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March/April 2003
Issue 19

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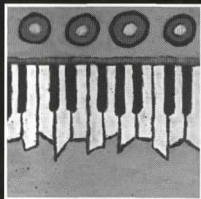
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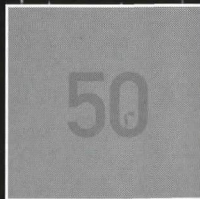
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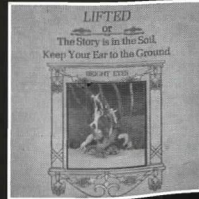
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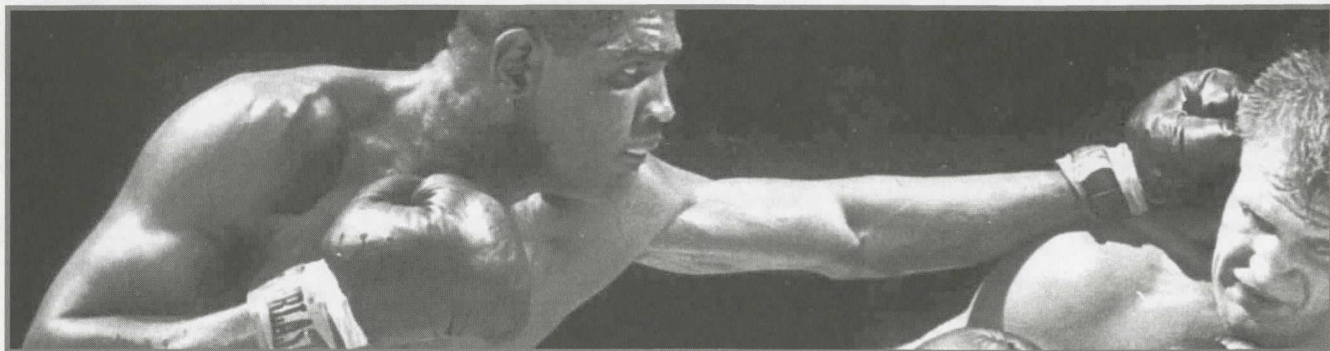


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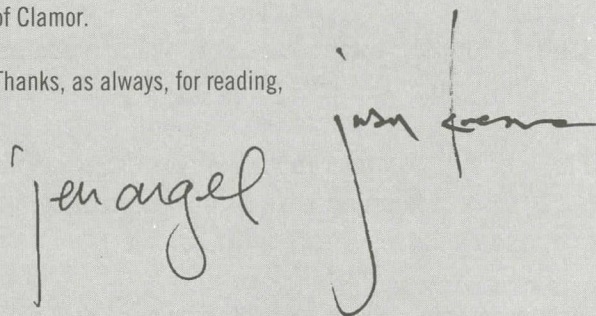
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Few people know that co-editor Jason was a competitive downhill skier or that he played high school football on a state championship team. Yeah, he stood in the middle of the football field in the fall of 1991 with the rest of his teammates, helmets in the air, yelling ecstatically after reaching a goal they had worked toward for years. Ask him to tell you about it sometime. It's pretty compelling stuff.

It seems sometimes that an interest in independent politics, culture, media, or art is mutually exclusive to any interest in sports and recreation. Of course we all know that professional sports can be pretty messed up in a lot of ways (corruption, homophobia, sexism, and racism to name just a few). But the elements of personal and team achievement and self discipline needed to reach desired goals is pretty universal. And there are anarchist soccer tournaments, indy rocker fantasy baseball leagues, and spontaneous kickball games happening in some of the most unlikely places. So why are sports written off as something reserved for mainstream Americans? Everywhere, just like with film or music, there are pockets of sports enthusiasts doing their own thing and making waves. Whether you're working to achieve our personal best through practicing T'ai Chi (p. 31) or competing in a triathlon (p. 31), or you are enjoying the social nature of sports (like bowling at the same alley for 20 years with great friends (p. 13)), we know that we all need a little more recreation in our lives and that all too often work wins out over play. This issue of Clamor is filled with people who enjoy sports for all the right reasons, and those who know where to direct a little constructive criticism toward our traditional games. It is our pleasure to celebrate these people in this issue.

Even more than that, we want people to lead less sedentary lives. We all encourage each other to become more active in our communities, in making art and media, and in each other's lives in general. And it's really about leaving behind the passive life of watching TV and consuming culture instead of making it. We hope you find some affirmation or inspiration in some of the people in this issue of Clamor.

Thanks, as always, for reading,



P.S. We've neglected to mention it for a couple issues, but Clamor is now (and has been for about 6 months) printed using vegetable, soy-based inks. This issue also marks an experiment in using uncoated stock (that is also chlorine- and acid-free). Let us know what you think: info@clamormagazine.org

CLAMOR's mission is to provide a media outlet that reflects the reality of alternative politics and culture in a format that is accessible to people from a variety of backgrounds. CLAMOR exists to fill the voids left by mainstream media. We recognize and celebrate the fact that each of us can and should participate in media, politics, and culture. We publish writing and art that exemplify the value we place on autonomy, creativity, exploration, and cooperation. CLAMOR is an advocate of progressive social change through active creation of political and cultural alternatives.



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Worst Activist Meeting Ever

Reading the latest issues of *Clamor* was like being in the worst activist meeting ever. Constant whining about privilege, and falling over each other to be more politically correct than the last person, with much introspection about why the working class who you all hold so dear is still so alien, like a strange foreign object, even as you shove middle-class politics down our throats.

As for the sex issue (Nov/Dec 2002), it makes Trotsky's *Their Morals and Ours* seem like an erotic thriller. Somehow, thinking about how horny emo teenagers can jack off and even somehow feel morally superior about how they do that doesn't do anything for me.

We just cannot allow the most liberal, identity-politics, new age crap be the legacy of the anarchopunk and hip-hop/rap and basically white/black/etc militant working class culture of the last 20 years. Haven't we all had enough do-gooder, spineless politics for one lifetime?

A concerned reader
Reynoldsburg, OH

Not All Proprietary Software Is Evil

"Softwares" (Jan/Feb 2003) by Kathleen Glover (which I enjoyed) raised some issues with which I have some relevant experience. Specifically, the author's statement "The simplest reason to support open source software is that it's better" is a gross over-generalization.

I am a professional software engineer. Users choose my company's software over the freely available open source alternatives, because our proprietary code provides them with better features, quality, and performance. We provide updates and support, because we want customers to keep choosing our software.

The fact that Microsoft publishes proprietary software doesn't make all publishers of proprietary software nasty, hegemonic behemoths. The fact that free open source applications are available doesn't make them better.

In creating software for a specific technical or artistic task, a distributed herd of hobbyist programmers (no matter how enthusiastic) will rarely outperform the focused efforts of well-funded experts.

B. B.
Los Angeles, CA

Singularity Hypothesis Is Laughable

I'm so tired of hearing the pseudoscientific hokum of Ray Kurzweil and Bill Joy regurgitated over and over again, as James Bell did in his article

"Technotopia" (Jan/Feb 2003). To set the record straight: the notion that our society, in all its technological glory, is approaching a "singularity" (at which the machines presumably take over and get back at us for centuries of enslavement as toasters and rental cars) is about as valid as the notion that teledildonics will soon replace real sex.

As Bell notes, the notion underlying all of this is that convergence of robotics, nano-, and biotech will spawn what is literally new, artificial life. Only problem is that none of these disciplines is up to it, collectively or individually. For example: the threat posed by nanotech boils down to a decades-old end-of-the-world scenario (known as the "gray goo" hypothesis) in which microscopic self-replicating machines run amok and turn all available energy and material into more microscopic machines, i.e. gray goo. Fun idea, but its inventors neglected the fact that any microscopic critter, be it natural or human-made, must cope with the same physical constraints that our world imposes on all life. That is to say, we might someday create an artificial bug comparable to existing bacteria and pathogens, but the construction of one so omnivorous is beyond preposterous — were it possible, nature would have likely done it already. (Which is also to say, the gray goo hypothesis is an example of how we overestimate our powers of design while underestimating the rate of evolution on earth — 99% of all species that ever lived are now dead, and in a single lifetime mother nature tests more new designs than we could ever hope to catalogue.)

Few of the materials we create have even one-tenth the durability, strength, or versatility of natural skin, bone, and muscle. And speaking as a researcher who counts computational neuroscientists among his close friends, I can tell you that the backbone of this whole singularity — the notion that machines will become smart, like us, is beyond laughable. Just having a computer that can do as many calculations (and that term can only be used in the abstract when referring to natural brains) as a human brain doesn't mean it will in any way be sentient. We already have computers that are as intelligent as roaches and possibly small mammals — do they run amok? Have they woken up and started acting independently?

The one real threat among Bell's list of hobgoblins is biotech — but probably only for the very mundane reasons that GMO crops contaminate native seed and our inevitable tinkering with our own genome will probably lead to many, many thalidomide-style incidents.

The problem with lavishing so much attention on these paper tigers is that it distracts from the real issues, the real threats. As the pre-eminent computational and physical force on Earth, and likely to remain so for the foreseeable future, we remain the greatest danger to ourselves and to this planet. The "sixth extinction" that Bell so glibly attributes to the convergence of man and machine

is much more directly the result of explosive population growth and an ever-more-voracious capitalist maw. We'll get far more mileage tinkering with our social technologies than we'll ever get wringing our hands over a vision of the future fueled more by our love of stary-eyed science fiction fantasies than by scientific fact.

Christopher Mims
Atlanta, GA

N17 Misrepresented

I was very disappointed with your article on the November 17 Revolutionary Organization that appeared in *Clamor* ("Ready, Aim, Misfire" Nov/Dec 2002). Not only is the article filled with inaccuracies and baseless speculations, the author basically parrots what is already being said by the corporate media.

The article tries to paint the picture of N17 as an isolated group of adventurists. However, if you actually talk to Greek activists and analyze the Greek political climate, the situation appears to be quite different. For instance, it has been reported in the corporate media on more than one occasion over the years, that N17 is extremely difficult to crack down on, not only because of their underground sophistication, but because they have so much sympathy, from Greek society, and even within the Greek state.

I have several friends that recently traveled through Greece, one of whom grew up there. She claims that nearly everyone she spoke to in her home town supports N17 and hopes that they continue carrying out actions.

It is not clear to me whether or not "N17's many killings and attacks against US military concerns and Greek businesses meant little" — but it is clear to me that not once, not anywhere, has significant and widespread social change been achieved without the use of revolutionary violence. Pacifism is not an adequate tool for change because the ruling class has armed itself precisely because it is not interested in peace. Pacifism therefore can only be used to achieve minor structural adjustments within an imperialist system of state control (if even that). N17 recognizes this obvious point and they are doing what so few are willing to do: retaliate against the murderers and blood thirsty merchants using the only language that they understand.

Strategy aside, what is worst about the article is the total lack of sympathy with those arrested for allegedly being involved in N17. You claim that the police "crackdown" on N17 reveals that they're just a small group that lacks participation from students and rank & file workers. Even if this is true, it wouldn't mean that N17 is ineffective, irrelevant, or counter-revolutionary. But sources show that this is not true, and that N17 evolved out

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EQUAL will be hosting the fifth annual Mid-Atlantic Womyn's Rights and Empowerment Conference the weekend of March 28, 2003. For more information, please check out the EQUAL website (<http://orgs.jmu.edu/equal>) or e-mail jmuequal@yahoo.com.

THE BLACK BLOC PAPERS: All the major communiqués issued by the North American Black Bloc prior to and following every major demonstration from Seattle (N30) through Quebec (A20), with commentary and analysis. Available directly through the editors at: Green Mountain Collective BO Box 76 Montpelier, VT 05601 or through AK Press online at www.akpress.org

of student movements and the class struggle and is a respected part of the revolutionary tradition in Greece. If N17 is small, so what? And more to the point, the only reason we have to believe that they're small is because the police tell us so and because few of their members have been caught.

You charge that N17 is a "family clique" because two brothers were arrested for alleged involvement in the group. I'm sorry to inform you that it's not only the two brothers that have been arrested. Many others have also been arrested or detained. Most of those accused of N17 membership claim they are innocent, and we have every reason to believe that they're telling the truth. The authorities have not been able to penetrate N17 for 20+ years and they are only doing so now that they're under pressure to arrest N17 members to prevent them from disrupting the Olympics, which are planned to be held in Greece sometime in 2003. Many Greeks believe that these arrests are being made merely to terrorize, as evidenced by a growing number of Greeks wearing "I am NOT a member of November 17" t-shirts.

For a more in-depth, well-rounded analysis of November 17 and revolutionary movements in Greece, I recommend issues #9-11 of Green Anarchy magazine. They are available for \$2 each from Green Anarchy, PO Box 11331, Eugene, OR 97440. Email: greenanarchy@tao.ca

Eric Blair
Toledo, OH

Well my response is basically that "Eric Blair" (George Orwell's real name, har har), though he claims that I made a large number of factual errors, actually named only one factual error. That was a poor translation of Greek text about the number of police killed. It's worth noting that he also makes two transparent factual errors in his letters, claiming a) that only two brothers were arrested (three were) and that b) I made the claim that these were the only people arrested. I do not.

I find it amusing that he sides with the corporate media, peddling its "Greece is soft on terrorism line because PASOK are secret Commies" as a demonstration for widespread support for N17, then accuses me of parroting the corporate media.

I find it ridiculous that he assumes I'm a pacifist or arguing for a pacifist position, especially since the article quotes Trotsky, once the leader of a little something called the Red Army. He simply assumes that all violence against the state is revolutionary violence. There is a clear political differ-

ence between the violence used by an oppressed class and violence used by a tiny clique.

I find it bizarre that he thinks that talking to "Greek activists" (by which is he obviously means anarchist supporters of N17) would give him a better estimation of N17's affect and status nationwide than actually talking to a large number real Greek people -- there are widely divergent opinions on N17 throughout the country, especially among the broader activist community.

"My friend told me that everyone in her home town likes N17" isn't a powerful argument. Can he speak or read Greek? I can, and have three Greek-language TV channels and access to significant amounts of literature, both above and underground, in the language. N17 isn't widely lauded -- there have been some smiles, some eye-rolling, lots of conspiracy theory, and traffic-accident rubbernecking since the crackdown.

He also insists that N17 emerged from the student protests and class struggle. No shit. I spend several paragraphs saying the same exact thing. But N17 degenerated greatly since then, because it was cut off from the mass politics of these movements. Far from even being unique, this is basically what happens whenever a movement splinters into cell activity. That's the whole point of the article.

He also misses the bald fact that the police penetrated N17 not because they suddenly gained magic powers due to pressure applied by the Olympic Committee, but because a wayward bomb outed a member of the group!

Basically, "Eric Blair" sets up a strawman of pacifism, pretends that I disagree with him on N17's origins, and fails to substantiate his own claim: that N17's terror campaigns showed true "revolutionary solidarity." The null-effect of its campaign over nearly 30 years (not one reform, not one victorious strike, not one theoretical breakthrough, not one important mass movement sparked by N17) shows the power of my analysis.

Nick Mamatas
Jersey City, NJ

submissions

Clamor is built from everyday folks like you. Please take some time to contact us if you have any ideas that you would like to see in Clamor.

Clamor accepts submissions of printed work and artwork on an ongoing basis. On our website, www.clamormagazine.org, under the heading "participate," there are deadlines and topic suggestions which may help you determine when, and what, to contribute. However, many works are accepted regardless of whether they fit with the cover story, or theme, of an issue.

Got an idea? Let us have it! Tell us about what is important to you, what is going on in your community, or someone (or something) you find inspiring. If a magazine was made just for you, what would you want it to include?

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Josh Medsker's (p. 62) work has appeared in the *Anchorage Press*, the *SF Bay Guardian*, *Frictionmagazine.com* and other fine publications. He is currently studying creative writing in Austin, TX, and publishing the literary zine, *Twenty-Four Hours*. He can be reached at increasethegrease@elvis.com.

Erik Rose (p. 24) is originally from the town of Etch-a-Sketches but now lives in Columbus, OH. He is a staff writer and illustrator *Tastes Like Chicken*. His parents always thought he would grow up to be weird — they just didn't think he'd be that weird. See more of his work and contact him through www.tlchicken.com.

Justin Shady (p. 17) knew from an early age that he wanted to play music. But since he never learned to play an instrument and can't sing worth a damn, he got into photography. He runs his own humor and entertainment publication called *tastes like chicken*. Check Justin at justinshady.com and tlchicken.com.

Charles Shaw (p. 27) is an author, political activist, and the Editor-in-Chief of *Newtopia Magazine* (www.newtopiamagazine.net). His debut novel, *Unfinished Portraits*, will arrive in stores sometime next year. His work appears regularly in *Newtopia*, *Clamor*, *Punk Planet*, *UR Chicago*, and *3am Magazine*. He lives in Chicago in the shade of the skyscrapers, lovin' every minute of it.

Becky Sicking (p. 31) lives with a musician husband, two cats, and a rambunctious, albeit delightful, five year old. She surprised everyone by significantly changing her unhealthy lifestyle for the better. Before anyone concludes that she's gotten too serious, she'd like to point out her eternal love of a good steak, a raunchy joke, and loud punk rock. She can be reached at beckysgong@aol.com.

Shepherd Siegel's (p. 32) article in this issue is based on his book-in-progress about how play is social transformation. Doc Siegel is the former bass player for Swingmatism and Thin Ice. He now leads the College and Careers initiative for Seattle Public Schools. He can be contacted at bamalama@mindspring.com.

Ariana Vigil (p. 40) is a Ph.D. student in Chicana/o Literature at Cornell University. She is a die-hard vegan who gets her kicks writing letters to the editor, dumpster-diving, and secretly carrying on a close personal relationship with her cell phone. She can be reached at veganspeed1980@hotmail.com.

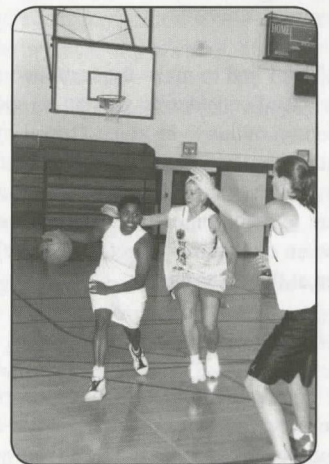
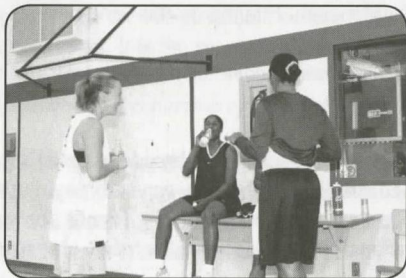
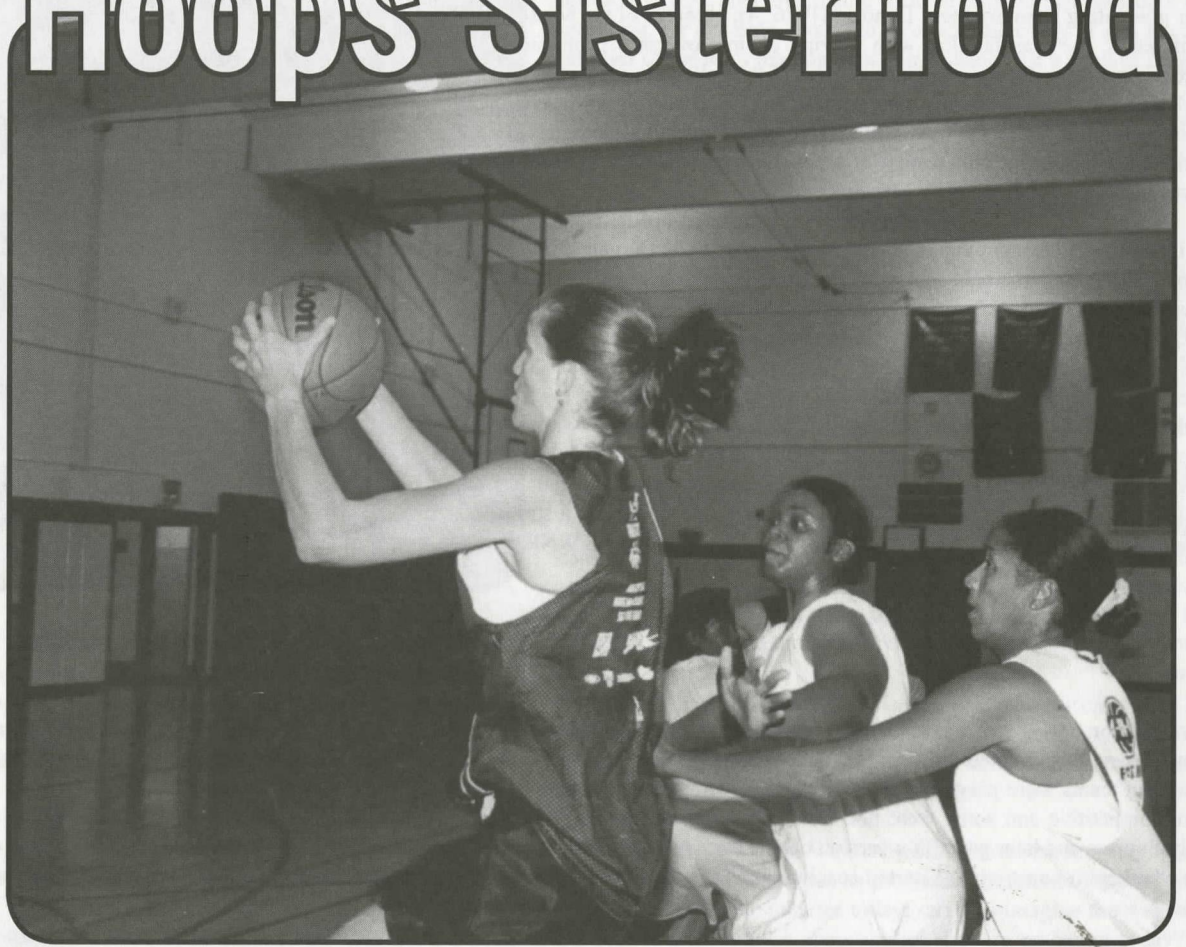
Emilia Wiles (p. 60, 65) currently resides in Brooklyn, NY and works as the Program Director of the International Center of Photography School at Hunts Point Community Center, a program that offers free photography classes in the South Bronx. Emilia has been the Art Director and Program Director of the hip hop activist magazine *Redeye*. Email her at ewiles@wesleyan.edu.

Christine Wong (p. 55) is a Chinese American artist, illustrator, and designer living in Oakland, CA. You can see her work on street lamps in East Oakland, galleries like ProArts Gallery (Oakland), and at ChristineWong.org.

JT Yost (p. 29) doesn't enjoy organized sports, but he did own a copy of the Atlanta Falcon's "Falcon Fever" 45. It wasn't as good as the "Pac-man fever" album. Sequels never are. Check out www.jtyost.com. Coming soon: www.jtyostll:electric.boogaloo.com

Mickey Z. (p. 39) is the author of *Saving Private Power: The Hidden History of The Good War*, *Forgotten New York: Small Slices of a Big Apple*, and *The Murdering of My Years: Artists and Activists Making Ends Meet*. He can be reached at mzx2@earthlink.net.

Divine Secrets of the **Hoops Sisterhood**



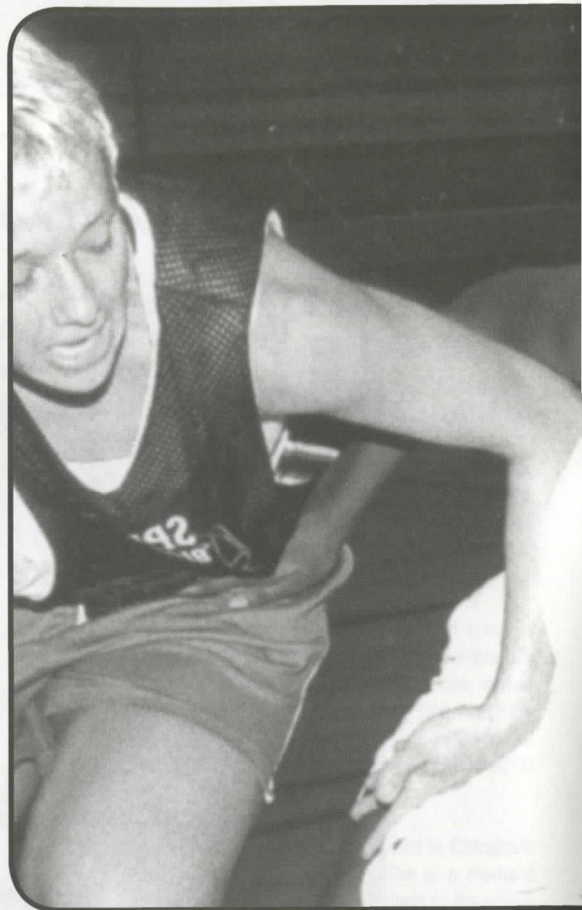
**An interview with Lady Express teammates
Petra Jackson and Paulette Martin**

interview by Tess. Lotta
photos by Brandon Faloona

Laurie Hodges, a forward for California State University at Northridge's Lady Matadors, labors to block Petra Jackson, a number two guard for the P and P Lady Express. Clearly one of the more experienced players, Jackson shows no fear as she glides in another two. Teammate Paulette Martin moves down court for defense, wrapping up a manageable 71 to 58 win over the Lady Matadors. Easier pickings for the Lady Express compared to running with their hometown WNBA team, the Seattle Storm. But, for this club team, taking it to the glass is as sweet as it gets.

The P and P Lady Express is a semi-pro exhibition team of post-collegiate players stretching from Western Washington University to Indiana-Purdue. As a female athlete, Jackson faced a grim landscape when considering a basketball career after graduating from Southern Illinois in 1986. An alumnus of the Missouri Valley Conference, she was familiar with playing against overseas professional teams hired as opponents for the exhibition portion of the collegiate season. Jackson set to work with the idea of gathering other professional-level players who were searching for opportunities within the U.S., and making use of her college contacts, she began marketing a U.S.-based club team to coaches. With the team now in Seattle, Jackson shares management duties with Martin.

Jackson and Martin share a legacy with generations of female athletes halted by institutional sexism. Yet common to the early Title IX generation, they are humble about their personal achievements while grateful to a law that ensured them equal access to interscholastic and intercollegiate athletics. Women's sports, in general, are just beginning to experience the positive influence of Title IX. A recent statistic reported an increase in female participation in sports of over 300 percent since 1971; the year Title IX became law. Despite a growing opposition, largely made up of male coaches and athletes whose sports programs have traditionally enjoyed healthier budgets than interest, Title IX is credited for enabling women's basketball to take root. And Jackson and Martin's resolve grows that much stronger. Positive about the chances of club teams like theirs growing into a strong career option for women players, they cross their fingers for a successful WNBA.



Clamor: Why didn't you play overseas in the pro leagues when you graduated?

Petra Jackson (PJ): There was not a lot of opportunity to play overseas then because they wanted only six feet and over Americans. But the European teams were playing exhibition games over here and some were competitive and some were not. So I organized the St. Louis Lady Express and later gave [that version of] the team away to someone who kept it going while I started coaching high school and Junior college.

So you became your own agent, manager, and promoter for the Lady Express?

PJ: Yes, I had to make the team and market it across the U.S. to colleges. And considering we had no sponsorship, we had to stay within a certain radius to be able to travel by van. I networked with coaches that I knew and planted the idea that playing us locally and meeting our expenses was financially better. And another very important element to communicate here is that then, as now, it is always hard for women club teams to get [corporate] sponsorship; they will sponsor men at the drop of a hat.

So how do you make money?

PJ: You really don't without sponsors to cover costs. The more teams you play, the more money you have to put out for travel and other expenses, like taking time off from your job or career if need be. We do fund raisers to try and get the money together. One of our teammates works for the Sonics/Storm organization and we were able to hold a raffle with tickets and an autographed basketball. We also walked around to a bunch of small businesses to get donations. It is

definitely hard. I mean, I wish the Lord would just bless us with a sponsor; it really would not take much.

One of your teammates recently went to the WNBA and then to China to play, and a few have landed try-outs. Does playing with the Lady Express open doors to other opportunities?

PJ: For some of the players, it is definitely an opportunity to be seen and network, and for some of us, it is because we enjoy doing it.

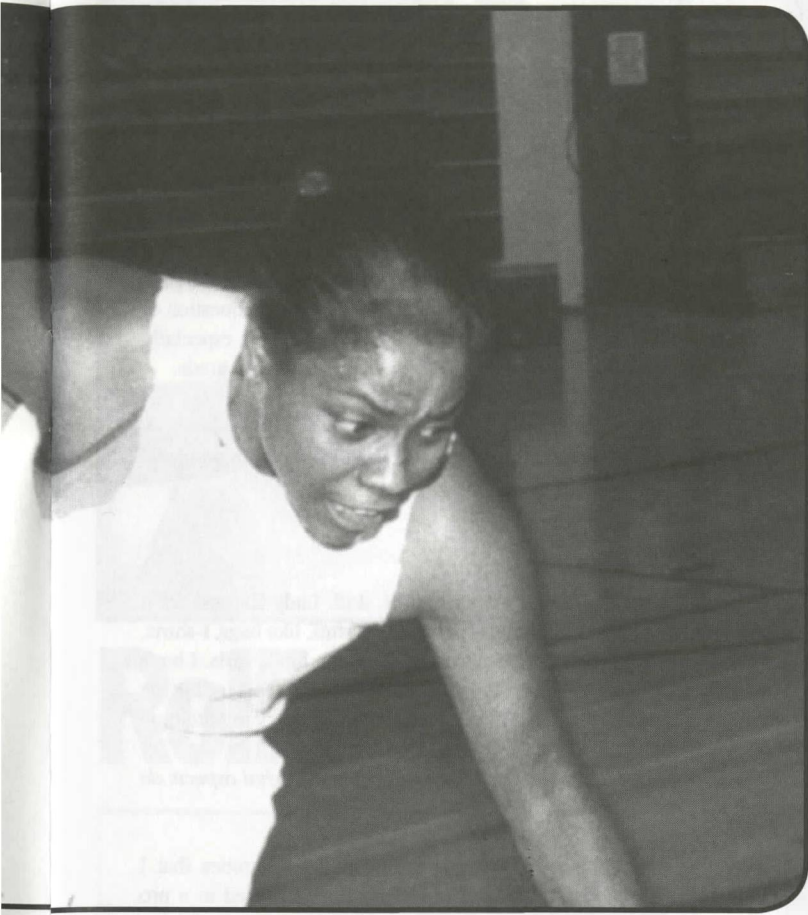
Paulette Martin (PM): It is also that once you have been an athlete through college you are used to being in shape and maintaining a certain level of athleticism. Playing on this level assures competition.

Has running the team become any easier with the visibility of the WNBA?

PJ: Not for club teams because the broader women's game, in general, is undervalued still. Hopefully they can start paying the women in the WNBA better so I can contact all my friends for sponsorship. The male [professional] players sponsor the men's club teams, but they can afford it

A Washington Times article reported the minimum WNBA veteran salary at \$40,000. My research has revealed that most veterans make just over that, and the league average is about \$55,000. I have also read that many of the players have second jobs or play overseas to make expenses like trainers and family. Are there other more lucrative opportunities for women to play professionally besides the WNBA?

PJ: The teams overseas are continuing to be strong, and there is the [Australian] WNBL. But neither the WNBA, WNBL, nor overseas



pays enough, really, although overseas can pay better than the WNBA. And when I went to one of the WNBL pro camps a couple of years ago it was only the top four people that got paid anyway. At that time it was around \$3,500 and an apartment for the first player, for the season, and then down to \$1,000 for the fourth top player.

Clearly money isn't the only battle for female players. What discrimination do you feel you have encountered as players and businesswomen in a male dominated sport and industry?

PM: I have chosen to see it less like discrimination and more as trying to make interest. The public needs to have interest. How many households are going to watch the WNBA finals vs. the NBA? In our case, doing a female club team, it is the sponsorship that is hard to get.

Is the lack of sponsorship a reflection of cultural values?

PM: I can agree with that, yes. But I believe, eventually, this will become established – it will become a big thing. It didn't start out where every household was watching the NBA, but it will definitely take us longer than it has the men. It is happening somewhat. I mean some of the women's [college] programs are better heard of than the men's. When you think of the Tennessee Volunteers, for example, you think of women's basketball. Same with Louisiana Tech. Even the guys we play ball with think of women's basketball with Louisiana Tech because the team has been good and dominant all these years.

Do you feel Title IX has contributed to changing attitudes and improved conditions for women's athletics?

PM: Definitely. Title IX opened doors that were not available to women. Title IX is about visibility and popularity; it is an equal distri-

bution thing. Colleges are putting money into the sports that have interest, and women's basketball is now seeing higher public interest because of the equal opportunities created by Title IX. Don't get me wrong here but college wrestling, for example, is not as well attended overall compared to women's basketball. Don't blame Title IX for the public taking an interest when offered a choice.

PJ: How much revenue does field hockey generate compared to football, or men's and women's basketball? Colleges are looking at their [sports program] budgets and seeing what generates money for the university. They are reevaluating with the mindset that considers what wrestling, for example, means to a certain university. If you have the families of the team making up a thin audience for a team of 20 guys, and possibly up to 15 are on scholarship – room, board, tuition, fees, and books -- that's a lot of money. They would have to restructure eventually looking at the big picture.

Do you feel we are ready to do away with Title IX then?

PM: No, we definitely still need it because with it colleges were, and still are, forced to recognize interest in women's sports. Only in our lifetime have we started to see the benefits of Title IX. Even the game has evolved as interest was supported. Women's basketball was played at half-court at one time. It was six on six, three played defense and three played offense all the time.

PJ: It is two-fold. They are deleting some men's sports programs as well as women's because of the money factor, so that is something that has to be done, unfortunately. If that was the simple situation then I can understand the questioning of Title IX. For the time being Title IX staying strong is important to women's sports. We are not ready yet to accept and compensate women athletes on an equal basis, be it high school to pro.

I look at the cultural symbols of value and it is pretty clear that Title IX is important. In Seattle alone, there are two massive, brand new, state-of-the-art men's sports complexes. What does that say to society about the value of women's sports?

PM: That is exactly right. We have just achieved the first step. We are just beginning to see women as professional athletes. I mean look at the quality of female athletes today; can you imagine the women of the past if they had the opportunities that are emerging today? We would have firmly established leagues, rather than teetering or bankrupt ones, as well as, hopefully, equal pay scales. There are records that are still standing set by the women of yesterday, and that was achieved without what support we do have today. The caliber of women athletes, with support from things like Title IX, will just continue to improve.

PJ: And I don't think the men are worth all that money they are paying them. Look at the mess it causes with salary wars and conflicts.

As women athletes are becoming sports stars, the biology issue we can never escape is heating up. The WNBA is playing a PR balancing act between selling sex via women players and imaging them as serious athletes. How do you think the cultural status quo of marketing women as sex objects affects the sport?

PM: It depends what you are in it for. For example, Anna Kournikova, she does not give a damn. People get mad at her because she is making money from the doors playing tennis has opened for her. You can't be mad at that. Professional sports is a business, female athletes view themselves more and more as businesswomen, so if you look at it that

way it is a matter of opinion. Look at Lisa Harrison as a prime example. She was considered the best looking player in the WNBA and she was asked to pose for Playboy, but they wouldn't pay her what she wanted so she refused. And I don't blame her. How much do they pay Michael Jordan for keeping his underwear on? Consider how much they would shell out if he were naked.

So what you're saying is that by using our sexuality the stakes will be higher for women in terms of return on the investment and public opinion?

PJ: For me, if they asked me to do a Jockey commercial with short briefs and what not, I would stand there [topless] with my nipples covered and my muscles ripping out. Why not flaunt it if you feel good about yourself? But they are certainly going to pay me what the guys make.

You have illustrated the modern feminist argument on this subject; do not dumb down or hide our sexuality vs. what message is our ownership of it sending when we cooperate in sexualizing ourselves.

PM: You know what broke that barrier was Venus and Serena Williams. They did it on their own, which is the important part. They did their thing, the clothes and hair on the court because they wanted to, because they feel good as women athletes, not because an advertiser told them to be like that. They are being themselves. What they are saying about Sue Bird, like the writer in the Seattle Weekly constantly commenting on how beautiful she is like it is more valuable than her game; that is not under her power.

And at the same time, she should not apologize for his choice to be a culture pimp rather than a sports writer. It was easy for him to sell a basketball pin-up story to his editors rather than a basketball player story because culturally we are trained to value how closely she resembles the beauty myth over her talent, and the article reflected that. How would she control that?

PM: I am OK with him mentioning her looks. But he should have done what sports writers do and written about her game in context with her ability, not in context with her beauty. And Venus and Serena get the same thing. Look at the camera angles next time. It is on their butts and chest more than anything.

PJ: They wouldn't do that, though, without the outfits.

PM: Not as much, maybe, but they did it before that too. It has always been about that anyway, so why not be in control of it yourself, flaunt it your own way before they do. That, for me, is the difference between Venus and Serena and the Sue Bird article.

At least the WNBA, as a visible institution, is having a dialogue about it. I have submitted my opinions to players on their chat boards.

PM: They are. And in a player's mind the commercials and endorsements are how you know you are going somewhere in your career. It gets back to public interest. Caress and Calgon need to get into the act (laughs).

PJ: Yes, I like that idea; 'After a hard day's work Calgon, take me away.' But it seriously should be like that, just like the Flexall commercials. It ties in with what the guys do for a living.

Do you think a player's looks influence WNBA picks?

PJ: Every team has their spokes models. You will never see Shannon Johnson, who is the best point guard in the WNBA, no disrespect to Sue Bird, but you will never see Shannon on anything because she is not at-

tractive. Do you ever see Latasha Byears doing guest appearances? No, because she wants to wear braids and they think that is a thug type image. The WNBA has the people they make money off of.

PM: Oh, but they show those thug guys!

Tell me about the girl's camp you run with the team?

PJ: I have been doing camps for years, as long as I have coached high school and Junior College. We love to do it. The majority of the time we stand back and watch those kids and ask each other the magic question of how good do you think we would be if we had this opportunity, especially starting that young. I did not start playing basketball until ninth grade.

PM: You get such a thrill knowing that you have taught these girls something and that you are supporting them and the future of the women's game.

