," Mrs. Mortimer said. She gave the room key to the husband, a nappy gentleman with a white handlebar moustache. "If you need anything, just say so. Don't be embarrassed. We're family here."

"There is one thing we'd like," the husband mentioned with deep earnestness. He supportively clasped the arm of his stoic wife. "We'd like a dead man in our room, please."

Mrs. Mortimer frowned. "I'm sorry. Mr. Peeve here has the only room with a dead man at the moment. And he doesn't seem intent on giving him up, I dare say."

"Lucky dog," the wife muttered as she glanced at the carpet.

"Why would you people want a dead man in your room?" the shocked Mr. Peeve asked the stern-faced couple.

"Such impertinence!" the husband scoffed. He looked at the ceiling to avoid eye contact with Mr. Peeve. "Damn tourist has the only dead man in the establishment and he has to lord it over everyone." His whiskers stiffened with indignation.

"Lucky dog," the wife said as she looked at a hatrack.

"Why would he want a dead man in his room?" the husband growled. "He should answer that!"

"I don't want a dead man in my room!" Mr. Peeve screamed as he stamped the floor.

(continued next page)

"Surely, surely."

"Lucky dog," the wife said as she stared at an umbrella stand.

"I don't," Mr. Peeve insisted. "Ask Mrs. Mortimer."

The innkeeper smiled respectfully. "It's not my place to tell guests what they want, Mr. Peeve."

The couple nodded appreciatively. "Harassing the help," the wife whispered in her husband's ear. "So unnecessary."

Mr. Peeve waved to get their attention. "If you want the dead man, take him."

The husband leaned toward his wife. "Wants to play the benefactor now. The man is schizophrenic."

"Treats us as if we were charity cases," the offended wife muttered.

"He'll probably change his mind in a moment," the husband grumbled. Without acknowledging Mr. Peeve's presence, he escorted his wife upstairs. "Really!"

Mrs. Mortimer grinned triumphantly. "Will there be anything else, Mr. Peeve?"

"I'm moving to another hotel."

"There are no other hotels in this town, Mr. Peeve."

"Oh, charge me for a cot then."

"Very good." Mrs. Mortimer made the proper notation on Mr. Peeve's bill. "Everything else in your room satisfactory?"

"I guess so," Mr. Peeve whined as he dragged himself upstairs.

"So glad," Mrs. Mortimer called up to him. "Don't hesitate to let me know what you think, Mr. Peeve. After all, you still haven't checked out the bathtub."

ROGET'S REVENGE

by Frances E. Oliphant Gabino

Born-again Christian Angela Kahill lies spread-eagle and naked across the water bed. She is praying to God for Father Gregory.

The inch-long ash from my cigarette dropped to the typewriter keys. Pulling the butt from my lips, I smashed it into a saucer of dried spaghetti and reached for the pack of Salems. My fingers froze. There it was again—that slow click-hum from behind the closet doors that began each time I sat down to write. Today it seemed particularly loud.

I pushed myself away from the table; the chair leg caught in a pile of soiled panties. Struggling to dislodge a tiger-print bikini, I fell forward, flinging out my hand. My elbow struck a mold-encrusted coffee mug. Cracked loose from its glue-like grip on the table, the mug shattered.

The click-hum sound increased. I kicked through another pile of dirty laundry and thrust open the louvered doors. Silence.

Oh, I knew it was Eureka alright—Eureka vacuum, canister model 3320A. She lay inert, feigning sleep, movable parts stilled. A squat, autumn-gold beast, her thick hose-neck was wrapped tightly around her lower extremities, like a tabbycat napping in the sun. She had adjusted her position since I tossed her into the closet a month ago. Falling onto her backside then, her wheeled feet had turned upright, as if protecting herself from an oncoming blow. In spite of the guilt I felt, I had left her like that, slammed the door and returned to my typewriter.

Now I gave her a nudge with my bare foot. "There's more important work to be done than housecleaning."

"BITCH."

My body froze in disbelief. "I don't believe this. What did you say?"

Eureka's thick nose-neck unwound and began to rise, like an elephant trunk sniffing the air for enemy scents. The bristles on her drapery-cleaning nozzle quivered. "I said 'bitch.' You are a lazy bitch. And a LIAR," she continued. "You told that vacuum dealer you needed a semblance of order in your life. HA!"

"Well, I..."

"Don't sputter. Spittle removal is not written into our contracts."

Backing away from her, I heard a crunch as my foot made contact with a soda cracker. The sound reverberated through the room.

"You dropped that cracker over the typewriter keys the night you gobbled cold Campbell's Cream-Of-Potato soup from the can. Thought you were writing a masterpiece."

