

the magazine of zine culture and the independent arts

brokenpencil

www.brokenpencil.com

disCultural Baggage

Journey to the
Center of Your Head:
*Royal Art Lodge Maps
the Pop Unconscious*

From Barracks to Comics:
*Slovenian Indie Culture
Commune Metelkova*

The Cedar Surf:
*Riding British
Columbia's Waves*

The Hottest Happenings
and the Coolest Choices:
*Montreal Anarchist Book
Fair, The Search for Thai
Zines, Criminal Cinema,
Underground Comics, Books,
Tunes and more more more!*



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Five reasons why you should take a writing course

I know what you're thinking. What's with the "Five Reasons" headline? It sounds like the cover of Chatelaine ("Seven ways to make your rooms sparkle!"). Relax. You know and I know it's only a cheap device to coax reluctant readers through some copy. And maddeningly, it usually works. It inspires curiosity. So, overcome your reluctance, give in to temptation, and read on:

- 1. You can learn to be a better writer.** Whoa! This is a blockbuster opening reason, inspiring self-doubt *and* salvation. What a dynamite combo. If only you have the discipline to follow up and take a course. It's a challenge. The gauntlet has been dropped. Who will pick it up?
- 2. You need to get out more.** This is undeniable. And I'm not talking about groceries, videos or the laundromat either (although more trips there might be a good idea too). You need to meet other people with similar interests. Make real connections so you can stop feeling like you're the only one in the world.
- 3. You can follow in the steps of the giants.** Kafka took writing courses. Nabokov took courses. So did Hemingway and Fitzgerald (but never at the same time). All the current big names take courses too. The rich ones have tutors come in. Of course the literary nabobs suppress this information. But we're brave enough to tell all.
- 4. Teachers can really help you.** Forget high school. Forget university. A cozy college evening course where everyone is treated as an adult, with respect, is what you want. And we hire experienced writers who are *also* great teachers. Like the editor of *Broken Pencil* (although he didn't give us a break on this ad).
- 5. Courses won't break the bank.** This is government-subsidized education that doesn't cost a fortune. So you only have to stock up on fake KD powder at the bulk food store and shop at Buy-The-Pound if you want to. Plus you can take TTC to our downtown campus.

Go to www.gbrownc.on.ca and register online or call 416-415-2060 (or 1-800-265-2002) and we'll mail you a calendar.



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Writing for Broken Pencil: Broken Pencil encourages submissions of original fiction accompanied by a self addressed stamped envelope and/or email address. Please include a disc in PC format (when possible) and a bio. We also encourage submissions of original essays, columns, rants, interviews and features - anything related to the subject of independent culture in Canada. But before you write your opus, please send a proposal for your article (2-3 paragraphs), along with samples of your work and a self addressed stamped envelope. We are also interested in working with new photographers and illustrators. Send us samples (not originals) along with a self addressed stamped envelope.

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Broken Pencil is indexed by the Alternative Press Index.

Broken Pencil is completely made and manufactured in Canada.

Broken Pencil acknowledges the support of the Ontario Arts Council and the Canada Council for the Arts. Broken Pencil acknowledges the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Publications Assistance Program (PAP) and the Canada Magazine Fund of the Department of Canadian Heritage toward our mailing and project costs. Canada Post Agreement Number 1377914

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email: editor@brokenpencil.com • website: www.brokenpencil.com
 mailing address: Broken Pencil, PO Box 203, Stn P, Toronto, ON, M5S 2S7 CANADA

\$4.95 per issue

\$12 for a one year subscription (three issues) • \$20 for a two year subscription (six issues)
 Cheques made out to Broken Pencil. Prices include postage.

ISSN 1201-8996 • Publications Mail Registration Number: 07414



The Canada Council
for the Arts | Le Conseil des Arts
du Canada



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CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO

Using Broken Pencil

Organization:

Broken Pencil reviews independent publications published in Canada and the world, including ezines and recordings. All the listings in Broken Pencil are organized by province/region. International and US listings are after the Canadian publications. There is an index in the back that lists every publication and recording reviewed in Broken Pencil in alphabetical order.

Structure of listings:

Title — the name of the publication

Definition — the arbitrary classification we attribute to a publication

Name(s) of creators — the creators of the publication, the people who write and publish it.

\$ — the price that the publication is sold for individually and, if available, by subscription. These prices do not include postage, which is extra (see "how to order zines")

Address — every effort will be made to have the correct addresses for all publications, however errors do occur and address changes/typos/mysterious disappearances are always a hazard.

Review — the review of a publication represents the subjective opinion of the reviewer. Personal taste cannot be edited out of a review. Broken Pencil welcomes dissenting opinions while making every effort to offer a fair and true judgement.

What Is A Zine?

A zine is an independently published, not-for-profit publication. Although it usually represents the personal vision of a single creator, it can have many contributors. Although most zines are photocopied and hand stapled, some zines are professionally printed. What makes a zine a zine is its dedication to the independent transference of thought on a non-commercial basis. Variations on the zine include the comic zine (indie comics), the litzine (literary - poems, fiction, essays), the perzine (personal, autobiographical), and the ezine (zines published only on the internet). In addition to zines, we also review independent/alternative newspapers, journals, magazines, books and chapbooks, and recordings in LP, cassette and CD format.

How to Order Zines

Please Send Cash! If you are ordering anything under six bucks you should send well concealed money. Many zine publishers don't have a separate bank account for their zine and cannot use checks made out to their zine or to their pen name. In fact, many zine publishers do not have a bank account at all. So the best thing to do is to staple cash to a letter (or tape coins to a piece of paper and staple that to a letter), though for anything over the six dollar mark, you should probably send a check. We list a name in our ordering information, and you should make the check out to that name or the name of a publishing house if that information is available. The second big thing to remember is that you are also paying for postage. Figure on a including a dollar extra for postage on a standard zine (within Canada). If you are ordering Canadian zines from the U.S., pay in U.S. dollars and that should cover the postage. Ordering Canadian zines from overseas you should pay in U.S. and throw in a dollar extra, two if you want air mail. If you are ordering U.S. or overseas zines from Canada, you'll need to send U.S. dollars and a dollar or two extra for postage. Don't send Canadian dollars or checks to anyone overseas or in the U.S. as they won't know what to do with it most of the time. Some zines include postage in their price, most do not. If a zine indicates their price includes postage, we will note that in the ordering info, otherwise, figure that the price listed is the cost of the zine only, not the cost of getting it to you. If a zine is free, always include a dollar or two for postage. Keep in mind that ordering zines takes time as zine publishers are busy. You should plan on waiting several months before deciding that a zine isn't coming. Should that occur, send a postcard asking what happened. If you don't get a prompt reply, drop us a note and we can try to contact the publisher for you, and/or warn others not to waste their money. But be patient, because most of the time you'll get what you ordered, though it might take a while. And hey, zine publishers like to know how you heard of their zine so be sure and tell them we sent yeah.

Searching For The Good Things

From: "Rick Towns" <rick@deepskies.com>

Subject: Who's from Barrie?

I read in one of your reviews that someone there is an Innisdale graduate of '89. Who was it? I attended Innisdale during the 80's. I think I was scheduled to graduate (from grade 13) in '88 - but never did. I might know the person in question (or they might certainly know me - or of the group I hung out with, anyway). Just curious!

Rick

From: "david x" <audace@hellokitty.com>

Subject: fs5

Hello, can you give me an update on the revaluation of Factsheet Five please? I want to know if it is up and running yet, or what. Their new email isn't working and my search engine can't find a recent web site (only site from last summer stating that a group is working on the new version of fs5 and that they plan to have an issue out by the end of the year). thank you, davidx (Nova Scotia)

From: <zangdrake@yahoo.com>

Subject: Hi I used to review for Skull Session zine

Dear Sir or Madam,

Hello My name is Jeff B and I am from Louisiana. I am writing you because I used to be a music reviewer for Brad Mitchell's Skull Session zine. I reviewed such bands as Green Apple Quick Step(great Alternative band), Body Clock(ok weird and ambient music), and Dystopia(they just outright suck....sounds like circus music....every single song). Anyways the point of my e-mail is to see if possibly you guys would know how to get in touch with Brad any other way than By Snail Mail(e-mail address works fine for me). I understand if you do not feel comfortable releasing this information without his consent though and I think maybe he and I could get in touch if you sent him an e-mail asking if it is ok to release this information to me. I have not corresponded with him in 6 years and

MANNA
AMBROSIA/SOMA/TEONANACATL

Exodus 16:14-24 makes it clear that MANNA was definitely a MUSHROOM. "It was a small round thing in the morning dew, it bred larva, and would melt to mush if not dried". (King James Version). Fly eggs cause worms in mushrooms.

Daniel 5:3-5 with Exodus 16:32 makes clear that the mushroom was a DRUG. "Those who drank from the cup containing MANNA had visions within the hour". Psilocybin takes 30-40 minutes to induce visions.

Hebrews 9:4 makes it clear that this drug was the most holy thing to Israelites, kept in the ARK OF THE COVENANT, in the "MOST HOLY OF HOLYS".

ENLARGE TEXT
118 082 480 020318 23:06

Psalm 78:24-25 calls MANNA "FOOD OF ANGELS" just as MAYAN/INCA PRIESTS from Meso-America called it TEONANACATL "FOOD OF THE GODS".

Cocaine found in Pharaohs tombs suggest that it was these Mayan/Inca Mushroom Priests who brought medicine, science, pyramids, astronomy and MUSHROOMS to Egypt where the Patriarchs of Israel learned these things. Mayan Natives have worshipped the Mushroom-God for over 5,500 years. Moses, Christ and Abraham all traveled to Egypt to learn. Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter.

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<dure@island.net> © Sacred-Wine Press ©

James D. Dure
310-3215 Cowichan Lk. Rd.
Duncan BC V9L 5G5
CANADA

My booklet documents evidence of the ritual use of mushrooms came from America to Egypt to Palestine. Biblical/Historical Evidence and the Mazatek Ritual. please print as an article, help educate public. JD

it would be nice to hear from him. Thank you for your time. Sincerely, Jeff B (Louisiana)

From: "Britnell Books" <info@britnell-books.com>

Subject: searching for Nietzsche's Brolly Hello. Back in Broken Pencil #3 you offered a review of a small press called Nietzsche's Brolly. I am wondering if that press is still active since I can find very little info online. Do you happen to have a contact number or e-mail address on file? Thank you for your time. Julianne (Toronto)

One Man's Mangina

From: rcshaw <rcshaw@sciborg.uwaterloo.ca>

Subject: The Mangina Monologue this is a piece i decided not to break up into paragraphs. enjoy! the mangina monologue it is a funny thing to create a mangina. first, you have to tuck your penis and balls between your legs. surprisingly, this is not as uncomfortable as it may appear. both legs must be crossed in such a way as to completely hide the penis and balls from sight. if viewed from the front, the

subject appears to have a vagina, or at least a mound of hair that one would mistake for a vagina. this is rendered even more comical if the subject has a hairy chest and beard. from behind, the joke is almost completely reversed. the image is a man with bulging, closed eyes perched atop a nose that is slightly too long for a face. upon closer inspection, the man's face is revealed to be a penis and balls, which is wholly unsatisfying. the mangina cannot be held too long, as the subject becomes physically uncomfortable and vaguely aware of the feminine perversion of the act itself. it is best captured as a photograph cutting off the subjects head, preferably using a camera whose owner is unaware that you're photographing a mangina. upon development, an embarrassed stupor will overcome the camera owner, and they may be possessed to find the mangina subject himself. in one's social circle, there are a few individuals who may be suspected of installing a mangina on themselves. after de-constructing the mangina, the subject may be sore and slightly aroused. this is a good time to engage in sex, since your partner would still be light-headed from laughing so hard at your mangina. you also appear to be confident with the function of your penis and balls, and this only heightens the subsequent arousal. during sex though, your partner may only be

able to see you as the mangina itself, and you may become manifested as an awkward archetype in their eyes. of course, you will not be aware of this. you are the proud beneficiary of mangina magic.

ryan shaw

A Few Words to the Reviewers

From: Zachary Houle <zhoule@magma.ca>

Subject: Killed by Kindness review Just a word of thanks for the Killed By Kindness chapbook review, finally. It's kind of weird to see a critique on something that is three years old (which is how old the two stories in it now are). Though I'm very thankful for the review, I think there's something I reluctantly should bring up. I say reluctantly because the review was positive overall, and the one thing that looks really ridiculous are these letters to the editor Broken Pencil gets (and runs) where person X writes in to complain about how reviewer Y didn't understand the brilliance of their art. (I



BROKEN PENCIL

(Hal Niedzviecki)