I bet they love hanging out with you.

PJ: We make it fun, they don't just drill, drill, drill. Lady Express team members play in a lot of tournaments and get free stuff, like bags, t-shirts, and sweatshirts. We give all that stuff out at the camp to the girls. I have trophies made for "best defense," "most improved," and it cost us, but we are thinking about making it fun for the kids. It is really very rewarding.

When you look back on such a full career in basketball, what aspects do you consider to be personal successes?

PJ: Basketball has been my life. It has given me opportunities that I wouldn't have had. I went to school on scholarship. I played in a pro league called the WBA and traveled with the Lady Express and have made a family with them. Coaching and getting involved with the up and coming has been very rewarding as well.

PM: Basketball, in general, has brought me a college degree, friends, travel around the globe. I grew up the youngest of six, and my parents did not have a lot of money, so I could not imagine not having sport, considering that it got me where I am today. Not only do you get an education through scholarships; it teaches you as a person. I have learned life skills, how to deal with different walks of people, and how to accept certain things. I think the richness of life is what I got mostly from basketball and where I am at today.

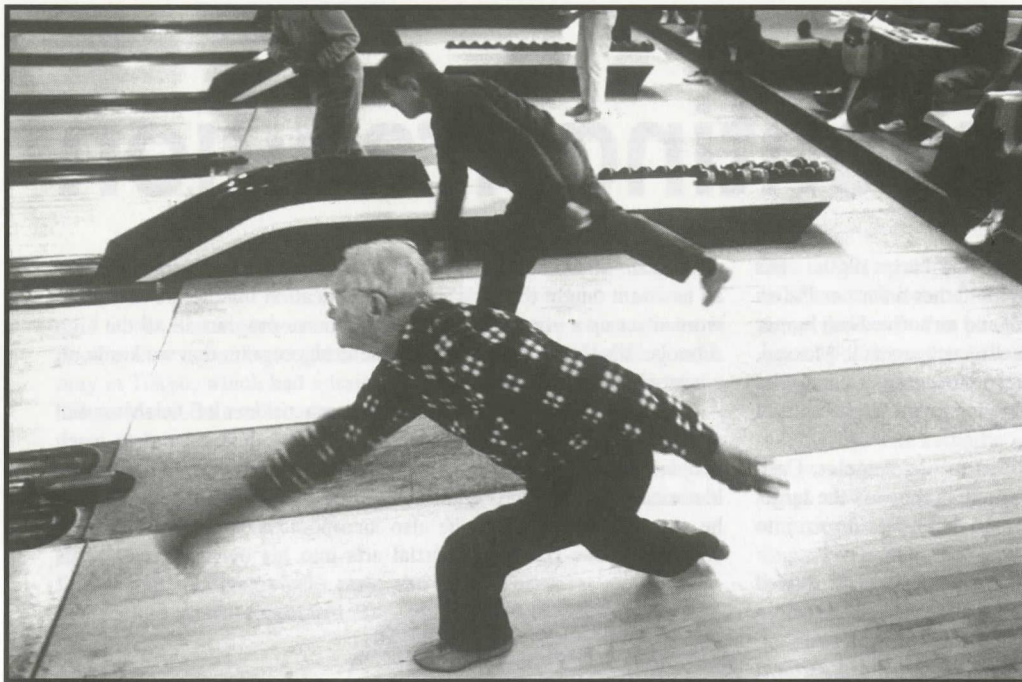
And even with the battles of having to create many of the opportunities from scratch?

PM: Yes, but I had to go for them, carve them out, even in places where there were none available to me. It started when I was little, when I started to play basketball and the boys didn't want me to play because I was a girl. Pretty soon, I got better than them as a player, and that prepared me for the new sets of obstacles.

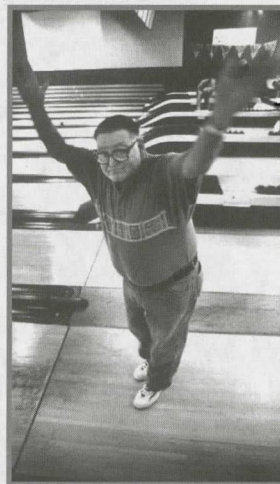
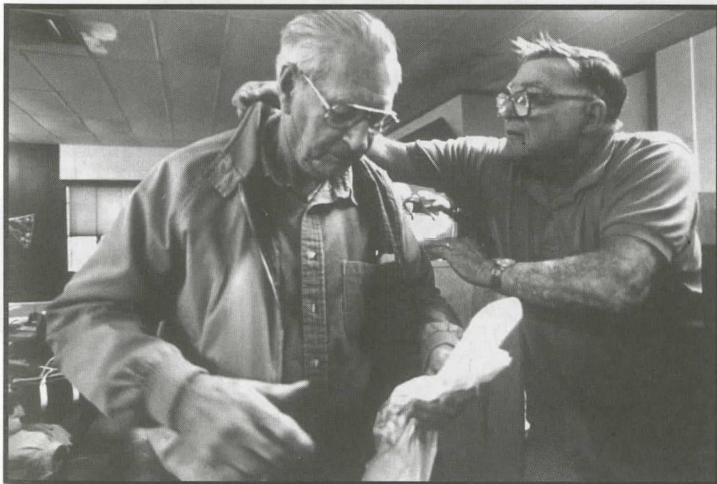
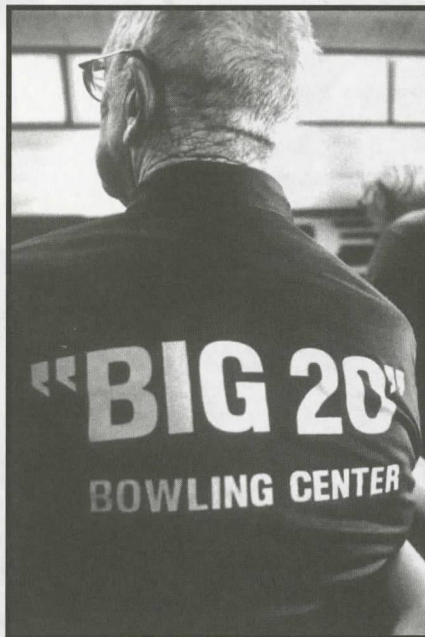
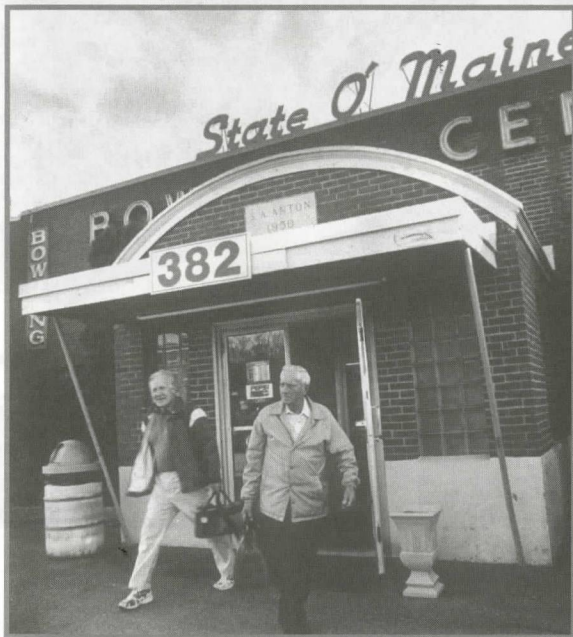
PJ: With P and P Lady Express, we are giving women the opportunity to continue playing because there are limited slots, limited numbers and avenues to go. I mean everybody, even if they are good enough, is not going to play in the WNBA. But you do not lose your will to compete. Lady Express allows for playing at a certain level, and you go out and compete every night, just like in college or the pros.

PM: You know, men have so many different options, so many more options. I think we will get there, and P and P Lady Express is one way that we are helping to make that happen. ☆

Get dialed into the P and P Lady Express at www.ppladyexpress.net.



Rollin' at the Big 20



By 12:30 the parking lot on Route 1 is brimming with Vacationland license plates. Buick, Pontiac, and Chrysler Sedans sit in neat rows with a Nissan pick-up truck wedged in between. At the Big 20 Bowling Center in Scarborough, Maine, close to one hundred senior men crowd the lanes and challenge each other's skill in candlepin bowling.

A shaky, high-pitched voice yells, "Thank you upstairs!" His delicate frame, with outstretched arms and head thrown back, is teetering with joy. He just bowled a spare.

Inside the Big 20 it is dark and warm. There is a constant hubbub. Throughout the hollow sound of the bowling alley, you can hear a muffled rumble as the balls spin down the worn, warped wood toward the pins. As the pins crash, the men mutter words of frustration or fruition. There are bellies sagging below the waistlines, curved backs, and seasoned smiles. The level of competition that exists for these men is evident in their whispers of friends whose eyesight is failing or how one is "losing their edge."

"I've been here all my life," Ed Farwell proudly states. He grew up in a house which once rested on the very same lot where the Big 20 now stands. Ed is a bowling fanatic: he bowls several times a week, sometimes several times a day. He loves to reminisce and go into detail about the tournaments he has been in, how many times he has won, and what other senior bowlers were on his team at the time.

On Tuesdays, Ed bowls alongside Carl, Fred, Morley, and Dan. There is a gentle kindness that plainly exists between these men. It manifests itself in their tender pats on the back, reassuring laughter, and comfortable sense of belonging, while they gather to watch their teammates lunge forward and release the ball.

Carl Tilley is 88 years old. Carl bowled at the Big 20 the first day it opened, and there is a photo on the wall to prove it. Even though Carl believes he no longer bowls as well as he used to, he says he will continue to bowl "as long as I'm able. You know, it's good to get out and talk with the different people."

Morley Robinson is 87 years old. "I come out for the fellowship I have with the men. And the exercise...my mother lived to be 101, I'm gonna try to keep up with her."

Ed lets out a deep sigh, his wide eyes are heavy with wariness behind his thick glasses, "I need a miracle," he groans. Though he has bowled an above average game (over 100), it doesn't look like he will be able to score high enough to pull his team ahead of their competitors. But seconds later, Ed wears a broad smile as he shakes his opponents' hands. He knows there is always next Tuesday. ☆

photos and words Lissa Gotwals

Reinventing Tradition

Mike Esmailzadeh was born in Germany in the early 1960s. His mother was a native-born Jewish convert; his father a former Polish resistance fighter in the Jewish underground and an active Nazi hunter with a clandestine unit of the Israeli intelligence agency Mossad. At age 7, his parents split. Mike's mother married an Iranian who adopted Mike as his own son. In the following years he was raised Muslim in Persia.

In his early teens, Mike's family moved to Los Angeles, California. Due to his small size and clumsy English, he was the target of violence in public schools. Because of this, Mike was drawn into martial arts.

After organizing for 15 years with his base in LA, Mike moved to the Bay Area in 1990. At the prompting of friends he opened a dojo the next year called Suigetsukan, or moon reflected in water school. Initially offering self-defense classes at the Gilman Street Project punk club in North Berkeley, the dojo progressed from a storefront to the industrial studio it has occupied in East Oakland for the last nine years. Starting with Jujitsu, a Japanese throwing and locking art, the dojo now offers Aikido, Shinkendo (Japanese sword) and Kadena de Mano (Filipino knife fighting). Over sixty students of varied genders and races train on a weekly basis; most are members of the East Bay activist community. Dues are sliding scale, down to zero. I began training at Suigetsukan a year and a half ago.

Clamor: Tell us about your activities as a community organizer.

Mike Esmailzadeh: I began organizing about 20 years ago, while at UC Irvine. I started off in the anti-nuke movement and organizing against US activities in Central America and apartheid in South Africa. I left the university in '85 and was on the road for about five years, moving from one action to another. I did work with Big Mountain when the Feds were first really going in there in a major way in '86. And I began working a lot with the anarchist community in Chicago, Minneapolis, Toronto and the Bay Area. I also did homeless organizing in LA and a lot of mental health advocacy in the Bay Area.

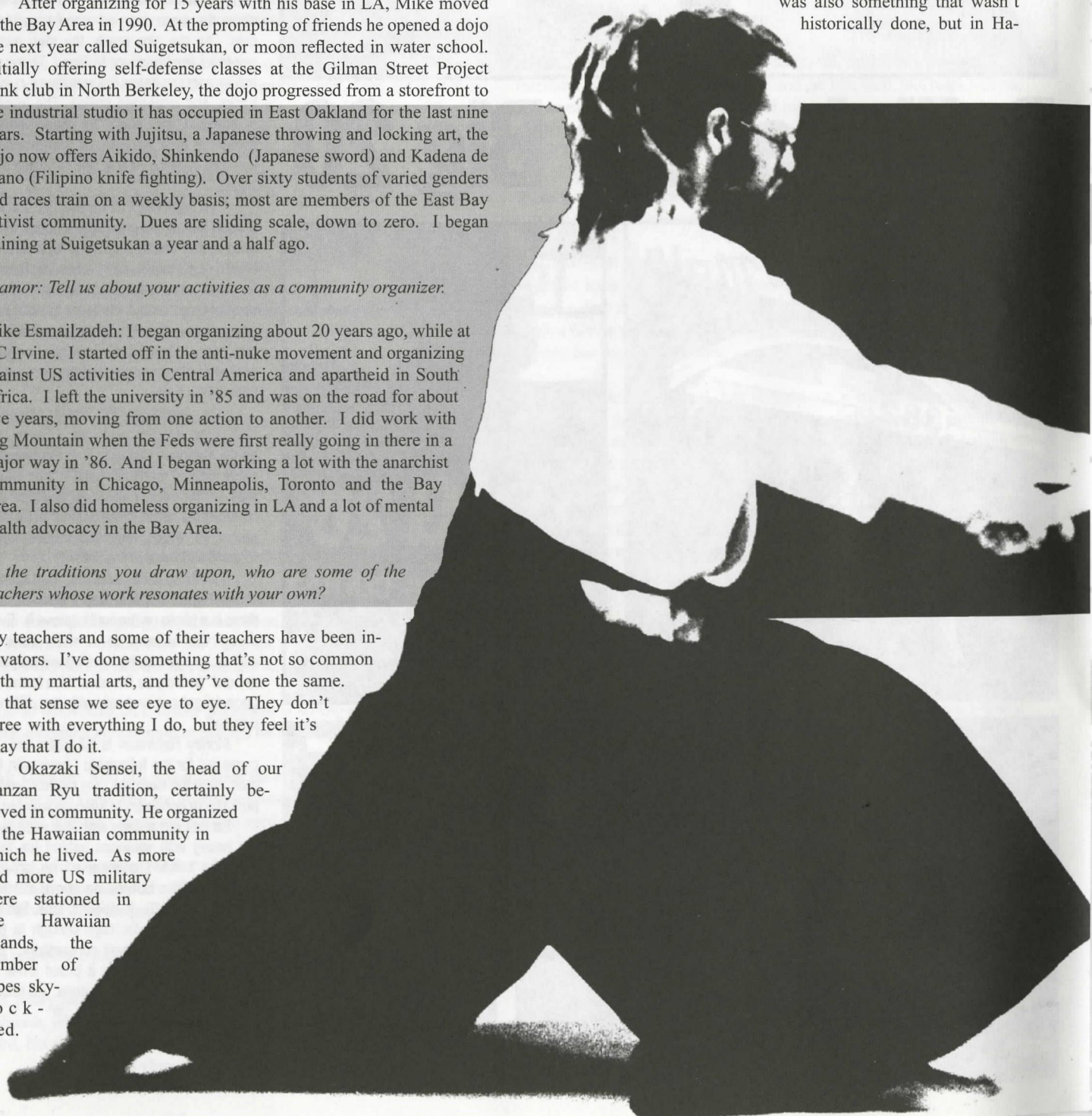
In the traditions you draw upon, who are some of the teachers whose work resonates with your own?

My teachers and some of their teachers have been innovators. I've done something that's not so common with my martial arts, and they've done the same. In that sense we see eye to eye. They don't agree with everything I do, but they feel it's okay that I do it.

Okazaki Sensei, the head of our Danzan Ryu tradition, certainly believed in community. He organized in the Hawaiian community in which he lived. As more and more US military were stationed in the Hawaiian Islands, the number of rapes skyrocketed.

A number of women approached him about the problem. He and an assistant taught the girls' physical education instructors and those women set up a young women's self-defense program in all the high schools. It's the first women's self-defense program that we know of, a pretty big deal.

Okazaki Sensei was also the first practitioner of Asian martial arts to open up his school to people of any ethnicity and to teach people who just wanted to learn. That wasn't how martial arts were historically taught, and he received a lot of criticism for it. Though he was a Japanese stylist, he also incorporated Chinese, Philippine, and indigenous Hawaiian martial arts into his own practice. This was also something that wasn't historically done, but in Ha-



waii, where many cultures were intermingling, it was becoming more common.

Obata Sensei, who our Aikido and Shinkendo comes from, is another innovator. He taught at Yoshinkan, a traditional training academy in Tokyo, which had a training contract for the elite units of the Tokyo Metro Police Department.

As an anarchist, what issues arise from having dedicated several decades of your life to the study of arts from a very authoritarian culture in a hierarchical situation?

In doing martial arts, you're right, the basic structures are very authoritarian. But martial arts

have taught me a lot of valuable things. They have taught me the value of community and the value of not always seeing your own needs above those of other people. This has led me toward anarcho-communist politics rather than in an individualist direction. Also, I think there's room in anarchism for leadership. As long as the person doing the leading is doing it because they have a skill and people accept it voluntarily. The authority can't be inherited and it can't be coerced in any way, shape, or form.

I view my martial arts training in this way: I didn't have to train with my teachers; I was there voluntarily, I could have left at any time; I was there because they had a skill I wanted to learn. Even though on the surface it appears very authoritarian, it's very different from the kind of authoritarianism we see and encounter in larger culture. I can't leave American culture. I can't simply choose not to give a shit about the laws or not care who's in charge. I can't just go somewhere else.

At my rank, I'm dealing more with martial arts politics and organizations. A lot of decisions are made hierarchically, by people of the highest rank, whose decisions are often times unquestioned. Frequently they make decisions on subjects whom they don't have a lot of knowledge of because they're not about martial arts; they're about business or the coordination of a large organization.

Participating in organizations like these lets me stay in touch with how most of the world operates. Being in a position of power in these organizations gives me access to a level of decision-making that I don't have in my other jobs. Except for a couple of times in mental health, I have very consciously not been a part of management. Mostly this reinforces my anarchist beliefs. I believe in consensus, communal decision-making, and democratic structures for good reasons! A lot of the other methods are not that effective, and if they are effective, it's at the expense of other things.

interview by Daniel Burtonrose

Sensei Mike Esmailzadeh Combines Ancient Tradition With His Vision for a Better Future

Sensei Jorin Bukosky (left) and Mike Esmailzadeh square off with *boken*.

continued next page

Much of martial arts is and has been in the service of a centralized state – warriors and bodyguards. What are some of the more resistant strains?

Well, it's interesting. Speaking of bodyguards, one of my teacher's classmates in the Chinese martial arts school where I trained in the '70s was Chiang Kai-shek's bodyguard. One of his classmates became Mao's.

A little rivalry?

[laughs] A lot of time people took roles on both sides, actually. In Philippine history there's a long tradition of resistance, though it's difficult to find much of it documented in English, particularly in this country. A lot has been written about the Philippine resistance against the Japanese occupation during World War II. Many of the people in the resistance refer to their fathers or uncles having been involved before them. If you think about it, that means these people were for the most part in resistance against the United States, because that's who was occupying the Philippines before Japan. It's never clearly stated but it's implied. There was a large resistance movement against the US occupation and there continues to be to this day, as you see with the US troop buildup. Any many of the people who resist the US occupation of the Philippines are escrimadores. [Escrima is a Filipino martial art.]

Philippine fighters are the reason the US military changed their sidearms from .38s to .45s. The Moros [Islamic resistance fighters] used to bind their bodies and take herbal uppers and painkillers, rush into a US military camp and kill as many GIs as possible. The GIs shot at them with .38s at close range but the binding acted as a tourniquet, allowing the Moros to take a few shots and keep going. The Moros would cut down a number of GIs while armed only with machetes, then they'd run back into the jungle where they'd be carried off by their friends to die. It spooked the living hell out of the American soldiers.

In order to put the Moros down, the US developed the .45 and mandated it as a sidearm.

You introduced me to a book by Noel Perrin called Giving Up the Gun. It was written during the high nuclear anxieties of the '60s and '70s. It argues that people, with enough willpower, can control the technologies we invent, and uses Japan's abandonment of the gun in the mid-1500s as proof.

It's a little hard to tie this into an anti-authoritarian context, because it happened in a very authoritarian one. Nonetheless, it's pretty amazing. In the 1600s, in Japan as in Europe, there was a lot of debate about the way in which guns were going to drastically change the nature of society. Unlike in European culture, however, the Japanese took these arguments very seriously. Most of the Samurai class argued that guns in the hands of common soldiers would destroy their way of life and warfare and any sense of honor.

The Shogunate decided these arguments were true and mandated that all gunsmiths move to one of two provinces. They also mandated that only every other one take one apprentice every generation. So it more than halved the number of gunsmiths every generation, because a number of people died before they completed their apprenticeships. By the time Commodore Perry entered Japan in the 1850s, there were

only three gunsmiths left with concrete knowledge and no functional guns in use. In 1600 there had been more guns in Japan than in any country in Europe, and many were better made. In the time gunsmithing was prohibited, it did not grow at all as an art. It's the only example I know of where a culture voluntarily turned its back on a major military innovation because they thought it would have a negative impact on their culture.

I know this is something you must think about: What are our prospects for creating more human-scale confrontations, ones in which we can use martial arts to fight the good fight against people with nuclear weapons?

If we're gonna be more self-reliant we need to feed ourselves, house ourselves, and be able to cooperate in a group. And we need to be able to defend ourselves. I don't mean this in a super-paranoid, constantly-armed, everyone's-gonna-come-get-you kind of way, but it's a basic need. More individually than that, as a basic idea, anarchism – against law, against rule – is the understanding that you won't be coerced against your will. It's a lot easier not to be coerced against your will if you can defend yourself.

Defending yourself isn't about amazing technique and being able to fight people off. It's an understanding of conflict and a willingness to fight if need be. Through training, not only will you be able to do it better, but you'll have more of a willingness to. It's a pretty intrinsic and necessary skill that people don't devote much time to. I see it as not the most important or the only skill but one of a number of different skills that we should have in our community.

I've done a lot of security work at different events and in different communities and occupations. One of the important myths to dispel is the idea that any community we have is naturally going to be free of fucked-up behaviors. Not true, in my experience. I've had to deal with incidents of rape, assault, people stealing, all kinds of shit like that. We need to learn to deal with this as a community. This involves two sets of skills.

Self-defense skills for one, so that when a fucked-up situation occurs, such as a rape or an assault, it can be stopped right then, as quickly and completely as possible, either by the affected people or by others in the community. Please understand that this is different from vigilantism, where there's also the desire to punish the attacker as opposed to just stopping them.

We also need to have the resources and the skills to deal with both people and with the community after the incident. We need to make sure that the person who was attacked gets what they need and that they get whatever help is necessary to make sure they don't get into this situation again.

The other person needs to be dealt with as well, to make sure this behavior doesn't continue. There's a number of different options. One is to boot the person out of the community. Unfortunately, this doesn't make sure they won't do the same thing somewhere else, including another political community. My preference is that they get serious help. Unfortunately, at the present moment we don't have the resources in our community, or in larger society.

How have martial arts influenced your political practice?

They've given me a different outlook from that of people who have come from a solely political background. It's given me a different relationship to conflict.

It makes conflict more legible when you've engaged . . .

. . . in conflict. Whether it comes up in a meeting or a relationship, it depersonalizes the conflict. It allows me to see it not in terms of winning or losing but just in terms of dealing with it. ☆



Sensei Rebecca Wong throws a student.

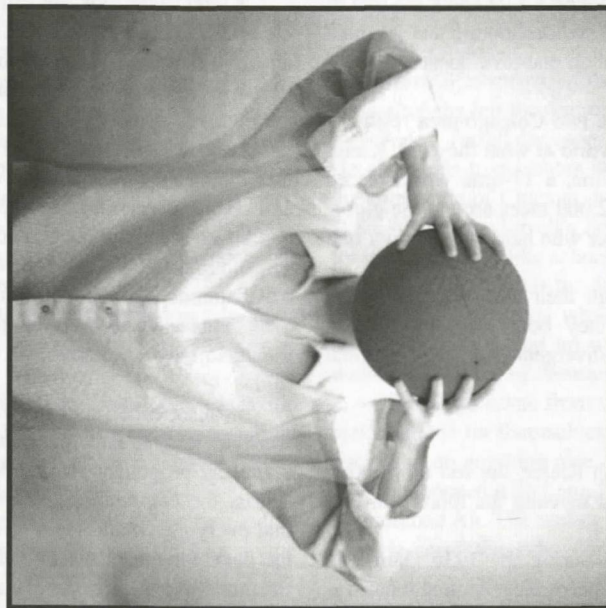
Kickin' It: A Girl and a Game

I would describe myself as a kickballaholic. I don't get to play as often as I'd like, but the sweet game of kickball occupies a fair amount of my imagination. I'm not alone in this either as a quick search online tells me more than I wanted to know: kickball's hot, especially for the hot-to-trot set. Outside of the classic punk-rock outposts, kickball is making the scene. There is singles' kickball, organized leagues of folks looking to kickstart romance with a rubber ball. I imagine this is much like those scary corporate Whole Food stores' singles' nights where people show up presumably because they've got to make dinner but secretly hoping to do some making out next to the kale. But singles' kickball is okay though, because even when laden with subtext, kickball is about connection on so many levels: with the ball, with yourself, and with the other players. Whether egalitarian, anarchic, or highly ritualistic, kickball can serve as communion.

We are too often forced to choose between athlete and mathlete. While all the anarchists seem to play soccer, I find that the macho, skills-oriented approach so many of us claim to eschew still permeates an ostensibly laid-back backyard soccer match. If you're not comfortable being an athlete, you can stand off to one side and watch, with the stinging flush of defeat coloring your cheeks rather than the rush of blood brought up by running and yelling and slapping high fives. I don't want to feel edged out of a game and I don't want to choose between different parts of myself in order to play.

Kickball? Don't you mean dodgeball? When I start talking up kickball, someone usually asks me that. Dodgeball is a loaded proposition. On one hand, anything we do together for pleasure can be this positive collective action. Lots of people play softball, soccer, basketball, so sure, if dodgeball's your thing, great. But dodgeball's not my thing. Not my thing to bombard an opposing team with a hail of hard rubber balls, to run amok trying to get my opponents down. Kickball's more my speed. It's a long, slow game.

Remember the dodgeball wars? The ones in your gym class in school? The ones that penalized the girls, the sissies, the brains, and the queers among us for simply being? The ones that too often found the class scapegoat bathed in a shower of stinging blows and rock-hard balls while the teacher looked the other way? Parent groups have been complaining about dodgeball for some time now, criticizing its competitive-



ness and violence. Dodgeball defenders tend to dismiss complaints and challenges, saying, oh, those people are too sensitive. Dodgeball seems symbolic of all the violent parts of our culture that we wind up passing down to children. People have a lot of problems with dodgeball.

Kickball, on the other hand, is a creampuff. It's like baseball-lite. While I know a lot of people who sustain some stinging bruises or even throw their backs out from a hard-played game, these people rarely blame the game for it. They snicker, shrug it off, go and heal, and come back to play again. As for competition, I guess it depends on the people you play with. I find that even the most competitive kickball game I've ever been a part of retains an element of the absurd. To most people I talk to, kickball is a refreshing enough idea that they're willing to cheer each other on and play for the sake of playing. It can be a spur of the moment game, and in conjunction with pleasant childhood memories and the lack of fancy moves, kickball can become another link in the chain of action that builds community. It's a game that tends to encourage a mixture of savagery, spitting, and gentleness. Seems like people who want to get competitive or tear down group action usually set their sights on something less recreational.

Some of us are athletes, and some of us enjoy sports. Too many of us either develop sports-phobia or have been told that we don't have the skills to play. In kickball, everybody plays. While it's fun to play with your friends, kickball is an easy way of opening up to other people. It's easier for me to feel connected to people once

we're in the park and running around and slapping high fives than to sit with people I don't know and discuss theory. The kickball scenario allows me to encourage others while I enjoy myself. That supportive vibe tends to draw people in. People you don't know often stop to watch you play kickball. They stick around to chat, to cheer, and to join the game. An invitation sometimes allows us to get over ourselves, over our social fear or reticence or misguided formal notion of manners, and jump in. It's utopian, but that's what I like about this game, putting doing first and foremost.

You can never tell who's going to be a kickball all-star. If you can kick or throw or yell, you can probably play. In some ways, everyone's a kickball all-star as long as you try to play and enjoy yourself. It's true, though, that some people have certain skills that cannot be

denied: running, throwing, kicking. I've played with people who can barely bend over to tie their own shoes but who can kick a ball out of the park every time. Unlike any other team sport I've ever played though, it's harder to resent a good kickball player and harder to be down on yourself for not carrying the team.

The real beauty of the sport for me is that girls who have been trained to stay out of sports play kickball with abandon. Unlike volleyball, the rare "girl-appropriate" sport, kickball's fairly gender-neutral. Because kickball is such a child's sport (unless ESPN's caught onto it lately without my knowledge), the stakes are different. Mostly, the pressure's off. So the girls I know can get down for some kickball, and that's a beautiful thing to see.

The girls I talk to about kickball sing its praises. Katherine says, "Kickball has been an inspiration to become more active than any other sport. I have heard that a lot of people are getting into it these days, which I find surprising, but cool. The idea of sports is a strange one to me. Usually, I think sports and picture meathead jocks. But when I think of kickball, I think about laughing and having a good time with my friends and I get excited." Sarah says, "If life's a game, it should be kickball. Sometimes you kick the ball wrong and end up with a big bruise on your ankle, but most of the time it's easy enough that you can even play without your shoes." Kickball is the little game that could, encouraging us all to get up, get moving, and get kicking. ☆

After the Cameras Stop Flashing

Sports are all about the moment frozen in time – the close finish, the winning smile, the final basket. The athletes become icons, forever young and infallible.

But life goes on after that immortal moment and what becomes of star athletes after they leave the spotlight says a lot about the role of sports in society as a whole; it brings up socioeconomic and political issues and shows the opportunity to build on one-time success as well as the fleeting and fickle nature of fame.

Adolph Kiefer and Ernie Terrell are two Chicago-area residents who, decades ago, were the best in the world at what they did. Kiefer was one of the best swimmers of all time, a 17-time world record holder and winner of all but two out of 2,000 races around the globe, while Terrell was a world champion boxer who held his own in a title fight against Muhammad Ali.

Though both probably pass through their daily life nowadays unrecognized by the general public, they both went on to lead interesting lives in areas related to yet divergent from their original successes.

Adolph Kiefer

As a 17-year-old backstroke star, Adolph Kiefer, the son of working class German immigrants, found himself meeting the führer himself, Adolph Hitler.

Hitler visited the Olympic village during the 1936 Games in Berlin and asked to meet several athletes personally. Among them was Kiefer, who he called a perfect example of a “true Aryan.”

“While we were in training at the Olympic Village, Hitler came in there with Goerring and the entourage and wanted to meet, among



others, myself,” Kiefer said, noting that he didn’t know much about Hitler at the time. “He couldn’t speak English, I couldn’t speak German – we had an interpreter. After the Nuremberg trials I wished I had pushed him in the pool and held him underwater.”

Kiefer, who took advantage of a job as an elevator operator at the tony Lakeshore Athletic Club in Chicago to get in swim training during his off-hours, joined the Navy after retiring from swimming. He was appalled to hear that more soldiers died from drowning than bullets, usually as a result of panicking and jumping overboard unnecessarily. He brought his concerns to Navy brass and ended up developing a swim curriculum that was passed on to 13,000 instructors and countless recruits. He interviewed scores of shipwreck survivors and wrote a book about it, and also developed the modern lifejacket. The old lifejackets were made out of the wood of the kapok tree, which was flammable, combustible and lost its buoyancy when waterlogged.

“Those jackets didn’t help them -- they would turn people upside down, so they would be dead but floating in the wrong position,” he said.

In an era when sports like hockey, soccer, baseball and swimming were not part of kids’ everyday routine as they are now, Kiefer was a tireless proponent of the democratizing of swimming and water sports, for competition, recreation or physical therapy. He decided that everyone should learn how to swim, period. He played a role in the development of the first above-ground pool and, after eventually obtaining one at his house, he and his wife Joyce would teach children to swim there. When a church near his home in Glenview, Ill., opened a pool, they likewise taught “anyone and everyone to swim, free of charge,” he said.

During the civil rights movement of the 1960s, Kiefer played a role in opening up pool facilities to the African-American community, who at least in the lower-income neighborhoods had never had such a thing. At the time, pool segregation was among the issues fueling bitter race riots. He worked with then-mayor Richard J. Daley to make sure that pools were built in all Chicago neighborhoods, not just the wealthier ones.

In keeping with his emphasis on swimming for everyone, Kiefer was also obsessed with safety. He had a hand in inventing scores of water sports and safety products ranging from the first water skis (solid ash numbers called the Surf King) to a UV water purifying system as an alternative to chlorine.

Working on the research council for Sears Roebuck, along with other athletes including baseball great Ted Williams and mountain climber Sir Edmund Hillary, he developed and promoted countless water sports products. He also worked with Jacques Cousteau to popularize scuba diving on a mass level, including coming up with the term “scuba” (self-contained underwater breathing apparatus).

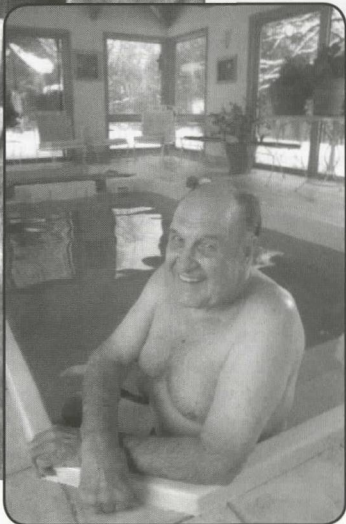
“We decided that we had to separate skin diving from scuba diving,” he said. “We discussed this new dramatic underwater experience of diving – we said we can’t let kids do this unless they’re properly trained.”

Kiefer was also asked to audition for the role of Tarzan in the original movie and urged to accept the part. He told them he would be on the next plane out.

“It just didn’t appeal to me at all. They were telling me what to do and what to say,” he said.

He has 12 patents and at age 84 he is still actively working on his products and inventions, as well as swimming every day at his home in Wadsworth, Ill.

“Our job is to promote swimming and get everyone in the water,” he said. “Swim for health, swim for fun. It’ll save your life, or the life of someone else. It’s a lifetime thing.”



two athletes after the limelight fades

Ernie Terrell

Muhammad Ali is inarguably the most famous and beloved boxer of all time, for his amazing skill as well as his brave and controversial political stands and his unflagging braggadocio.

In contrast, Ernie Terrell, who preceded Ali as the World Boxing Association champion in 1965 and 1966, seems soft-spoken and modest. To him, he said, as to many boxers, boxing was not about politics or even love of the sport, but rather opportunity in a society where opportunities for young Black males from low-income neighborhoods were few and far between.

"The only hero I knew of growing up was Joe Louis," he said. "He was the only one you would see up there, as far as Black stars. There was also Jackie Robinson, but baseball and football weren't as big yet. Every time Joe Louis would fight, it was like the world would stop and take notice. That was something."

And ironically, the moment that the world seemed to take most notice of for Terrell was not one of his own performances so much as the moment that he dissed Ali.

Terrell says he held his own with Ali in their 1967 world title fight, while others see it differently. Today, Terrell is tight-lipped about Ali, expressing neither ill will nor adulation for him. A Web site called The Cyber Boxing Zone describes their battle thus:

"The tall and lanky Terrell earned his 'title' by beating Eddie Machen after the WBA stripped Muhammad Ali, ostensibly for giving Sonny Liston an immediate rematch. The real reason probably was because of Ali's association with the Black Muslims. Ali defeated Terrell for the 'Undisputed Title' February 6, 1967 while shouting 'What's my name?' throughout the fight to Terrell who had insisted on calling him by his 'slave name' Cassius Clay."

Growing up, Terrell trained at the Midwest Athletic Club on the fifth floor of a building in downtown Chicago. He also went to training camps with well-known boxers as the instructors.

"The idea of going to a camp is that you don't do some of the things that you'd do every day," he said. "You try to get your reflexes sharp, to get in top condition, so when you get out there you just explode in the ring."

Terrell had his first pro fight in 1957 against a man named Norman Bolden in Detroit. He moved up the ranks to become pro for a career that spanned 20 years total. His biggest purse was \$390,000 for the WBA title fight against Ali, which Ali won in a 15-round judge's decision though the prevailing sentiment is that he could easily have knocked Terrell out but chose not to.

"During that time, Ali and I went through the ranks together," Terrell said. "I knew him, I thought I was just as good as him. I don't know why he was always making all that noise. But one thing about all his talking, he could back it up when he got in the ring. He was a very unusual person. He sacrificed a lot, and he gave the title up because of his religion. Then he became even more popular from doing that."

He added that he didn't think the movie "Ali" did justice to the story because it left out many facets of Ali's life including his close relationship with his mother.

"And the guy who played me did a lousy job," he said.

Though football and baseball have become more high profile than boxing now, Terrell still sees it as the ultimate sport.

"When you're talking being the best in boxing, you're talking the whole world," Terrell said. "That's what's unique about

boxing. With football, you're only talking about the U.S. You enjoy it when it's all over. While you're in the ring, it's rough!"

Boxing wasn't the only arena where the unassuming Terrell became famous. He also spent 13 years as the lead of the soul group Ernie Terrell and the Heavyweights who played the top clubs in Motown, Las Vegas and around the country, also appearing on T.V. shows like Johnny Carson and Merv Griffin.

Musical talent ran in the family — his sister Jean replaced Diana Ross after she left the Supremes.

Today, Terrell does some training of fighters and fight-promoting. He also sings to prisoners with his Baptist church choir. He lives on the south side of Chicago, not too far from where he grew up. Since 1986, he has run Terrell's Janitorial Service which subcontracts work for the Chicago public schools and police department. One of the staff members at Terrell's is the daughter of track luminary Jesse Owens.

