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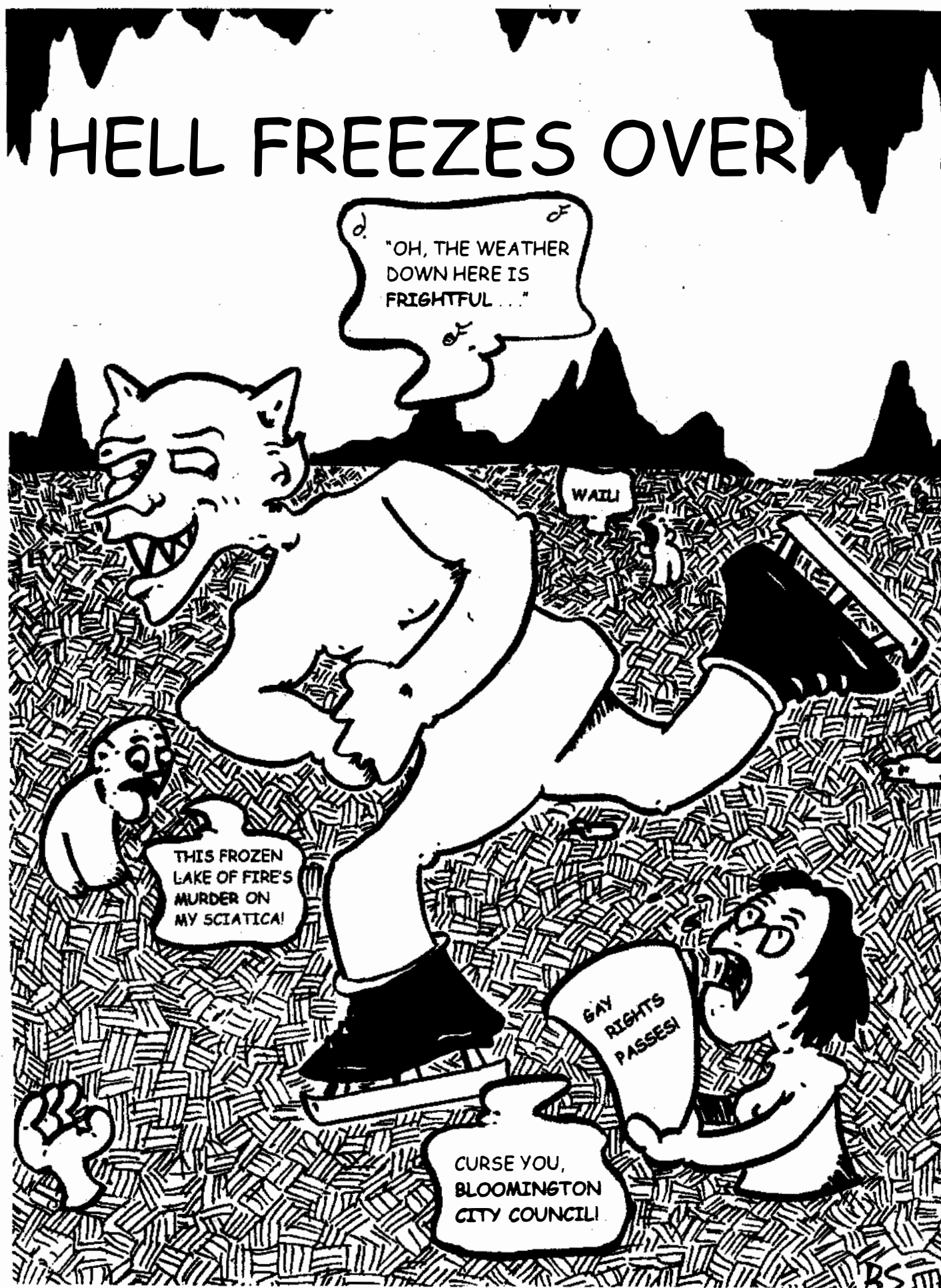
POST AMERICAN



BLOOMINGTON/NORMAL VOLUME 31

FREE

NUMBER SIX DECEMBER/JANUARY 2002-2003



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Pick up a copy

Copies of the Post Amerikan are now available for free at the following locations:

Bloomington

AIDS Task Force, 313 N. Main
 About Books, 221 E. Front
 Barnes & Noble, Veterans & Rt. 9
 Bloomington Public Library, 205 E. Olive
 Burwells, 908 N. Main
 CommonGround, 516 N. Main
 Crazy Planet Kitchen, 414 N. Main
 Gaston's Upper Cut, 409 N. Main
 Heartland Community College, Raab Rd.
 Lizards Lounge, 612 N. Main
 Shockwaves, 415 N. Main
 All About You, 1214 N. Towanda, #2
 Twin City Exchange, 411 N. Main

Normal

Acme Comics, 115 W. North
 Babbitt's Books, 104 W. North
 Campus Town, 121 W. North
 Centennial Hall, ISU
 Coffeehouse, 14 E. Beaufort
 Deadpan Alley Records, 107 W. North
 Ecology Action Center, 208 W. College
 Mother Murphy's, 111 W. North
 Movie Fan, 202C W. North
 Normal Public Library, 206 W. College
 North Street Cafe, 205 W. North
 Stevenson Hall, ISU
 University Galleries, ISU

Peoria

Bicycle Bus
 Illinois Central College

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When you move, be sure to send us your new address so your subscription gets to you. Your *Post Amerikan* will not be forwarded (it's like junk mail--no kidding!). Fill out this handy form with your new address and return it to us, P.O. Box 3452, Bloomington, IL 61702.

Name _____
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Due Date:

The due date for submitting articles to the *Post Amerikan* is: (please laser print your articles in columns of 3" using Palatino 10pt. type if possible.); or: submit via email at pamerikanusa@netscape.net **Jan 15th**

About us

The *Post Amerikan* is an independent community newspaper providing information and analysis that is screened out of or down played by establishment news sources. We are a non-profit, worker-run collective that exists as an alternative to the corporate media.

We put out six issues a year. Staff members take turns as "coordinator." All writing, typing, editing, graphics, photography, pasteup, and distribution are done on a volunteer basis. You are invited to volunteer your talents.

Most of our material and inspiration for material comes from the community. The *Post Amerikan* welcomes stories, graphics, photos, letters, and new tips from our readers. If you'd like to join us, call 828-4473 and leave a message on our answering machine. We will get back to you as soon as we can. Don't worry if it takes a while--we don't meet every week.

An alternative newspaper depends directly on a community of concerned people for existence. We believe it is very important keep a newspaper like this around. If you think so too, then please support us by telling your friends about the paper, donating money to the printing of the paper, and telling our advertisers you saw their ad in *Post Amerikan*.

Subscriptions

Subscriptions to the *Post Amerikan* are available for the low price of \$6.00 per year for six complete issues. Please send a check (made payable to the *Post Amerikan*) to: Post Amerikan, P.O. Box 3452 Bloomington, IL 61702.

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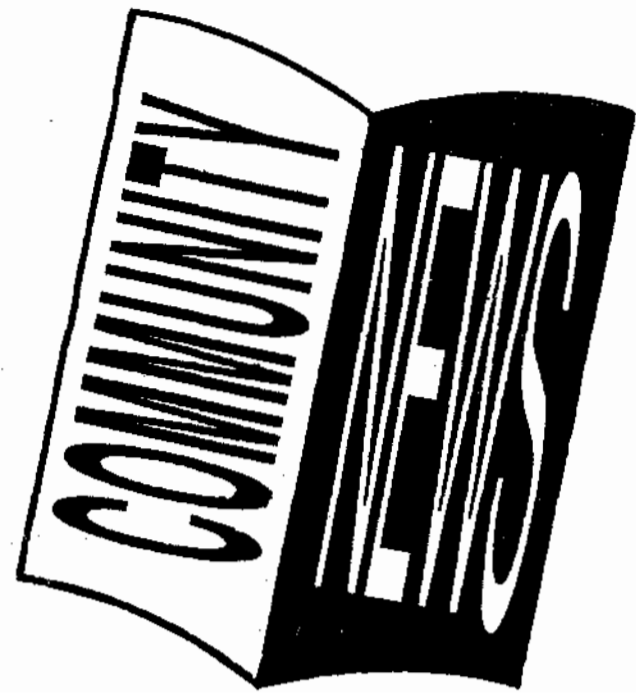
BILL, DAVID, DEBORAH,
 LINDA, RALPH, SHERRIN

Good numbers

Advocacy Council for Human Rights. 830-2521
 AIDS Hotlines
 National.....1-800-AID-AIDS
 Illinois.....1-800-243-2437
 Local.....827-AIDS
 Alcoholics Anonymous.....828-7092
 Amnesty International-ISU...Miomi@ilstu.edu
 Animal Protection League.....828-5371
 Better Business Bureau.....1-800-500-3780
 Big Brothers/ Big Sisters828-1870
 Boys & Girls Clubs of B/N.....829-3034
 Clare House (Catholic workers).....828-4035
 Countering Domestic Violence.....827-7070
 Dept. of Children/Family Services...828-0022
 Gay, Lesbian & Bi teen drop in center.828-3998
 Gay & Lesbian Resource Phonenumber..438-2429
 Habitat for Humanity.....827-3931
 Headstart.....662-4880
 Home Sweet Home Mission.....828-7356
 IL Dept. of Public Aid.....827-4621
 IL Lawyer Referral.....1-217-525-5297
 Incest Survivors Support Group.....827-0790
 LIFE-CIL.....663-5433
 Lighthouse (substance abuse treatment)....827-6026
 McLean Co. Center for Human Services...827-5351
 McLean Co. Health Dept.....888-5450
 McLean Co. Housing Authority.....829-3360
 McLean Co. Humane Society.....664-7387
 McLean Co. Peace Coalition.....828-7070
 Mid Central Community Action.....829-0691
 Mobile Meals.....828-8301
 Narcotics Anonymous.....827-4005
 National Health Care Services/
 abortion assistance.....1-800-322-1622
 Occupational Development Center...452-7324
 Parents Anonymous.....827-4005
 PATH (Personal Assistance Telephone Help)..827-4005
 Phone Friends.....827-4005
 PFLAG(Parents, Families & Friends
 of Lesbians & Gays).....862-1844
 Planned Parenthood (medical).....827-4014
 (bus/couns/edu).....827-4368
Post Amerikan.....828-4473
 Prairie State Legal Services.....827-5021
 Project Oz.....827-0377
 Runaway Switchboard.....1-800-621-4000
 Salvation Army.....829-9476
 Safe Harbor Mission.....829-7399
 TeleCare (senior citizens).....828-8301
 Unemployment comp/job service.....827-6237
 Voice for Choice.....827-4005
 Western Avenue Community Center.....829-4807
 Youth Build.....827-7507



Community News



Holiday Programs 2002

If you or your company/organization are looking for charitable opportunities for the holidays, here is a list of programs with contact information. 'Tis the season of giving...not just of gifts from the mall, but of your time and financial resources to those who may not be as fortunate.

