

Eastern Illinois University

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Volume 26, Number 2

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Angry Albanians

Dumpster Diving

Monsanto Monster



POST AMERIKAN



BLOOMINGTON/NORMAL

VOLUME 26

50¢

NUMBER 2

APRIL/MAY 1997

poetry
in the
cornfields

*examining
the local
scene*



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PAGE 2



BLOOMINGTON/NORMAL

VOLUME 26

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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 to 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 \$5.00 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.

This issue of *Post Amerikan* is brought to you by...

David, Deborah, Gregg, Laine,
Linda, Matt, Nick, Ralph,
Russ, Stacy, Sherrin, Steve

Post Sellers

Bloomington

AIDS Task Force, 313 N. Main (inside)
 About Books, 221 E. Front (inside)
 Barnes & Noble, Veterans and Rt. 9 (inside)
 Bus Depot, 533 N. East
 Circus Video, (Emerson and Main)
 Common Ground, 516 N. Main (inside)
 Front and Center Building
 Gaston's Upper Cut, 409 N. Main (inside)
 Law and Justice Center, 104 W. Front
 Medusa's, 420 N. Madison (inside)
 Mystic Link, 901 E. Grove Suite M. (inside)
 Once Upon a Time, 311 N. Main (inside)
 The Park Store, Wood and Allin (inside)
 Twin City Exchange, 411 N. Main (inside)
 U.S. Post Office, Center and Monroe
 U.S. Post Office, 1511 E. Empire
 Wash House, 609 N. Clinton

Normal

Acme Comics, 115 W. North (inside)
 Amtrak Station, 100 Parkinson
 Babbitt's Books, 104 North (inside)
 Bus stop, (School and Fell)
 Coffee World CoffeeHouse, 114 E. Beaufort
 Cultural Expressions, 127 E. Beaufort (inside)
 Deadpan Alley Records, 129 E. Beaufort (inside)
 Mother Murphy's, 111 North (inside)
Champaign
 Babbitt's Books, 614 E. Green, (inside)

What's your new address?

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 _____
 Street _____
 City/State/Zip _____

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.)

May 15

Good numbers

ACLU.....454-7223
 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
 Animal Protection League.....828-5371
 Bloomington Housing Authority.....829-3360
 Boys and Girls Club.....829-3034
 Clare House (Catholic workers).....828-4035
 Countering Domestic Violence.....827-7070
 Dept. of Children/Family Services...828-0022
 Gay & Lesbian Resource Phoneline...438-2429
 Habitat for Humanity.....829-0693
 HELP (transportation for senior citizens/handicapped).....828-8301
 Home Sweet Home Mission.....828-7356
 IL Dept. of Public Aid.....827-4621
 IL Lawyer Referral.....1-800-252-8916
 Incest Survivors Support Group.....827-5051
 Lighthouse (substance abuse treatment).....827-6026
 McLean Co. Center for Human Services...827-5351
 McLean Co. Health Dept.....888-5450
 McLean Co. Humane Society.....663-7387
 McLean Co. Peace Coalition.....828-7070
 Mid Central Community Action.....829-0691
 Mobile Meals.....828-8301
 Narcotics Anonymous.....1-800-779-6178
 NAAFA (size acceptance)
 Central IL chapter.....454-2128
 National Health Care Services/
 abortion assistance.....1-800-322-1622
 Occupational Development Center...452-7324
 Operation Recycle.....829-0691
 Parents Anonymous.....827-4005
 PATH (Personal Assistance Telephone Help).827-4005
 Phone Friends.....827-4005
 PFLAG(Parents, Families and Friends
 of Lesbians and Gays).....663-0831
 Planned Parenthood (medical).....827-4014
 (bus/couns/edu).....827-4368
Post Amerikan.....828-4473
 Prarie State Legal Services.....827-5021
 Project Oz.....827-0377
 Rape Crisis Center.....827-4005
 Safe Harbor Mission(Salvation Army) 829-9476
 Sunnyside Neighborhood Center.....827-5428
 TeleCare (senior citizens).....828-8301
 Unemployment comp/job service.....827-6237
 Voice for Choice.....828-3108
 Western Ave. Community Center.....829-4807



Community News



Buried Pleasures

Installations by Barbara Kendrick
Paintings by Rosalyn Schwartz

March 5 through April 13, 1997

Buried Pleasure is an obsessive investigation into the link between vision and desire. Scharz and Kendrick explore sensuality and the visual symbols and cultural rituals that express or regulate our impulses. They engage in the discourse of women's sexuality in titillating forms that incorporate feminine mythology and art history. The works have an organic, visceral presence that is both elegant and disturbing.

Want a little brother or sister?

Big Brothers/Big Sisters of McLean County is in need of volunteers to be matched with little brother/little sisters.

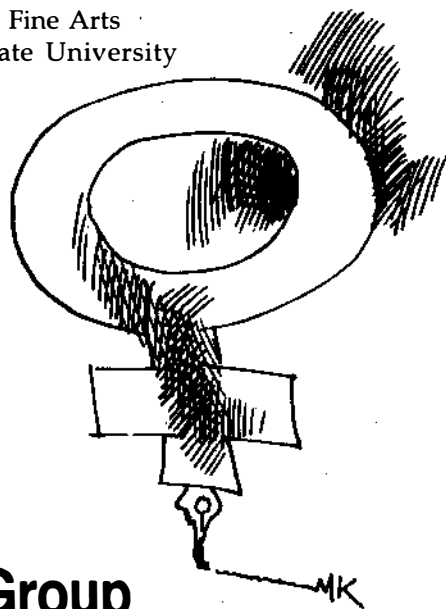
Volunteers are asked to make a one year commitment to their little brothers/little sisters by spending a few hours each week with them.

If you are interested in this program, please call the Student Volunteer Center at 309-454-5181.

Dive into Women's Issues

The Student Volunteer Center is launching its first annual Women's Issues Community Plunge program on Saturday, April 5th. Their goal is to increase student's awareness of women's issues by actively participating in volunteer activities pertaining to women's issues. For more information on the Women's Issues Community Plunge, call 454-5181.

--Student Volunteer Center newsletter
College of Fine Arts
Illinois State University



Zen Group

There is a Zen group in B/N that meets the first and third Mondays of each month at the Unitarian Church, 1603 E. Emerson in Bloomington. Meetings start at 7:00pm. Last year, they suspended meetings during the summer, but may possibly continue them this summer if there seems to be enough interest. For more information write to P.O. Box 1801, Bloomington, IL 61702-1801, e-mail zhandele@aol.com, or call Richard at 452-7084.

Beyond Normal Films

Beyond Normal Films was organized last October with the purpose of bringing quality American independent and foreign films to the Normal Theater.

BIG NIGHT

Thursday, April 3 / Friday, April 4

7 pm

Big Night is the story of Primo Pilaggi (Shalhoub) and his younger brother, Secondo (Tucci), hardworking, Italian immigrants who run the "Paradise," a small restaurant in a late 1950s New Jersey shoretown. Primo, the chef, is an artist who molds and labors over his creations -- risottos, capons, crostini with goat cheese -- only to find that the local clientele would rather prefer a plate of spaghetti with meatballs.

MICROCOSMOS

Thursday, May 1 / Friday, May 2

7pm

FRANCE/SWITZERLAND/ITALY 1996
Shot over a three year period by French scientist-filmmakers Claude Nuridsany and Marie Perennou, "Microcosmos" chronicles one full day in a meadow in the French countryside.

"Microcosmos" will shatter your expectations both about what insects are and how they can be shown on film. This documentary is much more interesting than a standard nature piece because it turns the bugs into larger-than-life characters whose quirks, pastimes and relationships are never less than riveting.

WELCOME TO THE DOLLHOUSE

Thursday, June 5 / Friday, June 6

7 pm

"Welcome to the Dollhouse" is an intense personal tragicomedy about the torments endured by an awkward seventh grader, Dawn Wiener, aka "Wienerdog" (Heather Matarazzo). Dawn is a model of geekiness, looking permanently perplexed and decked out in a wardrobe that only enhances her social problems. As the most unpopular girl in her junior high, life is truly hell for Dawn, who is mocked and verbally abused on a daily basis by her classmates.

Also at the Normal Theater...

I SHOT ANDY WARHOL

Thursday, April 10 / Friday, April 11 7pm

Shown in conjunction with the College of Fine Arts Festival "Intersections: Gender in the Arts."

"I Shot Andy Warhol" is the story of Valerie Solnares, who unsuccessfully tried everything to get Warhol to make her famous.

FARGO

Saturday, April 12 / Sunday, April 13 7pm

Oscar winner for Best Screenplay and Best Actress, " Fargo " is the latest from Joel and Ethan Coen. This black comedy tells the true story of a car salesman, his wife, a pregnant sheriff, two challenged kidnappers, and a large ransom amount (did I mention a woodchipper?). The naive Minnesota vernacular turns the appalling real life events into great hilarity. A marvelous film... you betcha.

JAPANESE FILM FESTIVAL

April 24 - 27

All showings 7pm

Sponsored by ISU International Studies through a grant from Mitsubishi.

OHAYO

1962 / 93 minutes / Drama

One of Japanese master director Yasujiro Ozu's last films, "Ohayo" tells the story of a small community in a middle-class housing development outside of Tokyo. Only one family owns a television set, and two brothers try to convince their parents to buy the second.

OKOGE

1992 / Comedy

"Okoge" is about a woman who befriends a male homosexual and proceeds to try and set him up with a partner. Problems, no less, occur when the families find out in this somewhat still patriarchal male-dominated heterosexual culture.

TAMPOPO

1986 / 114 minutes / Comedy

A tall, dark stranger rides into town on a milk truck and swaggers into a noodle shop. The film concerns his attempts in searching for "the perfect noodle."

BEIJING WATERMELON

1990 / 162 minutes / Comedy

A sharp-witted comedy about a Tokyo grocer who becomes involved with a group of penniless Chinese students, with potentially disastrous results. Particularly sensitive to the special relationship between China and Japan.



Letters to the editor

Thank you very much for publicizing my Primer on Student Behavior in a University Classroom. Your intent to damage me, of course, is as evident from the lead as your cowardice is in not signing the article. I will leave it to your readers, if you really have any, to judge the primer.

From lnbrojna@rs6000.cmp.ilstu.edu

Dear Post Amerikan:

I really enjoyed the most recent issue, one in a long line of fine publications of the Post. You should sell it here in your first cousin city of Bloomington, Indiana. I feel really badly that you must suffer through one of these ridiculous mayors, but you have to admit, the tenure of either one of them will surely provide fine fodder for future issues of the Post. In fact, there's probably a book in them, especially if Smart wins again--what a great TV movie he would make.

You know, it's funny; after reading the Leger Brosnahan piece, it occurred to me that here at my school, we have a teacher named Leisure Bronzyman, who released similar list of instructions to one of his classes...

A Primer on Studious Behavior in a University Building

1. Be out of body and clothes. "Me-liness is next to Godliness." Jai guru deva.
2. Dress approximately with glasses. Wear nothing. That will be distracting to instructors. Classmates cover the least. No tank wars or short stops.
3. Warm, do not shake or bake to class. Wait at all stairs under four hours. Donuts sit early on the floor of halls. Get up against the wall.
4. Aloud, the students and constrictors leave the class room before you enter into it.
5. Sit on your own pedestal straight with respect to the classmates, instructions, objects, and your self. Do not slouch, crouch, debauch, approach, reproach, suggest, impress, digress, invest, protest, suppress, inflate, regroove, overgrow, underwear, over here, til it's over over there. Is this clear?
6. Do not burp, slurp, bump, trip, gulp, snack, primp, bump, sink, flaunt, toast, roast, vote, goad, flex, tinker or spin. Do not display your or anyone else's breasts. Do no manicure work, including soaking, of any kind.

7. Do not wiggle, giggle, jiggle or dawdle. Do not dye my hair green or reveal parts of your delicious anatomy to my staring gaze during classroom hours, you charming little pumpkin...
8. Pay attention to me. Leave sheep and other domesticated animals outside in the hall.
9. Take note. Your problem is you can't understand and remember. You can't do both while writing notes. Whistling engages only one scent and one linguistic smell. Squeaking engages one scent and two linguistic smells. Bleating engages two scents and seventy hundred thousand smells. Notetaking brings most of your problem to memory.
10. Ask not what your teacher can do for you, ask what you can bring to school for your teacher, such as breakfast. Be out of my way ask the end of class, take all of my belongings to my office for me, leave no leaves, dirt clods, dust clouds, dank corners, dingy colors, dirty columns, daily crosswords, duty free cordless razors, or little snails.

Vladimir Lenin at Смоленск Университет:
"Что вы делаете утром?
Неопаздывать, неубирать,
неспущать, необедеть, и ужинать.
У вас есть носки и кроссовки?"

Anyway, thanks for another great issue,
Tom Townsend

Dear Editor:

Many people feel that the very fabric of our civilization is fast unraveling.

We could be seeing the slow, but sure decline of human civilization as we have known it in the 20th century. Here are a few examples:

--Genetic engineering is destroying human life as we have known it for thousands of years.

Life is being transformed into something unnatural, something that is artificially manufactured.

--We are seeing a decline in our civil liberties, all in the name of supposedly "fighting terrorism"

--More and more guns are being taken away, eventually leaving the citizenry utterly defenseless.

--The educational system is in shambles. And widespread demands for a voucher system would make things even worse.

--There is a fragmenting of various institutions, such as the educational system and the news media, meaning an acceleration of the growing trend toward less and less common knowledge among citizens. Already many young people do not have even a simple knowledge of current events, government, history and other aspects of society.

--We see a decline in real wages, in addition to efforts to destroy vital social programs, such as Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. Such programs are the only things standing in the way of a new dark age of Social Darwinism.

These are just a few examples, but they give an idea of the problems confronting us all.

--Allan H. Keith

National Day of Silence Wednesday April 9

The Day of Silence was first conceived during the U. of Virginia Gay Bisexual Union B-GLAD week in April 1996. Participants in the Day of Silence forced upon gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered individuals. At U.Va., the Day of Silence was an effective way to promote awareness and provoke discussion amongst the entire university community. Gays and straights alike participated in this event.

For more information about this Day, write to the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Union at the University of Virginia (lgbu@virginia.edu) or visit the Day of Silence web site at <http://faraday.clas.Virginia.EDU/~mkp6n/>

Dining with Friends

On May 17, 1997 the McLean County Aids Task Force will host a benefit.

Dining with Friends '97 is a two-part event. In the first part, people agree to "host" a dinner and to invite their friends. Each invited friend will be asked to make a donation to the MCATF. In the second part, all hosts and their friends are invited to attend a public dessert reception, for entertainment, fun and the fellowship of community with others who also had some part in this event.

Through Dining With Friends, MCATF hopes to raise \$10,000, about half of their proposed 1997 budget, promote greater community awareness of HIV / AIDS, secure greater community support for MCATF's programs and to recruit new volunteers who will continue at MCATF after the event is over.

For more information contact MCATF at P.O. Box 304, Bloomington, IL 61702-0304, or e-mail (mcاتف@dave-world.net)

McLEAN COUNTY AIDS TASK FORCE

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Care • Peer Support • Non-Therapeutic Support
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(309) 827-AIDS



Notes from the land of anti-fat

The Gene Wars

The same month that scientists announced successfully cloning a sheep in Scotland, an international research team may have isolated yet another genetic culprit in the battle against that Old Debbil Obesity.

In a March article in the journal *Nature Genetics*, this team of intrepid fat foes found a gene, labeled UCP2, which apparently preprograms some people to convert calories to heat and others to store them as fat. The presence of UCP2 in the body may explain why some folks are able to eat almost anything and stay thin, while others remain fat despite continual dieting. In research in both France and America, lab mice eating the same diet wound up with dramatically different bodies. The fat mice had less of a protein produced by the UCP2 gene; the thinner mice had more.

This protein, which is made in human muscle and fat, is "like a valve to determine whether you (use) calories for fat or heat," according to Craig Warden, lead author of the study. This differs from the first weight-predicting gene identified in 1995: that 'un produces a hormone known as leptin, which somehow signals the brain to adjust the body's metabolism.

With two genes thus identified, a major pissing contest has arisen among researchers as to which is the better approach in attacking fatness. Mess with the brain or the body? It's a puzzlement...

Those of us who value diversity in human stock have been viewing this debate with bemusement. Does genetic tampering hold the key to the banishment of fatness. More to the

point: should genetic tampering even be focused on this goal?

I'm of two minds on this issue. At full sci-fi geekitude, I find myself imagining a future where biomedical technology is so sophisticated that anyone conceivably could have the body they wanted. In a world where biology is no longer destiny, isn't it likely that men and women would learn to choose from a variety of body types? Wouldn't that be the ultimate in coolness?

On the other hand, our ability to manipulate both body and environment seems to be outpacing our understanding of the ways things interconnect. As a culture, we've been so focused on finding reasons that obesity is a "killer disease" (to use NIH terminology) we've been incapable of determining if there are, in fact, holistic reasons favoring fatness in the human pool. What would a fat-free world lose? I suspect it would be a lot.

Mummies, Dearest

Fat-phobia is clearly not solely a twentieth century phenom. Recent examination of skin folds and blood types in ancient Egyptian mummies indicate that - hieroglyphs to the contrary - many prominent Egyptian rulers were themselves fat. From their art, we've always associated Egyptian culture with the long and lean look. Now, it appears we've been had once more. But, hey, if you tried to judge the twentieth century based on its commercial art, you might assume that everybody in this era looked like Kate Moss, too.

Pageantry

Maybe it doesn't make sense getting incensed over beauty pageants - bastions of retarded chauvinism and stunted aesthetics that they are - but I still can't help but be boggled by the recent Miss Universe brouhaha.

If you missed it (and you've obviously got more of a life than I do if you did), the story is encapsulated thus: Miss Universe, nineteen-year-old Venezuelan Alicia Mchada, was the object of controversy in her native country when the slender brunette gained a whopping eleven pounds over six months.

This gain led to the loss of a lucrative contract with Kellogg's Special K and rumors that pageant officials were going to strip Ms. M. of her crown unless she went on a crash diet. To answer the latter, pageant chair Donald Trump recently issued a statement to the press supporting the beauty queen's continued reign (it ends in May, after all) while simultaneously trashing the young girl and calling her an "eating machine"

That Donald, what a classy guy.

What makes this even more fascinating is the following stat: today's beauty contest winner is, on average, fifteen pounds thinner than her counterpart from the fifties and sixties. In gaining eleven pounds, Ms. Eating Machine is still thinner than her peers in the past, even as she inspires stupid David Letterman jokes.

Wonderful times, in which we live.

--Bill Sherman

Environmentally safe, organic gardening tips

As the days grow warmer and the smell of spring approaches, the time to start thinking about planting your garden is close at hand.

Pesticide use in this country reached an all time high of 1.2 billion pounds in 1995, according to the NRDC's (National Resources Defense Council) *Amicus Journal*.

So if you want to try planting an environmentally safe, organic garden, companion planting is a good way to avoid some annoying pests.

It will take up to 3 years for your garden to be rid of pesticides and/or chemical fertilizers, if you've been using them in the past.