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mean, these folks should be thankful someone, anyone, has taken the time to read their shit, er, stuff.) Plus, being a contributor to Broken Pencil puts me in a weird position to try and talk objectively about someone reviewing my work in the same magazine. However, Shaun Smith did get two facts wrong about my chapbook in his review that are glaring. 1) One of my stories in the book was set in ToyWorld, not Toy Land as stated. 2) Smith mentioned I needed a proofreader, but the copyright information page does acknowledge I had an editor on the project. It was perhaps an out-of-the-way fact, but it was there, and the proofreader comment seems, well, bizarre in light of that. This doesn't bother me too much personally — I did enjoy the review — yet the errors just seem to undermine the whole point of the write-up at the same time. I guess all I'd ask is that your reviewer pay attention to the small details from here on in for all the obvious and important reasons. Aside from that, keep up the good work, and thanks for taking the time and space to review my fiction. Yours, Zachary Houle (Ottawa)

From: Parkinson Tascha <makestrange@yahoo.com>

Subject: Could you remove me from your site

Hello Brokenpencil. My name is Tascha Parkinson and I had sent a comic zine to you guys for a review about 3 years ago. I was a little pissed at the time that the review states that I am a "racist", but, I figured that it was just one persons confused opinion. Anyway, I would just like it if you could remove your review of me (Living Together on Queen Street West) that is listed on your web site. I'm tired of seeing this one person's clouded opinion of me publicized for the world to see. Thanks so much, Tascha Parkinson (Toronto)

From: "Twisted Linguistics" <twistedlinguistics@hotmail.com>

Subject: Twisted Linguistics on-line what's up hal? i got the magazine you sent me, thanks a lot. i appreciate you featuring my article very much. but, i didn't like that my article was heavily edited without my permission. if it was just some basic grammar/ spelling corrections that would've been one thing. but many of the changes were things like replacing "of course" with "naturally" or

chopping my run-on sentences into several sentences. The editing was so heavy that i feel it actually took away my writing style, and several of my friends who read it agree, it no longer even reads like i wrote it any more. If anyone at bp doesn't like my writing style or choice of vocabulary or takes objection to me calling Timothy McVeigh a "crazy white dude" of course that's fine, you don't have to print my article. But don't edit rearrange censor it to your liking without my consent and then print it. take it easy, moe. (Kitchener, ON)

Name Calling

From: "Chloe Steele" <chloesteele78@hotmail.com>

Subject: Magazine World

Hello, we are post-graduate Journalism students at Humber College. We are writing an article for a trade publication that we are producing called Magazine World. It is a magazine that examines issues relevant to the Canadian magazine industry. The article that we are writing explores the origins of names of Canadian magazines, and we are interested to find out how the name "Broken Pencil" was chosen for your magazine (who came up with it?, what it's supposed to mean?, how it represents the issues that the magazine addresses? etc.) If it would be easier to answer this question in a phone interview, then we would appreciate it if you could let us know who would be the best person to speak to, and what their phone number is. If you would prefer to answer this question via email, then we just have to remind you that the reply you send could be used in publication. Thanks for your time, Chloe Steele and Jillian Wellard (Toronto)

Dear Mr. Godsoe...

From: "Simon Dardick" <vp@vehiculepress.com>

Subject: Open Letter to the Bank of Nova Scotia

Dear Editor, When Jack Stoddart's General Distribution Services, one of Canada's largest book distributors, filed

Happiest Letter of The Issue

Broken Pencil (Hal & Emily),

Why the hell should I be dumb enough to renew my subscription to a zine like yours?

Over the past 6 or 7 months I've mailed out sufficient coin to at least 3 or 4 of the minor rags that your larger rag has promoted — I'm yet to receive as much as a peep from either of them. As a result, I now have an image in my mind of the typical Canadian zine publisher and/or reader of Broken Pencil as your usual lazy 20 or 30-something, who crawls out of 6-months-unwashed bed sheets (hungover) at 1 PM, to shower (while Nirvana's Nerve mind blasts in the background for the umpteenth millionth time since 1991), change into dirty clothes, and then head out for coffee, doughnuts, and a birth control refill. In other words, the sort of overgrown children that I am coming to increasingly dislike (actually, I cut off all ties w/such folks at least 6 or 7 years ago). I figure most of these people are about just as eager to develop as artists as my sphincter ani is to speak Latin. In other words, they are the sort of shitheads who will probably be winning the next dumbass 'literary hunt' contest sponsored by those children at that national embarrassment, This Magazine (a year later and the same shitheads will probably be appointed the contest judges). And then people wonder why national standards are becoming so low. Vanilla-flavoured? The proof's in the poetry, er pudding. Also, I sent a 'calls for submissions' piece in regards to some forthcoming publications I'm working on — I'm yet to see that in print. Why am I not surprised? First impressions are lasting ones. Why don't you tell the truth, for once, and change your name to Broken Spirit or The National Slacker? Sincerely, R.W. Watkins, Poet (a real one) & Genius

for creditor protection on April 30th it put at risk over sixty Canadian-owned publishers-ours among them. We have run our company in a responsible manner for over 28 years, and we wish to continue doing so. GDS owes almost \$47 million to creditors, including over \$16 million to the Bank of Nova Scotia, its largest single secured creditor. While legally Stoddart is still at the helm of the company during this period, it is apparent that the Bank of Nova Scotia is calling the shots. In a sense this is an open letter to Peter Godsoe, president of the Bank of Nova Scotia. While no one can fault a bank or a business from protecting its assets-in this case money owed to them by GDS-the Bank of Nova Scotia has the option of collecting what is owed to them AND ensuring that sixty small-to-medium publishers (most of them publishers of prize-winning books of cultural importance) do not go out of business. The bank is insisting that the publishers give up any first claim we may have on receivables-monies still to be paid to GDS. To do so would be to give up our future. What company acting responsibly would give this up? We are told by GDS and its lawyers that we are contractually bound to them and must not seek alternate means of distributing our books, even though the legal process may take months to reach a conclusion. In two to three months we won't be here. Publishers cannot exist without sales rev-

enues or without alternate means of distribution. The Bank of Nova Scotia is the only entity that has the power to allow the small-to-medium book publishers affected by the GDS debacle to continue in business. Not to do so would have the bank acting like a school-yard bully. (Incidentally, the total receivables owed to the unsecured Canadian-owned publishers in the GDS warehouse is \$3 million-not a princely sum for the bank, but our life blood.) The Bank of Nova Scotia has a long tradition of helping small businesses. This is an opportunity for the bank to rise above corporate interests. This is an opportunity for the Bank of Nova Scotia to support Canadian writers and publishers who contribute so much to the culture of this country. Simon Dardick/Nancy Marrelli, publishers, Vehicule Press (Montreal)

Asking For Help

Dear Broken Pencil: My name is Katy Groves and I am a Peace Corps volunteer in Armenia. I'm a community health worker but English skills are in high demands here, and so I'm trying to introduce new methods and literature to my students. As you can imagine, obtaining materials is really difficult. There are some church organizations and interna-

JAY THE BLIND JAYWALKER

Why does Broken Pencil love Jay the Blind Jaywalker so much? How the fuck should I know?



This is a bad comic strip in its purest form: terrible artwork, stupid gags, potty humour for the sake of potty humour...

I...no sympathy for the characters, unfunny... I can go on, believe me. What we have here is a series of strips in which Jay gets killed in some way or other while trying to cross the street. There's a reason you'll never see this in a newspaper, kids (and no, it isn't because creator Michael Hind is "indie as fuck.")



I'm sorry. This is a pretty mean review, but honestly, when there's a strip called "Jay meets Buddy Holly" and has the last strip as a picture of a plane crashing, I can't get into it.

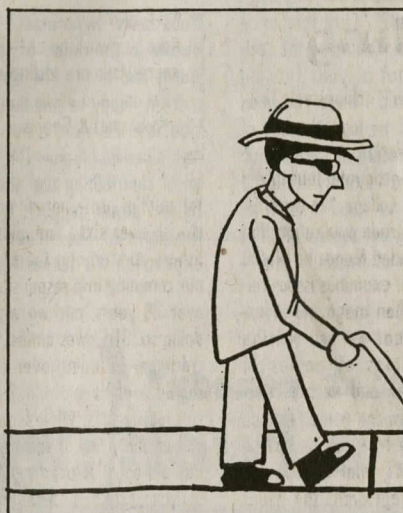


Anthony Gerace, Broken Pencil Issue Seventeen.

end

JAY THE BLIND JAYWALKER

JAY MEETS RICKY VALANCE



tional NGO's and I appreciate their help, but what they are able to pass on is moderate, mainstream, and often just an old textbook. Slowly another volunteer and I are accumulating books and zines for a library we're putting together. It provides our students with different perspectives, ideas, and backgrounds that they usually know nothing about. Hopefully this exposure can broaden their thinking and give them some impetus to put ideas on paper. We would really appreciate if you could send us one sample copy. We understand that it is expensive, but however much you could send us would be incredible. Thank you for your zine and your time. Katy Groves, Peace Corps Armenia, 33 Charents St., Yerevan, Armenia, 375025

From: "Jean-baptiste Clemence" <inscapist@hotmail.com>
Subject: help
Are there any lit zines that truly welcome

submissions from young, previously unpublished authors? I'm utterly desperate to have my stuff printed but I don't know where to send it aside from the journals at my school (actaviv, HHR, etc).
Thanx, Adrian Visheau

From: "Joanna Wong" <joannawong@hotmail.com>
Subject: the big cheese of the big "C's"
hi hal- first of all, sorry. i know that by wanting to consult with you i am reinforcing what must be by now the incredibly annoying status of "alternative culture guru." i will do my best to contribute as little to your postmodern angst as possible. did you read about your new title of "zine czar" (bestowed upon you by monday magazine)? i had to wince when they pretty much broke every Niedzwiecki we want some too

"don't" when it comes to writing on zines. which brings us to me, i'm trying to avoid the evils of the co-opting curse. a hard thing when you're media scum but being a uvic writing student i've got at least a little more time on my hands to research and theorize. i'm trying to write a feature on the quality zines in the vancouver/ west coast area, and on why indymedia and zines are so important, especially in the incestuous climate of vancouver's media family. (okay, so it's not exactly groundbreaking stuff, but it will be for plenty of people) if you could manage to choke out a few opinions about all the "C's"-convergence, coopting, conglomerates, corporations—you know, the usual suspects—I'll pick up that 40 for you. it's in the mail. i promise. here's some things i'd love to know about: i've spent many long hours crawling along the dusty bottom racks of comic and social-

ist book stores on hastings. i am now drowning in a sea of strange photocoped pages and staples. if you could throw me some context that would be great— like, is there anything particularly distinctive about the vancouver zine scene? anything you find really innovative and new? has anyone combined cool zines with different media (ie. music / e-zines)? has the internet, as usual, changed everything? what are some interesting canadian or w.coast e-zines? (i tried to get it off the broken pencil website but it's "under construction") if i could call you and chat about hopefully something other than your spiel that would be good. or we can continue our correspondence over the always deep and meaningful medium of email. i'd be as grateful as a small frantic hyperactive puppy for any scrap of time you're able to throw my way. thanks, joanna wong (Victoria, BC)

Random Thoughts

You guys are a bunch of pseudo intellectual liberal morons. Why don't you all try to go get a life?

stinky <fuk@yahoo.com> (Toronto, ON)

Have you ever felt that you wanted, no needed, to be rich or famous? That life would have no meaning unless you achieved one or the other, preferably both of these things? With money you could demonstrate to those around you that you were important because you could buy all the things our modern consumer society says are cool and important. The flashiest car, travel to exotic places, haute cuisine, custom clothes, custom whatever. With fame you would have proved to those around you that you're special and that the rest of the world thinks you're special because they noticed you. Doesn't it always seem to be

just around the next corner or to have brushed up against you and you didn't notice until it was too late. You thought of that new trend months ago but somehow it never dawned on you to take your own insight seriously. Or, it seemed like such a vacuous thought you dismissed it as being unworthy but now it's in the media and takes on an importance you never thought it could have. After years of this you begin to feel like an outsider. A loser. If only . . . a. coulson, (Toronto)

"What do you want to do?" She asks. "I don't know," I say annoyed. "Why do you ask me what I want to do? Why don't we do what you want?" "I just want to do what you want to do. You make the decision." "Are you out of your fucking mind," I say, shocked. "Have you been paying attention to the last 30 years of my life? My track record in the decision making process ain't exactly stellar. I think the last thing we need to do is let me make any important decisions." "I'm just talking about an afternoon." "Look, I

don't have to be with you in order for me to make stupid decisions which are going to fuck up "my" life. The reason I want to be in a relationship is not to share my misery. It's so that hopefully I can get someone with some fucking brains in on this deal and get me out of this hole. Damnit. Carl <freebrain@mac.com>

Saint Elsewise Has Arrived

Hello Emily: Hello again! Well it's been awhile in the doing of the production stages and testing the waters and such, but I'm happy to mention that the new zine Saint Elsewise, is out and about! In fact, since last August 04, we've done a lot of contributing and sharing with our fellow "street people". What was once the point of The Street Post, to give expressionistic forum (or a forum of

expression) for those who when they express themselves are so often misunderstood. The Street Post continues by the way, but the point of the exercise we're involved in is to show what can be done with so little by people most wouldn't expect it from. Some of us have stood on the street with copies of this Saint Elsewise zine in hand to see if others more well off would be interested in our expressions too and 80% are not (at least when approached that way), but the 20% who do take the time to pause a moment and take a peek inside always walk away with one in hand after dispensing well wishes our way. And that is an awesome and uninspiring experience. Being read definitely makes us feel less blue! So Emily — I'm way overdue in expressing thanks to you for the kind mentions of our efforts with The Street Post over the years, your words have helped keep us going. I hope you enjoy this special big issue #3 Saint Elsewise. Please let me know what you think. Peace. Robert Thomas Payne.