1) Adopt-A-Family- Children's Foundation-827-0374
Business groups, families, or individuals can adopt-a-family for Christmas. (The adopted families are those receiving services through The Children's Foundation.) Donations of gifts, household items, and money are always appreciated.

2) Salvation Army- Family to Family 829-9476-Contact Marilyn
This agency also accepts sponsors to "adopt" families in need. Sponsors are provided with family profiles to give them a personal feeling for the family and for gift buying purposes. Donations and volunteers are always appreciated. Call the respective agency for more information about being a sponsor to a family in need. Applications will be taken for the first two weeks in December, 9-12 only.

3) Angel Tree Sponsored by Eastland Mall 829-9476 Contact Elizabeth Beardsley
The Salvation Army Angel Tree at Eastland Mall has tags with the names of children, their age and sex. Shoppers may take a tag and buy Christmas Gifts for that child. The shopper returns the gifts to the Mall and Salvation Army will distribute the gifts. It is important that the shopper place the name tags on the gifts so they get to the appropriate child.

4) Bell Ringing- Salvation Army 829-9476-Contact Marilyn
The Salvation Army is looking for volunteers, clubs, church groups sororities, fraternities, civic groups, etc., who would be willing to donate their time as Christmas Bell Ringers. Begins November 22, 2002.

5) Brotherhood Tree-WJBC 829-1221- Contact Janae Jontry
Families who would like to receive gifts from the Brotherhood Tree must send a written request (with names of immediate family members, their age, and sex) to: WJBC, P.O. Box 8, Bloomington IL 61702. Requests accepted Nov. 29rd through Dec 11th. Gifts will be delivered on December 21st. For donations, only new gifts are accepted. Gifts can be for children or adults. Each gift should be wrapped and marked with age and what's inside. Checks can also be given. December 18th is the last day to give donations.

6) Christmas Party for the Children of the Unemployed-Contact Mike Matejka-827-3934
For children under 12, accompanied by an adult. The party will be Dec. 21, 10:00 am at Bloomington High School, 1202 E. Locust St. For tickets write to: P.O. Box 3396, Bloomington IL 61702.

7) Coats for Kids- Salvation Army 829-9476-Contact Marilyn
Accepts donations and distributes winter coats to ANYONE who needs a winter coat. Containers for collections are located at the four local Pizza Huts, St. Joseph Medical Center, AFNI, Kids R Us, Prairie Aviation, ISU, LeRoy High School, and Salvation Army. Coats will be available for distribution at The Salvation Army starting November 1st. 9-12 only.

8) Food Baskets- Salvation Army 829-9476- Contact Marilyn
Those wishing to receive a food basket for their family must apply in person at The Salvation Army, 611 W. Washington, Bloomington. Applications being taken first two weeks in December. Distribution of Christmas baskets is on Dec. 18th, 19th and 20th. All applicants must have the following: 1) Proof of residency in McLean County; 2) Proof of income; 3) Social Security cards for each person in the household. Volunteers are needed to help prepare baskets at both holidays.

9) Food Drives- Salvation Army 829-9476-Contact Marilyn
The Salvation Army relies on help from the public with food donations for the holiday food baskets. Annual drives are hosted by Sugar Creek Elementary, Oakdale Elementary, Fairview Elementary and Pepperridge Elementary Schools. Any group wishing to host a food drive can contact the office for pickups and drop-off times. The Salvation Army and the Bloomington Firefighters distribute hundreds of Holiday Food Baskets every year so volunteer help is much needed.

10) Holiday Meals Home Sweet Home Mission- 828-7356
Contact Al McLaughlin or Emily White
Volunteers deliver full Thanksgiving and Christmas meals for seniors and individuals with disabilities who are unable to be with family/friends and who cannot or do not wish to come to the in-house holiday banquet. Meals are available to people throughout McLean County, just call in advance with name, address and number of meals needed. The in-house banquet are served at noon on both holidays. Requests for meals will be taken up until Christmas day.

11) ISU Secret Santa- ISU Student Volunteer Center- 438-8972
ISU students can be a Secret Santa for one of the needy children of the Bloomington/Normal Boys and Girls Club, Catholic Social Services, and Western Avenue Community Center. Contact the Student Volunteer Center before Thanksgiving to receive the name, age, and size of a child to sponsor. Any individual or group may volunteer. Simply spend at least \$30 and no more than \$40 per child, wrap the gifts and take them to the SVC, Rm. 310 at 210 W. Mulberry. The Catholic Social Service drop off day is Nov. 26th, The Western Avenue Community Center day is Nov. 27th, and the Girls/Boys club is Nov.. 28th. Starts Nov. 1st.

12) Toy for Tots- Today's Temporary & US Marine Corps Reserves- 662-5799
Contact Kimberly Waters.
Collects new and slightly-used toys to be distributed to the children of needy McLean County families through Salvation Army's Christmas Assistance Program. Donated toys can be dropped off at any of the several drop-off boxes at any of the participating stores, restaurants and agencies (Toys R Us, KayBee Toys, Schnucks, Cubs, Big Lots, and Eastland Mall). Will start taking donations at designated places at the end of October through December 13th. To sign up to receive gifts, contact the Salvation Army at 829-9476.

13) Book Showers for Literacy -888-9884
Contact Shell Diaz Star Literacy Program and Child Care Resource and Referral Network
Hold a Book Shower at your organization, club, school or church to collect new children's books that will become holiday gifts for underprivileged children. Donations of cash are welcome and will be used to purchase new children's books. Checks can be made out to the STAR Adult Literacy Program. Donations of used children's books in good condition are also accepted. The used books will distributed to social service agencies that are working with low-income families, the homeless and children at risk. Donations of books may be dropped off at the Child Care Resource and Referral Network Resource Library at 207 W. Jefferson at the corner of Center and Jefferson Street, and the STAR Literacy Office at 905 N. Main Street in Normal.

Wheels-To-Work

YWCA Wheels-to-Work transportation service now provides transportation to areas within the corridor west of Interstate 55 and east of Mitsubishi Motorway. The day transportation program is open to any resident of Bloomington-Normal and uses wheelchair-accessible vehicles.

The fixed day route stops at these locations: the Bloomington Public Library, the Normal Public Library, Turnberry Village on Wiley Drive, and registered employers located west of Interstate 55. Hours of operation are Monday Friday 5:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Wheels-to-Work is provided at the affordable price of \$1.00 per one-way trip. In addition, transportation to a child care provider is provided for an additional \$1.00 for each family per one-way trip.



continued

Pre-registration by employers and individuals is required to take advantage of Wheels-to-Work services. All passengers who are referred by participating employers will receive preference for service. Registration must be made by calling the YWCA Wheels-to-Work office at 454-7676 during the hours of 8 am to 4 PM. A 24-hour notice is required.

The YWCA Wheels-to-Work transportation service, established in August 1998, successfully enhances transportation options in Bloomington-Normal by providing residents safe, affordable, and timely transit to their places of employment. Based on statistics collected from October 2001-September 2002, Wheels-to-Work provided 6,000+ rides to over 600 individuals with its night service.

Wheels-to-Work is a collaborative effort of the following supporters: the Transportation Advisory Council, the McLean County Chamber of Commerce, the Workforce Issues Committee, the Community Advocacy Network, the Continuum for Care, and Bloomington-Normal Public Transit.

Matching funds for a \$500,000 federal JARC grant are currently being sought from the community. This program has been funded by the City of Bloomington, the Town of Normal, the YWCA of McLean County, the State of Illinois and the United Way.

For more information about Wheels-to-Work transportation services for the day route or door-to-door night service call 454-7676.

Modus Vivendi: The 2002 MFA Biennial

Modus vivendi showcases the various talents and approaches of ISU's Master of Fine Arts students. Representing all studio areas of the School of Art and emphasizing the interdisciplinary approach taken by many students, the exhibition contains work in painting, printmaking, sculpture, glass, metals, ceramics, video, and installation that blurs the line between disciplines.

Artists: Kelly Blakeslee, Kathleen Bundschuh, Jacob Feldman, Ben Gardner, Brian Gustafson, Kris Holmgren, Noelle Hoover, James Knox, Eun Ju Lee, Angela Mobley, Matthew Palmer, Darcie Punke, Dawn Roe, Molly Scott, Robert Straw, Moriki Tomihara, Cynthia Shin-Yi Wang

University Galleries is located at 110 Center for Visual Arts, on the campus of Illinois State University. Parking is available on the ground level of the University Street parking garage (located behind the tennis courts).

All events are open to the general public.

For more information call 438-5487 or visit our website at www.universitygalleries.com.

Gallery Hours
Tues: 9:30 to 9:00
Wed-Fri: 9:30 to 4:30
Sat-Mon: 12:00 to 4:00



Letters

Dear *Post Amerikan*,

I was offended by your October/November 2002 issue.

I do not want innocent postal workers thinking I subscribe to such crap!

I love Cathy [Ahart] and loved Deborah [Wiatt], but have no patience for those who take indecent liberties with freedom of speech.

DO NOT send any more issues. If someone subscribes for me, give them their money back.

Thank-you.