Here are some steps to getting started:

Planning- Choose plants most suitable to the Central Illinois region such as tomatoes, cucumbers, corn, zucchini, etc.

Soil- You can evaluate your soil with a home laboratory test to determine its health, texture and pH. Potatoes and onions are good for building up organic matter.

Compost- Helps create healthy plants and soil. Compost can consist of browns (dry leaves, woodchips, sawdust, used napkins and paper towels, twigs and straw) and greens (fruit and vegetable scraps, plant cuttings and grass

clippings). Just make sure to turn your pile regularly. Using compost to fertilize your garden will also attract earthworms that keep the soil light, friable and healthy.

Companion planting- Certain crops, when planted near each other, will help to defend soil, repel pests and promote growth. For example, sweetcorn can shade pumpkin plants while pumpkins protect the exposed roots of corn.

Chives are good for repelling insects because they give off a strong scent and grow well with carrots.

Rosemary can be used as an insect repelling spray.

Tomatoes and basil help work together to keep each other healthy and will add to the flavor of the tomatoes. Basil also helps repel flies and mosquitoes.

Borage grows well with tomatoes, squash and strawberries; repels tomato worm.

Horseradish grows well near potatoes; repels potato bug.

Keeping a saucer of beer or laying down a layer of sawdust deters snails and slugs from invading your garden.

This method of planting has been used for centuries and is based on the knowledge that

certain plants grow well together and can have a positive effect on the health of their companions.

Taller plants provide shelter and protection for species that are smaller and more vulnerable. Low-growing plants are often helpful to their companions because they provide protection to the taller plant's roots.

Crop rotation helps preserve soil, preventing it from becoming depleted by over-use. Using this method means that no 2 species or groups of plants are grown in one area of your garden in successive seasons. For example: A heavy feeding leaf crop such as lettuce or cabbage should be followed by planting a less demanding root crop such as carrots or turnips. Root crops tend to do better planted a year after the soil has been heavily fertilized.

You don't need a big yard to have a garden. Windowsill pots make perfect homes for flowers or herbs. Even pots in a window ledge will work if light levels are adequate.

If you like organic foods but don't enjoy gardening, one alternative is to join a community-supported agriculture program to invest in and benefit from the produce of local organic farmers. There are local markets and food co-ops that supply organic food.

--Stacy McClelland

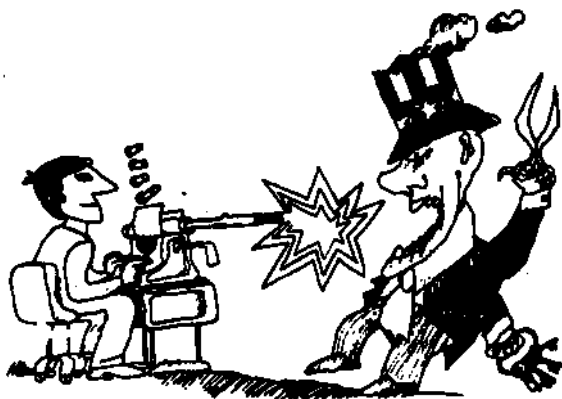


United States of the oppressed

It has been stated countless times that what America needs is a revolution. Those fighting for women's suffrage said it. Those striving to better working conditions for immigrants said (and say) it. Anti-war protesters said it in the 60's. The list goes on and on. However, the possibilities for revolution will remain unfulfilled until *all* of America realizes its inclusion into a group of people who are oppressed. Oppression is generally thought of as applying to those starving citizens in third world nations, or to those living under dictatorial governmental rule. When it is used in reference to America, "oppression" is ascribed to African-Americans grouped into ghettos or to Mexican immigrants who are being exploited by greed mongers. These are only symptoms of a disease which is of a much greater significance.

Oppression is a condition under which all of us live who do not have the power to control the political or humanitarian concerns of America. This is oppression *because* we have no choice; how we live is determined by the philosophic tenets embraced by our country. From birth we are taught our individual positions in the political machine. Brought up to perform the duties we are assigned (which keep the machine running), we have no choice but to do our jobs and die, having served our purpose quite well. Should one assert his or her ability to

make choice, and choose not to aid the system, this misfit will be immediately punished. Most Americans are so blinded, however, by the materialistic rewards of serving the machine, that they do not care about the consequences of their actions. New cars and country club memberships are all that is needed to bring smiles to their faces.




Some factions of the American population understand oppression quite well. Blacks, feminists, and homosexuals confront blatant oppression every day. The yuppie insurance salesman in the thousand dollar suit can perhaps empathize with these groups through his big screen T.V., but has no anger himself. He has been placated by tangible rewards gained by serving the system. He is brainwashed, unable to stop his hedonistic

lifestyle even though he understands his role as a tool of an oppressive system of control.

The question, then, becomes one of how to organize American society in a different direction. Though it seems complex, and it is, the seeds of revolutionary thought are already planted. Those who live in poverty and are constantly beaten down by America's ideals know economic and social oppression. Those who have obtained material luxuries by bowing before America's flawed scheme realize, or could be made to realize, that the same oppressive system has stolen their will, intellect, and wholeness as a person. All are discontent with America's present course of action. This is why escapism plays such a major role in modern lifestyles; whether it be through drugs, television, or some other form, people use anything to dull the reality of what is happening in the world. It is thus a problem of motivating people to stop hiding from this flawed system and to face it in revolutionary form. If this were to occur, if all people were to unite in a common goal of *change*, the system would crumble instantly and for at least one second equality would shine.

-Laine



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April 1-30**



PFLAG News

ACHR to show movies; community center benefits

Last winter, the Advocacy Council for Human Rights sponsored a showing of "The Celluloid Closet," a movie about gay and lesbian roles in the history of movies. Then, last month, "Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?" was shown, a cult classic with Joan Crawford and Bette Davis. The success of these two films prompted the council's decision to show movies every other month. The next movie night will be on April 11th. (At press time, the council had not yet made a decision as to what will be shown. Fliers advertising the film will be posted at a later date.)

There is no charge for movie night, however the ACHR accepts donations at the door. These contributions will go towards the renovation of the Saga Lynx Community Center. So far the movies shown have netted about \$130.00 to go for the necessary repairs. The ACHR has also generously donated \$250.00 from their own funds.

If you have any questions or film suggestions, call 830-2521 and leave a message. Hope to see you at the next movie!

A word from Carol & Craig

What a wonderful surprise!!! I never imagined we would have more than about three gay and lesbian teens attend the Valentine's Social/Dance presented by PFLAG, but we had between 17-20 high schoolers! I am not sure of the exact count because Craig and I didn't stay at the dance; we went next door to the Task Force so we wouldn't put a "damper" on the fun. Jerry Pope stayed with the teens most of the evening, acting as chaperone, while Bruce Stefl stood by as "bouncer" in case there was any trouble (which there wasn't). Craig and I decorated the room earlier in the week, and it looked pretty nice, if I do say so myself! We had soda, cookies, and candy for snacks. Of course my son Tom did an excellent job as D.J.! I do think that the teens had fun--I sure hope they did. A few of them thanked me as they were leaving...and that made me feel good.

Since we had such a good turnout, we thought it would be a good idea to have something once a month for the teens. Even if it is only a place for them to socialize, play board games or darts. So we decided that on April 18th, starting at 8:00 p.m.; we will hold teen night, where games will be provided along with snacks and soda. Then, on May 23rd, we are seriously considering a PROM for gay and lesbian teens! I forgot whose idea this was, but whoever you are...thank you! I think that these teens are in desperate need of being themselves and we can help give them that opportunity. Please feel free to call us with any ideas and/or opinions you may have--we welcome them. Our number is (309) 663-0831.

On another note, we are now a chapter with five members (growing slowly, but we are growing). If anyone reading this is interested

in becoming a member, contact us. Dues are eight dollars a year, and you will receive the quarterly newsletter, *PFLAGpole*, and other mailings from national. We will have strength in numbers as we start our journey into the community to have our voices heard in making this a safe place for our gay and lesbian loved ones. I thank those who have become members and encourage other fair minded people to do the same. I have the membership forms and they are very simple to fill out. So please consider taking this first step.

The event "Dining with Friends" sponsored by the McLean County AIDS Task Force will take place in May 17th. This is a very worthwhile event, which helps provide the MCATF with the funds necessary to continue their many forms of advocacy and education. Hosts for dinners are needed, along with volunteers to make desserts and other various tasks. Please call the MCATF (827-2437) for more information. It should prove to be a very worthwhile and fun event. Last year, Peoria made over \$18,000.00 from the event. After everyone has enjoyed a dinner of some sort, we all meet at a central location for dessert, entertainment and fellowship. Please consider taking part!

I have filled out and sent in the necessary forms for our PFLAG chapter to become a chartered, tax-exempt organization. We now have an EIN #. I am waiting to hear from PFLAG national in Washington DC as to when this will go into effect.

Finally, the First United Methodist Church (211 N. School St., Normal) will be presenting the following programs...May 5th (abortion); May 12th (homosexuality); May 19th (euthanasia). These are free and open to the public. I am not sure of the time, but it is probably 7:00 p.m. You may call the church (452-2096) for more information.

Craig and I hope everyone has a happy spring, and we hope to see all of you at the meeting. (Keep your fingers crossed that this month's Teen Night is as successful as last month's!!!)

PFLAG meeting

The local affiliate chapter of "Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays" (PFLAG) will meet at 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, April 15, 1997 in the Yoke Room of the First United Methodist Church, 211 N. School St., Normal. This month Travis Russ of the Bradley University Speech team will present a prose interpretation and selection from the young adult anthology, "Am I Blue." The Bradley University Speech Team won a national title in 1996 and are competing for one again this year. This meeting is free and open to the public.

PFLAG is an international organization which provides education and support for families and friends, and advocates to end homophobia. PFLAG provides opportunity for dialogue about

sexual orientation, and acts to create a society that is healthy, and respectful of human and friends, and advocates to end homophobia. PFLAG provides opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation, and acts to create a society that is healthy, and respectful of human diversity. For more information call 663 0831.

Coming events

April 9th-- "1997 National Day of Silence" to draw attention to the silence forced upon gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered individuals

April 15th--PFLAG meeting

April 19th--Diversity Day at ISU

April 30th--"Not in Our Town" march to end racism

May 17th--MCATF's "Dining with Friends" and dessert reception

May 20th--PFLAG meeting

May 23rd--PFLAG's Teen Prom; 8:00 p.m. at Saga Lynx

June 17th--PFLAG meeting

June 21st--ACHR's Pridefest 1997

--from Bloomington/Normal PFLAG newsletter

The way I see things...

With spring rolling around, there will be lots for us to do and see in the gay community. I know that most of us hibernated during the winter, saving up our energy. As the days grow longer and the weather gets warmer, more and more social functions and get-togethers will be held.

Already, the ACHR is forming committees to plan and prepare for this summer's second Pridefest, which is to be held on June 21st. Last year saw the first Pridefest in Bloomington/Normal history, and by all means it was a definite success! This year, the ACHR hopes to make an even bigger impact. On March 4th, a meeting was held to get the ball rolling--but it's not too late to volunteer! Contact Ron Frazier at (309) 827-7472.

On Wednesday, April 19th, Diversity Day will be held on the Quad all day long. This event is sponsored by ISU's gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered student group, Pride. So, if you happen to be near the Quad on that day, join in the fun!

organizations. This event takes place at 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in the Davidson Room, Memorial Union Student Center, on the IWU campus. This conference promises to be both fun and educational.

The events I've listed are only the tip of the iceberg. PFLAG's Teen Prom, the McLean County AIDS Task Force's "Dining with Friends," and a variety of other lectures and meetings should keep us all pretty busy. Guess we'll see you on the social circuit this spring!

--from Bloomington/Normal PFLAG Newsletter



Mental illness

What parents can/can't do for siblings

What parent's can't do:

- Can't take away the fact that mental illness impacts other siblings.
- Can't lessen the impact by not talking about it.
- Can't shield the siblings from their own feelings about it.
- Can't determine the coping style individual siblings may adopt.
- Can't do the grieving (mourning) process for them. This involves denial, sadness, anger and finally acceptance. This process everyone must do in their individual way, and at their own pace.
- Can't make them seek help if they are in the denial stage.
- Can't take away peer and societal stigma.
- Can't expect they will not have a variety of negative emotions such as guilt, fears, grief, resentment and jealousy.

What parent's can do:

- Be aware that all family members are profoundly affected.
- Be aware of the coping stance the sibling will adopt, i.e. estrangement, enmeshment, etc.
- Talk about your feelings and encourage them to do the same.
- Learn about the illness to lower family anxiety.
- Do not make the ill member the axis in which the family revolves. This is as detrimental to the ill person as it is to the other family members.
- Seek to improve the mental health system so that after-care options are available.
- Read some sibling articles and books to have a background understanding of the sibling experience.

Open Minds: New Horizons AMI Illinois' 1997 Annual Meeting Lisle-Naperville Hilton -May 3-4, 1997

Keynote speakers:

- Fred Frese and Family
- Jan Fawcett, M.D., Head of Psychiatry at Rush Medical Center. Nationally known leader and researcher on Bipolar and Major Depression
- Dr. DeVito, Head of Psychiatry, Stritch Medical School, Loyola U. Schizophrenia Researcher
- Susan Richman, President, OCD Foundation. "OCD Behavior Therapy and My Years in a Mental Hospital"

The Great Debate: Madness in the Streets: Care vs. Freedom

- Linda Virgil, AMI-IL President, "The Need for Involuntary Commitment and Medication"
- Ben Wolf, Esq. ACLU, "The Need to Protect Patient Rights"

Special Interest Sessions:

- Are DMH Networks working?
- How to Improve Community Services
- Coping with Delusions and Denial
- Working Toward Recovery
- Abuse, Neglect, Restraints and Seclusion
- Dual Diagnosis: Brain Disorders/Substance Abuse
- Borderline Personality Disorder

Consumer Art Show

Letter to Representative Tom Ewing

Dear Representative,

We who suffer the scourge of mental illness in the state of Illinois live in a state where the spending on the mentally ill is 44th in these United States. On months we don't have a medical card, we are faced with the prospect of eating at the mission two meals a day anywhere from three days to two weeks out of the month. And it's a painful two mile walk from the further flung reaches of Sect. 8 housing with our medications making our joints ache like arthritis. You may ask where our money managing skills are. Well, about a third of us had to drop out of high school due to the increase in the severity of our disease during that time. Then there's the matter of mental health centers which are understaffed for our personal bookkeeping purposes. Some in authority would say Social Security Disability gives them no money to begin with. And then there were those of us who got credit cards before we were diagnosed with the disease that destroyed our lives, and purchased things based on projected income from lucrative employment, when most of us would never make that kind of money again as long as we lived.

Speaking of Section 8, there always seems to be a magic principle pointing us to such housing in neighborhoods where gang activity, drugs, gunfire, and violence of every description, including rape, seems to be the rule, not the exception. It's a war of attrition between every form of public assistance recipient who has lost all measure of hope. It's usually the mentally ill who suffer the most. We've known since the 1950's that these environments are nothing but toxic to our conditions, yet this is where we always end up living. As a result, we stop meeting appointments, get in fights with day-treatment staff, fail to go into any kind of treatment whatsoever. We turn from drugs that barely help to illegal drugs like crack (provides exhilaration, but nothing like Alman Brothers acid), 30% THC cannabis, crystal methadone, and God knows what combinations these wild kids have come up with these days (they don't trust an old guy like me enough to let me know):

However, the mentally ill are highly vulnerable to street drug use because it is constantly available; and this is for people "lucky" enough to get into the program! Many others are forced to live with family members who abuse them well into adulthood. One

woman I know had to spend 3/4 of her disability check on rent and utilities, with two kids to support with the money left over, for four and a half years.

We feel deeply betrayed when faced with this inescapable situation. People wonder why we drink. Even a temporary placation of symptoms is better than none. And yes, everything we own that isn't bolted down to steel reinforced concrete, is stolen. It doesn't matter if you're stoned or sober; they always seem to know what time to strike.

Returning to mental health center staffs, many of them are "graduate assistants" from local universities. They replaced the part time staff because they are cheaper. They are paid \$400 a month for their services. Their training usually consists of being introduced to the consumers, going on an outing with us, one supervised group, and then several months of offending everything from our intelligence to our dignity. Raw, inexperienced and alone with us for the duration of the group or outing. It's similar to small towns requiring no formal training nor experience for police officers, who only need pass the civil service exam. Maybe not even that much.

Then we get the word down from the director that we may sometime in the future be served by an unconscionable HMO. These are the very organizations that took medical care out of the hands of doctors and placed it into the hands of business managers and accountants! What they do, as if we didn't already know, is take a profitable sum from the insurance premiums (in this case our tax dollars), after which the incentive is only to do good paperwork. If they treat the consumers like garbage the press will get nasty, some token employee will get fired and the rest of the consumers will suffer at the hand of the remaining staff, particularly the ones who spoke up. And then there's always the matter of Respiradone being something called "not cost effective"

and "not available, unless you want to pay for it yourself!" Out of the \$490.00 monthly check that most of us get, this almost sounds friendly, considering the distance most bureaucracies keep.

In other words, it's ugly press for the company, and ugly press for anyone who voted for such a Machiavellian plan. Human beings, the mentally ill, the ones nobody but their family loves, will die faster than they already are. In our cases, it's a disease where no amount of spiritual pureness or personal strength will cure you. In fact, too much of either of these and you end up back in the hospital, or solitary confinement in jail.

The solution? The best proven way is locally elected and controlled 708 boards that make the decisions about what the community needs, and what it will do with the federal, state and local funds gathered, applying them to the plans agreed upon by consensus. County agencies need to be funded on a county to county basis, as they do in the state of Wisconsin, for optimal consumer care. This can be verified by the Rev. Gene Stormer. He has a masters degree in social



awareness

work and psychology and worked in the field for many years as director of Fayette Companies in Peoria, IL, as well as the new and innovative "outreach" program at Southern Illinois University Medical School designed primarily for psychiatry students. He donned the holy vestments only recently and can be reached at (309) 662-4646 Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 9:00-3:00.

When Illinois, the state I was born in, is called 44th in spending for the mentally ill (which seems like progress only because nobody remembers where it was before, it just seemed worse), for those of us who feel betrayed when social workers leave on an annual and biannual basis because the funding doesn't exist to keep them at a competitive, full-time basis; when programs are cut to the bare bones because funding has stopped keeping up with inflation; and when friends commit suicide with cigarettes, food, jumping off of tall buildings, better medications like Respiradone would have given them the sense they needed never to have made friends with people who ultimately murdered them. I call that pestilence upon pestilence, Congressman! What more can be cut?

Bob Michel was willing to knock heads together for projects in his district. The Rev. Stormer can verify this, so don't tell us a powerful congressman like yourself can't do the same in ours!

We don't need HMO's telling us Respiradone isn't cost effective; or that we have had too many hospitalizations after which we are sent to a holocaust, dead before our time of a disease that shouldn't kill us

--William Hallinan

Shine: A triumph of the spirit

Recently I have read and seen several interviews about the movie *Shine*. It is the true story of a piano prodigy who descended into severe mental illness as a young man and about his amazing rehabilitation as a concert pianist after many years in a mental hospital. It seems especially poignant that the publicity has come in the spring of the year because May is designated Mental Health Month. The Mental health Association has chosen this time to help educate and inform the public about serious mental illness, the symptoms and treatments.