Dillinger Four "situationist comedy"



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Product of the Issue: Cheque, Please

What do you get when you cross a freelance graphic designer/photo editor with a philosophy professor? The Cheque Republic. It all started when Cheque Republic co-founder Kathryn Weinstein, the graphic designer, took a class at the School for Visual Arts in New York City. The assignment was to design a set of postcards, but she decided to create a set of cheques that expressed her conflicted relationship with commerce. "I wanted them to reflect my feelings about money in my life," says Weinstein, of this "under-used form of communication." And express them they do. With sayings like "Wage Slave," "Warning: Economics Has Made Me Selfish," "C'mon Take It" and "Pound Of My Flesh," printed on the cheques in bold letters, they reflect the uneasiness many of us feel about participating in a capitalist system.

Weinstein sent the cheques to her Santa Cruz, California-based friend Bill Anelli, the philosophy professor, whom she knew would like them. He

did, and they decided to start a business together, hence the cheques of The Cheque Republic; now available to consumers in Canada and the U.S. Weinstein, who says that she was tired of feeling anonymous when paying her bills says that using the cheques for this task has made it more fun. "I'm noticing that paying bills is just a pleasure, now. It gives me a little kick," she says. You can order the cheques in a rotating book, or simply get one book of the same type, for about \$20 (USD). Oh, the possibilities! Weinstein says that her brother is using the "Wage Slave" cheque to pay for tickets to a work function. Forget bumper stickers, the new wave in communicating your views is by using a cheque. Visit www.thechequerepublic.com for ordering details. **\$22.50**

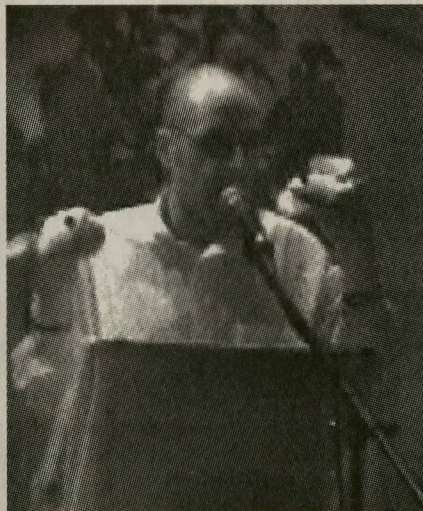
(Alex Mlynek)

Halifax: Howl a Scream

Howl Festival, Khyber Arts Centre, March, 2002

It was a coup. For a weekend in March folks set up camp at the Khyber Arts Centre and the HOWL festival came to town.

Howl is a mix of spoken word performances. The money from the festival goes to a local group doing good things. On this occasion it was Food Not Bombs and street servings of vegan delights were on offer both nights. During the planning of the Halifax festival, a suggestion was made to include workshops. These workshops fluttered between practical and F.Y.I. They took a long time to get started often picking up steam after the intro, after the go around, after the initial question had been answered. Not to say that nothing got said. Lots did. One of the great things about HOWL was this process of sitting around, chatting, trying to make sense of a notion like Art and Revolution through mediums as diverse



as pirate radio and screen printing.

But the real attraction of HOWL were the performances. In a number of cities in Canada there is a thriving spoken

word scene. Where is it in Halifax? Huh? Where? It's around, I've heard rumours. Lucky for us there were Montrealers Mia Rose Brooks and Kaie Kellough setting the stage each night with performances that mixed potent social issues with beautiful prose. There's more than one way to set a stage and theatre was a large part of both night's billings. Jacob Zimmer performed a hotly debated (I mean the puppets, they debated, right in front of us) one-man show. The Irondale Ensemble Project, or in this case, The Red Rogues (if you haven't seen them, go! They are awesome, and totally piss people off!) debated, yelled and sang while performing the history of overthrowing capitalism in a re-take of a Mayakovsky play. The conclusion of both evenings featured music from Slight Return and hip hop superstar Pip Skid.

This was a fun weekend of activism that was mostly action and a bit of talk.

(Larissa Holman)

Toronto: Nonviolent Director Action

2002 Images Festival of Independent Film and Video

The 2002 Images Festival of Independent Film and Video in Toronto began its final day with "Media Active", a panel of artists and media workers tossing the hot potato of activist film/video. Moderator Ali Kazimi set the agenda: "Can we distinguish aesthetically motivated decisions from politically motivated ones? Does it matter?" While hardcore activists might deem aesthetics a trivial issue, Tara Mateik's "Military Myths" video showed how such concerns lead directly to real strategies and real struggle. Designed specifically to dissuade poor black kids from joining the Army, its hip-hop acculturation and wealth of concrete data easily held this outsider's attention for 30

minutes. Kika Thorne didn't connect with an under-techned recitative-with-video, but Giselle Gordon's account of the "Blah Blah Blah" project combined stringent art-chauvinism with canny piggyback tactics and insights into grassroots distribution. Meanwhile, Dymitri Kleiner of Idiosyntactix represented the less glamorous world of tech support. Maybe he was too effusive about the agonizingly under-moderated Independent Media Center (evidence available at ontario.indymedia.org); but it's surely true that in Genoa, for instance, Indymedia's coverage of Carlo Giuliani's murder actually made inroads into what Kazimi calls "the larger audience." The outreach issue stirred things up - while LIFT's Malcolm Rogge suggested that "the more stories there are, and the more

means of communication there are, the more enlightened we all become," filmmaker Richard Fung insisted on a "substantial intervention into mainstream discourse...the circulation of information is at stake." Perhaps my favorite panellist, Janko Baljak is a videographer for Belgrade's autonomous media network, B92. Having recently survived the matched carnage of Milosevic and NATO, Baljak is assuredly an authority on media as struggle - especially given his highlighted videos "Anatomy of Pain 1 & 2", about the workers who died in the bombing of the state TV studios. "B92 was conceived as a movement, not a station," he insists. Their motto? "Don't believe anyone - not even us."

(Jonathan Culp)

Montreal: Putting the Lit Back in Politics

Anarchist Bookfair, May 18th, 2002

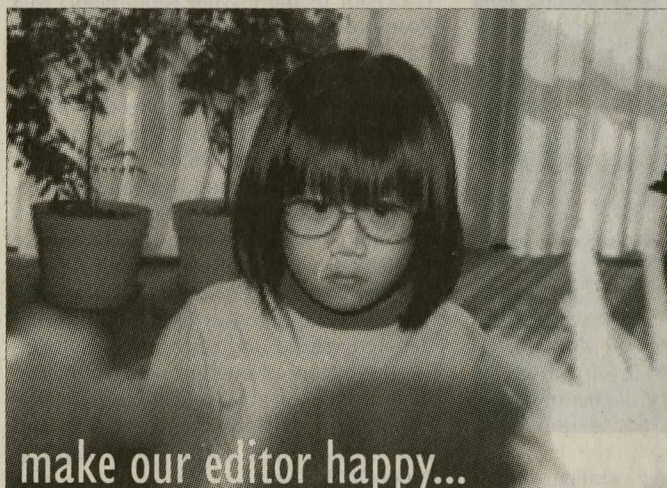
Le chat neige confidently prowled during the third annual Anarchist Bookfair in Montreal held during the May Victoria Day weekend. Best summarizing the unobtrusive sentiment was a T-shirt with a profile of a black cat (an unofficial anarchist mascot) encircled with the slogan "fuck the fucking fuckers."

This poison-pen festival aimed against the free market featured a full complement of Montreal agitators, including the CLAC (Anti-Capitalist Convergence), Bookfair spokesperson Stefan Christoff, and multiple sightings of activist superstar Jaggi Singh. Also representing Montreal was Fish Piss, along with author Sherwin Tjia and Andy Brown's Conundrum Press empire. Winnipeg's Arbeiter Ring Press made it down, along with the Bookmobile, AK Press and the Beehive Design Collective from Maine, whose enormous, gorgeous poster about the FTAA was a highlight for many. Last but not least, a strong T-dot contingent, including OCAP activist PJ Lilley, Satan Macnuggit, fuzzy head Patti Kim and artist Five:Seventeen, along with Broken Pencil and ARA Toronto.

Politics were debated openly and often amongst customers and vendors, especially within the various panels and workshops. The weekend event launched Friday evening with a Visions of Anarchy panel. Saturday was the bookfair itself and a steady stream of customers wandered two levels of materials. On the main floor, tables shared space with a soup kitchen cafeteria while upstairs, a crowded hallway doubled as display area. Beyond the usual printed matter, numerous other methods of expressing/advertising anarchist leanings were available, including T-shirts, cloth silkscreen patches, buttons, stickers and even black socks with the circle and the A.

Sunday featured an exhaustive colonic of Anarchist philosophies, including Queer Activism, which explored the movement's heterosexism, along with an examination of the cityscape as a medium of resistance, and an investigation of why urban anarchist spaces are so difficult to maintain (e.g. Who's Emma). As of press time, there were no confirmed reports on how well Monday's picnic and anarchist soccer game (?!?) proceeded.

(Ryan Bigge)



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Calls For Submissions

The 14th Annual Vancouver Queer Film + Video Festival is gathering steam and promises to be one of the hottest events this summer. Add your flame to the fire by volunteering now and during the festival. If you have a few hours to spare and want another excuse to be sociable, call or email Ron Nielsen, Volunteer Coordinator: 604-844-1613/volunteer@outonscreen.com - 14th Annual Vancouver Queer Film + Video Festival, August 8-18, 2002. www.outonscreen.com

The Sacred Voice Gallery is looking for painters and sculptors who do political or activist themed works to join in a group show to be held in Toronto in the fall of 2002. For more info contact Ian Pearson: ian@thesacredvoicegallery.com Web gallery: www.punkart.ca

Wet Ink Magazine is accepting literary, visual art and multimedia projects from Canadian youth aged 13 to 19 for its upcoming Summer 2002 issue! All submissions should be sent to <editor@wetinkmagazine.com> with a cover letter stating name, age, city and email address by May 1. Further submission guidelines are available at www.wetinkmagazine.com

The 4th annual Vancouver Videopoem Festival The Edgewise ElectroLit Centre is seeking videopoem submissions for the 4th annual Vancouver Videopoem Festival - the only screening event of its kind in Canada. Get public exposure and have your work screened in a premier public venue - the Pacific Cinémathèque, November 14-16, 2002. We are interested in any original, creative combination of poetry with material on videotape. Cinemoems are also acceptable provided they are transferred onto videotape format. This event provides a much needed venue for the presentation of work in this burgeoning art form. The most innovative treatments are explored and presented. Deadline July 1st, 2002 (postmarked). Submission Fee \$20 Cdn./\$20 U.S. for International submissions. Edgewise ElectroLit Centre Society, Box 18 - 1895 Commercial Drive, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada - V5N 4A8. To obtain an official VVF 2002 Submission Application Form, contact: Event Producer, Warren Dean Fulton @ 604-251-5845, or visit our web sites: www.videopoem.com, www.edgewise-cafe.org.

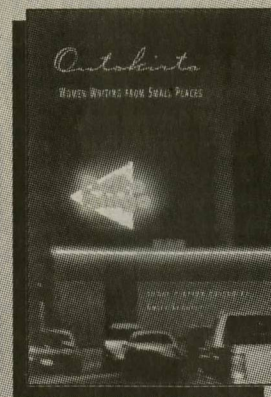
Gallery Motel Public Art Project: The Gallery Motel is accepting proposals for what might pass for "public art" or "projects" (or neither of those, in fact)

and which they will support with up to \$1500 and a worldwide publicity campaign on your behalf to attract audiences. Proposals of intent need not be long, fancy, resume-laden things, while qualities of brevity and confusion will be applauded, include your name, phone number and email, what you'd like to do and list of costs (not to include living expenses), whether the idea is time- or season sensitive, and if you'll need help in addition to (or instead of) money. Keep in mind that less money for you means more money for all, and that you may send as many ideas as you please but only one per non-bulky envelope. Don't be afraid to ask for the full \$1500, though, if you do need it. You will not be considered greedy. Funds will be distributed by the end of 2002. Questions may be sent to Sheila@trampolinehall.net, but be assured that the following answer will most likely apply to your concern: "yes, precisely, that would do just fine." Mail proposals by the last official day of summer to: Gallery Motel, 42 Barton Ave. #16, Toronto, ON - M6G 1P3.