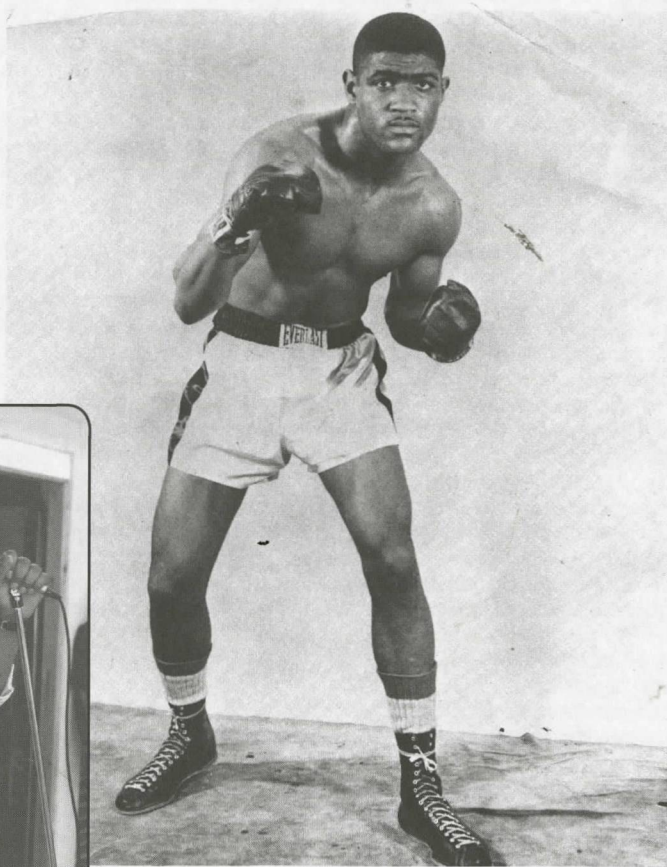
Terrell notes that while he has fared well for himself, many boxers ultimately end up with nothing, not even their health, after winning hundreds of thousands of dollars in prize money.

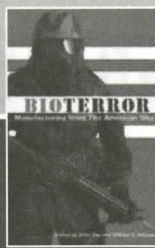
"The boys come from the lowest end of society, the projects, to make a name for themselves," he said. "They've been taught to fight, but not to do anything else. They're like kids in candy stores. That's how it happened with Leon Spinks, who made a lot of money fighting Muhammad Ali. The money just melted away."

He noted that now, the prize money is much greater than when he was competing because of pay-per-view T.V. for big matches. He expects this pot to get even bigger as other countries like Russia and China start developing popular pay-per-view technology.

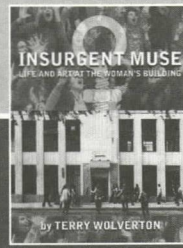
When asked why it is that it is usually people from the lower rungs of the economic ladder who gravitate toward boxing, he says he is not sure.

"I guess the better educated people can get easier jobs," he said. "They're the ones making money managing the boxers." ☆





FROM THE ROAD:
Snapshots of Living Resistance
A zine for liberation
by Sonja S. and Jennica B.



**Bioterror:
Manufacturing Wars The American Way**

Ellen Ray and William H. Schaap, ed.
Ocean Books, 2003
www.oceanbooks.com.au

With the ominous term “weapons of mass destruction” (WMD) being firmly fixed in today’s political lexicon, it is of crucial importance that those who take interest in the foreign and domestic policies employed by the United States understand the role that America has played in the proliferation of such weaponry. The standard line being touted by policy makers and parroted by mainstream media outlets is one that casts America as being the diligent democracy with the benevolent intentions of ridding the world of the vile scourge of chemical, biological, and nuclear weaponry. Hence the U.S. instigated standoffs with Iraq and North Korea.

It seems that in the world after the September 11 tragedy, the security of any and all nations not sufficiently humble enough to bow to American dictums must surrender any notion of their own national security or face the specter of war. Perhaps as odious as this clear notion of American hegemony is the unbridled rancid stench of hypocrisy that permeates U.S. propaganda pertaining to weapons of mass destruction. For it has been the United States that has been the most guilty in regards to the spreading of WMD technologies to tyrannical despotic regimes, as opposed to the much maligned (and justifiably so) so-called “axis of evil” states of Iraq, Iran, and North Korea. In *Bioterror: Manufacturing Wars the American Way* the editors make a thoughtful attempt at placing the current WMD hype in its proper historical context and, in doing so, offer a stinging rebuke of America’s current and former governmental policy.

The book, which is an anthology of sorts, is edited by Ellen Ray and William H. Schaap, co-founders of *Covert Action Quarterly* magazine. For nearly 30 years CAQ, has been offering poignant investigative reporting on U.S. attempts at subverting democracy worldwide and the assaults on civil and human rights here at home. *Bioterror* is a collection of articles that originally ran in CAQ from 1982-1993. These tracts are more appropriate now than ever, offering readers a vital perspective that will not be heard from FOX news pundits, the script reading politicos of C-SPAN. *Bioterror* is a must read for those who want to begin to understand the complexities and cut through the muck of rhetoric that passes for debate about America’s role concerning WMD.

Starting with World War 1 when the U.S. was manufacturing four times as much poison gas than were the Germans to George Bush (the first one) subverting investigations into how the United States had provided WMD assistance to Iraq during its bloody war with Iran, *Bioterror* offers a litany of facts that make a clear case against a not so innocent America.

As if helping to gas Kurdish women and children and propping up tyrannical despots was not enough, *Bioterror* shows how even American troops were also, albeit unintentionally, victimized by U.S. use of chemi-

cal and biological weapons. In the Vietnam War the use of the defoliant “Agent Orange” was widespread, the rational being that a guerilla army deprived of its food sources and jungle shelter would collapse. This widespread defoliation, much like the whole Vietnam experience, failed miserably; however, the carcinogenic ingredients used in Agent Orange did manage to riddle a number of exposed American G.I.s with disease — to say nothing of thousands of Vietnamese afflicted with cancer and childhood birth defects.

Other incidents covered in *Bioterror* are the early 80’s outbreak of Dengue Fever that most certainly was the result of actions carried out by the CIA and then there was Anthrax episodic that mysteriously appeared in the nation of Zimbabwe as the black majority was in conflict with the white minority of that country during de colonization. Perhaps, most importantly, the U.S. pattern of refusal to participate in international efforts to stem the tide of CBW that is put on display.

Bioterror is a concise and thoughtful read that is a good starting point for those who are not satisfied with the official edicts espoused in the daily Pentagon briefs by Rumsfeld and company. With the likelihood that U.S. troops will likely fight a war in Iraq increasing by the day, the importance of exposing America’s flawed justifications can not be overstated. This book can be an important tool in this regard.

-Tony Allen

**From The Road:
Snapshots of Living Resistance:
a zine for liberation**

Sonja S. and Jennica B.

The advancements of US imperialism got you down? Looking for inspiration to keep your passion burning for building mass based anti-racist, multiracial, feminist, queer and trans liberationist, anti-capitalist movements working for collective liberation? You should read this zine. The editors, who “were feeling disillusioned and uneducated about what amazing work we knew must be out there,” traveled the country for nine months and interviewed people from over 50 organizations working for social change in 20 states in the Southwest, Midwest, Northeast and the South of the US and Northeast Canada.

This zine compiles profiles and descriptions of 22 groups which the editors found to be the most “creative, inspiring, radical, interesting and solid in their commitment to ending ALL forms of oppression.” The profiles include the groups, size, location, the constituencies they work with, racial makeup, area of work, how long they’ve been around and contact info. The descriptions range from stories about how groups came together, how they make decisions, the use of caucuses to challenge white supremacy, patriarchy, capitalism and heterosexism and how organizations in both rural and urban communities have developed successful campaigns and projects. Each group gets about 2 pages in this 70-page resource guide.

Learn about the South West Organizing Projects, environmental justice work in New Mexico. Find out

how three activists ^ Susan, Nicola and Juliana ^ started up the Women’s Prison Book Project in Minnesota. Read about Latino/a and Native American led immigrant rights organizing with Derechos Humanos/ Human Rights Coalition of Arizona and multiracial, anti-racist queer liberation work with SONG (Southerners On New Ground). Check out how groups like Project South, in Atlanta, the Catalyst Center in Toronto, the Freire Center in Minneapolis and the 70 year old legendary Highlander Center in New Market, Tennessee are using popular education to develop leadership and build movement for radical social change. Read about the People’s Institute and how they’ve trained over 35,000 people in undoing racism workshops. The zine is divided into 8 categories: Environmental Justice, Faith Based Work, Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Trainings, Anti-Prison Work, Alternative Living, Solidarity Activism, Popular Education and Community Based Organizing.

If you’re looking for organizations to network with, looking for trainings and resources, want to hear how other groups are doing their work, want to read about vibrant and inspiring folks who are organizing from the grassroots to build our movements and win justice, then you should read Jennica and Sonja’s zine. \$5 for postage and printing. 648 Prospect Pl. #4R, Brooklyn, NY 11216 or write to welcominggirl@hotmail.com.

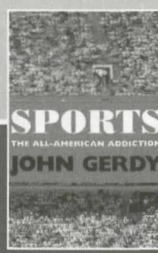
-Chris Crass

**Insurgent Muse:
Life and Art at the Woman’s Building**

Terry Wolverton
City Lights Books, 2002
www.citylights.com

Before I even began reading the book, *Insurgent Muse: Life and Art at the Woman’s Building*, I had great expectations for what lie ahead. I like reading about feminist experiences, especially a collective feminist experience with the magnitude of the Woman’s Building. It makes me green with envy that I wasn’t able to partake in the all-encompassing and changing world of ‘70s feminism. Terry Wolverton’s book, *Insurgent Muse*, lived up to my expectations. It is a successful fusion of memoir and feminist history. Her writing has a refreshing, unapologetic tone and this is what makes the Woman’s Building spring to life on the page. This book encourages third wave feminists to get out there and get involved, to be part of a culture, to stand up and make some noise.

Judy Chicago, Sheila-de Bretteville, and Arlene Raven founded the Woman’s Building in LA in the 1970s. It was a place that embraced women and explored what it meant to belong to a female centered organization focused on creating a woman’s culture. The Woman’s Building provided that solidarity place where women could turn when they needed to feel that their art was valid. Wolverton often discusses how there were two buildings, the actual physical structure and then the image you held in your head. The building that was a part of you and a part of every woman that ever walked through its doors. The building in turn



becomes a symbol for the self, "the material structure of brick and plaster and the energetic presence, the vision, the dream." Wolverton often felt that she was trying to be many things and struggled with the perception of who she was. Oftentimes she saw herself as not only a woman, but also a lesbian, artist, writer, activist, performer, and feminist. Her struggle to fit the pieces of herself into place often resembled a half finished jigsaw puzzle. She was always shifting them around, trying to make them fit. The Woman's Building mimicked Wolverton's exasperation and struggle to find an identity.

Insurgent Muse, opens with the words of Adrienne Rich, "No one ever told us we had to study our lives..." Wolverton has taken these words to heart and produced a memoir that explores that issue to its fullest. Wolverton approaches her memoir with a razor sharp knife and doesn't back down. *Insurgent Muse*, explores the feminist mantra "the personal is political" so often heard in the seventies. Which "...demanded that our lives inform our politics, but offered scant advice to deal with what our politics would do to our lives." Wolverton bares her insecurities and her triumphs and makes no apologies. From her attempted suicide in 1976, to dying 180 yards of gauze pink to resemble a vagina, to the struggles of the Lesbian Art Project, and to her triumph as executive director of the Woman's Building. Her trials and triumphs are all there — she truly lived her mantra.

Wolverton's 13 year involvement with the Woman's Building spanned into the early '80s. This transition from the '70s to the '80s changed her and the Woman's Buildings grassroots, laid-back way of life into the desire for mainstream acceptability. The Woman's Building "wrestled with its countercultural roots and the mandate to build itself into an institution." She had to grow up and grow up fast in order to help herself and the Woman's Building survive. The '80s required the Woman's Building to compromise and merge itself with the mainstream in order to get funding which translated into survival. "The disappearance of arts funding and the emergence of economic hard times that will send the Woman's Building scrambling for the cover of mainstream respectability, making us think twice before using the work feminist, let alone lesbian, in grant proposals, brochures, or exhibitions." This shift in the book provided such an honest look at not only the Woman's Building and Wolverton but also feminism and how greatly it was changed by the economic boom of the '80s.

Insurgent Muse won't let us forget the Woman's Building. Its resistance to the mainstream may have buried it beneath the surface but it has an important place within the history of second wave feminism. Terry Wolverton has decided to bring the Woman's Building full fold into the mainstream. I think it's about time society embraced the culture of the Woman's Building and realized what an important contributor it was to not only woman's art but also the way society views women and their artistic endeavors.

-Kris Leja

Race and Resistance: African Americans in the 21st Century

Herb Boyd, ed.
South End Press, 2002
www.southendpress.org

It seems an impossible task to summarize the history of African American resistance and struggle up until the 21st century. Rather than attempt that enormous project, editor Herb Boyd has approached this sharp and elegant anthology as a discussion on a broad spectrum of issues. Many of the anthologized pieces are taken from speeches, giving the book a conversational feel. Tackling topics as diverse as the Black Radical Congress, the struggle for reparations, the environmental justice movement, and George W.'s foreign policy (or lack thereof) in Africa, *Race and Resistance* presents a wealth of information in an easily accessible format. Both widely known writers and less well-represented voices are included in this excellent anthology. Though none of the essays run more than ten or fifteen pages, most include bibliographies with more information on each topic. I was particularly impressed by Johnita Scott-Obadele's insightful commentary on reparations, Yvonne Bynoe's discussion of the politics of hip hop, and the ever-formidable Angela Davis' essay on the prison industrial complex, in which she points out the frightening similarities between prison labor and sweatshops in the global South. This anthology is a perfect introduction to key issues facing African-Americans and anyone invested in anti-racist organizing.

-Sarah Marie

September 11 and the US War: Beyond The Curtain of Smoke

Roger Burbach and Ben Clarke, ed.
City Lights, 2002
www.citylights.com

There's currently a flood of books on the market covering terrorist and the US. "war on terror." Its almost overwhelming when considering what to reach for to try and gain insight into the events surrounding 9/11. City Lights has made it a bit easier with *September 11 and the US War*.

A collection of essays by over 30 authors, with names such as Howard Zinn, Robert Fisk, Arundhati Roy and Michael Parenti, this book covers a lot of ground. Broken up into three sections, it explores the origins and consequences of the present situation, and what we can do to change it.

The most interesting part of the book was in its exploration of the possible causes that led up to 9/11. Various authors tackle a diverse number of reasons ranging from oil interests to globalization to imperialism, all which contributed. The essays draw deeply on the history of US foreign policy, not limited to the Middle East. This broad history lesson alone makes this book an invaluable resource, a necessary guide in navigating the history most of us know and the history that is slowly emerging that we have never known. It's through this history that the authors also show us the potential

outcome of the current US 'war on terror', demonstrating the cycle of violence the U.S. is doomed to partake in by retaliating in its present manner. The book also offers steps the US. could take to start moving forward to correct the situation.

The effort put into selecting the essays and organizing them as they appear is obvious and makes this an essential read for anyone really interested in the other side of the "war on terror."

-Chris Bellevie

Sports: The All-American Addiction

John R. Gerdy
University Press of Mississippi 2002
www.upress.state.ms.us

Working from his unique background and his roles in college sports administration (he was a college All-American athlete in basketball, and had a brief career as a professional basketball player) Gerdy presents a thoroughly researched book: *Sports: The All-American Addiction*.

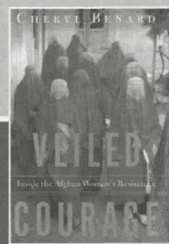
If it wasn't for his roles as either a player or an administrator, I likely would have considered his book the work of a fan discouraged by the current course that organized sports in America is taking, and how it's perceived by the public-at-large.

It's an irrefutable fact that we live in a time of skyrocketing entertainment costs, stratospheric salaries of our beloved professional athletes, and a seemingly complete lack of owner and player loyalties to the communities they hold ties to. Gerdy makes bold assumptions like this throughout the book — that it's not the sports themselves that are at fault, but the very way that sports themselves and its players are perceived by the public. He sounds a rallying cry that there should be an increased emphasis placed on active participation at all levels rather than the slothful passive observation so common today. How many of us have either participated in (or overheard) a conversation consisting of a sentiment similar to, "I don't know how to play/I'm not good at 'x' activity, so I'd much rather watch people who know what they're doing that way I'm not laughed at."

We Americans, as a nation, have gone from a nation of active participation to passive observation. Almost gone completely are the neighborhood pick-up games, only to be replaced by inter-scholastic teams and/or club teams as the sole domain of those who excel at any given sport, leaving those who aren't "star" caliber to sit and watch.

Gerdy desires a complete revamping of sports participation including (but not limited to) a minimum age limit of eighteen for Olympic or professional sports; the establishment of guidelines for coaches at the youth level consisting of: formal preparation in fitness training, and child development.

Further, such programs must also be developed for college coaches as they, too, justify their position on campus on the basis of their being educators. Specifically, there is a dire need for an increased emphasis on the academic preparation of coaches as well as the implementation of professional development programs



that incorporate components that relate directly to the educational mission of the institution as well as to the academic and personal development of the student-athlete.

Is it too late for any type of overhaul of organize sports? Perhaps, perhaps not. If there is to be any re-vamping whatsoever, the rallying cry must be sounded from all levels — players, fans, administrators and coaching staffs, which would be difficult, but not altogether impossible in the ever increasing prevalence of the me-first attitude among all rungs of society.

The first step is to read this book, letting it dispel all the widely held notions that are little more than half-truths designed to keep us all largely unaware of how important and wide spread the need for change has become.

-Steve O'Connor

Veiled Courage

Cheryl Bernard
Broadway Books, 2002

"If I rise up
If you rise up
Everyone will rise up."

Is it the latest anti-globalization street chant? No, it's a poem written by an Afghan woman, and circulated by her comrades in the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA). It's one of many poems at the center of their resistance — which is the first, largest, most organized resistance — against the gender apartheid regimes that have controlled Afghanistan for decades. In *Veiled Courage: Inside the Afghan Women's Resistance*, Cheryl Bernard introduces us to the women of RAWA, through the engaging narrative of personal interviews in 2000 and 2001. Bernard works as a researcher on international development projects, and has been visiting Afghanistan since 1982.

RAWA was started in 1977 in opposition to repressive laws against women. Their first action was a schoolgirls' demonstration, where they chanted poetry that protested their repressive conditions. They also organize literacy schools (for boys, girls, and the 93% illiterate adult female population), medical services, and documentation of human rights abuses against women. If caught, their activities are punished by beatings, humiliation, and death. Under these circumstances, RAWA has developed a decentralized structure that is characterized by a compassionate culture and resolute principles. The book also describes RAWA's support structure, which consists of international grassroots resources and Afghan men's auxiliaries. Men accompany RAWA women on missions, and serve as barriers between them and the police at public demonstrations.

In the last chapters, Bernard shifts focus to a critical analysis of RAWA. The theory is accessible in language and format. She raises provocative concepts, but her editorial rubs me wrong. Particularly troubling is her faith in Western government as the only alternative to fundamentalism. She repeatedly poses the "West" as the *de facto* "good." She writes, "A useful political rule of

thumb is this: The more force that is required to maintain a certain order, the more unfair and unnatural that order is." The irony is hopefully not lost on you, readers. In light of the USA PATRIOT act, indefinite immigrant detention, and increased criminalization and the police state in the U.S., this is indeed an important rule to remember.

Benard's analysis still raises many relevant issues for the "Western" reader. She identifies RAWA as a post-modern organization, in contrast to modern (Western superpowers) and pre-modern (fundamentalist) ones. This post-modern essence of RAWA is exciting — it is a resistance that can meet the challenges of injustice and oppressions we all face, in varied forms, worldwide. But Benard doesn't do justice to this post-modernism — which she identifies by its eclectic ideology, and its "perspective outside ethnicity and nationalism." She compares RAWA's mix of pacifism, socialism, secularism, Islam, feminism, and Communism, to fusion cuisine, which is innovative, but in the end simply tastes good. Never mind that RAWA's work might be liberating or logical. Likewise, Benard's proposals for Afghanistan's future government remain Western. She presumes that the U.S. or U.N. ought to construct this infrastructure, disregarding the competent leadership that already exists within the Afghan women's resistance. Might this be the first opportunity for a post-modern government? Nevertheless, the way Benard lays out this book gives us a valuable source of information and ideas with which to think about perhaps the most respectable, righteous resistance in the world right now--the women of RAWA.

-Andrea D

Webs of Power: Notes From the Global Uprising

Starhawk
New Society Publishers, 2002
www.newsociety.com

We need more women like Starhawk. In November 1999, she was incarcerated for five days following the protests in Seattle. Since then, this Pagan activist, teacher, thinker, and visionary has dedicated herself to the global justice movement, traveling to Quebec City, Washington, DC, Genoa, Porto Alegre, and back again. Of equal importance, she has been doing what her fans have appreciated for more than 30 years, writing continuously, posting columns to her website and other forums, from within the besieged activist headquarters in Genoa to the ruins of Jenin in Palestine. *Webs of Power* collects these eloquent reflections and astute analyses, beginning with Seattle, continuing through the struggles since and looking toward the future.

In the first half of the book, "Actions," she shows what it means to confront the awesome political and economic forces intent on enforcing global corporate hegemony at the expense of the freedom, health, peace, and survival of peoples across the globe. Her opening essay, "How We Really Shut Down the WTO," not only outlines the principles and methods of decentralized, democratic direct action, but also vividly expresses what happens when you place yourself within a mass struggle and what you need to do to survive. But *Webs of Power* is far more than a collection of reports

from the battlefield. In subsequent essays, like "Hermana Cristina's Well," Starhawk gets behind the activist lingo and illustrates what "globalization" means, how it impacts the daily lives of ordinary people and what ordinary people around the world are doing about it.

For those involved in the global justice movement, the most compelling and provocative parts of Starhawk's book are those in the second part, "Visions," in which she addresses intra-movement conflicts and concerns, such as the quarrel over direct action vs. non-violence, or "diversity of tactics." Where most activist-writers have become bogged down on one side or the other of this debate, she thinks beyond this dichotomy and backs up her philosophical discourses with examples where potentially destructive situations were diffused by listening and seeking constructive compromises that respected all parties' mutual and divergent interests. In this section, she also delivers one of the most cogent analyses of the history of the left in America to be found anywhere, as well as a sharp-minded look at gender and sexuality during the Civil Rights movement.

Whether or not one embraces Paganism or magic ritual, few will disagree that, facing such challenges from within and without, the survival and progress of the global justice movement will require, if not a manifest sense of spirituality, then a great deal of deep thinking, insight, and wisdom. Weaving principle, action, politics, and spirituality together, Starhawk calls for a new political language, one that eschews jargon and all its historical baggage for clarity and makes the vital connections between all forms of repression and exploitation. Starhawk's own eloquence demonstrates what that language might be like. Such a revitalized discourse would not only mediate or eliminate the conflicts that so often arise around ideology within the movement but also speak to those alienated by such bickering and elitist rhetoric.

Webs of Power is an important guide for those participating in the global justice movement, and an excellent primer for readers looking for a way to become involved and informed. In a time when the Bush administration is hell-bent on making war wherever and whenever possible and/or profitable, shredding international treaties left and right, and throwing up missile defense shields that don't work, when 15 million people are starving in southern Africa thanks to the IMF and first-world greed, when states and cities across the U.S., following the federal governments lead, are fending off huge budget deficits by cutting jobs, education, health care, and other critical services like fire departments, instead of rescinding one or two tiny corporate welfare loopholes or tax breaks, this book is, as Alice Walker says in her endorsement, "a must and soonest read."

-Susan Chenelle

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VOICES OF REASON FROM WITHIN AN INSANE NATION...

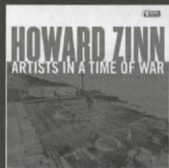


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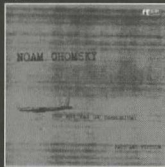


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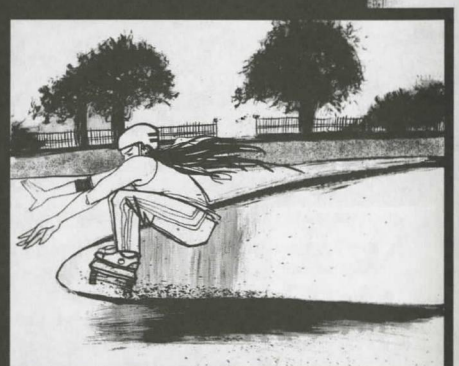
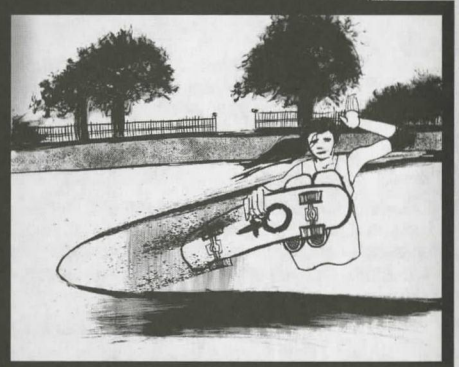
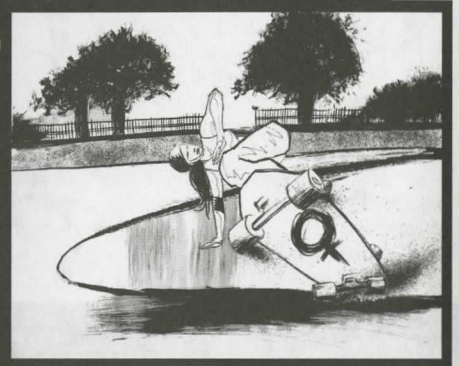
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Betties



words Myriam Gurba
illustrations Erik Rose



On Boards

Pain, skateboarding's most humbling side effect, does not discriminate. "Guys and girls fall the same. We all take the same hits," says Emilie Oliver, owner and founder of Cherry Skateboards, "Concrete doesn't treat anybody differently." Recent statistics show that of the 3.3 million Americans who skateboard more than once a week only 11 percent are female. Amateur and professional skater girls say that it's not the physical pain, but a variety of social and psychological factors that prevent more females from skateboarding. For many girls, these obstacles sometimes prove more difficult to surmount than the scrapes, bruises, or even broken bones that come with the territory.

Look at the latest issues of *Transworld Skateboarding* and *Thrasher*, two of the skate industry's leading magazines, and you'll be hard-pressed to find images representative of most female skaters. While you might see a few scantily clad models posing in skateboard, gear, or clothing ads, these models have little in common with the female athletes who also read these magazines. It's so rare in fact that when a pro like Vanessa Torres appears on even one page, word travels quickly among skater girls eager to see such images.

Pictures of pro and amateur female skaters have powerful appeal, and female pros maintain that they continue to be positively influenced by such images. In a recent interview for *Heckler Magazine*, Jessica Krause (sponsored by Think) described talking a friend into driving her from California to Wyoming after seeing a picture of a lone girl skating there. Through e-zines, many female skaters have created small online communities, like *Frontsidebetty.com*, that put girls in touch with these images. These e-zines monitor the mainstream skate scene, watching for any press that might appeal to their readers. When women get media attention, these sites post the news on their homepages and link to relevant sites.

One way women are improving their representation in the industry is by increasing their involvement as business leaders. Over the past three years, several female-run companies have emerged that are challenging the mainstream (male) skateboarding industry to become more supportive of its female athletes. One such company is Cherry Skateboards.

"One day my friend Sarah and I were hanging out, talking about how female representation sucks," says Oliver about her inspiration to create Cherry. "We were looking through skate mags and checking out the pictures of girls in them. Sarah kept saying, 'Look. This doesn't represent me.' I said to her 'Why don't I start my own company and I'll have you skate for my team.'" Oliver was serious and now sponsors her friend and a team of four other women from around the United States.

Leelee, Gallaz, and Rookie Skateboards are companies that, like Cherry, popped up to meet the demands of a growing female market. These businesses show how women in the skate scene are fusing the punk rock/Do-It-Yourself tradition of skating with American capitalism. Narangkar Khalsa, publisher of the California based skate zine *Swashbuckler*, says, "I think the big surge in the skateboarding industry as a whole may have contributed to the popularity of female products and events, that is: American capitalism. Someone out there feels they can make something of it and more power to them." But what sets businesswomen like Oliver apart from those just trying to

cash in on the sudden popularity of female skaters is that they are on a personal mission to make the scene a better place for women and girls like themselves.

Such companies also offer gear and financial support to their riders, something that was seldom done in the past and never done in the context of an all-female team like Cherry's. Ironically, the Zephyr Team of Venice Beach, California, largely responsible for revolutionizing skateboarding into the extreme sport we know it as today, had a female skater. This team member was a talented 14-year old girl named Peggy Oki. "I never experienced any gender bias. I pretty much felt like I was one of the guys," says Oki of her days skating with the Z-boys. Eventually, Oki dropped out of the professional skating circuit because "she didn't care for the competition's politics." "They really detracted from the enjoyment of skating," says Oki. The tradition started by the Zephyr team was soon lost as all-male teams came to dominate the competitive skate circuit.

Ed Templeton, owner of Toy Machine, decided to break that tradition in 1998 when he invited top female skater, Elissa Steamer, to skate for his team. "I wanted to do what no company ever did before," says Templeton, "I wanted to have a female pro skater that was not treated as a novelty. I am proud of the fact that Toy Machine never did an ad that said 'our girl skater' or used pink or flowers to separate Steamer from the other people on the team. She was treated exactly the same as everyone else. I feel that Toy Machine set the precedent of how to treat a woman skater." Since Toy Machine's decision to break down this barrier, other female athletes like Jessie van Roehoudt have followed in Steamer's footsteps.

Yet Templeton also describes a downside to Toy Machine's experiment. "The reality is that women's skateboarding is not as marketable," he laments. "For some reason, boys don't want to buy a board with a girl's name on it. Everyone respects the girl pros for doing what they do, but the big market, which is young boys, just doesn't buy it. When we announced Elissa Steamer would be going pro on our web site we got a tidal wave of response. Fifty percent of them were kids who were really pissed that she was going to be a pro on Toy Machine. They thought that they were just as good as her and that they were more worthy of being pro. They judged her purely on her tricks. The other 50 percent were writing in support of Steamer and coming to her defense."

The situation Templeton describes is emblematic of one of skateboarding's biggest marketing ironies. Steamer's merchandise wasn't any more feminine than Toy Machine's other gear, but, because it carried a girl's name, it wasn't profitable. Denise Williams, publisher of the girl-oriented skate magazine *Push*, hopes to change this. Through *Push*, Williams hopes to have created a space where places like Toy Machine can advertise in a gender-neutral context. She also wants to show the industry that women aren't necessarily interested in gender-specific products. "Retailers might think that girls want a board with a flower on it or pink trucks but that's not the case. Companies haven't gotten it into their heads that girls are interested in getting gear, not the feminine design of it."

The problem of retailing merchandise made by a female-owned company is a problem that Oliver has faced many times. "Most skate

shops are owned by men," she says, "and they don't see a market for our merchandise even though it's not necessarily designed for women." Not looking any more feminine than other boards or gear, it's difficult to understand shop owners' continued apprehension about carrying this merchandise. While some may simply not be ready for the concept of gender-blind gear created by women, others see the merchandise as inferior just because it is made by women. "I usually have to explain again and again that my company isn't just for girls and that my graphics aren't necessarily female specific," says Oliver.

To combat these frustrations, female publishers have begun creating the first women's skate magazines. Williams's magazine grew out of her initial experiences covering the female skate scene. "I got really up in arms," she says. "But after a few years I just realized that people don't listen very well. Pointing out that people have a bad attitude towards female skaters isn't going to help. Showing them the reality of what it means to be a female skater by putting a magazine in front of them that shows girl skaters as we are will do the job though."

Williams also wants to take female skateboarding out of the human-interest spotlight. Often treated as a novelty, she would rather people appreciate female skateboarders as true athletes. "Over the last two years," says Williams, "girl's skating has become more marketable. However, people often cover the scene badly when they report on it. We want people to stop thinking in the stereotypical ways that outsiders have and see it from the girls' perspective." Williams' editorial vision is unique,

with an emphasis on the skater who happens to be a girl and not the girl who happens to be a skater. She says that for the females to be taken more seriously as skateboarders, the focus needs to switch from their gender to the sport.

Check It Out Girl's Magazine addresses similar issues. Liza Araujo, publisher of *CIO Girl's Magazine*, describes her company's beginnings, "I started a zine to inform girls about skateboarding events, results and upcoming contests. The girls at that time didn't have any support from sponsors, event promoters, or the media. I decided that I wanted to kick open the door to the men's club and show them that girls could skate."

Though based in Brazil, Araujo says the global response that *CIO Girl's Magazine* received was amazing. "Over the last three years, we have had a really positive response from skater girls living in different countries. Now, after several years in the scene, we have subscriptions from the U.S.A., Australia, Europe, Japan and New Zealand... Some U.S. skate companies started advertising with us in 1996 which helped us to be recognized more globally. It challenged us to expand our format and enhance our quality."

Women are a vital part of the Brazilian skate scene. "I know that just in Brazil," says Araujo, "we have more than 1,800 girls skating this year... [In the beginning, it was difficult.] The dudes were making fun of the girls trying to do ollies or simple stuff that you see on the magazine pages. It was like that because us skate girls were growing together and our skills weren't developed like they are now. Everybody was a beginner. Nowadays, the photos of skate girls grinding big rails

bring a lot of respect to those amazing girls and our magazine."

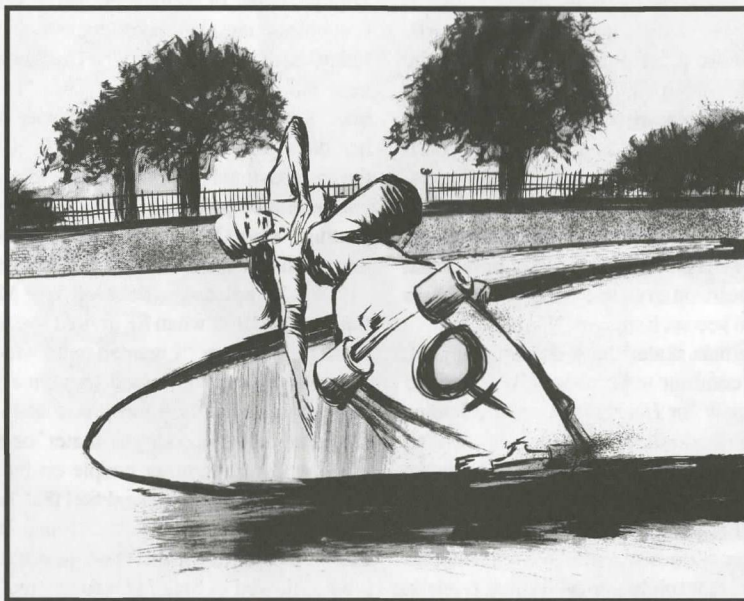
All-female events like All Girl Skate Jam and World Cup Skating have united women of all levels to compete and support one another. They have also brought much-deserved media attention. Many women see these events as retreats where girls can feel free to swap tips without the pressure that comes from being the only female at a skatepark, contest, or event. Attending these events can also be overwhelmingly inspirational, especially for girls who thought they were alone and now see hundreds of others interested in the same sport.

"All female events are great for women who are up-and-coming," says Khalsa. "Women are able to make a name for themselves while competing in a new genre. They are setting the bar, standard, and skill level for the quality of female skateboarding. If they did not have the chance to compete in their own category, they would constantly be compared to males and would lose a lot of deserved credit." Oliver agrees, "It's nice that we're all on the same level," she says about not being intimidated by more advanced skaters. "We can do the same things. That's why I think it's really good for girls to skate with other girls who are learning or new because it's more comfortable that way."

The lack of commercialization in the scene fosters a strong sense of camaraderie among skater girls at all girl events. The lure of big bucks isn't dangled in front of women as it is men and the emphasis is not placed on turning pro. Fun, attitude, sportsmanship, and style are valued instead, and these things are at the root of skateboarding's original rebel spirit.

"I think in both skating and in surfing females are doing it from the gut," says Templeton. "Women are not commonly sought out by skate companies for sponsorships and few women can make a living skateboarding. That means that the girls who do it are doing it for the reason we all start, because we love it. They are not poisoned by the imminent hope of getting sponsored. Most of the women I know in skateboarding are very active on the creative side of skateboarding. They make 'zines, take photos, skate weird spots, and listen to cool music. I am very jealous that my skate life isn't so pure."

Skateboarding is a sport that requires patience, determination, perseverance and, sometimes, a little bit of bloodshed. To excel at it, skater girls need to ignore the messages sent out by the mainstream media and focus on the original punk rock ideas that drove it. Moreover, there is no need for skater girls to prove themselves to the world, to feel that when they take a fall "it's a fall for all girls." Instead, Khalsa says, "I think a great motivation is seeing that there are average female skaters in almost every town and city that skate and keep skating. Women's skateboarding is a network and it's growing. We all relate to our brothers and lovers about how we also realize a certain bond between the sisters. We grow together and we inspire each other." The future of female skateboarding looks hopeful but, most importantly, "it's a fever that's growing everyday," says Araujo. "Everyday, a new skater girl is born." ★



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For the Politics or the Playoffs?

a fan's dilemma

About a month ago I was across the street at Rush and Walton at about seven o'clock in the morning when I saw Chicago Blackhawks' star winger Theo Fleury crossing the street directly ahead of me. His hair was streak-bleached and he was wearing this immense sheep farmer's coat that completely hid his tiny but well-chiseled 5'6" frame. As we passed each other on the crosswalk we locked eyes, and then he stopped and smiled at me. I almost *plotzed*.

"Hey, Theo, lookin' good, man" I said.

"Thanks," he says. I looked at him hard, he couldn't possibly think he recognizes me, and yet he did.

"Keep it up and get back on the ice," I said. "I know what you're goin' through."

"You do, huh?"