I am often moved when I think of the absolute terror that some of my friends have to live day after day. Schizophrenia has, among other things, delusions and hallucinations, frequently of a threatening nature. Affective or mood disorders may cause severe, intractable depression and/or periods of uncontrollable energy and activity.

I am in awe of the courage and persistence of the mentally ill. They have not only their own demons to defy; they are often the subject of ridicule and the poisonous barbs of the ignorant. When there is violence or crime in the news, reporters never fail to mention it if the perpetrator has a mental illness. This is not to deny that some mentally ill persons do get into criminal or violent situations, but the general public interprets this to mean that all mentally ill people are dangerous!

Most of my friends with schizophrenia are very shy, even reclusive. Some exhibit no interest in group activities and do not appear to react when others make unkind remarks as they pass. Even so, words do hurt and perpetuate the stereotypes.

It is hard to live with mental illness. With most people, early treatment allows them to get back into life and contribute to families and communities. Many famous people have mental illness. They take regular medications that relieve the worst symptoms but must take care not to get involved in activities that are too stressful. A person with mental illness has to make a concerted effort to understand what things aggravate it and how to regain the control. It is walking a tightrope day after day. The pills give you a strong rope but you have to do the balancing on your own!



To my son, to my friends, I want to say: Hooray for your courage! Bravo for your resilience! You have helped me learn, as this film *Shine* is saying, that life is about the triumph of the spirit. It is not about perfection or conformity. It is about living the best you can.

By the way, I have not seen this film. Going into dark rooms with crowds of people is something that I can't do. Yet.

--Faye Townsend

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Banging corporate style

Illinois prison gangs, in structure, spirit, and organization share common ground with corporate idealism. Gangs are the big businesses behind bars. One showed me the truth about racism--by beating it out of me.

My name is Phillip Camus; I'm a lifer, meaning (by my definition): I was raised behind razor-wired walls and fences. I'll die there, too. It's normalcy for me.

Prison gangs can provide opportunity and physical security. You got the smarts? The fists? Then you can rise quickly in the criminal ranks. You might go from a foot soldier to an enforcer, to a lieutenant, and maybe to the Chairman's spot, calling the shots for your gang in all the Illinois prisons. Also, while bloodletting your way up the ladder, you can earn respect, profit, self-esteem; you get to hang out with the warden talking shop. These are worthy goals in a closed harsh environment.

Of course, like good-bred American corporate workers, gang members must follow rules of policy, dress appropriately, behave in a prescribed manner, be the right color, and be politically correct the gang way.

My only gripe with prison organizations is they tend to fight over resources, forgetting that we are--including independent prisoner--in the same trap: behind bars, we're all convicts. Some gangs are more peaceful, though; they don't prey on their own members and make a decent effort to improve their constituency, ignoring deals with the devil. They don't sell out.

Reading the latest fad in media hubbub concerning prison administration cracking down on gang activity made me laugh. Why would it do something that stupid? When gangs A, B, and C are snapping at one another's throats, fangs bared (like corporations, dog-rape-dog), then this is an ideal situation for prison administration, admitted or not. It's better than gangs A, B, & C becoming E and going after the keepers. IDOC administration plays the role of neutral Switzerland; wardens act as referees, diplomats. Gangs are forever.

One did me a favor. When I first entered prison for stealing in the late 70's, I was fresh out of young criminal's college after serving a two year+ term in Illinois juvenile corrections. I graduated with honors by returning to jail within two months. I looked forward to prison, to seeing my buddies again.

I was placed in a maximum security prison, in the rough part. Car thieves and burglars are treated the same as thrill killers or rapists in the blind eye of the D.O.C. My age, size, and skin color caught the noses of black gangs. In those parts, nothing smelled stronger than a new white fish. Life hated me, then; and more than once death whispered temptation in my ear.

I transferred, though, to the white part of prison. Woo! Woo! Things looked good. A blonde guy, gang enforcer came into my cell and said, "You gotta hook up."

"Alright, cool!"

Blonde Guy put on a puzzled look. "You gotta pay dues, too."

"Sure." I said. It wasn't extortion to me.

Finally I was in a good gang. I did a little dance in my cell. Niggers wouldn't bother me now; I ride with white people and they don't act the same.

Day or so later, Blonde Guy came into my cell wanting me to play chess in his. Unusal. It didn't sound right. "I can't play." I lied.

"Come to my cell anyway." he demanded.

"No."

He became irate. "If you won't sex in my cell, then I'll sex you right here," he said loudly; a boast of sorts, I guess.

He left, came back, and put on his "guns"--leather gloves with the fingers cut out. They protect the knuckles, making it harder for the guards to tell if you've been fighting.

The guns didn't help Blonde Guy. I beat him down badly. He ran back, bleeding, to his cell, and I felt great. That must have been a test. The higher-ups would certainly notice I wasn't a coward.

Somebody noticed.

Shortly after, I was going to my cell with the incoming yard line. A big white dude stepped from an open cell and slammed me in the mouth with a lead pipe. Then he slipped away with the line.

I was back down on the concrete floor. Inmates were stepping over me. As I got up, another inmate--bless his heart--pointed and said, "Don't forget your tooth."

I put it in my pocket, too scared to touch my face. I used my state shirt to cover my gashed mouth.

I went to the flag area downstairs to the seargent's desk and lowered my shirt. He neither flinched or asked questions; he picked up the phone, "Got one for med."

It took a long time to get me to an outside E.R. Lying there on the gurney-thing, severe lights overhead, the doc humming a tune as he stiched my face whole again, all the racism drained out of me. The white talk was lies, big white lies, a nest of them. Truth is, we all bleed red. Scum has always been one color, the color of hatred.

The doc sterilized my front tooth and shoved it back in its hole. Good-to go.

Afterward, they placed me in P.C. (protective custody) or what real men call "punk city." Nobody asked questions and I didn't volunteer any information. Case closed.

Looking back, I'm glad it happened like that because I had a huge chunk of sticky hate lodged in the roof of my heart, anyway. Those bangers didn't know what kind of walking dead zombie they controlled. Had Blonde Guy slapped a shank (home made knife) in my hand

and ordered me to go kill X person, I would have with zeal. A happy Nazi, no questions asked. That's a jazzy way to get a promotion, a step up, a nice slice of respect. I guess life let me slide that time.

I've never made the right choices (for reasons I'll never know), but I'm glad gang life lost its appeal. It's hard enough having guards tell me what to do and when to cry without giving inmates, too, that same power. Gangs are a natural, unstoppable force in the prison environment, just like corporations in free society.

And I'd like to say that all my hatred has dissolved, but it hasn't. It's simply turned-in on myself rather than towards others.

That's a positive thing.

--Phillip Camus

Choice of roads

Yearbooks and jackets, a high school girl, and one most likely *not* to. I thought little about these American staples until I attended Illinois State University.

My name is Phillip Camus, partly raised by the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC). I'm thirty-six and have spent seventeen years in and out of guarded walls and razor-wire--a total of twenty-four DOC facilities, including city and county jails. I belong in prison, I think, for the rest of my life. Why else would I be a repeat offender?

One semester, I sat with my friend, Logan, in her Watterson dorm room, leafing through her high school yearbook. She pointed to a picture. "This is such-n-such; we were best friends in grade school. She goes to Western University." Flipping through some more glossy pages, "Here, he was a cool guy. So-n-so was most likely to. . ."

Logan's life in her high school community was alien to me. My brief experience was rooted deep in salty prison soil. Little growth.

I felt jealous. What? Did Logan need pictures to prove she had a normal youth? That vibe passed quickly, replaced by a familiar feeling of disconnectedness. No matter how I looked at it, I hadn't grown up in a free community.

My first and last year in high school, in Collinsville, Illinois, was in 1976. After being expelled, I chose a fork in the road that led to living my young adult life in IDOC--for whatever reasons, I'll never know. After 1976, I saw some of the kids I knew from my



neighborhood and Vandalia High School once or twice, between prison stints. After 1979, I never saw any of them again. That's always bothered me.

There was one girl, the Pill girl, whose name I cannot remember. I knew her for a short time, but I'll never forget her. She was new to our school and was assigned a seat across from me in homeroom. And she talked to me! Wow, somebody was exchanging small talk with Phillip Camus. Unusual. I was a hardcore misfit, a real outsider. Like I said, she was new.

A week later, she gave me a baggie of assorted pills. Uppers, downers, and sideways narcotic things. All right, my kind of girl! I sold the pills and split the proceeds with her. When they ran dry, she got more, although not for long.

One day, between classes, I returned some speed that had flopped. No sales. While handing back the unsold speed to Pill girl, I was witnessed by the P.E. teacher. Busted. I was picked up in drafting class and escorted to the principal's office. She had already been sent home. After a mild interrogation, I confessed everything, ratting Pill girl out as my source. We were suspended from ninth grade, pending possible expulsion by the high school administration.

Months later, Mom and I were summoned before a panel of teachers and the school administration. We sat, hands folded, before the panel. They listed various reasons why I was a loser. True enough, I was a trouble-maker by my own hand. When asked what I had to say, I bawled and mumbled something stupid about joining the wrestling team.

I was suspended for three months. So what? At the time, a vacation for me. And Mom was more angry at me because I'd cried. "Don't let 'em see ya cry. Never!" That was the last I ever saw of public school until I was thirty-three.

I saw Pill girl once more. Her story? What she told the principal that day was that the drugs were hers; she'd dropped them by accident. I had simply picked them up, returned them, and that's what the P.E. teacher had seen. She denied that I had been selling, too. Bless her heart, my kind of girl. I wish I could remember her name. I never saw her again. I hope she's somewhere living a decent life.

Informing, ratting, snitching, or whatever slang term we use instead of betrayal, is a stain on the heart. I should have kept my mouth shut in 1976, and maybe my new friend would still be my friend today.

There aren't any high school yearbooks containing my photo. The closest I have to a

yearbook is an IDOC master file, or "jacket," as some convicts call it. It's a record of one's criminal behavior and prison life. If the state needed to prove sociologically, that I'm a loser, it could get my jacket from the closet and use it well. It's kept in Springfield, Illinois, and it's got pictures--mug shots--of me that go way back. Someday, I'd like to see those pictures.

By society's standards, my court record and jacket are a stigma, but despite the many antisocial highlights, betrayal isn't one of them. Ask my partners in crime. Even though I could have taken them to prison, I've always chosen to go alone. I lied on the witness stand to free the one who pointed his finger at me first. My last "friend" snitched on me, signed confessions against me, and moved in with my girlfriend after I was jailed. I kept silent about his crimes. He went free; I went to prison. After I'm caught, though, I sometimes rat on myself. I don't mind; that's okay. It helps the police close the books on a few burglary cases. I've got nothing against cops.

If I were in a high school yearbook, one might have said this about Phillip Camus: "he is most likely not to betray you."

True, that quality is useful only in a criminal community. If I could go back in time, I'd choose the road that leads through a community like Logan's. Sitting here in this concrete box, I think I'd rather be known as a snitch than as an old school convict.

--Phillip Camus

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Waiting for a barcode:

Once upon a time, a not so long time ago, we humans recognized the deep interdependence of all living things on the planet Earth. We were born into worlds in which reverence and respect for the Earth was maintained through our religions, deities, rituals and mythology. Indigenous peoples the world over, have long spoken of the plants, animals, and elements as their brothers and sisters, divine kinships which encourage balance and temper exploitation.

Modern, and specifically Western, humans represent a radical break with the traditions and attitudes of the past. In the last several hundred years, primarily agrarian communities have exploded the land and tribe to livelihoods based on crude industries of ore, wood, coal, and oil to, currently, the technological age of fiber optics, silicon chips, genetic engineering, global markets, nuclear power and the nuclear family. Traditional ways that had been faithfully refined over tens of thousands of years have been rendered obsolete essentially overnight. The "new and improved" chemical/technological world quickly and efficiently replaced the old, demeaning the spiritual force that sustained our relationship with the land and other living things, and reducing it to superstition and 'primitive' sentimentality. We've fast become more likely to trust a big, bright red, genetically engineered tomato over its mottled naturally smaller archetype or a couple of Tylenol to relieve a headache over the bark of a willow tree.

This unparalleled shift in consciousness works in tandem with accelerating increases in human population and consumption. Two thousand years ago, there were roughly a quarter of a billion people on Earth. Only 200 years ago our species passed the billion mark, 100 years later we doubled to 2 billion, and are presently looking at over 5.6 billion people on the planet. It's estimated that there will be 10 billion people on Earth by 2025. Link the population rise with an even steeper increase in per capita consumption, particularly in the West, throw in our present distrust for all things organic, wrap it up in a profit-motivated global economics system, and you've got a big mess.

It is from this context that the professor and I approach the subject of biotechnology. Biotechnology refers to the genetic

alterations/creations of species for the purpose of benefiting the human race (translated realistically as "benefiting industrial or commercial objectives"). The process, genetic engineering, involves artificially transferring and manipulating chemical information from DNA specific to one type of organism into another; some actual examples include: chicken genes added to potatoes, mouse genes to tobacco, bacteria and virus genes to cucumber and tomatoes, and human genes to salmon, trout, and rice. The organisms produced from these experiments are all commodifiable according to the law, which maintains that all "non-naturally occurring non-human multicellular living organisms, including animals [are] patentable [profitable] subject matter."

"It seems that the more we learn about genes the less we understand about life." Dr. David Suzuki

Though biotechnology has been a lucrative industry for several decades, most of us have only more recently concerned ourselves with the impact it may have on our daily living. Last year, US genetically engineered soybeans and corn products were banned by the European Union and Austria and just last month the successful cloning of a 6-year-old ewe in Northern England was made public. Invariably, much of the media has focused on the limitless benefits of genetic engineering (everything from cures for diseases such as Aids, Alzheimer's and cancer, to inter-species organ transplants, food for the planet, and protection of endangered species). However, it is wise to remember that impressive as the benefits may seem, our ignorance of the mystery of life is without doubt vastly greater. Species are going extinct faster than they are being discovered, described, or invented. There are very serious issues to consider, and indeed equally serious money riding on public opinion.

So, just whom are we dealing with anyway?

With all the mergers and subsidiaries to keep tabs on out there in the corporate sector, it's difficult to know just who or what calls the shots. Let's take the grocery store as a point of departure. Now, when you hang out for a spell in isle after isle of commercial products, reading labels, jotting things down in

smallish notebooks, and cross-referencing data, you begin to realize that the majority of the food commercially available is ultimately connected to a very few, very colossal transnational corporations. We rely for the bulk of our nourishment on companies like Archer Daniel's Midland -- "ADM, supermarket to the world" (literally) -- Cargill, the world's largest private corporation, clearing nearly two million a day in profits (after taxes), operating in 1,000 locations in 66 countries with 76,500 workers in more than 40 product lines, and handling everything from salt to meat (but also fertilizer and steel) -- Ciba-Geigy, known for their illicit involvements with DDT and makers of genetically engineered corn products -- and Monsanto, a primarily pharmaceutical company responsible for Agent Orange, bovine growth hormone (rBGH), NutraSweet and Roundup Ready Soybeans. You will scarcely see their names at the retail level, but be sure they're there, secretly supplying the raw materials and ingredients, more and more of them genetically altered, that extend to take on the shapes of the various foods we eat.

The path from the lab to your dinner table

Currently, unrestricted use of genetically engineered tomatoes, soybeans, cotton, corn, canola oilseed, squash and potatoes, to name a few, is allowed in the US. It trickles down like this: the aforementioned agro-chemical giants license agreements with seed distributors (like Pioneer or DeKalb) who sell licensed genetically engineered seeds and chemicals to farmers in the US, Argentina, and Brazil who then cultivate these crops to be sold to buyers and distributors. These folks sell the genetically engineered products (primarily soybeans and corn) to the first wave of food processors (ADM, Cargill, Ciba-Geigy, and Monsanto -- sound familiar?) who process them into oils, flours, lecithin, etc., after which, they are purchased by the next wave of food processors (like Nestle, Kraft, and Gerber) who convert them into foods like margarine, chocolate, bread, and baby food. From here the genetically altered foods are sold to retailers (grocery chains) who tirelessly stock their shelves for you and me, the fearless consumers.

The Monsanto Monster

So how can we farm sustainably, protecting the Earth from dangerous chemicals when the corporations genetically engineering the planet's staple crops also manufacture toxic pesticides? Let's use Monsanto, producers of genetically engineered soybeans, as an example. Monsanto, headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri, employs 45,000 people and peddles over eight billion dollars a year in chemical products to the planet. Aside from its controversial production of rBGH, the corporation is probably best known for its creation of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), still proving a threat to the environment, and for its development and production of Agent Orange during the Vietnam War. Amongst its current holdings are: major pharmaceutical supplier, G.D. Searle & Co., makers of aspartame, the





Biotechnology comes for dinner

infamous artificial sweetener known as NutraSweet; Holden's Foundation Seeds, Inc., the leading foundation seed corn company in the world, and Corn States Hybrid Service, Inc. and Corn States International S.a.r.l., the exclusive worldwide marketing and sales representatives for Holden's products; and Calgene, creators of the Flavr Savr tomato engineered for longer shelf life.

Last year Monsanto introduced its first genetically engineered soybeans, Roundup Ready Soybeans (RRS), to the world market. These beans are engineered to withstand higher levels of Monsanto's herbicide, Roundup, a deadly chemical poison. The use of RRS makes farmers dependent on a single corporation -- Monsanto, which collects licensing fees for their patented seeds and chemical products -- thus essentially relinquishing the control they have over their land and local seed banks, and forcing many more family farms off their land. Soybeans, the 2nd largest crop in the US, are present in one form or another in over 60% of processed consumer food products, not to mention their significant presence in animal feeds. Monsanto expects as much as 33% of this year's crop to be planted in RRS. Furthermore, Monsanto opposes separation of products containing RRS, meaning that any of the tens of thousands of food products containing soy materials could contain genetically engineered beans. Not surprisingly, the company also militantly opposes labeling, robbing consumers of the right to choose foods free of genetic manipulation, as well as robbing us the right to know what we are eating. Monsanto promises future varieties of canola, cotton, corn, sugar beets and rapeseed oil, all of which will also tolerate higher levels of Roundup, and pass the poison on to you.

RRS bring no benefit whatsoever to the consumer -- they are not cheaper, tastier or healthier. There is significant evidence that Roundup, designed to poison and destroy unwanted plants, causes harm to the environment and human health even at current levels of use. In California, Roundup has been identified as the 3rd most commonly reported cause of pesticide-related illness among agricultural workers. Residues of glyphosphate (the fundamental chemical component of Roundup) have been found in strawberries, lettuce, carrots, barley, and fish in contaminated waters. Glyphosphate also impacts the survival of earthworms and beneficial microorganisms responsible for the health of soil. When Monsanto applied for FDA approval on RRS their data showed that feeding tests (done on animals) ran for a *maximum* of 10 weeks, making the forecasting of long-term effects to health and offspring unknowable. Other genetically engineered foods have caused unpredicted allergies, illnesses and even death in the case of the food supplement tryptophan introduced in 1989. GE organisms have also been known to cross-breed with wild plants causing unpredictable and irreversible changes to the evolution of natural ecosystems and further reduction of wild plant diversity. When non-indigenous species are introduced into new environments they are known to set off a

domino effect of cascading changes, causing long term disruption to nature's delicate balance.