Sincerely,

Scott Ericson

Dear Mr. Ericson,

In reference to your letter, we can't please all the people all the time; in fact, we don't even try. But just out of curiosity, what exactly was it in the October/November 2002 issue of the *Post Amerikan* you thought was an indecent liberty with freedom of speech and "crap?" We're not even sure if you are going to read this letter, as you are disgusted with the *Post* and have canceled your subscription, but in case you do learn of it, please respond, we're dying to know the answer.

Sincerely,

Post Amerikan (with a "k") staff



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Off the beaten path

Hello! I'm David from the independently owned video store, the Movie Fan, in downtown Normal. Do you like films that make you think as much as I do? Tired of the same old mainstream, mass-produced, commercial movies crammed down your throat by machine called Hollywood? At the Movie Fan, we prefer to support films you won't see playing at your local cineplex. Come into the Movie Fan and check us out. Hands-down, we have the best selection of titles in the Bloomington-Normal area. Here are a few titles you should definitely want to check out and a list of 25 more... enjoy!

Pumpkin --Here's a comedy/drama/social statement that you will either love or ask yourself: "What did I just watch?". Christina Ricci (*The Opposite of Sex*) plays a sorority girl whose life is just perfect in her mind. Her house begins helping train a Special Olympics squad and she is assigned a young man named Pumpkin. At first unable to handle the situation--life is not all perfect--eventually she begins to connect with Pumpkin on a deeper level. She starts to feel closer to Pumpkin--more than anyone else in her so-called perfect life.

It's Ricci's breakthrough as a more complete person that causes her problems. Her parents, sorority, perfect boyfriend, nor Pumpkin's mother can understand the fact that Ricci's fallen in love. The movie is uneven because it mixes reality with what seems to be over-the-top nonsense, but that is exactly what makes it work.

Ricci's confused throughout most of the movie because she's moving into territory she's never even considered. The viewer is brought along in a similar fashion because we're never sure of the seemingly strange relationship. Ricci shows range in a difficult role and newcomer Hank Harris as Pumpkin is one to watch. *** stars

Borstal Boy--This indie drama is based on a short period in the life of Irish writer Brendan Behan. As a young man Behan is placed in a Borstal Juvenile Correctional Facility after he attempts to bomb an English building for the Irish Republican Army. The movie is not about political change but instead focuses on internal growth and how love of others as well as ones' self can change a person.

The story involves Behan's relationship with two people, a fellow inmates and the warden's daughter. His experience with both grows from friendship into love which is important because both of his new interests happen to be British. He starts to re-examine his original prejudice, and he thinks about the gravity of his bombing attempt. Behan realizes that once labels are taken away we all are just people searching for the same things.

Borstal Boy gives us a daring insight into internal emotional growth. *** stars

The Piano Teacher--Watch out... Here's a French film that will make you think twice about the phrase "You can't judge a book by its cover." French screen legend Isabelle Hupert (*Amateur/The Swindle*) plays a middle-aged piano instructor who leads a very routine life. She goes about her normal existence and socializes only with her domineering mother, but all is not what it seems.

She regularly visits sex shops and has more than a few masochistic adventures. A younger male student shows interest in her, and she begins using him to act out her fantasies.

The Piano Teacher is a volatile character study of a repressed woman who enters into a passionate relationship that escalates into sexual obsession. Hupert deservedly took the Cannes Film Festival Best Actress Award. Highly recommended. *** 1/2 stars

Lovely and Amazing--Indie director Nicole Holofcener (who did the much underrated comedy *Walking and Talking*) shines again with this insightful and offbeat comedy exploring the female psyche.

After their mother has liposuction surgery complications, three sisters must deal with some serious life changes. Their coping includes the older one --a thirty-something married struggling artist--having an affair with her teenage boss (Jake Gyllenhaal of *Donnie Darko*). Hmmm...

Another sister's quest for physical perfection leads her into a one night stand with a dimwit action star who critiques her naked body after sleeping with her.

Sharp writing and a fantastic cast make *Lovely and Amazing* well worth your time. Katherine Keener (*Being John Malkovich*), Brenda Blethyn (*Saving Grace*) and James Legros (*Scotland PA*) are in fine form. *** stars

Tuvalu--This German import has cult hit written all over it. An almost silent color-tinted social comedy, *Tuvalu* should please indie, foreign, and silent film fans alike. Set in a desolate European locale, a blind man struggles to keep his health spa afloat as the owner's son tries to hold off business men who want to shut it down to make room for a real estate development. Things begin to take a decidedly different turn when a beautiful young woman enters the picture as she represents a way out.

Inspired and offbeat, *Tuvalu* has a letter-perfect cast and a consistently beautiful cinematography. If you're in the mood for a whole-heartedly different film, *Tuvalu* is the one to pick up. *** 1/2 stars.

Here are some other fun pictures you might enjoy:

1. Nine Queens
2. The Price of Milk
3. CQ
4. Cherish
5. Scotland PA
6. 24 Hr Party People
7. Elling
8. Happy Endings
9. Century Hotel
10. What to Do in Case of Fire
11. The First \$20 Million
12. Circuit
13. The Criminal
14. Angela
15. Innocence
16. Keep the River on Your Right
17. Virgil Bliss
18. Sunshine State
19. Happy Times
20. Italian for Beginners
21. Desi's Looking for a New Wife
22. Unfaithful
23. My Wife is an Actress
24. Men with Brooms
25. 13 Conversations About One thing

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Liberals & gun control

As we all know (and much to my dismay) many liberals support ever more stringent gun control laws.

In my opinion, this has done great harm to the political left.

One example is the election of 2000.

In the opinion of many observers, one key reason Al Gore lost the presidency was because of the gun control issue.

Keep in mind that if he had won just one more state (such as Tennessee or West Virginia for example) he would have been elected president.

(I should note that Green Party presidential candidate Ralph Nader was smart. He made almost no mention of gun control in his campaign.)

Gun control again played an important role in many of the Republican victories in this year's Congressional campaigns.

One example was in the successful campaign to defeat Democratic U. S. Sen. Max Cleland in Georgia. The gun issue also was a factor in several other races, such as in the defeat of Democratic U. S. Sen. Jean Carnahan in Missouri.

Some 27 years ago I wrote a letter to the editor which attempts to explain at least some of the reasons why liberals and progressives should be opposed to onerous new gun control measures.

Here is the letter:

Letter to the editor in the Charleston, Illinois Times-Courier on May 21, 1975

To the editor:

Rep. Max Coffey deserves praise for the strong stand he has taken against the variety of restrictive gun control measures pending in the Illinois Legislature.

Although I certainly don't agree with Mr. Coffey on all issues, he made some very good points in the news release he issued recently on the subject. I agree that

1. Americans have a basic right to keep and bear arms for self-defense,
2. That criminals will always find a way to obtain firearms, and
3. that banning possession of firearms would simply create another profitable area of activity for organized crime.

It deeply saddens me that a very small but outspoken minority in my own political party (the Democratic Party) in this area favors confiscation of firearms. Ironically, most of these people claim to be "liberals," in spite of the fact that just about the only guns left after confiscation would be in the hands of hard-core criminals and the U.S. military.

It shouldn't even take a grade school education, let alone a Ph.D., to see that under these circumstances a Hitler-style authoritarian dictatorship would inevitably arise in this country.

When a takeover of this country becomes possible with practically no muss, no fuss and no bloodletting, even the slightest knowledge of human nature indicates that a takeover will in fact occur.

The incentive and the temptation to do so is just too great. Disarming the American people is like an open invitation to stage a bloodless coup in this country.

Some people counter this argument by saying that top military leaders have such overwhelming firepower that they could take over any time they wanted to anyway. What these people fail to realize is that the chances of a coup against an unarmed populace is infinitely greater than it would be under present circumstances.

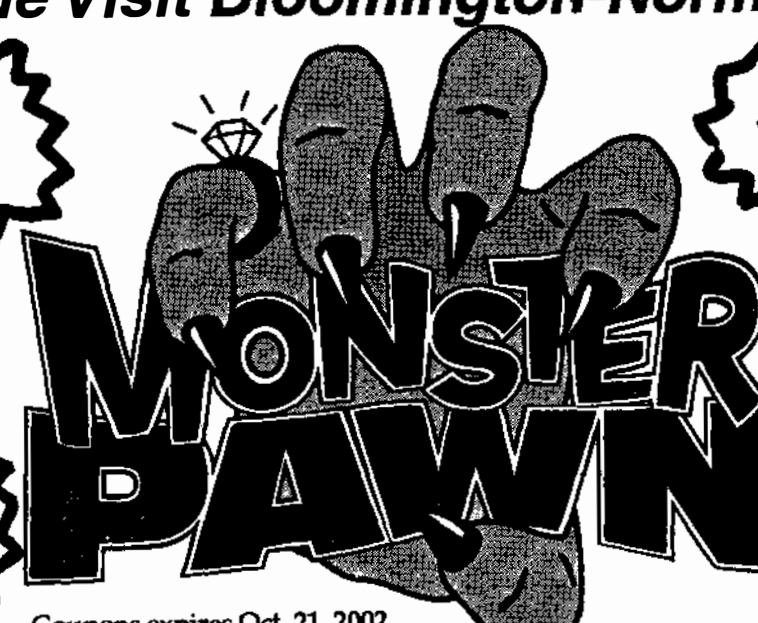
When military leaders know they would have to depend on their rank and file troops to kill fellow American citizens and when they know they would face many years of guerrilla warfare from armed, freedom-loving citizens, the chances of a takeover are greatly lessened.

On the other hand, it might not be difficult at all to get a consensus for a takeover when it was obvious that there could be no real resistance.

The self-styled "liberals" who favor gun confiscation had better think quickly -- for soon it may be too late. If firearms are confiscated throughout this country the word "liberal" won't even be allowed in the dictionary. Freedom of speech, press, religion and assembly will be only a faint and bitter memory.

--Allan Keith
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The Poetry Page

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 world.behind them.
 the bonds.dissolve.reality.tearing.open.ing.so close.deflecting.
 breathe..breathe..
 is this my love.is this my heart.break.ing.cutthecable.drain.
 counting.one.two..many times.this falsetto.climbing.inside out of me.
 following.tears.from their origin.streaking.a crescendo.heart.beat.
 carrying me.to places.i've never seen.this essence.tastes like.
 frame upon frame.sessions.of time.line.mystery.
 sing me to sleep.begin.imaging.