I felt my temper rise and bubble as her wheezing laughter flooded the room. She rolled forward, then slammed her nozzle-neck against my knees.

"Son-of-a-bitch!" My voice sounded shaky. I heard a "swoosh" as she sucked up the cracker crumbs. They scraped through to her belly.

Retracting, Eureka gasped, "Eating in the bedroom—yukk." She belched loudly, emitted a puff of dust, and shook a crumb from her bristles. "I thought dried cat-puke on carpeting was the worst."

"I...couldn't help that. I had to get the bordello scene done. Didn't have time to sponge up hairballs."

"Rubbish."

"What do you mean, rubbish?" It was my turn to bristle. "I take out the garbage every morning."

"I mean your writing—it's rubbish. Plain and simple."

I lunged for Eureka's nozzle-neck. She pulled back, then snapped forward and clamped onto the side of my head. I felt the suction move downward, and felt a pin-prick of pain as she ripped a gold stud off my earlobe. The earring rattled through her in-nards.

"YIKES! I wasn't built to digest jewelry. Where'd you get that crap? Some Tag-hag Flea market?" Revving her motor, she backed up half an inch, then sped over my left toe.

"DAMN! Damn you." I hopped after her as she rattled down the hallway, dustballs scattering in her wake. She slowed over the living room carpet, wobbled and ground her gears at the film of soot that had filtered onto the rug through screenless, open windows.

In the dining room she swerved toward Voltaire, my aggressive tomcat. He opened one eye and lifted his head, spotting Eureka. A shiver rippled across his shedding mane. Springing up on all fours, he landed with a thud and bolted for cover.

Eureka increased her speed, roaring into the kitchen. The utility closet door swung open as she rumbled past. I'd just about caught up to her and was ready to dive. The door swung back and smacked my breath away.

I crashed to the floor, rolled onto my back and closed my eyes. When I opened them seconds later, the dustmop was shaking his filthy matted head in my face, like an accusing, hairy fist. "Good, good, good," he chanted, sounding exactly like Pee-Wee Herman. He ducked as I slapped at him and rose to my feet. I saw Eureka inching toward me.

"I SURRENDER!" My hands rose to heaven. In my peripheral vision I saw cleaning supplies moving forward to the edge of their shelves, like an advancing army ready to join the attack. A snub-nosed scrub-brush began a frenzied flip-flop, dislodging ammonia fumes from its damp, stiff bristles. I coughed uncontrollably as the fumes burned my nostrils. A whisk-broom began a line-dance; the metal-armored dustpan joined in, together with a twelve-quart tin pan and a fourteen-quart Rubbermaid dish-pan, all of them yowling excitedly.

"I'll clean this weekend. Today. NOW! I swear I will." Eureka hummed in triumph and rolled forward. Her four wheel-feet clicked across the sticky linoleum. "Not enough." Her voice sounded smug, tight. "Make a pact..."

"A PACT, A PACT!" Eht five-quart bucket started the chant. Joined by cans, glass and plastic bottles: Ajax, Mop & Glow, Easy-Off, Windex, Soft-Scrub; they all yelled, "A PACT, A PACT!"

The battle-cry flooded the room, flatware and chrome-plated utensils rattling agreement against their metal cabinet drawer, dirty dishes clattering their assent from the sink.

Eureka waved her nozzle in front of my face, and motioned me to kneel and place my left hand on her squat back. I felt my knees crack, felt the warmth of her on my sweaty hand.

"Repeat after me." Her voice sounded sharp, stringent. "I SWEAR—say it, SAY it!"

I repeated the pledge, feeling my voice crack with each pause—"I swear...will...never write...another word...until...until the housecleaning gets...done...gets done first."

I rose to my feet. Eureka whacked her nozzle against my backside and snarled, "Who cares what happens to a born-again-Christian prostitute anyway."

A thumping page-rustling cacaphony suddenly rose from the bedroom. The sound echoed through the apartment.

Eureka halted her swinging nozzle in mid-air, turned from me and rattled out of the kitchen. I rushed behind her, saw her spin back through the dust-balled dining room, and whir across the living room carpeting. She circled my mud-encrusted pumps, abandoned in the hallway two weekends ago after a wild and wooly night on the town. As she ground into the bedroom, I crept to the doorway and peeked around the corner.

My eyebrows rose in disbelief. Roget's Thesaurus was levitating in the middle of the room. Catching sight of me, his sputtering shrieks increased. "You ASS, BOOB, CHUMP, FOOL, MINCOMPOOP, NINNY, NINNY HAMMER, SAP, TOMFOOL! No way will I be REPLACED - SUPPLANTED - SUPERSEDED by a - an electrical appliance - a machine!"