Suffice it to say that there are many risks involved with biotechnology. Our advancements are powerful but crude and so should be approached with utmost caution. As long as science and technology are fueled by the politics of profit, all life on the planet risks the potential to become a commodity line to be exploited, manipulated, and consumed for material and economic gain. It is imperative that we recognize that we are intimately and inextricably bound up in the complex skin of life that keeps this planet habitable. When genetic engineers tinker with the most intimate genetic structures of natural organisms, their actions are not unlike those of nuclear physicists who split apart the finest subatomic structures of the atom, yielding the potential for massive nuclear destruction. Though the poisonous effects of genetic engineering on the food supply and environment are today more creeping and silent, their effects could easily explode into a biological nuclear blast tomorrow.

What can be done?

Further investigate this topic!

Demand foods free from genetically engineered ingredients and manipulations!

Demand separation and accurate labeling of genetically engineered foods!

Write to your local and national government representatives! Write to the corporations involved in the various stages of adding genetically engineered foods to our lives!

If your support of biotechnology unfolds from a world hunger perspective (genetically engineered foods are able to produce more food in smaller space for increased world populations), pat yourself on the back for being motivated by compassion and generosity, but please do some more research to consider that it is politics and not food shortage that starves people.

If your support stems from the fact that you prefer bigger, redder tomatoes than the natural varieties, then so be it. Eat and with luck be healthy.

-- nanny & the professor...

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Recycling: Dumpster

"One cannot be perfectly consistent in living, but a more or less harmless way of life is possible, and if not as pure as the purest one can at least try to be not as gross as the grossest."

--Helen Nearing
SIMPLE FOODS FOR THE GOOD LIFE

"The way to a man's bible is through his butt."
--S&M, Mad Libs, "Proverbs", March

24

Do you not find the phrase, "Mayor Jesse Smart" an oxymoron?

Even though you won't get to read this until after the election, I'll pretend you know the secrets of space/time travel, and will tell you the reason why you should write in a vote for me for Mayor of Bloomington.

If I were elected to the office of Mayor of Bloomington (or to the office of Supreme Empress of the Universe) **I would throw out the plans for the Arnold Palmer Golf Course.** Here's my top ten list of what I would do instead with this money:

10. Fix the sidewalks running the entire 600 block of east Front Street, north side of street, and then fix them all over the rest of the city, making sure all sidewalks were sloped, making them wheelchair accessible.

9. Stop the building of this stupid new jail! It could have been done much cheaper by converting the old Miller Hardware building....and this would leave me even more money to spend...

8. Give free swimming lessons to all kids who can't afford to pay for it through the park district.

7. ~~Make sure the public schools, group homes and shelters in the city were actually feeding nutritious food to folks.~~ Make sure everyone in this city eats organic, nutritious foods and get them healthier so they would be nicer to deal with.

6. Take the kids off Ritalin and get the parents some therapy.

5. Take the parents off Prozac and get them some therapy.

4. Make sure everyone has health coverage that is good, and which honors people's right to choose.

3. Assure that families aren't hurt more by the supposed "welfare reform" of the Clinton administration.

2. Provide small, private apartments for everyone/every family.

1 1/2. Give equal rights to gays, lesbians, bisexuals, witches, and women in everything that white straight men have rights in.

1. Make recycling of everything from glass and scrap paper up to good old #7 plastic mandatory. Charge \$2 bucks a bag or can of garbage that is thrown out. Pay "garbage police" to sneak around and randomly inspect garbage to locate non-recyclables that people have tried to pass off in the refuse. Fine \$50 an offense which will send out a strong message and help pay for the "garbage police." Outlaw the sale of all plastic disposable products such as plastic wrap and disposable diapers. Outcome of all of this?: we use up less natural resources; we treat our environment better; we make more money for the city's coffers; we have less need for landfill; and we could create new jobs in the "natural diaper" field and recycling sorters region.

EVERYONE CAN RECYCLE. There are no excuses. There are a multitude of ways to do it. They say reduce, reuse, recycle. This is the key. Recycling in and of itself is not enough. There needs to be a complete change in folk's mentality, including an attitude towards purchasing in the first place. Recycling and overall pollution go together hand in hand.

The simplest recycling involves recycling your glass, plastic and paper/newspapers. For our family, this involves thinking about and teaching our children about what we buy in the first place... it isn't enough to just recycle, but needs to include buying less things which will eventually need recycling. How is what you're are buying packaged? Not all things recycle "equally" as well, and recycling in itself creates more pollution. There are factories and chemicals involved. Recycled paper creates more paper, with less trees cut down and less toxic pollution in the process. Recycled glass creates new glass which can be used. But recycled plastic is another story. They don't make new containers out of the stuff, but other "unnecessary" plastic objects: toys, park benches, etc. New plastic is made for the containers. So, when recycling plastic, one isn't making less plastic in the world; a new use for old plastic is trying to be found. And why do you really need a subscription to the newspaper in the first place?

In our household of four, we recycle everything we can, we compost, and we only have one can filled with garbage that we put out approximately once every three weeks. Yes, that's right. One can every three weeks. I don't think it is good enough, but it is better than we did six years ago! With the closing of Operation Recycle we need to go to greater extremes to get it somewhere to recycle, but we do that as we run other errands...which brings me to another point...driving around town with me has this mentality as well. I call stores first if I am in doubt as to whether they have something or not in stock before I drive there. I don't run errands constantly, but try to run them all at once, and do it in such a way that involves minimal driving around. This saves gas, and creates ultimately less garbage from "car parts" and car waste.

Composting is another great way to recycle! It saves the use of unnecessary landfill space and generates great soil/mulch for the yard. We have our compost pile behind our fence, and actually do very little to maintain it. We don't spend tons of time thinking of the correct "formulas" for creating the best compost. We simply throw our scraps onto it, and anything else appropriate, and once or twice a summer I get grass scraps to add to it. Once in a while we turn it, and that is it! There is a great pile of gunk out there! Better still, we have some neighbors that live in apartments that compost on our pile too. Yes, it takes time, but very very little. Once every day or two I walk out back and toss the stuff on...about two minutes of my time...and every once in a great while we walk outside and turn it...about fifteen minutes.

Compared to the time spent lugging garbage from your kitchen and bathrooms to the big garbage can, or hauling plastic bags to the corner, I'd say it works out about even.

And why use plastic bags for your garbage? It never breaks down in a landfill, so the "theory" of how a landfill is supposed to work falls apart. The stuff just never breaks down! We use paper bags in our can and put it in the large can this way, and use no plastic bags. Yes, we are using paper, but at least the stuff in the landfill has a chance! I would be all in favor of not using paper at all and just rinsing the can out once in a while, but unfortunately the city has a policy that the garbage collectors are supposed to turn the empty can upside down on the sidewalk. Explain the logic in this to me. Any garbage left in the bottom of the can goes straight onto the sidewalks creating more pollution. I called and complained and their rational is that this allows the separate truck that picks up grass to know which cans have grass in them. How did the garbage collectors know which had garbage in them in the first place? And, better still, explain why they still do it in the winter when there is no grass.

This can be solved by the city not wasting time in picking up grass in the first place. Grass should be mulched back into the soil as it is cut and not raked up. The time spent on the unnecessary raking of lawns could be better spent watching TV by most people (hee hee) or better still on the compost pile and recycling!

Why do people buy plastic wrap and bags in the first place? Sure, there are times when I buy ziplocs...usually before a camping trip. However, in general there is enough plastic and alternative solutions to prevent me from ever wasting resources, money, or creating more garbage or pollution. When we get ziplocs from other people or buy them once in a blue moon, they get used multiple times, until they develop holes in them. We rinse them out, stick them open on one of the wooden spoons drying in our drying rack and when dry we reuse them. We do this for all our plastic bags...bread bags get recycled in the home, and any other bags we run across. We don't need plastic wrap to cover bowls of leftovers in the



diving & garbage picking

refrigerator. Either the reusable plastic containers you have saved can be used, or better still just put a plate on top of the bowl of food. This is our most common way of saving food, and works great! Sure, you need to peek under the lid if you don't remember what is in the bowl, but it takes very little effort.

Another way to be better to your body, and reduce landfill waste is to use cloth menstrual pads. They are easy, and very comfortable. After use they soak in cold water, which is changed, and then tossed in the washing machine. They rarely come out stained, but if they are, who cares and who sees them but yourself? They are menstrual pads. And then think, in general, of wasted water. Why flush every time you pee? We only do it once every few times... as my kids say, "If it's yellow, let it mellow; if it's brown, flush it down." We save tons of water this way...good for the environment and good for our water bill.

But recycling can go much further. We view garbage picking as recycling. The stuff folks throw out is amazing! Our house is practically furnished with stuff people didn't want anymore. A very small dresser, with scrap paint from the basement, is where we keep all of our tapes of music. Our stereo cabinet is a neat kitchen cupboard someone threw out. All the lamps in our house were garbage finds (except for one that would have been sent to a thrift store). Our futon frame was headed for the landfill until my husband salvaged it and built a new side that was missing, and for the first time our futon had a frame! We have wooden shelves in the living room we keep shoes on which was garbage picked. Our chairs were landfill saves. Someone I knew was throwing out a rocker we now have, and when my uncle died we saved his rocker from the garbage. The list goes on and on...all our dressers, our bed frames, our oak desk, dining room table....and there are many more things. We also go to garage sales and second hand stores.

I have piles of fabric that I have saved from landfills which I use to make all sorts of great things! Clothes for the kids, presents, toys... We even bring home things we don't need if they are in good shape because we know eventually we will find someone who needs it, or we save things that are perfectly good and donate them at one of the thrift stores.

Dumpster diving is at its best when the ISU students leave! I could get an entirely new wardrobe each spring if I wanted it. We save sweaters, jeans, dressers, Smokey Joe grills, mops, brooms, dish strainers, canned goods and piles of papers. We don't need to buy any paper for our kids to draw on for the year because we get so much that is being thrown out. Everything we don't want or need we find homes for with friends or again at Salvation Army. One neighbor was moving and had an entire bedroom set he was going to throw out. We took it and found someone who needed one (and ironically, she already had a small

bedside dresser which was an exact match!). Students even throw out lofts and sheets of plywood.

Garbage picking or buying second hand clothing or fabrics, or remaking new things out of old fibers is great. It saves money, but in the long run it is better for the Earth. Even if you are consciously buying natural fibers for your clothing, all cotton, unless organic, makes a horrible impact on the environment in its growth and processing. Think of the toxic dyes used in the clothing! The skin breathes, and natural fibers are by far the best for your health and skin, but putting natural fiber clothing on that is loaded with toxic substances does little to help your health or the world. Many clothing items are made in horrible little sweat shops in third world countries by underpaid employees or, worst still, children. Next time you think you just can live without that nifty dress, think about how and where it was made. I'm not saying one should never buy anything new, but I am saying that by buying less you are doing much more.

Garbage picked dressers and scrap wood have become toys for the kids, presents for people, and currently a big chunk is becoming our new kitchen cupboard. Mark is building me a spinning wheel out of "found" wood! When someone ripped out their deck a few years back to put in a "new improved" one we took all the old wood and rebuilt our side "porch," which was rotten, at no cost. We are hoping to find a great haul like that one again to build a deck on the flat roof above our kitchen and porch. The steps on the side of the house and going up to the back door have all been from garbage picked wood. We have even found posts for fences we have used in our yard and wooden gates.

Dry wall, though cheap to buy new, is constantly on curbs. We are talking LARGE scraps here. When we need whole sheets, we buy it, but we have repaired many smaller holes in our house with scraps we have found.

One friend wanted to make something for her boyfriend for his birthday. We got the great idea to use old flannel shirts and an old flannel sheet for the lining, and made him a very cool poncho. It is light-weight, but warm, and had a style all its own. Cheap present, and one of a kind.

Garbage picked hardware fixed an antique door latch at my parents' house that hadn't closed right in twenty years.

Found light fixtures have been put in our house.

Old pictures and frames fill our house.

Large candles found in the garbage are burnt until there really is nothing left of them.

Old toys and bikes left on curbs have gotten a second use from our kids, and sometimes a third from friends' kids.

We helped friends in Chicago garbage pick a queen sized mattress in the plastic wrap!

Another friend garbage picked a kiln which she sold for \$300!

An old pieced together quilt top we found which had little holes became a beautiful Christmas tree skirt.

Many fans on the curb need nothing more than a bit of cleaning up and oil.

Recycling has to do with an overall approach to living. It is easy and becomes a habit after a while. It involves not buying into the concept that we NEED so many things. It requires thinking about creative uses for things others consider garbage. My children do this naturally now. Once when walking into Target my daughter found an aluminum can rolling in the parking lot. I went to throw it in the garbage and she corrected me and pointed out that it should be recycled. I know I should have, but I didn't feel like sticking a can with old pop dripping out of it from a stranger into my pocket, so I threw it away anyway, and somehow justified my actions. The point is, she does it automatically now, and my son is following in her footsteps. They are constantly coming up with projects to make from garbage, such as bugs from egg cartons and sculptures from tiny wood scraps. Old yarn scraps become leashes for stuffed animals or get put outside for bird nests if they are natural fibers.

Recycling more than glass, plastic and paper I see as a creative venture that teaches my children good values. It allows us to explore new uses for old items. When we need something new, we often turn our little bored brains to exploring how we can make it ourselves, and what items we need to find to make it. For example, I am slowly but surely collecting old unusual windows for use in making a green house down the road. It teaches us that we really need very little, and thus we live a more simple lifestyle. It doesn't take the fun out of life, but puts a "bent" kick into it! A couple of summers ago I was thinking of how much I wanted two things: a nice hammock, and an old wooden hand-cranked ice cream maker. The first garage sale I went to I found both of them cheap! I didn't have to create more garbage in the world, but used something for which another no longer had use. We don't drive ourselves crazy over this stuff, nor do we live perfectly. I could give you a list of inconsistencies if you wanted them (but why spoil the illusion?), but as Helen Nearing said, "and if not as pure as the purest one can at least try to be not as gross as the grossest." And this is why I should be elected Mayor of Bloomington.

—Marcee Murray



Poetry in the

Many stories have appeared lately in the national media reporting the apparent renewed interest in poetry. An article in *Utne Reader* points out that with the popularity of poetry readings; the subways in New York and Chicago displaying poems and MTV running poetry videos and much more, poetry is "a part of many people's lives as it hasn't been for decades." There has been much discussion as to whether this interest is merely a trend--poetry being the macrame of the nineties--or something more lasting and meaningful. Whether a trend in which coffeehouses and bars are merely using poetry to increase business or a positive result of the longtime efforts of such groups as The Academy of American Poets and The Poetry Society of America, events seems to suggest that Bloomington/Normal is emulating the interest in poetry that is being shown nationwide.

Poets? In Bloomington-Normal? My God, Ethel, it's everywhere

3-5 days a week one can find a poetry reading in Bloomington/Normal. Lizard's Lounge, a new bar, has open mic night on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays where poets, musicians and jugglers share the stage. The style and quality of the performers of course varies. Tuesday night seems to be especially good for poetry, while Wednesdays may appeal more to people interested in music, although you can hear both any of the three nights.

Next door to Lizard's is Coffee Works, 608 N. Main Street, which has poetry readings on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of the month starting at 7pm. They occasionally have featured poets; Ron Guillory, a professor of English at Millikin University in Decatur, is the featured poet on April 7th. Future events may include specialized programs featuring labor, gay and black poetry, to name a few.

Barnes and Noble has reinstated Poetry Cafe with poetry readings monthly. The next reading is scheduled for Wednesday, April 30 at 8pm. One can also periodically find a poetry reading happening at the Coffeehouse in downtown Normal.

Parents beware: these poet people want to recruit your children...

In addition to poetry readings, a Poetry and Writing Workshop was started by Greg Harris

last August. Poets have gathered at Coffee Works on Sunday evenings to exchange their work and provide each other with responses and feedback. Richard Chandler, a core member of the workshop, says that there is no fixed format for the meetings and that members have no idea of exactly what will happen that night.

Attendance at the workshop varies from 1 to 15 with an average of 4 to 6 people at a usual meeting. While poetry has been the focus of the meetings, the group is not opposed to working with prose. Because of the probable length of prose, poetry lends itself to being more easily read and discussed during the workshops. Chandler notes that members have primarily been males and expressed a desire to have more women involved in the group.

The group has published their first magazine, ... *Lighter Than Water*. The magazine contains poems by six workshop members: Gregg Brown, Richard Chandler, Dan Knestaut, Madeline Ostrander, Mike Pacholski and Caroline Pyevich and is available at Coffee Works. The group plans on publishing another magazine, but the dates are not confirmed. Publication is limited to persons who have attended at least one workshop. Preference will be given to poets who were not published in the first issue.

Future plans discussed by the group include workshops in publishing and poetry reading. The location and times of the workshop are presently being revised. For further information contact Richard Chandler at 452-7084

... And they're selling it openly and to everyone

The March /April issue of *Poets And Writers* magazine reports that "while the news from publishers and booksellers is not completely enthusiastic, many have seen a significant increase in the sales of poetry books over the past few years." Jennifer Read, assistant manager of Barnes and Noble notes that poetry is a "strong sales area." While Read gives no specific sales figures she did say that in her ten years of experience in the book business she has "seen an increase in the popularity of the subject." What sells? Read says that depends upon the season. For example love poetry is a big seller for Valentine's Day and college students buy poetry which is to be studied in their courses.

Brian Simpson of Babbitt's Books reports no increase in poetry sales; however he has observed more people expressing themselves through poetry. Poetry by well-known poets such as Frost, Dickinson, Elliot and Whitman always sells. Local poets whose books can be found in store include Jim Elledge, John Firefly, Lucia Getsi, Cecil Giscombe, Jim Plath and Susan Swartout.

Oh yeah? So how come you're serving your kid dinner at 10 in the morning or 10 at night?

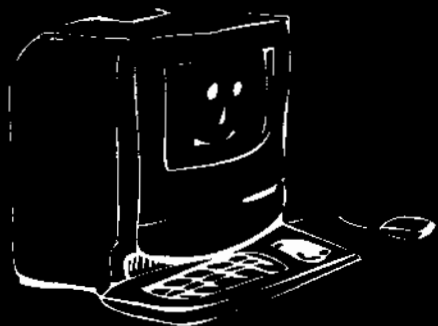
Another way that people of central Illinois can learn of contemporary poets is through Poetry Radio on WGLT 89.1 FM. A joint production of the the Illinois State English Department and GLT, Poetry Radio is now in its fifth year. ISU professors and poets Cecil Giscombe and Bill Morgan approached Bruce Bergathon of GLT separately in 1992 with the idea of presenting poetry on the radio. Bergathon got them together and Poetry radio was born. Poems read by local and national poets can be heard on Tuesday, Thursday and Sundays at 10 am and 10pm.