.lullaby.

finger.prints.touch.leave your.impression.
 imprint.me with encoded.memory.publish your thoughts.
 and make insignia of me.

-vaeda

Love and Wisdom On the Wind

Oh Autumn
 with your natural beauty
 You change life to its brilliance
 then you take it away

Your warm Winds are filled
 with the colors of fall
 As we watch life fart
 in a graceful way

You save some soon parting
 from the harshness of Winter
 I've seen so many
 taken under your wing

Now the Wisdom and Love
 of ninety-two years is parting
 Once again you've taken
 a product of Spring

I hear the warm
 Winds blowing
 The night
 it is growing

Please hold proudly
 the beauty of this man
 Riding on your Winds
 as they sail across the land.

--Lin Frog Simmons

**YOUR POEM
 HERE.**

The Post Amerikan is seeking poetry
 submissions for the Poetry Page.

If interested, please mail your poem to:
 Post Amerikan, P.O. Box 3452,
 Bloomington, IL 61702 or e-mail to:
 pamerikanusa@netscape.net

We have the right to reject any poem.

Warm Sunny Day

it's a warm sunny day
 yeah, I kinda like it
 think I'll go ride my bike

the sun is shinin' down
 a soft breeze moves the air
 hear the cicada sing

pretty little flowers
 with pink and purple petals
 vines climbing like green snakes

it's a warm sunny day
 yes, it's really nice out
 and I'm feelin' so freewheelin'

lay down in the grass
 beneath a clear blue sky
 the suns warmth soaks into my skin

luxurious laziness
 troubles far away now
 the world is truly beautiful today

until the twilight time
 when the night comes alive
 with thunder and lightning and rain

sweet

summer

rain

--Peter Elvidge

Call Me Alchemy

I must become of stone and steel
 thus I will not know or feel
 anything of love and loneliness

yet if I were iron and wood
 it wouldn't do me any good
 if I could still remember that I loved you

maybe if I became a fire
 burning away need and desire
 I could find some kind of inner peace

or better still to turn to water
 without all the fuss and bother
 and like a river I will run away

--Peter Elvidge

The Plegic

It started with a man with one arm and one hand
 Dancing on a counter top, proclaiming great things
 He baffled the bums, astounded the stewardesses,
 and even provoked the madmen...
 "You rambling bamboozler," said they, "Do you come in peace? Cause we notice
 you're...unarmed."

"There there, fair wretches, let me ask you but one thing..
 If a man can't grasp the mere virtue of insanity, how firm is his grip on reason?"
 And they debated amongst themselves as a minute (luna)ticked past
 and then spoke, "Well, to tell you the truth..we're about as stumped as you are."

"Consider this, can you know the world before the womb, the flavor
 before the food, or the answers before questioning what you never thought could be true?"

"Of course not, babbler, what's the idea here?"

"Simply this, if the wayward world points its finger at a man astray,
 how don't they know he paves a path enticed by righteous ways?"

And birthed was a new method of the mad

--Spiff Spony



What Lasts

the wild lilly is the earth,
and yet when the lilly dies,
the earth is still alive.

movements for change
change--
and yet,
neither the hungering
nor the flowering
ever goes away.

the eagerness of the dinosaur
is the twitching of lizards
at the approach
of the thousand-eyed fly.
the lust of apes
still lurches in our hominid loins.
it is the compassion
of the mother swallow
that makes a comforting nest
of our hugs.

nothing can distract it,
no fear can stand in the way.
and there's no legislation
that can prevent it--
this spirit in molten lava,
insistent fertile menses
and probing weedy roots.
in the irrepressible laughs
and cries
of untamed children.
in a poetry of justice
blossoming
from an outlaw vine.

the ancient family
still gathers within:
a family of purpose,
of friends, lovers, believers.
of comforting fur
and a fierce slicing of claw.
of river, grass and granite,
of feathered wings
and outstretched paws.

the tribe, this tribe,
dances inside us now.
we betray it with neglect,
honor it with each rhythmic step--
made in the direction
of what's most real,
most right.

it is the unstoppable
tsunami of change.
it is the fire of passion,
the mountain of commitment,
the lake of empathy,
the river of connection and love.

it is, in any form, us.
and this wild morphing whole,
if no thing else,
is forever.

--Jesse Wolf Hardin

Where I Come From

where I come from the rivers run
in circles around the sea
no fences or governments
and everyone is free

where I come from the fish have feet
and hop about like rabbits
snickering dirty limericks
it's just one of their habits

and where I come from
it rains at night

where I come from the dragons roar
in forests thick with fog
devouring hapless travelers
that ride on giant frogs

where I come from trees pull up roots
and walk to different places
the willows and the maples fight
for cool and shady spaces

and where I come from
it rains at night

where I come from the rocks and stones
pulse with energy
their voices rise up to the skies
in perfect harmony

where I come from the women fly
on wings of studded leather
black and silver silken steel
brightly colored feathers

and where I come from
it rains at night
all night
every night

--Peter Elvidge

Untitled

It's possible I may never sleep again
Forever eyes open to surrounding clashes
of light and fireworks indistinguishable
before books close from exhaustion
The finely crafted hands of every clock
move in unison so that a chorus is
created with every passing second
Illogical years of miscommunication
have left me here, my tags reading:
Mixed up, Lemonade baby-a tart-
but sweet
Slowly realizing everyone's weeknights
feel the same couch cushions
pressuring the smoke around the semi-circle
of semi-clad someday models-
calorie-free and nicked to boot
When you come over I hide my
middle, hang it up in the closet
pretending to be nothing and picturing
myself with deep dimples that
guarantee my innocence

--Lauren Nave

climbing trees

it never went as planned
your design
wounds up and down
the left side
the script we were
writing
tossed into fire
somehow survived

trails of
pages
sugared rain
leading back to mine
you found me
i close my eyes
try to clear
the image
out of mind
and dream you
a new reality
make it real
give you my life

kiss each scar
feel them heal
plant seeds
stay near you
water them with
my tears
i'll hang in there
i'll hold tight
you'll glow
with touch
in warmth
you'll know light
and breath

i've abandoned
fear
i've tasted death
we've exchanged
second glances
you have my exhale
i breathe deeply
and i'm thinking
it's worth the fight
i'm better fit for
loving everytime
i make it out of
this
alive

--vaeda

Poetry continued on page 17



Hell freezes

I'll be the first to admit, Posters, that the news these days remains grim, grim, grim.

Just in case any of you have been off on a desert retreat, I'll brief you. Not only did Jeb hang on to Florida, dashing my hopes for a Major Democratic slap in his smug older brother's face, but the Democrats definitely punted the mid-term elections. Now we have a clear Republican majority in Congress. The last time we had a majority Republican administration Eisenhower in was in office.

Honey, do you know where dad put those old bomb shelter plans?

Need I remind you that those were the '50's? Repression! Conformity! Loyalty Oaths! Censor bars in movies! Black people were referred to as Negroes, if they were lucky. Even seeing a black person on television was such an event, that little black children called out "Mama! Daddy! Come quick! There's a colored man on the TV!" Daddy and Mama may have rushed in ready to admonish junior for making up tall tales, only to be stunned themselves by the literal truth.

Women yearned to be wives and mothers, finding true happiness while pushing dust from one end of the room to the other--in seamed stockings and high heels. If they didn't like it, there was always electroshock and lobotomy. Lobotomized women made very happy housewives, according to eminent psychiatrists of the day.

Electroshock therapy is back in vogue, too

Wait, it gets worse. The late, lamented Adlai Stevenson, in his commencement speech to Smith College class, admonished his audience to "write laundry lists rather than poetry," which apparently he believed a better use of highly educated women's talents. I know this, because poet Sylvia Plath noted it in her journals, recording the great man's words in total disgust. She was among the graduates, you see.

As for our lesbian and gay brethren, God in heaven the news was worse than grim. You want to talk repression? If you didn't have the jones or the inclination for the arts, or weren't willing to be a complete-in-your-face pariah, your life could be a real hell. Homosexuality was listed in the DSM as a mental illness; many states allowed for the prosecution and imprisonment of consenting, same-sex adult. Tales of people committed, electroshocked, lobotomized were more than apocryphal. A mere whisper of homosexuality or lesbianism could cost you your job and ruin your chances for as decent living. The Boys of Boise hysteria really did drive many gay men to take one glance at that morning's newspaper, drop their toast, take a last sip of coffee, and not stop driving till they got to the Golden Gate Bridge. If that reminds you of tales told by Jewish refugees from the Nazi terror, then there's a reason.

The situation may be hopeless, but not it's not desperate

Now, let's review the current American political landscape. We have a President who thinks the whole country should get behind his vendetta for Saddam--I mean, the guy plotted to kill his dad. Wouldn't you be willing to risk global annihilation in order to exact revenge?

President Bush, the most secretive, if not anal, politician to occupy the Oval Office since Nixon (the man still resists opening his Texas gubernatorial papers for scholarly and journalistic review in the name of "national security"), not only chose the hysterical and reactionary John Ashcroft for Attorney General, but wants John Poindexter, the evil genius of Iran-Contra, to oversee the proposed uber-database that will collect and collate personal information of the most detailed sort on every single American citizen. Naturally, since your shoe size no doubt counts as information vital to national security, the mainframe housing the database will be somewhere in the bowels of the Pentagon. And you thought Orwell's 1984 merely a dated dystopian nightmare.

Across the land, the forces of darkness gather

Now before we give up what's left of any reasonable hope for humanity, let me point to a few tiny glimmers of light flickering in the gathering darkness. First of all, as one of my students pointed out in her refutation of an Ellen Goodman column, wherein one of my favorite pundits lamented the Republican Senate majority, the Republicans have only the barest of majorities. Constitutionally, the Senate must pass any legislation, etc., by a two-thirds majority vote. That means the Republicans have to persuade their colleagues across the aisle to join hands. Do I hear, compromise? The party breakdown in the House runs along similar lines, a bare Republican majority. Let's hope the Democrats can clear their heads soon enough to finesse standing trenchant without standing obstructionist.