As if in the midst of a giant earth-tremor, the wall-length ceiling-to-floor bookcases began to shimmy and shift. Great clumps of dust and debris dislodged and filled the air. First one book, then another, and another, flew from the shelves, pulling whirlpools of dust particles with them. The books circled, whirled, and dipped low, tornado-like over Eureka.

Voices echoed off the book pages and joined in combat: Knut Hamsun, Norwegian vowels soft and clipped; Harry Mark Petrakis, Greek obscenities high-pitched and resonant; Isak Dinesen, rolling her Danish "r's; Italo Calvino, melodious, flowery curses.

Eureka turned her power up full-blast, bit and tore at pages. The air filled with confetti and dust.

Then, a great yowl rose and the cacaphony ceased, as if slashed dead by a giant cleaver. Voltaire leapt into the fray. He hissed and scratched, flinging himself onto Eureka. She turned and knotted her nozzle-neck around his throat, hammer-locking him to the floor. Immobilized by her grip, Voltaire jerked and shook his head. Like exploding grenades, the books crashed onto Eureka. Her grip loosened. The cat instantly sank his teeth into her nozzle-neck. A great gasp of horror in a cloud of dust signalled the end.

Voltaire crawled out from under the pile of books and stretched languidly. He licked the film of dust on his coat, pulled his paw across his face to dislodge bits of confetti from his whiskers.

I stepped past him, and sank onto my desk chair. Rolling a fresh piece of paper into the typewriter, I smudged away strands of cat hair and pressed my fingers on the sticky keys.

Angela jumps to her feet, smooths the satin spread tight across the bedframe, and squares the corners at its end. She thinks about Father Gregory and wonders if she should take him up on his offer. Wetting her under finger, she presses a bit of dust off the nightstand. "Housekeeper in a rectory? What a crock—I know what that horny priest's up to!"

SUNDAY SCHOOL

by Howard Shipman

Sunday school I have never been quite able to forget. You could say the experience remains in mind, surfacing every year or so when my wife drags me--pardon me, I mean I accompany her--to church on Park Boulevard.

They save all kinds of souls in this church, they tell me. The seats are awfully hard, though. I believe they have to start from the bottom up.

I imagine things are different now from what they were at one time. I see no more semi-serge blue suits about on Sunday, nor reluctantly-shined shoes exposed to all observers, since the nature of the blue suit trousers was to rise four or five centimeters above the ankle at the same time they were losing the crease. The tendency was shared by the occupant.

Somehow and incredibly, there was always a good boy with trousers of corresponding length. A wistful sight. His tie or shirt was never disarranged, which puzzled one on the brief occasions of review, since his mother--an imperious sort, rising seven or eight feet from the pavement--delineated the reasons in the clearest manner imaginable.

I regret to say the tabs of my shirt rose toward the firmament immediately after boarding the trolley which was to bring us to this Sunday destination. And my hair stuck up in back of my head without the slightest strain of remorse. The tie was an obstinate article. It preferred an unseemly latitudinal direction rather than the appropriate longitude. All ties are supposed to know this; I really think the moon had something to do with it. It makes the blood run east and west instead of north and south, in direct contradiction to repeated celestial instruction. A very contrary planetary influence.

One returned on the same trolley, which got where it was going interminably. The suit was dirty and the shirt went its way with wicked abandon. There wasn't much sin in those days. There wasn't any time.

In Sunday school I think it was the hymns. Things always began musically. There was a piano in the northwest area of the basement floor, and the notes issuing from this sturdy instrument were administered by a woman whose devotion to this duty knew no mortal limits. I suppose she was 55 or 95 or something like that, with grayish hair which did not appear to have any sense of direction. Her teeth were slightly on the gigantic side and had the same characteristics as the hair. I am very ashamed to say I remember the spaces better than the enameling.

Whenever Mrs. Whatever-Her-Name-Might-Have-Been went around bringing those hymns into re-creation, it was a tableau no spectator could possibly not remember.

She also sang the melodies. She did this with such determination and audibility that the piano was left on first base. It was strictly no contest. This righteous and, I am quite sure, sincere and devoted woman was always several measures ahead of the other choralests. All together the various sounds and vibrations combined with such thunderous force that the walls shook and the foundations trembled. I feared for the entire structure. And the continuation of Christianity.

The piano suffered terribly. Every Sunday afternoon at 12:05 its keyboard was two inches closer to the floor at its middle than it was at its ends.

And that is the way it was. If the piano has survived, I imagine it is still the same.

IF THERE IS ANYTHING
The nonconformist hates worse
than a conformist it's another
nonconformist who doesn't
conform to the prevailing stan-
dards of nonconformity. —
Bill Vaughan.

