

I Was A Teenage Fag Hag Dengue Fever Japanoise



o t h e r

The magazine for people who defy categories

Issue 3 \$5.00

Pot & Chocolate: Lynnee
Breedlove Meets Ed Rosenthal

Brittany Murphy on Cloning

Borking For Liberals

It's Fun To Label People

Fiction by Kirk Read
and Jim Munroe



other

a magazine for people who defy categories

issue #3, Feb. 2004 • www.othermag.org

Other magazine is published
three times a year in

February • June • October

One-year subscription: \$12

POSTMASTER: Please send
address changes to our
mailing address.

Other address:

Other Magazine
584 Castro St. #674
San Francisco, CA
94114

correspondence:

• by email to:
editors@othermag.org

• by snail mail to
the above address

Other Submission Info:

visit <http://www.othermag.org/contribute>

No hard copy submissions, please.

Other Advertising Info:

- email editors@othermag.org
- visit <http://www.othermag.org/advertise>

Other Not-for-Profit Info:

Other magazine has non-profit status
through the Institute for Unpopular
Culture. Visit www.ifuc.org for details,
and send your donations to:

Other Magazine
c/o IFUC, PMB # 1523
1850 Union St.
San Francisco, CA 94123

Contributing Editors:

- Gregory Dicum
- Bryan Bell • Joel Schalit

Design Mavens:

- Carrie Hirsch • Gunilla Leavitt
- Julia Tenney • Sarah Davitt
- Polly Hommel •

Thanks to:

- Jackie James • Teri Angst
- Melinda Adams • Arthur Cohen
- Dave Ferguson • Shannon Wheeler
- The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence
- Debby Sommer • Jeremy Smith
- Lisa Miya-Jervis • Dev Green
- Princess Kennedy and Glamarama
- Diana Greer • Hernan Cortez

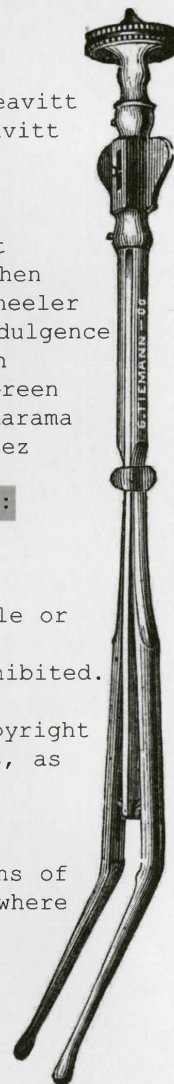
Other Copyright Info:

ISSN 1543 0890

Reproduction, in whole or
in part, without
permission is prohibited.

All content is copyright
© 2003 the authors, as
credited within.

The contents do not
represent the opinions of
the editors, except where
so stated.



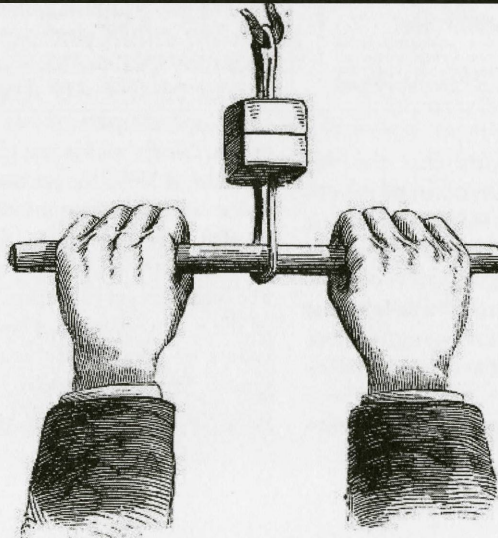
Charlie Anders
•publisher
Annalee Newitz
•editor
Daphne Gottlieb
•poetry editor
Gunilla Leavitt
•webmistress
Rob Clough
•comix czar

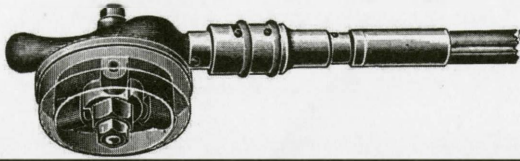
Other issue three, February 2004

Cover: Suzi Chang

Inside Cover: Heather Robinson

From the Editors: She's Got Balls.....	p. 1
In Other News.....	p. 4
Letters.....	p. 6
Comics: Walking George Potato by Jack Turnbull.....	p. 7
Way Other: Lexicon by Cecilia Tan.....	p. 8
Anti Tourist: I Hate The Beach by Diane Goldberg.....	p. 9
Fag Hags and Dyke Tykes in Recovery.....	p.10
Marijuana and the Pocket Vibrator Bitches.....	p.14
Brittany Murphy Unleashed.....	p.18
Comics: The Hypocrites by Martha Keavney.....	p.20
Fiction: Jed and Winnie by Kirk Read.....	p.22
The Boundary Police by Charlie Anders.....	p.24
Poetry: Wolverine by Matthue Roth.....	p.29
New Noise, Old Noise by Joel Schalit.....	p.30
Poetry: Weather's Here, Wish You Were Beautiful by Rachel McKibbens.....	p.34
Art Spread: Javier by Suzi Chang.....	p.35
Fiction: New World Odor by Jim Munroe.....	p.38
Bone Break Fever Dream by Mat Honan.....	p.40
A Shameful Indulgence by Scrutator.....	p.45
Contributors	p.48





in other news

The Annals of Psychobabble

by the editors

It Starts Young

Psychologists and social scientists have piled up tons of data on the “cross-race effect,” which is pretty well accepted as fact now. In a nutshell, people are more likely to recognize (and correctly identify) a face of someone who belongs to the same race than the face of someone from another race. One study of 15 Latino students found the students were much more likely to recognize Latino faces than black faces. The study also found that this effect depends on the “perceptual categorization of race.” The researchers used “racially ambiguous” faces and still the subjects were more likely to recognize the ones they believed were Latino.

Now a new study in the *Journal of the American Psychiatric Association* finds that kindergartners and third graders are less likely to be able to pick someone out of a lineup if that person comes from another ethnic background. The study seemed a bit simplistic, but it did suggest that even at a young age, perceived outsiders blur together much more.

The research doesn’t explain why the cross-race effect happens. Is it unconscious racism, a belief that all people outside your ethnicity look alike? Is it that when you see someone of another race, you’re registering them as a member of that race instead of registering the facial characteristics you’d be noticing about someone of your own race? We need to know, not least because the cross-race effect makes accusers much more likely to provide a false identification of a criminal suspect of another race.

Convicted of a Thought Crime?

Legal newspaper *The Recorder* reports that the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals has ruled that psychiatrists cannot testify against their clients in court. The decision grew out of a lawsuit in Oregon where a man was convicted on two counts of threatening to murder FBI agents based on two pieces of evidence: some things he said to a telephone operator, and his confession that he was having murderous thoughts in a therapy session. After the court’s decision, he was acquitted on the second count.

This means that while counselors/therapists/psy-

chiatrists are obligated to report clients who seem homicidal or suicidal, information from their sessions with the client will not be admissible as evidence in court. On the one hand, this seems like a good idea: it will reduce the number of people convicted of thought crimes and (as the judges wrote in the majority opinion) it will allow people to get more therapy rather than making a decidedly non-therapeutic trip to prison. But the problem is that counselors who have genuinely dangerous patients will have to rely on law enforcement to find more evidence before they can take custody of a possibly suicidal or violent person. In some cases, perhaps involving angry Muslims, law enforcement might be eager to gather this extra evidence (unanswered question: does testimony from a shrink constitute enough evidence to merit a wiretap?). In other cases, though, law enforcement could drag its feet, telling a shrink that just because some guy says he feels like raping his girlfriend that doesn’t mean he needs to be investigated.

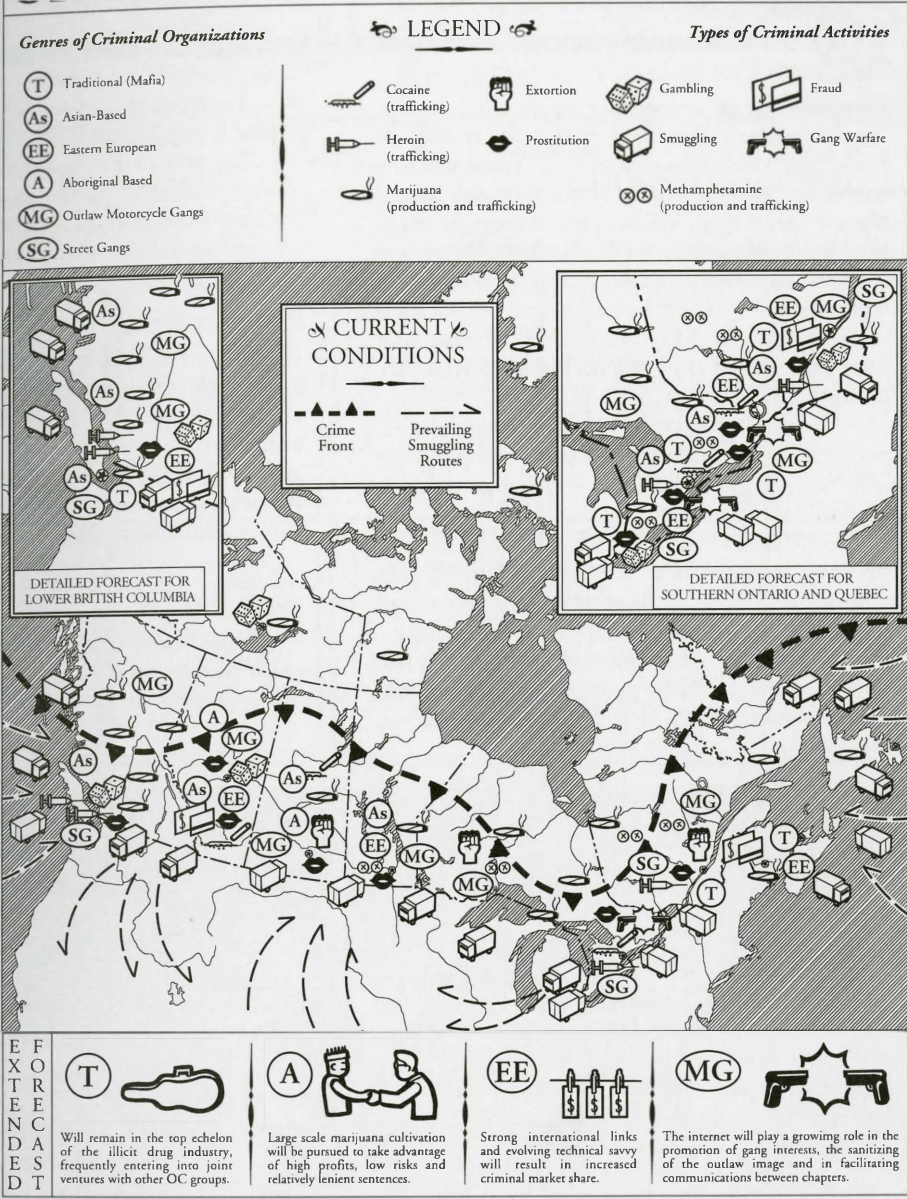
The Importance of Being Unlike Ernest

It’s hard to imagine a more tawdry coda to the chest-beating legend of Ernest Hemingway. Hemingway’s son Gregory, author of “Papa: A Personal Memoir,” had a sex change and became Gloria Hemingway in the 1990s. Gloria blamed her father’s “super-masculine” image for her need to transform. Then, in 2001, Gloria stripped naked on the street and got arrested. Soon after, she died of a heart attack in jail. Now, Gloria’s ex-wife Ida is claiming that Gloria and Ida remarried in 1997 (after divorcing in 1995) and Gloria left Ida all her money in a new will.

The whole controversy predictably raises questions about the legal status of transgender people, much like the famous lawsuit over whether transsexual J’Noel Gardiner could inherit part of her husband Marshall’s \$2.5 million estate. Gloria’s kids are claiming that because Gloria was a woman in 1997, the second marriage to Ida was a same-sex union and therefore invalid. The judge in the case sounded gleeful to be tackling such “cutting edge” topics.

Leaving aside the considerable Jerry Springer-meets-Moveable Feast titillation factor, it seems really sad that one of the main ways that society tries to grapple with serious issues of gender and social status is through a prism of greed. Ernest’s grandkids wouldn’t be affirming Gloria’s femaleness if they didn’t stand to inherit all her dough.

ORGANIZED CRIME IN CANADA, 2003




This diagram is based on the CISC 2003 Annual Report: Organized Crime in Canada. The full report can be found on the CISC website (www.cisc.gc.ca).

Portnoy's Complaint

Identity theft, questioning sexuality... and prog rock?

A man who impersonated Dream Theater drummer Mike Portnoy has been arrested in New York, the band's web site claims. Not only did the unnamed man steal Portnoy's identity using an uncanny knowledge of his band, his drum beats and his business contacts, but he also stole from people once he gained their confidence. One post

on the band's site claims that the faux Portnoy would hang out in bars and tell men he was "questioning his sexuality" and uncovering memories of childhood sexual abuse. He would then go somewhere and "get it on" with his victims – then steal their wallets and whatever else he could grab, including house keys. The real Portnoy is happily married, doesn't drink, and works hard on producing ponderous two-CD sets of arty Pantera-inspired rock for the band, according to the official site. 



letters

HER TWO CENTS ABOUT SIX INCHES

Dear others:

I was very happy to read your review of Hedwig ("Hedwig's Six Inches," issue one) — someone who actually understands! As a transsexual here in Minneapolis it took me some time to figure out how I felt about first the movie and then the play. Outward Spiral produced a local version starring a drag queen who took a walk around the Mall of America in drag and then proclaimed that she understood what we go through.

I have felt that who i am was being defined, packaged and sold by non-trans people with little insight into who I am — I imagine this is how many feminists felt.

Jordy Jones' analysis and insights confirmed my own feelings about Hedwig — none of this ought to detract from its overall value, there are parts of Hedwig that still move me intensely - my concern is that most people will not understand that Hedwigs experience is not that of a transsexual nor is it representative of the

inner struggles we endure — what it is exactly how a drag queen duped into SRS, successful or botched, would feel.

The rest of the magazine looks good too, though I haven't gotten to it yet. I'd subscribe but I am homeless and pretty broke right now.

-- Brenda Vonahsen, Minneapolis

REDNECK REALITY

The redneck environmentalist article ("Redneck Environmentalists," issue one) was one of the best things I've read in months. So much writing gets stuck in ideology, but this article managed to go past those filters and write about what is really happening.

-- Jill Lundquist, San Mateo

HIGH PRAISE

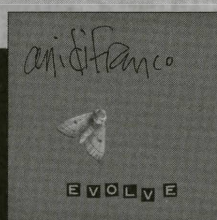
This is the coolest magazine I have ever read. Thank you for it.

-- Jennifer Goselin, New Haven

"So commanding are the vocals that it's easy to overlook her luminous acoustic guitar ... DiFranco sounds like she's having a blast all the way."

—MOTHER JONES

anidifranco
EVOLVE



IN STORES NOW

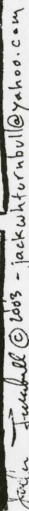
See Ani on tour this fall!

visit www.righteousbabe.com for a complete tour schedule!

DATE	CITY	ST	VENUE	11/15	Amherst	MA	Mullins Center
10/22	Santa Cruz	CA	Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium	11/16	Boston	MA	Orpheum Theater
10/24	Berkeley	CA	The Greek Theatre	11/18	Ithaca	NY	State Theater
10/28	Santa Barbara	CA	Arlington Theatre	11/19	Philadelphia	PA	Keswick Theatre
10/29	Long Beach	CA	Terrace Theatre	11/21-22	New York	NY	Beacon Theatre
11/10	Burlington	VT	Flynn Theatre	11/23	W. Hartford	CT	Lincoln Theatre
11/12	Providence	RI	Lupo's Heartbreak Hotel	11/25	Buffalo	NY	Kleinhans Music Hall

~ IN ~

The Pogo STICK CONTEST!





LEXICON

By Cecilia Tan

All the words of Chinese that I know I can list on a single page.

Bok choy, "chinese" cabbage, something I do not like to eat. Confucius, a philosopher, but whose name could not have been that originally, any more than my name would have been Cecilia if I had been born in China, a Spanish first name married to a Chinese surname.

Dad's name is Sergio, so I share that in common with him, like filipinos who were given new names by Magellan and the Spaniards who ruled the islands for three hundred years, but my grandfather who came from China is named Francisco, and I know that could not have been his real name any more than Confucius' was Confucius. Even Dad does not know what his father's real name was, like a secret identity, a Chinese identity, that grandfather hid when he moved from China to the Philippines.