News is grim at the state level, too, most everywhere. Republicans have a majority of gubernatorial offices, and state legislatures are not far behind. Except for Illinois.

See those lights up ahead, Huck? That's Cairo--Cairo, Illinois

Yes, out of state Posters, you read it right. Except for Illinois.

For the first time in twenty-five years, we have a Democratic Governor elect, Rod Blagojevich. Not only that, the Republicans got booted out of the State Assembly.

That of course hasn't prevented outgoing Governor George Ryan from blatantly raiding our deficit-ridden till, rifling through the IOU's to hand out fat patronage appointments to his pals. Governor-elect Blagojevich pleaded with him not to do this, citing looming

state deficits, probable tax hikes, and two percent cuts in state employees salaries, not to mention Ryan's outrage when then outgoing Governor Jim Edgar did the same thing. Governor Ryan effectively flipped Blagojevich the bird, all the while insisting that the scandals of the drivers' licenses for bribes during his days as Illinois' Secretary of State had nothing to do with him. Maybe Ryan thinks that if he grants clemency to death row inmates, that will atone for his sins, if not his general stupidity.

The last free state in America?

If the anomaly of Illinois' newly Democratic state government were my only beacon of hope, then I might as well go off to become Governor Ryan's latest spin doctor. However, there's more. That bastion of rock-ribbed Republicanism, McLean County, voted in a number of energetic Democrats to county-wide offices, most notably our very own Cathy Ahart to McLean County Board. Cathy tells me that when she met with the folks at the Farm Bureau, prepared to talk about issues such as planned growth, saving our water for the future, a tax-saving alternative to building a new jail, and preserving agricultural resources, they were floored. They had never before interviewed a Ninth District candidate who knew what issues were, let alone discuss them.

I tell you, it was a great night, Tuesday, November 4th, sitting at Democratic Headquarters, watching those polls come in for Cathy, Rod, and the rest of the Democratic posse. Especially on the heels of the previous week's tectonic plate shift.

Either the next scheduled Ice Age is Early...

Since 1996, Bloomington's Human Rights Commission has tried to amend the Human Rights' ordinance to include sexual orientation for protected status. In other words, people cannot be fired from or refused work, denied housing, or access to public services because they are homosexual, bisexual, lesbian, transsexual, or even heterosexual. When the ordinance came up in '96, it got shot down, no less than by then-alderwoman Judy Markowitz, who claimed to support the amendment, until the crucial vote, when she abruptly changed her mind.

There were some amusing moments on the road to Do the Right Thing. A requisite number of homophobic bigots stood up to rant about the Bible and AIDS--including a local dentist, who refuses to hire gay male dental technicians. (Should I take that to mean he'll happily hire lesbian dental techs?) After the testimony, both pro and con, at which Cathy Ahart spoke so eloquently on behalf of the Human Rights Commission, Mayor Markowitz asked audience members to show, by either a show of hands or standing up, whether or not they supported the amendment to the ordinance. Since she asked for the "nay" votes first, the two hundred or so of us standing in the back dropped to our knees, then shot to our full height, hands held high, when she called for the "ayes," as though we'd choreographed just those moves for months. The votes were 200 for, and 12 against.



over

Mayor Markowitz next spoke, succinctly but movingly, I grudgingly admit, about the anti-semitism that haunted her girlhood here, when her family bought a home in a neighborhood where Jews were not welcome.

... or we can cross hell on ice skates

Time came for the vote. Council voted 6-2 in favor of adopting the ordinance. Even Council members, such as Karen Schmidt and Mike Matejka, who have long supported it looked stunned at our victory. Mike Sprague and Tom Whelan, both of whom had refused to tip their

hands until voting, voted for it, both acknowledging that they were both under tremendous pressure to vote against. Mr. Sprague has been threatened with loss of business, and I know Tom's taken a lot of flack for it, too. As I told Tom when I ran into him at a party a few days later, "We all appreciate what you did, Tom. You did the right thing." He smiled. "I know I did the right thing."

So there we have it, folks. Bloomington added "sexual orientation" to the human rights ordinance, McLean County elected an open lesbian to its Board of Supervisors, and

Bloomington's Downtown Business Association voted its Jean Anderson Award, given to a resident and member who's done exemplary work to promote the downtown area to Jan Lancaster, citing in particular her development of The Bistro, the local alternative nightclub.

So at least in my little center of the universe, humanity is marching forward into the next decade of the 21st century. We'll do our best to tug the rest of the nation forward, away from the abyss of political repression and cultural paranoia. Even if we have to rely on adrenaline and sheer force of will.

--Dr. Attitude

Exactly what it looks like

Here's a couple rich ones--plucked from hundreds-- to savor before you file them under Exactly-what-it-looks-like.

The scene? The recently-concluded NATO meeting in Prague.

The news item: "U.S. war planes circled the city throughout the two-day gathering."

Yes, the President of the United States showed up at an international meeting with the ability to obliterate the gathering (not to mention the city) at a moment's notice. Just a little accompanying luggage, that's all.

Imagine if the news were "Iraqi war planes circle New York throughout the two-day UN debate." No big deal, right?

By the way, good luck finding the citation (deliberately not given here) on the genuine story from Prague. Seems that the newsminders finally realized that this was (duh) something not to publicize, even deeply buried in reports on the NATO meeting. A six-pack of Leinenkugel for anyone who can unearth the original in less than 15 minutes.

Next, please.

Apparently having warplanes circling overhead removed all restraint from the leader of the Empire's rhetoric. Seems that German fascism -- which set out to conquer at least all of Europe, built industrial death camps that killed 11 million people, and brought about a war costing more than 100 million lives-- PALES before the members of the stateless al Qaeda organization, once numbered by the FBI at some 200.

News item: "President Bush declared that 'we face a threat more dangerous than any we've ever faced before'."

Ding! --first place in the they'll-say-anything-to-justify-imperialist-war category.

Whatever you say, George.

But of course the story far bigger than these news items is Washington's drive to conquer Iraq and its oilfields, not to mention the rest of the Middle East.

Yes, it's exactly what it looks like, all the talk of the horrible "threat" posed by Saddam Hussein notwithstanding.

In fact, the arch-villain Saddam was Washington's most important Arab operative in the Middle East for years. He dutifully launched a horribly bloody war against Iran when it dared to revolt against U.S. rule. And when he used chemical weapons against revolution-minded populations in both Iran and Kurdistan, Washington pulled out all the stops to deny it. Indeed, the U.S. used its satellites to pinpoint Iranian troop concentrations so that Saddam could gas them. Cost? Some 50,000 dead.

And later --this one gets First Prize in exactly-what-it-looks-like-- Washington appealed to all rebels to rise against Saddam in the aftermath of its half-war against his occupation of Kuwait ... then sat back smiling while Saddam slaughtered them all.

Took care of that problem, thank you very much.

But now, of course, the U.S. ruling class is no longer satisfied by dallying with its old whore -- it wants all the concubines and the bebies of daughters instead.

Target? Control of the second-largest oil reserves in the world.

(And don't think that the first-largest reserves -- found in Saudi Arabia-- aren't in the gunsights as well. There's one tottering and decadent set of rulers whose usefulness Washington has about written off.)

Why buy milk when you can own the cow --or hell, seize the whole damn farm?

But perhaps the biggest exactly-what-it-looks-like lies back in Prague with NATO and its new eastern members. Just do a freeze-frame progression on the expansion of both NATO and U.S. military bases in the region. What do you see? A blatant creep / creep / creep towards seizure of the world's last imperial prize -- the conquering of the vast territory of the still-not-capitalist former Soviet Union and its allies.

So here's a final thought to ponder as we head towards the next year: might we be about to experience something entirely new --and dreadfully old? How about worldwide economic depression and a third world war?

That's exactly what it looks like.

But count on stiff resistance --already begun-- from masses of people in the Middle East and Latin America, just for starters.

Haven't heard?

Well, that's exactly what it looks like, too.

--Steve Eckardt

Karen Schmidt
Alderman ~ Ward 6

409 E. Grove St., Bloomington
home: 829-6318
work: 217-244-2070
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Ward 6 brought downtown Bloomington and all parts of its surrounding neighborhoods. You don't see it, but it's there.



Mad Libs redux

Back in the late fifties, comedy writers Roger Price and Leonard Stern first came up with a concept that would revolutionize the publishing industry, *Mad Libs*. A series of short stories or essays with words removed and replaced w./ a grammatical descriptor, *Mad Libs* were sold as a party game; they remain available to this day and are particularly ubiquitous in road-side shop selling stuff designed to relieve Long Drive Tedium.

As a game and phenomenon, *Mad Libs* are clearly of their time: an era when public education was really coming into its own. To even play it requires enough command of the English language to differentiate adjective from adverb, after all. The books were sold to all ages, but its optimal audience was probably pre-teen kids. We played 'em in my neighborhood in the early sixties, but their appeal was fleeting for my fifth grade crowd. There are only so many synonyms for "poop" (noun and a verb!) you can use within parental earshot.

In these days where even text can be robot-generated, *Mad Libs* seem a bit archaic. But just because a concept's outlived its entertainment value doesn't mean we won't use it at the P-A.. Without further ado, we offer our first political Mad Libs, opening w./ a conservative entry :

THE YAMMERINGS OF (noun)S : More proof (as if further was needed!) that being a good (noun) doesn't necessarily make you a(n) (adjective) pundit. Today, (full name) appeared before the press to (verb)our president's (adjective) campaign against the (pejorative noun) of the Middle East, Saddam Hussein.

This is not the first time (first name) has pontificated so (adverb); last year, the popular young (noun) made a big (noun) about our incursion into Afghanistan. "A (adjective) (noun)," he called this noble effort of America's finest, characteristically choosing to blame the events of 9/11 on American

(noun). Typical Leftist (noun), we called it back then, and of course, history has proven us (adjective).

Make no mistake, we enjoy (first name)'s work. In fact, our copy of (title) is one of the most (adjective) in our collection. But the ability to entertain doesn't mean you have anything (adjective) to say about the (adjective) political world we live in today. Perhaps our young artist should stick to (gerund), and leave the (adjective) pontificating to the (noun)s.