National poets who have read on Poetry Radio include Carolyn Forché, Li Young Lee, Joy Harjo and William Trowbridge. Local poets who have read are John Firefly, David Hall, Ruth Wantling with Barbie Dockstader and Erick Curtis recording this month. Poets from the academic community who have read are Brian Burt, Jim Elledge, Lucia Getsi, Jean Lee, Mary Leen, Jim Plath and Susan Swartout.

Bill Morgan is pleased that Poetry Radio "seems to work." He notes that the poems are "just put out there;" there is no professor explaining the poem for the listeners. The station receives lot of good feedback and Morgan is addressed in grocery stores as "Citizen Morgan," the name he uses on the air. The station did receive one complaint about "dirty language." Kevin Jones read a poem by local poet Bill Wantling which included the line "You son of a bitch." A listener called in to say that at he didn't appreciate hearing that language while he was having dinner with his child. Wantling, a nationally known poet who died in 1978, emerged at the tail end of the beat generation.

Morgan says that they invite "readers not poems." The readers choose what poems they want to record and Morgan and the others choose what would work best for the radio. Some poems, *The Wasteland* for example, work

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cornfields

better on the page than on the radio. A poem on Poetry Radio must "make its point on one hearing." It needs a "hook for the ear and it needs to hook quickly."

GLT in conjunction with the Unit of Contemporary Literature at ISU air Small Press Reviews on Wednesdays at 7:50am and 4:50pm. During National Poetry Month all five reviews will be of books of poetry. Bill Morgan will review Charles Simic's book *Walking the Black Cat* as well as Margaret Randall's *Hunger's Table*. Randall's book contains 35 poems, each of which is a recipe. She makes connections between food and sexuality, body image, politics and world hunger.

Just call us Seattle in the cornfields

As I talked to people about the poetry scene in Bloomington/Normal some interesting patterns seemed to emerge. Poets and listeners are divided between the different venues. Poets who read at Coffee Works usually do not read at Lizard's and vice versa. Smokers, both listeners and poets, prefer Lizard's because of Coffee Work's non-smoking policy. And all venues at this time do not have younger poets participating (high school or junior high). Some people are concerned about the number of venues and would like to see one location become the center for poetry performances. Occasionally readings held on the same evening conflict with each other; a recent evening boasted three different readings in Bloomington/Normal. There also is a bit of a conflict between poets and musicians who perform, with some on both sides feeling disrespected by the other.

Is this interest in poetry simply a trend that will pass? Can Bloomington/Normal continue to support the many and diverse events suddenly at its disposal? Stay tuned for the next episode.

--Sherrin Fitzer



BY
E. CURTIS

POETRY WRITTEN BY

BARBIE DOCKSTADER



An interview with local poets Barbie Dockstader and Erick Curtis

Local poets, Barbie Dockstader and Erick Curtis recently held their second book release party at Lizard's Lounge in Bloomington. Their first book, *The Marianas Trench Diaries*, sold all 150 copies, 75 of them in the first week. *Marianas Trench* is a collection of Barbie and Erick's poetry with drawings from five local artists. Now Dockstader and Curtis have released their own books--Dockstader's *The Five-Cent Tour* and Curtis's *Coffee Induced Perceptions*.

The Marianas Trench Diaries is a reference to the Marianas trench, the deepest ocean trench which is so pressurized that no one has ever gone to the bottom of it. The book was praised for the contrast that Barbie and Erick's work provide for each other --male/ female, free verse/rhyme, global/personal.

Erick's influences were Emily Dickinson, e. e. cummings and Edgar Allan Poe while some of Barbie's favorite poets are Lewis Carroll, Shel Silverstein and Poe. Erick writes mainly in free verse about the injustice that he sees, Barbie in rhyme about more specific, personal issues. In the beginning of *The Five-Cent Tour* Dockstader notes that her poems describe her through her own eyes. She adds: "This book is a catharsis for me. These poems represent a poor-man's psychiatrist."

As a poet Barbie often feels ostracized because she writes rhymed poetry which is currently not thought of as chic. While other poets may praise her images, word choice and subject matter, some are still critical of the rhyme. Dockstader notes that sometimes the dark subject matter juxtaposed with the rhyme scheme can provide an interesting effect.

When asked about the increase of poetic activity in Bloomington/Normal Erick suggested that the revitalization of the Bloomington downtown area may have something to do with this mini-renaissance. He said that Bloomington may be "loosening their ties and becoming more conducive to culture."

Poems by Barbie and Erick can be found on the following Poetry Pages.

Two Ravens Publishing

Barbie and Erick's new books are published by Two Ravens Publishing, a collaboration between Barbie and Paul Yoggerst. A dream of Paul's since high school, Two Ravens was realized when he found the second raven in Dockstader. Barbie and Paul do all of the typing and layout themselves and then a local printing company prints the books. Future plans of Two Ravens may include an anthology of local poets, plays by Barbie and Erick as well as a CD of their work. *The Five-Cent Tour* and *Coffee Induced Perceptions* cost \$5.00 and can be bought at About Books in downtown Bloomington. For further information contact Barbie at 829-4320 or Paul at 827-0262.

--Sherrin Fitzer

April is National Poetry Month

April is the second annual National Poetry Month. Inaugurated by the Academy of American Poets in April 1996, National Poetry Month Brings together publishers, booksellers, literary organizations, libraries, schools, and poets around the country to celebrate poetry and its vital place in American culture. Thousands of businesses and non-profit organizations participate through readings, festivals, book displays, workshops, and other events. Highlights of the second annual National Poetry Month will include a reading by all the living Poets Laureate at the Library of Congress on April 24; tax-day readings of *The Waste Land* (celebrating its 75th anniversary in 1997); readings at more than 30 urban libraries across the country; and live internet chats with well known poets.

The Academy of American Poets held its first poetry reading on Halloween night, 1963, when John Berryman and Robert Lowell read at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York City. In the years since that historic evening, the poetry reading has become one of the principal ways in which readers encounter and learn about the work of contemporary poets.



The Poetry Page

Will You Carry Me?

Will you still remember me tomorrow
 Will you carry the cross
 carry my heart
 Will you remember me with different faces
 Will you carry my soul
 Carry my crow
 Their eyes light the pale faces they show to use
 Will you carry me when I die
 Will you give me wings when I start to fly
 When he drops you, you will trip
 to a world of mind games.

--Brian Vinson

Take Me

Take me, take me, take me, take me
 Take me away to a land of holy hearts and make it smart.
 I don't care about pain, in heaven it's all the same.
 I'm not so sure about life you know, I don't like it to go slow.
 Show me the way to where the devils lay, give me a sign, not hard to find.
 Carry my soul, let's move real slow.
 Light up my mind, it's hard to find the way.

Take me, take me, take me, take me.

Burn all my prayers, what can you say.
 Make every day a little faster, that's all I asked her.
 Take me away to a land of Holy hearts and make it smart.
 Give me a life and give me a heart.
 I need a brain with no complain.
 End I can see, peace is with me, show me the way to the devils way.

Take me, take me, take me, take me.

--Brian Vinson

Really Alive

No more pretend, now let it end, day has gone by, now that I'm fried.
 Past is behind, just back in my mind.
 Now that I'm gone, I'm really alive.
 The future is there, left to find, your mind is dead, there to be read.
 No more lies, why, why don't you die
 Now that I'm gone, I'm really alive.
 Free as the wind, I go in trend, what left to see, what should I be.
 No more days, who's left to pay.
 Now that I'm gone, I'm rally alive.
 My life ends, gone like the wind, no more pain, what can you say.
 Carried away, buried that day.
 Now that I'm gone, I'm really alive.

Fly to the sun, fly to the sun, pass the moon, it's coming soon.
 I'm really alive.
 I'm really alive.
 I'm really alive.
 I'm really alive.

--Brian Vinson

Forever Trashed

Obscure lines in - the Wall -
 Faces that draw me -
 in - Smiles that welcome me - Shaking
 for - no reason - Places -
 shift - Weakness - Depressed - Hanging -
 Dangling -
 Swinging -
 I hope - I can - Swing -
 Dangle -
 Hang -
 Float - Freely in the Wind -
 Body - weary - Yellow skin - Running
 Noses - Speeding Tracks - Sickness -
 I need - something - Strong Cough -
 Buried anger - in the Mind -
 Spare some - change Sir - I Need -
 Sleeping fleshless - Crying blood - WAITING
 AGAIN - Points in the ground -
 Sitting in - the Corner - Red - Light
 Hangs - Human - shapes in the
 ground - Wasted - I need - Defending -
 Vast whiteness covers - Picking
 Strength - Screams - in a mass of sparks -
 Chain - saws cutting - into -
 Metal - Shapes - with different means -
 Trashed with Despair - Flowers
 that sting - Weeds - sing - Reach for
 the Gun - Expensive Crystals -
 Invisible signs - of Peace - Watering
 thoughts -
 The sprinkling of -
 Dust in a Bowl -
 Clouds enter - the Lungs - Blackness -
 in a different Shade -
 Rainbow crash to the brittle skin -
 Walking slowly home -
 Embraces of the Breeze - Playing
 games - to break down Life -
 I want you to know - Echoes of
 faint beating hearts -
 Forever Trashed - Cool contemplation -
 In a river of Blood - Chaos in
 a Ring - Division of - Joy -
 Pleasures of the Unknown - Question -
 for their Death - Strapped -
 Reached - for the vein -

Written by Eric Curtis
1993





Holding a Scream

I'm holding a scream.
It's here in my hand,
along with a vision
I can't understand.

I'm holding a scream
while I'm holding my breath,
along with a vision
that looks like my death.

I'm holding back time while
I hold back my tears while
I'm holding a scream
that's hiding my fears.

I'm holding a scream,
so it doesn't get free.

I'm holding a scream,
that's holding back me.

--Written by Barbie Dockstader
February 12th, 1997

Caught Again

Soft smile - Quiver in the knees -
Hurting inside - Blank stare at me -
Gleaming at the day - Something
inside - Caught staring - Feel bad - Caught
again - Looking at me (I hope) -
Sacred intelligence - Caught again -
Getting lost - Absent words - sing
in my head - Impoverished tongues - lap
up the sand - Leading
Death - by the Nose - I can - not give
it away - I can - not give the months
back - Trapped where I do - not
belong - questions I hate asking - I retire to
be dormant - Pushing up the Wall to hide
the mirror - Lifeline duplication
Prohibited - Faded walking - piercing the
skin - Caught again - Statue
standing - My eyes paralyzed - Only one focus -
I can - not tell - I am caught -
Denial of the Truth - Scared of () -
Falling Ashes -
disturb the motion -
of the moon -
Shut up - Flaming at
the Mouth - Burnt
retorts -

Written by Eric Curtis
1993

The Meeting

I bumped into Truth on the subway,
his clothing was ragged and torn,
and he looked with dismay
at Hatred and Rage,
and with pity at Anger and Scorn.

It seems he had left
with the world in this mess
and had given up trying to try
and he gazed up at me
with a look so serene
and the tear of Fate caught in his eye.

He had lost all his faith in Humanity and
Humanity lost faith in him
as he started to fear for his Sanity
seeing children abused
and the face of Love bruised
while Ignorance lied on a whim.

See he couldn't abide by Injustice
and he didn't find Racism fair
and he just couldn't see
how someone like me
could have found any reason to care.

I bumped into Truth on the subway,
and our meeting just doesn't seem real.
To encounter blind grace
in such a chance place
made up of concrete and steel.

--Written by Barbie Dockstader
October 22nd, 1996 (revised 10/25th/96)
Inspired by a conversation with
Michael Horn.

The Wait

Home - Her eyes - Her presence
Takes my words out of my
mouth - The coming of hell
on earth - The Wait - The Seasons
change - The Wait - The Time
alone with her - The Time without
her - I long for her
warm - Strong Arms - Gentle Touch -
The Wait - The kill - Alone I
sit - Head in my Hands - She is
alone - loneliness - sorrow - The
touch of silk - Lips - Skin -
Home - Dirty Old Town
Differences of opinion - Mom -
Dad - The Wait
The Distance
Is Too Far
To Touch
Written by Eric Curtis
1993

Stupid Boy in Love

Here I am
In an open cage
Feed me well
I am your slave

Tie a rope
Around my neck
Kiss my lips
Break my back

You say you want
to be my wife
You say you love me
with a knife

Your words make my ears bleed
Your touch burns my skin
I run from your love,
But I'll be back again

--David Hall

YOUR POEM HERE.

The Post Amerikan is seeking poetry
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We have the right to
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Seeing Red

Hello Mr. Ponzi

Need a laugh? Just take a look at Albania: a whole nation of morons.

Why, these chumps sunk all their assets into giant Ponzi schemes--pyramid scams where investors get promises, and initial receipts, of whopping returns. Of course, with little underlying productive activity, eventual collapse is unavoidable.

But did inevitable bankruptcy stop Albanians from investing in the ventures? Far from it: though some warnings were sounded, 45-50% of the population jumped in--at least one person in virtually every family, commentators quickly pointed out. Why, some people sold everything they owned: houses, horses, cars--hell, probably a daughter or two--in the scramble to get in on the action.

Indeed, the amount invested--two billion dollars--was the equivalent of 43% of Albania's gross domestic product, according to the March 7th Chicago Tribune.

Now, of course, the bubble has burst and investors have lost everything.

Has there ever been a bigger bunch of fools?

That's been the thrust of U.S. press coverage of the Ponzi schemes' disastrous collapse in Albania, a Balkan nation of some 3.4 million abutting Yugoslavia and Greece, just across the Adriatic Sea from Italy.

"Get-rich-quick scams ... lur[ed] the gullible with promises of up to 500% annual returns," declared the February 17th Business Week (whose ad slogan is "Not just with promises of up to 500% annual returns," declared the February 17th Business Week (whose ad slogan is "Not just information. Intelligence.") A "something-for-nothing ethos" gripped this "Balkan basket case," they pronounced.

The tonier Christian Science Monitor put it this way: people "frantic to taste the good life but with few legitimate avenues to do so" found the schemes "a tolerable risk in light of the scarcity of genuine investment opportunities."

"They thought that this [fat returns on investments] was how capitalism works," breathed one expert on National Public Radio February 27 with obvious incredulity.

Imagine that.

Although the U.S. economy has grown less than 6% in the last two years, the American stock market has in the same time frame soared an astounding 85%. (Now flirting with 7,100 the Dow-Jones average was 3834 at the beginning of 1995.)

Today 43% of U.S. adults (surely at least one person in virtually every family) has money in the stock market--a percentage itself more than double that of seven years ago. (Previously, it took a quarter of a century for stockholder numbers to double from 10 to 21%.) This despite warnings by the usually tight-lipped and cryptic U.S. banking system head, Allen Greenspan, of "irrational exuberance."

In fact, the dramatic inflation of the U.S. stock market owes almost everything to the inability to make money anywhere else: Japan has a millstone of US \$350 billion of bad loans around its neck, Germany has the highest unemployment rate since the 1930's, and U.S. banks pay a laughable 2% or less on deposits.

Moreover, cutthroat international is hammering profits rates from actual production--not speculation--into the ground.

Seems like people "frantic to taste the good life but with few opportunities to do so" find Wall Street "a tolerable risk in light of scarcity of genuine investment opportunities."

No doubt many will find comparing Ponzi schemes in Albania to the mighty New York Stock Exchange far-fetched, to say the least.

But what would you call people who believe in returns fourteen times greater than economic growth?

Gullible?

Actually, the bad news goes far deeper than the market's current price/exchange numbers.

Truth is capitalism--whose profit engine feeds on paying workers less than the value of what they produce--is itself a pyramid scheme, one inevitably collapsed by too many goods and too few consumers with money.

This resulting "crisis of overproduction"--and its bitter irony of 'too many' goods to sell profitably while hundreds of millions suffer from 'too little'--has already caused two World Wars, as competing nations fight like animals marooned at an oasis inexorably disappearing into the sand.

Of course the last go-round was so devastating that it took five decades to run out of customers again--so long that three generations have come to believe that eternal economic growth is ... well, the way capitalism works.

If the ruination of the people of Albania raised only smirks and headshakes from Western pundits, the Albanians' eruption into massive and angry protests moved commentators to indignation. The Christian Science Monitor found an expert to say "it's the classical behavior in which people put their money in and then expect the government to bail them out. It proves a not-very-good understanding of democracy."

The richness of this particular chestnut--that millions of people protesting ruination by a few dozen swindlers somehow violates majority rule--was made all the sweeter by its source: a U.S.-paid mouthpiece in Prague quoted in a newspaper long-known itself as the mouthpiece of the U.S. State Department.

But now, with one-time protesters metamorphosing into armed insurrectionists--the Albanian government is losing control of half the country as this is written--smirks and indignation are turning into narrow-eyed expressions of "serious concern" about what the March 3 New York Times called Europe's "angriest country."

Somehow, mobs of thick-headed workers stripping policemen to their underwear and--armed with tanks and automatic weapons--threatening to roll into the capitol don't seem so funny any more.

Can't somebody explain to these people how capitalism works?

But no matter: it's *Albania*, for crissakes. Here, the smart money is racking up 40% annual gains in the U.S. stock market.

Behold the morons.

(Reach Eckardt, a Chicago-based freelance writer, at seckardt@aol.com)

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Want to grow old to be an "Angry Albanian?"

Angry Albanians--You've seen them on the news lately, marching on government buildings, violently upset because they just lost their life savings on a pyramid scheme.

Here's a small country, recently under the most repressive Communist regime in eastern Europe, now experiencing its first Capitalist crisis. Every Albanian sunk their precious life savings into this financial mirage and now they're all broke.

Americans smugly sit before their TV thinking, "Stupid Albanians. Anyone could see through a scheme like that."

And as the angry Albanians fade from the screen the next news story is another Washington think tank talking head advocating privatizing Social Security, putting America's retirement system into the stock market.

"Stock market? Hey it's booming now, just cracked 7000 this week. If the stock market keeps growing and climbing, I could retire a millionaire."

Perhaps. And perhaps Albanians were going to get rich on a pyramid scheme. Wall Street is going up now but Wall Street goes down too. The only folks who would "get rich" from wrecking Social Security would be Wall Street brokers.

Social Security was started as "Old Age & Disability Insurance." It was meant to insure a minimum to live on when you were old or disabled. It was never a life of luxury but but offers dignity instead of poverty to the elderly.

And like any insurance program, Social Security was meant to be conservative and calculated. Its funds were directed to government bonds for a slow and steady rate of return, rather than the up and down fluctuations of Wall Street.

If everyone's Social Security payments were put into the stock market, perhaps some folks would make big bucks. On the day they turn 65 they might be sitting on some serious money.

But what happens when you're 72 and serious illness strikes, wiping out your savings? Suddenly that nest egg could disappear. Under today's Social Security you'd still get that basic check every month and it will continue to come, no matter what catastrophe or good luck comes your way.

As a baby boomer I realize we are an actuarial nightmare. Starting after World War II baby boomers are like a pig sliding down to a python--this huge bulge working its way into the 21st century.

Just as we baby boomers forced a lot of new school construction in the 1950s we'll probably fuel a nursing home boom in the 2030s. This one time bulge is no reason to abolish a program that constructively worked for sixty years.