For some time he had even changed the name of the family to Martinez, but that must have been too much for him and he changed it back to Tan, though he still never taught any of his children Chinese and scolded them whenever they were disobedient: "You rotten filipinos!" in a filipino dialect of course. Given that my father never heard a word of Chinese when he was growing up, it shouldn't be a surprise that I know so little of it.

How about Wori Wori then, the language only my father's generation of the family speaks? I don't know a single word of that either, since my father came to the United States and like his father has only spoken the local tongue to his children — "You American kids!" — so I'll stick with Chinese, of which I know so few words.

Junks, the boats they paint eyes on the front of in China, this I learned from a children's book, full of painting of men with round hats like cymbals.

Kung Fu, the martial art, this I learned from David Carradine, along with Shaolin, Grasshopper.

Lo mein, noodles, I think, but so are chow mein, chow foon...chop suey, Chung King? Mei fa, the art of hair sticks, this I learned in Macy's from a perfumed, rouged woman wearing far too many gold rings, who

raised her clawed hands like a hieroglyph to frame her blond, intricate whorls, held in place with what looked like children's chopsticks with baubles glued on the end sprouting from her head. Now I wear them, too, but I have my doubts that Confucius' mother ever did.

Oolong, black, this from my Jewish boyfriend who likes Chinese tea.

Peking duck, but of course, it is Beijing now, and I know how to cook it, but what good is a "traditional" recipe that is only one generation old?

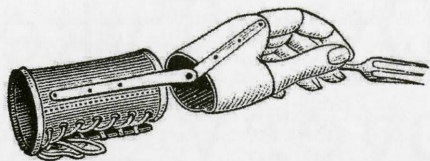
Quit this obsession with China, I think, and get back to eating apple pie and worrying about democracy. Really. So, did I mention that my father thought apple pie was disgusting when he first moved to the States?

Tai chi, something I always dreamed my grandfather would teach me when he came to visit us in the States, but he didn't. Unless I spoke first, he never said a word to me, two generations of languages distant and nothing to talk about.

Very often he received Chinese-language newspapers in the mail, and I used to steal them from his room and pore over the tiny black characters regimented in columns and rows, waiting for some moment of magic to strike me, to bring my Chinese blood out in me, and make me understand these symbols, this one like three boxes piled one atop the other, that one a lily next to a mountain, this one a robot by an easel, that one a picket sign, that one the only one I ever learned since the magic never came, the one which meant "Number One."

Wai guoren, foreigner, this I learned from a book by a white American woman about what if in the future China became the last superpower, but then I forgot it and had to learn it again when I read a book by a white man about how he spent his life studying kung fu, Chinese language, Chinese history, and was finally granted a visa into the country to teach English at a medical college there. Xenophobic is how he described the Chinese, afraid of foreigners, wai guoren, aliens, rotten Filipinos, whatever you call it, so it is no wonder my grandfather never told his secrets to wai guoren like us. You cannot blame him, I tell myself, but it hurts.

Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo, People's Republic of China, this I learned just now out of shame, to at least be able to say the name of the place I will never see, will never visit and will never call home. ✓



anti tourist

I HATE THE BEACH

By Diane Goldberg

"Beach vacation" is subliminally encoded in Maslow's hierarchy of human needs.

The presence of an opposable thumb and the ability to reason aren't the only things that separate us from other primates. The need for seaside vacations drives civilization. It's genetically encoded. Has to be. Why else would we subject ourselves to the series of painful, expensive and humiliating rituals essential to the process?

Why did the British build an empire upon which the sun never set? To lay the groundwork for package holidays along the Mediterranean coast. Why did the Romans conquer most of the world? To assure their citizens prime bookings at resorts. The American empire? Ditto. It stretches from "sea to shining sea."

The beach-dieting season begins in January. On New Year's Day billions of bleary-eyed hungover humans will start starving themselves. They'll crawl to the kitchen, gulp water and swallow aspirin. Food becomes the enemy. French fries spark more social scorn than cigarettes.

Lest we neglect the joys of Atkins during the winter we're bombarded by "cruise wear" catalogues sent out by helpful capitalists who assume that we need different beachwear if we're among those who head for the Caribbean in the winter. "Cruise wear" catalogues are full of visual terrorism — colors usually only found on golf courses or reruns of the Brady Bunch. You won't find a black bikini in their pages. You'll be treated to turquoise and pink atrocities worn by grinning models airbrushed to perfect.

In February women's magazines feature articles on how to buy the best bathing suit for whatever sort of inadequate body type you have. Men's magazines don't do that yet, but with the current makeover of testosterone-laden types to facial-getting creatures it won't be long until editors commission articles titled "Skip the Speedo Unless You've Got a Six Pack" or "Tragic Trunks: Avoid these Beach Boners."

Beyond the shopping odyssey where four thousand suits are tried on beneath mortuary-style lighting lies the pain of frequent bikini waxes and the expense of self-tanners that turn your skin orange. A moderate bush trim is all that's essential for a boudoir look but exposure on the sand requires rigorous removal of hair from almost every inch of skin.

Pearly white skin framed by black lace is usually exquisite. Transfer that same pale flesh to the beach and unflattering phrases like "fish-belly white" or "corpse"

come to mind. Otherwise sane people have been known to bake themselves in coffinesque tanning machines to escape these epithets.

What is this really all about? There seems to be no way we can explain our need to explore rooms of mom and pop hotels with ergonomically-damaging mattresses and spend hours wearing tiny bits of cloth and courting skin cancer. Surely we are not drawn by the lure of foot-long hot dogs slathered in chrome yellow mustard to mask the taste of unknown offal; nor are we inspired by the primal need to acquire jewelry boxes festooned with sea shells and hot pink I've-been-to T-shirts; nor do we yearn to reach the shore in order to stand in ever-lengthening lines for bad food, Las-Vegas-reject entertainment, and umbrella drinks.

The beach trip urge is about sex.

Something deep within the human past programmed us to believe that if we spend money on overpriced rooms next to twenty college students shouting and puking like pigs that we'll have great sex. We believe, against all reason, that sand in the labia, sunburned inner thighs, and an excess of cheap beer will rekindle romance in couples who've grown complacent. If we don't have a current partner we believe that walking around reeking of coconut-scented sun lotion with wet hair tinged green from chlorine will entitle us to mattress dance with one of those improbably gorgeous creatures posing in the resort brochures.

One blissfully forgets that during the last beach vacation one's lover huddled in a darkened room swathed in aloe screaming, "Don't touch me! I'm blistered!" after a few hours outside. We don't recall the drive home with frequent stops for diarrhea related to days of all-you-can-eat crab legs and huge piles of freshly-thawed shrimp. We enter some sort of amnesiac fugue state when it comes to recalling arguments about staring at other people, stepping on jellyfish, and money.

We can't quite accept that those beautiful people, particularly the lissome lovelies with aerodynamic breasts who splash through crystal clear waves in advertisements for islands never show up where we are staying. Oh no. We don't even end up sharing the side of the pool with the least attractive vixen from the *Girls Gone Wild* video. Our hotel hasn't a single entry in the Miss Coppertone Bikini Contest or the Mr. Muscle Follies. We manage to book in next to Bob and Edna from Ohio whose three annoying brats knock over our coolers while Bob asks us about our life insurance coverage and Edna mutters aren't-kids-great.

But we keep going to the beach.



FagHags and DykeTykes in Recovery

Everybody thinks it's glamorous to be a girl who loves fags, or a boy who loves dykes. Mass media propaganda like *Will and Grace*, or that Jennifer Aniston movie *The Object of My Affection*, glamorize the unrequited love for homosexuals. But what about the tears, the shattered dreams, and the wreckage this destructive situation leaves in its wake? Let's face it - loving queer people is addictive. Friends are lost, work is neglected, and sexual orientations are jiggered. We're never going to stop being fag hags and dyke tykes, but we can try to recover. Here are the stories of a few brave men and women who have dared to face up to their dependence on queers.



Don't Count Your Chickens

By Lauren Wheeler

I wanted a hysterectomy for my 16th birthday. The endless cramping-and-bleeding cycle -- so much more painful and world-ending when I was a teenager -- seemed like a magnificent waste of time and energy and bodily fluids. I didn't think I'd ever have children to begin with and definitely had no intention of popping out the little buggers in high school. Since there was no way to delay the whole ovulation-menstruation routine until I might actually want kids, I figured a hysterectomy wasn't such a bad idea. Okay, I was a bit melodramatic, but, like I said, I was a teenager.

So, eventually, I got to college, where not only were a bunch of my closest friends guys, but a good number of them were gay. In several instances, I was the first person they came out to, and their entrées into queer life were our big bonding moments. The adoring and

supportive fag-hag, I wanted them to have everything — true romance, real sexual fulfillment, and yes, the white picket fence that they feared being gay would automatically banish from their futures.

Suddenly, instead of wanting to rip out my ovaries, I wanted to starthanding out my eggs like it was Easter Sunday. I didn't start handing them out exactly, but I did start promising them to my bestest gay guy friends. First Aaron. Then Teddy. Then Eloy. And finally, on ecstasy at a party, Carleton.

It was ridiculous. I was planning to spend 36 months, a full THREE years of my life — the time required to complete a law degree, the length of the average car lease — breeding babies for my buddies and their boyfriends. I was going to have four children — at least! There was always the odd chance that I would end up like one of those Jesus-freak couples

Illustrations by Teresa Moore

who decide that God really, really wants them to have another child, because five just isn't enough -- and the next thing they know, after partaking of fertility drugs that the good Lord hath provided, they're having seven or eight kids in one fell swoop.

At the same time, my friends didn't really see me as just a breeder.

Teddy, not convinced of his complete conversion to the other side, wanted to forgo the turkey-baster and really get down to business. To this day, he gets a big kick out of the idea that he and I might someday give birth to a black, Jewish, Argentine love child. (To be traded back and forth each season, I suppose, like a timeshare.) And Eloy, a former boyfriend whom I, with the aid of my always-recruiting dyke mother, had dragged out of the closet during a summer in Miami Beach (okay, we didn't have to drag that hard), didn't just want me to be a surrogate -- his dream was for me to settle down with a nice girl, share a duplex with him and his partner, and live in some sort of queer co-parenting commune. (I guess he put a lot of stock in that old African adage that it takes a whole village....)

But still, it eventually occurred to me that I don't come with an infinite supply of these eggs, and therefore shouldn't go handing them out like candy -- especially if someday I might actually want to have kids of my own, with my own partner, with someone who's more than just a good, platonic friend.

I haven't promised any more eggs to my gay guy friends. I haven't reneged on any of the previously-promised ova -- we'll see if anyone ever calls me on them -- and I still try to be a supportive and adoring fag-hag. But I've decided that from now on, I'm keeping my eggs to myself.

Unless, of course, I end up accepting Eloy's offer. The commune's really not such a bad idea.

(*All names have been changed.)

I Was a Teenage Fag Hag

By Amy Elizabeth Mendosa

Mark, Jason, and Kimmy had dragged me on yet another homoscapade. This was different from previous homoscapades in that it was our first time out clubbing. We had been to all the shops on Commercial Street in Provincetown. We had driven to an IKEA in search of the world's most-to-die-for sofa and minimalist lighting fixtures. We had well-worn

passports to the Banana Republic and we had a horse stabled at the Pottery Barn. We had purchased rainbow paraphernalia for our cars and our bodies. We had sung along loudly, some of us more in tune than others, to show tunes on long car rides to quaint locales. At times, we spoke in acronyms: LGBT, GLBT, HRC, GLSEN, ACLU, NGLTF, BAGLY, NYC, LAX and B&B. We were most definitely homos and if the whole world didn't know it, then honey -- they were not paying attention!

Well, three of us were homos. I was a kind of tag-along-pal. I assumed they kept me around for my comic relief, genetic bargain-hunting genius and other good qualities. And as long as I was dragged along, I was happy. I was the straight girl. I was the fabulous, well-dressed, well-coifed, well-mannered, well-read disco-dancing straight girl. I was 19 and I had never heard the phrase "fag hag."

So there we were, out clubbing at ManRay, a joint that on "ordinary" nights catered to the goth/industrial/s&m fashion crowd, but tonight was for the gay folk. We paid our under-21, overpriced cover, put forth our fists for "X"ing and entered a sweaty, smoke-filled, techno-pulsing orgy of half-naked gayboys. Women looking something like me peppered the crowd. I think it was the boys wearing overalls with nothing on underneath who really scandalized me. Denim pressed to hot, naked gayboy flesh, so very scandalous. We found a spot on the floor and went from zero to vogue in a very short homoment.

We danced away, Mark & Jason occasionally taking turns to have some couple-ish slow grinding. I bathed in the fabulosity, the ass-grabbing, the lusty glares shooting from boy to boy; I soaked it up. Feeling myself dehydrated, I sashayed my way over to the bar to purchase a \$5 bottle of water.

"Oh sweetie, aren't you the cutest fag hag I ever did see!"

"Er. Excuse me?"

I turned my head to acknowledge the cute chubby gayboy with the flip-up hair and Cleopatra eyeliner.

"I'm not sure what you mean. What's a 'fag hag?'"

"A 'fag hag' is a girl-type person that pals around with us gayboys. Here, why don't you take the 'fag hag' quiz?"

"Umm, ok."

"Do you find yourself using the word 'fabulous' on a daily basis?"

"Yes."

"Do you refer to everyone as 'girlfriend?'"
 "Yes."
 "Do you consider Madonna, Cher and Barbara to be the 'Holy Trinity?'"
 "Yes."
 "Do you leave the house without makeup?"
 "Never."
 "How much does it cost to get your hair cut?"
 "With tip?"
 "Yes."
 "\$56."
 "Do you own a designer bag?"
 "Yes."
 "Do you find yourself strangely attracted and yet repulsed by men in that you want to be best friends with every gayboy you know but find yourself unable to engage in any real

ambiguous boat with her combat boots, chain, and cute girlfriend who looks like a way-too-knowing boy. I walk down the street, secretly, shamefully drawn to each one I pass, and sorta wishing I could sidle up to the bar in the Lexington Club (three hundred yards from my front door!) and just hang. But I can't, and it's because of me, not them. I feel like I'm intruding, weirdly cognizant of my straight-guyness.

I can't help it. Dykes (or, really, a certain kind of urban alterna-dyke) are my people. When I travel, I only feel at home when I stumble across a vegan (dyke) café in an otherwise unbearable wasteland. It warms my heart to walk in and see a vermillion-haired, nose-ringed sister with the interlocking Venus tattoo.

It's something about the competence they

I wasn't just a fag hag. I was some kind of cultural mutant, a gay-man-queer-girl-gender-bender-thing.

intimacy with a straight man despite the fact you're physically attracted to them?"

"Omigawd YES!"

In almost cartoonish slow motion, my mouth morphed into a circle of shock and recognition. I smacked my palms to my cheeks, fingers splayed for dramatic effect.

"Omigawd, I am totally a 'fag hag.' I didn't even know there was a word for girls like me."

The chubby gayboy and I exchanged a sweaty, fraternal embrace and he whispered in my ear, "just between you and me I think you've graduated from 'fag hag' to 'fairy princess.'"

Notes:

Kimmy's real name is Mark. But it got so confusing to have two people named Mark in our circle of friends. After a drunken night of watching *Full House* re-runs (Oh John Stamos, what did you do to deserve that horror?) he was blessed (or cursed) with the nickname Kimmy, in honor of Blossom's pesky friend, Kimmy Gibbler.

Girlfriends

By Gregory Dicum

I'm a hetero guy, let's get that straight, but I've got an unaccountable love for lesbians.

I live, of course, in the Mission — the part of San Francisco that, outside of Portland, is the nation's capital for the kind of grrl who floats my

exude. You can count on a dyke. She'll always know what to do, especially if it involves motorcycles or farming or woodworking. Real craft — physical things that are the product of total union between the brain and the hand. Vegan muffins, for god's sake!