If you want to come across as more personable, without compromising your conservative principles, there's always the following:

THINK OF THE (noun)S!: Drove to the Mall of (location) today. Took the little (term of endearment), of course, so naturally we had to visit Aisles of (noun)s, the little one's (adjective) store. Something about all those rows of (noun)s brings a (noun) to my child's face. Because it was a weekday, the mall was (adverb) sparse.

We hit our store of choice first thing; in the entryway was a display of (noun)s, (adverb) repackaged to capture my child's attention. Before I could (verb), the li'l scaper had reached out of the stroller and grabbed a (noun). A tiny mew of (noun) and the package was (adverb) opened. "Okay," I said to myself. "Just take it over to the (noun). No (noun) done." Which was when my child (adverb) spit up all over the item in question.

Wheeling home, I couldn't help replaying the (adjective) look of (noun) that I saw on my little consumer's face. "This," I (adverb) thought, "is what our government is fighting for!" Let the (adjective) appeasers (verb) all they want. Equivocators may seek to (verb) the actions of the Islamo-(noun)s. But for me, the answer to such moral (noun) can readily be countered by the (adjective) mien of a child. . .

"How about more left-leaning writers?" you ask:

IT'S ALL ABOUT (noun)!: More blather and (noun) from the Bushies today, (gerund) the Chief Executive's (adjective) plans for an Iraq adventure. We've written before about the (adjective) arrogance of the Illegitimate Presidency's plans for Hussein. But as the war drums (verb) louder, we still have to ask the (animal) hawks, "Where were you when (adjective) Reagan and his gang were working to install this (noun)?"

The neo-(noun)s may talk about installing a(n) (adjective) government in Iraq. But as our (noun) in Afghanistan has shown, the actual costs of such (noun)s can be considerably more (adjective). History has proven us (adjective).

For all its moral (noun)s, War Talk is not about fighting the (adjective) fight, anyway. It's about protecting our (noun) interests. Everything else is pseudo-patriotic (noun)! Yes, I know the polls say Bush has a (number)% approval rating. But I (adverb) contend that if the people knew what he really stood for, they'd (verb) his (noun) in a second! Enjoy the (noun), folks - it's sure to be a(n) (adjective) one!

--Bill Sherman

Sex

...okay, now that we've got your attention...

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A spiritual outlaw's advice

Whatever is real and good, protect and nourish with all your might. Beware of anything that plugs in, requires fossil fuels, brags about being "disposable," admits to being artificially colored or flavored, or pretends to be something it's not (whether fake wood grain or a synthesized voice).

Beware of jobs requiring uniforms, or oaths of allegiance to ideas you don't believe in or people you haven't met.

Beware of solutions that can be packaged, bottled or sold, any science or religion that tells you can't trust your instincts, any intermediary standing between you and God or you and raw experience.

Don't eat, snort, or watch on the boob tube anything that deadens your awareness of the pain and bliss of life, or anything that impairs your honorable responses. Remember that nobody and nothing is worth a damn unless it's authentic. The primary sin is failing to feel, and failing to act on your genuine feelings.

Remember to give equal time to both mourning and celebrating. Remember to be grateful, and don't waste any hard lessons that come your way. Avoid stubbing your toe on the same rock twice. And don't fritter away too much time explaining your mistakes.

Take time to "be little:" crawl around on the ground after interesting bugs, look for animal shapes in the clouds, and don't worry if you get grass stains on your clothes. Better yet, go naked anytime its not too cold and you're not too likely to get busted over it. Focus on sports where you get to play. Remember that having toys is not the same as having fun. Now have fun.

Swim in chemical-free water, and in places where you're not supposed to be. Walk barefoot through clover. Find divine Creation and your place in it in every blade of grass, in every home's backyard. But don't forget to make pilgrimages to truly wild places. Open up to the information and inspiration they provide, and subject yourself to the solitude that teaches you're never truly alone.

Sweat your brains out, in sweat lodges with hissing rocks. Sweat, building shrines out of striped granite, and making love to your sweetheart.

Focus solely on your lover when you are with him or her, and on no other food than that food which you're eating. Savor the nuances of life, and spit out the unpalatable. Now notice what a high it is- this unencumbered view of existence, and our sense-filled participation!

Heed the lesson of Kokopelli: that no matter how heavy the load, you must continue to dance you dance, continue to live your song!

Now give yourself credit, and move on!

Jesse Wolf Hardin is an acclaimed teacher of Earth-centered spirituality, and author of Kindred Spirits: Sacred Earth Wisdom (Swan•Raven, 2001). Wolf offers intuitive counsel, Gaian spirituality, wilderness quests, retreats, and resident internships at their riverside sanctuary. For information on his books, teachings and programs contact: The Earthen Spirituality Project, Box 516, Reserve, NM 87830

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The crisis in Ulster part 1

Below please find a letter just received from Roger Collins, the veteran Red and Irish Republican who covers Ireland for SeeingRed.com.

SeeingRed,
Steve Eckardt

Dear Readers,

On the night of Tuesday, October 8, a convoy of RUC [Royal Ulster Constabulary] armored Land Rovers pulled up in front of the Stormont buildings, the seat of government in the British-occupied six counties of Ireland. In a scene reminiscent of a military coup, heavily-armed riot troops and secret police stormed the offices of Sinn Fein, arrested the office manager for alleged espionage and seized two CDs as evidence.

At the same time, other secret police units raided the homes and offices of Nationalists in West Belfast. The next day's papers all headlined the police exposure of an IRA "spy ring" and David Trimble, leader of the pro-British Ulster Unionist Party and head of the local government, demanded that the British dissolve the local government, unless the IRA was disbanded.

On Monday, October 14th, John Reid, Britain's colonial governor of Northern Ireland (the official title is Secretary for Northern Ireland) announced the suspension of the elected power-sharing government and the re-imposition of direct colonial rule. The British governor attempted to justify this blatantly illegal action with the claim that allegations of IRA misdeeds had eroded confidence and made the power-sharing government impossible. As a precondition for a restoration of democracy in the Six Counties, Reid demanded that the republican armed organization, the Irish Republican Army, should disband.

In a speech on October 18th, Anthony Blair, the British Prime Minister, supported the actions of his appointee in Ireland and brazenly asserted that Britain had no intention of carrying out its obligations under the Good

Friday peace accord, unless the Irish Republicans disband their armed organization. Naturally, no such demand is made on the Unionist paramilitary groups, even though they have carried out hundreds of bombings and arson attacks in the last eighteen months and have murdered over a dozen people in the last six months. After all, these murderous gangs are the historic allies and tools of British rule in Ireland.

Let's take a look at the allegations against the IRA. The current frame-up campaign began with the St. Patrick's Eve raid on the Belfast headquarters of the Northern Ireland secret police, the Special Branch. On St. Patrick's Eve, while most of the cops were out drinking, six officers from the British Army Counterintelligence, MI5, used their official passes to enter the gate at Castleraeagh Police Barracks.

Once inside, they used their electronic swipe cards to penetrate seven security doors to reach the computer center. At the computer center, the raiders overpowered the one cop on duty and then downloaded the computer files on former snitches and agents, who were in a protected witness program.

The next morning, the police chief, Ronald Flanagan, gave a press conference in which he named the burglars (they were British officers that he had worked with for years), claimed that the cops had a variety of evidence against MI5 and warned the various protected witnesses that MI5 had their addresses and was probably out to kill them.

For two weeks a media frenzy focused on the British army spy apparatus and the police began talking about bringing a court action against the army. Suddenly, the police chief announced his retirement and his acceptance of a higher-paying government job in London.

Coincidentally, all the physical evidence seemed to vanish and the new top cop, Hugh Orde, began an investigation into alleged republican involvement. The British state-owned media, BBC and its affiliates, reported the anti-republican allegations as fact. And, to no one's surprise, a few of those in the witness program, were found shot dead...including one

in the police parking lot.

The other allegations were equally bogus. The British Army seized several hundred beer bottles from a recycling center in the Ardoyne Nationalist community and claimed that the republicans were going to use them for fire bombs. A Palestinian freedom fighter shot ten Israeli soldiers using an aged sniper's rifle and BBC claimed that he must be an IRA man...presumably you have to be Irish to shoot like that.

In the aftermath of the Israeli army slaughter in Jenin, a "former" British spy, now working for the Swedish Red Cross, claimed that the home-made bombs the Palestinian defenders used were of Irish design, and that the IRA was training the Palestinians! Perhaps we're supposed to believe that the pipe bombs had little Irish flags painted on them?

The big frame-up came in the South American nation of Columbia. Using faked evidence, supplied by the U.S. Embassy, the local police arrested three Irish republicans who had been attending a political conference in a rebel-held section of the country.

The U.S. Congress attempted to force Gerry Adams, leader of Sinn Fein and member of the British Parliament, to appear before a witch-hunting committee. Big Gerry, told the Congressional snoopers to buzz off.


Formally speaking, that was that, but the crude frame up still is useful to the British and their friends, as a pretext for political provocation. In Columbia, three Irish republicans still face frame up charges and will come before the kangaroo court in December....

In the months while the BBC concocted false charges against Irish republicans, Britain's loyal friends in the various Unionist paramilitary gangs stayed busy. In the last twelve months, the Ulster Defense Association, largest of the armed gangs, has carried over nine hundred arson and bombing attacks against the homes, schools and churches of Catholics and Nationalists. In the same time, they have killed six people that they believed to be Catholics and in addition have killed six members of rival Unionist gangs, in various drug turf disputes.

Oddly enough, none of these gangsters have been arrested, even though the British police have thoroughly infiltrated their ranks. Of course that is exactly what any one would expect; these fascist-like gangs are immune because they are the loyal allies of the British, the UDA having been set up and funded by the British military.

Slan,

Roger



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The crisis in Ulster part 2

Dear Readers:

The shut down of representative government in Ulster is not exactly new, the British have 'suspended' democracy on three previous occasions and always for the same reason, to promote the political fortunes of David Trimble.

This time it seems a bit more serious in the aftermath of the British Prime Minister's speech on October 18th. In this speech, Anthony Blair, admitted that his government had failed to live up to its promises made in the Good Friday Peace agreement that had ended the fighting in Ulster.