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THE GREAT RIDDLE

by Richard M. Millard

Once again, that day had arrived. And all of the townsfolk were gathered to view the proceedings.

"Let the contestants come forward!" the town crier exclaimed.

In response, two men and a woman walked forward to where King Polmer sat, resplendent in his purple robe. The men bowed and the woman curtsied. King Polmer nodded as he stroked his full beard. The men and the woman then sat on small stools that were attached to three separate poles.

"Belan!" the town crier announced.

The stocky man on the first stool raised a hand to his head.

"What has four legs and chases cats?" King Polmer asked as he leaned forward.

"A dog," Belan replied.

King Polmer smiled. "Sometimes, yes. But that is not the answer to my riddle."

The town crier released a lever and the pole to which Belan's stool was attached shot skyward, catapulting Belan into the townsfolk where his fall was cushioned by family and friends.

"I claim Belan's land and holdings as stated by law!" King Polmer exclaimed.

Many of the townsfolk sadly shook their heads.

"Sola!" the town crier announced.

The dark-haired woman on the second stool nodded her head.

"What has four legs and chases cats?" King Polmer asked.

"Another cat."

King Polmer tilted his head and grinned. "Still wrong."

Sola quickly pulled her skirt around her legs as she was catapulted into the crowd of townsfolk.

"I claim Sola's land and holdings as stated by law!" King Polmer shouted.

A ripple of grumbling ran through the townsfolk.

"Tilac!" the town crier announced.

The fair-haired lad sat uneasily on the last stool as he looked up.

"Do you still wish to play?" King Polmer asked.

"I must," Tilac replied with a hopeless shrug. "I have not the resources to tend my farm through this season. So I must gamble all on the chance that I can answer your riddle and, by law, replace you as King."

"Very well," King Polmer nodded, with a very toothy smile.

"What has four legs and chases cats?"

Tilac furrowed his brow as he thought.

"Come on, man!" King Polmer urged. "Do not waste our time!"

"Chases what?" Tilac asked.

"Cats! Cats!"

Tilac's face suddenly beamed as he blurted out, "Mrs. Cats and a lawyer!"

King Polmer's mouth fell open.

The townsfolk let out a collective gasp.

The town crier reached forward and released a lever. "Correct."

King Polmer was catapulted into the sky above the townsfolk. But since King Polmer was not particularly well-liked by the townsfolk, they scattered and let him hit the ground with a thud.

"Long live King Tilac!" the town crier exclaimed.

And the townsfolk echoed his words.

SAYZ-U (Letters)

Dear Elayne,

Well, I thought I was cleared until the end of the IJ run but the "X" popped up on my label so here's the three bucks and, while I'm at it, here's my two cents. Yea, that's pretty bad, but I couldn't resist.

My biggest complaint with Ace's column is that IJ is subtitled "A Newsletter of Comedy and Creativity," right? It's not "The Newsletter of Anger and Arguments," is it? I just don't see where Ace's opinions fit, except in the letters column, which seems a good area for venting one's opinion. That said, I don't necessarily disagree with all that Ace says. In fact, I agree with him in many instances. Radical feminists who condemn all men are as bad as, if not worse than, the worst men that they condemn. However, I don't agree that "the underlying assumption of almost EVERY aspect of feminist thought is that it is basically all men's fault." I think that's more the case of feminist practice and not feminist thought. (And I, as one might expect, think it's more the case of a few bad apples making bad cider for the rest of us feminists, as both Steve and I consider ourselves feminists in practice and thought.)

Ah, the death penalty...another can of worms. If you want to talk about "facts to ignore," how about the issue of "certainty?" If you kill a person for murder and then find out he's innocent, not an unprecedented event, you're screwed, pal. Counter-argument: if the death penalty saves ten innocent lives, is the one innocent death worth it? Well, what if it's five innocent lives and two innocent deaths? Where do you draw the line? And I'm unconvinced that the death penalty is less costly (economically) to society.

Amidst Ace's anger, though, there are gems of truth. People don't want to think things through, not just because they want to do what will benefit them, but because they are lazy and shortsighted. How's that for a sweeping generalization? You see the problem? You start generalizing, and you start sounding like a pompous, above-all-this egotist. So I'll stop.

Quickly on to specifics: The more I read Sergio's stories, the more I like them. I like the style, I like the content. A note to the Kid: I'm worried about the ever-increasing prevalence of characters named Michael in radio commercials. A Geo ad, I believe, and a Sunoco ad, to be specific. I think it's just characters' names in general. Are we supposed to identify with these characters more because they have names? Puh-lease. And, while I'm on the advertising topic, the AT&T commercials have to be the most annoying ad campaign. And incidentally, having recently moved, I was able to compare my old phone bill, AT&T, with my new, US Sprint. Folks, I can put it in writing...there are big savings.