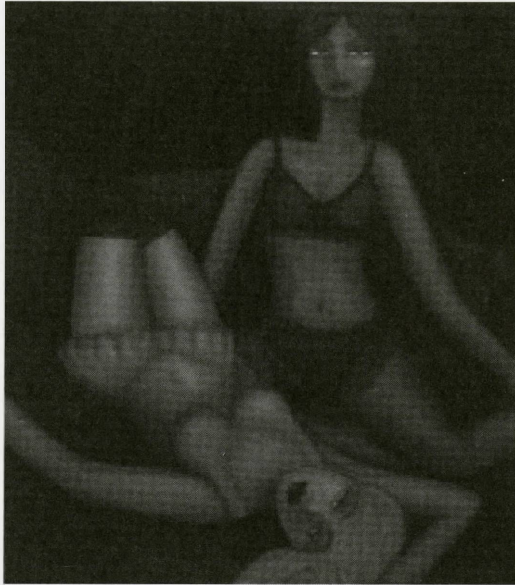
It's not a sexual thing — though vegan muffins are unbelievably hot, of course. The idea that dykes are not just disinterested in guys but sometimes actively shun us, makes me feel safe with them. It feels like I can form deep friendships with dykes without an unspoken sexual undertone that lurks behind friendships with hetero women. But it's a tricky game.

If I have sex with my dyke friend, is she still a dyke? If that makes her not a dyke, is she still one of my people? Yes, it's a psycho-sexual hall of mirrors that really should not be entered, at least not habitually. I'm content just to hang out with my grrlfriends, soak up the vibe, and pretend, for a moment, that I'm one of them.

The First Step is To Admit You've Hit Rock Bottom

By Annalee Newitz

It started in the sixth grade. I was madly in love with this boy, K---, who had a face like an elf and starred in all my pornographic D&D fantasies. I used to follow him home and try to persuade him to kiss me. Finally, he showed up one day at my house with his cousin and told me



he was going to beat me up for bugging him so much. We wound up having a long argument, which became a conversation, which led to all of us watching the movie *Piranha* on cable and becoming good friends. Of course, he was gay. So was P---, whom I dated in junior high and high school. Yes, we had sex. But he was gay.

"You're the kind of girl that gay men have sex with," J--- explained to me when I was in college. I had recently had sex with C---, another gay man, who subsequently dated J---, the man who diagnosed my unique problem. I wasn't just a fag hag. I was some kind of cultural mutant, a gay-man-queer-girl-gender-bender-thing. Today, the genderqueer community would probably dub me a trannyfag. Labels aside, the whole thing sucked. No matter how much they loved me, those gay boys always left when they found somebody who had more than just a strap-on dick. When I fell passionately and intensely in love with J---, I knew it was time to get some treatment. I'd hit rock bottom. I needed to fall in love with people whose sexualities were oriented towards me. From that time forward, I vowed to stop dallying with the gay boys.

I'm pleased to say that I've been on the wagon for almost a decade now. I haven't had sex with any gay men during that time, nor have I neglected myself while I pined after some unreachable homo in the hope that he'd go bi. It's been a long, hard road getting to a place where I can control my urges and use fags merely for socializing and friendship. I'll always be a fag hag, but if I just take it one day at a time I'm sure I can keep my addiction in check.

Dyke Tyke

By Joel Schalit

I find it difficult to out the dyke tyke in me. Perhaps it's because most of my dyke friends look like the straight punk girls I fell in love with when I was in high school, and I don't want to tell them. Or perhaps it's because they're far more articulate and verbal than most of the folks that I know, irrespective of gender preference. I'd wager that I find myself enamored by them because my dyke friends tend to be politicized in highly personalized ways that I find absent amongst most of my professed activist pals. There's very little didacticism, definite avoidance of polemics, and a strong sense of what it means to have extended family relations with your friends instead of your biologically-determined brethren. In short, those are the best kinds of kin. Word, I remain smitten.

Step One

By Melinda Adams

I could have continued to tell myself that "I only do it socially. I mean, they do have the best parties." But I would be a lie. I was a fag hag. I was a straight girl living the life of a gay man - minus the sex with men part sadly. I had lost all contact with other heterosexuals.

It wasn't till I was able to admit that most of my men friends owned a greater amount of dresses than me that I was able to begin my road to recovery.



MARIJUANA AND THE POCKET VIBRATOR BITCHES

Lynnee Breedlove interviews Ed Rosenthal

*E*d Rosenthal is a longtime activist in the movement to legalize marijuana. He's the author of *Why Marijuana Should Be Legal* and the syndicated "Ask Ed" column. He lives in a beautiful Queen Anne Victorian overlooking the Oakland hills. In a recent highly-publicized medical marijuana case, Ed was convicted on felony drug charges, but managed to get off without jail time. Other magazine was lucky enough to tag along when Ed was interviewed by Lynnee Breedlove, a notorious San Francisco queer activist and punk rocker with the band Tribe 8. Lynnee is the author of a semi-autobiographical novel called *Godspeed*, about a genderfucked dyke bike messenger's struggle to become sober. Lynnee and Ed met in Ed's office, a cozy space off his courtyard garden. They were also joined by Ed's cute black and white cat, Toonses.

L: I'm a pretty paranoid person, so I wonder -- do you think the government or cops or anybody read books like yours and try to track people and figure out who they can bust and when for anything, or do they just go, 'Oh well whatever, it's harmless.'

E: I'm sure some of these books are read by the police.

L: Have you ever had any trouble with them?

E: Well, you know I've been arrested, I'm a felon. I had this big trial.

L: Yeah, I wanna hear all about it.

E: Everything you ever want to know about the trial is on the Internet. Just go on to green-aid.com. But have I ever had any trouble? How about selective prosecution

because they didn't like that I was actively talking about it helping patients?

L: Right, so they singled you out.

E: That's right.

L: But you were able to beat the rap.

E: I didn't beat the rap, I'm a felon. They gave me three felonies.

L: Did you have to serve time?

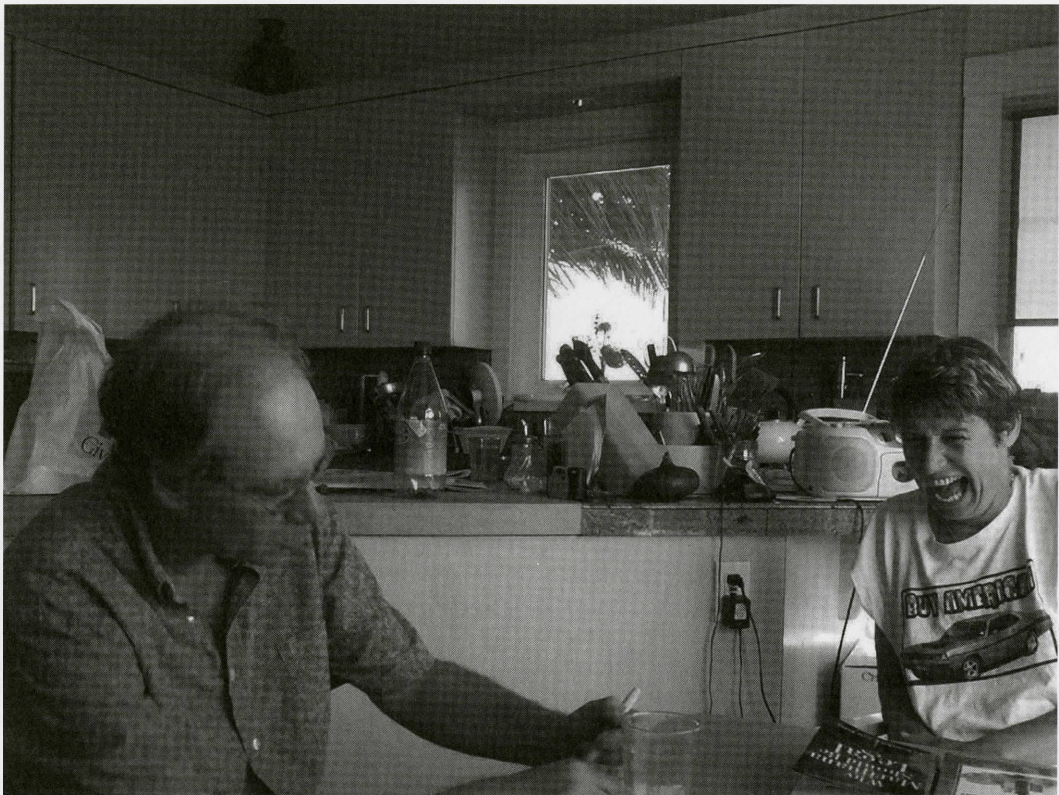
E: No, I was given one day, time served.

L: So they let you go.

E: No, they didn't let me go! I'm a felon, I'm a three-time felon now! I started out with no felonies and now I have three felonies, and you say they let me go? No, that's not letting me go. Letting me go is getting rid of those felonies. You got it? I mean, do you understand that?

L: Whoa, I don't need you to yell at me! I'm on your side, pal. We're having a conversation.

E: I know, but it's an insulting question. Think about it. They didn't let me go, but that's the impression people have. Get that right out of your head. First of all, this judge violated my constitutional rights. He had a lying cop that he protected. He knew that the search warrant was no good, but he let the search warrant stand. He admitted that the prosecutor misled the grand jury and he allowed that to happen. He didn't allow us to talk about the fact that I was deputized by the city of Oakland, and was immunized from prosecution. I mean, it goes on and on and on. This guy used his robe of authority to violate my constitutional



rights. And then there was so much public pressure that to save his own ass he gave me one day. Because there were *New York Times* editorials about him, two editorials, one calling it a kangaroo court and one saying he should give me no time. I mean, without that pressure, if it had been an empty court room . . . [pauses]. I got special treatment because of all the publicity behind the case.

If I hadn't had all the publicity, I'd be in some federal prison somewhere. What about [Chico, CA medical marijuana activist] Bryan Epis? He's doing ten years now because he didn't have the publicity. Or what about any other number of people who have had to plead guilty -- for instance, people were told, "If you don't plead guilty, we're going to prosecute your wife, so where are your kids gonna go?"

This trial did allow me to help change the paradigm in which marijuana is thought about, and especially medical marijuana. It's no longer a joke, it's a serious issue; it's covered seriously by the newspapers. People like us, on most issues we probably think differently than most Americans, but in terms of medical marijuana we're in the majority because 80 percent of Americans believe that medical marijuana should be civilly regulated.

Then there's a small group of people who have a self

interest because they earn their living from marijuana prohibition. They're the tail that's wagging the dog.

Did you know that 88 percent of the 750,000 people who are arrested every year for drugs are arrested for simple possession?

L: What four ounces, or?

E: Not intent to sell, simple possession.

L: Supposing I'm a big pothead, which I was. And I want to smoke pot. I love pot, pot is good -- smells good, tastes good, makes me feel happy. But I don't have any of the illnesses that you have listed that actually pot is good for. So how is the whole medical marijuana push good for me?

E: The problem is the federal government doesn't separate medical from recreational use, and most states don't, except for California and a few other states.

L: We'd actually make more, do better economically if we taxed it.

E: Not only would we not be spending the \$15 billion a year [on drug law enforcement], we'd actually be employing people on the books rather than off the books

Photos by Charlie Anders

and we'd be getting all sorts of excise and vice taxes. There's a much lower accident rate from marijuana than alcohol. There are no reported fatalities from marijuana but there are 50,000 to 100,000 every year from alcohol.

L: What would we have to do to actually legalize it? Which comes first, getting public support? Or do we get the Supreme Court to do it with some kind of ruling and then get the rest of the people to follow like they did with civil rights?

E: There are different people who are all trying to push the envelope. I'm attacking the medical laws, and to some extent all the marijuana laws, through court action. Other people are trying to change public opinion or get legislatures to act on medical marijuana.

L: Do you think if we got medical marijuana would that be a good road to legalizing for recreational use?

E: I think that it's a good first step.

L: Because then people are accepting that there's something good about it.

E: Right and also people will become more familiar with it. I think it will become a non-issue. It will get depolarized.

L: How far away do you think we are from getting pot legalized?

E: I think we are very close. I think when it happens it won't be an evolutionary thing, it will happen very quickly in the same way as when the Soviet Union fell or when apartheid fell in South Africa.

L: Or prohibition.

E: Right. It was very sudden. I think when Americans heard about my case it clarified in their minds how bad these laws were and how stupid they were.

L: And what exactly were the charges? Possession?

E: No, it was cultivation of marijuana, maintaining a place where marijuana is cultivated and conspiracy to cultivate.

L: They just like to throw conspiracy in there, to make it heavier.

E: And then I had three felonies. They deal them out in threes.

L: Who do you think is standing in the way of changing things the most? The Bush administration? Republicans in general?

E: I think until recently the Democrats were right there with them. But recently Democrats have had a change – it's become a partisan issue. [Ohio Rep. Dennis] Kucinich has come out for it; [Massachusetts Sen. John F.] Kerry, I think, is coming out for it.

L: Wow, I thought that Democrats were trying to be Republicans in bad suits, but they're actually broadening their views. So let's talk about what got you into pot to begin with.

E: I don't want to talk about it.

L: Do you want to talk about anything personal at

all? Because my book is all about my personal drug use, I used drugs, and this is what I did, and this what I thought was great, and this is what I thought was fabulous, and here were the bad parts, and all these things.

E: My relationship was marijuana was more like Carlos Castaneda's with some of his allies.

L: An eye opener? Mind opening?

E: It was both medication, and an ally and an enhancer. It was nothing like using heroin or cocaine. I've never felt my relationship with marijuana was destructive.

L: I used to use it when I would be in a big fight with my girlfriend. I'd get in a fight with my girlfriend and then she'd be enraged and I'd be enraged and I'd roll a big fatty and then I'd start smoking it and about two hits later I'd be laughing, going like, "This is great, what are we fighting about?" She'd be mad, because I wasn't mad any more, and she'd be like, "Well you can't just end the argument by smoking a joint," and I'm like, "Why not? It's over, it's done. Why are we fighting?"

E: It's a stress release. I think I can put the difference between marijuana and most other drugs this way: If you ask most people who are involved in hard drugs, heroin, cocaine, amphetamines, alcohol, tobacco, do you recommend your younger brother and sister use it? Do you recommend that your good friends start using it?

L: No, not at all, I'd try to dissuade anybody . . .

E: They'd say definitely not, don't start smoking cigarettes. But you could say to somebody that smokes pot, well do you think your brother should use it, your sister? You could hear somebody say, "Well, it might do them some good." People don't think of marijuana as a destructive substance. If you ask a junkie is heroin good, they'll say, "Listen, it ruined my life," if they have any honesty.

L: Well, that may be true, but then there's also people that just have addiction issues and you can get addicted to anything, really, I was addicted to pot, I used it every day. I had to swear it off, and say, "OK, that's it, I'm just drinking beer." When I wanted it, I needed it — I needed it or I was just going to be in a really bad mood.

E: Just because something is addictive doesn't mean we have to beware of it.

Plus marijuana has one of the lowest rates of addiction. They can't prove physical addiction. They try and make the most tenuous experiments and they can't do it. In terms of psychological addiction . . . You know what? I'm addicted to chocolate. You think I'm kidding? [Ed reaches into his cupboard and pulls out five or six giant bars of chocolate.]

L: Break it out, all right!

E: I'm in a seven-step program — seven steps to the store. I'm addicted to chocolate, so should we make it

illegal?

L: I'm anti that.

E: Chocolate has a substance in it which humans produce when they're in lust. That's why when you lose your lover, you want some chocolate.

L: I thought it was in love. You're saying lust?

E: Lust. Lust.

L: What's the difference?

E: Sexual desire.

L: So you can be in love with somebody but not really want to fuck them?

E: No, you know, like I just met this person and I want to fuck this person. You ever get that feeling?

L: Yeah. [Unwraps a chocolate bar.]

E: [Takes a bite.] Right?

L: I really want to hold their hand and kiss them. No, absolutely, people are addicted to sex, they're addicted to all kinds of things that are legal.

E: I've heard about people addicted to sex, and I want to meet some people like that. We'd have something in common.

L: Are you addicted to sex?

E: Yeah.

L: Oh yeah? [Munching sounds.]

E: From the first day that I came, I decided this was it.

L: Yeah. So, how many times a day do you figure to make that happen?

E: I'm not going that far.

L: It's personal. Ed doesn't want to talk about personal shit. OK. I heard that boys like to do it three times a day whereas women only want to do it maybe once a day or once every three days, or maybe even once a week they're happy. But guys will go into the restroom at work. At the docks they take the doors off the stalls because the guys are in there doing their thing.

E: So why do they sell pocket vibrators?

L: Cause some babes are nymphos.

E: I want to meet them.