Graffiti Art Zine: A new Graffiti Art themed zine is now accepting submissions for poetry, doodles, drawings, articles, photographs, cartoon strips, (anything goes). The submission deadline is July 22 2002. The zine will be photocopied in black and white, and possibly colour for the covers. Page size: 7" x 8 1/2". Please send your stuff by email: anitasingh@roadrunner.nf.net or by snail mail to: Anita Singh, 252A Duckworth St., St. John's Newfoundland, A1C 1G6.

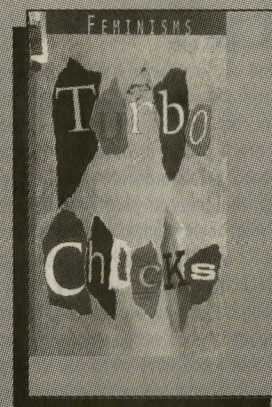
Hello! I am a Newfoundland Visual Arts student who is working to create a **zine devoted to the art of gardening** and creating a forum for the Newfoundland gardening community. This zine is all-inclusive and focussed on the social/cultural aspects rather than the technical aspects of gardening. Call for Submissions I am interested in receiving any and all contributions to this topic, whether you are a seasoned pro, or an interested novice. Possible submissions include images/art (of any medium), stories, articles, writings, questions, recipes, anecdotes, lore, recommendations, or anything else that I can possibly reproduce via a photocopier. This is a community forum, so don't be shy! Tell me what you'd like to see, read, and experience. Please contact me at: a_red_thread@hotmail.com I can provide my mailing address to anyone interested in submitting visual media. Thank you so much for your time! Missy a_red_thread@hotmail.com.

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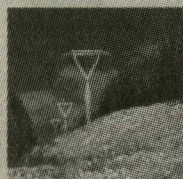
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Zines of the Month

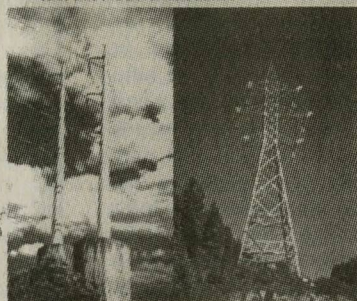


Coming up from the south in the eastern end of the Valley, these gracefully gayed and gridded towers loop around Rosebud Lake before crossing the South Salmon River on their eastward march. Particularly good viewing is available where the lines cross Rosebud Lake road, passing under the 500kV line. The corner variation of this pole is a curious arrangement of three upright girders with guy wires supporting the line tension. This is quite rare in this region; the best example can be spotted behind Rosebud Lake.



230kV

Shortest of the Pend d'Oreille power lines, these majestic metal towers connect the Seven Mile dam to the Selkirk substation. The first two poles are cast pylons, bolted onto a foundation. The rest are interesting steel girder towers, with a unique six-line conductor configuration. East of the Selkirk substation, the four 230kV wooden H pole transmission lines come onto two sets of these towers.



Vancouver recently for which he meticulously constructed miniature power-towers and rolling astroturf hills to set them on. He said: "I know the work deals with important issues, I just don't know what they are." Field Guide is his lovely self-published catalogue for the show. Without overdoing it, he treats those huge metallic towers like they're part

of the natural aesthetic landscape of the Pend d'Oreille valley, as wildlife or vegetation. The chapbook is saved from being a silly tongue in cheek gesture by the fact that it comes from a genuine, boyish affection for these Voltron-like constructions. He gives us little descriptions (with photos and diagrams) of each of the species of "power lines" (towers) and includes an appendix of the "Noxious and invasive weed species found on transmission line right of ways." The issues he wasn't clear about are more closely related to the magic qualities of landscape photography than to model-building; the slightly perverse, but unmistakable warmth of the field guide proves that to me. (Donato Mancini)

February

Anywhere But Here: The Road Trip Issue

zine, #4, 40 pgs, \$1 + stamp or trade & free to prisoners, Tyrone C., PMB 143, 603 W. 13th St. #1A, Austin, TX, 78701-1795, USA, abh_zine@hotmail.com

It's strange, but all I can think of is this cheesy greeting card I got when I was about 12, for helping the man next door shovel his driveway all winter. It said something like, "There are 2 little words/that are so sweet to hear/and these 2 little words/are meant for you, my dear/although they may be short/and very quick to speak/I just want to say thank you/you've made my day complete." I know, I know, stop freakin' gagging and let me explain! Anywhere was such a pleasure to read. The writing is beautiful, the stories of the road trip are captivating and it gives such a unique perspective on gender-issues that I was sorry when the trip was over. The text is so well edited it makes the descriptions clearer than the view from the window of a newly rained-on hippie van. So I guess I just wanted to say thank you to the writer of Anywhere, for the enjoyable time I spent reading your zine. Sorry for making you read the poem, I guess I didn't have to rhyme after all. (Heather Ball)

March

Field Guide to the Power Lines of the Pend d'Oreille Valley

chapbook/exhibition catalogue, by Tim van Wijk, radiotelescopus@yahoo.ca

Tim van Wijk had a solo show at the Helen Pitt gallery in

April

Misadventures of an (amateur) Photojournalist

zine, 24 pgs, \$3, Paul Jacksties, 68 Regent Drive, St. Catharines, ON, L2M 3L7

Jacksties has his life threatened, gets tear-gassed, and wanders an abandoned jail in these three minor misadventures. Told in a matter-of-fact style that veers between confessional and deadpan, and brought to life by reproductions of the photos that inspire the encounters, this is a kind of quiet exploration of the way a creative hobby draws you into new situations and predicaments. In the first and best story in this book, Jacksties snaps a picture of a construction worker working on adding new storeys to the Fox Head hotel in Niagara Falls. In the picture, the worker stands on a beam high above ground, the Falls spewing and spilling in the background. But the worker isn't wearing a safety belt, and when the pic is published in a local newspaper, the potentially mafia linked construction boss runs afoul of provincial regulations. As you can imagine, he isn't too pleased. In the longest story, Jacksties travels to Quebec City for the

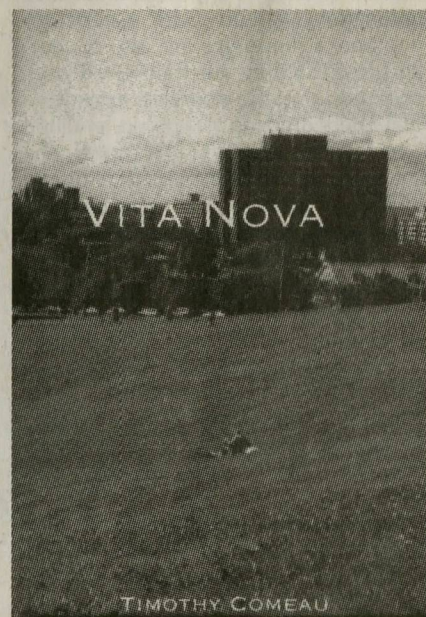
big and now infamous protest. Tear gas and cops are the story of the day, but Paul notes interesting details and keeps the narrative moving. He also recounts moments of violence within the protestor set itself. Finally, closer to home, Jacksties visits the old Welland Jail before its renovation and reconstruction. Interspersed with stories of executions and the poems, murals and blood stains he finds there, the jail visit is as chilling as it is mundane, just another day in the life of the (amateur) photojournalist. (Hal Niedzviecki)

May

Vita Nova

artist's book, 154 pgs, \$35, Timothy Comeau, 51 Addley Crescent, Ajax, ON, L1T 1V3

Comeau has really raised the bar here. To raise it any higher, you'd need a CANADARM. Vita Nova is a perfect synthesis of prose and graphics, wrapped up in a beautiful hard cover, handmade bookwork. Call it a love story. Actually, maybe it's a road trip story. It is about the author's journey into self-awareness, expressed through a love of the small, observed, telling detail. Love story within a road trip, you could say. The book begins with a description of a woman's t-shirt, emblazoned with the name Leonardo da Vinci, a souvenir from some potboiler art exhibition. Comeau goes on to articulate all the free-associations that the sight of this shirt leads him to. Abrupt topic shifts allow the author to cover a lot of acreage on his psychological roadmap. When you order your copy, you'll be asked to choose from a selection of images to adorn the hardcover. I picked a photo of Halifax's Citadel Hill overlooking the city. Fitting for a book that gives the reader a privileged view into very intimate musings. At \$35, Vita Nova is a bit beyond the average zine, but think of it as gas money for a road trip you're hitching along on. (Jon Sasaki)



The Difference Between Me and Goldstein

by Heather O'Neill

When I was little, we lived in West Virginia. A lot of people wouldn't talk to us, because my family had a bad reputation. My mother had a tattoo of a butterfly on her wrist that fit under her watch when she was going to my uncle's parole hearing. She put mascara on and her hair up, but you could always tell right off the bat that she was wild.

My mother met my father when she ran away from home to the city in 1969. He was a guru. He would just sit in the park philosophizing with young people sitting around him. My mother wrote down what he said in a notebook. She thought it was like being educated. My dad always scared women because he had a nail for a front tooth and was crazy about shot guns. My mother was 19 and had long hair down to her butt and she was crazy about him. My mother used to wake us up in the middle of the night when she was drinking. She would drag us out into the yard to look at the full moon. My mother was the kind of woman who calls you in the middle of the night begging you for forty dollars so that she can leave town or else she'll be murdered. There was always a pile of clothes and broken chairs in the yard in the front of our house. There was pot growing in the pigpen and the goats walked around the house. Now I live in the city.

"My friends are all afraid of you!" Goldstein says. "How come you didn't make a single friend from college?"

Goldstein has lots of friends. He goes and meets them for coffee. Growing up, we were never allowed to use the word "best friend" in my house. My dad said a best friend is someone who will rat you out in the future. "Your family are your only friends."

Goldstein was born in Brooklyn. He likes comic books, Chris Elliot and National Lampoon. If someone leaves their hat on a seat on the subway, he feels terrible. He likes radio documentaries about transvestites and eccentric babysitters. He opens the window of the bus when we pass by the chocolate factory. You can imagine him reading Charlie and the Chocolate Factory as a child.

He's a vegetarian and he likes Thai food. He smokes cigarettes and doesn't inhale. He blows out all the smoke with his lips pursed and smiles. He compliments an old woman on the flowers that she planted in her one-foot city garden. He is terrified of rats. He didn't have any girlfriends in high school and he used to sit in peep shows between classes in university. He finds the girls from 1920s silent films pretty. He likes to write haikus in black notebooks at the doctor's office. He likes to play MS PAC-MAN and drink Orangina.

He likes to sit for tea squeezed between old Chinese men on a bench in a cafeteria in Chinatown. He likes to stand on a bridge that goes over a polluted river and calls it our romantic spot. He gets us to both stand on the fortune telling scale. He is delighted when the paper comes out saying 270 lbs; "Your future is bright." He says he will keep it and tell people that he

has come a long way.

He says he doesn't like when I act tough. I pick flowers and stick them behind my ear and give people the evil eye. I like horses that have gotten lost. I especially love crazy roosters. I like the idea of black sheep. I like people who think they're lucky when they're not. I like people with long long legs that look like they belong on a motorcycle. I like blue eyes you can see across the room. The lights of motels on the highway make me feel like I'm in love with everyone, even the people on death row. I like busted up cars with stuffed animals all over the seats and stickers on the hood. I like scrap men with thick dirty arms in pick ups

My dad always scared women because he had a nail for a front tooth and was crazy about shot guns

filled with old stoves. I like bare feet sticking out of car windows. I like Hells Angels when 50 of them pass down the highway at once. I like when a train passes right next to me. I like people who come up to your door trying to sell you stolen quilts. I like the pickpockets at the bus depot who pretend to be in love with you. I like birds and tattoos of birds.

I doodle stars all over my notebook until the paper looks like a night sky when you are lying on a pillow in the grass. Goldstein and I are trying to figure out where to settle down together. I want to buy a farm. Not the kind where you necessarily grow anything. The kind where you can stand in the yard in your underwear, where you can talk to yourself and nobody knows any different. Where you can have chickens named Peeper and Frederick. Goldstein doodles rockets and mad scientists. He doodles an open window through which you can see an attractive fat woman watching television. He says if he could buy any car he says he'd buy a little Honda because it's easy to park. Goldstein carries around a tape recorder and records people performing music on the street. He plays the tape back to me. It's of two punks making up a song.

"This made me think of you," he says.