Well, I've hogged up enough space in this column. Once again, Elayne, thanks for your efforts in keeping this going so long. I've only been aboard for about two or so of the ten years, but it's been a fun ride.

Regards,

MICHAEL BULLER
39 Glenbrook Road, Apt. 5E
Stamford, CT 06902

Dear Elayne, September 27, 90 anno Freudus

Just reading the new Dan Quayle cookbook, It Can't Always Be Cookies and Milk. Some great recipes. Right now I'm on Chapter 9, "One Hundred and One Ways to Make Lemonade." Here's an excerpt: "#67- same as recipe #66, only this time try putting the sugar in the pitcher BEFORE the lemon juice; see if you can distinguish the subtle difference in flavor this makes." Great stuff, eh? What an aesthete! What a tongue for nuance! You can see why I worship the dude.

Anyway, what did I want to say about Saudi Arabia, this month's representative of Our Way of Life? (I have to admit that when I see a woman with her mouth unveiled, I can only think of One Thing too.) Oh yeah: Fools rush in where angels fear to tread...and then said fools present said angels with a \$100 billion bill for services rendered. Nyuk nyuk!

Yours in Kropotkin,

ELLIOT CANTSIN
1961 Cedar Street
North Merrick, NY 11566

P.S. I hope that the second paragraph will still be just a joke by the time you print this.

Dear Elayne,

I haven't yet had a chance to read the last issue. What with the funeral, moving out of Sebastian's house and preparing to move into our new one (we move on the 15th of October), I haven't had much time to sit down and read.

Sebi and I, especially I, loved the wedding pressies. The bunny measuring spoons are a personal favorite, along with the candle holders. Sebi's favorites were the bunny music box and the Archie McPhee monkey clock...

I can feel now IJ winding down, and if I don't ever have this opportunity again I wanted to say it was nice to keep company with such a talented and varied group. Anni, Ken, Cathy, Dorian, Vinnie, Steve, Phil, Jay Harber, Tom Deja, Sergio, "Kid" Sieve, Rodny...It was a pleasure and an honor to appear in these pages with you. Pink Bunny and I are not sure where we're going to next appear. We're kinda shy about sticking our necks out so we're hoping to get an invitation from another zine. This is a hint, in case nobody realized it yet.

Elayne, a copy of Spontaneous Human Combustion Whenever is in the mail to you. Rodny and I are going to put it out twice-yearly, we promise. If only we get submissions. Jay Harber was kind enough to submit the cover. This issue is going for a dollar, but future issues may be \$1.25 due to costs. As you'll see we have a new format, so I think you'll find it worth the wait. "Kid" Sieve, Tom Deja and Kit appear in this issue, so there's some pretty neat stuff.

Anyway, let's all have a drink in honor of the last issue (which, although I understand your reasons, I'm still hoping never comes to be).

Luv,

PRUDENCE GAELOR
P.O. Box 177
Laurel, MD 20725

Hi Elayne,

October 5, 1990

I suspected the "Mrs." would not go over well at all, although it wasn't expected to be an insult at all. Merely pointing out that although I have subscribed I am not inside on the joke. (I don't know if preferring "Ms." to "Mrs." is an inside joke, Elliott; it's just that the whole point of the honorific "Ms." is to serve as a feminine equivalent of "Mr."--you know, to make it clear that how one is addressed should have nothing to do with one's marital status. I don't really get bent out of shape, I just get surprised that more people don't pick up on that fact. Besides, I prefer no honorific--just call me Elayne.) Haven't had time to pour through the fiction yet but Anni and Dorian are always interesting. For your demographics, I'm a 23-year-old language refugee from Quebec studying Prime Mathematics at York U. The IJ issues do not get passed on to others. Gut Yontev,

ELLIOTT PEARL
360 Ridelle, #1707
Toronto, Ont. M6B 1K1 CAN.

Dear Elayne:

12 October 1990

Well, there, you see, I've gone and done it again. I actually had planned--though I know you won't believe it--to sit down and write you a nice, long, juicy letter all about the last IJ, in some sort of attempt to make up for all my lapses of the last several months, and I was all set to do this, you know, I really was, and I was all psyched up for it and thinking about it and ready and so forth and then I sat down to do it and, well, er, I seem to have, well, in a manner of speaking, you understand, sort of, um, misplaced my copy of the last IJ. Sort of. I mean, it's not lost or anything like that--I have the distinct impression it's probably down in the shop, buried under a pile of catalogs from the smaller publishers ("Yes, now, for a limited time only, we are able to offer you 500 copies of Anais Goldwoman's acclaimed children's classic Jason Likes To Dress Up In His Mother's Clothes. Do You Want To Make Something About It? that will sit on your shelves gathering dust for the next five years, at a limited wholesale discount of 42% if you take all of them") and notices from the post office, wondering politely why I've decided to drop my p.o. box after all this time (because I see no particular reason to go on handing them \$45.00 a year to not deliver my mail, that's why)--it's just not, like, where I can put my hands on it at this particular moment, you see, which happens to be the moment I had selected for writing this IJ letter. You see.