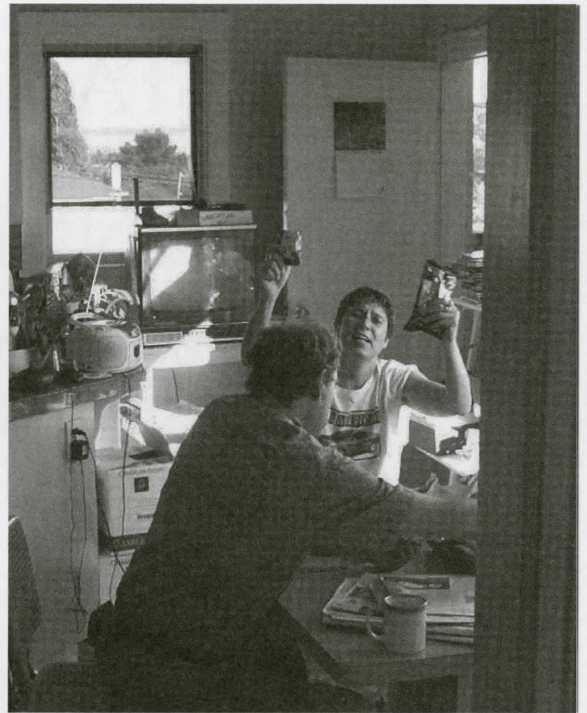
L: You're looking for nymphos, I know, we all are. Where are they? Where are these famous pocket vibrator bitches? They're hiding out.

E: No, they don't need us.

L: Oh. That's what we've gotta do, is make pocket vibrators illegal. Because then they'll need us.

E: They're illegal in some states.

L: Rubber dicks are illegal in Texas. Really, what the big picture is — I'm a big picture guy — do you think really there's some Republican philosophy, a Machiavellian thing, where you just want to control everybody, you don't care why or what they're doing, you just want them to not be so happy doing things they wanna do. So you gotta make as many laws as possible, and then if they do anything wrong, if they break a rule which inevitably they will because there's so many rules



“I’m addicted to chocolate, so should we make it illegal?”

you can't even turn around without breaking a fucking rule, you can always swoop in and grab them like they did to you.

E: There was a movie about that that the Beatles put out called *Yellow Submarine*, it was about exactly that situation. What are Blue Meanies? How about cops, you know? Turning the whole world grey? Knocking over people who are smelling the flowers?

L: What do we need to do in order to make this a freer place where we can actually think, where maybe we could eat some magic mushrooms and eat a little peyote and smoke a doobie and go sit up in Duboce park and not worry?

E: Get active. People have to get active, whatever they're doing.

L: Look what happened to you from being active. What if they're all paranoid now, like, “I don't want to end up like Ed, I'm not going to get the same publicity, why should I get active?” What do you say, risk it anyway?

E: I'm not saying necessarily do something that puts you in jeopardy. You can be active without being put in jeopardy. Go as far as you want. ✓

BRITTANY MURPHY

UNLEASHED

An interview with the Uptown Girls star

By Adele Pham

If you're in search of celebrity gossip, working as an unpaid writer with zero clout doesn't get you much. Actually it might get you a chance to ask two questions of a quasi-superstar, as I discovered during my first experience covering a press junket with seven other reporters in the basement of San Francisco's Ritz-Carlton.

As we anxiously awaited a tarrying Brittany Murphy, I realized that all of us were like weeds of the news industry. We'd tumbled in from whatever godforsaken publications wanted to cover the budding bimbo career of a girl who went from gritty roles in *Freeway 2* and *Spun* to a less-than-meaty role as a dotty chick flick heroine in *Uptown Girls*. With Brittany as our bait, we all hoped to snare a coveted little spot in the "people" sections of our publications.

In this flurry of self-deprecation, I glanced down at my notebook, packed with scathing questions for Brittany. For a moment, I felt superior to my peers. With inquiries like: "Is Alicia Silverstone pissed you're stealing all her roles?" was I not subverting the norm of fluffy P.R. pandering undertaken in the faux-elegance of a four star hotel? Then again, I might just be

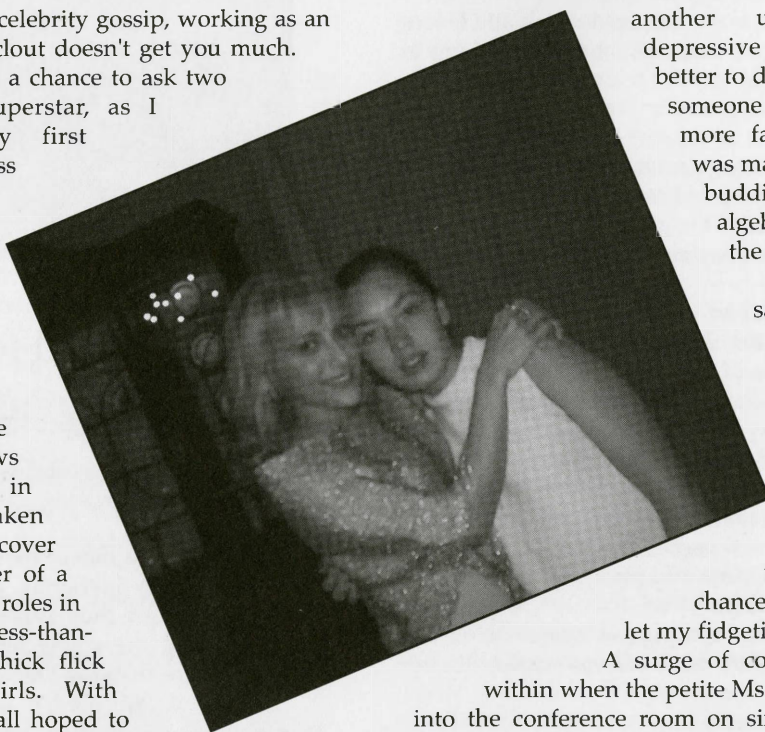


Photo provided by Adele Pham

another unemployed manic-depressive loser with nothing better to do than attempt to slam someone who is my age but far more famous, someone who was making movies while my buddies and I were skipping algebra to take apple rips in the school parking lot.

Furthermore, would saying "crack-whore" in front of the twelve-year-old reporter from MGM's industry paper fuck my karma?

Luckily Brittany was taking her sweet ass time,

which gave me a chance to pass a little gas and let my fidgeting stomach settle.

A surge of confidence welled from within when the petite Ms. Murphy waltzed back into the conference room on six-inch heels. After all, what is a manic-depressive loser without their integrity? I decided to leave the ass kissing to someone else.

When she finally arrived, Brittany sat at the head of the table, smiling hugely, displaying a perfect row of Chiclet teeth. She made a point of introducing herself to everyone in the room, despite the fact that this thing was already two and a half hours behind schedule. And then the melee commenced.

"Brittany," I shout first, "If you could clone yourself would you rather it looked like you did circa *Clueless* in '96, or after you dyed your hair blond and lost hella weight?"

Murphy just stared at me, glassy-eyed, and retorted: "Um, what you need to understand is that I never lost 'hella weight' as you put it. When I made *Clueless* I had just gone through puberty and still had baby fat. Now my hair is what my stylist dreams up. But I don't believe in cloning."

Fair enough. She was sassier than I anticipated. I recoiled, drummed my fingers, and felt out my next attack.

Some chump asked her if she still hangs out with the cast from *Clueless*, totally riding my coattails. But Brittany treated the question with equal care, and shelled out another acceptably inane answer. I can't remember what she said though. I was too poised to jumping into a pause in her jabber. When it came, I seized my opportunity.

"Brittany, Brittany, who was a better dry hump, Stanley Tucci or Eminem?"

There was some muffled laughter, and Brittany looked as if she didn't know whether to join in or leap across the table and kick my ass. Keeping it professional, she slid right into the slime.

"I love Stanley, but they're both great."

"Does Eminem smell?" I followed.

"No, actually both of them smell really good."

Everyone in the room appeared caught between a sneer and a shrug. It was a while before I got in my next query.

Unfortunately, it was the last one before our little session was officially kaput.

"Brittany, you probably get this a lot, but do Demi Moore and Ashton Kutcher give you the creeps?"

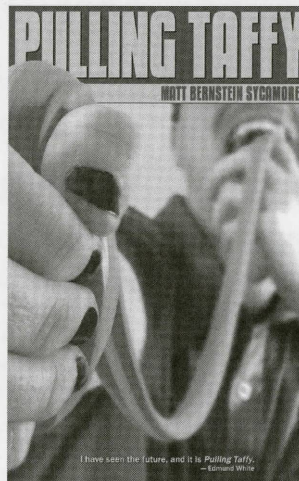
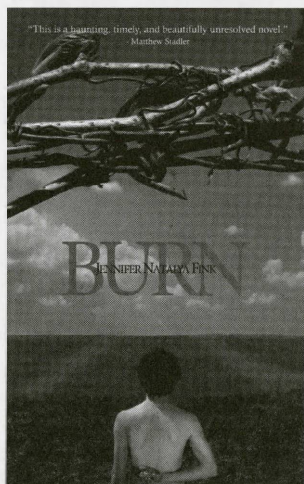
Brittany laughed, "I wouldn't say they give me the creeps but isn't there anything better in the news?"

Apparently not. There was so much more I wanted to ask Ms. Murphy, too: like if her own courtship with the Punk'd star was also a publicist's personal wet-dream. But I feel ashamed that my inexplicable attachment to *Entertainment Tonight* and *Access Hollywood* is contributing to the Decline of Western civilization. The session ended with a twelve-year-old kid representing Sundance asking about "the meaning of happiness." Aw, kids are so fucking cute, and Brittany said something about eyes and laughter.

Brittany wrinkled her nose, gave everyone a hug, and even submitted to a picture with me. Which just goes to prove that no matter how tough one thinks oneself, there's always a bubbly, underfed "B" actress who can steal your heart. ✓

suspect thoughts press

"The dialectic of class warfare and sexual rebellion has never come together more powerfully. *Burn* deserves to be recognized as a literary classic."
- Patrick Califia



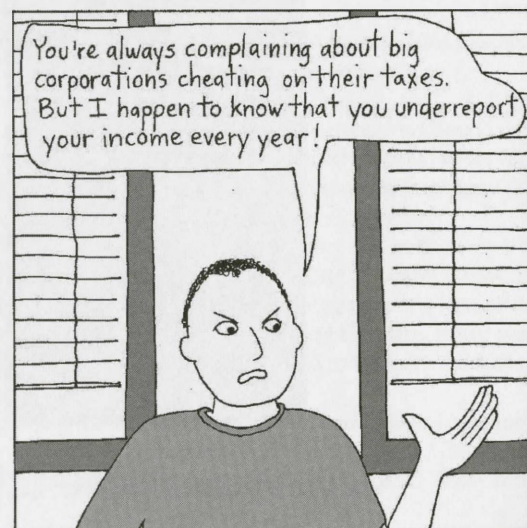
"Matt Bernstein Sycamore's fiction debut is a sharp and sparkling picaresque of queens and k-holes, grandmothers and tricks, friends and freaks."
- D. Travers Scott

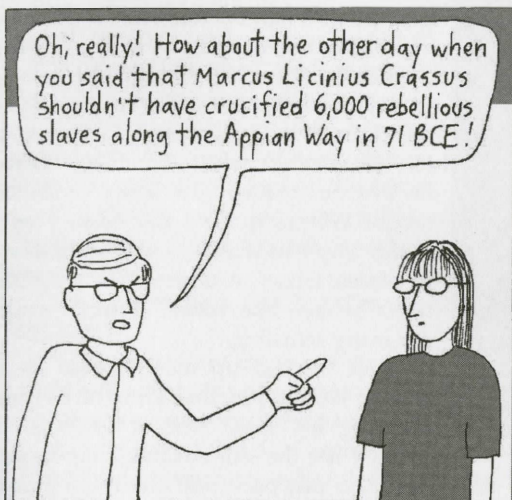
www.suspectthoughtspress.com

Spelt-Rite™ Comics
presents:

THE HYPO- CRITES

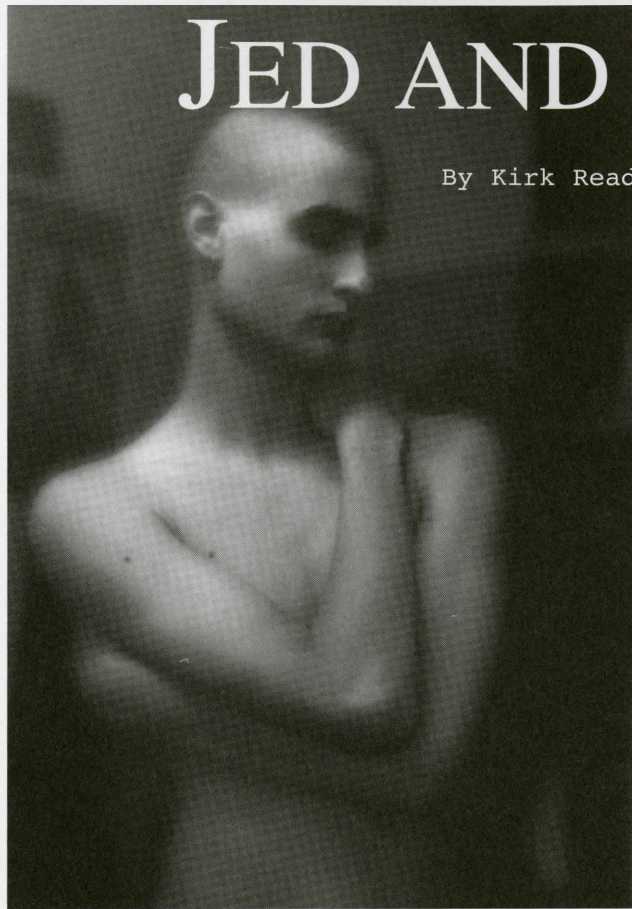
© 2003 Martha Keavney





JED AND WINNIE

By Kirk Read



They never even took a bucket in the truck, just knew that the afternoon was all about levels of mercy. Hooking the fuckers with a three-pronged steel bait, hand-painted, beautiful, the kind you'd attach to khaki hats and walk through town, "Yeah, me and Winnie are goin' fishin'."

Jed and Winnie dug for nightcrawlers together. They'd stay up late getting high off the corn syrup in Capri Sun juice bags and then root around for worms out by the woodpile at Winnie's uncle's house. He had the richest soil of anyone they knew.

Jed shaved Winnie's head just before they went out. Winnie had hair down past her shoulders and she knew her Mom was gonna cry over it but she asked Jed to do it because she knew he would. She knew he'd take time going

around all the scars on her scalp. Gentle, like Jed. He was full-grown, everybody figured. Six foot three at seventeen and went through two gallons of milk a week. His mother just kept buying it because what are you gonna do, tell your first born son he's drinking too much milk?

Some of the scars puffed out real far because different doctors did the stitching and one or two of them were drunk when they did it. Winnie just wanted her head empty of all that prettiness so her mother could never ever put bows in her hair or ask her why she wasn't combing it better or why, no matter how many times she taught Winnie to do a tucked-in French braid, why was it always so matted down in places, frizzy in others. "Cuz my hair don't behave like yours," Winnie would say every morning.

Jed worked up an elaborate lie to placate Winnie's mother. Once he finished shearing her head free of feathers, he handed her the still-buzzing clippers and said "Now, do me, babe. We'll tell her we got ticks and got scared of Rocky Mountain spotted fever." Which worked for Winnie. And she set about going over Jed's enormous head, asking him "You got any scars to watch out for?" and he said no. And Winnie figured that's why he was so much smarter. He hadn't gotten dropped on his head by anyone.

The nightcrawlers were everywhere. Jed said it was two nights away from a full moon and that they were restless to get out of the ground and go swimming. Winnie wasn't the least bit squeamish about it because she and Jed had been digging for worms every Friday night since they were eight years old. Whatever impulse makes a girl clench up about rats and night dirt and worms having sex with themselves right in your palm, well, those parts of her were long dead. She found 14 worms and Jed found eight. They'd need at least that many,

Photo by M. Tucco

because fish around here were smart. The fat ones knew how to grab the end of a worm and unknot it without even pulling on the line.

Winnie sat on top of the woodpile and started singing a song from a McDonald's commercial. Jed stood up and showed her the bucket. He held it level to her head so the moonlight would get in and they could see the worms.

"Wild how they make they selves pregnant," Jed said over her singing. "Come 'ere, I want to feel your head."

He ran his hand delicately over her new haircut, which felt like the cloth of a bucket seat. He knelt in front of her and tipped his head so she could feel his.

Winnie stopped singing. "Thass interestin, you know, to not have anything up there," Winnie said. "Won't even have to wash it anymore, cuz it used to get so greasy. Well, cept tonight, because our hands are so filthy."

"I kinda like that," Jed whispered, then kissed Winnie once on each scar mound, five in all. Winnie put her face into his armpit and rubbed her forehead around like a puppy wiping its post-dinner face on the carpet.

"Lil puppy girl," Jed sang softly, rubbing Winnie's head. Dried dirt fell from her scalp in tiny clumps.

"Don't call me a girl, Jed. I'm about done with that."