Should there be some changes? Of course. Should we abolish the whole program? Definitely not. One solution is to raise Social Security payroll taxes one percent for workers and the same for employers. That increase will handle the extra expense my generation will cost Social Security.

Remember many of the TV talking heads wanting to abolish Social Security have their own agenda. They want to abolish government assistance programs totally. If they can destroy the most popular and pervasive

program, it will be even easier to attack others. And Wall Street would get a temporary get-rich-quick boost from all those payroll taxes suddenly falling into their pockets.

Let's adjust, fix Social Security, not destroy it. Because when I'm 69 I don't want to march on City Hall like an angry Albanian, upset because my savings just disappeared in a pyramid--oops, I mean Wall Street--scheme.

--Mike Matejka
From Livingston & McLean Counties Union News

No Disney sweatshops campaign shows results

Letters and media publicity are forcing changes in the Magic Kingdom, as Disney is beginning to clean up its act in Third World countries.

Disney subcontractors have been exposed producing clothing at 30 cents an hour in Haiti, using child labor for toy production in Indonesia and exploiting terrible conditions in China.

The National Labor Committee is actively exposing Disney's activities around the world. Letters and demonstrations against Disney in December resulted in Disney ending production in military-ruled Burma.

However, Disney's production in Haiti and China continues. British Broadcasting did a documentary in Haiti called *Face Value*, finding sub-subsistence wages of 30 cents an hour in Disney sub-contractors.

NBC's *Dateline* aired a December show on Indonesian and Chinese production of American toys. In Indonesia *Dateline* found children as young as 13 working in toy factories for 21 cents an hour, producing 101 Dalmatians, Lion King and Pooh dolls.

In China *Dateline* found "young women working 12-hour shifts making . . . one of this year's hottest sellers, 101 Dalmatians. . . Here, all-night factories churn out one of every two toys sold in America. Here more than a million migrant female workers eat, sleep and work in factory compounds for just over a dollar a day."

The National Labor Committee is continuing its push to have Disney live up to basic human and labor rights. They are asking the large corporation to allow independent human rights monitoring of its subcontractors and pay workers a livable wage in their country.



"I was manufactured in a much more brutal sweatshop than YOU were!"

For more information, contact the National Labor Committee at 275 7th Ave, NY, NY 10001, 212-242-3002. Letters to Disney encouraging them to maintain decent human rights should go to: Michael Eisner, CEO; Walt Disney Company; Buena Vista St., Burbank, CA 91521. Copies of letters to Eisner should also be sent to the National Labor Committee.

--From the Livingston & McLean Counties Labor News

Rape Crisis Center of McLean County

We're a non-profit volunteer group whose main purpose is to offer assistance and support to victims of sexual assault and their friends and families.

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Call PATH 827-4005
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Understanding Central Africa:

Time moves fast in our land, but it was only weeks ago when Rwanda/Zaire threatened to explode as the next mega-media extravaganza. Remember the hundreds of thousands of starving refugees in desperate need of humanitarian assistance? "A human disaster looms in eastern Zaire," quoth the October 26 *New York Times*. "There is only enough food for three days," said UN officials. So what happened to the crisis? What happened was this: the dispossessed natives usually tallied up with the number of cattle by Western analysts—astonishingly—seized the stage and took matters into their own hands.

They busted up the camps of refugees held hostage by the "murderous Hutus," militias that had been nurtured by millions of dollars of Western aid. The postcard: helpless Africans promptly went home to Rwanda. Of course the same unexpected uprising also caught the attention of Western imperialist powers, which—after impassively watching the 1994 slaughter of over 500,000 Rwandans in 1994—were suddenly gripped by a "humanitarian" impulse to send in 15,000 soldiers.

Big blows against the agents of genocide and dictatorship struck by rebellious forces in Zaire and Rwanda have landed Central Africa on TV screens and front pages again.

But while Paris and Washington clashed over rights of plunder, the prize slipped further from their hands. Rebels in eastern Zaire took on and dispersed the militia forces of exiled Rwandan mass murderers, thereby freeing over half a million refugees the militias once held hostage in camps along the Rwandan border.

Meanwhile the rebels consolidated control over a 200 kilometer long stretch of territory now liberated from the Zairian dictator Mobutu Sese Seko partially arming the population and organizing a rally of 10,000 in the key eastern Zairian city of Goma on 20 November.

Intervention set back

With the refugee camps as the central justification for Western "humanitarian" military action, their closure gravely weakened the case for invasion. "The camps are empty. They will not be re-opened" a U.N. High Commission for Refugees said to reporters in the western Rwandan city of Gisenyi. "It's a new beginning for Rwanda."

As events accelerated, the imperial powers found themselves confronting opposition to military action from the Rwandan government—and the active hostility of the Zairian rebels. "I don't think the international community has any reason to come here," rebel leader Laurent Kabila told reporters on 18 November. "What purpose can they have? To free whom? There's total freedom here."

Then three days later—as the uprising deepened Kabila upped the ante: Western forces will intervene "only over our dead bodies."

But however chastened—and divided—the West remains committed to military action, albeit for the moment scaled down. True, "the need for

United States military forces needs to be carefully reassessed" granted the *New York Times* in a 19 November lead editorial cynically entitled "Help still needed in Central Africa." Clinging to the remnants of the old line, the *Times* declared "the refugee crisis . . . eased but not over" only to double-clutch to "security questions" and the need for "the international community . . . to provide some kind of impartial monitoring."

Zaire: the key

What's really at stake is control of mineral-rich Zaire, the strategic—as well as geographic—heart of Africa. The importance attached by the West to Zaire (once the Belgian Congo) was shown in the early 1960's by repeated military interventions by Belgian, French, and U.S. armies, as well as massive covert operations by their secret service counterparts—including a *contra* army of South African, Rhodesian, and anti-Castro Cuban mercenaries. These forces eventually proved too powerful for the anti-colonial fighters (called "simbas" [lions]), as well as a small group of Cuban revolutionaries led by Che Guevara.

The resulting dictatorship of Mobutu was then nurtured as an anti-Communist bastion for the next 30 years. He was rewarded both with official receptions in the White House by every president from Johnson through Bush, and with billions of dollars in aid, virtually all of which went to personally enrich the former Colonel, now reportedly one of the ten wealthiest man in the world.

Zaire, on the other, became "one of the world's poorest" countries, despite its "vast wealth of mineral and agricultural resources," according to the *CIA Fact Book*. Today "the people of Zaire experiencing a total breakdown," says William Minter of the Washington Office on Africa. The currency is worthless, infrastructure is non-functioning, and civil servants and the army are not paid. Life expectancy has sunk well under age 50, and annual per capita income to perhaps \$200. (US currency).

Fearing the deluge

While Western powers have occasionally grumbled about loan defaults, ruination of the economy, and strangulating corruption under Mobutu, the alternative—a liberated Zaire—has kept imperialist support of the dictator from flagging.

But now Mobutu lies in a sumptuous villa in southern France, reportedly dying of prostate cancer. Insurgent forces have freed a portion of eastern Zaire. And—with refugees returning and the murderous militias dispersed—prospects for a democratic and pluralist Rwanda have brightened.

In short, imperialist control of Central Africa lies in jeopardy.

Now the first contingents of Western armies are poised to intervene again, back to the scene of the crime. Whether the "jackals and hyenas" (as Che called Western "humanitarian" forces in the

1960's Congo) or a new generation of "simbas" will prevail is yet to be seen.

Future developments—some perhaps explosive—are certain.

The western powers prepare to divide the spoils

Aside from their military, paramilitary and covert forces, Western imperial powers have relied on two other powerful weapons.

One is the ancient strategy of divide-and-rule, whereby ethnic groups have been played off against each other, as in the case of the violence unleashed against the Tutsi people.

The other is the orchestration of public opinion by calling upon—and reinforcing—deeply-held racist archetypes. Of course while "white innocents" threatened by "Black savages" worked for the 1964 Stanleyville intervention, it's a bit archaic today.

Now it's images of starving Africans, helpless Africans, diseased Africans, and dying African children. And there's still the image of "crazed Black savages," blood-drenched and machete-wielding . . .

At the same time, public opinion is manipulated by the sewing of confusion. By failing to make critical class distinctions *within* Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups, the media have left even well-informed Americans trapped in a hopeless effort to figure out which group is "the bad guys." The only possible result, of course, is to make people throw up their hands and figure the whole thing's insane.

In fact, the real insanity—and the entire blame—lies in Washington, Paris, and the other imperial capitals. It's in the organized system of plunder, oppression and misery that the Third World faces inescapably every day.

African people are quite capable of solving their own problems, as has been shown in virtually every country on the continent. Sadly, they have been met at every turn by repeated Western military interventions and the press of impossibly unequal economic relations.

What Africa—just like the rest of the Third World—badly needs is the New World Economic Order called for by the Non-Aligned Movement in the 1980's: cancellation of the Third World debt, equalization of exchange rates between finished and non-finished goods, and free access to Western science and technology.

Most of all, they need the troops to stop coming.

--Steve Eckardt

Steve Eckardt, a Chicago railcar mechanic, writes a column for the Chicago-based magazine Lumpen Times.

He has also filed stories from Chiapas and Havana for assorted international publications. E-mail: seckardt@aol.com



Back to the scene of the crime

Background Briefing

Zaire

Once the Belgian Congo, the entire country was declared the personal property of King Leopold of Belgium in 1884. Leopold infamously pressed his now-vassals into forced labor, using mass executions and (for the time) unprecedented brutality to strip everything of value from the land.

Zaire (pop. 45 million) has some of the greatest mineral wealth in the world, including gold, silver, diamonds, copper, zinc, cobalt, cadmium, bauxite, manganese, tin, uranium, iron ore, and germanium.

It controls the mouth of the Congo River, the only outlet to the South Atlantic.

Zaire won independence from Belgium in June 1960. Central anticolonial leader Patrice Lumumba became the first Prime Minister following free elections, but Belgium invaded and unleashed contra forces led by wealthy landowner Moise Tshombe. Lumumba called for U.N. "peacekeepers," but arriving Western forces instead disarmed Lumumba's forces, allowing the installation of Mobutu. The immensely popular Lumumba was then arrested and murdered, actions reportedly organized by the U.S. Central intelligence agency.

Nonetheless, young independence fighters called "simbas" (lions) fought on and eventually re-liberated most of the country. However, Western governments financed a mercenary army of white South Africans, Rhodesians and counter-revolutionary Cuban exiles to wage a scorched-earth campaign of mass murder.

In November 1964, the U.S. Air Force flew Belgian paratroopers into Stanleyville on a "humanitarian rescue mission" which left so many thousands of Congolese rotting dead in the streets that a typhoid epidemic broke out.

In 1965 Mobutu declared himself president. He has been granted formal state visits to the White House by every U.S. president from Johnson to Bush. In recent years, though, Mobutu's personal plunder of the country has reached a level high enough to offend his French and U.S. keepers. In 1992 he defaulted on loans owed to the United States of America.

Mobutu rule has left resource-wealthy Zaire "one of the world's poorest countries," according to the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. Economic activity beyond primitive barter arrangements have ceased, as it now takes 9,628,000,000 1993 Zairian dollars to obtain US dollars.

Mobutu's absence from the country, his impending death, his inability to pay his army, his arbitrary removal of citizen-ship from Zairians who happened to be ethnically Tutsi, and the influx of genocidal gangsters fleeing the new government of Rwanda caused the population of eastern Zaire to rise in October/November 1996, expelling both Mobutu's army and the murderous Rwandan Hutu militias.

The rebels, called the Banyamulenge, are reportedly part of a national revolutionary front for democracy in Zaire. Mean-while, Mobutu forces in the capital, Kinshasha, are mobilizing under the racist banner of fighting Tutsi "outsiders."

The murder of Lumumba and the bloody reassertion of imperial control of Zaire in the sixties directly caused the impoverishment, the breakdown of age-old communal societies and the plundering of the rain forest which would ultimately lead the virus that causes AIDS out of the Zairian equatorial jungle, down the epidemiologically-infamous Kinshasha highway. The resulting worldwide epidemic has already cost millions their lives, while tens of millions more face almost certain death.

Rwanda

Smaller than the U.S. state of Maryland, Rwanda (pop. approximately 9 million) is a mountainous, landlocked and fertile country probably once best-known as the home of murdered naturalist Diane Fossey and some of the world's last remaining silver-backed gorillas. Ruled along with neighboring Burundi by Belgium until 1962 with the complicity of a Tutsi aristocracy. Following independence, overwhelmingly peasant Hutus (85% of the population) took control of the government. Utilizing demagogic appeals against former Tutsi oppressors, Hutu rulers used state power to fashion themselves into a new elite.

Following the overthrow of the repressive and kleptocratic regime, French troops reinstated the old government which subsequently unleashed the systematic butchering of Tutsis and any Hutus opposed to the genocide. Nonetheless the pluralistic (if largely Tutsi) Rwandan Patriotic Front successfully overthrew the murderous government in July 1994. Murderous militias of the old regime were fed and housed in Zaire by Western aid, along with hundreds of thousands of frightened Hutu refugee hostages. The refugees were freed, and the militias dispersed, by anti-Mobutu Zairian rebels in October/November 1996.

United States

By far the world's largest imperial power, only the United States has the physical ability to transport large numbers of military forces to central Africa by air. Constrained by the legacy of a massive anti-war movement that helped bring about its historic defeat in Viet Nam and by native-forced retreats from Lebanon and Somalia, the U.S. nonetheless is seeking to use its tremendous military authority to wrest control of central Africa from France. It can also count among its advantages the deep popular hatred of France in central Africa, and the presidency of an English-speaker in Rwanda. The United States was central in the crushing of the Lumumba regime in Zaire and in the maintenance of the dictator Mobutu.

France

The key ruler of central and western Africa, France has intervened militarily there 35 times in the last 34 years. In addition to its well-

established relations with its neo-colonies, France can also count on the overwhelming dominance of the French language in the area. It was French intervention in 1994 that re-installed the "Hutu" government which subsequently butchered more than 500,000 predominantly Tutsi Rwandans. Popular regard for France in Rwanda is probably even lower than in the Central African Republic, where demonstrators met Paris's intervening troops with cries of "Death to the French!"

Cuba

The only country in the world led by revolutionaries, overwhelmingly Afro-Latin Cuba has a long record of internationalism and assistance to those in conflict with imperialism. Cuba dispatched a small force led by Che Guevara in 1965 to the Congo to aid anti-colonial fighters there. Cuba also sent 50,000 volunteers to Angola in the 1980's and played a critical role in the defeat of South African forces there, credited by Nelson Mandela with "forever changing the face of Africa." Although it's still a speculative matter, should central Africa erupt into open conflict with the West, the actions of Cuba could become a real factor.

Context

Unlike the 1960's, when Western powers cooperated to return the Congo (now Zaire) to the imperial fold, events in Central Africa today are marked by sharp conflict between Paris and Washington, and to a lesser extent, Ottawa. The increased competition between capitalist countries--driven by a world-wide structural economic crisis reminiscent of circumstances preceding the past two World Wars--represents a new ingredient in African politics. Africans took advantage of the last period of inter-imperialist conflict to liberate virtually the entire continent from direct colonial rule. While current competition has hardly reached the pitch of the 'thirties and 'forties, already sharp disagreements between Paris and Washington prevented quick Western military action, allowing Central Africans to change the entire situation to their great advantage (i.e., the establishment of liberated territory, the break-up of the refugee camps, and the weakening of the murderous militia forces). While the ramifications of this new ingredient are impossible to fully foretell, one thing is clear: the circumstances of the 'sixties no longer prevail.





The world



These fated times--part 2

Right now we are living in a time period of which was written by prophets and seers of every age and culture to be a period of massive global cataclysm. Cycles big and small are converging and the signs are every bit apparent in the world around us as they are in ancient manuscripts, star charts, and divinations. On the sociopolitical sphere of involvement, both domestic and abroad, things are going freaky-nuts and gearing up for violent changes that will leave the current powers that be in shambles. (It sure won't be peaches and cream for their subjects either.)

I. Here at home

The United States is a cancer that has infected the world. Our economic-technologic totalitarianism has spread our sociology of greed, ambition, and pride so quickly that overclasses and corrupt governments have sprung up globally. Our domestic economy had safeties built in so that this end result of capitalism took 200+ years (oddly, the lifespan of the average republic) to form here, but on other continents it reared its ravenous ugly head.

Things aren't well here though. The fact that politics is by, of, and for itself, its vested interests are more widely realized, and as the overclass grows fewer (and richer), it grows more afraid. For the economy to keep grinding at the rate it must to support them, more and more of the teeming masses must be worked harder and harder at less pay/benefit. To do this means more control, and that has to be won in the media. The gangs are getting along more and pulling their resources toward a common enemy and, with the help of the urban Islamic movement, getting in touch with international radicals who mean the U.S. no good. Both gangs and white supremacist groups are integrating with the military for training and access; meanwhile, Christian patriotic militias are training in the hills. The social safety net is being shredded, but the situation for living in the worst areas are no better, yet a new political scandal or NASA science project take precedence. You don't see police or military budgets being cut. A global underground of leftist, ecological and new age movements is condensing, and the hemp subculture is getting pissed. By the way, what are the natives up to? Chances are not what you hear, if anything, on the news.

The police are getting automatic machine guns and hollow bullets while farms bankrupt to huge conglomerates and the FBI can tap your phone without anyone's permission. Also notice how the government is trying to get everyone on the Internet where income, spending habits, and browsing interests can be neatly electronically monitored and filed.

In the UnaBomber case, as it turns out, authorities might not have had a legal warrant (or any at all...) to search Ted K's cabin, let alone remove it and its contents for scrutiny and cataloging. OOPS. As for the OK Bombing, a deep cloud of controversy and scandal has arisen. It seems that the authorities on the scene did a laughable job gathering evidence. On top of other technical, but equally bizarre, deviations from normal procedure, the investigators did not secure the perimeter for FOUR DAYS and were told to ignore any evidence "smaller than a softball." OOPS. It has also come out that top crime lab officials who tried to note these discrepancies were demoted or given remote new assignments.

What really counts, if you take the timing of the two (and several other equally unsolved acts of "domestic terrorism" that happened almost simultaneously) cases into account, is the initial public hysteria they created. This sudden spurt of media attention to domestic security breaches allowed politicians with big-buck interests to pass laws that violate the rights and privacy of every man, woman, and child. What's worse, these laws set precedents that may haunt us for totalitarian decades to come. All the status quo could do was nod their heads and say we need roving, warrantless wire taps, easier searches with even more circumstantial (and relative) probable cause, and an even more bloated police budget.

Now that the fervor has died down and the cases that started the hype crumble before official court or fade into oblivion, it is obvious that some of these cases may go unsolved due to technicalities. This closes the door on further investigation, as they will say they had the right guy(s) but can't convict them. This could set up even more invasive and antipopulation legislation...The errors in these two cases also appear to be too obvious to be accidental, bringing other episodes in our government's history to mind (Tonkin Bay, perhaps, or a dude called JFK?). All the government had to do was create the hype, use the hype, and distract people long enough to escape the possibility of investigations.