He smiled and continued across the street and disappeared around the corner. At the time (although I didn't know it), Theo

had just been cleared to begin practicing with the Blackhawks' again after being suspended by the league for violating the parameters of his substance-abuse treatment, an ongoing saga over the last two years that threatened to completely ruin his career. After leaving small-market Calgary for the lights of Manhattan and a multi-million dollar free agent deal, he flopped, freaked out, attacked various players, refs and mascots during the 2001-2002 season, and just as he and fellow Ranger teammates Eric Lindros and Mike York (the FLY line) became the highest scoring line in the league, Theo left his team and went into treatment. When he returned, he was traded to San Jose. Signing with Chicago over the summer, ostensibly to replace the popular and prolific former captain Tony Amonte, Theo was suspended indefinitely the day the season opened, and everyone in Chicago shit a brick. And they let him know it in no uncertain terms. Poor guy. No one should ever have to publicly defend an illness. What if the press treated Lance Armstrong the same way they treated Theo Fleury? Would anyone stand for it?

Charles Shaw words
Helen Griffin illustration

Theo didn't recognize me that morning on the street. I completely forgot I was wearing my Blackhawks' hat. But the situation speaks to the larger issue of being a sports fan in Chicago. I felt compelled (as a lifelong Blackhawks' fan and graduate of Boston University, the college hockey capital of the world) to give Theo my support and let him know there were a lot of people still behind him, because Theo Fleury is a good guy. He had a lot of real problems, and he genuinely sought help for them and worked harder than the average recovering person would ever have to work, and was properly humble and contrite to the press and the fans. He was a model athlete, because what he said came from the heart, and he truly loves to play hockey. Oh, if only we could say the same about all professional athletes.

I never thought I would find myself actually debating whether or not I should support professional sports, and yet here I am, right here in front of you, debating. The reasoning is simple. I'm generally vociferous about my political views, I edit a political magazine, and as such, I have to take all these wonderfully dramatic stances against all the various forms of injustice that permeate our society. It's a total pain in the ass and fills my life with so much more stress than the doctor prescribed, but I have to be that way or else I am nothing but a hypocrite, right?

So over the years, particularly in the 1990s when professional athletes began to be deified by a world audience, evidence began to mount against this culture of physical elites.

Latrell Sprewell nearly chokes Coach P.J. Carlsissimo to death during practice and it is formally called a "disagreement" and no charges are ever filed. Michael Irvin gets caught up in a coke-and-hooker conspiracy, arrested twice and still plays. Darrel Strawberry maintains an active cocaine addiction for almost fifteen years, is arrested over and over, probated over and over, and violates all the parameters of treatment and probation over and over and still is allowed to play until he is physically incapable of continuing. Allen Iverson is caught with drugs and guns and proudly surrounds himself with known gangbangers and parlays it into a marketing fortune. A heavily inebriated Jayson Williams shoots his limousine driver with a shotgun while "horsing around." Bison Dele (formerly Brian Williams) becomes involved in an international gold smuggling caper and gets killed at sea; his body has never been recovered. Ray Lewis went on trial for his alleged participation in a murder conspiracy; he was acquitted. Randy Moss didn't want to wait for people to cross the street, so he plowed into a crosswalk. When a traffic aide stepped in front of his car to stop him, he pushed her two blocks with his car

before knocking her over. Mike Tyson did time for aggravated rape and bit off a chunk of Evander Holyfield's ear. Rae Carruth had the mother of his child killed to avoid paying child support. Many think OJ Simpson killed his wife and her friend and that he was acquitted by a Los Angeles Criminal Justice system that had to avoid more riots at all costs.

That alone should be enough to ignite debate, and that list was only the proverbial tip of the iceberg. But everyone has their breaking points, and mine came after watching an episode of HBO's *Real Sports* about former NFL star Ezra Tualua who had to hide the fact he was gay from everyone he knew in order to play in the NFL. Watching the testimonies, one after another, of these arrogant, self-righteous, Evangelical homophobes touting the Bible and stating proudly and with impunity that yes, he would have been run out of the league if he had ever been outed, led me to become enraged. What did his sexuality have anything to do with his effectiveness as a player? It wasn't *contagious*, for christ-sakes. It was sad, because, again, Ezra Tualua seemed like a decent guy. He lives with his partner and two adopted children in Minnesota, and runs a string of businesses. A far cry from some of the lifestyles of these other Rich and Famous.

I decided once and for all to stop supporting the NFL. I knew how deeply Christian the league was, but I put up with it. This was different. This was just wrong. And I didn't feel the need to defend my views. Now every time I drive by the new Soldier Field, I feel like a chump, some idealistic fool that will never get to experience that wonder of human ingenuity inside that giant glass and steel bowl.

There is no doubt greed is destroying professional sports, and that we fans are guilty of creating this new athletic royalty, because we bought all the marketing. But doesn't it make sense that men who can't spell "salary arbitration" should have no right to demand it?

I am a Chicagoan, and you don't grow up in Chicago and somehow avoid becoming a professional sports fan. The Bears and the Cubs are a way of life here, the cross-town rivalry of the Cubs and Sox is a living metaphor for the cultural difference between Working Class Chicago and Professional Class Chicago. The Blackhawks' are an Original Six franchise, and have the longest losing streak of any NHL team. The Sox have the second longest drought without a World Series title, surpassed only by the Cubs. The Bears just had a \$600 Million dollar new stadium deal rammed down the State's throat, a controversial renovation of the old Soldier

Field, which is nearing completion despite the team only making the playoffs once in the last ten years. Then again, many refer to the late 90s renaissance of Chicago as "The City that Michael Rebuilt." This is a sports town. Culturally, socially, economically.

But does that necessarily mean that athletes should be exempt from the basic rules of society? There's a legitimate sociological phenomenon going on here. Very young, largely poor men with very little formal education (regardless of the Collegiate system) are from grade school being exploited for their physical talents, sheltered, rarely denied anything, and taught that the only important lesson in life is to *win*. To be kind, they have a limited world view. Overnight they become incredibly rich and influential and are treated like royalty, and they have absolutely no idea how to handle it. Very few of us would. And then consider they are also under tremendous pressure to maximize their earnings in order to get enough to last them the rest of their lives during the very brief window of opportunity their professional careers present.

As such, is it any wonder that everyone wants something from them, everyone who ever said hi to him back in the old neighborhood thinks he owes them something, and the temptation to do less than prudent things in order to flex one's influence can be overwhelming. I can only imagine what I would have done had I ever become that World Class hockey Centerman I always became when I played X-Box.

But enough is enough! Something has got to change. Unfortunately, it is looking more and more like the leagues will fold long before the athletes are willing to change their demands. Escalating player salaries and ad revenues have already heralded the end of NHL hockey in all but three markets in Canada, the birthplace of the game. Ticket prices for all four major sports have risen to the point that only the affluent can attend, which forces the working class to stay home and watch it on TV, which means more ad revenue, which means more influence from the corporate sector. It's a death spiral of greed and hubris, antithetical to the working class nobility of the gentleman athlete. And as it stands, hockey is the only sport to offer an annual award for the most Sportsmanlike Player.

All this makes it easier to abstain politically, but no matter what I really feel like I am missing out on something that is an essential part of life. So I still watch hockey and rationalize it because I think hockey players have more values. Well, maybe they do and maybe they don't, but it seems to me I have one last guilty pleasure I'd sure like to keep. Life definitely wouldn't be the same without it. ★

Minor League University

Michael Calderone words
JT Yost illustration

OJ Mayo is not so different from fellow 7th graders. Like his peers, he listens to Jay-Z, enjoys eating hot dogs for dinner and cites Spike Lee's *He Got Game* as his favorite film. Numerous lists on OJMayo.org enlighten the reader to the personality of the young basketball phenom. Flashing across the web page are quotes to provide further insights into Mayo's life both on and off the court, including an unnamed Nike executive's bold pronouncement that claims Mayo to be "the best player to come out of West Virginia since Jerry West."

Perhaps he is different from most 14 year olds.

Subtitled "A Look into the Future," Mayo's web site disclaimer contends that the Rose Hill Christian hoops star was not the creator of the site. While heralding his many achievements, the suggestion that the young star created it to praise himself is proved false. Although mostly spewing accolades upon Mayo from others, there is a notable quote from the young man himself that hopes to quell the cynics by stating that "I'm going to college and get my degree."

While in the past high school basketball games did not garner great media excitement, droves of fans have borne witness to his on-court performances thinking the same thing: "What if you could have seen Michael Jordan play when he was only 14?" While Mayo is deservedly atop the list of high school basketball players in the nation, he is not the only 7th grader being eyed by scouts and coaches for future collegiate heroics.

In order to appease those hungry for the latest info on

the best post-pubescent hoops stars in the country, one needn't look too far. Various Web sites offer (for a fee) stats and scouting reports on young players across the country. For instance, on hoopscooponline.com, college coaches learn about basketball players from 7th grade through senior year with comprehensive reports and rankings.

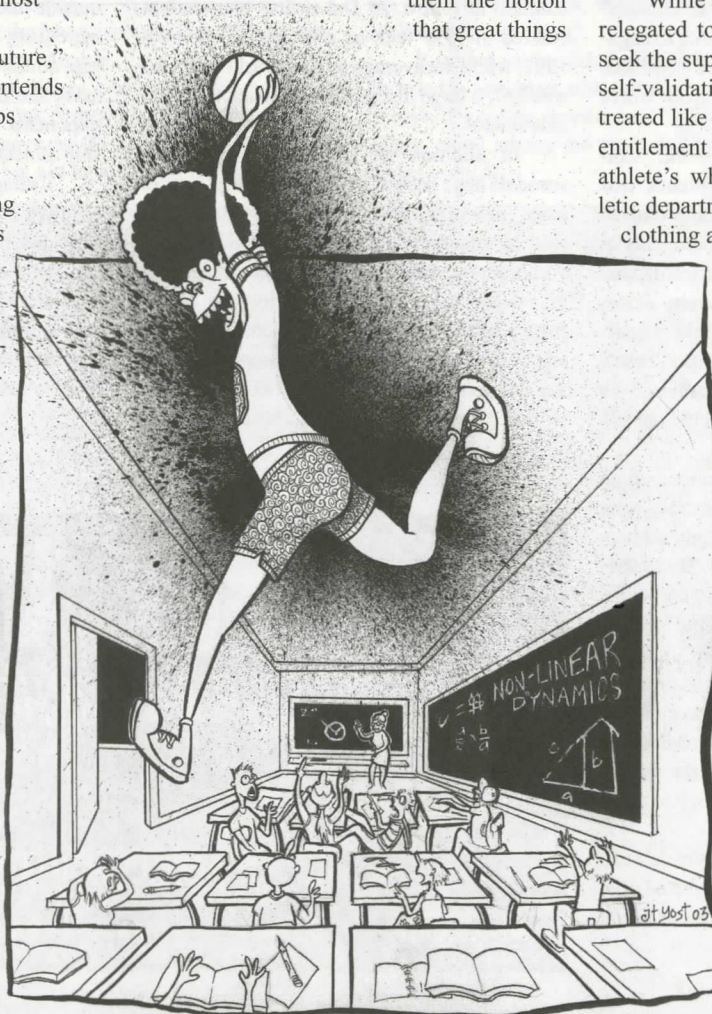
To compete for the NCAA title, coaches are no longer looking at only high school juniors and seniors or local stars to grace the college hardwood. They get an extra edge by investigating young players and instilling in them the notion that great things

will happen to them if they choose their respective colleges.

In addition to eyeing prospective players from the detached vantage point of the Internet, clinics for high school players have sprouted at numerous college campuses where coaches can ogle the young men trying to outshine one another in their quest for admittance to a nationally ranked program. It will be only a matter of time before they start receiving recruitment information, possibly years before they are old enough to apply for a learner's permit.

While budding 14-year-old chemists are relegated to their respective basements and seek the support of summer science camp for self-validation, the young basketball stars are treated like conquering heroes. This sense of entitlement is extended in college where athlete's whims are catered to by the athletic department, including free tuition, food, clothing and various other amenities.

Understandably, teenage poets and chemists are never going to win popularity contests against basketball and football players. However, this is not about popularity, but rather money – the money that these players can bring into the athletic department. From a young age, these students are scouted for their talent and fed the tired lines promising fame and fortune. While some may eventually reach the athletic pinnacle as a professional star, complete with endorsements and guest appearances on stage and screen, most will merely serve the interests of those benefiting monetarily from collegiate playoff appearances.



Is it any surprise that the current state of collegiate athletics, namely basketball and football, seem to serve interests far removed from the school whose logo merely adorns the jersey? While many critiques of college athletics have looked at the roles of matriculated, blue chip athletes, few question the lineage of the burgeoning athlete that begins before stepping foot on campus. For the serious basketball player, with plausible NBA expectations, the time to begin serious work is in high school, before using college for prominent and vital national exposure.

College sports have drastically changed. Rampant commercialization, fueled by expanded cable coverage and high coaches' salaries, appears to be the norm on many college campuses where student-athletes serve corrupt non-academic interests as semi-professional athletes rather than undergraduates who also play sports. With the emergence of ESPN and other cable outlets, and the ever present major networks, billions of dollars in television revenue weighs heavily upon the minds of the NCAA, athletic directors and university administrators.

Companies view college stars as potential money makers, similar to professionals that hawk products and run basketball camps. A vast difference rests in the fact that NBA stars are indeed *professionals*, profiting off their skills by competing for championships and entertaining loyal sports fans. Collegiate stars also display their talents and entertain but what is the purpose of this enterprise, to entertain or educate? Further emphasis on sports is beginning to negatively affect the academic interests of the school and the problem will most likely grow worse exponentially.

In Murray Sperber's brilliant work, "College Sports, Inc.," The author contends that educational integrity has been compromised by increasing focus on athletic departments at many schools. He insists that athletics departments, while still bearing the university name, use funds that could serve academic departments. Oftentimes, to make up for fiscal losses, money desperately needed for academic or student services is given to the athletic department.

Sperber, like other critics concerned about the plight of American higher education, worries about athletic departments at many schools serving as minor league franchises. He asserts that they "have almost no connection to the academic units and functions of the school; universities should admit that their intercollegiate athletic departments are separate commercial businesses." Sperber's contention has been echoed by others who have concluded that the sports franchises, disguised as departments, should break off and relinquish their grip on the University.

This virtual minor league system is most prevalent in basketball and football where collegiate play flourished years before a professional

system was created. Unlike baseball (which has an extensive minor league system), the NBA and NFL rely mostly on recruiting from college teams. Therefore, to gain admittance to the prestigious big leagues athletes must take on the role of the student-athlete, a questionable term which insinuates that their admittance to the school was based partly on academic achievement.

Statistics have invalidated the claim by proponents of big time athletics that student-athletes can serve both roles. Empirical evidence is abundant in Sperber's treatise. Unfortunately, the demands of competition at nationally ranked programs often leave little room for being a student. Estimates range from 40 to 60 hours of work needed to play at that level. When athletic departments have pushed for longer seasons to increase revenue and a playoff system for college football akin to the NCAA tournament in basketball, educational standards surely cannot be met.

If students are being admitted that do not measure up academically and cannot uphold the educational mission of the University, then why is this system still in place? In this equation, money counts most and although countless programs (including nationally ranked ones) lose money, the pull of athletic departments and boosters is still strong.

Schools such as Duke and the University of Michigan are praised as trophy schools that have succeeded both academically and athletically; however, neither should serve as the institution to follow. At Duke, first year students entered in 1997 with an average SAT score of 1392, while the average on their basketball team was 887, a large discrepancy for such a respectable school.

In addition to admission shenanigans, scandals have rocked several prominent universities, providing an example of situations that tend to arise when you throw unpaid athletes, corporations, cable networks, agents and athletic departments into the same pot. Still reeling from a recent federal investigation, the University of Michigan should also not serve as a shining example of offering the best of two possible worlds. Federal findings allege that a Michigan

booster gave hundreds of thousands of dollars to college players during the 1990s, a hefty charge which urged the school to harshly rebuke the athletic department, pay back large amounts of NCAA revenue and impose sanctions on the team for this post-season.

Indeed, inconsistencies can be found at numerous universities. By no means are Duke or Michigan the only schools guilty of unsavory practices but the problem appears more pervasive when two of the higher ranked institutions in the country have run into problems after increasing emphasis on athletics.

For this reason, the administrations at many top schools – including Boston University, New York University and the University of Chicago – have taken steps to curb the athletic programs in a way which will make them less susceptible to commercial interests that have no interest in upholding quality education for the majority of students. Contrary to one myth widely circulated about college athletics, de-emphasizing big time sports, has not resulted in a drop in admission requests for the aforementioned schools.

At Rutgers University, contentious opponents have waged war in the daily op-ed section. While the administration fails to accept blame for pushing athletic programs into Division IA, a costly venture which has hurt the school's academic credibility, many students, faculty and alumni under the organization – the Rutgers 1000 – have worked to take control away from outside interests. Highly critical of "the steadily increasing emphasis on 'professionalized' college athletics," the group has urged the school to leave the Big East conference and play against opponents whose teams consist of non-scholarship athletes.

College athletics departments have done a grave disservice to universities' academic missions by allowing commercial interests to run rampant. These athletic departments must separate from the university and become minor-league franchises or concerned individuals must fight to reduce the role of sports at the university level to restore an educational focus. ★

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my triathlon

by Chris Benevich

Triathlon training can be uncomfortable, lonely, and boring. I grew up on team sports, or at least sports that are done in a club or family setting. I wasn't used to running or riding long stretches without the spurs of a coach, camaraderie of teammates, and weekly rewards of a fun game or outing. Even so, it was not my intention to place last in the inaugural 2002 Starved Rock Triathlon.

I remember seeing the Hawaii Ironman triathlon for the first time on TV. It seemed the hardest, most elite sport competition in the world, and my goal-oriented nature demanded that I someday be a part of it. So, some 20 years later, for many different reasons, I committed to an Olympic distance triathlon. This includes a continuous 1.5k swim, 40k bike, and 10k run — about a quarter of a total Ironman distance.

What quickly dawned on me was that I committed to something not that distant in the future, demanding such focus for a sustained period of time, for ... well, too long. Cushy office jobs had softened my brain. Nearing age 30, I realized if I were to discover and fulfill my life's purpose, I had to discover and shed my Blakian mind-forged manacles.

I started to confront my fear of commitment (translation: fear of entrapment and loss of independence) upon getting married in 2000. My husband had long heard how I believe love is a choice we make each separate day. Like our marriage, I took the triathlon training day by day. The glitch in my plan was confronting a rocky marriage, and my goal changed from competing in to completing the race. I biked the streets of Chicago and read translations of Rumi. I walked alone in the forest, strangely empty of any rustling or animals. Though this cleared my mind, what remained was deep disappointment and a wrenching apart of my heart and self-identity.

Everything was so quiet and peaceful when training for my first triathlon the previous winter ... the outdoors is my church — when you're stripped bare of all thought, first as a necessity to move in the cold, then as a meditative freedom, a loss or a shedding of thought like dead skin cells that you don't need anyway. This is religion, the magic time when your true self emerges and a conversation begins. Returning from a winter workout is a heavenly post-orgasmic stupor — all calories expended, a warm-bodied, euphoric high, peeling the heavy, wet clothing off and stepping into a hot shower just before a nap. Mmmm.

With spring's arrival, my first challenge was to visit the mile-long swimming corridor along Chicago's Oak Street Beach and give my first open-water swim a try. One woman gave me the combination to her bike lock so I could lock my bike to hers but not have to wait for her. Another

swimmer allowed me to trail her in the water until she got tired and turned around. I gradually drowned out the kids throwing stones and my flashbacks to "Jaws Part III in 3D" with meditative chanting and focusing on the buzz of distant boats under water.

Fast-forward to 2002. After months of workouts and work on my marriage, race day appeared. For somebody whose idea of breakfast is a few cornflakes, scarfing two bananas, a quart of yogurt, a half gallon of apple juice, two liters of water, and a full bowl of oatmeal before a race had me a little on the bloated side! I brought a bag of things I'd need before the race, such as sunblock, an extra tampon, and a black permanent marker for the required "marking," or the ritual of writing the race number on my body.

I took the swim easy yet finished all the liquids for my race during the bike leg. I felt light and my thoughts started to wander. I started to thank myself for what I'd done to get where I was, reveling in my bike's mechanical smoothness, its razor-sharp responsiveness, slipping through the air rather than riding into it.

Towards the end, I was really just thinking, "Keep going. Right foot. Put the next foot down. Do not stop no matter how slowly you have to go. You are going to finish. You just have to get there." Homeowners had card tables covered with Dixie cups full of water and "Good Luck triathletes!" signs taped up. Kids played in their yards near the running trail, some waved or cheered. Although I waved back, I felt as if I was coming back into my body, coming back to this point in my life.

When I crossed the finish line, my husband was waiting. I ran into his arms and cried for what I'd accomplished and what we built together. Instrumental in my race recovery, he'd also grown into the man I love.

Sometimes, when I wonder about my boundaries, I return to my watershed moment during the race. When riding the bike, floating, my body not separate but a part of the surroundings, who am I? Am I dreams and promises, since that's how I got to the race? Or am I action, achievement, what I show or say or write or prove to the world? Who is that elusive self but a bag of chemicals, electrolyte-potassium cycles, nervous pathways clicking and clenching?

It is that self which we at all times have but only at instances acknowledge and, rarer still, fulfill to potential. I found that unnamable part of myself coasting down a rural highway, high on endorphins, running on empty, alone among the stark sky, hot wind, and shifting shafts of harvested corn. ☆

my chi

by Becky Sicking

I am perhaps as unlikely a candidate as can get to write about sports. I was still trudging along with training wheels on my Huffy well past a respectable age. My knock-kneed gait served me only to ensure I received continued taunts at school greater even than a last name like Sicking can provide. And there's little doubt that spectacularly breaking my nose playing softball in junior high, because of my rather dubious fielding technique, sealed my self-opinion that no matter how much I loved sports — which is considerably — I was not meant for them.

So I pursued stimulating my intellect instead and relegated my body to the dust bin, paying attention to it only to lament how fat I was, all while continuing to get fatter due to neglect. (Never mind that when looking back at photos of myself, I would love to be that "fat" again!) Basically, suffice it to say that I hardly got out of the starting block of life with a positive body image. The choices I made for myself, perceptions I had of myself and thus, definitions I clung to as truths about myself, did not include sports or even my body much.

Two years ago, I was at the rec center that is walking distance from my home, to sign my two-year-

old daughter up for classes. While there, I noticed a flyer by the front desk: T'ai Chi instruction. T'ai Chi is something that I ran across over ten years prior. And I fell in love with the concept of it immediately. I had an image in the back of my mind that I would love to be able to do that one day, but the idea seemed preposterous. Besides, at nearly ninety pounds overweight I felt uncomfortable to entertain the thought of taking T'ai Chi instructions until losing a considerable amount of weight. And the likelihood of that happening seemed as remote as...as...well, as catching that damn softball. So while I'd dreamed of knowing how to practice T'ai Chi, I didn't really imagine it would be something I would ever attempt to do, let alone actually do. I thought it would be an experience in this world that I would have to regrettably miss from my life, like skydiving still is.

So there I stood feeling fat, uncoordinated, sluggish, and intimidated, taking in the wording on that flyer. It spoke of a kind of acceptance and non-judgment that I hadn't imagined possible, especially with my perception of martial arts training as formal, rigid, and austere, a perception almost entirely fueled by pop culture — Bruce Lee and the "Karate Kid"

movies in particular. Unbelievably, I signed myself up, placing hope and trust in the author of those inclusive words.

During those first few attempts and honestly, the entire first quarter, I struggled to do any of it at all. Any. It was as if my whole life, who I thought I was, lived separately inside this shell, and so I had no idea what the hell to actually do with my body. But something unspeakable about T'ai Chi pulled at me to continue. Now, a little over two years later and fifty pounds lighter, I participate in group practices three times a week and usually practice on my own every day. It took me a little over a year to learn the T'ai Chi form that my teacher demonstrates, well enough to be able to practice it alone, but I did it. And I was correct; the words on that flyer did reflect the trustworthiness of my teacher. He included me, and I included him. Through T'ai Chi I was reintroduced to my body, my spirit, my whole self. And now I am an athlete. I realize now that I have always been; I was just an athlete still looking for my sport. ☆

Only the highest achievements will do for our children. For every child in America must grow up to be president, or a star athlete, or a scholar, or a business success...mustn't they? Gobs of money, fame, and bold leadership are what we're about. It seems a sin to even mention, let alone address, ordinary outcomes for children and youth. We can't talk about their best interests unless it is in the language of celebrity and the highest possible human achievement. It's our national religion. And it's a lie.

The examples and stories we feed to our children are all of highly educated, highly talented, or highly paid professionals. Woe unto Charlie Brown, Ramona Quimby, and Bart Simpson. And, yes, this obsession was tempered on the morning of Nine Eleven when it was firefighters, police officers, and construction workers who were the heroes.

But that's the point. Even if our zealous devotion to the choicest careers becomes more democratized, we are still obsessed with the overachiever, the hero, the extraordinary performer. We feel the pressure and we pass the competitive imperative on to our children. I tip my hat to the parents and families who fight this inhuman standard-setting and love their children and want them to just be happy. And I would not be so bold as to proffer the heresy that people shouldn't seek to excel and be all that they can be. But I do believe that a life is well-lived and a life is fulfilled when a being takes time to break from competition and pursuits of high achievement, and simply engage in play — not sports, contests or games, but play.

I am not making the case for mediocrity. I am saying that excellence, as our society has framed it, has fallen far short of bringing peace and balance to the world. And I am saying that an expanded search and effort for spiritual excellence at the societal level — which play offers — is in order.

I believe that when parents nourish the play of their children, and when play is sustained beyond early childhood, we get a glimpse of the life that celebrates more than it competes. We grossly undervalue play in our society, to the same extent that we have a bloated obsession with competition, achievement and winning.

Play is a principle basic to life, and it should be for society as well. The messages of art, comedy, children, history, and folk culture scream a hundred ways to make this argument. Yet another is the wisdom of our spiritual traditions. The basis for such a proposition is found in the Jewish concept of Sabbath. In his essay "The Sabbath," Abraham Joshua Heschel explains that "The Sabbath is not for the sake of the weekdays; the weekdays are for the sake of Sabbath." It is not an interlude, but the climax of living! ... The world has already been created and will survive without the help of man...on the Sabbath we especially care for the seed of eternity planted in the soul."²

But with what do we fill this Sabbath moment?

Certainly, rest. The body, mind, and spirit need and love rest. One should never feel guilt but only joy and appreciation of life in rest.

And meditation and prayer, however that comes to you.

But also play. Play, like rest, meditation and prayer, is free of the competition to control space, and is therefore open to the magic of eternity. Play is not for the sake of recharging the batteries before the next cycle of work and achievement.

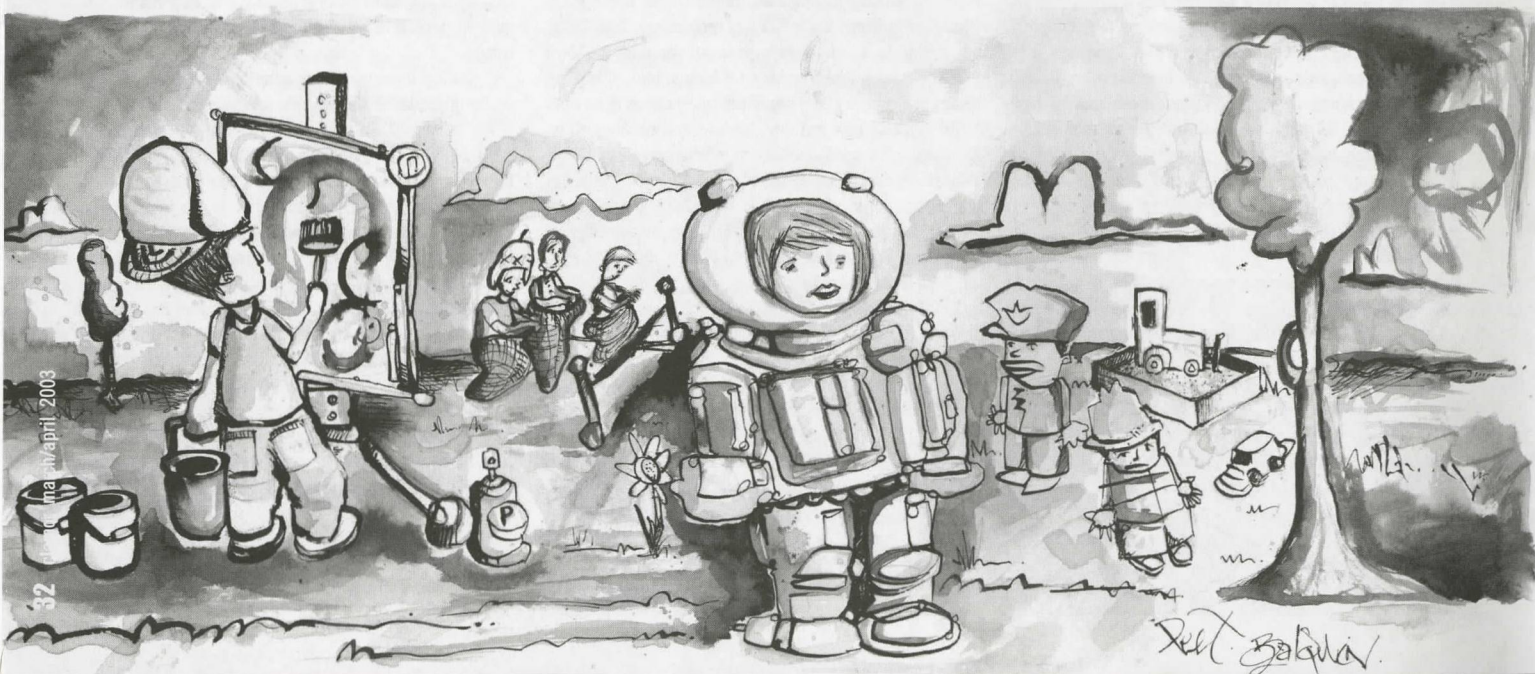
Play is for its own sake, is its own reward. It is very hard for us to get to the idea that our achieving is for the sake of play, not the other way around. For "life goes wrong when the control of space, the acquisition of things of space, becomes our sole concern."³

What is Play?

The opposite of play is not work. The opposite of play is contest and competition. There are at least four kinds of play: cultural, deep, original, and social. The classic philosophical book on play is Johann Huizinga's *Homo Ludens*.⁴ It is a brilliant and essential piece. Huizinga describes contest, or cultural play. Such a definition thrusts us into paradox, for contest is the opposite of the other three types of play. And Huizinga implicitly grasps this: competition at its most enjoyable — like in well-played sports — thrives on some of the same juices found in other forms of play.

Deep play is the exhilaration found most often in solitary pursuits where one reaches a level of blissful connection with nature. It can be hiking or bicycling, painting or praying or playing music. As described by poet and writer Diane Ackerman in her book by the same name,⁵ deep play is an inner experience necessary to the full enjoyment of

Play Is Not a Game



play. In deep play, one can play well, but does not necessarily play well with others.

Original play gets closer to the authentic kinds of activities where play enriches our lives and stimulates societal growth. As described and practiced by trainer and writer Fred Donaldson, original play is a social activity amongst beings, in fact it is the primary socializing activity of all life forms.⁶ As we engage in the basic but profound acts of frolicking, rolling, laughing, people are able to touch that life force that is in the diet of all animals and pre-cultural humans (infants). It's something we forget how to do as parents: we start to play games or learn sports that revolve around scorekeeping and ranking, none of which can occur in original play. In contest, we are preoccupied with the excelling of the self. In original play, the self is forgotten as we connect with something larger.

There is play in the pretend-fighting of dogs, where the rules of "I am going to bite you" are observed and then suspended immediately before any harm is even possible. If you get down on the ground with a small child under the age of four and roll around without clutching, tickling, or hitting, you can have great fun without it ever becoming an actual game, or without attaching moral lessons to the cavorting. After a half-hour or so, you will emerge from the experience, body and soul refreshed. These are forms of original play.

Finally, we come to social play, which is what happens when original play comes into direct contact with the many public realms of our society that are seriously engaged in cultural play. Social play takes on the paradox of getting into a contest with contest — fighting the power. In a society that is based upon competition and ranking, social play is a seditious act that rattles the foundations of convention and proposes the peaceful and fun age that we have never known.

Take, for example, the twentieth century. The Impressionists presented fine art imbued with the principles of original play new ways of looking at the world. They were also the first to popularize an anti-materialist, bohemian life. There is no debating that they sought to get paid well for their art, but through their struggles and their play, they

challenged the idea of art as a marketable commodity. They sought out a reality deeper than commerce, even as their break from France's patronage system laid the foundation for a new market. Since then, that new market has been a huge capital success, but it has killed art's potential to liberate.

With a ghastly world war to oppose, *dadas* took their cue from the Impressionists — not a new market, but NO market. They refused to connect their art with a market system, and refused all conventions of meaning. In a word, the *dadas* played — *dada* IS play, and *dada* art merely artifact: the shed skin, the residue of moments of play. Stop viewing art and start jumping into the pool of Life and Play was the clear message of the *dadas*.

The Beats would renew the cycle in the post-World War II shadow of a possible nuclear holocaust. With the focus shifted from painting to poetry and literature, with mass media as a possible catalyst of cultural movement, the Beats rediscovered the bohemian life and made it their own. Kerouac, Ginsberg and Burroughs were players of the highest order. Their rebel lives simply and sincerely rejected materialism. In the midst of a competition-based society, they reached — through writing, drinking, loving, drugging, and meditating — for some crazy equilibrium that was play-based. They tried to get and give a glimpse of what the

experience, the element of lightning-fast media, and mass participation in all of these for the first time, suggested that a play-based society was not the aberrant thinking of some radical art movement. It was a distinct possibility.

The war ended, the politics became dogmatic, the drugs got abused, and the music scene imploded, its rebel energy to be resurrected through punk and grunge, whose huge followings are more gradually connecting to a social vision and cultural movement. As the Surrealists provided haven for the activist element of *dada*, the human potential movement and leaders/thinkers like Gregory Bateson, Buckminster Fuller, and Stewart Brand carried on some of the vision for a play-based society. Abbie Hoffman, John Lennon, and Yoko Ono had an uncanny genius for playing with the media and provoking the American consciousness into considering a cancellation of the achievement contest. Throwing dollar bills from the gallery of the New York Stock Exchange. Running a pig for president. Conducting a weeklong press conference and love-in from bed to promote peace.

Had these heroes and warriors of play been able to bring such behavior to Josie and Joe Sixpack, unimagined gateways to peace, love, play, and fun could have opened and heralded a new age. But the closest we got was someone like Andy Kaufman, who lacked the political understanding of Hoffman, Ono, or Lennon, but brilliantly juxtaposed play into unexpected arenas and gave us all cause to question business as usual. Elvis impersonations. Intergender wrestling matches. Milk and cookies following a Carnegie Hall performance. Kaufman knew volumes about play, and struggled through play to break out of his individualism. But for all this, Kaufman was still stuck in the obsession with self. Original play requires the ability to give the self up for the moment, thus creating the opportu-

words **Shepherd Siegel**

illustration **Pete Lewis**

American character, denuded of its competitive mania, might be.

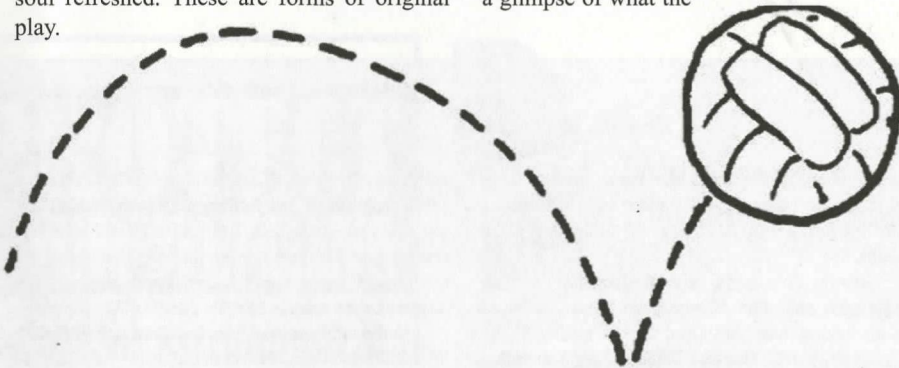
The hippies took this glimpse and ran with it. Where *dada* and the Beats had reached the level of highly successful cult, the hippies were able to create a mass culture and the largest Western foray into social play. Many ingredients were there. There was another major war to oppose. An antiwar movement is a statement that the contest has definitely gotten out of hand. Thus, to be against war is to be for play. War is the ultimate contest-based activity, the archetype of sports.

Where painting, poetry, and literature had been the emblematic art forms of previous social play efforts, music provided and fed off of the energy of the Sixties counterculture. The antiwar movement, the power of the rock music explosion, the grandeur of the drug ex-

periment for a collective experience. Try as he might, the prison of comedy's format thwarted him.

Kaufman may not have been able to play well with others, but it is the market system surrounding art, not his best intentions, that stultify that possibility. Social play is the as yet unlearned capacity to bring original play into the societal arena. Because it is anathema to a market system (i.e., competition) it, is subversive.

Experiments in such collective quasi-social play have occurred: the shared consciousness experienced in any particularly sensitive musical concert. Jazz is the most likely location for such an experience, and John Coltrane's quartet exhibited such grace; Grateful Dead concerts were famous for it. And the writing and seminars conducted by David Bohm addressed it directly. Bohm experimented in what science fiction writer



John Wyndham called the ability of groups to “think together.” He represents a deliberate search for the possibilities of a higher consciousness that could be experienced by a group that applies the principles of original play to dialogue. In other words, whether through physical play or dialogue, a group is seeking to have pieces fit together non-competitively to develop a greater whole, without having a predetermined insistence on what that whole should look like. And it’s interesting to note that our fascination with the humanistic science fiction writers like Wyndham, Asimov, Heinlein and Bradbury has been beaten down by the onslaught of ejaculatory sports-minded fantasy/sci-fi/action films that overwhelm humanity with mindless kinetics.