"Okay, you want me to call you a boy?"

"Yeah, when it's just us, yeah, I'd like that."

"You wanna be my little puppy boy, huh?"

Winnie locked her feet around Jed's waist and pulled him close enough so Jed could stand up. He started chewing on Winnie's ear and Winnie started whining.

"Baby, baby."

Jed walked up the hill into a clearing they called the Finger Farm. They came here every Friday night and lately, on other nights, too. He laid Winnie down on the grass, which he kept short with a riding mower even though his uncle always said there was no point in cutting grass up there.

Winnie put her head under Jed's shirt and rubbed the top of it up and down his chest. Jed started laughing because it tickled and they wrestled until Jed had Winnie upside down, feet kicking the fog above Jed's shoulders.

Winnie planted both hands on the ground and kicked over, making an arch with her back so Jed could scoop her up again and spin her around high above his head. "Your hair don't hit me in the face no more."

Then Jed let go and Winnie screamed. He caught her, like he always did, and chewed on her neck a while, just enough not to leave hickeys.

Then Jed lay on his back and curled his fingers together, just above his belly button. Winnie, on cue, took her pants off and straddled him. They'd tried dick fucking a few times but Winnie made Jed put it away.

"I don't think I like that much," she said.

Jed ran his hand over her scalp again and gave her one of his muddy fingers to chew on. She eased herself down, moving up to his thick forearm where she could really plant her molars. Jed always said do what you have to do. And he meant it. Jed would just hold his hand there and let Winnie go.

He liked watching her, especially now with the crewcut. Jed smiled.

Winnie started breathing deep, then bit down really hard and slid down past Jed's thumb.

"Oh, god DAMN that milk makes you big."

And then Winnie did what she always did, which was to buck so hard Jed thought the bones in his hand would break. And Jed did what he always did, which was to pull his hand out and taste her, lick each finger before he put his thumb in her mouth so she could suck off her juices.

Winnie looked up from Jed's armpit, where her face was tucked. "Tomorrow afternoon we're gonna catch something big, one of the fat bass that always gets away. And we're gonna eat it."

Jed nodded, then gave Winnie's head one last rub before they headed home. ✓

Project: QueerLit

We recruit...
and print the best
of tomorrow's queer lit!

The Project: QueerLit contest celebrates and brings media attention to unpublished authors of queer writing and opens doors for publication of their work.

www.projectqueerlit.com

THE BOUNDARY POLICE

It's Just a Routine Adjustment of Your Personal Identity

By Charlie Anders

The first person I ever labeled without her consent was Margaret Cho.

I wasn't alone. Pretty much the entire bisexual contingent at San Francisco Pride 2000 took part in addressing the back of Cho's head. "You're one of us!" we shouted over and over again. Staring at the nape of her neck, we never knew if she heard us. She was the Celebrity Marshal that year, and maybe the organizers put her in front of us because they shared our suspicion that she swung both ways.

"You're one of us!"

If we ever worried about imposing our identity on Cho (who has since self-identified as bisexual), it didn't bother us for long. After all, we were used to people labeling us against our will. Gay men routinely told bi men that they were really just gays in waiting. Lesbians told bi chicks they couldn't call themselves dykes. We were just playing the game.

Welcome to the world of the Boundary Police, where your own choice of identity is less important than an external standard. In some subgroups, the Boundary Police will claim you as a member of that group whether you believe it or not. In others, they'll exclude you from membership even if you feel you should belong. The non-consensual exclusion and inclusion contradict each other, but they both stem from the same yearning for clarity. You can tell a lot about a group by which impulse it exerts more strongly.

Confusion over membership in subgroups is nothing new. For as long as we've had language, definitions have been slippery. In the 1930s, any two socialists might have given you two very different definitions of socialism and who should be allowed to call him/herself a socialist.

That's how you get splinter groups, heretics, and activist binges and purges. What's new is that the Internet lets these battles happen in real time, in public forums accessible to thousands, instead of in dark basements.

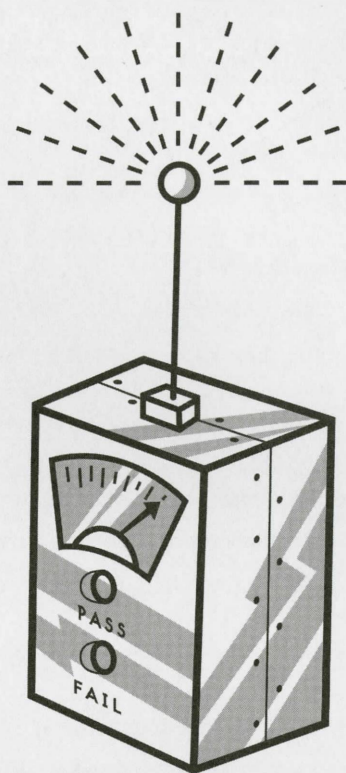
Boundary police officers attempt to regulate two different threats to their own self-images. In an interrogation, their first question is, "If you're allowed to call yourself the same thing I call myself, then what does that say about me?" The second is, "If you refuse to call yourself the same thing I call myself, am I alone?"

Both impulses are about wanting to clarify and enforce labels so that your self-identification means something. If someone demonstrates a drastically different understanding of your label, you see yourself through a warped lens.

It's gotten more complex as sexual/social/political identities have blurred. "Borderline" groups like bisexuals and genderqueers are opening up the definitions of queer groups, but it's happening in other areas too. You can see it in the profusion of humorous books like *You Know You're A Redneck If....* Since when do people need a book to know whether they're really rednecks?

It used to be that a "real" Cockney was anyone born within earshot of the bells of St. Mary-le-Bow in Cheapside, London. But researchers say noise from cars and other factors have greatly reduced the radius within which you can hear these bells. You can see a map of the shrunken "real Cockney" zone at www.steeljam.dircon.co.uk/cockney.htm.

A group can try to refurbish its membership list to keep out wannabes, or fend off insecurity. But there are many other reasons why the Boundary Police walk their lonely beat, along the dark side streets of identity politics.



Behavior Modification

You can convince someone to change her behavior by pointing out the ways she fails to live up to the strict construction of her label. Say someone who eats honey claims to be vegan. If you point out that honey is an animal product, you're offering a choice: either lose the vegan label, or give up honey.

Kat describes a housemate who wanted everyone in their shared house to be a "slut." This wasn't a problem for Kat, who wears the slut label the way a yuppie wears Prada. But the housemate insisted that Kat wasn't really a slut, even if she called herself that, because she wasn't sleeping with enough people. Kat's response: "a slut is someone who sleeps with whoever she wants to." Kat eventually decided the housemate's true goal was to get Kat to prove her sluthood by sleeping with him.

You can also try to influence someone's behavior by pinning a label on him and then expecting him to live up to it. Amy confesses she became a "sergeant" in the boundary police by terrorizing her housemate. She decided her housemate was fat and queer, and then got mad when she didn't live up to the labels Amy had chosen. They would fight about whether the roommate was fat and queer enough. Eventually, Amy says she discovered that "it's really important for friends to validate each other and support each other."

Some labels are just slipperier than others. Most

people can agree on a definition of "vegan," but your slut may be my nun. And your fat may be my thin.

If You Can Join, Then Who Are We?

When a group seems primarily concerned with exclusion rather than inclusion, it's usually in the service of retaining some sense of purity. After a brief interval in the early 1970s when some lesbians claimed that all women could/should become lesbian, the dyke community has become more concerned with keeping the unworthy out of dykedom.

The lesbian community used to worry about dykes who slept with men. Now the dyke boundary police are on guard against dykes who become men. Meetings of the San Francisco Dyke March committee turned raucous when female-to-male transsexuals demanded more inclusion in the women-centered event.

And some FTMs are returning the favor. Jim (not his real name), a San Francisco FTM activist, criticizes "butch lesbians" who want to call themselves FTM transsexuals. In his view, many queer women want to call themselves transmen "to be more interesting at parties." Whether motivated by angst or a desire for trendiness, many dykes have stolen the FTM label away from true transmen such as himself, he argues.

Jim reviles so-called "bois" who refuse to commit to a male identity. "It's very difficult to see someone as male

Googling For Fun

If you haven't received a rejection letter, you probably shouldn't call yourself a writer.
http://arwenbooks.com/rejection_letter.htm

Once you hit 30, you can't call yourself a girl any more.
<http://www.iwilldare.com/archives/001659.html>

If you don't know shit about HTML, you shouldn't call yourself a web designer.
<http://www.versiontracker.com/users/ekveland>

With your mentality you shouldn't call yourself a 'postmodern programmer'
<http://lists.debian.org/debian-wnpp/2002/debian-wnpp-200212/msg00243.html>

If you do not practice a few fundamentals... you shouldn't call yourself a Wiccan.
<http://www.geocities.com/celticgrove/wicca.html>

You shouldn't call yourself a gamer until you play all the Final Fantasy games that are out.
<http://www.angelfire.com/games3/tiffsfdarkcastle54/lmamd.html>

You shouldn't call yourself a b-boy if you don't break.
[http://skolor.nacka.se/myrsjo/elaget/specialarbete/Hip-Hop%20Kulturen\(Elin%209E4\)/breakdance.htm](http://skolor.nacka.se/myrsjo/elaget/specialarbete/Hip-Hop%20Kulturen(Elin%209E4)/breakdance.htm)

"You shouldn't call yourself a Herald unless you actually do something to earn the title."
<http://www.mercedeslackey.com/text/1mlask08.shtml>

"If you're a Republican, you shouldn't call yourself a Democrat. And vice versa."
<http://camden.villagesoup.com/boards/MessageList.cfm?ThrID=1037&Tally=35>

If you get your kicks from trashing systems for the hell of it, you shouldn't call yourself a hacker.
<http://camden.villagesoup.com/boards/MessageList.cfm?ThrID=1037&Tally=35>

when they offer nothing to anchor that label to," he complains. "These people are trying to be designer 'bois' but they seem in most every way to be grrrls."

"There is a lot of discussion on how to take just enough hormones for a deep voice without taking so much that they get facial hair, or taking enough for facial hair but still look like a boy," Jim adds. "There is an attraction to being a boy but a fear of turning into a man."

In other words, even if you take testosterone, Jim doesn't think you should be allowed to call yourself an FTM or a transman. Not unless you're sufficiently committed to manhood as he defines it. Otherwise, you're

just a poser trying on masculinity for style points.

Jim also hates it when people call him transgender, because to him that label connotes a "genderqueer" or third gender lifestyle. He feels that people who want to cover him with that "umbrella" term are really seeking to draw him into an assault on binary gender that he doesn't feel a part of.

To Jim, it's all about political and social agendas: if poseurs are allowed to call themselves FTMs, then the FTM community can't present a coherent agenda. And he resents being associated with a "transgender" agenda that's at odds with his own goals.

Ideology And Identity

Setting agendas is a major concern for the boundary police. If you call yourself a Green but I tell you that you're really a Democrat waiting to happen, I'm attempting to strengthen the Democratic party. Ditto for Greens who tell Democrats they're really Greens who've sold out.

Self-described "conservative feminist" Carolyn Gargaro complains that many feminists object to her use of that term, especially because she's pro-life. On her site rightgrrl.com, Gargaro defends her right to champion both female empowerment and John Ashcroft. Feminists object to her not just because they wouldn't want to go to a dinner party with her, but also because her brand of feminism dilutes a feminist agenda that includes social justice and access to abortion.

Sometimes groups try to draw a distinction between their own laudible agenda and that of a "lesser" group. A perfect example is the attempts of some in the polyamory community to repel swingers. Both polyamorous people and swingers believe in honest open relationships and non-monogamy, but polyamorous people often form multiple relationships, whereas those tacky swingers just fuck around. And don't even start on those people who call themselves polyamorous but don't adhere to our particular standards of fidelity or seriousness about relationships.

On one polyamory email list recently, a participant pleaded for a bright line between true polyamorous people and imposters. Why can't the term polyamory relate to a clear set of "observable behaviors?" this person wondered.

In response, my pal Sheeri argued the term polyamory is more meaningful the more diverse a crowd it encompasses, not less. "I, for one, would like it if I could talk to someone and say, 'I'm polyamorous' and have them ask further, and not just assume they know everything based on that one statement," she wrote.

And of course, anyone whose a role model in

mainstream society, alive or dead, will inevitably be appropriated by some minority group that's seeking more prominence. So Shakespeare was gay and Eleanor Roosevelt was a lesbian.

You'll Thank Me Later

Tristan proudly identifies as a member of the boundary police. He says his badge has made a positive difference in people's lives.

In one case, he told someone who didn't identify as transgender that he looked like a cute tranny boy. This person was overjoyed, because he'd secretly feared coming out and being told he wasn't trans enough.

Tristan told the neophyte, "No butch in their right mind would wear that boy scout shirt," which made the wearer very happy.

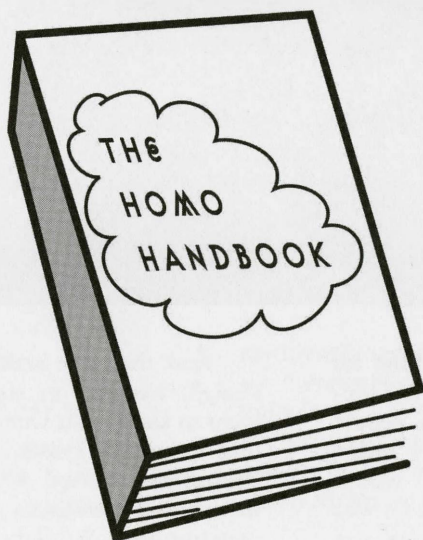
"For me it's been more the 'You are not straight, and this is a wonderful, fabulous thing' border that I've affirmed," Tristan explains. "Of course, if a comment I made offended someone's identity, I'd feel bad, but would hope that they would take the time to talk it over with me." In Tristan's view, trying to draw someone in isn't nearly as potentially destructive as trying to keep someone out.

Being handed a label that you didn't necessarily know applied can be a great affirmation in some circumstances but in others it can feel like a weight being lowered onto your shoulders.

Oddly enough, mainstream culture cherishes the myth that labeling someone can lead to happiness.

Two movies, *But I'm a Cheerleader* and *In and Out*, share this same fantasy. In both, the main character is "outed" as gay or lesbian by someone else. Neither Megan (Natasha Lyonne) nor Howard (Kevin Kline) believes her- or himself to be queer. Both protagonists believe absolutely in their own straightness but their friends and loved ones decide they must be queer because they fit the stereotypes. In Megan's case, she's a vegetarian who doesn't like kissing her boyfriend. In Howard's, he wears bow ties and adores Streisand. As a result, Megan's parents cart her off to an anti-queer reeducation camp and Howard's former pupil outs him on television.

Miraculously, both characters discover their sexual orientations after everyone else in their lives has. It's as if the magic of labels has liberated them. Instead of an



Googling Part 2

I used to be of the opinion that biracial people like ... Tiger Woods, who were only partially Black, were in denial about their Blackness.

http://www.sccs.swarthmore.edu/users/03/athelwe1/my_thoughts.html

You are a gay man in denial.

<http://www.alternet.org/story.html?StoryID=13766>

I absolutely hate when studs/butches/doms fail to realize they are women... Own up to your womanhood, PLEASE!

<http://members.blackplanet.com/afeistyfemme/>

"I'm not a lesbian." "Sure you are, you just haven't admitted it yet!"

http://www.bostonphoenix.com/archive/1in10/96/09/MELISSA_ETHERIDGE.html

Whether you like it or not, you're one of us.

-- Captain Janeway to Seven of Nine, Star Trek: Voyager, Hope and Fear.

<http://3sygma.com/deltablues/hopeandfear.html>

Won't you just suck it up and admit you're a socialist!

<http://www.che-lives.com/cgi/community/printpage.pl?forum=17&topic=1178>

unpleasant experience, having other people foist an outsider identity on them becomes a positive, life-changing event for both characters. Weirdly, the people "outing" Megan and Howard aren't actually queer themselves. You have to wonder if Hollywood would have the guts to make a movie about someone who was converted to queerness by other queers, or someone who was falsely outed and suffered for it.

It Goes Both Ways


Bisexual boundary police tend to be among the most aggressive about claiming members who may not identify themselves as bi. If you sleep with more than one gender, you're bi, regardless of whether you acknowledge the label. Woe betide anyone who calls himself "heteroflexible" in front of a bi activist.

But sometimes, bisexuals will turn around and question your right to their label. The Web site Afterellen.com, which covers depictions of lesbians in television, recently posted a discussion of female celebrities who identify as "bi with a boyfriend." The article raises interesting questions about why so many young women in Hollywood are owning up to same-sex attractions right now, and why some of them are reluctant to call themselves bi.