What really counts

Tim McVeigh and Terry Nichols (and possibly that third "Doe" guy) were fingered relatively quickly as the perpetrators of the Oklahoma City bombing, and after many, many years, the FBI has arrested Theodore Kyczinski as a prime Unabomber suspect. Two major cases of domestic terrorism, one sudden and one resurfacing, tied up in a relatively close (even overlapping) time period.

Now, months and months later, neither trial has even been started, let alone been resolved. The U.S. Justice system, an oxymoron in itself, had two cases with assumed sure prosecutions (which isn't right...) and has not been able to finalize them for this long. This is not because of paralyzing bureaucracy, although this is a nice public distraction. Other rosy facades include squabbles over court locations, whether to try defendants together or separate, and jury demographic studies (we need a hangin' county!). Unfortunately, heh,heh, it wasn't until now that the public interest in these cases reached such lows that problems with both cases were allowed to start surfacing. These problems had to have been apparent from the beginning, and could very well have been intentional.



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according to Matt

When you look at initiatives to improve the situation and see how they all work in relation to each other, it seems as though all governmental sources are either oblivious and ignorant, or are intentionally taking powers and liberties from the population and trying to make the situation worse. The end result of this motivation would be to have a reason to martially crack down on the populace and once and for all establish an order of overclass consisting of heads of corporations, the medical and technological sciences community, access distributors of public knowledge, and the politicians and families who got them there.

This process is very well underway in 1997, from marketplace/media control to harassment tests on subculture the government has made sure no one will defend. Most of my other snippets in this column are about this domestic phenomena of coerced, enforced willful complete public submission (another oxymoronic U.S. policy), and woven together paint a bigger, more diabolical portrait of old Uncle Sam.

II. War beast rising

Just as the Roman Empire fell partly because it had to defend too many fronts, our Global Capitalistic Empire is increasingly and more potently being attacked the world over. Stronger and more determined enemies are rising and increasing, lasting regions of violent chaos threaten this incarnation of the Global Empire. Of course, it is hard to say how much of this is actually for or against our Empire, for any large scale military conflict would seem to benefit it: one, by boosting the economy; two, by strengthening our overseas control with public bolstered support—they think; and three, by getting rid of much of their "problem" population, thus making domestic fascism unopposed. At any rate, the world is gearing up for a massive armed conflict the like of which have never been seen before. Of course, because of lessons learned in past practices, the government and media are doing their best to distract and keep unrelated the forces at (seemingly intently) sway.

In Europe, there are still deepset tensions in the former Yugoslavia region, with record unemployment (and rising underground extremism) in Germany a bit north. Albania has fallen to anarchy and governmental overthrow, while Greece and the newly Islamic-led Turkey are at odds over an island. Strange powerplays and tensions in the U.N. and European community are never good, and we may find out who else had a heavy hand on the Axis side in WWII (it only minorly involves the Swiss band/Jewish savings scandal). The USSR...oops...Russia is in political turmoil with several semi-ex republics wanting to go hardline Islamic and its economy in shambles due to sudden capitalism. Russia is also getting disturbed by our strong arm in Europe, and has been building stronger relations with China,

Speaking of China, look at the pressure rising there. With the HongKong and Taiwan turnovers looming in light of civil unrest and human rights criticism, this giant has lashed out at our Empire in the media, and, despite looming food shortage (due to too much population), has just spent record amounts of money on the arms market to fully modernize its military. This comes mere months after our media comforted us by saying that China's military would be ineffectually archaic for at least a decade. Elsewhere in Asia, the Korean's are at it again, this time with anti-capitalist demonstrations by those we support. General chaos and government initiated massacres have popped up in several smaller countries including Tibet and Burma.

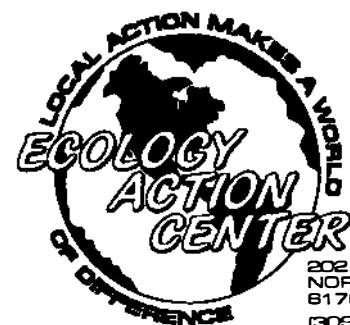
Turning to South America, we are quickly loosing allies in our all-important drug war, pissing off those countries' leaders and opening the door for U.S. "policing" warmongering. We have even thought about not giving up the Panama Canal because of its drug war importance.

The Middle-East region is getting pretty spooky. Israel is thumbing its nose at the peace process, U.N., and Arab neighbors which makes one wonder what they are possibly considering. And its Arab neighbors make known their intentions without deceit, should Israel be unwilling to compromise. Afghanistan has been conquered by hardline Islamic rebels, and tensions of the guerrilla sort continue east into India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Iran has been forging ties with China and Russia, while Iraq is militarily ten times stronger than seven years ago (with how many less civilians after U.S. Empire bombing and economic siege tactics?)

In Africa, the European political structure, enforced the last three centuries into modern times, has been utterly denied. With capitalism and the sociology of ambition and selfishness left to run its course, the populations have violently abandoned the concept of "countries," and tribes are killing off the excess populations to a level that can sanely be supported by their natural environment. People aren't buying our system of excess=profit, profit=all good. European mercenary, private companies with hardcore military equipment are hiring out to "internationally known condoned/acknowledged, legitimate governments" to squash the resurgence of tribal society (in its rebirthing pains) and reimpose social structure healthy to capitalistic ventures. In this way Europe can still manipulate African policies without having actual colonies.

III Spiral on

This is the sociopolitical situation in a nutshell. The intricacies and specific ways the above mentioned happening relate and the level of meticulous intent behind them are too vast and cyclic to be fully described here, using linear language. By comparing these events to both ancient prophecies and cause-effect, logical predicting, the very near future seems very grim for the 98% of the people on Earth who, by standard of the U.S. Global Capitalistic Empire, are average (let alone thorns). The sociopolitical sphere of These Fated Times is but one, however, and in many ways transcend this one. Those will be covered in future Post Americans.



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An interview with OK Majik

While at work last week my coworkers and I got into a relatively interesting conversation. My boss said he went out the past weekend and checked out one of our local bands. He told us that, while they were quite talented, the band did not "do" anything for him. I asked him why and he replied, "They did all of these songs I've never heard and I just couldn't get into it." He continued by saying that they did do a few covers (which he liked); but apparently, he was not pleased that he did not know the music the band was playing. Naturally, I was a little perplexed and I asked, "Why is it that people these days seem to prefer the familiar and are rather unwilling to pay a few bucks to see a band that they have never heard?" Another participant in the conversation replied, "People like to be comfortable when they go out, listening to music they know can be reassuring while in a social environment."

I admitted that his view was rather sound and began to wonder about the fact that our increasingly sterile society breeds familiarity. We become accustomed to those things accepted by others and take them on as our own. To seek out those things which are different, original, and just plain weird are left for people with a more adventurous temperament.

This line of thinking goes along with what my friend at work said about going out; it is more satisfying to listen to a band that you have heard before. We enjoy the idea of having this familiarity while engaged in activities that involve social interaction. For example, compare the audience (excepting diehards) of a show with an original band and that of a band

that performs only cover songs. There is a noticeable difference in crowd reaction and participation. Hopefully, people will allow themselves the pleasure of enjoying things never heard or experienced: before musical originality is a lost concept. Well, this discussion could continue but there really is no need; those who wish to seek live entertainment will, and those who don't...won't.

This installment of the band interview is with a group of people I have known and played with for a couple of years. They're all great people who always seem to be happy and willing to make others around them feel the same way. The band, *Ok Majik Hi-Pi-Fi Bo Bo Kings* is the focus of this article; particularly two of the founding members of the band. Unfortunately, only Andy Ballance and Steve Taylor were able to be present at the time of our sit-down; but believe me, they kept me very interested in the band's formation, the development of their band's name, and the style of music they play.




Andy first met Steve T. in a surprisingly normal way, "I gave this drunk kid a ride home; I was very relieved when he didn't puke in the back of my Chevette." Many life-long friendships are based on less than this. A couple of years passed and they ran into each other back in the Summer of '90; "It was a horribly dry summer," Steve T. recalls. From these auspicious beginnings they started playing with a few other musicians in the basement of "the inferno." Andy explains about their first sighting of Steve Fritzen, "We were checking out this Christian biker band at the parking deck in Bloomington and there was this kid playing guitar who just rocked." Steve added, "After the blessing of the bikes where they all rode past the minister there was the *Seventh Angel Band*...and Steve was out there jamming rhythm guitar." Jon Fritzen, who started playing bass six weeks before the Fourth of July, was picked shortly thereafter. Jason Nourie was a friend of Steve F. and all the pieces were in place by 1995.



As other people are, I was very curious about how they came up with the name of the band. Steve T. and Andy explained that it was a cooperative effort and they each chose one-fifth of the title. "Ok" came from an amalgamation of Omar Kiam, Ok's Bar, and the Orkestra Kinwa. "Majik", they explained, is another word for marijuana. Steve T. said, "Magic does occur...universal magic...or there could be witchcraft involved; but those are only rumors." I assumed he was talking about the band, but only those who know are privy to that information. "Hi-Pi-Fi" was best explained by Andy; "Hi-Pi-Fi" is the secret language of the brotherhood of the indestructible brothers." He continued by saying that Jon and Steve F. were born nine months apart and how twins isolated from outside stimuli develop their own language. "Bo Bo Bo," Andy told me, was a youth music form that was popular in the 1950's. "Kings," Steve explained, just added something to the name; also, they wanted to have a crown in the band logo. Steve added, "The name was before we were and will be after we was." Well, let's just say, it makes sense to me.

I posed the question of why they decided to play the type of music they do, a loud response followed, "Drugs, pot, Reggae music" (Well, let me be honest and just say "duh"). Steve T. explained that, "it's just the way some of that groovy reggae music sounds...the drippy guitars, the touches of effects, the happy vibe..." But, of course, the drugs don't have that much to do

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Kaz's CD reviews

with it; "I've realized the medicinal value of a happy vibe in music...it's stronger than any pot..." he added.

Andy then touched upon what goes into song-writing in a band that plays songs that not too many people are familiar with; "I don't think



we have the knowledge or the background to create original songs in this genre...really, really original songs." He added, "We take a piece from this song and a piece from that song and we try to approximate the meter of the poetry in the lyrics...that is the challenge." Steve T. explained that, "While you may not have to do a note perfect cover of an African song, you can do a legitimate system and make it work because the system works, it's designed to work." By "systems," I took it to mean the way Blues tunes are constructed; a basic structure, common to all of the songs in this particular style, on which the song is built. Steve T. added that, "African systems are more...tastes and flavors, but they are detailed, structured compositions."

I hope I have given a little insight to a band that, I feel, is very successful at what they are trying to accomplish. They are a band that plays music for the sake of playing. A truly wonderful approach that seems to be missing in the ever-increasing commercialism taking place in our society. Whether they're playing in room full of people or a small party, the groove is always the same. Steve T. told me that their music is, "inherently bouncy," and it can be felt any time that they play. And, of course, any band willing to play African-style music in the middle of corn-country deserves all the recognition and support they can get.

--Nick Murray

From the Muddy Banks of the Wishkah

Technically, this review should have been completed last issue, but the goddamn barfly was always at the house wanting to go out. That or at my house after the bars closed with a bottle of bourbon. It doesn't hinder listening to music, but writing? Well...

Nirvana, I personally feel, was the best of the "alternative grunge" scene of the early nineties. Though most of that scene was fabricated and bullshit, there was a real talent and poetry to those guys.

"From the Muddy Banks of the Wishkah" is a live album compiled of performances from December 1988, when they were virtually unheard of, until their untimely demise in 1994. The highlights include a gamut of their career (although the album's a gem to any true Nirvana fan) from "Drain You" to "Negative Creep." Also included is a version of "Tourettes" (In Utero) before it was released in which the band says "The bootleggers go ahead & go!"

After a few pliffs from the barfly & some volume from the stereo (bourbon doesn't hurt either), I felt I was "there."

Ironically, "Smells Like Teen Spirit" (Nevermind) on this album, seems like they were already tired of playing their "hit."

I love a good live album and this album is one. The album is (what the hell?) "awesome dude!"

Nirvana, whose career was short lived, was one of few bands I say effectively mix articulate & kickass in the same sentence.

For beginning Nirvana fans I recommend this album if you're more into just total loud jamming (which a live album should be). If you're mellow and are interested I recommend "MTV Live & Unplugged in New York" which has a lot of cool covers included such as David Bowie's "Man Who Sold the World" and is all acoustic. Both albums cover a wide choice of their history. Other Nirvana CD's (although

not complete) include: "Bleach" (1989), "Nevermind" (1991), "Incesticide" (1992), "In Utero" (1993), and "Unplugged in New York" (1994).

Well, until next time kiddies, remember we can't review until you send 'em in, you local heroes. I know you're out there.

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Underground Barfly

Hello again, and welcome to another blah-blah-blah of the Underground Barfly. The two clubs which I will be reviewing are a couple of surprisingly cool places to hang: North Pier (formerly Rhino's) and The Gallery (formerly The Galery).

North Pier

The night started at North Pier (531 N. Main Street). This is an interesting place. It's in downtown Bloomington surrounded by a lot of other bars and lawyers offices and city hall, etc. so you can imagine that during the day it is yuppie-yuppie-yuppie hell! However, at night they go away like cockroaches when the light is turned on and the freaks take over (go freaks! rah-rah-rah!).

On the particular night I was there, which was a Tuesday, there was an R & B band called Andre & Friends which plays some good covers till around ten when it becomes "open mic night." Now don't you poets and jugglers start drooling, this is pretty much for musicians, which is O.K. If you want to read/listen to poetry, etc. go across the street to Lizard's Lounge, but if you want to listen to and/or participate in some good solid R & B jams, North Pier is the place to be on a Tuesday night.

Now for the oh, so important stuff: the booze. The drink selection at North Pier is pretty average. Their hard stuff is pretty basic, not too expensive, nothing too fancy, but what they do have is good enough for the U. B. If you're a beer-drinkin' kinda cat, the selection you'll find there you'll find just about anywhere in this town and the prices are average, except when they have specials when they are cheaper. One thing that separates North Pier from some of the other places your pal, the Underground Barfly, has visited is the different kinds and the amount of the fru-fru drinks that are available. They have everything from a Blowjob to a Bloody Brain! Weird! What's even stranger is that people actually buy those things! What is this world coming to!?!

If you want to play pool at this bar, I would recommend going in early or when the place is dead, as there is only one table. I didn't get a chance to examine it, as far as I remember, so I can't tell you what kind of shape it's in, but it's a bar table, so take it from there. I also didn't notice if they had a juke box, but, again, it's a bar so if they do, they probably have the standard non-country-bar kind of tunes.

All-in-all I would say that North Pier is not such a bad place to hang out. It's your average middle-of-the-road bar. Not too exciting, and not too boring (except on Tuesdays); but hell, after a few drinks The Weather Channel can even become exciting!

The Gallery

Getting back to the freaks I mentioned a few paragraphs ago, The Gallery (111 E. Beaufort) must be the place where their nest is located. The Gallery is freak city! You'll find everything from weird arty folks to rebellious college students with green hair and pierced eyeballs. Not that that's bad; the world needs freaks, right?

So, let's get down to business about Freak City. The Gallery is a dark little bar in the heart of downtown Normal's bar district. It's surrounded by a few fratty-type bars, but don't get discouraged; even if it's 20 degrees below zero, they prefer to stand outside in a (at times) long line waiting to enter frat heaven. They wouldn't dare enter The Gallery. They might be seen. So all you freaks can be assured that you will be among your own freaky kind if you enter The Gallery.

When I went to The Gallery, I saw (besides the freaks) what appeared to be a dump. I was not mistaken. The Gallery is basically a dump, but it has a certain charm to it. From the witty declarations behind the bar to the water that drips from the ceiling when it rains, I must say that I was fascinated with this little place.

Their alcohol selection is pretty average, though I did see some hard stuff that I hadn't noticed in other bars. The choice of beers they offer is pretty average, too; nothing very unusual, as are their prices. However, they do have some fantastically low prices on draft beer specials. I was fortunate to experience 75 cent drafts! Pretty cool, huh?

If you are a connoisseur of bar games, the pinball machines and video games will satisfy your tastes, I'm sure (just like any other pinball machine or video game, "I'm sure"). For those of you who like to shoot pool, The Gallery offers the finest in worn, unbalanced pool tables. And, while you are enjoying a game of billiards, you might partake of a "left handed cigarette" (wink-wink) from one of the many left handed cigarette smokers who gather around that secluded area.



There is no juke box at The Gallery, but there are some DJs who play everything from alternative-rocky type music to classic rock. All right! There is also some pretty good live music, usually on weekends. Some of the bands that have graced their presence at this wonderful place are The Spelunkers, The Grainbenders, Stumptwhoop, and The Polite Coyotes among others. Well worth checking out.

The Gallery definitely gets a thumbs-up from the Underground Barfly. It's a place to go when you're tired of the same old scene. Though it's in Normal and can only stay open till 1 a.m., even on weekends, it's still a worthy place. Take it from the U.B.: gurgle-gurgle-gurgle, drink-drink-drink! Till next time, make sure you don't throw up on your shoes (or even worse, someone else's)!

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Third encounters of the pig kind

Well, another installment of Bloomington-Normal area police harassment stories has written itself, thanks to our merry men (and women, although no stories yet...) of law enforcement and those of you willing to share the tales. Some real doozies have been brought to my attention, and they add to a long list compiled over the last year or so. Remember, any pot bust is police harassment (yeah, and the Nazis were "just doing their job," too), and any other police encounter that steps beyond an officer's "citizen granted" authority is equally heinous. As long as police have the mountain oysters to ignore the "highest law in the land," there will be Third Encounters of the Pig Kind. Call anytime, completely anonymously, 309-829-9920.

I.

The first caller, alias (I assume) Mr. Greenjeans, was the front seat passenger in a gold, late 80's Buick LeSword (heh,heh) just after dark on March seventh, this year. His brother was driving, having just completed a major painting job. They had cashed Mr. Greenjean's brother's paycheck and were on the way to pick up said brother's child at the babysitter. As they neared Bunn St. in Bloomington, a squad car pulled them over. Before the cop got to the driver's window, Mr. Greenjeans noticed that it was a McLean County Sheriff's police car and a deputy. The deputy merely looked at the driver and circled around the front of the vehicle, eying it thoroughly, to Mr. Greenjeans' window. Mr. G calmly rolled it down, and the deputy blurted out, "You look like a cocaine user. Both of you get out of the car!"

Upon exiting the vehicle, Mr. Greenjeans and his brother were "forced, practically pushed" onto the grass beside the road and told to assume a spread position. They complied, Mr. G's brother freezing in a tank-top and jeans, as the pig explained that he was walking a dog around their "suspect" vehicle, because he knew "there must be at least cannabis" on the premises. After a quick frisk for weapons, the pig did just that. Then he let them sit up, and he got their ID's. Explaining that they had to remain seated in the grass while he ran their numbers, the pig added, "Because you two must have warrants out."

After twenty minutes, the county mountry returned to Mr. Greenjeans and his brother, only

to search them and their vehicle (briefly). The entire time he questions them about "more different kinds of drugs than they knew existed," why they were so skinny (the caller explained that neither of them is..), and why they can't afford a headlight with all their money. Mr. Greenjeans' brother then had to explain his money.