He says he has a beautiful picture in his head of us sitting outside the New York Public Library eating peanut butter sandwiches.

Heather lives in Montreal and is the author of the poetry collection Two Eyes Are You Sleeping.

A Fruitless Search for the Zines of Thailand

By Donato Mancini

She's wearing a patent leather bodysuit crisscrossed with fine little chains. I would soon find out she's from New York and has a sensual name that doesn't gel with her impeccable butch-dyke-punk look.

My granny-bike handlebars were shaking as I crept painfully back towards my guesthouse in the old city of Chiang Mai. I had about 8 blocks to go, if I lasted that long. After chasing absent zines all morning, sunstroked to the core from the previous day, I'd given up not only on life, but also my search for Thai indie culture; I ride right past Sophia.

I'd found it tough to explain to people what I was after. Minutes before seeing Sophia, I was semantically wrestling with a comic shop owner. "No I don't want to photocopy magazines, I want magazines made on photocopiers" is complicated information to convey in confusing hand gestures, wretched Thai, and slow, deliberate English. He was barely listening. To complete my humiliation, some teenage monk novices entered the shop while I was talking. They daintily browsed in their beautiful orange robes, obviously amused by me.

Still, when I see Sophia, a sign that indie culture lurks, I peddle on. The guy with the sideways mohawk, 20 feet further down, in front of a tattoo parlour, sitting on a broken desk, strumming an electric guitar, very stonedly staring at the strings – that's what stops me. Putting out the kickstand, barely strong enough to do even that, I simultaneously introduce myself, ask for zines, and moan about feeling sick. He slowly raises his head and looks at me. Sophia snap-turns on her heels, comes back. It goes amazingly fast from there.

"Can I help you man?...Zines...yeah a couple."

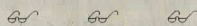
She leads me into the windowless dark of Chaos City – spray paint in Thai and English, couches, all pervaded by a dull blue glow. At the kitchen-

counter/bar, she pulls down three zines: two bilingual, Level99, one (from Singapore) in English only, Zerox. Yes I want to buy, even though you're overcharging me. But as I'm ogling at last the exquisite texture of Thai script as run through a photocopier, she snatches back one of the Level99s:

"This is our last copy. I gotta make more. Come back tomorrow."

On the sidewalk outside (it's dusk now) I ask her scads of annoying, impersonal questions about Thai indie, adding: "I'm so sick today I can barely move..." There's nurturing concern in her eyes as she gives me the lowdown: few hardcore zines have been produced in Thailand – I'm in fact holding issue no.1 of Level99, of which there are only 2 issues total. She says the person I should really talk to is named Chris, an ex-pat himself, British, who lives in Bangkok, maker of the original Thai/English hardcore zine Arise.

What I miss that night – my travel companion and I are headed south to Surat Thani – is a punk show at the University of Chiang Mai – and, even worse, the Chaos City Christmas party, including free 'special punch drink.' Sigh. But Sophia tells me about some places in Bangkok: Immortal Bar, where I'll get to hear heavy bands play, and the Suicidal Tendencies record shop, where more zines should be found.



Nine days later, in Bangkok, recovered, I'm told that to get to Bangappi Mall, home of Suicidal Tendencies, requires a two-hour bus ride. But my vacation time is draining away, and I don't trust anybody's directions anymore. Looking into the smoggy distances, I know I'll never see Suicidal. The Immortal Bar is highly accessible, however, being in the disgusting, unavoidable tourist-pit of KaoSan Road. After rushing to Immortal about six hours too early (it's closed), I wisely go

back around 9:00 p.m. A fresh-faced little guy (Chin) walks straight up to me, without introduction:

"Hey man, do you write a zEYen?"

Chin's gorgeously smiling girlfriend approaches too, while a tall dread-head eyes me suspiciously from behind the bar. Set against rock-flags and murals, small groups of farang (westerners; it once meant "fruit") sit at scattered tables. None of them look very "heavy", just blasé and passively impatient to be drunk.

"No but I'm looking for zines, and I want to see some metal bands," I say.

"I think I've got zines at home." Chin mentions the dread guy a few times, without introducing us. We also talk about the mysterious Chris of Bangkok. I arrange to come back the next night.

"Chris, man, he's in England for Christmas, with his family."

The next afternoon, I run into Chin in one of the street markets, eating chopped fried chicken over rice. He tells me with a naughty-boy smile he was up until 7 a.m. playing pool.

"Have a seat, man," he says.

But I'm on my way to Dusit Zoo, where I'll get to look right down the throats of hippos and scratch the back of a live, highly erection-prone monkey.

"See you tonight, Chin."

"Cool, man."

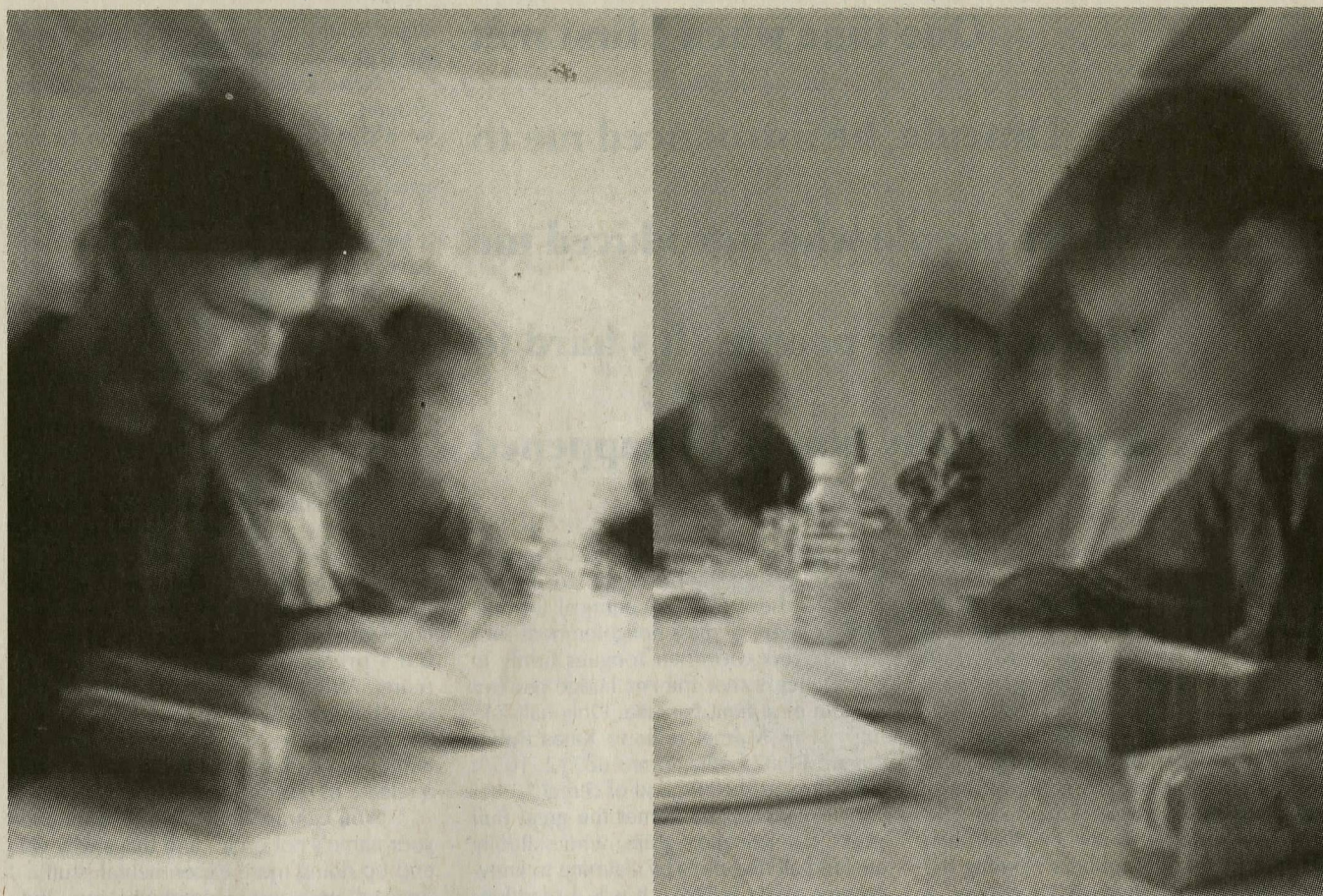
When I show up, he's got nary a zine. I think he just wanted to push the dreadhead's band on me. I shouldn't have mentioned Broken Pencil, Chin mistook me for "the media".

"Sorry man, no zines, but my friend here's in a band called Bloodwind..."

No flippin' way, my patience is up. To bug him, instead I buy Thai death-metal by a band called Macaroni.

It's great.

When not failing to find indie culture in Asia, Donato resides in Vancouver.



photograph by Dustin Leader

Collective Simplicity & Global Mass Artput

**The Royal Art Lodge spreads
its tentacles from Winnipeg**

by Flick Harrison

It's Wednesday

night, and the members of the Royal Art Lodge have gathered in their Winnipeg studio for the weekly work session. They quite casually hand the phone to one another, letting me fire off questions almost endlessly, refusing only to call on Hollie Dzama ("I'm just too shy to talk to strangers," she later emails). Every time they speak they reveal new connections, new side projects, new art forms at which they excel. I can't quite keep up.

Are Neil Farber and Micheal Dumontier the two members of the depressing rock-band Eyeball Hurt and the Medicine? Is it Drue Langlois who writes the infinite-character, non-sequitur storyline superhero comic Protoprize, or his brother Myles? Is the new 16mm movie "Micro Nice" by Myles and Michael about the kitten who gets trapped in a grocery store and meets a vampire or is that the short story by Hollie and Michael? Which one does the sound sculptures? Who built the kite with a free-swinging microphone and a speaker, so that as the wind blew it around, the thing would make screeching feedback? Is it Hollie's brother Marcel that paints

One time when I first met Dracula, he introduced me to some people who introduced me to some other people. It's hard to explain really how it all happened

with root beer ("It should last forever because it is a non-acidic root beer base.")? Who had the show in Dusseldorf, who's in L.A. next month, when was the Padova, Italy show? And who am I talking to right now, again?

The RAL is a Winnipeg-based drawing collective, ranging in age from Hollie at 17 to Marcel at 28, that's pushed their folksy, insane and irreverent group drawings into the Western European and North American art spotlight as if through the sheer power of numbers. During the recent RAL group show in Vancouver, a man bought a drawing from the incredibly large selection of work on display, but when he came back to get it, he couldn't remember which one he chose. The drawings tend to blur together, consisting as they do of modular pop-culture iconography, such as definite if unplaceable cartoon characters, all rendered in childlike line and colour from the primitive to the sublime. It's a cornucopia of vampires, flappers, cowboys, lizards, period children, fantastic creatures, electronic cats, superheroes, robots, babies...most of which turn up again in videos, dolls, drawings, comics, and whatever other medium you can think of. The RAL's output is not unlike what future police sketch artists might create if they were trying to reproduce 20th-century culture from tattered artifacts and scans of petrified brain cells but without violating copyright. (Well, Marcel did draw a Tin Man and George Burns for a while, but has since chosen to retire them...the group also sneaks in the Fantastic Four now and then.)

The pop-culture-as-art tidal wave of post-Warhol imagoguery seems a little desperate, as if art fears for its significance if it doesn't lay claim to the geiser of icons which blows through our daily lives. Artist as warper and juxtaposer in a world too full of visuals to warrant any original cre-

ations. But if post-printing-press popularity is inversely proportional to artistic merit, is there some alchemical formula of pop + art = mass enlightenment sans sellout? It's with their tongues firmly in those cheeks that the Art Lodge reaches bargain-basement Nirvana. Only half-jokingly does Marcel refer to Kalas Puffar (<http://w1.871.telia.com/~u87125105/honey.htm>) as the "Picasso of cereal."

In Lahore I once met the great Sufi poet Najim Saeed Sahim, who skillfully avoided all questions by claiming to know nothing about Sufism. It was a maddening and obvious guru trick, yet 100% foolproof: whoever denies he is the messiah must be the messiah! I couldn't help recalling that moment when Marcel told me, via email, why he'd had more publicity than the other Lodgers:

"One time when I first met Dracula, he introduced me to some people who introduced me to some other people. It's hard to explain really how it all happened. At the time I didn't even believe it was really him. It was not until later that I realized that it really was. He's much taller in reality."

The humility and honesty in this answer is as obvious as the tension and the old dodgeroo; but being in a collective means that all benefit from the success of one. The group has soared to fame partly in the wake of Marcel, whose lunatic cultural extractions are currently in the lead. When the fickle public drops him, there's five more to pick up the banner. However, they only officially call it RAL when a work is a collaboration amongst all of them.