So it's all really a shame, and I did want to write this letter--you must believe that. I know there was all manner of stuff on

which to comment--there always is, isn't there?--but the problem is that I simply don't remember what most of it was. I know that I very much liked the latest installment of the latest Prudence story--I always do--and I know that I had some problems with Ace's column, but he no longer makes enough of an impression on me one way or the other for me to recall them clearly, but, aside from that, nothing immediately brings itself to mind, unfortunately.

Oh, yes, except that I did want to just casually mention to Elliot Cantsin that, while I agree that it's impossible to express certain concepts in journalese, there are very few concepts that cannot be expressed in clear, precise English. Simply employing an eight- or ten-syllable word where a one-syllable word will do just as well proves absolutely nothing about either your point or your cleverness--it shows that you know how to use a dictionary, Elliot dear, not that you're saying anything especially meaningful with the fancy words you've memorized. Perhaps if you stopped trying to impress us with your vocabulary (and most of us did fairly well on our SATs--we don't impress that easily) and actually tried saying whatever it is you're trying to say, you'd get more cogent--not to say positive--feedback.

But that's not a letter, that's a bellyache, and not even a particularly interesting one at that. Ah, Elayne, what's a poor, lonely, soon-to-be-unemployed Witty, Acerbic, Sophisticated Commentator on the American Scene to do? (Must you really stop publishing LJ? Yes, I know you must, and I respect your decision, though the typewriter that is my heart pangs.) Turn on the VCR, put in her newly acquired copy of Where The Buffalo Roam and have pornographic fantasies about Bill Murray? That seems a reasonable idea...you will excuse me, I hope.

Up to my neck in the '90s, ANNI ACKNER, Castle of
the Chicken McNuggets
c/o Tell Me A Story
9 North Fifth Street
Reading, PA 19601

I KNOW WHAT I KNOW

by Pavele Wesser

I have received a number of letters from strange and unidentified sources recently suggesting that I am lacking in my better judgement. These began arriving at my humble home some three weeks back and have been filtering in ever since. Now, I don't understand why anyone would have the desire to slander my name when I, Eliza Brown, secretary to the Trade Group of Numsquat National Bank, have never done anything wrong in my life to warrant shame or indiscretion on anyone's part.

I am a mediocre citizen in humanitarian issues, certainly, but I have neither the money nor the time to invest. I have always deeply believed that love conquers all, although there has never been any in my life. I live alone with a cat named Snoot and I change his litter regularly. I even pay my taxes. So what's all this talk of me being a depraved and nonsensical individual?

At first I thought it was some bizarre organization I hadn't heard of before due to my chosen ignorance of the media. But I asked around and I am certainly the only one bearing the brunt of this assault. It is starting to affect my work habits, which aren't any too keen to begin with.

"Eliza, why haven't you proofread this?" They give me stern looks in the Trade Group. I find myself gulping because I am of a nervous disposition by nature.

"I will do my best," I stammer.

"But you haven't, Eliza."

"But I will now."

They sigh and raise their eyebrows at each other sarcastically. They think I'm not too smart, and that may be true, but I know what I know. And I know I am being persecuted.

I cannot disclose to you the contents of the letters because I do not use language of their nature, but they go something like: You blanking blankety blank blank (not in those words, quite). Anyhow, you can imagine my shock. I don't know what it is they're referring to and

"JUST CALL ME VLAD"

by Ted Brohl

"In fourteen-hundred and thirty-one
I was born, Count Dracula's son,
In Sighisoara, Romania,
The town of Transylvania.

"Just call me Vlad, my father's name too,
Both fond of the numbers of Turks that we slew;
The province of Wallachia I ruled with iron fist,
And I gleefully read each Turkish death list.

"I tortured Turkish soldiers, cutting off body parts,
And when death came they were piled into carts;
Impalement with stakes was my favorite game,
And 'Vlad the Impaler' was soon my nickname.

"In fourteen-hundred and seventy-six,
Near death, I ran out of stakes and of sticks,
Never a vampire, that myth drove me daffy,
And I finally died choking on Turkish Taffy!"

I've given up trying to figure it out.