So this is the metaphor for our times. Not play. While it might have been risky to suggest society re-balanced in favor of play, peace, love, understanding, and fun before Nine Eleven today it must seem ludicrous. Today our very existence seems to depend upon our patriotism, ranking and selecting the very best pilots for our military, security for our public places (don’t even think of doing anything playful or out of the ordinary in public), leaders for our hapless businesses and government, and so on. And our educational reforms are cranked up to evaluate every student, teacher, school and district based upon simple numbers that tell us what each student

has achieved and how well. Such betrayals of freedom, of authentic learning, are falling into place right on schedule for this jingoistic national reorganization.

American competitiveness is not entirely bad, but the bloated size and finances of our sports institutions are emblematic of how it is way out of proportion. So it is with our national preoccupation with overachievement. This is hurting our kids, hurting our culture, depriving many of the true enjoyment of life that is found in original play.

We need to consider the implications of re-proportioning the achievement contest our sports institutions like Major League Baseball, the NFL, and the NBA so aptly represent, typically with one winner and twenty-nine losers. Martin Buber said that “Play is the exultation of the possible” and not the elimination of a competitor’s sense of possibility.

The world waits for a demonstration of the great American freedoms we are willing to mobilize the most powerful army in history to protect. That freedom is not about competition, though a free market is a part of our free society, however out-of-hand it may have become. That freedom is about the freedom to pursue happiness, through the release of the creative...art; through the formation of the collective...community; and through the spiritual pursuit of a higher order of being in the world...play. ☆

Footnotes

- ¹ The Sabbath, by Abraham Joshua Heschel, 1951, 1952, Meridian Books, New York, 1963, p. 14, wherein he quotes Rabbi Solomo Alkabez, Lecha Dodi; The Evening Service for the Sabbath; and Zohar, I, 75, respectively
- ² Ibid., p. 13.
- ³ Ibid., p. 3.
- ⁴ Johan Huizinga, Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture, (Boston: Beacon, 1950),
- ⁵ Diane Ackerman, Deep Play (New York: Random House, 1999).
- ⁶ O. Fred Donaldson, Playing by Heart: The Vision and Practice of Belonging (Nevada City, CA: Touch the Future, 1993).



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REVIEW CENSORED NEWS

Censored 2003: The Top 25 Censored Stories

Peter Phillips & Project Censored
Seven Stories Press, 2002
www.sevenstories.com

Project Censored again brings us its annual reportage of the most important stories of 2001 and 2002 that corporate and political mass media refuse to present to the public. People without a subscription to *Z Magazine* and *In These Times* probably missed most of these stories and, even if they heard about them, were inundated with junk stories about celebrities or propaganda about the threat of Iraq.

In *Manufacturing Consent*, published in 1988, Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky described what they called a Propaganda Model of mass media in which news items undergo a five-phase “filtering” process to weed out the stories that would focus the attention of regular people on the poor behaviors of the dominant moneyed elite and the subservient federal and state government. Much of that book is dedicated to showing how the mass media acted as propagandistic tools on stories from the 1970s and 1980s, mostly involving Southeast Asia and Central America. Under their model, news people acting with what they believe to be complete integrity and goodwill somehow still choose to present the news in a way that best serves the elite and corporate interests. When confronted with this theory, newspeople practically laugh out loud and call Herman and Chomsky’s theory product of paranoia and unsupportable by objective evidence. American

media and policymakers still treat these gentlemen like wackos, marginalizing them as if they were the reporter in the Incredible Hulk TV show or the FBI agents in the X-Files.

Project Censored’s annual (actually, annual-and-a-half) collection of repressed stories provides the continuing objective proof of the validity of the propaganda model. How else would few of the corporate media outlets published stories on how the Bush Administration prevented the FBI from investigating Osama bin Laden’s family? Well, Western oil interests vested in wealthy Middle Eastern oil families would be concerned if that story came out.

Included with the most recent Top 25 stories are updates on previous editions’ stories. The continuing suppression of important stories guarantees that underlying problems creating the stories in the first place never go away.

By reviewing the continuing censored stories in conjunction with the relatively new ones, themes of corruption in politics become apparent. The top censored story in *Censored 2001*, the last Project Censored edition, involved the IMF and World Bank’s attempt to privatize water supplies around the world, creating the possibility of enormous wealth for the corporate entities that bought into the opportunity. And so it goes in the current edition, with the top story of *Censored 2003* being the

attempt by the Federal Communications Commission to privatize the airwaves, allowing corporate media outlets the ability to literally buy and sell radio and television channels on the free market, virtually destroying the concept of the electronic “commons” whereby the airwaves were reserved for the benefit of the people.

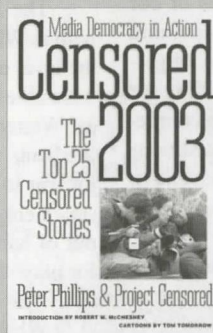
Noted progressive media analysts such as Robert W. McChesney and Norman Solomon make cameo appearances in articles focusing on certain aspects of Herman and Chomky’s propaganda model. Another article focuses on “Junk Food News” and how the media diverts our attention to important news by forcing drivel about Jennifer Lopez and summer shark attacks down our throats. Junk food news is like crack — it’s addictive and, in the morning after, it makes you feel like someone covered your brain with a layer of molten plastic while you were asleep.

Project Censored collections afford many people the chance to view these stories in one place without having to search all over the Internet or subscribe to 50 major newspapers, but of course one shouldn’t sit around and wait for the newest edition. The book is

an excellent resource on activist media organizations and DIY media.

Read this book and learn something. Start your own media outlet. Be the news.

–Matthew L.M. Fletcher



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www.loveofeverything.com

By the time I finally found my way to the Mid-America Game Club outside of Muldrow, Oklahoma, David Chavez's roosters had swept the afternoon derby. Chavez, a lean Kansan by way of Juarez, Mexico, looking somewhat like Lee Van Cleef in *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly*, had four victorious cocks this crisp December day. During the lull between the afternoon and evening fights, Chavez and his three handlers lounged in the smoke-filled arena, sipping domestic beer in Styrofoam cups. The cage in the middle of the arena looked like a smallish boxing ring littered with dirt, feathers, and blood.

I had arrived at one of the few remaining cockpits in Oklahoma to witness the sport with my own eyes. Here a legal battle royal is underway to decide the constitutionality of a November 2002 referendum banning cockfighting. It hadn't been easy: my life had been threatened on an online cockfighting discussion board when I asked for information about cockfighting, I had been led down apocryphal state roads by an Oklahoma tourism official, and given wrong dates and times by cockpit owners.

Oklahoma was (and technically still is) one of only three states — Louisiana and New Mexico are the other two — to allow cockfighting, and the debate over the sport had turned the state's normally dull politics on its head. Although the ban had passed by 54 percent, it was rejected by 57 of the state's 77 counties and a state judge placed a temporary injunction on any enforcement of the new law. So while cockfighting might be in legal purgatory, the sport continues, even as the debates over it grow shriller. To cockfight or not to cockfight has become a referendum not just on the sport itself, but on the state's moral compass and external image. Cockfighting, like the *Grapes of Wrath* some seventy years earlier, has forced Okies to confront their deepest fears and anxieties about race, class, and violence.

There has been widespread speculation since November that a last-minute mobilization of cockfighters failed to defeat the referendum, but somehow succeeded in upsetting the ultra-conservative Republican candidate for governor, Steve Largent, who had called cockfighting "a barbaric practice."

Largent seemed like a shoe-in for two factors: as a US congressman he had been one of the most visible members of the Christian

Coalition and, perhaps more important, he is an NFL Hall of Fame wide receiver. Football and Christianity are a powerful tandem in Oklahoma, and to a lesser extent, national politics: JC Watts, Tom Osborne, and Jack Kemp are but a few representatives who parlayed success on the gridiron to Capitol Hill. When I asked Ken McNeeley, owner of the Mid-America Game Club, if cockfighters could take some of the credit for beating Largent, he got serious: "You don't have to ask that," he said. "You know we beat that SOB."

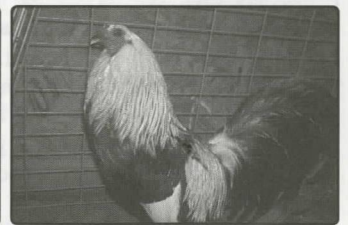
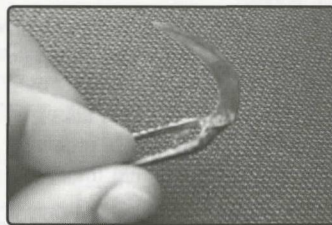
To Largent and Republican Governor Frank Keating the answer to the vexing State Question 687 was simple: cockfighting is an abomination, a cancer on the face of the Heartland. "Cockfighting is cruel," Keating said shortly before the election, "it promotes illegal gambling, and it's simply embarrassing to Oklahoma to be seen as one of only a tiny handful of locations outside the Third World where this activity is legal." The comparison of Oklahoma with the "Third World" resonated on more levels than Keating could have anticipated.

While cockfighting has been a shadowy subculture in the United States since at least the turn of the century, it has experienced a revival in part due to the influx of Mexican immigrants to the South, where cockfighting culture is most ingrained. This has led to an unlikely coalition between these new immigrants and rural, poor or working class whites against the conservative mainstream.

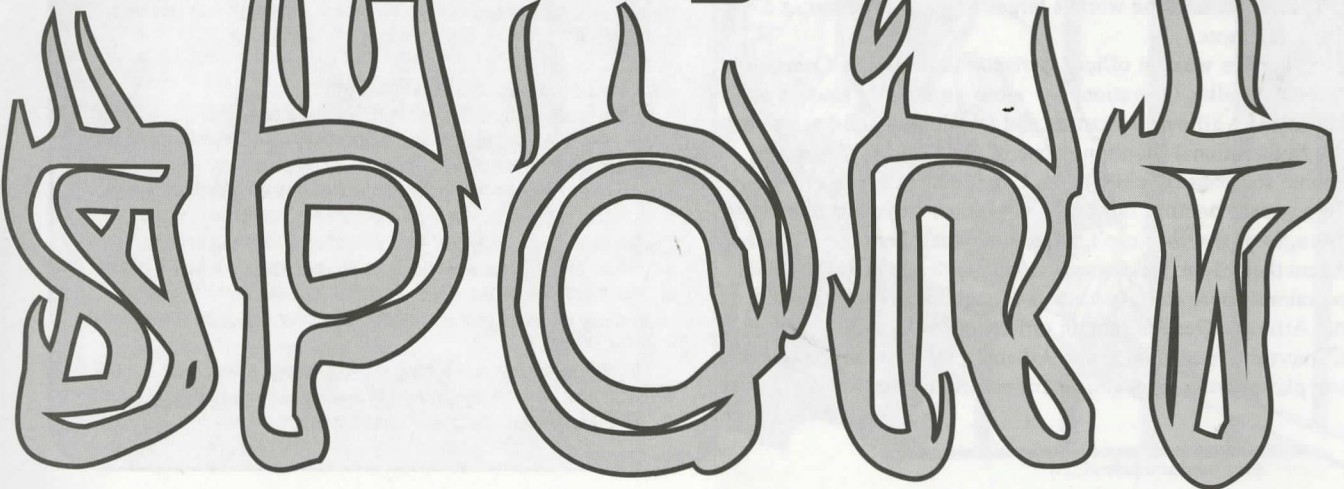
"The way I feel about it is, you have one Mexican cocker, he brings seven of his buddies to a fight. A white guy brings two, maybe three," said Sam, an Oklahoma rooster farmer near the Texas border, "It's good for the sport." Contrary to the image that the anti-cockfighting lobby tried to present, cockfighters, for the most part, seem to accept and even welcome diversity — as long as they agree with their sport. "Who cares what color you are," another one said, "the question is: do you fight chickens?"

"We're a live and let live bunch," McNeeley told me, only to warn me about "queers, lesbians, and vegetarians ... funky people in the cities with hair down to their ass and rings in their nose."

It wasn't only the subtle racism of Keating's statement that hit home for many cockfighters. In a state with a 15 percent poverty rate



Cockfighting in America



that ranks Oklahoma as the eighth poorest in the nation, cockfighters believed that they were being pegged as lazy, vice-ridden, poor white trash.

Cockfighting has, in other words, become an allegory for class warfare. In an interview with NPR, Janet Pearson, the *Tulsa World's* editorial page editor admitted that the newspaper's stand against cockfighting had more to do with class and identity than with the actual sport. "To us, as an editorial board, the image issue was really paramount. I mean, it just seemed like a backward activity."

Inside the Pit

The cockpits themselves, according to the anti-cockfighting lobby, led by the Humane Society and the Oklahoma Coalition Against Cockfighting, are dens of iniquity full of drugs, prostitution, cruelty, and gambling. Yet, somehow, the atmosphere in Mid-America felt only slightly more decadent than bingo night for seniors at the VFW. Kids drank huge sodas and ran circles around the pit, men discussed cocks' blood lines in the jargon of genetic engineers, and David Chavez and his handlers returned to business, readying their roosters for a long evening of cockfighting.

To Hayden Hise, a 77-year-old veteran and retired referee of the sport, cockfighting is anything but backward. "Cockfighting is an art and the best cockfighters are extremely dedicated to the sport," he said while grabbing two roosters and setting them on scales for an evening bout. Hise fought and raised cocks for 44 years before acquiring his current post as Mid-America's announcer and cockfight supervisor. He is sharp and friendly; he is the only cockfighter who dares to look this non-cockfighter in the eye. He is articulate, too: unlike most cockfighters, who justify the violence of the actual fight by reverting to a "natural law" argument, Hise is aware of the deep bonds between human and cock. Man has bred the rooster over the past 2,000 years to become more aggressive, quicker, and stronger, Hise says. Everyone knows that the rooster is a natural fighter, he says, the difference is his handler: "A good handler can bring a dead rooster back to life," Hise claims. The psychological connection between the cock and the handler can be the difference between life and death. "I've seen plenty of fights where the handler gives up and the rooster just dies."

If this is true, then the notion that cockfighting is "barbaric" becomes much more complicated. Cockfighters are quick to argue that they treat their animals with much more dignity and respect than your average chicken farmer. "What's really cruel?" Sam asks me, refusing to give his last name. "A guy who takes care of his roosters for three years, or these farms packed with chickens that they electrocute after a few weeks?"

While some of the arguments cockfighters put forth to legitimize what is, in fact, a blood sport do seem far-fetched, this is an irony in the debate over chicken fighting lost on no cockfighter. Just across the border in Springdale, Arkansas sits the corporate headquarters of Tyson Foods, the world's largest poultry producer, a \$7 billion a year business.

Tyson operates what in official parlance is known as Concentrated Animal Feedlot Operations — more commonly known as "factory farms" — all over Arkansas and Oklahoma, and has been labeled by Multinational Monitor as one of the "World's Ten Worst Corporations" for its use of child labor. Conditions in Tyson's farms, or any large-scale poultry farm, are notorious: hens are densely packed in cages so that they can't move, while their beaks are sawed off to prevent them from pecking one another to death. As if the child labor and animal abuse charges weren't enough, none other than the Oklahoma Attorney General (not an office known for animal rights crusades) recently threatened to sue Arkansas for contaminating its rivers with phosphorous, a by-product of poultry waste.

Yet as the debate continues, and I hunker down in the middle of Muldrow with David Chavez and his handlers, who are diligently fastening on an inch-long blade to a rooster cradled in one of the handler's arms, politics gives over to the visceral sensation of impending mortal combat. This rooster, his white heckles and black plumage shining, closes his eyes as he is prepped and messaged for the upcoming fight. Will he end up in Mid-America's ROOSTER trash bin or on a Kansas farm as a 12-year-old prize battle cock? I could watch and find out, but it is midnight already and home is a long way from Muldrow. ☆

COCKFIGHTING FACTSHEET

excerpted from the Humane Society of the United States website
www.hsus.org

What is cockfighting?

Cockfighting is a centuries-old blood sport in which two or more specially bred birds, known as gamecocks, are placed in an enclosure to fight, for the primary purposes of gambling and entertainment. A cockfight usually results in the death of one of the birds; sometimes it ends in the death of both. A typical cockfight can last anywhere from several minutes to more than half an hour.

How does it cause animal suffering?

The birds, even those who do not die, suffer in cockfights. The birds cannot escape from the fight, regardless of how exhausted or injured they become. Common injuries include punctured lungs, broken bones, and pierced eyes. Such severe injuries occur because the birds' legs are usually fitted with razor-sharp steel blades or with gaffs, which resemble three-inch-long, curved ice picks. These artificial spurs are designed to puncture and mutilate.

Aren't these birds natural fighters?

While it is true that birds will fight over food, territory, or mates, such fights are generally only to establish dominance within a group (the pecking order) and seldom result in serious injury. This natural behavior is quite different from what happens in staged cockfights, where pairs of birds, bred for maximum aggressiveness (and sometimes given steroids or other drugs to make them more successful fighters) are forced to fight until a winner is declared.

Isn't cockfighting part of our heritage?

While it is true that cockfighting has been practiced for centuries in various countries, including the United States, "old" does not necessarily mean right or even acceptable. At one time the United States allowed slavery, lacked child abuse laws, and refused women the vote.

Is there a trend toward treating the crime of cockfighting more seriously?

Yes. It is illegal in almost every state, and most states specifically prohibit anyone from being a spectator at a cockfight. Recently many states have increased the seriousness of a cockfighting charge from a misdemeanor to a felony. In addition, the federal Animal Welfare Act prohibits the interstate transport of birds for use in cockfights to states with laws against cockfighting.

What can I do to help stop cockfighting?

If you live in one of the states or territories where cockfighting is still legal, please write to your legislators and urge them to ban it. If you live in one of the states where it is still only a misdemeanor, please write to your state legislators and urge them to make it a felony offense. To find out how your state treats cockfighting, visit our page on State Cockfighting Laws.

We encourage you also to write letters to the media to increase public awareness of the dangers of cockfighting and to law enforcement officials to urge them to take the issue seriously. You may want to display our cockfighting poster in your community; additional copies can be ordered from The HSUS.

If you suspect that cockfighting is going on in your own neighborhood, alert your local law enforcement agency and urge agency officials to contact The HSUS for practical tools, advice, and assistance.

The Gretzky Effect

Each train line in New York's vast, serpentine underground system has a personality all its own. My line — the N train — is essentially a blue-collar crowd. You know, the breed of human that perceives Roe vs. Wade as two nifty ways to cross a river (insert rim shot here). These are New York Post readers who loyally ignore the headlines and flip their tabloid newspaper over to scan the sports pages with an intensity rarely seen elsewhere.

What a cool world this would be if people would only put half as much energy into improving their own lives as they do studying the NFL standings.

When it comes to sports, I consider myself a reformed addict ... of sorts. I still play sports when I can, but not having cable makes it easy for me to resist viewing. That's a good thing because I've wasted far more time than I care to admit worrying about batting averages, hat tricks and the goddamned Super Bowl.

Several years ago, in fact, I lectured a co-worker of mine named Jody on the dangers of sports addiction.

"Professional sports," I told my impressionable young pseudo-friend, "are nothing more than a very clever diversion needed to encourage chauvinism and keep us drones looking in the wrong direction."

To prove this rather unusual postulation, I offered the intrepid Jody the following formula as evidence (remember, this was a few years back: "Leon Hess owns the New York Jets. Leon Hess also happens to own an oil company. Now, it's no secret that oil companies like Hess benefit greatly from US-enforced 'stability' in such wonderfully exotic places as Somalia and Kuwait. However, if we citizens were only slightly aware of the dreadful tactics used to promote such so-called stability, there would be a very noisy Second American Revolution."

This is where Jody raised his eyebrows and was obviously wondering what all this subterfuge had to do with Dennis Rodman's rebounding average or Evander Holyfield's next title fight opponent (more dated references to illustrate my supposedly indifferent status). So, I chose that time to deftly tie all this scattered hyperbole together in one very neat package.

"Hence," I proposed, "it's best to have people like us worry our heads over the Super Bowl then to dig into U.S. foreign policy, right? Plus, if the major oil companies spend tons of advertising dollars, the media accepting that windfall is logically going to promote what they're told to promote: sports, not human rights. Therefore, the concept of Leon Hess owning an oil company and an NFL franchise makes remarkable fuckin' business sense (the same goes for the guy who bought the Jets from Hess: the owner of a major pharmaceutical company)."

Jody's polite silence was not unexpected so I opted to segue into "the Gretzky effect."

"In 1988," I began, "the hockey legend signed an eight-year, \$20 million contract with the Los Angeles Kings for an annual salary of \$2.5 million (quaint in 2003 terms). In return,

thanks to season's tickets sales, cable TV, concessions and rent kickbacks, the Great One earned an extra \$4.4 million for the Kings in his first year. When you factor in the league-wide increase of ticket and concession revenue Gretzky directly caused, his total initial effect that year was a \$12.73 million windfall for the Kings and the entire NHL.

"But not even Wayne Gretzky was exempt from player depreciation. Team owners seeking a tax break depreciate athletes like a friggin' piece of equipment. A player valued at \$1 million, depreciated over five years, gives the team owner a tax write-off of \$200,000 for each of those years. This total is subtracted from a team's gross earnings, thus providing yet another tax shelter for the wealthy owner.

"As former Yankee Jim Bouton quipped, 'While the players don't deserve all that money, the owners don't deserve it even more.'"

Jody thought I was done so I blocked his exit from my pathetic cubicle and continued.

"Like GM, IBM or Boeing, pro sport teams just love socialized costs and privatized profits — even if they have to resort to extortion. Owners regularly threaten to leave a given city unless they receive bigger tax breaks, more favorable labor policies and protective tariffs, and have new stadiums, arenas, roads and luxury boxes built. These costs are dumped on the taxpayers but the profits are completely privatized. Corporate America then rewards its benefactors by uprooting the team from the community when a sweeter deal materializes elsewhere. This is why so few teams own the facility they play in: the burden of taxes, insurance, construction and maintenance are passed on to the state and the opportunity to pack up and leave is thereby made much easier."

Jody seemed surprised to learn this so I hit him with more about socialized sports.

"Consider the seemingly benign concept of season tickets. Massive conglomerates buy up

all the best seats, distribute the tickets to other corporations and write off the cost as a business expense on their taxes. That means taxpayers like you and me, Jody, are subsidizing the costs for corporate fat cats and their hotshot friends to sit next to Spike Lee and Jack Nicholson.

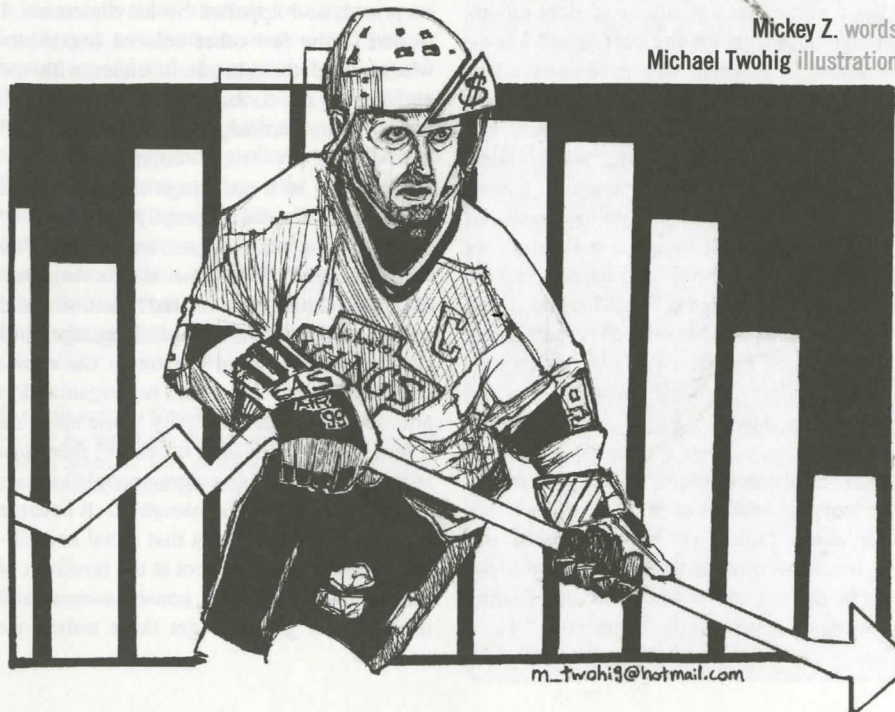
"As for me, Jody, I no longer give two shits who slam dunks (lie) or tosses a no-hitter (untrue) or just how mad 'March Madness' really is (maybe). My addict days are over; I've got my eyes open. Yours truly has torn off the blinders known as sports (not really accurate, by the way)."

I'll always cherish the image of Jody sprinting from my office when he realized I was finally finished talking.

All that chatter about sports reminded me of a really dumb mistake I once made. When I was in my teens, as much as I'm loath to admit it in public, I began to collect baseball cards as a hobby. My delinquent friends and I would sneak into baseball cards shows. We'd buy a few and steal a few and eventually built up some impressive collections. I even owned a 1954 Phil Rizzuto. You know, the famous poet/shortstop.

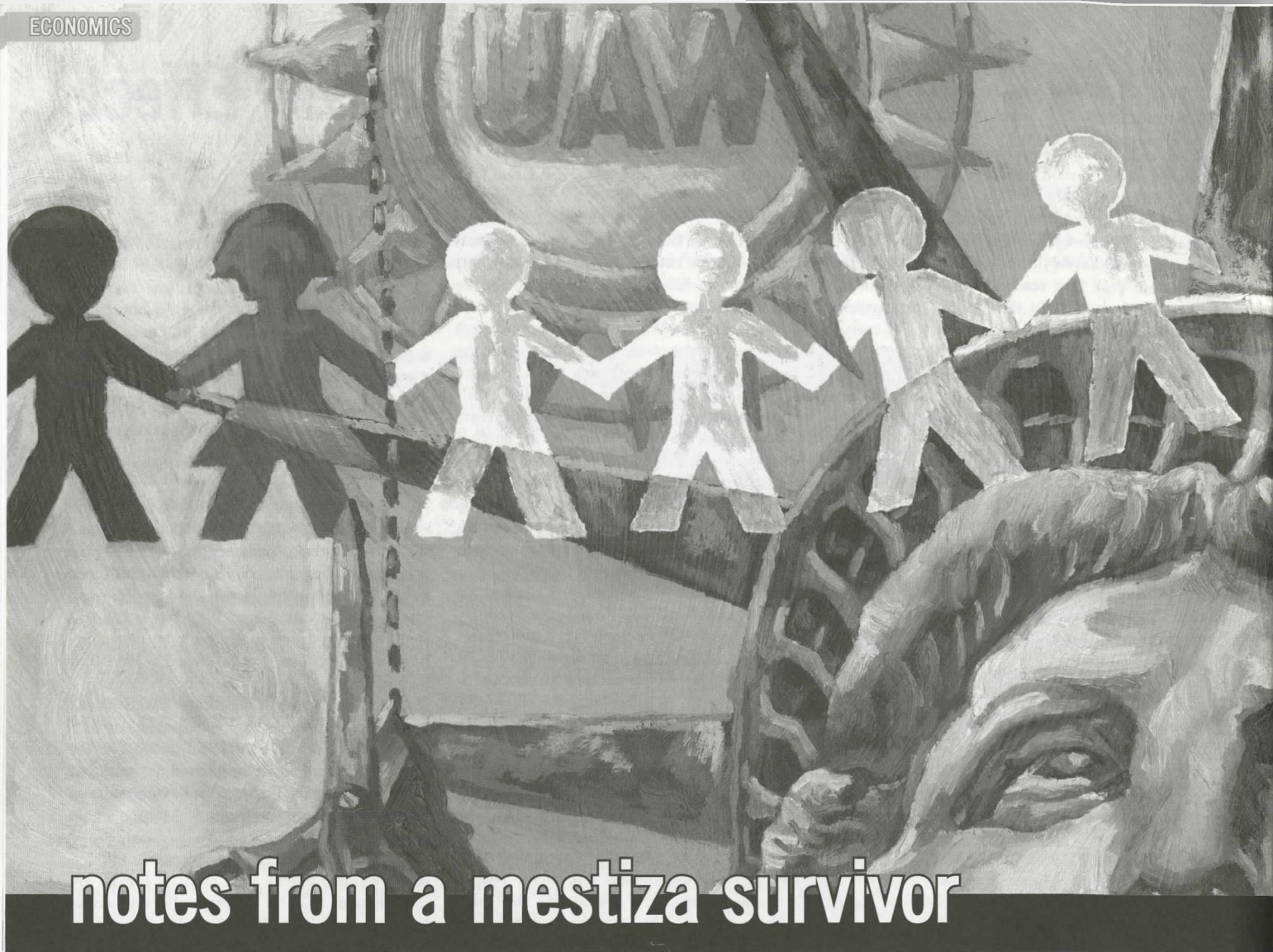
Anyway, some of my former baseball card buddies saved their collections to pass on to their sons in an incestuous bit of brainwashing. As for my baseball card collection, I sold it when I got fired from one of the many jobs I've gotten fired from. I needed cash, so I took \$50 for the whole thing.

Today, when I see the incredibly inflated prices of such bubble gum cards, it breaks my cynical heart to know that my collection would be worth well over \$2000 if I would've held on to it. This sad thought crosses my mind as I glance about at all the N train riders reading the sports section. I'll bet they all have valuable baseball card collections socked away somewhere. Who knew? ☆



Mickey Z. words
Michael Twohig illustration

m_twhig@hotmail.com



notes from a mestiza survivor

words Ariana Vigil
illustration Helen Griffin

I have worked on a graduate student unionization campaign for the past year.* I have been told by a white, gay, graduate student that graduate student employees shouldn't complain about not having child care because "that's too bad for them, they shouldn't have children in graduate school." I have heard the experiences of a fellow [woman] organizer, cornered by three male students in an office, told she should be able to take care of herself, called a "bitch" while riding the bus to campus. I have seen posters going up around my campus with phrases such as "We're students, not auto workers, tell the UAW to go back to Flint," and "Stop the whining!"

I have encountered problems within the labor movement as well. In a conversation about "minority issues" within our organization, a white friend of mine told me that he did not notice white men dominating meetings because he is "colorblind." Hurt,

surprised, and appalled by his statement, I turned to the few other colored organizers who nodded their heads in anger with me and helped me to laugh off his ignorance. Early in the campaign, at a meeting I did not attend, my friend complained about the wording in a paragraph that dealt with minorities. She was promptly asked by one of the leading white organizers to fix it. She was infuriated. Why must she be responsible for all things race-related? And why did no one else notice the biased language until she, the only colored person in the room, said something? I watched my organization attempt to embrace diversity while slapping a few brown faces on a brochure; meetings still run by whites, no colored people's issues to be found within the pamphlet. It became obvious over the months that racial and ethnic issues were simply not at the forefront of our fellow organizers' consciousness, and they weren't going to get there unless we

put them there. We, an African-American, una Chicana, una Americana central y me [a half-breed Jewish Xicana], brought our issues to the table. Later that night, my friend called me: "Do you think anything's going to change?" I answered: "Honestly? No. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't have done what we did."

My desire to go to D.C. that weekend for anti-International Monetary Fund/World Bank protests reached a peak. During that meeting, I had felt so outside, so small and ineffectual. I needed to know that thousands of other people cared about the things that I did and that they were trying to make a difference. I needed to know that even if I couldn't exact change in one area, somewhere, with thousands of other people, I was going to help change something.

I became involved in this union campaign because I am pro-labor. Also, I felt this campaign was a good opportunity for

me to contribute concretely to a movement I have supported theoretically for years. At first it was foreign to me, talking to strangers, learning the experiences of graduate student employees at a time when I wasn't one. However, actual organizing, "time on the ground," was great. Sure it was difficult for me to schedule a two-hour block of my morning to devote to walking around TA offices, talking about employment issues and asking supporters to sign union cards. But once I dragged my sleepy head to campus and was actually doing it, I was happy. I ended most of my days for the past year with sore feet and a hoarse throat, but feeling upbeat. And union organizing fulfilled me in a way graduate seminars never could. Time passed quickly and the amount of times I heard someone say, "Thank you for doing this" far outweighed anyone who said, "I'm not interested" or worse rebukes. I met great people and had great discussions and I don't regret a minute of the time I spent talking to fellow graduate students about the union.

I still believe in unions. And I believe in the labor movement in the sense of this concrete, historical, practical movement, which has achieved so much. But it is so muddled with corruption, big business, sexism, racism, and heterosexism. And you know what? People can't change. I really believe that. Institutions can change — and the labor movement has. The UAW, for example, has great policies on women, immigrants, and GLBT issues, and I was and still am proud to have been a part of that organization. But really changing people — their individual actions, thoughts, and ways of relating — I'm not sure if I believe in that anymore. I have seen so much racist, sexist, heterosexist, and ablest rhetoric spew from the mouths of "progressives." The instances I have witnessed make me feel that only queer people can really push for a queer agenda, and that only colored people can really lead an anti-racist movement.

There is certainly room for whites and straights and men in revolutionary movements, and their roles are important ones. However, as far as these people actually *understanding*, en su sangre, the oppression of others — impossible. Some people are never going to know what it's like to look around the room and feel completely alienated from all the white faces in the room. Or to bite your tongue from correcting someone's Spanish pronouncement of a person, place, or food, for fear of exposing one's self, letting them see how easily the rr's roll off your tongue. Or to change the word "synagogue" to "church" when describing how you know that girl in the row behind you. And it's not that people don't try. I know they do. But they have to understand they are trying to overcome prejudices that penetrate deep, and

that are perpetuated almost everywhere in our society — in our media and our schools; our speech and eating habits. We need to recognize that often times the very institutions through which we seek liberation are themselves a part of a very anti-liberatory system.

This is not to say colored people are perfect. Indeed, I often find that colored people have difficulty articulating clear-cut class analyses of situations and I am frustrated in the ways that class is often ignored or taken for granted — either because the individual assumes the group she is addressing is all poor or that it is all middle class.

So, what is a queercoloredmarxist like me to do? I stay in the fight. I'm not going to abandon the labor movement and only organize along racial and sexual lines because that's not where the revolution is going to happen. And make no mistake; the revolution is going to happen. And it's going to be awesome.

However, I won't abandon mi gente because they won't abandon me, this much I've learned. I will never experience disappointment from my colored friends for missing a meeting or an event because I'm busy doing union organizing. They understand the bind we are all in, fighting on too many fronts and with too few people. The same cannot be said of my white activist friends. They're never really going to understand why it's important for me to attend a Latino speaker series or social event.

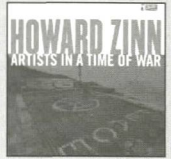
One of the things I noticed in the course of organizing this union was the overwhelming support we received from colored people on campus. After a particularly difficult meeting, my Xicana friend said to me: "We must be dumb, cuz we get treated like shit and we keep coming back." White people — especially labor people — need to understand exactly what it means for a queer, or an immigrant, or a woman, or a colored person to step up and actively organize. Recognize the historical relationship labor movements have had and still have with these groups.

So let us support you, let us join you and fight for economic justice. But realize how much we have to overcome, every day, to continue to trust you and to trust this movement. And when the revolution comes, be ready for us, because we're going to be there, and we're going to make sure it's full of color *y cambia y alegría*. ☆

*At 1:40 a.m. on October 25, 2002, Cornell University became only the second university in the United States to vote down union representation for graduate student employees.

Artists in a Time Of War

Howard Zinn
AK Press &
Alternative Tentacles, 2003
www.alternativetentacles.com
www.akpress.org



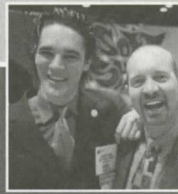
AK Press/Alternative Tentacles continue to make available some of Zinn's more interesting lectures. This is a follow up to the note-worthy *Stories Hollywood Never Told* and *Heroes and Martyrs* which continues Zinn's effort to tackle the aspects of American history that might otherwise receive little or no attention. *Artists In a Time of War* does not really cover any one period of history, instead Zinn chooses to comment on the role of the artist in society, especially as dissidents and especially during times of war. Zinn, discusses why he thinks the artist has a duty to speak out against unjust policy through their paintings, music, poems and novels. "It is the job of the artist to think outside boundaries, to dare to say things that no one else will say." Mark Twain, Arthur Miller, Kurt Vonnegut, Dalton Trumbo and Langston Hughes are just a few of the names he mentions as examples of dissenting artists. Zinn argues that art in all it forms is a forum for dissent. He also argues that artists do not have to be explicitly political, that an "artist can be sly" can get away with criticism because it is only art or fiction. Zinn argues that even apolitical art has a role to play, in that the artist provides a vision of hope or an alternative to the horrific nature of war.

This lecture affirms Zinn's absolute opposition to war and the need for everyday people, not just artists to transcend the madness. He is right to say that you do not have to be a military "specialist" or have studied international politics to speak out against something that you feel is unjust. He is also right in saying that you do not need to be an artist to make an eloquent statement against war. Zinn states that, criticism of the government is not unpatriotic but highly patriotic and it is the duty of everyone to speak out, when the country is involved in an unjust war (all wars are unjust according to Zinn).

While Zinn, quotes from and mentions great American anti-war novels such as *Slaughter House Five* and *Catch-22* he fails to really get into the marginalization and often persecution of artists during times of war. For instance, there is no mention of the McCarthy witch-hunts during the Cold War and nothing about books such as *Johnny Got His Gun* by Dalton Trumbo, being blacklisted. Also missing, is any discussion on how war has a detrimental effect on culture, such as the controversy surrounding, *The Coup's* album cover (depicting the explosion of the World Trade Center before the fact) after 9/11, or how the Hollywood glitterati were so quick to jump on the Stars and Strips bandwagon.

In saying that, *Artists In A Time Of War* is a very timely release, as the powers that be continue to ensure that they keep this country in a state of war. Zinn highlights some very important artists whose work everyone would do well to turn to right now. If Zinn is correct, when the bombs start to fall again, inevitably, someone will write a book, paint and painting or sing a song that might create some beauty out of the horror of it all.

-Peter Lewis



Between Resistance & Community: The Long Island D.I.Y. Punk Scene

www.walklor.com

A coarse voice screaming into a crappy PA and coming out of a blown-out speaker in your friend's basement still manages to come out sounding like a revolution. That's one of the lessons of *Between Resistance and Community*, Joe Carroll and Ben Holtzman's look at the Long Island do-it-yourself (DIY) punk scene.