And then the article goes on to attack "bisexual straight women," or straight women who occasionally want to sleep with women. There's nothing wrong with this, the article insists, but those women shouldn't call themselves bisexual. Accusations of faux bisexuality for the sake of trendiness also aren't unusual in some bi communities. Similar to the charge of insufficient sluttiness, the only way to dispel such accusations is sometimes to sleep with the accuser.

In most groups, the boundary police will perform both tasks: draw people in and shut them out. It can become a spin cycle — a group claims you, demands signs of your worthiness to belong, and finally spits you out again when you fail to live up to the label you never asked for.

In fact, the strength of the boundary police within a particular group may be a sign of the group's health, not insecurity. Think of them as the circulatory system of your subculture, keeping up a constant flow of people in and out. Maybe groups without vigilant vetting of labels become anemic.

But whether you think of them as the people who keep the revolving doors spinning or as a combination of bouncers and touts, the boundary police are here to stay. Cooperate with them and nobody will be harmed.  Much.

WOLVERINE

by Matthue Roth

1. i'm not feeling super today
a flash of claws, curses,
muscles contract
and release
it's over

me, the smell
of blood in my skin
a roaring silence
and a numbness in my left arm
that won't go away

2. go away--
i don't like you and
i'm not like you and
in a field of scratchy waist-high
wheat stalks in central California,
i could be having
a good day.

i'm sick of it.

i want to save
myself for once.

3. i feel each punch i pull.
before my claws cut your head in half
they slice the skin of my knuckles
i wear a uniform but
it's still so hard
to fool myself into
believing i'm human

blood begins to
look like cartoons
all that bland bright red
spurting like ketchup

4. you'd barely believe
i'm human
but still, i sometimes
remember:

my favorite color, brown
my favorite Steve Van Zandt
guitar solo
the texture of my first girlfriend's hair
and the hit of wind
on my motorcycle at night

5. these days it's just
the business of
asskicking

i know it's
better this way but
some days i could wish
for an office job

and a Jean Grey who's still
there in the morning

6. okay, bub.
you asked
for it.

≠snikt≠

NEW NOISE, OLD NOISE

By Joel Schalit

Noise' was not commonly invoked to describe a musical idiom until the early 90s, when American importers of Japanese underground rock began distributing recordings by now well-known artists such as Merzbow along with his lesser-known contemporaries such as The Incapacitants and Masonna. While noise had been practiced for years by groups such as Throbbing Gristle and Einstürzende Neubauten, it had been subsumed into industrial and otherwise experimental pop music. It had never been explicitly defined as its own genre. The new noise was heralded by critics as Japanoise, bringing to mind the French term 'chinoise' as much as a contraction of Japanese noise.

Here was a new approach to music-making, avant-garde in the worst possible pseudo-French way, that fit the needs of a generation raised on hardcore's original ideology of anti-musicality in its purest and most unadulterated form.

Given punk's increasingly melodic tendencies and commercial acceptability, Japanese noise's appearance on North American record store shelves during the early 1990s could

not have been more culturally appropriate or politically timely. Contemporaneous with Nirvana's album *Nevermind*, which opened the floodgates of a decade's worth of alienated indie music to the mainstream music market, here was an underground genre whose lack of fidelity to anything even remotely resembling harmony or structure meant that it could not be easily commodified. The sociological significance of this event for persons who invested themselves in punk's 'great refusal' to be integrated by the cultural industry was remarkable. It restored the promise of permanent artistic marginality. Because there would never be a large-scale audience for such work, one could consume it without feeling like one was lapsing into anything even remotely resembling conformity, aesthetically or economically.

Unfortunately, Japanoise never survived as a commonly-employed term used to designate a nationally-specific form of music-making, even though its original practitioners went on to pursue full-time careers as internationally recognized avant-garde artists. By the time the independent music business began its long slide into recession in the late 1990s, most of the



musicians originally associated with the 'movement' had had their identities as noise artists diffused by signing domestic contracts with death metal and avant-garde labels such as Relapse and Tzadik. Or they were relegated to the prohibitively expensive import market.

Gone with this 'identity' was such work's publically-acknowledged status as a genre, regardless of the fact that artists on both sides of the Pacific (and more recently Europe) continued to make music that fit what listeners originally thought the term meant: music without any immediately discernible arrangements that was brutally loud and unpleasant to fuck to.

Would it be fair to assume, then, that noise is dead? As an identifiable genre accepted by the media, quite possibly yes. But to endorse such a notion would be to accept the idea that musical genres reflect the kinds of music that can be documented by music journalists. This does little to explain why noise, as a stylistic affectation,

has remained an integral part of rock and roll ever since its identification as a 'genre' of popular music in the years immediately following the Second World War. Why should we take an interest in noise? In short, for political reasons.

'Noise,' as we commonly encounter it, remains pop music's most fundamental expression of negativity. Whether it's simply a burst of distortion in the middle of a Yardbirds song, or the undecipherable Cookie Monster-like growling of a Napalm Death vocal part is immaterial. The fact of the matter is that noise always expresses a moment of dissonance within the social order, be it a 'break' in the middle of an otherwise typically conventional top forty hit (take for example, Korn's singer, Jonathan Davis, who will start gurgling like a flushing toilet in the middle of the most pedestrian of rap-metal arrangements) or the running of the national anthem through a fuzz box, a la Jimi Hendrix. As the name of the aged punk group Social Distortion has always implied, noise is literally an amplification of the unacknowledged 'distortions' within the social fabric that

Illustration by Duncan Long

we take for granted.

Most importantly, noise disrupts the commercial culture that popular music is supposed to mystify.

Then why reconsider Japanoise? Most importantly, because of the way in which it was critically constructed by the media as the first alleged genre to make such expressions of disenfranchisement the heart of its identity. As such, it distilled within itself all of the painfully

Music without any discernable arrangements, that was brutally loud and unpleasant to fuck to.

obvious aesthetic metaphors that music fans associate with alienation. However there are also artistic reasons to insist that we remember noise, mostly because of the contemporary popularization of what is commonly referred to as 'sound art,' i.e. music made and arranged

using non-traditional source material, without any adherence to pop or otherwise traditional compositional structures.

Driven by the remarkable compositional opportunities opened up by computers and audio software such as Max MSP, we are now living through what could be considered the first revival of early 1990s noise, as practiced by artists ranging from Chicago guitarist Kevin Drumm and Polish laptop artist Zbigniew Karkowski, to Spanish found sound processor Francisco Lopez and German computer musician Florian Hecker. The difference between the work of these artists and that of their Japanese predecessors isn't so much due to their inability to repeat specific musical tropes as it is the lack of any appreciation of the extra-musical significance of their music.

This is a shame, because the new noise is far more stylistically diverse, and yet remains a non-event in the eyes of music journalists. Old noise's stylistic predilection for distortion and a lack of deference towards traditional compositional structures are carried over to the new generation. But in today's noise, there is a much more nuanced set of sensibilities being communicated one which is far more mournful, far more subtle, and at



LUNGFISH

Records & Stuff We Sell:

- 141. Q AND NOT U 'X-Polynation/ Book of Flags' (A)
- 140. MINOR THREAT First Demo Tape (A)
- 138. BEAUTY PILL 'You Are Right to be Afraid' CD ONLY (A)
- 137. LUNGFISH 'Love is Love' (B)
- 135. BLACK EYES 10-song album (B)
- 134. EL GUAPO 'Fake French' (B)
- 133. Q AND NOT U 'Different Damage' (B)
- 131. THE PUPILS 11 songs from Asa & Daniel of Lungfish (B)
- 130. FUGAZI 'The Argument' (B)
- 125. 20th BOX SET 3 CD Set: 134-page book, 73 songs (21 unreleased) (E)
- 49. GRAY MATTER CD remastered (C)
- 40. MINOR THREAT CD has every song! (C)
- 24. EMBRACE CD Remaster (B)
- 14. DISCHORD 1981 Teen Idles, Minor Threat, SOA, G!*, Youth Brigade CD ONLY (B)

Price Guide, including postage, in U.S. \$:

	U.S.A.	SURFACE & CANADA	Airmail
(A) 7"/CD single	4.00	5.00	7.00
(B) LP/CD	10.00	11.00	14.00
(C) MaxiCD	12.00	13.00	15.00
(D) Video/DVD	18.00	20.00	23.00
(E) Box Set	25.00	29.00	35.00

ORDERS: www.dischord.com (703) 351-7507 dischord@dischord.com

We accept most credit cards and, of course, real money.

Stores: Let's deal direct! direct@dischord.com or fax (703) 351-7582

Illustrated CATALOG!
please send one US \$ or
3 US Stamps or 4 IRCs



For a plain but complete
LIST of all records, send
us a US stamp or an IRC.

3819 BEECHER ST. NW, WASH., D.C. 20007-1802

SUBSCRIBE TO

☒ **other**

ould allow it to be
al significance at all,
artist insists that his or
— that it has political
ted as such, outside of

extent to which we need
test music that, unlike
from the consciousness-
al pop. We need to
rical context. Its ability
its hyper-abstractness,
o the gruff directness of
olk, and 1990s noise,
about the intangibility

e the watchwords of
. The new noise might
hat it means to be self-



You don't belong with us...
but you should join us anyway.

Here at **other**, we don't want you to join our
clique, wear our uniform, or fit in with our
target markets. We're not creating faceless
drones with identical hairstyles, who genetically
modify their children to look like Twyla Tharp,
whether boys or girls.

But that doesn't mean we don't want you to join
us. To keep **other** bashing its head against the
wall of us/them, we need support.



Subscribe at www.othermag.org. Or send a check for \$12 with your name and
address to: **other**, 584 Castro Street #674, San Francisco, CA, 94114.

Please mention which issue you'd like to start your subscription with.
For a limited time you can buy the first 2 issues of **other** for \$8 postpaid,
through the website or by sending a check to the address above.

Or participate in the **other** uprising -- we welcome non-fiction queries and
submissions of fiction, poetry, comics, and art, also through our website.

So prove that you really don't fit in with us -- support **other** magazine.

we take for granted.

Most importantly, culture that popular music

Then why reconsider because of the way in by the media as the expressions of disenfranchised. As such, it distilled

Music without arrangements loud and unp

obvious aesthetic met with alienation. However insist that we remember contemporary popular referred to as 'sound a

You can't join the other revolution unless you receive every issue of *other*. Just fill out this card and send it to:

other, 584 Castro St. #674, San Francisco CA 94114

Please enclose a check for \$12 for three issues (1 year).

Name _____

(for gift subscriptions, please put the recipient's name)

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Please start my subscription with:

_____ Issue 1 _____ Issue 2 _____ Issue 3 _____ other



LUNGFISH

Records & Stuff We Sell:

- 141. Q AND NOT U 'X-Polnation/Book of Flags' (A)
- 140. MINOR THREAT First Demo Tape (A)
- 138. BEAUTY PILL 'You Are Right to be Afraid' CD ONLY (A)
- 137. LUNGFISH 'Love is Love' (B)
- 135. BLACK EYES 10-song album (B)
- 134. EL GUAPO 'Fake French' (B)
- 133. Q AND NOT U 'Different Damage' (B)
- 131. THE PUPILS 11 songs from Asa & Daniel of Lungfish (B)
- 130. FUGAZI 'The Argument' (B)
- 125. 20th BOX SET 3 CD Set: 134-page book, 73 songs (21 unreleased) (E)
- 49. GRAY MATTER CD remastered (C)
- 40. MINOR THREAT CD has every song! (C)
- 24. EMBRACE CD Remaster (B)
- 14. DISCHORD 1981 Teen Idles, Minor Threat, SOA, GI, Youth Brigade CD ONLY (B)

Price Guide, including postage, in U.S. \$:

	U.S.A.	SURFACE & CANADA	Airmail
(A) 7"/CD single	4.00	5.00	7.00
(B) LP / CD	10.00	11.00	14.00
(C) Maxi CD	12.00	13.00	15.00
(D) Video/DVD	18.00	20.00	23.00
(E) Box Set	25.00	29.00	35.00

ORDERS: www.dischord.com (703) 351-7507 dischord@dischord.com

We accept most credit cards and, of course, real money.

Stores: Let's deal direct! direct@dischord.com or fax (703) 351-7582

Illustrated CATALOG!
please send one US \$ or
3 US Stamps or 4 IRC's.



For a plain but complete
LIST of all records, send
us a US stamp or an IRC.

3819 BEECHER ST. NW, WASH., D.C. 20007-1802

times, even sympathetic to the suffering that the music inevitably deploys. Interestingly, the new noise belies the sense of being part of a tradition, as it were, in its comfort with assuming new voices and its embrace of politicized subject matter, despite its renunciation of any kind of artistic formalism.

And yet there is no corresponding critical appreciation of why this work is being made, and what it might be responding to in the outside world.

The lack of political interpretations of such work is due to the fact that none of it is identified as belonging to a greater genre.

If that remains the case, then perhaps there is an argument to be made for employing such superficial terms as genre, because at the very least they help establish a sense of context, aesthetically and socially.

Japanese made political sense to the media - regardless of the difficulties that critics had in establishing what was exactly political about it - because it so closely followed first-generation hardcore. Unfortunately, there is no similarly immediate historical shadow to be cast on

contemporary 'noise' that would allow it to be experienced as having any social significance at all, except in those instances where an artist insists that his or her work be experienced this way - that it has political meaning and ought to be interpreted as such, outside of the realm of music.

This problem points up the extent to which we need a new language to talk about protest music that, unlike punk, is completely disconnected from the consciousness-raising ethos of 1960s political pop. We need to understand the new noise in historical context. Its ability to express alienation, in all of its hyper-abstractness, should be deliberately compared to the gruff directness of 1980s anarcho-hardcore, 1960s folk, and 1990s noise, because it communicates so much about the intangibility of the present.

Terror and surveillance are the watchwords of contemporary political experience. The new noise might just be the idiom that expresses what it means to be self-consciously alienated today. ✓

You don't belong with us...
but you should join us anyway.

Here at **other**, we don't want you to join our clique, wear our uniform, or fit in with our target markets. We're not creating faceless drones with identical hairstyles, who genetically modify their children to look like Twyla Tharp, whether boys or girls.

But that doesn't mean we don't want you to join us. To keep **other** bashing its head against the wall of us/them, we need support.



Subscribe at www.othermag.org. Or send a check for \$12 with your name and address to: **other**, 584 Castro Street #674, San Francisco, CA, 94114.

Please mention which issue you'd like to start your subscription with. For a limited time you can buy the first 2 issues of **other** for \$8 postpaid, through the website or by sending a check to the address above.

Or participate in the **other** uprising -- we welcome non-fiction queries and submissions of fiction, poetry, comics, and art, also through our website.

So prove that you really don't fit in with us -- support **other** magazine.

WEATHER'S HERE, WISH YOU WERE BEAUTIFUL

By Rachel McKibbens

There was the summer you ignored me so hard
it gave me bad posture.
By fall, the chiropractor prescribed a back brace and
a name tag to wear around the house.
Every Christmas Eve, instead of a birthday party,
you'd soak me in the bathtub, fully-clothed,
then hang mistletoe above every light socket.
I was never included in family portraits.
You said I had a face only a mother could leave.
I remember standing in your hallway, every other weekend,
gazing at you and my stepbrother wearing the smiles
I knew I'd never inherit.
I became your biggest fan. Chasing the car home
from the grocery store, waiting outside your bedroom
for an autograph, a handshake
explaining how, "Ma, I've seen all of your movies:
Disneyland with Isaac, Weekend Trip to the Zoo,
Mother-Son Picnic in Yosemite" and knew every
one of your mood swings by heart.
When you'd drop me off at home, I'd brag to dad
and his girlfriend about my brush with fame.
They'd smile and nod, then shake the wild imagination right out of me.
Pretty soon, the weekend visits faded
into a nineteen-year carnival line,
where I waited for you
until the sights and sounds of families and laughter
made my stomach plunge.
That's the year I lost my appetite, then found it
in men disguised as getaway cars.
Sometimes a tingling sensation sweeps across my cheek
like an amputee's phantom itch,
and I realize how much I miss the back of your hand.
And I know I never apologized for steering you
into that marital car crash,
but how was I to know they'd pry your legs apart,
drag me from the wreckage
my first cries shattering the rear view mirror of your heart?
You could've told them.
You could've explained,
I was just some filthy hitch hiker
you never meant to pick up
a greedy little fetus,
an accident
waiting to happen.