I take my cat Snoot into the bathroom at night now, where I've made a bed in the bathtub. I figure whoever they are might come through the window and try to get me. There's no windows in my bathroom, see. I've always been a strong believer in protecting myself from evil. Only I haven't been sleeping too well in the bathroom and my work performance is getting worse.

"Eliza, this just won't do."

"I'll shape up, I promise."

"You'll have to, Eliza, if you wish to remain in our service."

That's when I broke down and explained to them about the letters. They just shook their heads and asked softly, "Now, Eliza, are you sure you're not just imagining this whole thing?"

"WHAT DO YOU TAKE ME FOR," I hollered, "SOME KIND OF FOOL?" They just turned their heads away and nodded sadly, almost as if they'd forgotten I was there.

I keep getting these letters and it's so disheartening. I cry in my bathtub at night while the shower drips on my cold, blue feet. But what can I do? I am only a woman, and an ill-equipped one at that.

Well, I don't open the mail any more because it's too disturbing. I just sit in my bathroom with Snoot. The other day I brought the electric heater in there because the tiles were so cold and wouldn't you know it the door swelled up and was stuck tight. I couldn't go to work, naturally, being trapped in my bathroom. I says to myself, "Eliza, this is it. They're gonna fire you now for sure."

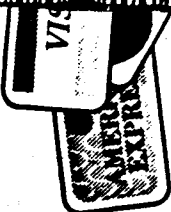
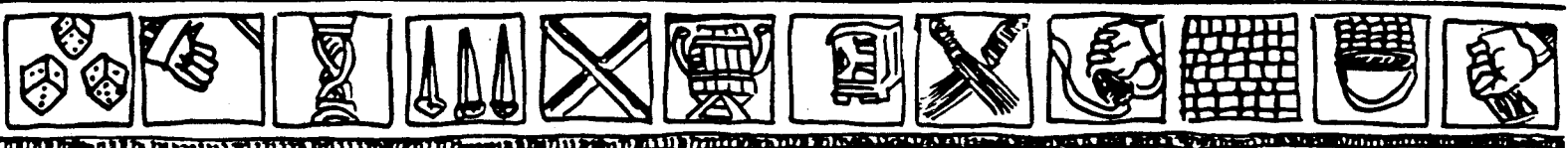
Just then the vent was knocked out of the bathroom wall, and this man appeared and he says, "Aha! I found you, you bitch! You bleeping two-timing such-and-such this-and-that!"

I yelled bloody murder as I pounded the bathroom door but there was no getting away. He jumped down from the vent and landed with a thump on poor Snoot, squishing him all over the tiles. He lunged at me and pulled my hair and bit my leg. He was frothing at the mouth like some kind of maniac. All the while I screamed like it was nobody's business.

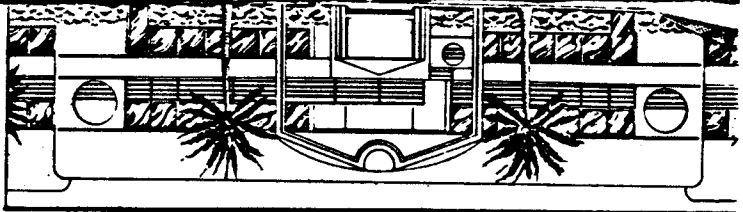
I don't know how I finally managed to do this but I kicked him where the sun don't shine, and he fell to the floor squirming and wheezing like a deflated balloon. Somehow I managed to open that damn door and I went squealing into the streets in my bathrobe all the way to the local Precinct.

Turns out that many was my superintendent. I'd never seen him before. Oh, I'd tried to get service plenty of times but he never would open his door. Turned out he was off his rocker. No one had ever seen him, it seems. But the police identified him, sure enough. Lucky for me I'm still alive and still have my job. Don't have my cat no more, though...