"We were all in the same art school," Michael says, referring back to 1996 when they first assembled, "Because there were a lot of people that were doing narrative, figurative drawings that kind of related to each other... we thought we could get together and see

what would happen... The name Royal Art Lodge was sort of a joke."

"One person would draw a background," Drue explains, "and then one would draw a car or a person or an action." In a typical evening session, they can pump out 50 drawings.

"We quit a month ago, we're taking a break," he continues. "Marcel and Neil have shows coming up they have to draw a lot of their own stuff for."

He also worried about the fast-pace, freeform style. "I didn't feel like I was doing the best work when we were doing those, I feel like I was getting worse. You can get too loose; and then maybe your own work will suffer. But being loose can help you too."

"Anything where you spend a lot of time on it is going to be better. I guess it's just two different ways to make things, when you're drawing really fast drawings, it's just coming straight out of your subconscious. One's as good as the other, but I prefer things to be thought out more. When I don't think about it, it's okay but I don't feel very proud of it."

On the other hand, the group authorship is liberating - the artist can feel a release of responsibility.

"You can do whatever you want and your name's not on it - and that's why we end up doing more experimental [stuff]... they get pretty gross, sometimes, too. But we don't show people those ones...usually."

There's a policy in place now whereby the Lodgers assess their work at the end of each session and chuck lesser efforts into a large suitcase marked with a skull and crossbones: the to-be-destroyed box. Myles hesitates to mention it, but confirms that it is now bulging and the destruction will soon have to be actually carried out.

"At the end of a meeting we sit around and do a rating system," Myles says, "of the best quality, the middle and to-be-destroyed. It's just really bad jokes, anything that somebody went for the easy joke, or the tasteless joke, we don't want them to end up in shows... We talked about a bonfire. It's been around for a while."

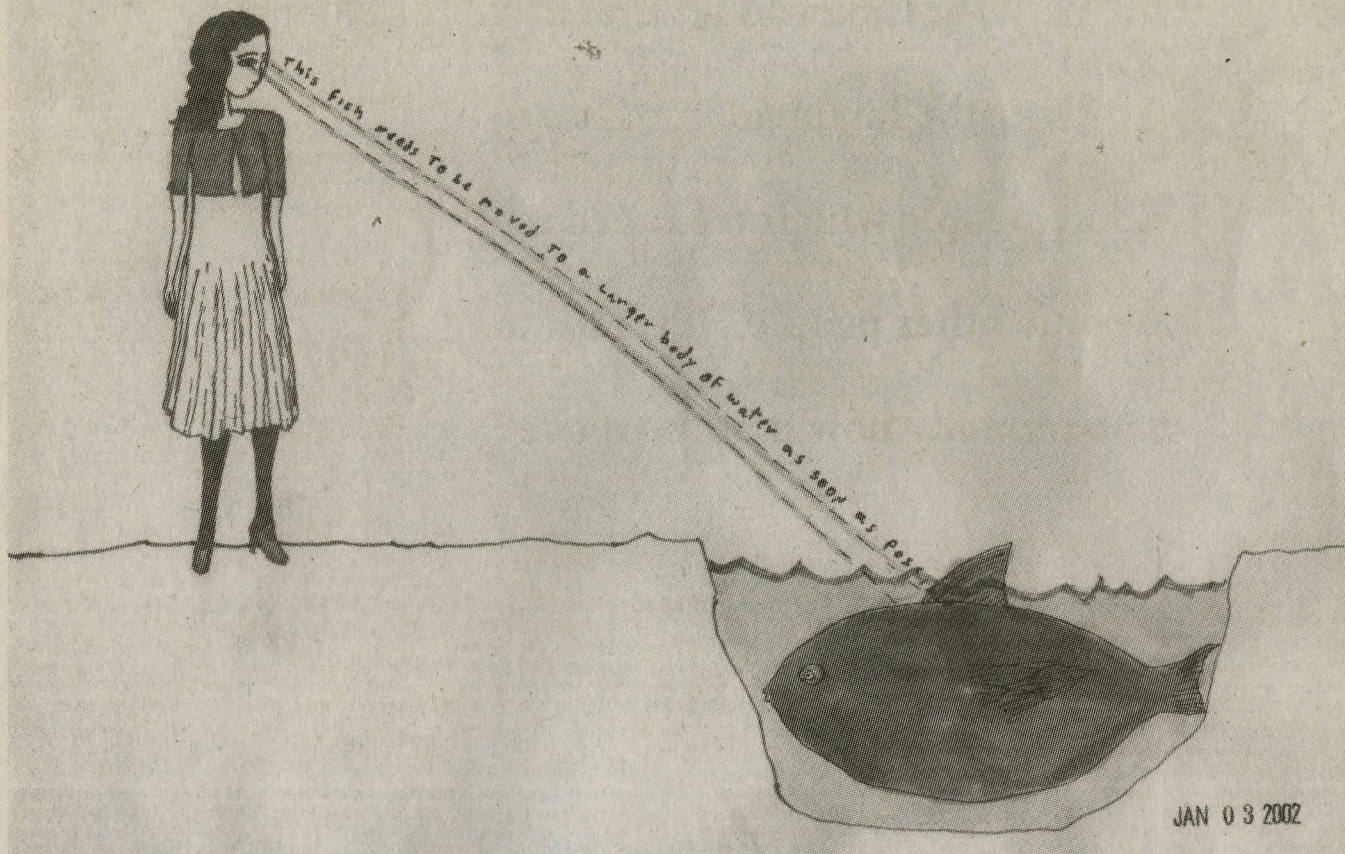
I would have to imagine their older comic series called "Living with a drunk" would fall into the to-be-destroyed category if it were created today. Imagine the following with scratchy, quick sketches as illustration:

Larry: Tippy, why are there 2 women in my house?

Tippy: Hey, it's cool Larry, this ones for you. But watch out, she's already pregs!

Or another one:

Tippy: Pretty cool, hey, Lawrence, I



can write my name in the snow!

Larry: No it's not so cool you wrote it all in red letters Tipsy

Myles concludes: "If someone broke in here to steal electronic things, and then they accidentally grabbed [the suitcase]... knowing that was out there would be pretty horrifying. You just reminded me... we should probably get that stuff destroyed."

In a kind of inversion of this concern, Michael finds the group drawing/creative process liberating.

"I'm rigid, I work in a certain way. But when collaborating, your part is anonymous... it lets you go places you wouldn't go, wouldn't be brave enough to go on your own."

Like all the Lodgers, his creative dance-card is pretty full - the kitten/vampire story is his with Hollie and will become a comic. His sound sculptures have included a table with a record-player arm built into it, so that whatever happened to the table would get translated through the arm into a speaker system. Sewing machine pedals, bits of string, a bullhorn, dried peas, paintbrushes, and a spinning rubber wheel all contributed to the cacophony. He recorded some of the sounds but preferred the live performance, since the physical making of the noises was visually important.

"I've struggled with it, whether I should be doing so many things," he says. "But by doing so many things, I'm always doing something, and that makes me happy. [If not] I end up getting stuck and depressed... as a group, we don't have an agenda, we're committed to working nonstop."

And the Lodge banner has been helpful in other ways.

"Because this name that's associated with us whether or not it's collaborative, a banner over everything, it's obviously helped us - it's helped expose people to our individual work."

Then he gets reflective:

"It's pretty complicated I guess...I can see it being difficult to shake...uh...if I ever wanted to."

He and Farber, by the way, made the above-mentioned squawking kite together and sold a picture of it on Ebay for 25 cents. It was to a kite collector who felt guilty and gave them \$2 instead. The kite tore itself apart regularly, and is still in R & D turnaround.

The Lodge seem to want to play down the commercial aspect of art, and Drue expressed annoyance at a gallery in Toronto, for example, buying their art low (\$75) and selling it high (\$300). "We wanted to sell them so people like us could afford them - people who don't

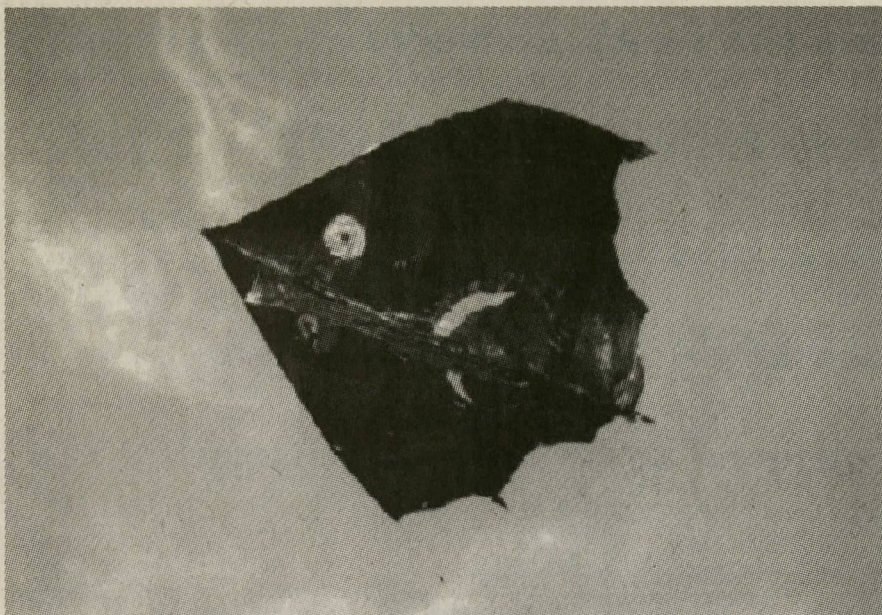
have much money... That's just a rude thing to do - to buy something from somebody and sell it for three times as much."

He also found having an agent annoying. "I used to have an agent, I don't anymore. They become sort of possessive of you... they won't allow you, say you were showing stuff in their gallery, and say you wanted to show stuff in some other, like a student gallery in the same city, really small, and charge whatever you want, they wouldn't let you do that...I just thought that was annoying. I'd rather be poor and happy."

"Most of us are living off of our art-work," Drue says, "although for some of us, the standard of living is so low that it's not saying much." He'd rather concentrate on his multiple creative projects than the business side - making home-made comics and photocopying them, for example.

"Everything's connected for me. Michael and I make songs together, we also make dolls together so we have sort of a doll company. And then the comic books I make, I make those characters into dolls too, so those dolls are different. And my brother and I make comics together and also this movie."

He's referring to MicroNice, a 40-minute 16mm film based on their own



Squawking Kite by Neil Farber and Myles Langlois

comic - funded to the tune of around \$30,000 by the City of Winnipeg and the Canada Council. "It's not about a kitten and a vampire - it's about superheroes." He actually went for full-on effects, opting against ironic cheesiness. When the protagonist tears out a barber pole and flies away, they'll use a computer to take the strings out. Ditto a scene with a medusa's writhing snake hair.

Drue's brother Myles made the film with him. Myles also makes comics, films and videos, and anatomical drawings that fold out in transparent layers to see under the costume, skin, down to the skeleton. He also writes fiction and scripts. Collaborative work is important; that's why he's in the Art Lodge.

"It's a big social thing," Myles says. "And I'm not a social person. It's a lot of fun, too. Being able to laugh and just have fun. Filming the movie, too, is a lot of fun."

The group-work aesthetic seems to be influential on individual work; Protoprize, Drue's nonsequitur superhero comic, is grounded in the hand-off writing techniques which made their earlier group-stories so strangely compelling. Michael once wrote a story by cutting out sentences from books, then Drue illustrated it. In "a pack of Reading Fun," a zine-ish comic wherein someone would draw the first panel and another Lodger would draw the second, they seem to try stumping the next person with either a hopelessly oblique panel or a painfully obvious set-up. In one, a long-nosed, toothy character named Jeffrey arrives on the shore in a giant ship, proclaiming "I'm back from my long voyage." A similar creature on shore responds, "Do you have the

keys to our house?"

Protoprize contains like-minded twists. As a black-hatted villain escapes from his foiled bomb plot, he takes a sudden detour to pick up his dog from the vet. Then the door busts open and a man yells, "There's seventeen of us outside and we're here to kick your ASS!" Radiana, the hero with bosom envy, chases the villain with the aid of a passing kid who has a tracking device hidden in his guitar "for some reason". And so on.

"Well, the characters should have freedom," Drue understates.

Everyone talks about the various arguments for and against Winnipeg, where the bunch is based - their studio is west of Main. Hurricane blizzards, small town blues, cheap rent, geographic centrality, lively arts scene are all bandied about. Drue finds parts of Winnipeg pretty depressing. "There's way too many panhandlers on the street lately. I went outside the other day and this lady collapsed on me and she was bleeding. I brought her in here [to the studio] and she went unconscious...stuff like that's been happening to me a lot."