The British head of government admitted, publicly, facts that everyone in Ireland has known for years; that the equality legislation is only a fig leaf, that the paramilitary police force has only changed its name and badges, that the courts and justice system are grotesquely biased against Catholics and Nationalists and that the British Army has failed to withdraw from South Armagh and South Tyrone as promised.

Blair further admitted that the Irish republicans and the 26 County State in southern Ireland had fully carried out all their promises in the peace agreement. Mr. Blair then announced that the British would carry out their treaty obligations only if the Irish Republican Army disbanded.

To put this in context, in thirty years of war, the British military, secret police and all their attendant fascist death squads were not able to defeat the IRA. Britain's inability to defeat the republican resistance was what eventually brought the British to peace talks and the historic compromise of the Good Friday Agreement. Now a British government seeks to re-write a treaty to obtain what they could not win in battle, the surrender of the IRA.

This move is not only vile and treacherous, it is fraught with very serious danger. In effect, the British are saying that they will not allow a normal democracy in Ulster, unless the Catholics and Nationalists give up their right to armed self defense --this after admitting that the whole state apparatus is deeply undemocratic and biased against Catholics. To put the icing on the cake, the IRA is supposed to go away, while the various Unionist armed gangs bomb and burn the homes, schools, churches and shops of the Nationalist population and the British cops and soldiers do nothing.

Think about this, for the last five years, the IRA has been on cease fire. In the last twelve months, the Ulster Defense Association, largest of the Unionist armed gangs, has carried out over nine hundred arson and bombing attacks. In the same period the UDA has admitted murdering five Catholics and one Protestant mistaken for a Catholic.

In the same period the UDA has also claimed the murders of six members of rival Unionist gangs, during an ongoing drug war in North Belfast. (Amongst its other unpleasant features, the UDA, guardian of Christian morality, runs the rackets in Belfast and anyone, of whatever religion, who tries to muscle in, is likely to get dead.) It is perhaps worth mentioning that the UDA is heavily infiltrated by the British secret police and has been used as a proxy to carry out political murders for the Crown.

Need I say that the British cops, whether they be called the Royal Ulster Constabulary or the Police Service, do not bother this charming pack of fascist gun men and drug dealers? Perhaps I should also mention, that during the last days of October, while Ulster staggered into political chaos, that leaders of the Unionist political parties and the leaders of the Unionist gun men and drug gangs, were sitting down in a secret meeting in South Africa, to plan their joint strategy. Things being what they are in Ireland, the details of the secret conclave will be public soon enough.

The republican and Nationalist response to Blair's provocation was nicely encapsulated in an Phoblacht/Republican News headline: "Trust Me; I'm a British Prime Minister."

The Irish have over a thousand years of bitter experience to teach them the folly of trusting British politicians. The IRA responded with a terse communiqué reproving the British government for their silly demands and an announcement that the IRA was "ceasing its engagement" with the disarmament commission set up as part of the peace process. I am not predicting anything, but the British government should recall that the last time they seriously provoked the IRA, the "cessation of engagement" was followed in due course by an end to the cease fire and some very costly bombings in London. In the wake of that bomb blitz, a previous British set down and did some serious negotiating, giving birth to the peace agreement that Mr. Blair is so blithely casting aside.


Why is the British government engaged in this dangerous game of provocation and brinkmanship? Why are they risking political disgrace and possible violence rather than allowing democracy to function in Ulster?

I believe the British and their Unionist clients are acting from a profoundly weakened political position. When the Good Friday agreement was signed, the major players (the British and the Irish Republicans) both believed they advance their long term goals by political means.

The Irish Republicans believed that if they were allowed to freely participate in the electoral process, if their ideas and words were freed from censorship, their press freely circulated and their political leaders no longer objects of repression and murder, then they would be able to increase their support base and begin to win elections. Based on this concept and demographic projections of a Catholic/Nationalist majority in the Six Counties in a couple decades, Sinn Fein stated its goal as a united Ireland by the year 2016.

The British signed on to the peace process in the belief that by drawing the revolutionaries into electoral politics, they could be politically marginalized. The British based their strategy on the continued stability and growth of the Ulster Unionist Party and the reformist Nationalists of the Social Democrat Labor Party. The British hope was that the SDLP would remain the political leadership of the Nationalist People and that the UUP, and especially David Trimble's faction of the UUP, would remain the political leadership of the Unionist People.

Continued



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The plan was that a compromise could be worked out between these two "moderate" parties, so that if Ireland were ever united, British influence would be preserved. These two parties were to be the granite pillars of British rule in Ulster.

Well, in the course of four years of political struggle, the granite pillars have turned to sand. Rather than being marginalized and politically isolated, the republicans have become the political leadership of the Nationalist community. The two cities of the Six Counties, Derry and Belfast both have Sinn Fein mayors. The republican party also leads the county councils of Tyrone and Armagh and is a strong presence in the other four counties.

Rather than being swept aside by the reformists, the revolutionary party swept them aside and seemed poised to become the largest party in the elections scheduled for May. The suspension of the Ulster self government postpones this for a while. Very convenient for the British and their clients!

While the reformist SDLP slid into minority status, the UUP hasn't been doing all that well either. For the last six years, this reactionary party has been torn by factional disputes between the followers of Jeffery Donaldson and David Trimble. The UUP electoral base has begun to drift, rightists flowing into Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party and more

liberal elements sliding into the SDLP. The British do not regard the DUP as a suitable ally, as its ranks tend to be filled with backwoods religious nuts and uncontrollable fanatics.

The outcome of the latest British census has thrown all varieties of Unionism into serious crisis, even though these results have not yet been published. In Ireland, secrets don't stay secret all that long and now every one knows that the majority of people in the Six Counties no longer identify themselves as Protestant. What was a possibility for the proximate future, in a couple decades, has become the reality today. The dogs in the street know the results; 48% of the population regard themselves as Protestant and 46% regard themselves as being Catholic.

Seeing that the historic ideology of Unionism was "a Protestant State for a Protestant People", the demographic collapse of the assumed permanent Protestant majority poses a serious problem.

All the assumptions and presumed certainties that under lay British political strategy have collapsed. The normal functioning of democracy seems likely to lead to a rapid collapse of British in the very near future and so the current crisis becomes understandable. The British are taking a gamble to win a little wiggle room.

One element of the Good Friday Agreement that was carried out by both the British and the 26 County Irish regime was a historic compromise on their respective claims to sovereignty in Ireland. In return for the Irish government dropping their constitutional claim to sovereignty over the North, the British modified the Government of Ireland Act to permit reunification of Ireland any time the majority the Six County electorate so vote in a referendum.

The UUP is already pushing for the next demand, assuming the republicans are silly enough to disband the IRA, a Unionist veto over Irish reunification. Perfectly understandable from their point of view, they, the UUP, have run a one party religious dictatorship for the past century and they see no reason to give up power and privilege.

In the coming days and months, every socialist, every supporter of democratic rights, every "Red", should support the Irish republicans in this clash with British imperialism. For the Irish people to win their centuries-old struggle for democracy and national unity, they will need the solidarity on the international working class. The victory of the republican struggle will not only redress a thousand years of imperialist misrule, it will remove the biggest obstacle faced by the Irish working class in their fight for socialism.

Also, a victory in Ireland will be a great step forward for the workers and farmers in the rest of the not-so-United Kingdom and an important advance for the world anti-imperialist struggle. As the struggle becomes more acute, I urge every Seeing Red reader to support the Irish freedom fighters in their final battle to oust the imperial beast from their island.

Slan,

Roger



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oceans.tide.
whispering.your name..beauty.passion.into the depths.we dive.your words.
written in violet.across my sky.and when i breathe.each syllable..*:sighs:*

in arms of affectionate..a breath hinged on every silence.i can't
speak.this.spell.
you.say my name.and i evaporate.and from where i'm standing.it looks like
rain.
a splash along the mystery of a love undefined.wings of static bring
deep.deep sleep.
dream.ing.of the day.

i woke up singing.this spark.alight.making flame of my heart.wild.fire.of
me.
the only intermission.my eyes.blink.ing.as i watch words leap from their
reality.
on to the page.where fingertips.await their next feeling.
and tonight when i drift.over battle.ships sink.ing.i don't feel heavy.
the wind still carries me into the.perfect circle.of heart.beat.and being.

--vaeda

Threads

A thread is pulled
on the tapestry of life
Colors of its essence fall
In its absence
the light
Through the place it held
calls

And reminds
of the fine beauty
Each spirit wears
When gone we see
The love each share

Connects closer than we know
Though so easily
a thread removed
All essential
so the spirit will show
As colors blending do elude

And we try to find
a piece to fit
But nothing will replace
The way it lit
And each stitch the thread did trace

Everything it touched
As it wove its course
Each grain of trust
It gave
reinforced

The Tapestry of Human Love
Blending eternal colors
Each stitch of life knew of
The sisters and brothers

A spirit radiates with
Along the woven path
Sharing with each other
a gift
Of inspiration that will last

Longer than the threads
of tapestry
All hearts intertwined
Understanding that we see
Colors of human life
combined.

--Lin Frog Simmons

Plastic Rant

Why do we need to wage war over petroleum products? well, let me tell you why: you'll buy something like say, a simple fucking bulk of cassette tapes and the bundle of tapes are wrapped in one incredibly hard to open layer of clear plastic which encloses each of the individually wrapped in hard as hell to open plastic which surrounds the plastic case-- easy to open sort of, unless it is one of those new funky slide ones, but either way the tape itself is petroleum product-plastic and you leave the store carrying your plastic inside a plastic bag which ends up on the side of the highway where it was hopefully not thrown, but was sucked out the window of your petroleum product consuming car by the wind, to end up for eternity next to the other plastic bags decorating choking stunted trees along side the petroleum product asphalt... and that is the real reason for the war on "terror"-- Afghanistan needs a pipeline running through it from the Caspian basin, I mean there is oil in them thar hills and our government killed all those people in the world trade towers, started a war in the name of the murdered, cause you know the appointed Junta Chief Bush and his cronies work for the corporations now, and they issue decrees to enslave us, and no matter what happens it always seems to make the rich richer and the poor infinitely poorer-- and the corporations are free to pillage the world-- fuck 2004 as the time of high automobile fuel economy requirements, cause buddy we got us more of that good ol' oil and our profit is worth more than anyone's life and it gives them a monopoly of power every where 'cause of that shit and ya know we showed them; every kid on the block the size of our anaconda-- we call it a daisy cutter cause it blows a load that kills flowers and people, and people ain't nothing but daises anyway trying to reach up and get some fucking light and grow...