It has to do with the way you just can't hear what The Insurgent is saying in the song, "CPA Dream," unless you've seen the band perform it a million times or the words are subtitled on the screen, as they are in this documentary. "Socialization since we were five years old, burned into our skin like a hand on a hot stove. Another night, another fight. 'Honey, I don't think the kids are alright,'" the singer screams as their friends slam around right in front of them. This movie notwithstanding, those words were probably not intended for anyone outside of the basement of their friend's house, where many of the shows take place.

In fact, at the moment that some of the local bands launch a cross-country tour, the police show up. And they continue to crack heads all the way to Wisconsin, suggesting a second lesson about the potential of local, DIY music scenes to really change our world: they're only going to realize that potential when they connect together, forming a web of independent venues and supportive communities. The movie shows that happening, as the Long Islanders are warmly received by their peers in Virginia and elsewhere, and bands from Indiana, New Mexico and beyond are welcomed into the local scene.

The other way for the local message to reach a larger audience is by signing to a label. But that raises the question, is that sharing something special with a larger audience, or is it saying that the local scene is not good enough? These are the pressures that On The Might of Princes faces when Revelation Records offers them a contract. The discussion of whether they should accept the record deal provides the most interesting segment of the movie, with the host of some of the local shows referring to it as a "stab in the back" and the band saying that they don't have money from their parents so they have to do it themselves this way if they want to be able to keep playing music. "The harsh reality is that you need money to do all this stuff," says a member of the band.

The movie does not do as well in examining the white male dominance of the punk/hardcore scene. It seems to take the approach of reflecting the local community, rather than trying to change it, so this might be a result of what its protagonists offer up. The filmmakers at least deserve credit for raising the subject in a movie that does not wind up being overly long at 44 minutes. My only real complaint is that we don't get to know the filmmakers, their views or their connection to the scene they are documenting. This impersonal style contrasts oddly with the style of the bands in the movie.

But overall, *Between Resistance and Community* depicts a fabulous example of the kind of fight many of us are waging: the one to maintain a distinct identity and culture in the face of growing homogeneity and consumerism. Even if, like me, you're not from Long Island or the world of punk, you will still be able to draw many lessons and much inspiration from this movie.

-Joshua Breitbart

The Business of Fancy Dancing

www.fallsapart.com/fancydancing

Sherman Alexie's brave new film, *The Business of Fancy Dancing*, is, at times, a touch Deepa Mehta, at others, a bit Spike Lee, while remaining throughout its length truly unique. Alexie, writer of the critically acclaimed *Smoke Signals*, comments on the Northwest Indian experience with a humanity and bravado that usually escape films like this. The evocative, lyrical quality that seems almost exclusive these days to contemporary Native literature (see Tomson Highway or Louise Erdrich for examples) shines like a point of light, a guiding north star, during the course of the movie; poetry is suffused throughout, off-setting a linear spoken narrative; magic realism, more often found in the pages of the world's great writers (Salman Rushdie, Gabriel Garcia Marquez) than in contemporary film, weaves a fantastic story out of what could be, in many people's eyes, a rather ordinary account – Spokane Indian releases himself from the physical destitution of Rez life and makes good. In Alexie's hands, this film, his story, is magic.

Evan Adams, erstwhile smoke signaler, is Seymour Polatkin, a brainy poet-fag, physically and emotionally removed from the Rez by way of a literary career in Seattle. The movie pits him against his childhood friend, Aristotle Joseph (Gene Tagaban) in a battle for the spiritual right to Indianhood, as well as the attention of their co-friends Mouse (Swil Kanim) and Agnes (Michelle St. John). It is Mouse's death and subsequent funeral that pull them apart and bring them back together like threads in a quilt. Intersecting the film is a series of interviews, conducted by a very Dostoyevskian Grand Inquisitor (deftly played by Rebecca Carroll) – more bold and sinister, but still not unlike the interview between April Grace and Tom Cruise in P.T. Anderson's *Magnolia*.

Alexie, in his first directorial feature avoids the many pitfalls that most first-time directors fall into; the film is, by no means, long-winded or bloated, and stays its steady course throughout. Stylistically, touches of Fridrik Thor Fridriksson and recent Jim Jarmusch are present (almost omni-present) and Alexie's ability to coax brilliant performances out of the cast is matched only by the sharpness and intelligence of the dialogue.

But Alexie isn't the real star of this film... Adams cashes in on a formidable performance with a sense of maturity and grace not often seen in young actors. He is touching and humble in a role that will, hopefully, garner plenty of accolades, along with future starring roles (as Adam Beach, his former *Smoke Signals* co-star, has gone on to receive).

With luck, this film will gain the same respect that has been bestowed upon its predecessor. Make no mistake, though; *The Business of Fancy Dancing* is not *Smoke Signals*. It is exceptional in its own regard and should place both Adams and Alexie squarely among the top realm of emerging actors and directors.

-Gibby Peach

Horns and Halos

www.hornsandhalos.com

Horns and Halos, a 58 minute documentary by Suki Hawley and Michael Galinsky, chronicles the life of *Fortunate Son: George W. Bush and the Making of an American President*, a book by J.H. Hatfield. The book, originally published on St. Martin's Press in October 1999, only to be recalled and suppressed five days later, was the first to bring American's attention to Bush's cocaine use throughout his early life as well as to allege that Bush the senior had pressured officials into dropping the charges against his troubled son. Despite the book's bestseller status, the publishers caved due to pressures from Bush's lawyers as well as the negative attention which followed from a journalist revealing that Hatfield had been convicted of attempted murder in 1987.

The documentary follows Hatfield and Sander Hicks, as they attempt to republish the book through Hicks's fledgling (and struggling) independent publishing company, Soft Skull Press. The company operates out of the dingy, congested basement of a New York City building, where Hicks also serves as the superintendent, in exchange for the rent-free office. (Indeed, it is not unusual for the business day to be interrupted by calls from tenants requesting that Hicks fix their broken toilet). After struggling for 16 months, Soft Skull Press is successful in republishing the book, again bringing mainstream media's attention, including a 60 Minutes appearance. However, the 45,000 copies that are published are soon recalled by the Soft Skull Press's distributor, who is threatened by another lawsuit against the book, this time on the charge of libel by one Hatfield's former business partners who was also imprisoned in the attempted murder case.

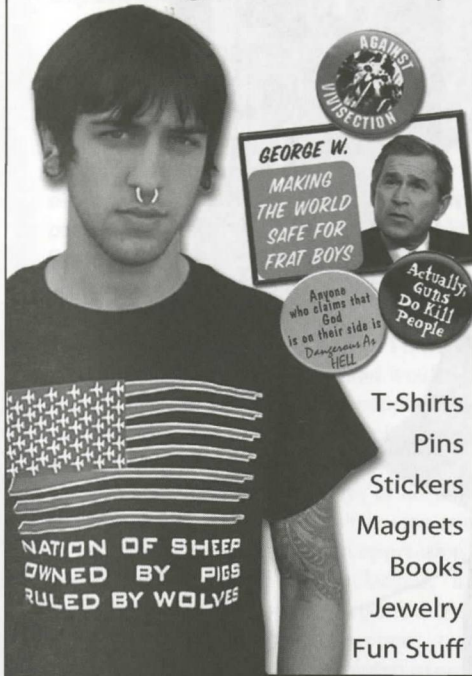
Hawley and Galinsky are gifted storytellers, benefiting by their choice of fascinating subject matter as well as by their subjects (not simply with the involvement of the President of the United States). The insight into the motivations and continued efforts of Hatfield and Hicks, in the face of what seems like an insurmountable struggle against corporate media and the President, creates a compelling and moving piece of cinema verite documentary filmmaking. While Hatfield continues in this struggle in his pursuit to reveal truths and to make a political impact, Hicks appears more interested in gaining celebrity status in the media attention garnered by this David vs. Goliath saga. The turmoil both men face due to their efforts is great. Soft Skull Press almost crumbles in bankruptcy, with Hicks eventually leaving the company. Hatfield also suffers financial ruin, in addition to the psychological burdens that come from his beratement by the press. These, as well as other significant demons such as alcoholism, result in Hatfield taking his own life a month after the book is published for the third time, leaving behind his wife and two-year-old daughter.

Horns and Halos is a thoroughly engaging and rewarding documentary, the result of well-paced and carefully structured storytelling. It is a revealing look into the complexities of publishing, media, and power in American society as well as the potential limits of one's efforts to expose truths about this nation's most powerful figure.

-Ben Holtzman

Boondoggles

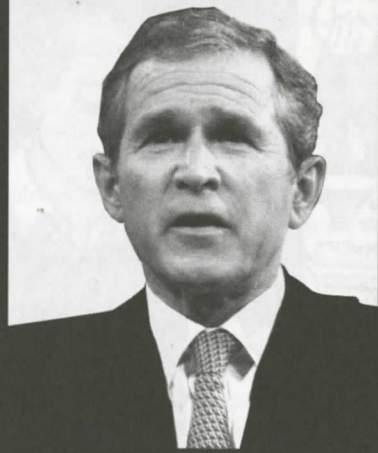
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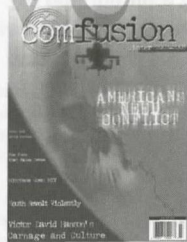
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Together we can make a difference. We need to take action now!!

by Jonathan Kidd
 illustration by Zanne delanvier



HOW QUEERS BECAME WHITE: GAY IDENTITY AND THE FAILURES OF SINGLE-ISSUE POLITICS

Bodies Unlike Ourselves

A friend of mine recently told me the story of how he was sitting on a set of stairs near a gay bar writing poetry when the owner emerged and told him to move along. My friend, who is black, asked the owner, who is white, why and the owner stated that he rents to students above his bar and they might get nervous if my friend was sitting on the steps outside their apartments late at night. My friend stated that he was also a student. The bar owner relaxed a bit but told my friend that he had a lot of female tenants who would be uncomfortable and that my friend still had to move. My friend asked the man if he owned the bar, the man said yes and my friend said he wanted to write about the bar. Realizing that my friend was gay, the owner relaxed even further, and told my friend that he could remain on the staircase writing poems, but if anyone approached he should “try and look cordial.” My friend looked at the man and decided to sit on

the curb in front of a restaurant next to the bar. The bar owner just walked away.

I relate this story because I feel that it is indicative of failures within the queer liberation movement to include issues beyond sexuality. Before my friend was a student, before my friend was gay, he was just another black male occupying public space — a source of anxiety in our society since the days of slavery. Even after “proving himself” as non-threatening because he was purportedly educated *and* queer, my friend was still instructed to smile, a gesture that would make potential passersby feel safe. One might think that since American society spends a lot of energy attempting to police the bodies and behaviors of its queer citizens, that a queer person might be less likely to try and police the body and behavior of a society member who belongs to a minority group that is also subject to societal sanction. But with the rise of single-issue politics within the queer community, this type of solidarity remains a political fan-

tasy. By single-issue politics, I mean that issues concerning sexual identity have become the singular focus of queer political groups. It seems like a logical form of political expression on the surface, but when one looks at who is considered queer, we begin to understand why this is a problem.

White Washing the Queer Body

In the last decade, we have seen queer activism revolve around issues such as gays in the military and gay marriage. As a political strategy, keying in on these fronts attempts to place queer citizens at the center of all that is "American" — God, Country, and Family.¹ To many contemporary queer activists, being able to participate in United States militarism or the covenant of matrimony serves as a sign of acceptance within our society. More recently, there has also been a move to agitate for hate crime legislation utilizing Matthew Shepard as the quintessential queer martyr. I must admit that I am not against civil unions for queer couples and would like to see legal protection against bias crimes for queer people. These moves to establish a "normal life," however, exist in relation to current power structures within our society and established definitions of who is considered to be inside or outside the category of normal. I feel that we should be rethinking how we want to envision the queer community.

I would like to suggest that oppression creates alliances. In what I call "smear the queer social relations," a group targeted as a marginalized part of any society is attacked by a group of other members who may or may not be homogenous, but act in concert with one another to scapegoat the one pointed to as queer. So a gay or lesbian member of the U.S. military enforces the queering of global citizens who happen to disagree with U.S. foreign policy and are thus subject to attack. In this light, Arab Americans who are racially profiled and discriminated against in the U.S. during a global war on the idea of terror, or the citizens of Iraq who will suffer at the hands of a U.S. military-led invasion, can all be considered queer and worth fighting for. Similarly, black single mothers who are poor and do not fit into the all-American concept of the nuclear family and are thus subject to attacks via Reagan's condemnation of "welfare queens" in the 1980s or Clinton's welfare reform/repudiation bill in 1990s, can also be considered queer and a group to seek out for coalition efforts.² I would also argue that despite the horrific and therefore sensationalistic circumstances surrounding Matthew Shepard's death, it was his social standing as a white male college student that propelled his tragic tale into the stratosphere of queer organizing efforts. Many lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered people died due to hatred long before Shepard's murder, but they somehow lacked the social respectability necessary to have national queer organizations lobbying for them after their deaths. In a related instance, where were the

queer activists after African-American James Byrd Jr. was decapitated while being dragged behind a truck? Couldn't we also consider Byrd to be queer?

But Some of Us Are Brave

In response to my call for coalition building between various communities queered by our society, some queer activists might ask, how can we successfully create solidarity when often times ethnic minority groups are antagonistic to queer liberation?

Using African-Americans as an example, my first response would be that black people are no more homophobic than white people. In fact, prior to desegregation, African-Americans did not ostracize lesbian and gay members from the black community because there was no place for them to go in a society that was anti-black. A glance into the choir stands of black churches across the U.S. would also prove that queer black folk many times are still tolerated by the overall community. While this is not to be mistaken for complete acceptance, it is a starting point towards building a greater societal good. Many African-Americans do grow angry when queer people equate the queer liberation movement to the African-American civil rights movement, but often that anger is a sign of disappointment. In his essay "Some Glances at the Black Flag: Race, Same-Sex Desire, and Cultural Belonging," Marlon Ross argues that white gay men not only slumped within gentrified urban black communities as a way of escaping homophobia, but they also garnered a sense of political solidarity through the identification of gay oppression with oppression suffered by African Americans.³ Over time, however, many blacks believe that queer activists abandoned the anti-racist promise of the queer liberation movements in the 1960s and 1970s and now only focus on issues that are important to select portions of the queer community, in particular, the white ones.

As the push for queer assimilation continued in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, the political ramifications of this transition have had a representational affect. Since American culture today means being a part of consumer capitalism and identity marketing. Television shows like "Queer As Folk" and "Will and Grace," magazines like *Advocate* and *Out*, and films such as *In and Out* and *Philadelphia* all participate in the creation of a queer American myth that excludes people of color and oftentimes, women. With these various social realities in play, the assertion that the queer liberation movement's primary goal is to recover a lost white male privilege makes a lot of sense.⁴

In addition to fighting racism and sexism within the queer community by pushing for further inclusion of people of color and women, queer activists must also break with single-issue political organizing and redefine what queer really means.⁵ ★

Endnotes

¹ I feel that these two issues are reflective of what Ronald Inglehart defines as a postmaterialist value system. Whereas physiological needs like protection from danger are taken care of, social needs like group validation become more important. For a more in depth explanation of postmaterialist theory and its affects on social change, see Ronald Inglehart, *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society*, Chapters 2, 7, 11.

² In regard to gay marriage, Cathy Cohen argues that queer should be used as a political counterpoint to the enforcement of *heteronormativity*, not heterosexuality, meaning that at certain moments in history, whether through the banning of marriage between slaves, legislation against interracial marriage, or legislation against poor women who have children out of wedlock, individuals in our society have been and still are marginalized because they do not fit into the ideal norm of what an American family should be. In short, they were/are queered. This queering of heterosexual members of society should function as a tool for the creation of coalitions amongst all progressive activists. See Cathy Cohen, "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?" *Sexual Identities, Queer Politics*, Ed. Mark Blasius, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001, 200-227.

³ See Marlon B. Ross, "Some Glances at the Black Flag: Race, Same-Sex Desire, and Cultural Belonging," *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature*, March-June, 194-218, 1994.

⁴ Matthew Jacobson discusses the fight for the legal attainment of "whiteness" by various ethnic groups in his important work, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race*. For a more specific account of the fight for white see Noel Ignatiev's *How the Irish Became White*. A parallel argument could be also made in regard to the actions of white women who as a group refuse to support affirmative action today, despite being the greatest past benefactors of affirmative action policies. This issue of feminism's relationship to white privilege deserves further investigation.

⁵ A contemporary issue that could galvanize progressive coalitions is the AIDS crisis. This epidemic is having a catastrophic effect on people of all races, genders, and sexual orientations. Left unchecked, AIDS will continue to decimate Africa, destabilize communities of color within the U.S., and cause the loss of another generation of queer men of all races. The fact that only certain people have access to life saving medication or that the virus is mutating while safer sex practices are in decline should be cause for alarm.

It was in the empty bleachers of the high school football stadium that Michelle Dixon and I realized we were at the end of our childhood. I said to her with all the dramatic fatalism of a 13-year old, "You know, next year we're going to have to have sex and stuff, and we won't be able to play or act stupid anymore." The smell of ketchup and wet grass swam lazily through the air. I stared up at the bugs guzzling the stadium lights, imagining what the bubble I was in would look like if I could see it, and anxiously mulled over the coming events that would officially end the first chapter of my life. It was the last football game of the season, but there were to be many, many more.

had decided on black sequins for the dress I'd wear as homecoming queen but wasn't sure what to do about my dad, who's '86 Honda hatchback probably wouldn't make the 350 miles to my crowning. I fretted over who would walk me down the 50-yard line and pass me over the threshold into Southern womanhood.

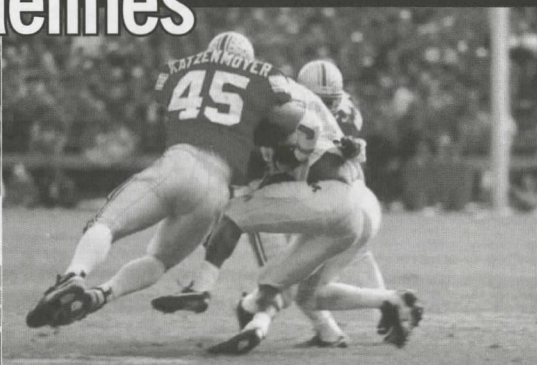
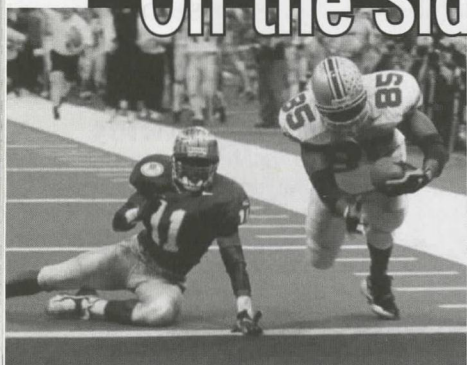
My sister Gretchen's parallel obsession with Crista found her twirling lessons with our idol. I kept up by sneaking out to the driveway with Gretchen's batons and imagining not so coincidentally, my lumpish, awkward body as thin, with long black hair, twirling for the crowd at a game, or if I was feeling particularly optimistic, the President

on the way out of church when people would pull me aside or whisper to my mom that I was a pretty girl who had a lot of potential. They meant to be like Crista. As I passed out of the church doors, the preacher would comment on my beauty then perversely chide, "Be humble with all that God has given you." I couldn't escape the reminders of who I was supposed to be. The local newspaper, festivals, churches, textbooks, and my role models kept me in line and reinforced the football mantra.

I grew up in a place where there were two kinds of people, "boys" and "girls" and "whites" and "blacks," and football was a metaphor if not practice for the game of our

On the Sidelines

by Elizabeth Cline



Memories I have of growing up are largely a pinache of trumpet blares, boiled peanut shells, and batons, candescence in the stadium lights, all staged in a sea of red and black at a high school football game. My first idols were cheerleaders, homecoming queens, and majorettes. There was April, the '89 captain of the cheerleading squad, and Sarah, a dancer at the local studio, also a cheerleader. Then there was Crista, co-captain of the majorette squad and the '91 homecoming queen. Crista was tall and thin with long, dark hair. Everybody said she was a "class act" and about as wholesome as a jar of may haw jelly. People loved her. I loved her, because I wanted some of the admiration she knew for myself. I would ride my bike past her house on Sunday afternoons, where she'd usually be out in the driveway twirling, and straighten up, quickly tease my bangs, and coast by as cool as I could.

Her example got me ready to fight ruthlessly for the closest thing us girls could have to running the winning touchdown, a chance to wear a red and black cheerleading skirt in the Plantation Ford ad, a Santa Claus hat as I twirled in the Christmas parade, or a good shot at homecoming court. By age eight, I

of the United States. Clumsily twisting those metal sticks between my fingers, I would visualize the six splendid minutes over and over where hundreds of people would watch as my batons soared heavenward, glittering in the stadium lights. June 22, 1990, my diary reminds me, "I now know how to twirl a baton!" I was so proud of myself, but I knew there was still much to be done. My diary should have gone on to say, p.s. now to master becoming beautiful without being "slutty," be confident but don't be *too* assertive, and make sure to have that extra "something." But do not, ever, attempt individuality because that's just bitchy. Those were the unspoken rules that all young girls follow or face certain social death. Crista juggled these contradictions with perfection. Most of us did not.

The whole town was knee-deep in hero-worship of spandex-clad high school boys, but I continued to worship my football heroines in hopes I'd be one of the rare girls with some applause. It's easy now to wonder why I didn't seek a less self-destructive definition of success. Then, I recall the times I overheard my sister confess jealousy to my mom that I was pretty and was probably going to be a cheerleader. And those Sundays

lives. Blacks and whites mix on the field but not in the stands; boys play the game and girls are on the sidelines. Likewise, on Monday mornings, men go out and make the living, farming, raising livestock, or manufacturing with underpaid black labor. Women raise the kids and support their husbands by working at the bank, doing hair, or selling Avon. It's not so different elsewhere in the United States, it's just more entrenched and isolated. The first time I walked into a punk rock club in Tallahassee, Florida and *found myself*, I was 16 years old. Before that, I'd hardly ventured beyond the county line, never saw other kinds of people and thus, saw being different as the worst sort of failure. My town, nestled deep in rural South Georgia, exists in a self-contained bubble and I think it's made out of a pigskin.

The irony was that cheerleaders and majorettes, who we were encouraged to be, never got a pat on the back by the teachers in the hall, a headline in the paper, or scholarships to major universities, just like the moms and the Avon ladies are never asked what they think about sales taxes or education reform and are never on the front page for their innovations in childcare. The thought of major-

ettes being appreciated for their talent alone, perhaps twirling in something more than a tiny, sequin bathing suit, is almost inconceivable. There's always the potential for glory in throwing a football 40 yards down a field, yet there's little in sending a pair of metal sticks 40 feet into the air. Keri, my best friend since third grade, must have practiced her knife and three-baton routine a few hundred times before tryouts her freshman year with a dedication unmatched by any quarterback. When she didn't make the line, we sat in her driveway in her mom's van for an hour while she choked on her tears. It was the greatest failure she'd ever known. I was so afraid of that sort of defeat I avoided it by never trying out.

Somehow I did manage to fashion my

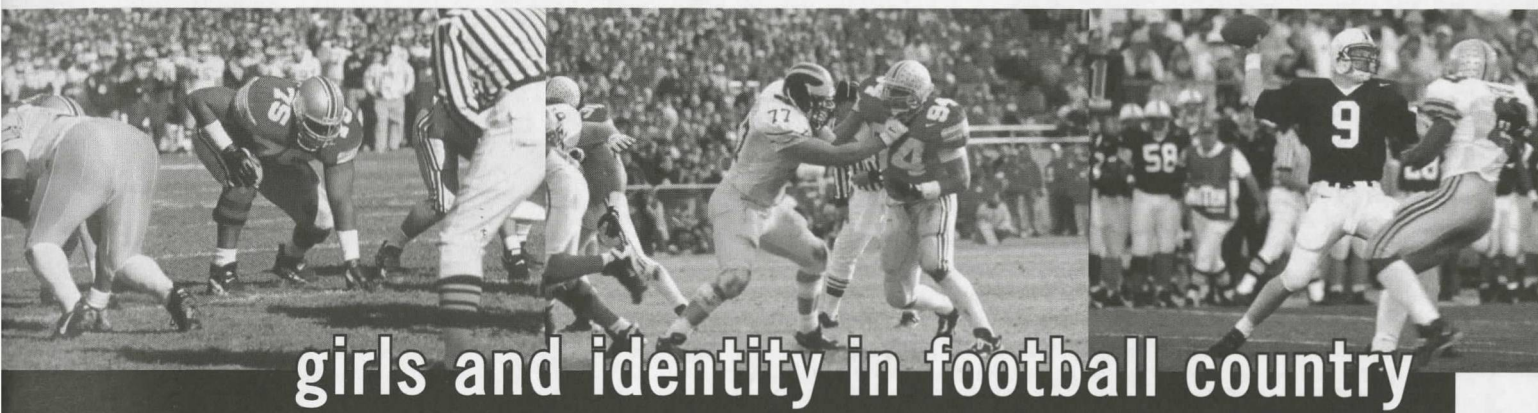
right people. When I finally started to want something other than Crista-like glory, it was like I'd been holding my breath for 16 years. I had started to believe it didn't feel so bad, but when I finally let it out, I realized I was asphyxiating and that most people liked me better that way.

I know the black girls would say something wholly different about growing up in our town. There is usually only one black majorette a season and she never quite fits the virginal, flat-chested, fresh-faced, white-bred image the squad is going for. Sandra, the only black girl on my line my junior year didn't have to worry about being called "slutty" because she was already a peon on the high school social ladder just for being

the bank, a life on the sidelines. I always naively hoped that homecoming queens and majorettes were whisked away to Hollywood because girls are rarely given the tools, just the dream, to be somebody.

I did, despite my seeming failure, move on. I had the privilege to go to college and know the blessings of bourgeois feminism and the economic origins of my racism, something I am invaluablely grateful for. But there remains a stubborn part of me that wishes I could have twirled like Crista, worn the crown in the parade, or made that Ford ad and given my best cheerleader grin. That same part of me is also what pulls me back to football games when I'm home.

The sound of drums warming up rum-



girls and identity in football country

brash, vegetarian, nerd personality into that of a good Southern girl by the time I started high school, thank you very much. Even though I had given up on cheering or twirling, I was still betting on homecoming queen, a chance to ride in a car in the parade. I lost a lot of weight, mostly by starving myself, and made a few more minor adjustments like growing my hair out and wearing the "right" clothes. Keri, too, got her act together, lost some "crucial" pounds, smiled more, and tried out for the majorette line the next year and made it.

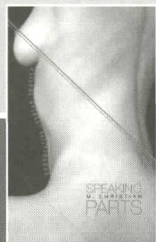
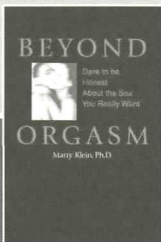
As for my childhood friend, Michelle, she almost got to the top. She made the cheerleading squad but high school kids, including myself, branded her a "slut" because she refused to be fake-nice and her big boobs, a tragic curse of nature, black eyeliner, and tight shorts simply were not wholesome. I figure nobody told her that the Lord Almighty, or at least a deacon from the First Baptist Church, was always looking over a girl's shoulder. It probably wouldn't have done much good. With all those expectations, it was impossible to always do the right thing, at the right place, and with the

black. I complained in my diary once that she was the worst and the fattest girl on the line and was only on it so black people wouldn't cry racism. Though I apologize now for being horribly racist, I'm more ashamed knowing that the standard for popularity at my school was whiteness, was racist, and still is.

For boys, football in the rural South represents a rare moment in life to be great, no matter who you are, and, if you're really good, a rare chance to move on. My high school football team, in a town of only 15,000, has made it to the state finals several times since the '40s and produced many first-string players for Florida State University and University of Florida and several professional players. For the black boys, nine out of 10 which grew up in poverty, a football scholarship may be the only way to go to college or earn some respect in a still segregated and racist world.

For girls, we are forced to realize twirling and cheering are a dead end, that our own dreams were designed to paralyze us. While they would give us an occasion to stand out, they were also a way to train us for a life of making cornbread or counting coins at

bles in the background, the stench of boiled peanuts mingles in the air with wet grass and ketchup from the concession stands. Baby girls run around dressed up hopefully in little cheerleading skirts while young boys fetch water for the players. Once-legendary quarterbacks work the press box or coach the team. Mamas who were Cristas, or wanted to be, boast of their daughter on the majorette squad or their son on the starting line-up. There are the majorettes still looking just as wholesome and white-bred as ever. The quarterback is a lean, good-looking white boy. Despite my Yankee makeover, nobody really looks my way. Why should they? I'm not in high school, I wasn't a homecoming queen, and I don't have a three-year old who looks like he's got a good arm. I guess I'm not what others expected of me. Neither am I the person I set out to be when I was eight. And though I would never compromise myself, there will always be that little part of me that rears up on my way out of the high school stadium and hopes someone, somewhere, thought I would have been great down there on the sidelines. ★



Beyond Orgasm: Dare to Be Honest About the Sex You Really Want

Marty Klein, Ph.D.
Celestial Arts, 2002
www.tenspeed.com

I'll admit it, it was the title that got me. A saucy little challenge, plus I'm a sucker for a dare. I quizzed friends, what is beyond orgasm?

In a word, intimacy, according to marriage counselor and sex therapist Marty Klein. While the title generates images of forbidden desires and unspeakable acts, the book is actually an earnest, 200 page plea for honesty in our sexual relationships. Rather than a trove of salacious little tales about taboo desire, *Beyond Orgasm* is a peanut butter and jelly sort of text, simple, forthright and constructed around the commonsense plainspeak we often overlook when we're dealing with partner problems.

Klein's aim is admirable. He values embodiment and wants his readers to have sex lives that are satisfying emotionally, as well as physically. He wants them to talk to each other not just about physical pleasure, but about fantasy, about responsibility, about who left work early to pick the kids up and who would appreciate a 'thank you' at the end of the day.

In Klein's world, self-acceptance would be the law of the land and shame and sexual secret-keeping would be unheard of. No one would gripe over desires that were abnormal or weird; self-disclosure would all be in service of transparency and understanding. The first seven chapters of *Beyond Orgasm* define and defend Klein's vision. He asserts that sexuality is a normal and healthy aspect of human life and through several case studies investigates how the lack of this conviction can result in shame, self-censorship and unsatisfying sex. He goes on to examine how secret-keeping can derail our sense of emotional connectedness and search for physical pleasure.

Curiously enough, despite their distress, most of the patients Klein cites aren't asking for anything exceedingly radical in the first place. They think they masturbate too much, or they want their spouse to go down on them. They want sex a little more or a little less often. Phil worries about telling his partner that he watches pornographic movies; Akiko is intimidated by her husband's sexual past. They all struggle with understanding what normalcy means in a culture where we rarely speak frankly enough to fully appreciate who we're rolling around in bed with, let alone convey what we do — or want to do — when we get there.

Klein is at his best when offering a practical blueprint to follow for disclosure and sharing. The last two chapters of *Beyond Orgasm* are lucid, useful steps to consider before revealing sensitive information to a partner. It's practical information which, if utilized, could relieve some of the anxiety surrounding anxious confessions such as divulging past abuse or exploitation, coming out, or reevaluating sexual boundaries.

His analysis of the roots of sexual shame and secret-keeping, however, leave much to be desired. He urges the reader to look to childhood and family

relationships to address feelings of inadequacy, citing a childhood fear of being abandoned, while overlooking the enormous cultural pressures to act, look or relate in acceptable ways. Klein glosses over how homophobia, racism and ageism affect our self-acceptance and relationships, as well as how pressures to conform to mainstream genders, sexualities and physical appearances and abilities.

His buoyant "just do it" attitude towards self-acceptance is less useful to those of us struggling to accept less traditionally beautiful bodies, unconventional gender identities, or pasts which are colored by racism, abuse, intolerance, assault, or exploitation. This nonchalance is reinforced by the photographs opening each chapter portraying frisky, cheerful models — uniformly thin, attractive and fresh-faced as Ivory soap ads.

Klein's assertion that "to really broaden our thinking and our minds, we need to think about eroticism in new ways," is a crucial one. But the challenge is not only to find the language with which to articulate our sexual lives, but to also hold accountable those persons and institutions which generate and perpetuate images of sexuality in mainstream culture which exclude bodies which are not white, thin, heterosexual, young and non-disabled. While Klein's book succeeds in offering an effective and informative blueprint to assist in self-disclosure and emotional authenticity, its potency is diminished by a failure to adequately address the complex social and cultural factors which make such sexual honesty challenging in the first place.

-Pamela Wilson

Speaking Parts: Provocative Lesbian Erotica

M. Christian
Alyson Books, 2002
www.mchristian.com/speaking.html

I found out he was a straight-identifying bio-boy after I finished the book. When I put down my Hitachi magic wand, more turned on than I have gotten in a long time from the printed word, an insert fell out of the book entitled "A Man for a Woman's Job?" Can you still take this lushness seriously? My answer is how could you not?

Maybe it's because instead of just another fluffy lesbian erotica book, M. Christian has created yummy daring wetness, and I feel like I've gotten another gender-bending, let's-fuck-up-the-status-quo buddy in the process.

Speaking Parts' sexes and genders are as fluid as its characters: he's and she's caressing and sliding their tired old bodies against themselves, each other, in a compelling, new stimulating rhythm or maybe even just shedding their identities for another, in the bedroom, the bathroom, through the computer keyboard, on the pool table, or in another world.

Picture a dyke bar bathroom full of femmes, butches, trannie boys, and all other sorts primping and peeing when three women wielding machine guns descend and have everyone perform their secret desires.

Or one woman's journey into a leatherman's world only to discover that nothing is as it seems. How about one butch's steamy tale of her conquest of a purring motorcycle and long tarred road?

You can tell from the first story that M. Christian's priority is writing his characters from the inside out and capturing the nuances, complications, and irreverences of humans.

He says himself in an interview with *Windy City Times*, "Hell, most of the time I'd rather write than have sex — not that sex for me is that bad, it's just that writing is so much damned fun. Think of it this way, sex — hot damn good fucking sex — lasts, what, four hours — and that's if you do it right. A great story, though, can last for centuries. What Saturday night of whoopee can beat that?" And I say, that *Speaking Parts* will probably be on top of my strap-on and vibrator for centuries to cum.

M.Christian sculpts his stories in a deliberated manner taking you on a whirlwind tour of a ton of different desires, forbidden and vanilla and the ones beyond and in between. I do get frustrated at M. Christian's tendency to always use racial modifiers with the characters of color, presenting them as an exotic other in contrast to the white norm. Maybe erotica has that challenge assigned to it however, to make you a little uncomfortable and definitely to make you think and question your sex, gender, race assumptions, identifications, and desires. Or maybe M. Christian, as a straight-identifying white bio-boy writing queer erotica is much more honest about what he sees and what turns him on including going to U.S. liberal-forbidden-race-land as well as within gender and sex lines.

Speaking Parts is 14 tales that throw anyone who says that a straight-identifying-white-bio-boy couldn't write accurate, good, sexy lesbian erotica — leaving them on their back gasping for more.

M. Christian is an explorer of the geography of desire, not for the complacent individual who is willing to stay where they think they are (or want to be) but rather for the adventurous erotica sampler who will be challenged and more turned on than usual. As a shameless hussy slut myself, I guarantee it.

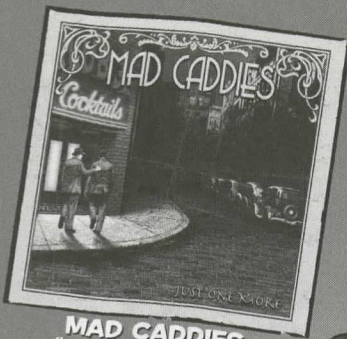
Sadly many erotica books fall short of anything but predictability both in their politics and in their sex. *Speaking Parts* is a must for those who have lost all hope in smart, well written, and deliciously sexy erotica which cannot help but be political. Did I say yummy yet?

-bruin trouble

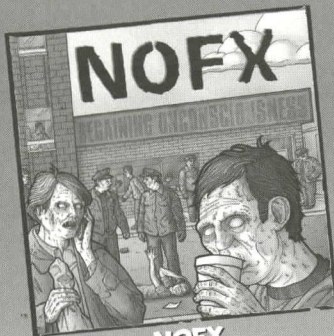
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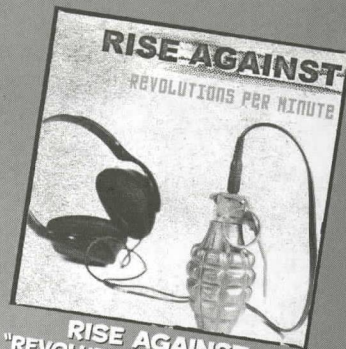
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Between Resistance & Community The Long Island Do-It-Yourself Punk Scene

"Proves that punk's not dead—it's just cleaned up its act and moved out past Massapequa... they collect food for the homeless, analyze their own sexism, and sing without irony about the "smiling faces/smiling back at me" that fill their literally underground gigs. *Between* provides a timely snapshot of contemporary punk's new sincerity."