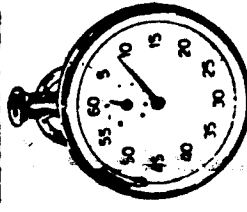
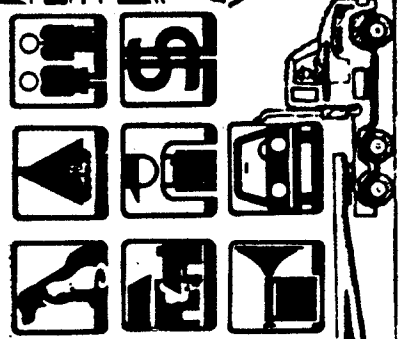
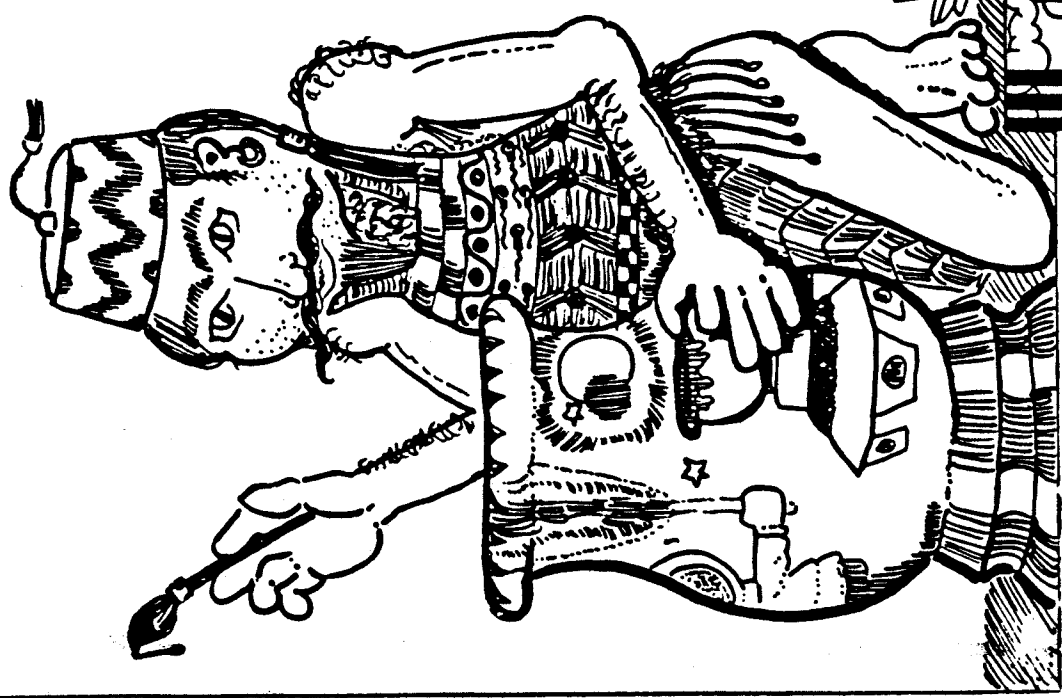
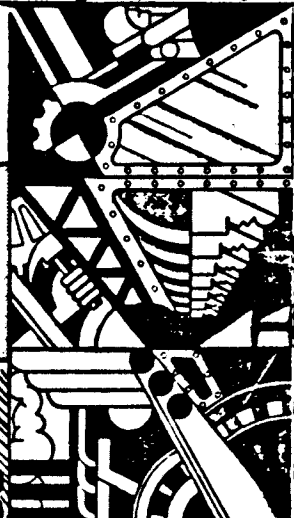
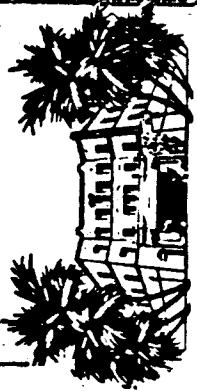
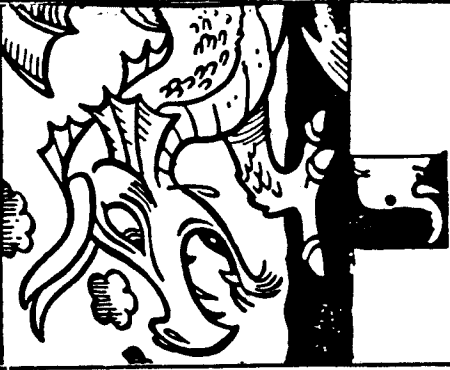
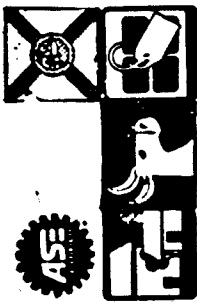
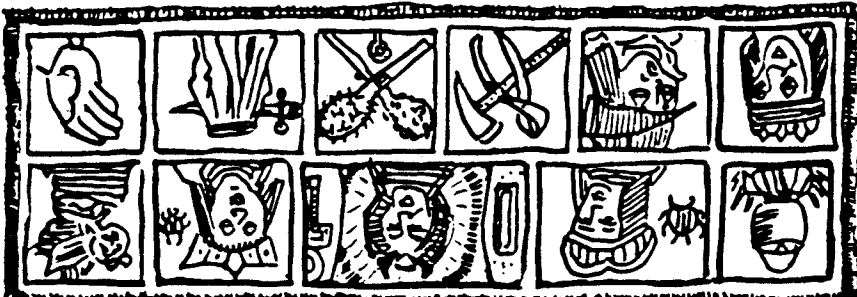
I've got one thing to say, and that's that life's a tricky business. I may not know much, but I know what I know.



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