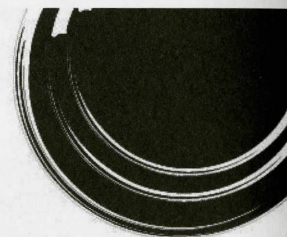
GARGOYLE BEADS

1310 Haight St.
San Francisco Ca
Tel (415) 552-garg

Purveyors of Beads & More

*Come adorn yourself in
creativity, be you virgin or
advanced bead slut*

*Mention "Other" for a special
promotion
Offer exp 3/1/04*



BPM Records

UNDERGROUND
DANCE MUSIC
SINCE 1991

573 HAYES ST.
SAN FRANCISCO CA 94102
PHONE: (415) 487-8680
FAX: (415) 487-8683



JAVIER

Photos by Suzi Chang





New World Odor

By Jim Munroe

Someone was farting.

I knew it had to be a political thing. I figured it was probably the guy ahead of me in line in the FEAR ROBOTS T-shirt. But it was hard to tell for sure, because they were silent. Silent, as they said in the old days, but deadly.

Personally, didn't think the young fella was doing the cause any good. It was a small, hot room, and people were already anxious to get out of there. It was a municipal hearing on how to phase out the live operators still remaining at city services. You know, when you call about your social security cheque and all and you want to talk to a real human? What the hearing really was was a sop to the unions – never really was intended to be attract average citizens. They probably expected the union rep and the rep from the company who sold the switchboard AI – Personnelectronic, I think – to duke it out in the listless way that hired guns do, and then they could knock off early for the weekend.

But it had gotten around, I'd seen it on the anarchist listserv I'm on, and from the look of the crowd it'd been spread around the dataspheres, too. There were a few grumpy-looking troll and elf avatars in the peanut gallery. People were doing that a lot these days, uplinking via the gaming portals to preserve their anonymity and make a bit of a spectacle.

They didn't have to sit it out in the heat, or put up with the militant farter, but they couldn't speak their piece, either. There were five of us in line to do just that. Had to put up with the jibber-jabber of the Personnelectronic guy before that.

"Besides reducing the strain on the public coffers, a recent study has shown that 88% of the public prefers automated information delivery to lengthy on-hold times. Our artificial intelligence is... also..."

He paused here, got a whiff, and summed up.

"...Our AI is the best value on the market thank you."

The FEAR ROBOT boy smirked, and I knew it was him. The strange thing was that he had been fitted – he wasn't more than two feet ahead of me, and I could see the notch on his spine. So it would have been an easy thing to do, to plug in and install the bioware that stops you farting – they were practically giving the software away now. A whole Bodyworks suite came with the tax program I bought last year, not just the fart patch but a powernap one that would help with my insomnia, but I can't use it without being fitted. Part of me wanted to – my daughter has been after me to do it for ages, says I'm not safe without virus protection. But I can't see how getting a metal plug fused into to my nervous system isn't just as dangerous.

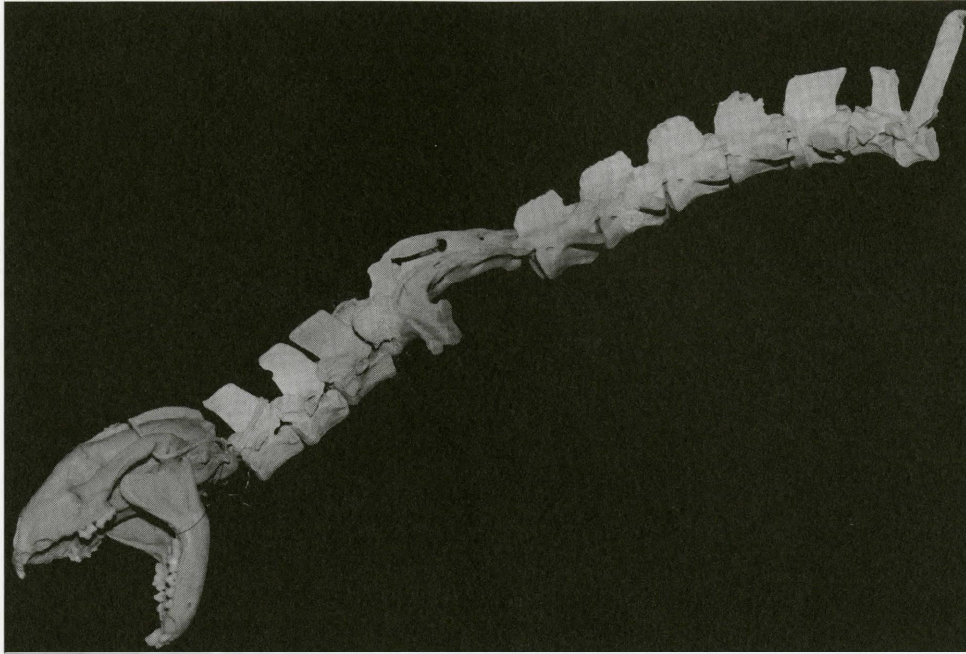
"I'm 85 years old," I tell her. "The only plug I want in me is the well lubricated one your dear mother slipped in me when we made sweet love." That usually ends the discussion.

There's another fart! That one's a real full-bodied one. Geez, that takes me back to my days on the line. Chili night. Yeah, looks like the kid really prepared for this meeting.

The union guy is winding up now. He keeps glancing over at the line-up, but he doesn't let the smell get to him. "Our workers, loyal workers who have been working for their entire lives for the city, are not about to be thrust aside for a spreadsheet program with voice synthesis. Not without being given fair compensation. Thank you."

He walks by us and mutters something like disgusting under his breath. It brings a sneer to the kid's face.

I sort of knew that sneer. Politeness, breeding, proper behavior – all things that serve the status quo and not the radical. Farting wasn't my kind of



political statement, but I guess being willfully stinky could be a subversive way of reclaiming humanness. As far as having a plug in his spine and being anti-technology, well, maybe he got fitted when he was too young to know better. I had just about decided that this kid was a new breed of revolutionary when he went opened his mouth.

"Last month I was able to talk to Judy about why my hours got messed up for my workfare cheque. Because of my fucking moron of a supervisor. Next month, who will I talk to? Judy 3000lx?" He sneered at the councilors. "When my rotting corpse is found, dead of starvation, I hope you robotfuckers are happy!"

He pumped his fist and there was a cheer from the peanut gallery. I looked up to see the troll and elf dancing around. He wrested the mike from its stand, and put it to his tattered behind.

I have to admit, it was an assblaster. It echoed through the chamber, and I could tell about half of the councilors were trying not to laugh. The lady next in line stood frozen, however, long after the perpetrator had stalked through the door.

I felt sorry for her. She was a familiar face, a woman as old as me with no particular political bent other than nosiness. She'd gotten her noseful already today, however, because instead of her usual ineffectual question, she just sat down.

The councilors were regaining their composure and checking their watches. That was good, because usually

they'd be doing retinal scans on the questioners to pull up their profiles – that never reflected well on me as a more-or-less full time shit disturber. I stepped carefully around the mike the kid had used to the second microphone. I knew how to milk a comic moment, and a few dry chuckles were heard.

"I was just hoping to clarify something," I started, taking off my glasses and blinking in the light. "The fellow who was with the union mentioned that the do-hicky you're replacing the ladies with is a program of some sort...?"

The company rep jumped to his feet. "I'm glad you brought that up, sir. No, it's not just a program — we deal strictly with artificial intelligence, which is quite different."

I nodded. Put on my glasses. "I was reading recently that in France, an AI that replaced a telemarketing workforce was able to legally unionize, have you heard about this?"

He stared back at me.

"And it turned out that the company ended up paying out more to the AI – or rather, the AI's owner – than they would have to a human staff?"

"Well, that's in France, sir, I... that's not... the laws are different."

I shrugged and walked out as the councilors started to murmur amongst themselves.

The kid was there with a few other tattered and dirty compatriots, recounting his glory. I stopped for a second, lifted a leg, and farted in solidarity.

May not have been my tactic, but hey – us shit disturbers gotta stick together.



Illustration by Sophie Forsyth

BONE BREAK FEVER DREAM

Why It's Better to be Sick in Thailand than the U.S.

By Mat Honan

Little, landlocked Laos is by far my favorite country in Southeast Asia. Vast swaths of the land remain completely inaccessible, except by boat or foot-trail. There are remote areas where people will stop and stare at you, giggling because they have never seen Westerners before and, let's face it, we're goofy-looking. Although the country certainly has a tourist circuit, it's easy to get off the track. And that's just what I did – especially after I caught a nasty case of dengue fever.

I'm into traditional medicine. I believe wholeheartedly in acupuncture, herbal remedies, and smoking copious amounts of medical marijuana to ward off diseases and keep my vision sharp. In Vietnam my wife Harper and I saw a traditional Chinese medical practitioner to cure Harper's stomach problems, and he did what no drug could. On a longtail boat in the Andaman sea, between Thailand and Burma, a monk applied a homemade tincture to my aching knee (the product of jumping off a bridge as a teenager because everyone else was doing it). He explained to me how I could permanently cure my pain by wrapping it in a ginger poultice, placing charcoal starter tablets on the top, and setting the whole shebang on fire.

I have yet to try it, but I'm not ruling it out. It sounds better than surgery.

When it comes to Western medicine, there is, for all practical purposes, no health care in Laos. In case of illness or injury, the guidebooks suggest getting the hell out of the country. I'm not a worrier by nature. I had my foot operated on in Kuwait, spent three days in a Tehran hospital, got stitched up in the Bahamas, and even had some dental work done in Bangkok. But there was no way I was going to see a doctor in Laos. Decent pharmaceuticals are nearly impossible to come by outside of Vientienne. As our friend Josh said of the hospital in Vang Viang "No thank you. I'll just sit here with the other Westerners, drink beer and eat Pringles."

It was in this environment, on a tiny river island in southern Laos along the Cambodian border that my wife and I came down with dengue fever. Dengue is a mosquito-borne illness similar to Malaria. The CDC estimates that it affects between 50 and 100 million people a year. The hemorrhagic form kills about 5% of the people who get it. It hits you fast: within a matter of a few hours we went from feeling fine to having soaring fevers,



body-aches, joint pain, and chills. There isn't much you can do about Dengue. The only treatment is to drink lots of water, take Tylenol, and get to a hospital as fast as you can. In southern Laos, this was a problem.

Since we couldn't leave until the next day, we were at least two days from Bangkok. We had three Tylenol. Before we left Chaing Mai and crossed the border into northern Laos, I stocked the first aid kit. I bought bandages, Band-Aids, alcohol, antibiotics, sleeping pills (transportation being so miserable in Laos that you need tranquilizers for some trips) and strong pain killers in case we broke something three days from a Thai hospital. But I'd neglected to get any Tylenol.

The next day we woke up feeling like hell, but looking forward to taking the air-conditioned minibus to Pakse, Laos. When we landed on the Mekong's northern bank,

however, we found out that the minibus was in fact a songtheau—a covered pickup truck with two rows of benches in the back. Nor were we to have our own, comfy, minibus seat. Instead 35 of us packed in the back of the thing while several more rode on the roof. I was feverish, in lots of pain, and had people literally swarming all over me. I couldn't straighten my legs, which were hurting like hell from the Dengue and old knee injury. Behind me, the tropical sun was smashing into my back and head. My wife, sitting across from me, looked equally miserable. This went on for three hours. I swallowed a Tylenol and prayed for Thailand.

We finally reached the border, and started to walk across. It was only about a kilometer, but in the 90-plus degree heat and intense mid-day sunlight with our loaded packs, it felt a lot longer and my fever started spiking again. Three hours and a few songtheaus later, we were buying train tickets to Bangkok in the Ubon Ratchithani train station. Whatever. We were there. Thailand. We'd made it.

Illustration by Audrey Niffenegger

When you think of Thailand, you probably don't think of health care. Maybe you should. Thailand — with its modern healthcare system and rock bottom prices — is a top destination for "medical tourists." The Kingdom's private hospitals have western-educated doctors and access to the latest medical technology. You can fly into Bangkok for a tummy tuck, spend a week on the white sand Andaman beaches, and fly back for a fraction of the cost of the surgery in the States.

I knew if we could get to the City of Angels, we'd be OK.

No matter what you need—from an organ transplant to dialysis to a Leksell Gamma Knife treatment center for brain surgery—odds are you can get it in Thailand cheaper with fewer hassles. The same malaria medicine that cost \$2 per pill in the US was only 2 Baht in Thailand, 1/43 the price. A "VIP Superior Room" at Bangkok Hospital, which you could mistake for a room at a three-star hotel, only sets you back 5,500 baht, or about \$130. The *New York Times* reports that open-heart surgeries,

which cost tens of thousands of dollars in the US, go for about seven grand at one of Bangkok's best hospitals. My dental work, which was going to cost me about \$3000 in San Francisco, was a mere \$75 in a clean, modern office in Bangkok, where a SUNY-educated dentist had set up shop. Admittedly, for those prices, you have to ask for anesthesia.

The Kingdom's health care system owes much to its decades-long status as a top destination for sex reassignment surgery (SRS), more commonly known as a sex change operation. Thailand doesn't have nearly as stringent requirements to have the operation as we do in the States. All it takes to get a MTF sex-change operation is about \$4,000, US. As a result, both doctors and patients have been flocking to Thailand since the 1970s. This has had a trickle-down effect on the entire health care system, which now rivals many in the West. When Dr. Carlos Urbani of the WHO came down with SARS, they medicated him to Bangkok, not Brussels. I knew if we could just get to The City of Angels, we'd be okay.

Dengue is called "break bone fever," and I found out why at about 2 AM on the train. I woke up with a 102 fever and intense pain that seemed to be radiating out from my spine and bones. Everything hurt, particularly my back and legs. Harper later described the sensation as one of having someone scrape your bones with a knife. It was incredible: I had to bite my pillow to keep from

www.sunsetsauna.com

Same Day Appointments Available

Special

Swedish Massage
59.95 for 1 Hour

With this Ad/Expires 2/28/04

- **Deep Tissue** (\$80 hr)
- **Deep Swedish** (\$65 hr)
- **Body Wraps**
- **Sauna • Facials**
- **Couples Massage**
- **Hot Stone Massage**

Midweek Special \$54.95
Weekdays 10:AM to 3:PM

Best Massage in San Francisco
.....SF Weekly

(800) 200-2559 1214 20th Avenue • SF (415) 753-2559

sunset

SAUNA • DAY SPA

OPEN DAILY

Gift

Certificates Available

All Major Credit Cards Accepted





screaming. I roused myself from the bed, and woke up Harper, who got wet rags to bring the fever down. After an hour or so, the fever broke, and I climbed back in my bunk and went to sleep.

We arrived in Bangkok at 6 AM, 24 hours after we first crossed the Mekong. We dropped our bags at a Banglumpu hotel and caught a tuk-tuk to a private hospital. Thai hospitals are models of efficiency — nothing like their counterparts in the States. We had hardly slouched through the emergency room doors before they were weighing us and taking our temperature. We saw the doctor within minutes, and he ordered a blood test. My wife was so dehydrated that they had to stick her repeatedly trying to get a vein. At one point I watched as the phlebotomist dug and dug in her arm trying to draw blood. Brutal. It was February 14. Happy Valentine's Day, sweetheart.

We spent most of the next three days in bed. The pain was so bad that we couldn't hold still; we had to writhe around and squirm constantly to abate the agony. The Tylenol kept the fever in check, but the pain was still unrelenting. My back and thighs felt like they'd been beaten with a pipe. My eyes ached. We didn't eat for a couple of days, too sick to do anything but drink water. Although the room was better than what we were used to, it was by no means comfortable. The bed was a slab of granite, and

outside on Khao Sanh Road, Eminem blared all day and all night.

On the fourth day, we returned to the hospital. By this point we also had a rash, and were itching all over: classic Dengue symptoms. The doctor told us what we already thought we knew. The good news was that we were on the verge of recovery if we had the rash. The bad was that my wife's platelet and white blood cell counts were too low, she was dehydrated, and needed nourishment.

She had to be admitted overnight and get on an IV. But she was fine. We were fine. It was all okay. The hospital was, predictably, much nicer than our hotel in Bangkok's backpacker-district and the madness of Thannan Khao Sanh. The food wasn't bad either— it was fresh and hot, much better than the grub you get in the West. The air conditioning was top-notch, and all things considered, a better value than many of the city's mid-range hotels.

I wouldn't recommend dengue fever. Sure, as far as tropical diseases go it's a good one to have, much better than, say malaria or cholera. But it's still a bummer, and not a memory you want to take home. I would, however, recommend getting treated in Thailand over America for most ailments (which says as much about our health care system as it does theirs). Thanks to 9-11, the Bali bombing, and SARS, airfares to Bangkok are lower than ever. If your insurer is denying you coverage, or you can't afford coverage at all, Thailand might be the answer. Just be sure to wear mosquito repellent.