-Village Voice, 7-17-02

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-Abhor, August 2002

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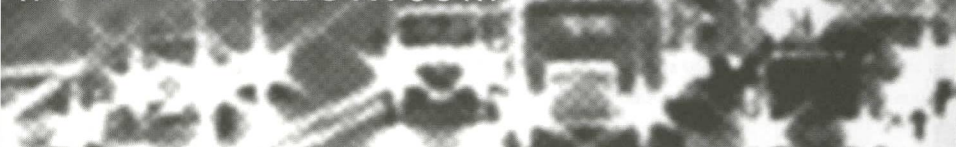
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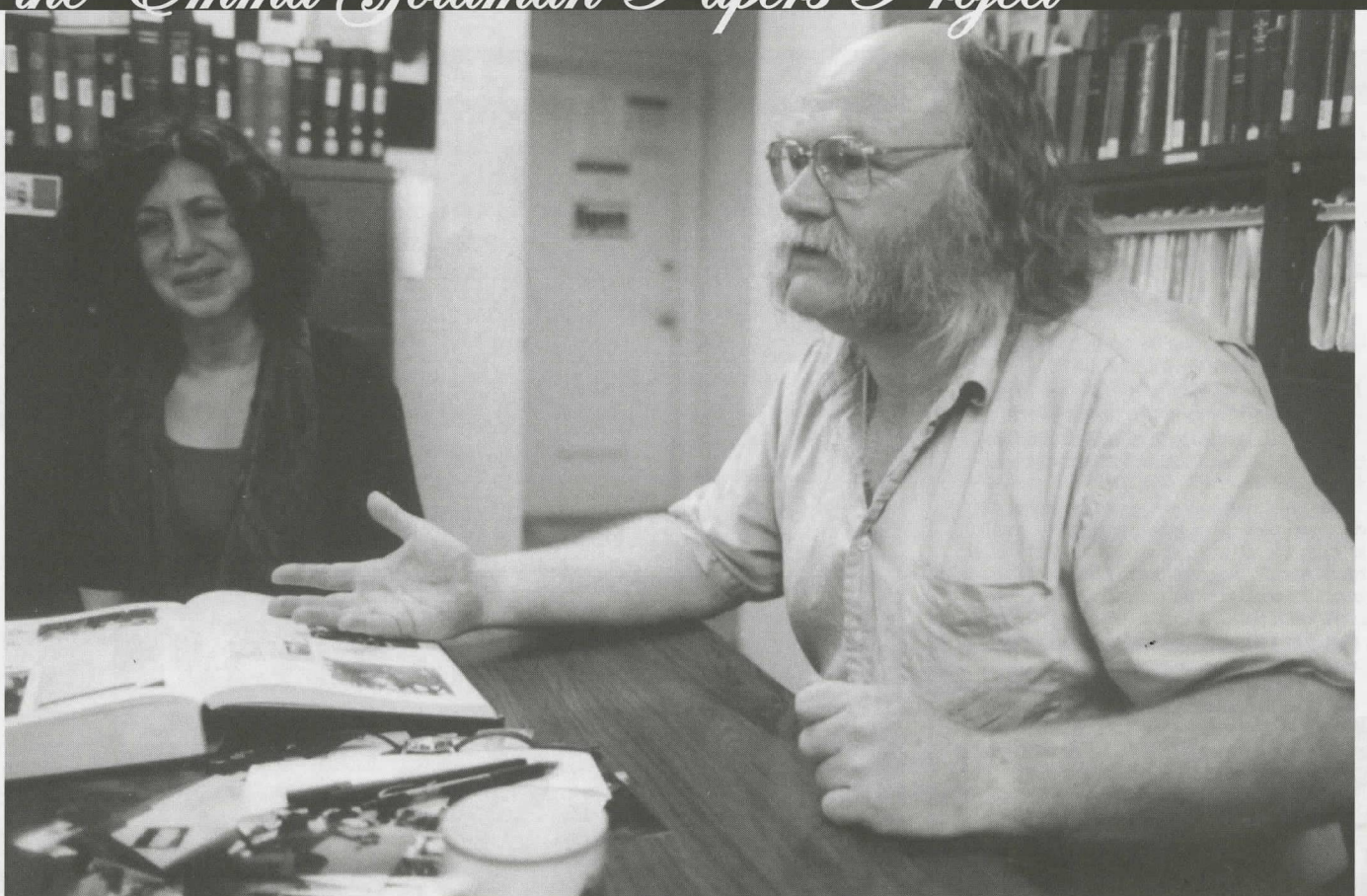
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the Emma Goldman Papers Project



Sometimes it's easy to forget that a historical figure was once a person. It's easy to take that historical figure and marvel at her achievements and glorify the things she did and become so wrapped up in her great moments that you forget that she once lived and breathed and made mistakes like the rest of us. Emma Goldman can be a hero for so many radical groups: feminists can idolize her for being an early birth control advocate; anti-war activists can worship her for fighting against World War I and conscription; and everyone who's ever been a rebel or a radical or fought against the grain in any way can immortalize Goldman for being one of the loudest, toughest, smartest, and bravest radicals among us. Still, it's important to remember that, when you immortalize and idolize a historical figure, you can never get any deeper understanding than what their image presents. You can't really learn from a historical figure until you're willing to understand what they were as a person.

Because I was fascinated with Goldman's words and actions, and because I'd already read her autobiography and most of her speeches and essays and still wanted to know more about her as a person, I went searching for Emma Goldman. I know it's sounds silly to search for someone who's been dead for more than half a century, but I had some good clues. I'd read an excellent biography called *Love, Anarchy, and Emma Goldman* which delved into the love life of Goldman and did a very thorough (and caring) job of investigating Goldman's personal life. I also knew that the author of the book, Candace Falk, was the curator of the Emma Goldman Papers Project at University of California, Berkeley. I knew that, if anyone could introduce me to the real Emma Goldman, Candace Falk and her colleagues could. I drove up to Berkeley, took the tour of the EGPP, and interviewed Falk and historian Barry Pateman about Emma Goldman, the early American Anarchist movement, and the importance of keeping history alive.

interview by Sean Carswell
photos Todd Taylor

Destroying Mothers



Clamor: *What's the story behind your initial discovery of Emma Goldman and Ben Reitman's letters?*

Candace: I was driving across the country from Vermont, through Chicago on my way to California... with my boyfriend.... I have a very good friend who works in a guitar shop in Hyde Park. So we went to this guitar shop. I had my dog, a red Irish Setter Golden Retriever... [who] came bounding in after me. My friend said, "You have a lovely dog. What's her name?"

I said, "Emma. Red Emma Goldman."

All of the sudden, he just stopped. He scratched his head for a second. He said, "That is so strange. Five years ago, in the back of the shop, when I was cleaning the storeroom, I swear I think I saw some letters of hers." And he left. He spent a very long time in the back of the shop, and he came back out with this enormous boot box full of letters of Emma Goldman's. And I, like most people — though sometimes I'm embarrassed to say this because I was already a graduate student at Santa Cruz — had never seen any original documents. I'd never seen primary sources, let alone letters from one of my great heroines of freedom and free expression and rebellion. The letters had a big "E" Goldman. And they were all addressed to Ben Reitman. I knew from the autobiography [Goldman's *Living My Life*] that Ben Reitman had been her lover and road manager for 10 years. She had said that Ben Reitman's letters were like a narcotic to her: they made her heart beat

faster but they put her mind to sleep. I also knew that he was a very promiscuous guy. A ladies man. He was a gynecologist. What can I say? He probably knew a lot more about female sexuality than most men did back then. So there was a lot going on there. They had a very passionate and tumultuous relationship. But she overcame it because, in the end, she was more committed to her vision and her politics than he was. He was more ordinary in the end...

I was in graduate school, in the history of consciousness program. Hayden White, my director at the time, gave me a grant to go to [the University of Illinois at] Chicago to look at [an archive of Emma Goldman's] letters. And, sure enough, the letters, as Emma would say, "Breathed the same sad song of love." So I thought, well, I shouldn't secret them off. But if they are public, it would be a great thing to write about Emma's dilemma. Like, what does it take to have a vision of another kind of life and live in this one. Especially, as an anarchist, you want your public life and your private life to coincide. It's not a question of how you vote, because you don't. Anarchism isn't a political position; it's a way of life. So I thought that it was such an interesting issue, especially for a woman with a desire for complete freedom. A desire for free love coupled with the natural tendency to be jealous. How do you deal with those issues?

That was the beginning of my desire to work on the relationship between her public and private life. I ended up writing the book *Love,*

Anarchy, and Emma Goldman. When it came out, it was very controversial because no one wanted to know that their great hero was this way, or that the left was very prudish, especially at that time.

How did you go from a boot box full of letters to the Emma Goldman Papers Project?

C: An editor approached me at a party and said, "Would you write a book about that? Would you consider making your dissertation a book?" ... I wanted to write a book that would reach normal people. But I was just interested in Emma Goldman and Ben Reitman at the time. So the editor said to me, "Who cares about a 10-year relationship? Why not put this in the context of her whole life?"

Naïve me, I thought, oh yeah, of course I'll do that. I had no idea what it would take to learn about Emma Goldman's whole life. ...

I went from archive to archive to archive to do my research. ... While I was doing this, it coincided with this commission in Washington, DC, called the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. This commission was set up to collect and organize the papers of the founding fathers. And that was supposed to be the basis of keeping the nation great. And Emma Goldman wasn't on their list. It was all men. The Great White Men Project. But there was a huge radical movement at the time, even among historians. This guy named Jesse Leimisch gathered a whole bunch of historians and petitioned the National Archive, saying, "We don't want a Great White Men Project. We want a history of the people." So, in a very typical top-down fashion, the National Archive chose the papers of the "great individuals" — they still couldn't go for the people and movements, you know. But Emma Goldman got on the list, along with Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Margaret Sanger, and Martin Luther King. So that's how we got started.

[The people at the National Archives] always joke with me, and they say, "Anarchist? We thought she was an archivist!" And then they say that they started with the Founding Fathers and we're part of the Destroying Mothers. But the commission offered to me the position of editor of the papers... There was this fabulous, brilliant, African American activist who worked with the National Historical Publications and Records Commission. She was the first African American archivist, Sara Jackson... [and] she loved that we were doing the Emma Goldman papers. She said, "Candace, I'm gonna declassify Emma Goldman's government documents for you."

This would've been before the Freedom of Information Act, right?

C: Yes. It was unbelievable... I had to have a base at the university, so we started out as the Institute for the Study of Social Change. We've had a bit of a rocky road at the university, which has mixed feelings about the Emma Goldman Papers Project. On one hand, they're very proud of us. On the other hand, no one wants to give money directly. But they have, over time.

Why are archives important? Why is it important to have primary documents?

Barry: The real reason is that [archives make] you respect the person. One of the problems with people like Emma Goldman ... is that people create myths and stories about them. Historians read into these people and re-write their words. But primary documents are the person's actual words. ... [and] to actually read what that historical figure said, to read the original newspaper that that historical person wrote for, puts that person in a true context. You're connecting directly with that person as though they're alive. No one is in your way. How you understand that or interpret what that person says is another matter. But primary research does a huge thing that's very important in history: it

brings back the facts. Much of left history is based on mythology. It's based on the creation of heroes and heroines, usually in defeat, to make us all feel better. And there's something very exciting about reading what these people really said, what they really thought, how they really interconnected, how they related. You can then create, if you like, a factual base for scholars to take off on. And not just scholars. Anyone who's interested: activists, whoever. You've got the material. Don't believe anything until you've read the actual documents.

Is the Emma Goldman Papers Project really in hot water [financially]?

C: Our project started out with a kernel of federal funding which a lot of anarchists wouldn't take. But I felt like, okay, the government deported her, and we're bringing her back with government money.

But I've had to spend so much of my time trying to raise money... It's very hard to keep this project supported. So we have this very remarkable group called Emma's List. I made it up one day after getting about a hundred mailings from Emily's List — which is a group that works to bring women candidates into office. So I thought, oh, we should have Emma's List — which will be a bunch of people who will never elect anybody but will help to bring Emma's work into libraries across the world. It's fascinating to us that the people who contribute are from all different walks of life. Some of the people on Emma's List send us five dollars and they work in methadone clinics and other people on the list send us twenty-five thousand dollars that they happen to have inherited. Or we'll get money from somebody whose grandfather was Emma Goldman's great friend and moved to Missouri to be near her when she was in prison so that she would have company. Or Ben Reitman's kind daughter [Mecca Reitman Carpenter], who not only forgave her father for all his transgressions, but also wrote a lovely book about it. Reitman helped Emma sustain her work and get it out there, and now Mecca helps the Emma Goldman Papers do the same thing.

So all I'm saying is that it's been a struggle to stay afloat.

Well, why is Emma Goldman important [today]?

C: That's an interesting question because, to me, having worked on this for, well, your lifetime, most likely [laughs], what's been important about her, in particular, has changed. At certain points, it was her vision of women's freedom. At other points, it was her vision of war and why national boundaries divide people in awful ways. And other times, like now, it's more about anarchism and about a different vision of life.

In the sixties, when Richard Drinnon wrote his book [*Rebel in Paradise*], it was about free speech and the free speech movement — like here at Cal [University of California, Berkeley] — which was really about the right to free expression. The basis of any radical challenge, any challenge at all to the status quo is having the freedom to speak. Even your magazine, at a certain point in US history, would've been banned. We can document that. So Emma Goldman was one of the great heroines who stood for your freedom to speak...

If you compare the political climate when Goldman and Berkman were deported [1919] to the current political climate, can you see many similarities?

C: I would say that, with our various "homeland security" acts, there's some element of the creeping surveillance of everyone's everything. There's also an understanding of patriotism for some people in which the assumption is that patriotism is to follow rather than to challenge something that doesn't stand for justice. I would say that there are some parallels, there.

B: But [today] there's not the level of violence whatsoever... But one of the things we have to be very careful about is drawing too many simplistic conclusions. This is a far more complex society that it was in Goldman's period of time. In 1918, you could be a Wobblie [a member of the Industrial Workers of the World] organizer and the police could kick your door in, cut your testicles off, and lynch you, and nothing would happen to them... So it's not quite the same now. But my argument would be that, in a way, the culture that we're in now is far more sinister than it was then. That's why I make the point that it's not the same. Violence now is far more cerebral. It's far more cunning and clever. It's far more inherent in everyday life. It's a very dodgy period in American history, but there aren't many clear-cut comparisons. But one could imagine how she would be now. I don't think she would've changed her views.

This is the most class-ridden society in the world, and that poverty and that brutality is there, but now, you could say that the right have learned their lesson. They know how to attack far more cruelly and far more surreptitiously.

For example?

B: How many Arab men are in prison now? How many have been imprisoned in the last 10 months? How many? I don't know. I know there's a lot. I know there's over 500, but I don't know how many. Who does? Where's the names? Even in the radical left papers, where are they?

How many people are dying of black lung in Appalachia [where coal companies release hazardous chemicals into the air and water]? How many people are dying of tuberculosis in Appalachia? I don't know. It's not in the papers. The information is just not there...

A different thing on Emma Goldman: of all the amazing things she said, the quote that's most often attributed to her is some variation of, "If I can't dance, I don't want to be in your revolution." And she never actually said that. Why do you think that [quote is] attributed to her the most?

C: I love that that's attributed to her. I'm sorry that she didn't actually say that. But she did say something like that in her autobiography. She said that, at the dances, she was one of the gayest, most untiring dancers and she was criticized by people on the left who said that she'd hurt the cause by being so flamboyant. And she said that she didn't want the movement to become a cloister and that she didn't want to become a nun. In fact, at some of the anarchist events, she would dress as a nun and do the "anarchist slide". She was just feisty. I think that what's interesting about that quote, and what sparks people's imagination, is that you want it to be true. I personally think that one of the most exciting things about the movement now is ... it's really about going out there with puppets and, I don't know, making it fun. There was a time when some of the people I knew and actually respected who were part of the old left had a much grayer-suited Soviet model of resistance. Like, if you're going to side with the working class, you have to be like the working class, eat like the working class, etc. I had friends who were anti-Vietnam War activists who would sleep in a little bamboo thing in their closet. I would think, I'm sorry, but you really don't have to do that to show your solidarity.

Emma loved freedom and self-expression and the right to beautiful, radiant things, and people love that. If you can't dance, then it's not my revolution. If it's not something that celebrates life, forget it.

Do you know the story behind how that particular quote became so widespread?

C: Yes. It's on our web site [<http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/Goldman/>]. Alix Kates Shulman, who's a lovely person and one of people who wrote *Memoirs of an Ex-Prom Queen*, was asked by somebody who was putting an Emma t-shirt together to give an Emma Goldman quote. And Alex made that quote up.

If you want to interest people in Goldman's life, what one story from her life do you tell people?

C: You're asking people who know too many stories. ... Sometimes I try to describe Emma Goldman by saying she was an anarchist, [but] who really understands what an anarchist is? Then, I have to explain that there's a whole spectrum of anarchism. She wasn't necessarily a bomb-throwing anarchist but she wasn't necessarily *not* a bomb-throwing anarchist. It's very tough...

I'm one of the few people who doesn't mind when people project their own image on Emma Goldman. I think our books [a four-volume set of books called *Emma Goldman: A Documentary History of Her American Years* that the EGPP will publish over the next few years] are going to ruin that, anyway... When our books come out, though, people won't be able to project everything onto Emma because they'll be able to actually see who she was in all of her complexity.

Tell me more about these books.

C: The first volume, [spans] from 1890 to 1901, is called *Made for America*. It covers her coming into political activity in 1890. It was a very violent era. The book ends with the McKinley assassination, in which the assassin [Leon Czolgosz] wasn't associated with Goldman at all, yet she became associated with his act. It's a very dark, interesting book.

The second book is called *Making Speech Free*. It covers 1902 to 1909. There's a lot about the early free-speech movement, which was an interesting time. Then there's *Light and Shadows of the Avant Garde*, 1910 to 1916. And the fourth volume, *The War Years, 1917-1919* covers her political trial. Her anti-conscription trial is fascinating. All the anti-war stuff, her prison letters, her deportation trial, it's all very interesting.

We hope, eventually, to be able to do the European years, too.

That time is pretty interesting, too, because she was in her late sixties when she went to fight in the Spanish Civil War, right?

C: Yeah. They called her "The Grandmother of the Revolution."

When you were doing the biography [Love, Anarchy, and Emma Goldman], was Goldman an icon to you? And what happened as you got deeper into her letters?

C: Yeah, she was. I mean, here I am, giving my life to the woman. Her autobiography was *Living My Life*. Mine would have to be *Living Her Life*...

Now, on the other hand, because I came to Emma as a feminist and as an anti-war person, there were certain things about anarchism that I had to learn. And I did have a moment after I wrote the introduction to the first volume of our books when I couldn't stop sobbing... Then, I realized that it was because I did have a different image of Emma that I had to let go of. I had to embrace the fact that she was closer to violence than I, personally, would be. There's also the fact that anybody who does something that is secret keeps secrets. They're not totally truthful. It's not like a bad judgement [to say] that they're not truthful, but that they're not truthful for a political reason. I asked myself, was I one of the people who was fooled by her? So, in that sense, I had to embrace her full humanity. ★

and the right to beautiful, radiant things

The Future of Women's Sports is in Jeopardy

Shortly after returning from the winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan, Angela Ruggiero, a member of the USA National Ice Hockey Team went to a local hockey rink to play a pick-up game. When she tried to pay the \$5.00 entry fee, the front desk clerk informed her of the rink's "no girls allowed" rule. Ruggiero informed him she'd just returned from Nagano with an Olympic gold medal, the desk clerk's only response was, "sorry, no exceptions."

It was the routine discrimination that Angela Ruggiero and numerous other women faced when searching for equal opportunities to participate in sports that prompted Congress to pass Title IX in 1972.

Part of the Educational Amendments, Title IX prohibits gender discrimination in education, including athletics. Title IX requires schools to offer a number of opportunities for females that is proportionate to the number of female students, guaranteeing the rights of female athletes to the same coaching, scholarships, equipment and recreational activities as male athletes.

Regarded as one of the most important pieces of legislature passed in the 20th century, Title IX has increased participation in sports dramatically. According to the National Coalition for Women and Girls in Education (NCWGE) prior to Title IX, women made up only 2 percent of college athletes and 7 percent of high school athletes. In 2001, women's college athletic participation rose to 150,000 — a gain of more than 400 percent. And women's participation in high school athletics is up over 800 percent, to more than 2.7 million.

The impact of Title IX is clear: the more opportunities women and girls have to play sports, the more women and girls will play sports. And this is an important connection.

Participation in sports is enormously beneficial to women's health and futures, according to the Women's Sports Foundation. Research indicates participation in regular physical activities decreases a woman's risk of breast cancer, increases self-esteem and self-confidence, increases bone mass and decreases the risk of osteoporosis. Additionally, women who participate in sports report higher grades, lower drop out rates, decreased teen pregnancy rates and are less likely to use drugs.

Yet despite the benefits of participation in sports, women still face significant barriers to achieving equal treatment. NCWGE reports that male college athletes receive more scholarship money than female college athletes, and men's college athletics receive more funding for scholarships, recruitment, coaching salaries and operating expenses. In high school athletics, NCWGE reports that women receive inferior equipment, fields, and scheduling compared with men's teams.

A new task force created by the Bush administration may further widen that gap. The Commission on Opportunity in Athletics is currently reviewing all aspects of Title IX policy and planning a series of public hearings nationwide to reveal their findings. The Commission, made up of former athletes, coaches, athletic directors, the chairperson of the Olympic Committee, and the President of the Women's Sports Foundation, has recommended sweeping changes to Title IX policy that has women's groups concerned about the future opportunities for women in athletics.

"This is not the message we want to send to our daughters or our sons. We want boys and girls to know that they are equally valued, will receive the same chances to play and be treated equally in sports and in life. If we don't

send this message in schools supported by our tax dollars, we have failed our children," says Billie Jean King, founder and chair of the board of trustees for the Women in Sports Foundation.

If changes to the legislation pass, that could be exactly the message we're sending to our sons and daughters. Research conducted by the Women's Sports Foundation and NCWGE reveals that the landscape of high school and college athletics for women will be negatively affected by the Commission's proposed changes to Title IX legislation. Current proposals include reducing the number of opportunities for women's participation in sports at the college level by up to 78,000, and reducing opportunities for women in high school athletics by up to 1.4 million. Additionally, the Commission proposes offering up to \$188 million dollars less in athletic scholarships to female college athletes. The suggestion that is most alarming is a proposal requiring women to prove their interest in sports in order to secure equal rights to participate.

Members of the Commission appear to believe that women are inherently less interested in sports than men, and therefore deserve fewer resources than men. The history of Title IX indicates otherwise. "Title IX is the reason women and girls have made dramatic advances in athletics, but we are not at equality yet. President Bush must not turn back the clock on women's rights by weakening Title IX," says Eleanor Smeal, president of the Feminist Majority Foundation, strong supporters of Title IX legislation. "It is lack of opportunity, not interest that keeps the number of women athletes down." ★



Jodi Helmer words
Dave Crosland illustration

a quick lesson on the longest
ongoing war still being waged
by the United States

THE WAR ON IMMIGRANTS

Ravi Grover words
Christine Wong illustrations

Throughout its history, the United States has systematically attacked and blamed immigrants for the nation's problems. Immigrants from England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean have been blamed for everything from crime to unemployment to moral decline. But as xenophobia renews itself with the arrival of newer immigrants and continues to the present — some say the war on immigrants is reaching a fever pitch. Today xenophobia manifests in everything from anti-immigrant legislation, US imperialism, corporate scapegoating, to legal loopholes in the justice system.

Anti-Immigration Legislation: History

American history, paradoxically, is full of achievements won with immigrant labor, as well as a steady stream of anti-immigration legislation.

Asian laborers, especially those from China and India, were brought to the frontier West to construct railroads and address labor shortages in the 1800s. But they were met with xenophobia and anti-immigration laws. The Page Law (1875), Chinese Exclusion Act (1882), Barred Zone Act (1917) and Immigration Act of 1924 were passed to specifically to stop Asian immigration.

Other immigrant groups came under scrutiny as well. In 1924, the Border Patrol was created to monitor the flow of Mexican laborers entering the US. But the demand for agricultural labor catalyzed the Bracero Treaty with Mexico (1942) — allowing millions of Mexican laborers to work as farm hands and agriculture workers in the US, without gaining citizenship rights.

The war on immigrants intensified drastically during World War II, when Executive Order 9066 (1942) forced the relocation of over 120,000 Japanese Americans into internment camps for possible treason to the US. Across the globe, Adolf Hitler blamed Germany's economic woes on Jewish people — who were legally classified as "stateless," the same status of an illegal alien.

Anti-Immigration Legislation Today: California

California's anti-immigrant policy reached another groundswell in 1994 with the controversial Proposition 187. This short-sighted state ballot initiative — which passed with only 51 percent of the votes — denied public education and social services such as health care, free school lunches, and food stamps to suspected illegal aliens. It also required teachers, health care workers, and employers to report suspects to the INS. Supporters claimed that California would save \$20 million and immigrants would leave the state. But critics pointed out that illegal immigrants would be likely to continue residing in California, regardless of loss of social service benefits — and the

long-term result of denying basic social services could be devastating to the whole state. For example, under Prop. 187, undocumented parents might have withdrawn their children from schools for fear of being deported. Many children could have ended up on the streets or alone at home, making them statistically more prone to engaging in criminal activity. More crime causes increased economic strain on the justice system, causing taxpayers to spend additional money on building and maintaining prisons. But California already spends more money on prisons than schools; which is one reason why California ranks among the lowest 10 states in education quality.

Another example of Prop. 187's failure is health care services. If undocumented people are afraid to go to hospitals, the spread of contagious sicknesses could increase and result in more long-term health care costs. Fortunately, about a year after its passage, a US District Judge ruled that the denial of education and health care was unconstitutional.

The war on immigrants continued in 1998, when California voters passed Proposition 227 to end bilingual education. Immigrants need English skills to survive in America, but the initiative proposed methods that would not teach English effectively, such as putting all non-English speaking students of all grades in one classroom. Luckily, that same year California's State Board of Education ended English-only education and gave schools the freedom to teach English the way they felt was best. Both these controversial initiatives sparked similar anti-immigrant trends throughout the country in states like Florida, Arizona, and New York, as well as in Congress. This kind of widespread xenophobia is based on false perceptions of immigrants.

Myths Surrounding Undocumented Immigrants

Stereotypes about immigrants abound, but two detrimental misperceptions in particular have fueled the war on immigrants.

The first major misperception is that immigrants contribute nothing to America. The most obvious argument against this is the fact that immigrants put money back into the economy through spending and consumption. As for taxes, a Los Angeles County study reported that illegal immigrants in California pay *four times as much in taxes* than they receive in benefits. The ACLU reports that nationwide, both legal and illegal immigrants contribute *more than* \$90 billion in taxes every year. However, according to a 1993 report issued by the National Immigration Law Center, two-thirds of the taxes paid by undocumented immigrants go to the federal treasury. But local and state governments pay for social services and education — and complain that immigrants are overextending services like bilingual education. In order to solve this problem, Americans should demand that the federal government allocate tax money properly to

local and state governments in order to fund such services. Instead, immigrants are blamed for economic instability. Politicians, in turn, garner voter support with this kind of immigrant bashing. For example, in California in the early 90's, a nationwide recession caused tax hikes and widespread unemployment. Governor Pete Wilson had extremely low ratings, used anti-immigrant sentiment to boost ratings and win his re-election campaign.

Another major misperception of illegal immigrants is the racist stereotype that illegal immigrants are non-white, particularly Latino or Mexican. Though the media and politicians perpetuate this myth, the facts and statistics presented by the INS tell a different story: most people residing in the United States illegally do not enter this country by slipping across the US-Mexico border. In fact, Canadians, Irish, and Poles are all on the INS's top 10 list of illegal aliens, but are not portrayed in illegal immigration reports. New England's largest illegal alien population originates from Ireland, while New York City's illegal immigrant populations are primarily Ecuadorian, Italian, and Polish. Yet mainstream immigrant bashers continue to focus their attack on non-whites. People of color constitute over 95 percent of the people imprisoned by the INS.

One might think the US is being overrun by Mexicans, according to the anti-immigrant organizations. Barbara Coe, head of the California Coalition For Immigration Reform and a major supporter of Prop. 187, had once stated, "the militant Mexican-American groups want to take back California. Our children cannot get an education because their classes are jammed with 'illegals.'" In many classes only 20 minutes of English is spoken an hour." But according to the INS, undocumented Mexicans constitute only 30 percent of the illegal immigrant population. This type of paranoia and misinformation gets Americans to view immigration in a racist manner.

Part of this racist stereotype is the myth that illegal Latino immigrants use up the nation's social services. Senator Diane Feinstein proclaimed, "The day when America could be the welfare system for Mexico is gone. We simply can't afford it." But the question is, if immigrants are "stealing jobs" (which means they *work*) how is it then that they can be on welfare? In 1994 the Rand Corporation conducted a study showing that working-class American families used social services far more than illegal immigrants. Additionally, 86 percent of Latino males over the age of 16 are employed and working. Many illegal immigrants do not apply for welfare because of one simple fact — the fear of being caught and deported. As for legal immigrants, only 7 percent of the legal immigrant population was on welfare in 1990, and the majority of those were refugees. After the passage of the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) in 1986 to provide amnesty for illegal aliens in the US, a congressional investigation conducted a year later showed that a mere 1 percent of undocumented aliens were receiving Social Security, workers compensation, unemployment, etc. and less than 0.5 percent were on food stamps!

The majority of the estimated 5 million undocumented people in the US live in California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, and Arizona; but in each of these states illegal immigrants make up less than 1 percent of the population. The war on immigrants is fueled by myths, because most immigrants — legal and illegal — come here for the same reasons those in the past have: to make a better life for themselves by working. There are, however, some immigrants who are trying to escape persecution from unjust governments, who may be backed with American dollars.

US Imperialism, Corporate Downsizing, And Immigration

Many Americans believe that illegal immigration can be curbed by militarizing the US-Mexico border, increasing the powers of the INS and FBI, and tightening immigration laws. But this method simply attacks a symptom — not the root — of a larger problem. The roots of immigration must be addressed on a global scale.



IMPERIALISM

The US has a long history of supporting nations with records of human rights violations in exchange for cheap goods, resources, inexpensive labor, and free trade. Many illegal immigrants have attempted to escape from these countries' brutal regimes backed by the US:

- El Salvador's regime — which caused the deaths of around 75,000 people in a 12-year civil war — received \$6 billion worth of military aid from President Reagan during the 80s. About 1.5 million Salvadorans fled to the US illegally, only to be greeted with refusal of asylum and deportation; when they returned to El Salvador, many faced torture and death.
- Haiti is the poorest country on the Western Hemisphere, but that didn't stop its dictator family from receiving millions of dollars in assistance from the US government. Illegal immigrants, known as the "boat people," fled to the US. In 1992, 30,000 Haitian refugees were detained at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and later many were sent back.
- Honduras, Guatemala, and Nicaragua are also countries who have been (or are being) torn apart by civil war and run by US-funded dictatorships. Since 1979, the US has given billions of dollars in military aid to dictator-run Central American countries. Again, people who fled these countries were also denied asylum from the US. Most of these countries are currently run by more liberal governments and illegal migration from these countries has declined.
- Nigeria is run by a military dictatorship that is denounced by the global community and human rights organizations. Nigeria's military is primarily funded through oil sales; their largest customer is the US, which purchases 45 percent of its oil. One Nigerian dissident was imprisoned and tortured for nine months by the Nigerian government; after escaping to the US he was imprisoned in an immigration detention center without possibility of parole.
- China. Both President Clinton and President Bush have accelerated trade relations with China, which is notorious for human rights violations ranging from the occupation of Tibet to the Tiananmen Square massacre. Many Chinese who have entered America illegally are detained in INS centers for several years before being deported or given a hearing.

NAFTA

Anti-immigrant groups claim that immigrants are taking jobs away from Americans, but the bigger picture reveals that corporate downsizing and trade agreements like NAFTA are responsible for job loss.

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which passed in 1994, is probably the most significant policy to change US-Mexico relations. Labor unions and American workers were told that NAFTA would create jobs and boost America's economy. But according to the Economic Policy Institute, more than 395,000 jobs were lost specifically because of NAFTA since 1994. In fact, all 50 states have experienced NAFTA-related job loss. In several states, corporations have told workers that if they want to keep their jobs they must take pay cuts and reduction (or elimination) of benefits.

Corporate downsizing swept the country in the aftermath of NAFTA, and CEOs laid off hundreds of thousands of American workers and moved their factories to third world countries. Although NAFTA did create new jobs here in the US, the majority was in the low-paying service industry. The new economic growth, then, mostly rewarded the rich; 91 million Americans (35 percent of the population) have incomes *200 percent below the poverty line*

Yet corporations grow and CEOs profit. Many CEO's have used their profits to increase their salary or buy out other companies. Mergers have been very common in the last few years, as seen with Disney and ABC, pharmacy chain stores, BP Oil and Amoco (during this merger, BP Oil laid off hundreds of thousands of American workers), or more recent examples like AOL and Time Warner.

Corporate mergers and downsizing means that workers and immigrants are getting the short shrift over and over. According to *The Nation*, IBP, based in Storm Lake, IA, made \$257 million in profit and CEO Robert Peterson gave himself a \$5.2 million bonus — on top of a \$1 million salary. Despite its huge profits, the meat packing company paid workers — many of which were Laotian and Latino immigrants — a mere seven dollars per hour, far below the average wage for this field. Additionally, IBP was granted an \$8.5 million corporate welfare package from the government. Local schools, however, received only \$100,000 from the government for English education programs for the immigrant communities. Lastly, in 1997, IBP cooperated with an INS plan to raid factories, resulting in the deportation of many IBP workers. IBP was not penalized for knowingly hiring illegal immigrants, nor was CEO Peterson fined or penalized in any way.

Justice For All? How The Justice System Fails While Businesses And Smugglers Get Away

Anti-immigrant legislation is designed to punish immigrants and immigrants only. While the Department of Labor penalizes employers for violations like environment hazards or non-adherence to minimum wage laws, many companies who hire undocumented workers escape punishment by cooperating with the INS to catch workers.

Besides the INS, the justice system also seems to punish illegal immigrants but not their employers, smugglers, and other exploiters. In 1993, US officials captured The Golden Venture — a ship filled with illegal Chinese immigrants — off of New York City's shores. Of the nearly 300 immigrants captured, the INS granted asylum to 12, sent about one third to Central America, and sent another third back to China. Fifty-three immigrants were jailed for four years without the possibility of parole, but the smugglers — who charged the immigrants \$30,000 to enter the US — served a maximum of one year in prison.

While undocumented immigrants often go to jail, many of their employers only go to seminars on labor laws. During 1995, New York City prosecuted only three cases out of thousands of complaints against sweatshop environments and labor violations. One of New York City's more publicized cases is that of Empress Fashion Garment, a factory that withheld wages from immigrant employees, amounting up to \$60,000. New York's Department of Labor prosecuted two of the three owners: one received a sentence of six to twelve months, and the other required to complete 50 hours of community service. Yet the employees have yet to be paid. On the other side of the country, California Governor Wilson vetoed laws to hold business owners responsible for labor conditions and the workplace environment *twice*. Wilson himself had once hired a maid who was an illegal alien!

Even legal aliens are being attacked. In 2000, INS agents raided San Antonio's Randolph Air Force Base and arrested 40 computer scientists loaned to the US from companies in India. Invited by the

US government and Bill Gates himself, many Indian programmers entered the US with legal H1-B visas to fill the demand for programmers in the computer industry. But a US District Court struck down several regulations placed on H1-B visas by the Department of Labor; and in a strange legal loophole, the INS was allowed to deport legal technical workers. The story of the South Asian programmers is similar to that of the Mexican farm hands or Chinese railroad workers in the 1800's: that of deportation, exclusion, and xenophobia after contributing valuable labor, skills, and knowledge to America.

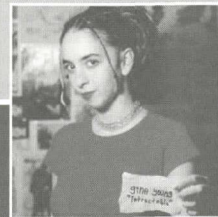
The War On Terror And Immigrants

Militarizing the borders and harassing foreigners won't solve the problem of immigration. Still, that's the government's predictable response in light of the terrorist threats in the US. Attorney General Ashcroft expanded the INS' powers, allowing them to violate Constitutional amendments by detaining immigrants without pressing charges or guaranteeing a trial. Also, the USA PATRIOT Act resulted in the detainment of over 1,200 people in INS prisons. Many of these detainees are denied access to their attorneys, and their families aren't notified of their arrest until weeks later. Yet as little as only one or two percent of the mostly Muslim, Middle Eastern, and South Asian detainees are linked with terrorism or criminal activities, while the rest detained for visa violations. In fact, many lawmakers have been questioning whether the Justice Department is acting consistently within the Constitution. And in California, a newer version of Prop. 187 — known as the Homeland Security Initiative — is being reintroduced by anti-immigrant organizations.

Instead of attacking immigrants, Americans should demand that conditions for people around the world improve. America could easily use its strength and wealth as a superpower to help developing nations, instead of investing only *one-tenth of one percent of its budget into humanitarian aid*. If developing nations enjoyed better living conditions and economic statuses, less people would want to immigrate illegally to nations like the US. Rather than spending billions of dollars on aid packages, or military aid for brutal regimes, money should be invested directly in sustainable development and education. Here at home, Americans should demand that corporate welfare handouts and immense tax breaks to wealthy companies stop, and start allocating money to necessary services that benefit the nation and *all of its residents*. All human beings have a right to survive, whether they're here legally or illegally.

★ TEAR DOWN ALL BORDERS ★





Alexander Cockburn

Beating The Devil: The Incendiary Rants of Alexander Cockburn
AK Press
www.akpress.org

"Can anything good come out of this?" Cockburn's sardonic views of U.S. policy and globalization, expressed through parables and history, transform somewhat boring (though certainly important) information into good leftist entertainment. *Beating the Devil: The Incendiary Rants of Alexander Cockburn*, the new CD of political rants and raves, is like punk rock agitation: persuasion, fresh, direct and to the point. Alexander Cockburn has a way of explaining complex issues — such as contradictory views on certain elements and land mark events of the left movement and their role in the past and prospects for the future — that few could duplicate. Though the time permitted on a CD is limited, *Beating the Devil* holds a good deal of information. Beginning with a talk at AK Press, Cockburn reflects on how "clearance" and marginalization can actually ignite revolutionary sentiments. The topics discussed range from "drug wars" to electoral politics, though the main themes are globalization and Colombia.

In one of the longer talks on the disc, two of President Clinton's final acts in office are used to reflect the droll irony of U.S. policy. Cockburn discusses how on January 17, at the end of Clinton's presidential term, he awarded Theodore Roosevelt a posthumous Medal of Honor (for which Roosevelt had always petitioned) for his charge with the Rough Riders up San Juan Hill in the Spanish-American War. Incidentally, the Rough Riders did very poorly and were actually saved by a black battalion. On January 18, one day after awarding Teddy his medal, Clinton, under the pretense of a war on drugs, approved another portion of money to be released to the Colombian military, despite its having one of the worst possible human rights records. Two prime examples of U.S. imperialism and "insurgency" past and present.