But, here we are, us here daises, we want us lots of fucking plastic so we can carry our plastic home in plastic, ya dig? and so we buy our slave labor plastic goods and we smile cause we recycle... It might now be dangerous to even say a word-- too many folks with flags for blinders fooled by popular misconception, that ol' not knowing the true nature of things, denial of the facts- lets hide under our plastic crap in disposable diaper land fill tombs of our creation and if we were to ask why want to enslave us as they drown us in plastic and polluted air and toxic chemical coated food and polluted water so you end up, if you care at all about your health, buying your water "they" say is clean cause they treated it and ozoned it or some such thing, and when you buy your water it comes in more plastic-- these people would say it's all for you so you can have this lifestyle your S.U.V. and all your computers CDs and TVs all plastic sweet and sour sugar tittie that some even buy with that proverbial plastic, and what we would say, what could we say? it is the ol' fucking inevitable question you answer and ask wondering if it matters at all; Paper or Plastic???

--Juventino Manzano

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Animal rights news

Starvation, mutilation and madness

The tidy plastic-wrapped packages of chicken in the grocery store hide an agony unimaginable to decent people. Crammed by the tens of thousands into stinking sheds, "broiler" chickens never scratch in the dirt or preen their feathers in the warmth of the sunshine. Painfully misshapen legs buckle under the massive weight of their bodies because they've been bred to grow to large.

But even worse than a broiler chicken's life is the torture of the broiler breeder—the roosters and hens who produce the chickens eaten by people. The birds suffer starvation, mutilation and overcrowding.

Factory farmers often slice off the chicks' tender beaks with a searing hot blade and roosters' toes and spurts are cut off without any anesthetics. The chicks will be shoved into sheds crowded with other chickens. Frustrated and angry, they peck and fight with each other. Chopping off body parts to prevent injury is cheaper than giving them more space. Even the roosters' cobs are sometimes cut off in the mistaken belief that it will prevent fighting.

Broiler breeders are starved every day of their lives. Selectively bred to produce offspring that are big enough to slaughter in just six weeks, they would grow grotesquely huge and die in just a few months if allowed to eat all they wanted. Rather than breeding a slower-growing bird who takes longer—and costs more—to reach slaughter age, factory farmers

often use the "skip-a-day" diet—the breeders are fed only small portions of food every other day, as little as 25% of what they would normally eat. From birth until slaughter, chickens suffer chronic unrelieved hunger. They peck endlessly at the filthy litter and at their own feathers, preening themselves to baldness, trying to find something to fill up the emptiness in their stomachs.



Hens are allowed to eat a little more than roosters because they need the extra calories to produce eggs. To keep roosters from fitting their heads through the wires of the females' feeding troughs, plastic sticks called "Nozbonz" are shoved through one side of the nose and out the other. The tender nasal membranes swell and drip blood, and there is no relief. Starving chickens could satisfy themselves a little bit by drinking more water, but factory farmers figure that this will mean increased urination and wetter litter. Rather than cleaning the litter mire often, they take away water right after feeding, adding chronic thirst to the hunger and pain.

Factory farmers keep the starving, crowded birds in the dark for up to 18 hours a day so that they can manipulate growth. Studies of chickens in natural surroundings show that they bask in the sunshine yet even this simple pleasure is denied them. Many go blind or suffer excruciating detached retinas.

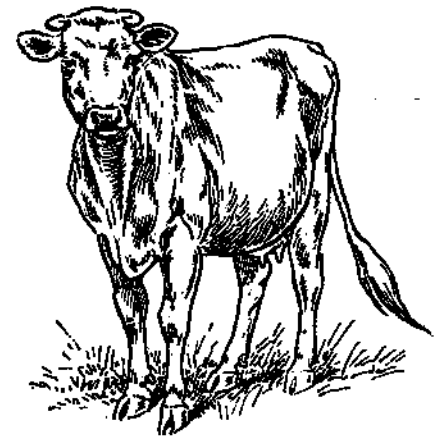


After 16 months, chickens are roughly grabbed by one leg, slung upside down and stuffed into crates. They are trucked for hours or days without food, water or rest, then they are hung upside down and their necks are dragged across a blade, often while still conscious.

Dairy deception

In the fantasy TV ad world created by the California Milk Advisory Board, dairy cows loll about lush, green fields, enjoying luxurious lives of ease and comfort. "Great cheese comes from happy cows," the announcer claims. "Happy cows come from California."

Consumers take note: The reality is that dairy cows in California, the largest milk-producing state in the U.S., live anything but easy lives. Real cows are typically kept in feces-and urine-saturated, treeless, grassless "dry lots" of dirt (or mud, during California's long winter rainy season). They are shot full of growth hormones or other drugs to get them to produce unnaturally high quantities of milk, commonly suffer from disease and painful injuries from their intensive rearing, are repeatedly impregnated in order to keep them lactating, and are attached to milking machines several times a day nearly every day of their lives, even throughout their pregnancies.



Their beloved calves, shown in the ads talking about their blissful lives to their grandmothers, barely get to see their own mothers. Most are torn from them within 24 hours of birth. Many die before even reaching the age of weaning, and many more are condemned to the veal crate. In fact, the veal industry relies on the dairy industry for its very existence. After just four or five years (a cow's normal life span is about 20 years), when their bodies are so worn out that they can no longer meet the inordinately high milk production demands, they are trucked off to the slaughterhouse to be strung up by one leg and killed with a knife to the throat. Happy cows?!

PETA has filed a complaint with the U.S. Federal Trade Commission, which has the power to take deceptive ads off the air. Says PETA attorney Matthew Penzer, "The 'Happy Cows' ads mislead consumers into thinking that dairy cows live easy lives, while the fact is that cows and their calves suffer greatly. The truth is that there's misery in every glass of milk."

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Labor culture alive in new works

What is "labor culture?" Is it union songs and stories? Is it craft worker and union battles?

All of this and more can be loosely grouped as "labor culture," and two new books and a CD express the cultural variety that workers share.

Tin Men's Tales

Say "Tin Man" and most folks think of the "Wizard of Oz." But there's another tin man--the actual constructions that sheet metal workers fabricate to celebrate and advertise their trade.

A founding father of labor cultural studies, Archie Green of San Francisco, a former pile driver and workplace song and story collector, recently examined the meaning and story of tin men.

He's searched coast to coast, from rooftop advertisements to union apprentice projects, to ask why sheet metal workers fabricate tin men and what they represent.

He also explores the tin men's trade and its historic roots, drawing on folklore that goes back 400 years.

Some tin men were obviously built as advertisements. Others were built to complete a union apprenticeship. Some are now treasured as museum pieces.

Any tinner would enjoy this book, a snapshot of the trade and its symbols. Even more, it is a salute to craft workers, expressing their skills not only in their everyday work, but also in the sometimes whimsical statements they make with the trade's tools.

Tin Men
by Archie Green
University of Illinois Press
ISBN 0-252-02750-7

Illinois Labor Land
Illinois has long been a labor center, birthplace of unions and battleground for many union epics.

These struggles not only spawned books and stories, but also music.

Chicago musician Bucky Halker recently gathered some Illinois-specific labor tunes, compiling them on his latest CD, "Welcome to Labor Land."

These musical tales range from southern Illinois coal camps to the Chicago stockyards to a 1905 train wreck. A laid-off construction worker laments his fate in "304 Blues" and the 1937 Memorial Day Massacre at Republic Steel returns with a long lost song.

Halker also includes labor's anthem, "Solidarity Forever," written by Chicagoan Ralph Chaplin in 1915. Halker livens up this classic with a jumping punk interpretation, spirited without being over solemn.

Halker is a lively musician with a strong band, who bring a country-rock sensibility to traditional tunes, revitalizing them for a new age. The liner booklet is a treasure, noting each song's origin and the labor story it reflects.

Welcome to Labor Land
Bucky Halker & the Complete Unknowns
Revoluting Records
PO 257608, Chicago, IL 60625
<http://www.buckyhalker.com>

Insurgent artwork

Murals have a rich tradition in art internationally, best exemplified in the U.S. by the historic paintings the government commissioned as federal work projects in the Depression 1930s. One still survives in Normal's Post Office and a labor mural, featuring local union history, graces Laborers 362's old hall, painted by Kari Sandhaas in 1986.

Mural painting resurged in the U.S. in the late 1960s, spawning an urban art movement that decorated city walls in Chicago, Los Angeles and other cities.

A labor-supportive and politically radical response is the work of Mike Alewitz, whose large scale paintings not only grace U.S. walls, but also buildings in Nicaragua, Russia, Mexico, Iran and northern Ireland.

Alewitz did not begin as a painter, but as an anti-war 1960s radical, active with the Socialist Workers party. Although no longer a "party regular," he makes no apologies for his Marxist perspective.

Alewitz's U.S. murals are often controversial. In 1986 he painted a mural for striking P-9 UFC#W Hormel workers in Austin, Minnesota. The local was put into receivership and the mural sandblasted. A recent Baltimore mural featuring abolitionist Harriet Tubman with a rifle has also ignited controversy.

Alewitz's art is immediate and stunning, with rich colors and the large scale imagery needed to project a mural's power. His paintings for the Mine Workers, the Carpenters, the Teamsters, and the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers project labor's struggle's and heroic figures in broad and colorful strokes, maintaining unity across an expansive canvas with banners and symbolic worker figures.

Some may find Alewitz's radical politics hard to swallow, yet his artistic and political integrity commands respect. His politics guides his art and produces stunning images celebrating workers and slamming an economic order that puts profits before people.

Insurgent Images
by Paul Buhle & Mike Alewitz
Monthly Review Press
ISBN 1-58367-034-3
www.monthlyreview.org

--by Mike Matejka from Union News

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