Michael insists I take note of Jon Pylypchuk and Adrian Williams, two founding Art Lodge members who have since left Winnipeg for L.A. and Montreal respectively. When he says it, the fact of the rest of these world-class artists sticking to Winnipeg really hits me. Perhaps I can explain it by quoting Dorothy, since the RAL often visually quote the Tin Man:

"No matter how dreary and gray our homes are, we people of flesh and blood would rather live there than in any other country, be it ever so

beautiful. There is no place like home."

The Scarecrow sighed.

"Of course I cannot understand it," he said. "If your heads were stuffed with straw, like mine, you would probably all live in the beautiful places, and then Manitoba would have no people at all. It is fortunate for Manitoba that you have brains."

Okay, so I stuck Manitoba in for Kansas. But the vision of a simple Prairie girl aching to blow mystical Oz for a lonely, boring farm resonates with the simple art collective resisting the bright lights of New York and L.A., and perhaps adds to their folksy appeal.

They also collaborate with other artists on occasion; in Vancouver they've done group drawings with artists Jason MacLean, Marc Bell (who runs the Hollie Dzama fan club) and Robert Dayton. And who knows how many others they've encountered in their travels?

And just as I think this article is finished, chock full of goodies, I get an email from Farber, who prefers to be interviewed textually rather than by phone. He directs me to his girlfriend's website: <http://www3.mb.sympatico.ca/~prance/home.html> which sells 80's toy artifacts and videos (Care Bears, Transformers, My Little Pony, Jem, and on and on) and includes an amazing collection of Italian toy ads from the same period. It's surprising how abstract these ads feel, removed in time, space and cultural context in such minor ways. Their design and imagery are directly from the memory-backup of my youth, but to see so many familiar American mass-market toys at once saturating some non-English country leads to a cultural dizziness; Italy, America and Canada merge as Corporate Post-national colonies in my head.

In this hyperculture context, and in light of Farber's statement that cartoons were his first attraction to art, it's worth quoting the Perugi artecontemporanea art gallery catalogue from Farber's show in Padova, Italy (which incidentally lists him as being from the "state of Manitoba"). Writer Guido Bartorelli expounds:

"One of the aims of industry and mass media is to break out of localization. Given that this tendency has been going on since the Sixties, years of economic boom and Coca Cola, whoever was born after, like Farber and me (1975 & 72), has grown up in an environment for a good part shared by peers scattered over the five continents... the industrialized countries. Beware of undervaluing these distant experiences, because they leave a lasting impression on a child's soul.



Whether this is a good or a bad thing is not important. It's extraordinary, a radical innovation, that Farber - and he isn't the only one - should become an artist by following a reflective path directed not towards art in its strict sense, but to comics."

It may be a stretch to politicize the simple childlike work of the RAL, though I guess one can (and should) think about the politics of any expression. The fact that they are often hilarious - and every joke, as we know, is a tiny revolution - is a welcome breather from the seriousness of most art. If you try to describe their work to someone, you'll both chuckle, and the pop references are like a shorthand within that dialogue. The drawings themselves pretend at pointlessness, isolated moments, useless knowledge, but the critical mass of a dozen or so of the images viewed in any sequence begins to create something entirely other, an Eisenstein montage which maps itself onto your subconscious. As watching a full season of *The Simpsons* can produce a sharp joke for every conceivable occasion, so consum-

ing all the RAL's work could subvert every image you ever see again. They've created an expansive visual collage but also a medium montage of zines, books, films, music, puppet shows, and dolls. The pervasiveness of their ideas and forms, combined with the humility and wit of the execution, is what lets them strike a chord with nearly everyone - they're as accessible as Kraft Dinner.

The collective process is also quite an anarchist approach to art - no auteur egotism in the group drawing sessions (\$1 bets notwithstanding), and the group must stand together in defense of their works. The deceptive simplicity and tiny size of the work suggests a populist sensibility, an announcement that complexity of technique and spectacular production values are not the be-all and end-all of creative expression.

Though it would be boobishly incorrect to characterize the Lodge's work as low-quality, their massive output evokes brilliant hacks like Picasso and the assembly-line ethics which run our society, almost suggesting that artists must

compete in quantity in order to have an impact on our image-infused, crowded and cacophonous social landscape.

It's hard to say whether there are more of the RAL's actual original drawings, or photocopies of their zines and comics. Contemplating their prodigious productivity, I think of the Art Factory in the 1972 Mexican film *"The Holy Mountain,"* where the artist-corporation creates "A new line of art every season." Rows of workers splotch paint across a naked ass in front of them, which then sits on a piece of paper. They pass it to the next ass-painter team, which repeats the action in a different colour. It's a scene the RAL would appreciate, if not emulate and joyously subvert.

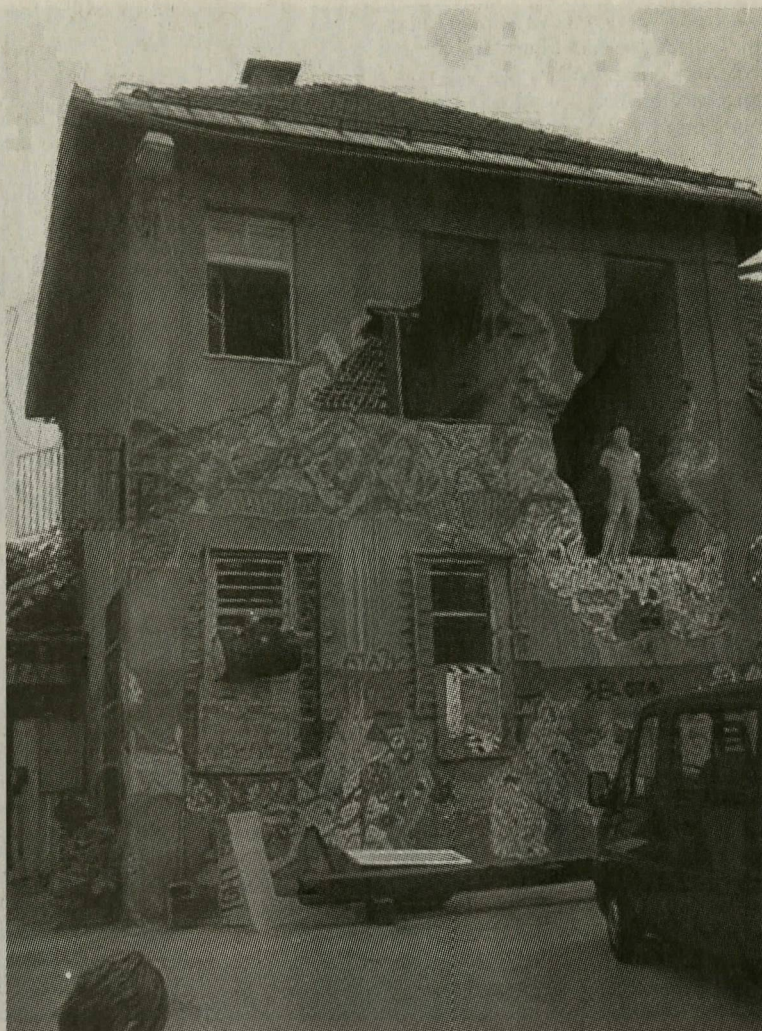
Contact the various denizens of the Lodge at: royalartlodge@hotmail.com

Flick Harrison is a filmmaker and writer in Vancouver. His new digital feature *Longshot* better get accepted into the Toronto Int'l Film Fest and lots of other fests besides. He maintains StockwellDork.com and ArmedRabble.com

Until the Next War

**How a Slovenian
barracks became an
indie culture hotbed**

by Kara Sievewright



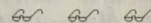
Once upon a time, far away in a little country called Slovenia, a country lost in the horrors of the Balkans and the history of Europe, there was a small war, a war of 10 days. It started on the day that Slovenia declared its independence from Yugoslavia. Tanks rolled through the city and the countryside, and helicopters rained down leaflets with ridiculous proclamations: "Inhabitants of Slovenia, stay at home and at work. You are invited to peace and collaboration, for the Yugoslav People's Army will fulfil their mission thoroughly and forcefully. Any resistance will be crushed."

The next day the Slovenes shot down two helicopters and the Yugoslav military retaliated by bombing Slovenian communication towers. In the city, maybe the capitalists toppled the Tito statues, but the statues of the partisans from the other war were kept in place, their red stars rising, arms extended into fists of eternal but faded triumph. These fists, some remember, the partisans stuck into the assholes of mules to keep warm as they fought off the Italian fascists. But this

time, there was no need for such drastic measures for after 10 days and 13 people dead, the borders were built and the Yugoslavian People's Army retreated, leaving the capital city of Ljubljana guarded only by greening bronze dragons.

The inhabitants of Slovenia were not really surprised by any of this, for the path from Party rule into independence had started long ago - not from within the ranks of the government or the business leaders (who assumed capitalism was inherently democratic) - but within the realm of civil society in the form of new social movements. If you happened to be peaking through the holes in the rusty iron curtain during the 80s at the goings-on of this small country, you would have seen the public presence of avant-garde artists, punks and their mohawks extending into the blue sky, graffiti filling up the bland spaces, independent demonstrations against militarization, gay celebrations, the popularity of the weekly iconoclastic magazine *Mladina*. You would have heard on Radio Student a medley of punk, New York underground, "counter-

revolutionary" neo-Marxist political analysis and French influenced critical theory. These movements and happenings succeeded to drive small but painful slivers into the rule of the League of Communists of Slovenia. So when the Yugoslavian military abandoned their barracks on Metelkova Street in Ljubljana and the capitalists and the democrats came crawling from out of the jails, the universities, and their various exiles, the Slovenian people were hardly shocked.



100 years ago the barracks of Metelkova were built to house the Austro-Hungarian Army on the grounds where public executions were held, in the district once known as the Valley of the Cows. For 100 years Metelkova watched the blood of one, two, three wars seep between the cracks of the cobblestones.

In 1990, a year before Slovenia's independence, over 200 individuals and groups - including artists, musicians, anarchists, students, political organizations, punks, theatre groups - initiated the

Network for Metelkova, a plan to convert the military barracks into an independent cultural centre. When the Yugoslav military vacated the barracks and the prison after the Ten Day War, the dreams and schemes of the Network actually became realistic. Even the city of Ljubljana and the government of Slovenia agreed to the Network's program, and so the Network started a Metelkova zine which spread news and plans of the Metelkova conversion from the home of the war machines to the home of art, comics, politics and zines. In the fall of 1993 the Network petitioned the city of Ljubljana to let them move in before the winter fell.

But the city, employing the rationality of the state, suddenly decided that they were the rightful owners of the barracks. And because they had no present use for the buildings, they determined it was better to tear the compound down then leave it for a bunch of illegitimate young punks. After 100 years of housing the machines of war, for one night in September of 1993, Metelkova itself felt the devastating effects of destruction. Immediately the news of the bulldozers spread and approximately 200 people spontaneously occupied the northern section of Metelkova. Many buildings were damaged beyond repair and large gaping holes were knocked into the wall of the Hiev building - the Stable - but the occupiers and their supporters managed to stop the city workers before the barracks were completely destroyed.

Between the ruins of the government's promises and the memories of other wars, people started to live in the buildings. Others set up art studios, put on film nights and art shows; bands put on shows; organizations, clubs, and societies claimed spaces. Although within a week of the occupation the city disconnected the electricity and the water, for three months, in the dark and cold, over 200 events happened at Metelkova. The squatting of the barracks in September of 1993 intensified and continued the strong and rich independent cultural and political movements of the 80s. So while the monotony of free-market capitalism took over the streets of Ljubljana, autonomous culture grew and flourished in the former military barracks of Metelkova.

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I never had my eyes glued to holes in the rusty iron curtain so I arrived in this little land not knowing anything of its existence. I was on my way through, traveling from the east - Romania, Hungary - and back on to Italy, on to the anti-G8 demonstration in Genova. From Hungary we took a train to the border but the



Strip 17 burger # 31

tracks stopped a couple of kilometres away. It was night so we slept under a tree, in a field by the no-man's land between Hungary and Slovenia, passports firmly in hand. Canadians, just tourists, we rehearsed saying, should we be awoken by the flashlights of the border police. The next day, we walked 10 kilometres along the highway from Hungary across the border into Slovenia, a journey I documented by taking pictures of the roadkill we passed. We had heard on the Internet of a nearby activist camp set up to prevent refugee deportations. We decided to check it out.

When we arrived at the camp there were people from all over Europe: an

Austrian theatre group, some Slovaks, Croatian crusty punks, German hippies. Despite some of its occupants, the camp was a pretty dull place. But I did meet the amazingly articulate former zine-writer, erotic radio-host, festival organizer, and self-proclaimed hedgehog, Tea Hvala. Tea's energy and commitment was the first indication that I was to find something truly exceptional in Slovenia. I eventually pushed on to Ljubljana, capital city of Slovenia, but not before making plans to meet up with Tea again. One night, we stole bikes and rode through the park of the partisans, across the cobblestones, through the heart of town, past the old folk's home, on through the gates



# So many people come through in a glance: for a festival, as a visiting artist, on the squat tour. They stay for a while, maybe even months, but then they always leave

of Metelkova. And there it was, this active, partly crumbling amazing mass of art and politics. Tea became my introduction, my historian, and tour guide to the incredibly rich independent culture of Slovenia.