Beating the Devil has tracks on the Seattle protest — "they [the ruling class] just didn't expect it, and they fucked up big time" — as well as on the role of the labor movement in contrast with "less respectable" groups like the Black Bloc and Direct Action Network. Cockburn also offers wonderful discussion on the sham of American democracy, the farce that was the 2000 presidential elections, the snubbing of Nader by the Democratic Party after the elections, as well as exploring the future battles for the left, like those over low watt radio and organic foods. He argues persuasively that "there is another way, and that would be our way." *Beating the Devil* is a wonderful fusion of anecdotal histories and complex socio-economic analyses that will ignite droning left thoughts and leave the ruling class wondering, "How did we fuck up?"

-Joshua Root

John Sinclair

Fattening Frogs For Snakes: Delta Sound Suite
Surrealground Press, 2002

Fattening Frogs For Snakes/Volume One: The Delta Sound
Okra-Tone Records, 2002
www.okra-tone.com

John Sinclair remains one of the most important American revolutionaries of the 20th Century. He was leader of the Michigan-based White Panther Party in the late 1960s, early 1970s, and manager of quintessential rad rockers the MC 5. Sinclair understood that political and cultural revolution were inseparable. Along with the Yippies, the Diggers in San Francisco, and the Provos in Holland, the White Panthers were psychedelic hippie freaks who advocated libertarian communism. Sinclair's book *Guitar Army* is an essential countercultural text, positing youthful rebellion as political revolt. When the authorities framed him with a ten-year prison sentence for giving an undercover cop two joints, his name became a *cause celebre* — John Lennon even wrote a protest song called "John Sinclair." He challenged the cruel and unusual proportionality of the state marijuana laws and walked on appeal after serving 29 months. Michigan subsequently significantly reduced penalties and 43 other pot prisoners were released after the laws were declared unconstitutional based on Sinclair's appeal.

Perhaps the first radicalizing force in Sinclair's youth was his love for African-American culture, particularly music. Young white rads had to invent an alternative culture — black people were born into one. He eventually moved to New Orleans, became one of the most beloved disc jockeys in the Crescent City on WWOZ, and has continued to write and perform spoken word. Much of his literary work is ethnomusicological poesy; the history of blues and jazz recited in poetic form.

Sinclair has spent a lifetime immersed in researching African-American music and draws on the work of other blues scholars (hence the name of his band) such as poet/playwright Amiri Baraka, journalists Robert Palmer and Pete Welding and others. *Fattening Frogs For Snakes* is one of the results; a chronological journey from the Mississippi Delta north to Chicago that explains how the blues developed from an essential staple of black people's lives as much as food and water to a commercially performed style heard in nightclubs and recordings. A scorching introduction by Baraka precedes the text.

Blues fans will know many of the names paid tribute to, if not the particulars of their lives. Robert Johnson, Robert Lockwood Junior, Sunnyland Slim, Howlin' Wolf, Sonny Boy Williamson, Little Walter, Willie Dixon — and, of course, Muddy Waters — all tell their stories through Sinclair's verse. No less than three musicians — Tommy and Robert Johnson and Charley Patton are said to have sold their souls to the devil in exchange for superior musicality, a myth that's traced back to the legend of the African trickster god

Legba. But what Sinclair makes clear is that extreme living conditions that stemmed from slavery — brutally hard work, criminalization, heavy drinking, migration — created an intensity that bred an art form reflecting lives that burned hot and often flashed all-too-quickly. The blues is still revered because it communicates that intensity; a quality lost in Disney McCulture. The author explains that blues was not originally meant for consumption but an emotive and cathartic musicality utilized to survive racism and the relentless physical labor.

Sinclair has recorded most of the first quarter of the book with rhythm and blues legend Andre Williams producing and featuring some of the finest blues instrumentalists in the country. As magnificent as his work is on the printed page, it's mo' better on disc. It must be the only poetry recording with three female background vocalists!

Sinclair's enthusiasm and natural feel for the blue note and its heritage is a moving testament to the gift that African-Americans gave to a nation that had brought them here in chains. Sinclair has returned that gift with this extraordinary book and CD.

-Michael Simmons

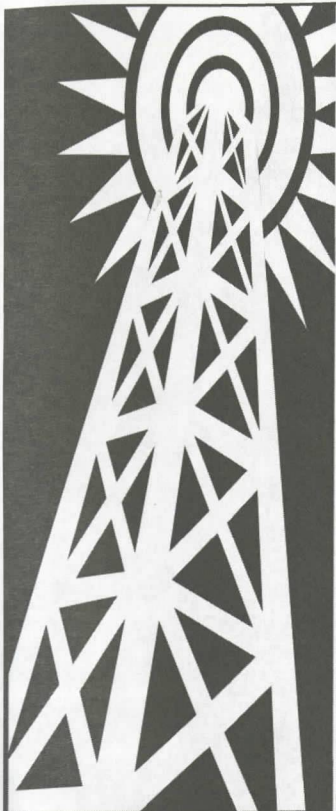
Gina Young

Intractable
28 Days Records, 2002
www.28daysrecords.com

Throughout her debut album, "Intractable," folk-singer Gina Young holds true to the title track and remains unyielding, yet still willing to show her vulnerability. This dichotomy provides a powerful line-up of tracks, giving way to the coarse, dark, non-sugar coated lyrics of "Can She Bake A Cherry Pie?" and "Haunted," and the heart-tugging, intimate pining of "Touch" and "Turn The Lights Off." Over rocking guitar riffs, which are at times part funk and at times part punk, Young's voice spouts out her piercingly honest lyrics in a distinct, soulfully urgent way. With multi-layered melodies that pack a punch even when tackling such diverse animals as nursery rhymes and raucous chants, the mood ranges from fun and carefree to staunch and serious, displaying the tier talents of this freshman artist. Interspersing wisdom well beyond her youth and a playfulness indicative of it, Young adds a dose of poetic political rants, throws in passionate, raw emotion for good measure and creates an enchanting, electric first offering, packed with promise.

-Tiffany Curtis

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WALK LIKE A WARRIOR DEAD PREZ



above: Stic and M1 with People's Army (background) and Stic's boy, Etwila

Dead Prez blazed into hip hop in 1998 with the politically-charged single, "It's Bigger Than Hip Hop." Their *Let's Get Free* album spoke about Black self-determination in a way no one else was doing at the time, in hip hop or out. They were signed to Loud Records, but got screwed when Loud closed its doors and DP's contract was commandeered by Columbia Records, a subsidiary of Sony. Their planned studio album, "Walk Like A Warrior," was shelved. After many delays, the studio album will hit the streets on May 20, 2003.

In November, 2002, despite the restrictive terms of their contract, an independent album, *Turn Off The Radio*, was put out on Holla Black Records under the name DPZ.

If you get the chance to see DP perform, do it, because they bring an amazing show. DP is made up of Stic and Mutulu "M1" Olugabala, and is part of People's Army, a larger musical and political collective. Rosa Clemente sat down with Stic at his home in Brooklyn to break down the message in the music.

You guys have shirts that say "Pimp The System." What do you mean by that?

There's a lot of movements that are building for community or self-determination, community control over all aspects of our lives, from

I think it depends on what you think their job is. I think the government is on point with what they set out to do — set up a capitalist organization. I think the government, this system, fails black people, it fails oppressed people, the brown people, the red people. But I think this government works in the interest of the majority of white people. I think that's a failure to human rights; that's a failure to social development. In the end, that's going to cause and has caused war and conflict and all of the daily shit we up against as far as poverty, drug abuse, trumped up incarceration, political imprisonment. All this shit is caused by what this system is designed to do. And it's working.

You put out an album recently, Turn Off The Radio, on your own label. Is that album and releasing it that way part of a resistance to that system?

I hope that it can be helpful. At the bottom of all our struggles is the need for economics, so we got to do this music. I don't think everybody has to use their musical talent, or whatever talent to say the same thing. I think there are people who've shown that they can be empowered financially or economically without talking about black self determination. They can demonstrate it, but their rap might be

interview by Rosa Clemente
photos by Emilia Wiles

the land all the way to the education, etcetera. But we're not there yet, because that's a campaign that's building. You've got to win masses of people to really make it work. So in the meantime... people are forced to work 40 hours a week, people are forced to do all kinds of shit, people selling pussy, people pimping pussy, people doing all kind of shit to survive. So the mentality that I see as progressive, that we try to put forth is, when you're in these situations, understand these relationships and that it's a pimp situation, and seek out ways to sabotage that pimping relationship. Seek out ways where you can abuse — if they put you on the register, you can get some extra change for your family. If they put you on guard duty, you can let us come get some TVs. You got to pimp the system. And that's the mentality, not just in theory, but really that's what we found ourselves doing to survive because the jobs and shit like that that they give us aren't really for us to survive, it's for them to survive. So in order for us to survive, until we get full independence, and self-determination, we got to pimp their shit, and milk it and use it. If you go to school, you can't go to school so you can work to brainwash your people. You got to go to school so you can learn certain information, certain skills and use it to empower your community.

Do you think the government of the United States is failing?

about shaking your ass — you know. Shit, that's not the worst thing on the planet to do. For us, Turn Off The Radio is a sentiment and it's really saying, they're trying to program us with what to think, what's cool, based off this system. And when we're saying turn off the radio, it's cause it's reflected in the music, in the entertainment, and that's a big weapon the oppressor uses on us. Whether you do that literally or not is not really the mission. But the mission is that you would recognize why somebody would say that, and where that sentiment is coming from.

Dead Prez and your crew, People's Army, seems to be able to bridge the brothers and sisters in the hood struggling for basic food and shelter and the black middle class and college students. What makes you able to bring those communities together that sometimes because of class issues are divided

Most of these things are responses to repression. Some people's response to oppression is you got to go to school, you got to get a diploma, you got to get a degree, that's going to put you in a better position so you're not at the bottom of this shit. That's some people's response, like the bourgeoisie. Some people's response is the white man is the fucking devil 'cause look how he been doing everybody on the whole

planet; we need our own language, we need our own culture, I ain't wearing no Calvin Klein, I'm wearing a dashiki, whoop-de-woo, I'm celebrating Kwanzaa, fuck Christmas. That's their response. Some people in the hood it's like, I ain't got no options, the motherfuckin' police dropped this dope over here, I'm gonna sell this dope. I'm a be a thug. And these women got all the jobs and nigger ain't got no job, so I'm gonna be a pimp. That's somebody's response to oppression. So, with DPZ, I understand that it's all related to like Malcolm says, to the response; these are different attempts to survive. So instead of separating ourselves, it seem like we can pull each other together by understanding that that's all we trying to do. I have a belief in political education in the sense that if we can get a firm understanding of how we got in this social situation, it will unify people to change it.

But I'm drawn to the hood for a lot of reasons: how I was brought up, the environment I was brought up in. I didn't never go to college. I was kicked out of high school. So I relate to what's going on in the street, just from my uncles, brothers, whoop-de-woo — shit I was doing. I have more experiences than I have in a college setting, but I also have cultural experiences. I been exposed to Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X, being healthy, training in the martial arts, you know. With Dead Prez, we want to be something that black people can find as a link, instead of another attack on black people. We want black people to feel like, I'm being represented. When I listen and whatever these guys try and promote and put out here, they're trying to include everyone's concerns as best as they can, as two motherfuckers. And I want people to know that it's bigger than me and M because, because of our experiences, we're limited. And M, M1 — that nigger is from the hood and the nigger went to college, so he has a balance. That's what enables him to relate and to recognize the significance of that sector of the population and be able to communicate.

Dead Prez's music, especially your rhymes, is very up front: it talks about conflicts with your wife, it talks about your drinking, what you were doing as a kid. What gives you the ability to be so honest and personal?

There was a time in hip hop where I used to write brag rhymes, you know: I'm the best MC don't test me, whoop-de-woo, all that. And then people started saying, keep it real. That became a popular phrase. And I started saying yeah, I like that, I like that real shit. I started thinking about people, I don't know if they were keeping it real, but things that was real life stories and occurrences — that shit made me say, yeah, if I'm gonna do this shit, that answers, that fulfills what I'm trying to do. I gotta write about the stress I'm going through. I'm inspired by people like 2Pac, his honesty with his mom on crack, whoop-de-woo. He putting that out there, that shit is therapy for him, and it let other people know that it's not a skeleton in your closet, this is life. The ruling class wanna make a fantasy, but we're dealing with conflicts and shit all day and if I'm trying to hide it, then I'm not trying to fix it. If I put it out there, I can probably get some answers and move forward. So it's a strength. I'm not saying in no funny way, but it's a strength to say what's really poppin'. Put it out there so people don't have no illusion. People think because you talk about be healthy you some guru on health — nah. It's because I've been unhealthy a lot and I can appreciate being healthy. I don't want to just start talking about health, I want to start talking about how unhealthy I done lived, so it can relate. That's the whole thing. I'm trying to talk to real people about some real shit so I got to be honest enough with myself so you know that's what I'm really doing. ★

Bringing It All Back Home

So New Media



by Josh Medsker

"We want to convince people that you can do this sort of thing — you can run a publishing company — and make it work without a billion dollars and a trillion sales," publisher Ben Brown says of his "ultra micro-mini" publishing company, So New Media, which he started in October 2001, with his friend and fellow writer James Stegall. In Brown's case he runs a publishing company for a lot less than a billion dollars. "We're operating with less than a thousand dollars in the bank at any time," Brown says. "The first batch of books we actually printed on stolen photocopier time, bound them on an office stapler, and used leftover file folders for covers," Brown says. "They were straight up ghetto, but still pretty neat. Each one was unique. Each one had style." Since then, the production value has gotten better. "Now we are doing everything on high-end laser printers," Brown said. "We're outsourcing color inserts, binding in bookmarks, postcards and CD's."

So New Media grew out of Brown's previous publishing projects. After two short-lived webzines, and many failed attempts at web publishing, Brown started a zine called *Uber*, and another called *Words*, both of which are still running.

So New Media brings immediacy to literature that few small publishers can match. In a recent interview in the *Austin Chronicle*, Brown said his So New Media books are "halfway between a zine and a trade paperback." And since he runs So New Media out of his house, on equipment he owns, Brown can produce



Murs

The End of the beginning
Definite Jux, 2002
www.defjux.net

This is one of the new Def Jux releases in the wake of the Cannibal Ox and Aesop Rock critical successes — with Murs being another player along with C Rayz Walz. El-P (Def Jux founder) seems to view his label as the avant garde version of Rocafella Records, with all the emcees contributing to each others records. In the standout track, "Happy Pills" with Aesop Rock, Aesop's talent brings out more from Murs. Murs keeps reminding me of a conscious version of Jayo Felony. Track two already sounds like the Styles-P single, "I Get High," but Murs seems unfazed and not much changed. "Its blood's killin, bloods and crips killin, crips, niggas killing dudes they played kickball with," he says, and it comes across as true. Murs as a commentator on the streets of L.A. is worth listening to. Track three is a vivid description of a few incidents regarding race conflict, drive-bys, and all of the everyday situations that he comes across. He seems resigned to his fate; and with the smoother production and better quality, this is a record worth buying by anybody who grew up on NWA and 2pac, only to be discouraged by the artificial. Well, Murs is real, in any sense of the word, and this record gives you a sense of his life.

-Jacob Dreyer

Small Brown Bike/The Casket Lottery

s/t
Second Nature Recordings, 2002
www.secondnaturerecordings.com

What is the purpose of a split recording? The consumer is basically buying the album for either one of the two

bands. The other band on the recording may or may not be comparable to the band of interest and on top of that, most of the songs are throwaways. This is the over-generalized belief system I used to live by (or buy music by).

This split release by Small Brown Bike and The Casket Lottery has thrown a monkey wrench into the machinery known as my buying power. Both bands have received moderate success throughout the Midwest, and the story goes that since touring together one fateful weekend over two years ago, the idea of a split album has been growing into fruition.

This self-titled, six tracked EP is more a collaboration than a split. There is only one original song by each band ("Now I'm a Shadow" by Small Brown Bike and the wonderful power-pop number "Composing Myself (A Lullaby)" by The Casket Lottery.) The rest of the songs consist of long distance exchanges of music and vocals and a few in-studio works with members from both bands.

The result is a work that is a sound of its own. The hard-edged intensity of Small Brown Bike can be heard, but is not dominant. And neither is the softer, quirkier sound of The Casket Lottery. A handful of mid-range rock/pop numbers remain that flow nicely together.

Thematically, the EP follows darker feelings of coming to age. But there is also a playful side to the album. Both bands work together on an absurdly straight cover of "Under Pressure" (which includes almost perfect imitations of Bowie and Freddy Mercury vocals). And even the bitter acoustic track "Riding with Death" has the feeling of road worn musicians having a jam session of sorts late at night, and really enjoying themselves. Be sure to check out each band individually, but this split EP is a worthy entity in itself.

-James Nickras

Various Artists

Uncontrollable Fatulence: Fat Music Volume VI
Fat Wreck Chords 2002
www.fatwreck.com

Some people might argue that NOFX has a lot to answer for, mostly because they were the first to specialize in and perfect that brand of punk rock that acquired melodies and clever lyrics now exploited to great success by so-called bands like Blink 182. With that logic, we'd have to blame Led Zeppelin for cheesehead hair bands like Warrant and Cinderella. We'd also have to blame the Beastie Boys for misogynistic rap-metal bands like Limp Bizkit and whatever Tommy Lee is up to now. Well, when you're a pioneer (and yes, even NOFX is a pioneer of sorts), expect some fallback.

Fat Mike apparently took all that dough he made with NOFX and created the label Fat Wreck Chords something like eight years ago. The label released some records by some cool bands like Lagwagon, Wizo, Propagandhi, No Use for a Name, and Me First and the Gimme Gimmes. Still do, in fact. And they started releasing label comps that beat pretty much everything else in the punk rock label comp-releasing industry. Titles like *Survival of the Fattest*, *Physical Fatness*, and *Live Fat, Die Young* (all with killer funny cover art featuring very, very, very, VERY fat people) bring the faithful back screaming for more.

Uncontrollable Fatulence deserves some attention because, like its predecessors, it is so damn cheap and because it includes great bands like Frenzal Rhomb and The Lawrence Arms tossing out songs that weren't good enough for their latest record, or in the case of Me First, the second greatest cover of the second most covered Prince song of all time, "Nothing Compares 2 U."

-Matthew L.M. Fletcher

a lot of books. The trick? The books are short. "We're doing 28-page books, 64-page books," Brown says. "We can do 12 books a year, and that's a great thing." Brown says he gets a thrill from seeing every book "literally hot off the press." "I feel very fatherly about each and every book," he says. "They're my babies. Or my soldiers, sent out into the field to fight our battles." Brown says he doesn't limit himself in what subjects he'll publish. "We've published personal essays, we've done straight fiction, we've done sci-fi. What we are looking for are authors who are excited about working with us, who are excited about independent publishing, and who really want to have a good time writing, creating and promoting their book." Brown also found inspiration from his parents, who used to be indie publishers as well. "[They] were big radicals in Berkeley, in the sixties," Brown says. "They ran some sort of alternative health newsletter. Now I'm doing the same thing, except my manifesto is about egalitarian publishing."

Brown recognizes the difficulty new writers have getting recognition, and hopes So New Media will help them. He points to the internet as a good way to get started. "We like to work with writers who have a pretty good audience on the web," Brown says. "[On the web] you learn to be concise, you learn about what your audience wants, [and] you develop a voice. And while you're doing that, you've got people who are actively reading your stuff." True to form for a publishing company that grew out of web-publishing,

So New Media gets most of its orders from online. "We sell dozens of books every week to people all over the world," Brown says. "Seriously, all over the world."

Brown has started branching out into spoken-word recording, with Magdalen Powers' reading her work on a CD featured in the early copies of her short story collection *Hand Over Fist*. Brown has also started throwing literary events, starting with a Punk/Lit Jam last August, which was held at Club DeVille in Austin. He got one of his heroes, literary satirist and punk fan Neal Pollack, to be the emcee. Brown booked several Austin punk bands, including Alfalfa Male, and The Dakota Smith to play behind So New Media authors. "It was a wild time," Brown says. "The bassist for the first band was thirty minutes late, [so] Neal [took] the stage and pretended to be John Updike," Brown says. "He read from Updike's autobiography, and then took questions." Brown says that later on, Pollack sang lead vocals with The Dakota Smith, and in the middle of the set "tore the book into shreds" while screaming, "I wipe my ass with your novel." "And then he dumped a four-dollar beer on my head," Brown says.

Brown plans to continue in the vein of the Punk/Lit Jam by launching a monthly reading and music event in Austin, and plans to release So New Media's first perfect-bound book next year, Adam R. Rakunas sci-fi tome, *Greaseguns and Feathers*. So New Media will also be putting out a new book by Neal Pollack, *The Neal Pollack War Diary*. Brown is very happy to be working with Pollack again, and has high hopes

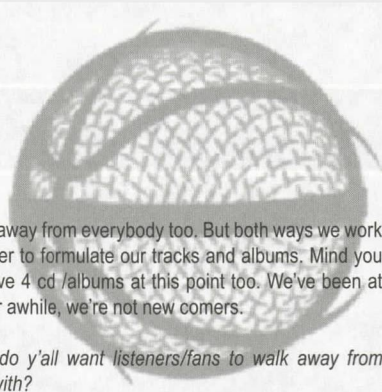
for Austin, having just come last year from what he considered a disappointing scene on the East Coast. While living in D.C., he traveled regularly up to New York City, and was dismayed by the celebrity aspect of the literary world. "With the work [we're] going to be doing next year, alongside Neal Pollack, I think Austin will blow New York away. The Brooklyn scene is crumbling in on itself. Too much ego. I think it would be very easy to lose your head and start thinking of yourself as some sort of celebrity after you've been interviewed a few times, and after your book has sold well," Brown says. "They should get down in the mud and use their notoriety to make positive change. In the publishing world, in the political world, or anywhere." Brown says that along with the Pollack book, and the literary events, he hopes to expand into art books and "home brew" DVD's. Then there's the "Pickle Factory" book. —

Above all else, Brown stresses the importance of the act of writing. "Just sit down, [and] write your stories," Brown says. "People don't care if your words are printed on a laser printer, they simply want to read. All the world's knowledge used to be kept on stone tablets. Books should not be defined by how expensive their binding process is." ☆

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Legendary Athletes

midwest hip hop for the masses



I don't have some story for you about how I've been down with Athletic Mic League since day one — that I've been watching them grow from novice performers to the pros they are now. Hell, all I really know about them is that they got their shit down. Lab Tech beats and true verses make AML's tracks some of the more genuine hip hop out there — and they're selling out shows in the Midwest like crazy. If you like Jurassic 5's style, but find yourself wondering when they're finally going to say something real — check out AML for some fine independent hip hop that fuses old and new to come up with some shit with staying power. I tracked down 3/7 of the crew for some questions.

What's AML's mission? Where have you been as a group and where are you headed in the future?

14KT: Our mission is to make some of the most creative, and dopest hip hop music period. We want people to respect us musically as well as embrace it as something they can call their own. We want to bring something new to the world of hip hop. In the future we're trying to touch as many people as we can, leave our mark on hip hop music as well as the business side of it with Lab Technicians Productions.

Sonny Star: Personally I believe that our evolution as a group and as artists as well as businessmen is something heaven-sent. Our mission is really not ours to decide, but we are doing what we feel is what we're supposed to be doing — which is making some good, soul snatching, thought-provoking music. We strive to be the best at what we do. It seems we touch people with our music and performances in a natural way — sort of like Earth, Wind and Fire. Just like the elements too, but I'm referring to who I feel is the greatest band ever. I want to be the Earth, Wind and Fire of hip hop — connected with people and their lives and social awareness through our music.

Buff (1): I personally would like to be able to use this to make social changes, even though I'm far from a politician or an activist. I really feel music is more powerful and influential than people think. We may not directly cause change but we could influence the change or a person to spearhead change. It's a little more than entertainment to us.

How does AML differentiate itself from the rest of the hip hop flock? Will y'all be independent forever, or is it just a stepping stone to bigger, more mainstream audiences?

14KT: We look at hip hop music in a whole different vision than many others do. We love to go against the grain, you know? For example, a lot of people call us an "underground" hip hop group, but our sound is far from it. We vibe off all different types of music and incorporate it into hip hop music. People have a hard time defining what our music is and that's what makes us differ from the majority. I love being independent and hopefully we can reach a mainstream crowd independently. Who doesn't want to be heard by millions?

Buff (1): In order to get to a level where we can be recognized for our talents and make changes in this world we have to be a little larger than we are now. When we first started in 1994 we were having fun. When people started to tell us we had skills around 1997, we thought

we had to get signed to be heard. Now, over the past couple of years we've been content with our position in the hip hop community because getting signed is hard (unless you luck up on a deal, it happens). If a really good opportunity came our way where we could get a budget to do what we've been doing (music, promotion, advertising, pressing, manufacturing and distribution), I'm sure we'd take it, but that's kind of wishful thinking. So until the big bucks come our way with the chance for complete creative control, we're cool.

Sonny Star: We do us, we don't worry about them. We're not underground or commercial. AML is not typical, we're independent and self-sufficient as of right now. We do want to reach a bigger crowd in the ways the Buff and KT said but we also want to learn the ropes of what goes on behind the scenes. That way we won't let ourselves fall victim to the everyday horror stories you here about from the industry cats. We have huge plans for 2003 that will set up everything from here on out...so stay tuned. Lab Technicians Productions is officially here and ready for business, ya heard?!

There are a lot of you involved in AML. How do you make decisions as a group? Take us on a short tour of how AML writes a track...

14KT: Making decisions can be a big job sometimes because there are several of us (7 members), but we have meetings on a weekly basis so we deal with decisions quite well. There are several ways we make tracks. Lab Techs might come with some candy (a beat) and then we'll hear and instantly brain storm ideas together.... go to our own separate worlds...then come back with verses and mesh them together. Or someone may have a verse and the Lab Techs will try and compliment the verse with a beat.... There are so many ways we write music.

Sonny Star: Depends on what you define as together. Sometimes we are actually right there with each other to write and work on songs and ideas. Other times we relay our ideas and rhymes that we came up with while

being away from everybody too. But both ways we work together to formulate our tracks and albums. Mind you we have 4 cd /albums at this point too. We've been at this for awhile, we're not new comers.

What do y'all want listeners/fans to walk away from AML with?

14KT: Hopefully listeners and fans never walk away from AML (hahaha)...but we want them to take our creativity, messages, and knowledge we've learned in making music with them to expand themselves. When AML is done one day, people will look at us as one of the dopest crews to ever do it — have the same effect as Stevie Wonder, Earth Wind and Fire, Tupac, Theloni-ous Monk, Aaliyah, and Martin Luther King Jr and many others touched the world...

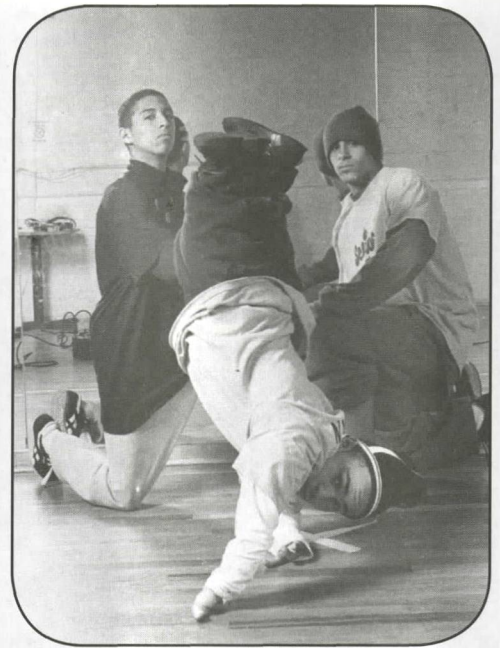
Buff (1): I want people to say that we try to sound different than everyone else while staying true to the art-form. We think we make some of the best music period and we hope everyone gets a chance to hear it. We also want people to say we have fun with the music and that we try to enlighten people in the process. Oh, and if people say we're the best we don't have a problem with that.

Sonny Star: I want people to feel like we changed their lives at some point in time. That would mean that they understood and felt everything we are about. We make real good music, and I want people to recognize it, go get it...and love it for what it is. As for other artists, stop hating and respect it. Sometimes I find that cats hate to like us, is that good or bad? I don't know. But let it go and just get into it, and you'll find that it's more than music we make. We've been blessed to create something that I think people feel is their theme music to everyday life, and pathway for elevation in the future.

For more information about Athletic Mic League and their most recent full-length "Sweats and Kicks," visit www.athleticmicleague.com

interview by Jason Kucsma





BREAKING

the urban soldier's original gangster revolution



words **Emilia Wiles**

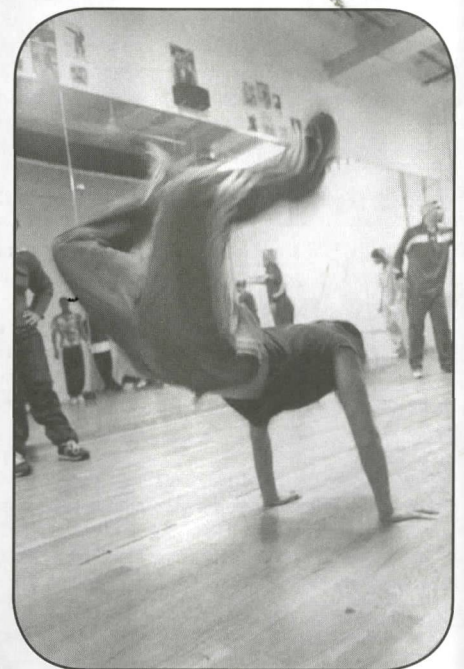
photos **Jason Tirado** (top two) and **David Viera** (bottom three)

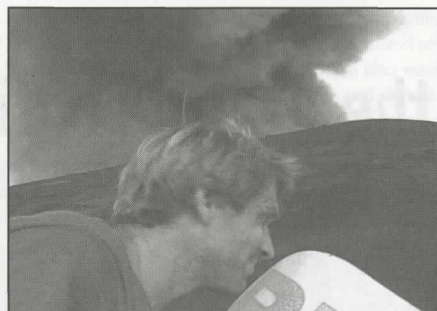
Born in the South Bronx, breakdancing has grown into a worldwide movement. A competitive sport today, the movements of breaking run parallel to those of Kung Fu and other martial arts due to their shared qualities of self-discipline and body control. Ranging from popping and locking to top rocks and head spins, breaking is for the disciplined street warrior.

Like the emergence of the original street soldier hip-hop culture, breaking came from hoods with no physical dreams outside of the local blacktop and ball game. Therefore, the combination of limited options and the voice of America's marginalized culture resulted in one of today's most famous pop culture sports: breakdancing.

Afrika Bambaataa introduced breakdancing as the first form of positive organized street battling and introduced the most competitive sport on out streets today. To summarize the overall effect at the time of it's emergence during the late 1970's, the organized gangs put down their guns and organized their crews around battling each other with the most creative or new breakin move.

Although many say that hip hop has left the urban communities it once represented for white suburbia, the flourishing breaking in the South Bronx immediately suggests something else. The legendary Hunts Point Community Development Corporation, also known as "The Point," has been home to many of the greatest gangster breakers to step foot on national battle grounds. Dominated by the infamous Rocksteady Crew, The Point provides breakin, b-boyin, and b-girlin classes and knowledge to its community taught by the masters themselves — Crazy Legs and Alien-ness. Walk-ins by other Rocksteady pioneers such as Mr. Freeze or Mr. Wiggles are common as well. Originally created from the improvisation of the streets with a little space and some thrown out cardboard, breakin has come a long way to provide our youth with a competitive physical form of combat that represents their personal and communal street revolution. ★





Volcano Boarding ... seriously.

by Zoltan Istvan

Snow has never fallen on Vanuatu's Tanna island, but a double black-diamond slope that shames most of Colorado's best runs stands on the island's southeastern shore. The only problem: the pumice slope is part of an active volcano with a habit of shaking, smoking and coughing up Great Dane-sized lava bombs — some of which have killed travelers.

I first saw Mt. Yasur seven years ago while sailing my sloop through Vanuatu's 80-island archipelago. The volcano's northern side was a nearly vertical 1,000-foot pumice face streaking downward. There were no trees, no trails, no board tracks, nothing; it was virgin. As an addicted out-of-bounds snowboarder, I promised myself I'd come back someday with a board. I dreamed of S-turning right down the center of Mt. Yasur — starting the sport of volcano boarding.

After a pitiful 2002 snow season in my home state of California, it seemed a good time to uphold my promise. I flew into Tanna, strapped my Burton to my back and took off through the highlands on a rented Yamaha. In a few hours, I emerged onto an ash plain in front of Mt. Yasur. Still a half-mile away, I was already in the volcano's extreme throwing range. The islanders call it the *death zone*.

I parked my Yamaha at the base of Mt. Yasur and began the grueling hike to the rim in the oppressive tropical heat. After five minutes, the football stadium-sized crater erupted, spewing lava rocks onto the slope and fuming enough smoke to fill a skyscraper. It took me over an hour of sluggish hiking in the pumice to make it to the top.

Even though I was exhausted, I didn't rest at the rim. The smell of sulfur was intense and thousands of hardened lava rocks grounded on the crater's edge distressed me. This was nature's war zone and while large, airborne lava bombs are usually easy to see and avoid, Mt. Yasur is famous for golf ball-sized lava bullets that fly through the air and are difficult to detect. There are already three memorials to killed onlookers near the rim of Mt. Yasur; I didn't want to become the fourth.

Hastily, I sat down on the edge of the slope and began strapping on my board. Seconds later, a giant wave of billowing smoke rose behind me, followed by three sharp, deafening blasts from the crater. There was too much smoke to see if any of the lava bombs were coming my way. My gut feeling told me to get out of there and start boarding.

I pushed myself over the edge and let gravity take its course. Almost immediately I forgot about the dangers and concentrated only on the enormous ash slope before me. Surprisingly, even though I was boarding on sticky pumice, speed was not a problem. The slope was just too steep. Turning was a different animal altogether. It takes much more leg power to S-turn on pumice than it does on snow. Each carve required heavily leaning into the direction I wanted to go.

I hadn't gotten far when a second explosion shook the mountain. Thirty meters to my right, a huge lava bomb landed, broke into pieces and then tumbled down the slope. The greatest danger with volcano boarding is not being able to see where the mountain is shooting its molten entrails — Russian roulette came to mind.

Halfway down, I hit a tacky ash patch, crashed and rolled. The sweat on my skin became a coat of pumice. Immediately I turned to the rim and watched for falling rocks. None came, but soon enough the volcano started grumbling again. I shoved off and headed for the safety of the bottom, S-turning to within a few feet of my motorcycle.

Over the next three days, with every zigzagging groove I carved down the center of the north face, I got more excited about the sport's potential. With millions of snowboarders in the United States and hundreds of active volcanoes around the world, here was a new extreme sport that might just be the cure for snowless summers.

Zoltan's TV news segment on volcano boarding aired on *National Geographic Today* in November 2002.

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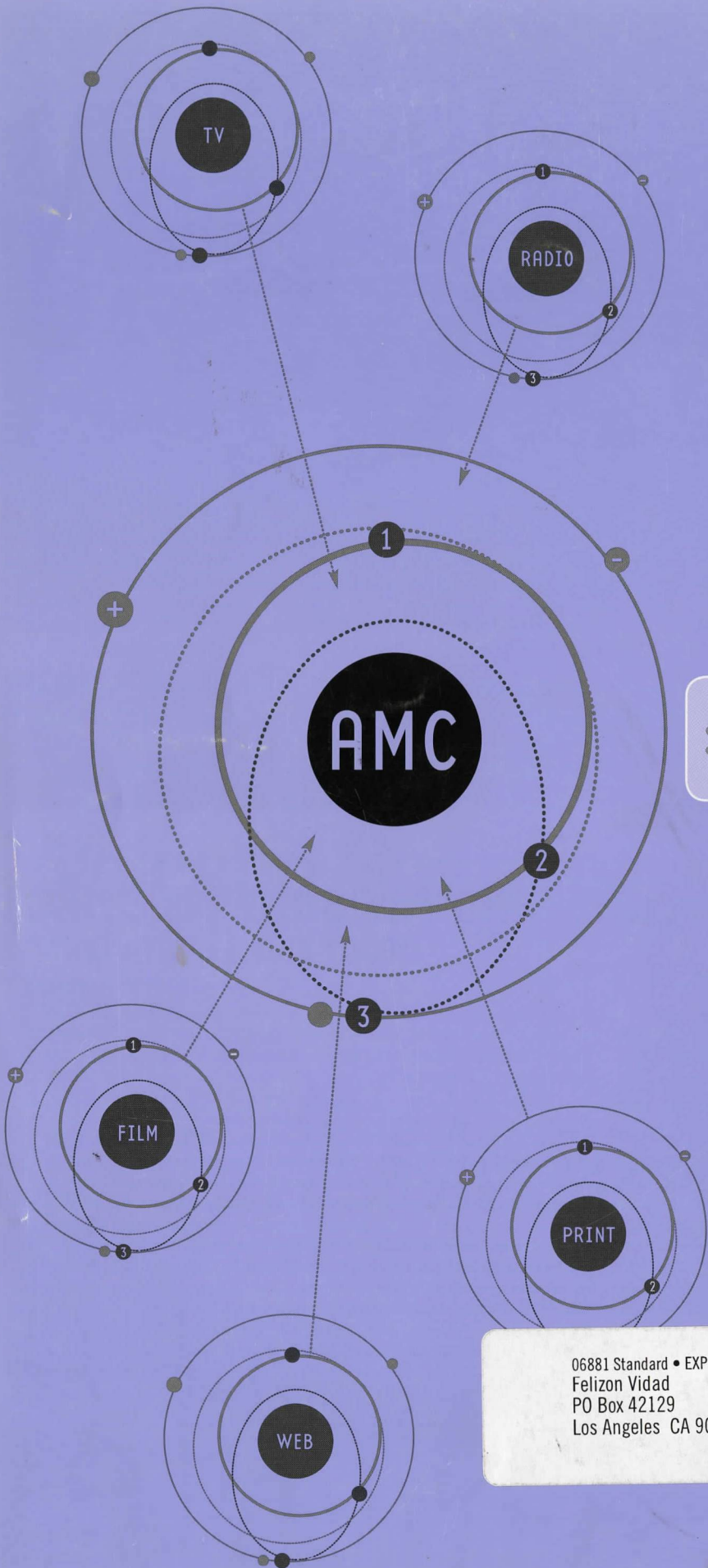
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