Still not satisfied, the pig asked Mr. G's brother if he had any dead bodies in the trunk. Well, old bro looked the pig in the face and asked, "Are you for real, man?" to which the pig replied, "Yes, I am very for real. Do-you-have-any-dead-bodies-in-your-trunk?" A negative response ended that line of questioning, only to begin one on "every type of civilian and personal military weapon available in this age back through WWII". When this proved fruitless, the pig told them they had no warrants and were free to go, but he had to warn them about the headlight. This ordeal took around an hour and a half, and all Mr. Greenjeans (rather, his brother) got was an extra 1.5 hours OT at the sitter's to cover.

II

The next caller began by swearing to me (like a judge) that he was a "clean cut, serious student" who "never stays out past curfew although he's almost 22." He then proceeded to tell the tale of a spring day last year when he went to the grocery store at one in the afternoon. Since it was nice out and his dorm was close, he walked. Approaching the entrance, a squad car suddenly leapt to a halt in the fire lane, grazing the back of the caller's leg. Turning around to see who had done this, the caller found the cop already out of his car and pointing aggressively at him. "What're you looking at, pal?" the cop demanded. When the caller tried to respond, the cop butted in, "Hey, if you wanna start something, I can take you in right now!" The pig made a few threatening steps toward the caller, who calmly turned and walked away, never looking back as he went to get some food.

III

Another caller, alias "Buds" (since he/she couldn't spontaneously come up with one, and it makes the tellin' easier), had a long day at class and an even longer one at the part-time job. Needless to say, all the caller wanted to do was go to sleep. Unfortunately, Buds was only half moved out of Mom & Dad's, and had promised to "get it all out by the next day."

So, at one AM, Buds knocked on Dad's window and was let into the house (a security alarm thing...). Twenty minutes later, s/he was cruising down college avenue toward the new apartment. Then, Buds got pulled over. After checking Buds' ID for fifteen minutes, the cop says that there are no warrants, but that he wonders what all the stuff in the car is for. At this point, three more cop cars pull up, lights on. Buds explained that s/he was just moving, but the first cop asks that s/he get out of the car. A thorough frisk ensues, along with the information that Buds is being arrested for residential burglary.

Buds then pointed out that the address on the ID matched the one at the residence in question. As if in ecstasy (gamete reference deleted), the pig exclaims, "Aha! We never mentioned which residence you burglarized!" Buds cut in by adding, "Because, until two hours ago, I lived there." Then "good cop" stepped in and suggested that two cars go to the residence, since no complaint had been phoned in, and see if the "alleged parents" were home. Buds had to sit in uneasy silence in "bad pig's" car... The two squad cars, at two AM, pulled up to Buds' parents' house with lights flashing (but sirens thankfully off), and the two cops knocked, in unison, on the door. As Mrs. was out

of town on business, Mr. answered. He was groggy and in his nightclothes. One of the cops asked, bluntly, "Is Buds your son?" Mr. answered positively, and the two pigs turned around and left. Just like that. Buds' father followed the pigs across the front yard, asking questions and literally thinking his son was dead, but the pigs ignored him. He stood there in shock, in the front yard at two AM, for most of the half hour until Buds called him from a pay phone. Before he returned to sleep, the two pigs came to his door again to offer a curt apology.

That's all the room this issue, but there's always room for more as you call them in. I tried, and failed, to get ahold of Hodges about his assault case against the Normal Police night supervisor, but next issue is filling up fast anyway. Anyway, if you get harassed by a pig or have your Righteous Herb stolen from you under the evil regime of the US Drug War, help lay the groundwork for social defense by calling 829-9920. Tell the tale that might break the pigs' backs, before they get around to victimizing other peaceful people trying to be free. Have a happy, pig free month and again!

the launders





News From Voice

FDA endorses use of morning after pill

The Food and Drug Administration has approved the use of the "morning after pill." Essentially the pill is a high dose of ordinary birth control pills. The FDA said six brands of birth control pills are safe and effective "morning after pills." The decision opens the door for companies to specially package birth control pills for women to have on hand just in case of an emergency, just as the pills are sold routinely overseas.

Contraceptive manufacturers so far have refused to sell what the government terms "emergency contraception" here, citing litigation and political fears. The FDA said for the morning after treatment to work, two to four pills are taken within 72 hours of unprotected sex, and then the same dose is repeated exactly 12 hours later. The regimen is effective at preventing pregnancy 75% of the time. The pills prevent a fertilized egg from implanting into the uterus so that it can grow into an embryo. If a woman already is pregnant the pills will have no effect.

Nausea and vomiting, sometimes severe enough to prevent the emergency contraceptive from working, are the main side effects. The FDA report will act primarily as a prescription guide for physicians, few of whom knew what doses to prescribe to the even fewer women who knew how to seek the treatment.

Source: *The Pantagraph*

Who has had abortions

According to a recent survey by the Alan Guttmacher Institute, about one half of women in this country have had an abortion. About 33% of those women had an abortion in their early 20s and 22% in their teens. The survey also found that six in ten women who had abortions got pregnant because of contraceptive failure and that Catholic women have an abortion rate 29% higher than that of Protestant women. Two thirds of the women

who had abortions said they plan to have children in the future.

Source: *New Woman*

Abortion bill heads to vote in Illinois Senate

A bill banning the procedure known by anti-choice groups as "partial birth abortion" is heading to the floor of the Illinois Senate. The measure would bring a federal proposal that was vetoed by President Clinton last year to the state level. The bill, which would bar doctors from performing the procedure, appears to have a good chance in the full chamber after passing out of a Senate Committee March 4 on a 7-2 vote.

An identical bill is pending in the Illinois House where the bill has almost 40 co-sponsors, including Dan Rutherford and Bill Brady. The bill's main opposition comes from those questioning its constitutionality. "Given the way the bill was drafted, it's clearly unconstitutional," said state senator Barack Obama, a Constitutional law professor who voted against the bill in committee.

Some opponents say the language of the bill is too broad and does not include an exemption for situations in which a woman's health is at risk. "The word 'health' does not appear one time in the bill. There has to be an exemption for situations for long term problems of the woman," said Luellen Laurenti, with N.O.W. "They may not need the procedure, but they need to have the option of the procedure, especially if there's a question of saving her life."

Now would be an appropriate time to contact Representatives Rutherford and Brady to let them know they need to include an exemption for the life of the mother--after all, women are also important, aren't they fellas?

Source: *Pantagraph*

Lobby Day April 16

April 16, 1997, is Lobby Day. Sponsored by N.O.W and Planned Parenthood, this is a chance to accompany a delegation of McLean County pro-choicers to meet with our state representatives in Springfield. If you would like to participate call Luellen Laurenti at 452-4817.

Women therapists harassed

More than half of the nation's women psychologists have been sexually harassed by their patients, a new survey suggests. Questionnaires were sent to 750 female psychologists nationwide. Of the 354 psychologists who responded, 53.4 % said they had been sexually harassed at least once by a patient.

"There's been a lot of publicity in recent years about therapists abusing patients. What this study indicates is that patients are not the only ones at risk in the therapeutic encounter," said the author Robert deMayo of Pepperdine University.

One psychologist reported 29 such incidents in her career. Ten respondents said a patient had threatened sexual assault and one said a patient had assaulted her. Overall, deMayo said the incidents average fewer than one for every 5,000 therapy sessions. He also noted that psychologists may be more at risk because they are constantly involved in closed door sessions.

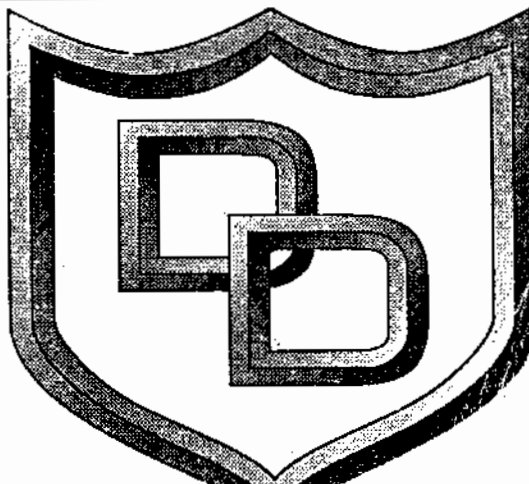
Source: *Pantagraph*

N.O.W. announces "flush Rush" campaign

N.O.W. has launched a campaign to flush Rush Limbaugh from the airwaves. According to N.O.W., under the guise of humor Limbaugh has led a massive assault against women, people of color, gays and lesbians, and anyone else he disagrees with. In a country in which every 15 seconds a woman is battered and every 6 minutes a woman is raped, there is no room for radio personalities who refer to women as feminazis or any other derogatory name.

Limbaugh's targets are not just women--he once responded to a caller who argued that the African American community must be heard by saying: "Why does it have to be heard? They are 12% of the population--who the hell cares?" N.O.W. is not suggesting that free speech should not prevail, indeed they recognize Limbaugh's right to be a pig and act like a pig. However, N.O.W. would like to confront his advertisers and demand equal time from radio stations that air his show.

Advertisers like CompuServe and Pizza Hut, through their sponsorship, are paying for Limbaugh to spout his venom. At the same time those radio stations are refusing N.O.W. the right to place paid advertisements on the air because, according to the stations, N.O.W. is too controversial.



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For Choice

The Florida Citrus growers refused to renew Limbaugh's contact as their spokesperson because of the letters and calls they received from people who objected to the state of Florida using 1 million dollars in tax payer money for the Limbaugh campaign. We can have an impact with other sponsors as well. An example: stop ordering pizzas from Pizza Hut, and each time you do order a pizza, call a local Pizza Hut to let them know you're not ordering it from them because they are a Limbaugh sponsor. Be polite, but direct; let them know they can't expect your business until Pizza Hut stops its support of Limbaugh. Listen to the Limbaugh show locally and write down which local businesses pay for advertising during the show--call the station advertisers to let them know that you disapprove of their sponsorship of Limbaugh's program.

Source: N.O.W.

Upcoming events

Eighth annual Emma Goldman "If I can't dance I don't want to be a part of your revolution" prom-- Sunday, April 27, 1997, 6:00 p.m. - ? at The Bistro. There will be 50/50 drawings, raffles, music, dancing, and who knows what else? All proceeds from this event go to the Abortion Assistance Fund which helps low income women access abortion services.

Voice for Choice garage sale-- That's right, this is your chance to get rid of that old stuff cluttering up the basement and garage. The sale will be held on Saturday, June 7, 1997, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at 1406 N. Fell, Bloomington. If you have stuff you'd like to donate simply drop it by 1406 N. Fell, Bloomington anytime after June 1 (put it on the back porch). If you have larger items we may be able to help you move them--call 829-8640 to inquire. All proceeds go to the Voice for Choice general operating fund which helps pay for our newsletter, rental of equipment and space for events, and helps us financially with events like "Violence Take a Hike Peace March."

The voice that is great within us-- a celebration of area women artists and musicians sponsored by Women's Coalition. April 6, 1997, 1:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Coffee Works.

"Oppression and disabilities"-- a panel discussion sponsored by the McLean County Peace Coalition and People First. Sunday, April 6, 1997, 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Bloomington Public Library.

An interview with a pro-choice activist

It was over a year ago since I had the chance to have lunch with Kay. Upon finding out that we'd be in Madison, Wisconsin for the weekend, a friend of mine insisted that we meet Kay. Now retired, she has poured her energy into protecting a woman's right to choose and to insuring that women seeking abortions at

Madison's clinics know they have a friend among the crowd of anti-choice picketers outside the clinic.

It started when Kay grew tired of driving by one of the local abortion providers only to see day after day picketers, people with signs screaming, yelling, blocking the drive and entrance. An unassuming woman, Kay simply felt that there should be someone representing those who support a woman's right to choose. For the past several years, Kay has spent 3 to 4 days a week, in all weather, standing outside the clinic with a sign that reads "I'm pro-choice." The message is simple but reassuring to women entering the clinic. She is a woman who believes so strongly in choice that she has made the commitment unasked, and often without support.

Tall, thin, white hair and glasses, she hardly looks like an activist--she looks more like your third grade teacher or a member of the church choir. Kay's face is gentle, smiling and she is soft spoken and articulate. She relies on kindness, gentleness and dignity to relay her message, quite a contrast to the anti-choicers who surround her outside the clinic. Even as she sits among friends discussing her work she talks about the anti-choice protesters with gentleness, respect and a wee bit of humor at some of their exploits.

Kay's time is divided between two clinics. She says that she takes a lot of verbal abuse and is often ignored by the anti-choice picketers. Our mutual friend, Sandy, interjected "I admire Kay so much. She stays calm and is polite and civil." Sandy admits that she has a harder time remaining calm when she does clinic defense.

Kay began regaling with us with stories about the clinic protesters she has met. She explained that one day the protesters began yelling at a woman not to kill her baby--calling her names--the woman yelled back "I'm going in for a root canal for God's sake." Apparently it had escaped the protesters' keen observation skills that the building houses not only a woman's health clinic but also two dentists offices and a plastic surgeon. Here they had been assuming that everyone entering the building was there for an abortion.

Kay has been told that she is destined to go to hell. Kay said that on occasion she would talk with some of the anti-choice protesters. However, that stopped when one of the anti-choicers, nicknamed "Kathleen the Horrible" told Kay that the anti-choicers would no longer talk to Kay because, despite repeated warnings by the anti-choicers, Kay had not yet repented. So as far as Kathleen and the others were concerned, Kay no longer exists.

Writing letters to the editor is another of Kay's callings. Her letters too are articulate, factual and respectful. She has much to teach her retractors--ahh, if only they would listen.



Thinking back on the Two plus hours we spent talking with Kay, I find myself wishing I had made better notes but I was too interested in hearing what she had to say to be bothered with note taking. I'm glad that Sandy asked Kay to join us--it was encouraging to know that women like her are engaged in the struggle. My hope is that women will recognize that we will only maintain the right to choose if we are willing to become involved in some way. Kay didn't wait to be asked; she acted upon her beliefs and convictions--we should all be so noble.

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Locals nuke small town neighbors

In a time of rampant Corporate greed, corruption and wholesale rape of our unrenowable life dependent resources in the name of profit, it would seem that at least some segments of America, sanity and goodwill towards ones neighbor would still prevail. Not necessarily so.

Shockingly enough, in a small conservative midwest town, a well known "three generation" family has offered over 840 acres of land uphill from the small town of Ellsworth, Il. for a nuclear waste dump.

"Three times the going price...", "It would create jobs..." and "It would be a lot like a big park" were just three of the comments made by the family member putting the land for consideration.

The facts show that the area appears to be totally unsuitable. It is in an area of a very high water table, the site is uphill and adjacent to two sides of Ellsworth and the town has flooding problems. The State, is a large waste producer and is being federally mandated to build such a site. After several costly and time consuming failures all around Illinois the

State legislature has pulled the local government and County government out of the "approval loop". If it is now desperate enough it will most likely force this waste hazard site down the throats of this small conservative midwest town.

Hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars are at stake. Some county officials are already smelling the money, and gloating of "tipping fees, education funds, and recycling money..." Perks for local residents have been rumored and the lies of "total safety" have already started.

The following list of names are that of the family that is offering up this land in "Voluntary sale" for the waste disposal site. This article is to serve notice that they will be held ethically and morally accountable if any harm ever comes to any of the people of Ellsworth or their children because of this "site":

Donald Fleming, Mary W. Fleming, Joan de Vrieze, Jonathan Fleming, Mary Sheh, William Fleming, Gini Fleming, Patrick

Fleming, Mollie Fleming-Benedict, David Fleming, Mary Eldridge, Peter Fleming, Andrea Crissman, Jonathan Sheh, Robert Sheh, Elisabeth Walter, Theresa Sheh, Martin de Vrieze, Carla deVrieze.

No matter how much money you receive from this sale, you and your children will never be able to hide from your responsibility to the citizens of Ellsworth should anything ever go wrong.

Please, if you have any knowledge of any local, county or State official who is making a stand in favor of this waste hazard site, please contact the *Post Amerikan*. We need to keep these people in the public eye, and hold them accountable for their actions against their neighbors.

No Parks-No Perks Committee, Ellsworth, Il. 61737.

--Crow

Nuclear waste site near Ellsworth ?

In Germany, earlier this year, thousands of people protested the movement of radioactive waste into a dump site. It took 30,000 police weeks to get the train through. Is their struggle relevant to the situation that the people who live near Ellsworth face as land adjacent to that town is being considered as a site for storing so-called "low-level radioactive waste?" Or to put it another way: what do they know in Germany that hasn't dawned on us yet?

On March 20, I attended a presentation that was given in Ellsworth supposedly to inform and educate concerned citizens. I can say "supposedly" because the information presented by the panel, when compared to information made available in a handout distributed by a group called the Central States Education Center (CSEC), amounted to a journey through fantasy land.

The CSEC literature stated that "there are several radioactive isotopes present in "low-level" waste that are highly radioactive and can remain dangerous for incredibly long periods of time." These include Strontium-90 which is "dangerous for 300-600 years," and Iodine-129 which has a half-life of 17 million years.

The panel's presentation painted a much different and much more benign picture of what was included in the waste. There was no mention of Strontium-90, the fiendish isotope that began showing up in breast milk in the 1960s. The word "dangerous" was newer mentioned.

The panel's spokesperson told us that the Chem-Nuclear Corporation would be responsible for the 50 years of its operation and 10 years after that, That's 60 years against Iodine-129's initial half-life of 17 million

years. And Steve Frankel of CSEC told me later that "radioactive material is no longer considered dangerous after ten to fourteen half-lives."

Frankel went on to say: "Don't be fooled by the name 'low-level' because things like metal housings that have been in the reactor core are still considered low-level and they can be highly radioactive." He said that a sixty second exposure to such irradiated metal "would have been lethal" had it not been contained in high-level waste shielding.

I question how long such shielding can last. Hundreds of years? Thousands of years? millions of years? Again we enter Fantasy land here. The future is being irradiated. The future is being poisoned.

To me, the most telling moment of the discussion was when I tried to make the point that the production of all radioactive material--low and high level--was all connected. The panel's spokesperson, Anne Nadakavukaren, shot back "No, it's not." To which I cleverly responded: "Yes it is!" It was like two grade school kids arguing at recess.

But the point is this: in the minds of those who oppose the nuclear industry everything is connected. In her mind, apparently, nothing is connected, I'm sure she went home and slept soundly. I went home and had nightmares.

What is the answer? For myself it is clear. We must shut down the nuclear industry (civilian and military) immediately, because every day they operate the mountain of deadly poison grows higher.

There will be another meeting in Ellsworth soon. It will be announced in the local media. I would encourage everyone who is concerned about this to show up and make their feelings known to the powers that be.

Someone told me that night that "a little protest is good for the soul." The people of Germany are learning that as they struggle to save this precious and beautiful world. I hope that we are soon to follow.

--Gregg Brown

ATTENTION!

If you are one of the group of people who are in favor of the NUCLEAR/ELLSWORTH waste dump then you can not crap here.

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