Illustration by Courtney Utt

A SHAMEFUL INDULGENCE

The Greatest Hits Of Right-Wing Propaganda For Liberals

By Scrutator

Where is the conservative literature in your life? Reading *The Nation* and *The New York Times* will not keep your liberalism sharp. Only a crash-course in popular conservatism – from mildly annoying screeds to tomes that really make your teeth hurt – will keep you on your political toes. Furthermore, you can indulge in the intellectual equivalent of picking off a scab: reading through this stuff, nodding, and saying, “You know, this kind of makes sense.” For your edification, here are a few excellent places to start picking.

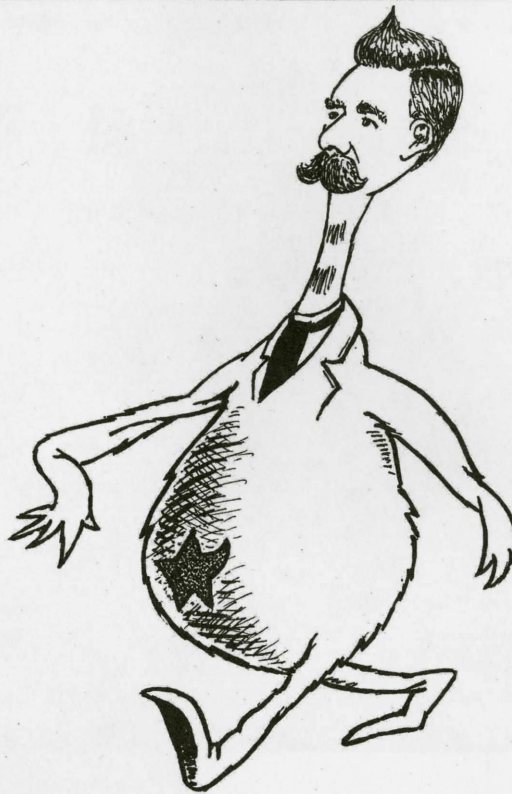
We’ll begin with the Second Lady of the United States, Dr. Lynne V. Cheney. The lady knows her Foucault, as you will see by reading her book *Telling the Truth: Why Our Culture and Our Country Have Stopped Making Sense and What We Can Do About It* (Simon and Schuster, 1995) – and in case you’re wondering, the answer to the questions in the nifty title are respectively, “radical academics” and “vote Republican.” Chapters one through six, shocking to say, have a lot of perfectly sensible comments about the wilder shores of postmodernism and critical race theory.

She’s supportive of teaching material in schools on “Women on the American Frontier” which avoids the “women-as-victims approach” and is “very much in the spirit of first-wave equity feminism” (p. 111). Nor does she argue that liberal/radical teaching should be absent from the academy, though she does end up giving the impression that nobody except Baudrillard clones ever get hired in American universities any more. But on the loony-ometer, Cheney’s book scores a distressingly low 3.5 out of ten. Radicals won’t much like it. Liberals (proper ones, not the monsters that Laura Ingraham would tell her kids about when reading out scary bedtime stories) won’t actually find it nearly as crazy as they

would expect (or maybe hope). I wonder if Dick knows?

This will not do. We must find much more insanity than Lynne has been able to provide. Better turn to Harry Stein’s *How I Accidentally Joined the Vast Right-Wing Conspiracy (And Found Inner Peace)* (Delacorte Press, 2000). What is it with these long titles? Is there a connection between conservatism and logorrhoea? This book chronicles the now-rather-familiar path of a former leftist who turns to the right as age and sagging skin catch up with him. But much of it is a mainstream set of arguments that moral character comes from private virtue and discipline, and that, say, helping destroy Nazism abroad while maintaining segregation at home is the sort of contradiction that makes American history an intriguing and nuanced web rather than a black-and-white (as it were) narrative (p. 153). Stein also has a good time skewering targets in terms that liberals will empathize with. Much of his book is a lengthy rant against a man who is “definitely a creep and maybe a sociopath” (p.181) – the forty-second President of the United States, Bill Clinton.

The “final straw” in his conversion, which came as early as 1992, was the Rickey Ray Rector case. Hmm, Harry, have to admit it – good call. In case you don’t remember, Rector was the brain-damaged black man on death row in Arkansas whose execution then-governor Clinton refused to stay. Clinton even flew back to deny the stay in front of the TV cameras. Famously, Rector left the dessert from his last meal behind so that he could come back and eat it later. I can’t do better than Stein on this one: “As a class, our politicians are undeniably cynical, but it is rare that one is able to rise quite so high being that cynical” (p. 31). Stein, however, saves the good stuff for elsewhere, and in particular, a lengthy



CRAIG SWANSON © www.perspicuity.com

The Star-Bellied Nietzsches had bellies with stars

disquisition on the evils of the French. "Like insecure people everywhere," he notes, "the French tend to be followers" (p.144). To back up this point, he brings up an outside authority who declares that the French are a "bunch of anesthetized sheep." Elsewhere, he wishes that Jimmy Breslin had been less compliant in apologizing for an incident where he called a young Korean-American colleague a "yellow cur" and a "slant-eyed cunt" (p. 221). This comes a bit oddly from someone who, a few paragraphs earlier, suggests that "no one ought to go around casually offending others; that is simple courtesy" (p.220). You'd think so, Harry. Still, the sane vs. frothing back-and-forth of this book give it a middling 6 on the loony-ometer.

Illustration by Craig Swanson

One has to save the best till last, and as ever, it's the guy who is probably the smartest of the lot who really hits the heights in the mouth-frothing stakes. I give you the Hon. Robert H. Bork, former judge on the US Court of Appeals, Supreme Court nominee, and, according to the blurb on the back of his book *Slouching Towards Gomorrah: Modern Liberalism and American Decline* (ReganBooks, 1996), "our country's most distinguished conservative scholar." All I can say is that I'd hate to meet the second-most distinguished one; he or she is probably still breathing through gills in a mud pool somewhere.

This book verges on parody. In a chapter on America's supposed obsession with equality, Bork attributes it all to "envy." As he so sagely points out, "Vacationing at the shore, I see a large yacht at anchor in the harbor. Though I may wish I had one, it is quite clear that I do not lack a yacht because another man has one."



(p. 68) Good point, Bob. Maybe if they'd let you get on the Supreme Court you could have afforded the big boat? As it is, though, it's possible that the huge percentage of Americans living in poverty and without health care may not consider the lack of yachts the most pressing reason for greater equality. But I never served on the US Court of Appeals, so what do I know?

Having said all that, the book is definitely worth the money if only for the careful textual deconstruction of the ditty "Big Man with a Gun" by the popular rock-musical rhythm combo Nine Inch Nails. Trent Reznor and Rockin' Bob would clearly not get on so well. As Bork puts it: "The music is generally little more than noise with a beat, the singing is an unmelodic chant... It is difficult to convey just how debased rap is" (p. 124). Too true, too true. I suppose it was after getting Bob's advice to stay away from the evils of rap that Supreme Court justices decided to stick to porno vids instead. For sheer willingness to concede nothing to the other side (something Mrs. Cheney avoids, possibly drawing on her experience as the wife of an elected politician who therefore understands the virtues of seeming moderate despite one's inclinations), and bombast dressed up as argument, this book must score a good 9 out of 10 on the

loony-ometer, with a point deducted because I really do like the argument on p. 258 that the rot set in to American academia when Yale Law School abolished Saturday classes.

There's a thread that runs through many of these books that seems to sum up the fundamental contradiction that makes their arguments unstable. It goes something like this: well, things were definitely bad a while ago (usually before the 1960s, the decade which also comes in for excoriation for the excesses it promoted) if you were a woman/black/disabled/Jewish/Irish/from Cleveland, but we've dealt with it and now things have GONE TOO FAR. This is actually a perfectly pragmatic conservative position. If the point of conservatism is, well, to conserve stuff, then being reactionary and asking for the clock to go back isn't much of a solution, and smart conservatives know it. A classic conservative position is to oppose change vocally till it happens, then run really fast round the ideological block and reappear silently, now committed to conserving things as they are now. Until the next set of changes.

You can see this more clearly by having a look at some of the books that are the spiritual predecessors of the Peggy Noonans, Borks and Cheneys. Before any of these, after all, we had titans such as Phyllis Schlafly and the mellifluously-monickered Stephen S. Shadegg. In this vein, do check out *The Challenge of Conservatism* by Paul A.

Illustration by Audrey Niffenegger

Sexson and Stephen B. Miles, Jr. (The Conservative Publishing Co, 1964). Sexson was one of the many voices behind the Barry Goldwater campaign in the 1964 election, and his musings on what conservatism meant then make interesting reading now.

In the year of the Civil Rights Act, Sexson and Miles generously allow that "Liberalism cannot be blamed for the whole century of segregation" (p. 89). Why, thank you, boys. But don't let those liberals start getting no smiles on their faces. For "liberals are to blame for the outbreaks of racial violence in the South" (p. 90). How so? Because "today, of course, it is the Negro, not the southern white, who is so vociferously demanding his 'rights'...The Negro's demand for freedom of access to educational facilities, lunch counters, toilets and so on,

has many earmarks of similarity with the segregationist's demand for 'freedom of association.'" (p. 90). (By the way, don't you just love those quote marks round the word "rights"?). In fact, "Negroes" and their demands seem to come up an awful lot in this short book of about 130 pages – and not just their demands to use toilets. In the middle of this fine and stirring call to "duty" and a "free society," the authors state explicitly what their position is on civil rights: "There is... no conservative principle for segregation any more than for integration. If the Negro really wants integration, the conservative can only wish him God-speed in head-on collision to win it, and at the same time make sure that the struggle does not mortally injure society" (p.93) Er, yes. Because "society" obviously doesn't include "Negroes," does it now?

This is the sort of thing that's worth remembering, given the way many conservative writers re-cast the past. In her book *Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness* (Adams, 1994), Peggy Noonan makes a useful distinction between "young Republicans" and "old Republicans": she doesn't mean just age, though that is a factor, but the new, conservative, anti-welfarist thinkers as opposed to the more traditional, post-FDR settlement World War II generation. "Old Republicans watch Jay Leno," she says, "Young Republicans listen to Rush." Yet one of her snappy dichotomies rings oddly: "Old Republicans had their good points: they supported civil rights. Young Republicans have their good points too: they do not suffer from racial embarrassment, and think race is a stupid basis on which to decide much" (p.179). But hang on — "Old Republicans" supported civil rights? Some did, sure. One of them, up to a point, was none other than Richard Nixon. (True fact: old Dick joined NAACP way before Kennedy ever did.) But the voices of Messrs Sexson and Miles seem to be another, rather more dominant thread from the civil rights era: not racists as such, but people who did not see that their carefully-honed pieties about freedom and character could not possibly ring true without condemning segregation rather than sticking to their then-position that it was none of society's business.

There you have it. According to conservative literature, "back then" was good (except for the stuff which was bad); "now" is bad. This stuff is more addictive than crack cocaine and twice as bad for you. Get some today. ☑

Just look at the difference it makes when you advertise in other magazine!



**You too can get
results like these!**

**You have nothing
to lose but
unsightly lack of
advertising!**

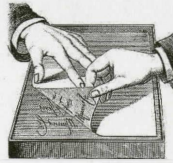


the magazine for people who defy categories

other

584 Castro Street #674

San Francisco, CA 94114



contributors

Charlie Anders (www.charlie-girl.com) is the webmistress of www.godhatesfigs.com.

Suzi Chang is an international photo artist.

Diane Goldberg is an agoraphobic misanthrope. The antithesis of Will Rogers, she has never met a person she could not heartily dislike. She writes fiction under the name d g k goldberg. Visit her at www.dgkgoldber.g.com.

Sophie Forsyth is 17 years old. She mostly works with bones in her art, but also paints and does sketches of imaginary creatures. She studies Art and Photography at Kings of Wessex in Cheddar, England, and plays guitar in a band.

Mat Honan has an acclaimed Weblog at www.honan.net.

Martha Keavney is a writer and artist. See her work at www.badlydrawncomics.com and www.modernhumorist.com.

Rachel McKibbens has been writing poetry since the catastrophic heartbreak of 2000. Her work has appeared in numerous anthologies and websites and has been frequently used in collegiate forensic competitions.

Jim Munroe <www.nomediakings.org> has written three science fiction novels and does a CD-ROM zine called *Novel Amusements*. His video game column in Toronto's alt-weekly *eye* is called *Pleasure Circuit*.

Teresa Moore <www.teresamoore.com>'s images bring to life a world at once sensuous, sophisticated, sometimes sweet yet always alluring. Moore's work is collected and exhibited throughout the U.S. and Europe.

Audrey Niffenegger is the author of the *Time Traveler's Wife*.

Adele Pham is a writer in San Francisco.

Kirk Read is the author of *How I Learned to Snap*. He is a baby witch, journalist and frequent performer who lives in San Francisco. He can be found at kirkread.com and reached at kirkread@earthlink.net

Heather Robinson <www.heatherrobinson.com> always wanted to be an artist when she grew up, but she didn't tell anyone until it seemed like the only choice left to make.

Matthue Roth just finished a novel about a sitcom about an Orthodox Jewish family. He's filmed for HBO's *Def Poetry Jam*, performed with Deepak Chopra and written several chapbooks, including *Yom Kippur A Go-Go*.

Joel Schalit is co-director of *Bad Subjects* and Associate Editor of *Punk Planet Magazine*. Joel is the co-editor of *Bridging the Discourse Gap: Bad Subjects 1997-2003*, forthcoming in April 2004 from Pluto Press.

Scrutator works in a country that is not the United States and not Mississippi either, in the hire education sector: if you pay him, you can hire him.

Cecilia Tan writes science fiction, erotica, and baseball history from her home in the Boston area. Find out more about her numerous books and publishing projects, including *Circlet Press*, at www.ceciliatan.com.

M. Trucco lives, works, and plays music in the city of San Francisco.

Jack Turnbull creates the mini-comic *Apollo Astro*, and his work has appeared in *Clamour Magazine's* Zine Yearbook.

Courtney Utt likes to collect vintage plastic cameras. She can be reached at courtney@uttwerk.com. 

Of course, some people do go both ways - The Scarecrow, The Wizard of Oz

THE BISEXUAL RESOURCE CENTER

www.biresource.org

Our Statement of Purpose

We believe in a world where everyone's love is celebrated, regardless of gender(s), that acknowledges people as whole and indivisible, and where they should not have to leave any part of their heritage of identity at the door; and we believe that oppression on the basis of sexual identity is intertwined with all other oppressions. The BRC is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation dedicated to researching and providing information and educational resources to the general public and interested organizations.



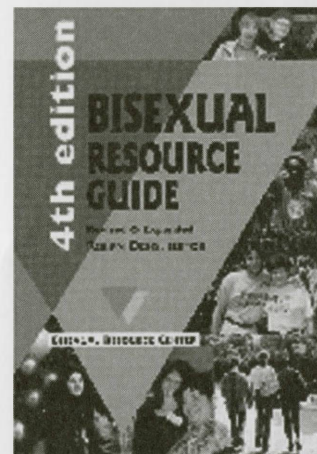
What we Do

Our website provides access to all BRC pamphlets (free), links to every on-line bisexual group in the world; opportunities for bisexual writers; information for bisexual youth, parents & teachers; a listing of bi conferences & events; safer sex information; political action links; bisexual speakers, & the Bisexual Book, Video and Music Stores. We publish the Bisexual Resource Guide. And much more.

The Bisexual Resource Guide

The 4th edition of the Bisexual Resource Guide lists more than 2400 groups from over 66 countries. The editorial section includes Bi the Book and Reel Bisexuals, sections listing bisexual-themed books and films with descriptions and commentary, & "SAFER & SEXier," timely information & tips for communicating with partners and making safer sex more enjoyable.

"The Bisexual Resource Guide is an essential resource for bisexuals and bi-questioning people in search of support and community," said Fritz Klein, M.D., noted author of the classic *The Bisexual Option* and director of The Bisexual Foundation.



Opportunities For Everyone

The Bisexual Resource Center is an all-volunteer organization. Volunteering is fun and rewarding. From being a regional editor or contributor for the Bi Resource Guide to helping write grant proposals or ads like this one, or working on our website, you'll meet and work with lively and enthusiastic people and learn more than you would believe! A little time, a lot of time-there's a place for you. Some volunteer jobs are local to Boston, but some can be done from anywhere in the world. For more details visit www.biresource.org/volunteer. If you are interested email volunteer@biresource.org or call 617-623-5535.