The next night again we rode down to Metelkova on our borrowed bikes. We stopped in on a band of Germans that had set up a camp of caravans. They proceeded to put on a performance - a strange childish theatre with no words, just sounds and exaggerated mouths in the shapes of O's. There were other Europeans around, a strange crowd wearing top hats, leather vests, white blouses, each with one long dangling earring, a pair of pocketed brown cord trousers and a big black leather belt with hanging tools. They swaggered through town like they did not belong, but like they had been around for centuries. I found out later that they were a guild of artisans, in the medieval fashion, travelling (for two years they swore not to go closer than 50 km to home), working only for food and a place to sleep. They came to Metelkova to do renovations in the Hlev building (the Stables) and they were also fixing up and sleeping in the cells of Zapori, the former prison. We toured the prison and found the remains of other foreigners in the cells - dissolving human-shaped sculptures, one cell full of the mementoes of a group that walked from Ireland to Yugoslavia, beautifully constructed beds, the residue of an international art show.

Throughout the year, Metelkova and the rest of Ljubljana are taken over by international festivals of independent culture including: Break 21 - a festival of comics, film, art and music, and the City of Women, a festival celebrating women's art. In March, Tea helped to organize the third Rdece Zore (Red Sunrises) International Women's Festival, a festival celebrating the DIY art and activism of Metelkova and Eastern Europe. The name Rdece Zore is taken from a children's story about a rebel partisan girl with beautiful red hair - a metaphor for the subversively beautiful work of women artists and activists. It also translates as

"red sunrises" in Slovene. Tea says that the festival "created a flow of people, but not the Friday-yuppie-kind of flow, but a flow of very different people, engaged people, people who came and fell in love with the place, with the people, and there were so many new friendships born, new collaborations..."

The flow of people in and out is the blessing and the curse of Metelkova, and of Tea's life as an organizer and producer of autonomous culture. So many people come through in a glance: for a festival, as a visiting artist, on the squat tour. They stay for awhile, maybe even months, but then they always leave. In the English translation of one of her zines, Tea writes about this passing: "We share a cigarette like we are saying goodbye to smoke, when we were really saying goodbye to one more approach, never entirely touched, and when your self has left this town, the rain fell again and again, pretending nothing has really changed - and it hasn't unless we can finally take what we thought was imagined for real."

Metelkova, though always changing, remains a reality. In 1996 a group of artists decided to re-construct the Hlev building (the Stables), still heavily damaged and full of holes from the city's 1993 attempted demolition. They repaired the damage and renovated - adding dormer windows, a deck, and an orange metal staircase made from the leftovers of some big machine. Over the years they have slowly added more additions, but they have kept the holes in the walls left by the bulldozers; only adding mosaics of broken tiles, wire and a plaster David statue. The entire building looks like it is half under construction, half under demolition - a strange continuum between the past - of war - and the future, of something else, maybe art, culture, community. The Hlev building is now the home of the Biker's Bar and Club, some art studios, a kitchen/restaurant, another popular bar which has shows and performances and the Gallery Alcatraz - an open art gallery space. Next door to the Hlev, is Klub Gromka which has readings, film nights, shows and a bar.

For the last 10 years Metelkova has also been the refuge to the international comic anthology, Stripburger. Stripburger was formed in 1992 by Strip Core, a group of people involved in the Ljubljana hardcore and graffiti scene. This group decided to start a zine that covered music and alternative art and culture. As the story goes, by the time they had enough money to put out the first issue, all the content - band interviews, stories about the international hardcore scene - was out of date...except the comics. By issue #4, the idea of a comic anthology that regularly featured artists from Slovenia and other parts of the former Yugoslavia along with international artists was fixed. Tea introduced me to Igor Prassel, one of five editors for Stripburger and it is his fault completely that I have become obsessed with the small strange world of sequential art.

Soon after we met, with a mischievous grin and little-boy excitement, he started to pull from the shelves of his office: beautiful illustrated books, long graphic novels, simple photocopied comic zines, big beautiful books of full colour comic-porn and then later at his house, he brought out boxes and boxes of silk-screened foldouts, comics shaped like maps, tiny comics the size of a thumb, handprinted books, comics in strange shapes...a complete candy store of comics.

Igor joined the Stripburger editorial team in 1995 and since he was not an artist, he wrote and published reviews and theoretical articles on comics in Stripburger. He says, "I found in alternative comics a certain liberty of mind and when we started to do taboo-breaking projects, such as the Anti-Nazi calendar for the year 1996, the human rights themed set of postcards, HandyBurger...I knew this was it."

Before Stripburger there were no other comics magazines in Slovenia. The sole outlet for this kind of material were two comic pages in the weekly iconoclastic Mladina magazine. Formerly the voice of the Slovenian youth wing of the Communist Party, praising the great leader Tito, defending the great principles of the Party, in the 80s Mladina began to bulldoze all the sacred symbols and taboos of Socialist society. Mladina is infamous in the annals of Slovenian cultural history for an incident in 1987. Every year in celebration of Tito's birthday, youth from all over Yugoslavia would run relay races, passing batons of brotherhood and unity until they reached a large stadium in Belgrade, where they would prostrate in front of the great leader. Some youth organizations spent almost

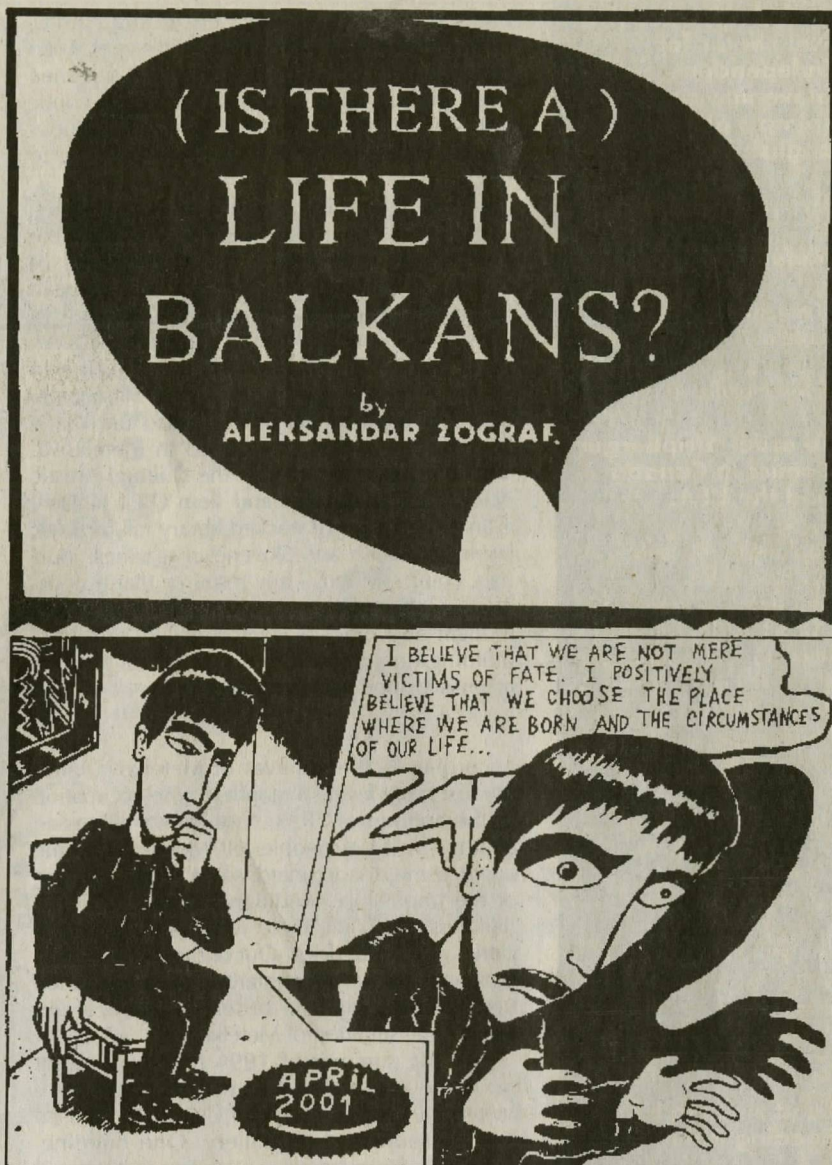


80% of their budget on this one day. The League of Socialist Youth in Slovenia was sick of the silly display of patriotism and loyalty, but they were obliged to do something so they sponsored a poster contest. The winning poster, done by the avant-guard group New Collectivism, was published in Mladina and was honored by the authorities. Only later did they find out that the artists had taken an old Nazi poster and switched the swastika to the Yugoslavian flag.

Stripburger has continued the iconoclastic tradition, breaking taboos with special issues such as HandyBurger, focusing on disabilities, an Anti-Nazi issue against all forms of intolerance, and XXX(Strip)Burger, the sex issue (sadly, the European version is 216 pages, but the American version is only 160 pages). There are two regular issues a year and one special issue. Each regular issue displays a variety of artists from Slovenia and other parts of the former Yugoslavia, along with a special theme or a feature on artists from a specific country. The zine is partly in English, partly in Slovene but it includes an insert with a translation, an artist profile, and a scene report from both the featured country and from different places in the former Yugoslavia. The last issue, #31 featured artists from Montreal - Julie Doucet, Hénriette Valium, Geneviève Castrée, Rick Trembles and many more. This year the special issue is StripBurek "Comics from the Other Europe" featuring artists from Slovenia, Poland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Yugoslavia, Albania, Romania, Macedonia and even one artist from Kazakhstan.

The painting on the front cover of StripBurek imitates the lightness of the Russian artist, Marc Chagall: a cow flies above the moon, a little village with a church steeple bright in the night sky, a tractor with a red star plows the fields and a brightly coloured peasant woman with a headscarf floats in the air, handing out comics. The bright and cheerful village life of the land beyond. The painting continues on the back cover but there are no happy cows only the cement blocks of socialist housing and the towers of a nuclear power plant expelling words into the sky. In the foreground an idle peasant is sitting around smoking cigarettes and reading comics. Inside, many of the comics are filled with the darkness that you would expect from living under the black and gloomy skies of Eastern Europe. As Tea says, "people in the Balkans have become experts in the blackest black humour." The Yugoslavian artist, Miroslav Lazendic in his comic "The Bank" illustrates the dark story of an old man who receives his pension, goes to

Aleksandar Zograf, 80



from StripBurek

the store, buys some good salami and bread, eats his meal and then hangs himself. He leaves a note that reads: "I won't die of hunger." Many of the other comics are full of darkness but are lightened with little bits of hope like the Slovenian artist Ciril Horjak's story about how his grandmother snuck in a note about the end of the war to his grandfather in prison. The prisoners used small mirrors to spread the good news through the jail and the "mirrors lit up the message of hope above the prison sky." Croatian artist Danijel Zezelj illustrates a poem by Pier Paolo Pasolini with black, slightly sinister brushed lines, but the whiteness and the stuttering backgrounds claim that there is something other than the darkness of the night sky.

For the past 10 years, Stripburger has had a large influence on changing atti-

tudes towards comic art in Slovenia. Igor even convinced the public library to devote an entire section to comic books and graphic novels. There still isn't a lot of money for comics in Slovenia or elsewhere, so Stripburger encourages young artists to self-publish comic zines. They run workshops on how to make mini-comics, organize exhibitions and in 2000 Le Dernier Cri, a crazy comic collective from France, led a 4-day workshop on silk-screening which resulted in BurgerFaces, a 24 page handmade silk-screened anthology of some of the best Slovenian comic artists. Koko, one of the most versatile young Slovenian artists, attended that workshop, and he says that Stripburger has done much to motivate him to try different ways of illustrating a story. Koko says, "I've realized that I wasn't satisfied with just one style (approach,



**Net server for independent Slovenian culture (almost all in English):**

[www.ljudmila.org](http://www.ljudmila.org)

**Metelkova**

[www.ljudmila.org/metelko/](http://www.ljudmila.org/metelko/)

[www.metelkova.org](http://www.metelkova.org)

**To order StripBurger Comics in Canada and the USA:**

Top Shelf Productions  
PO Box 1282  
Marietta, Georgia, USA  
30061-1282  
[www.topshelfcomix.com](http://www.topshelfcomix.com)

or directly:  
StripBurger  
c/o Strip Core  
Forum Ljubljana,  
Metelkova 6/1  
SI - 1000 Ljubljana,  
Slovenia  
[core@kud-fp.si](mailto:core@kud-fp.si)

many of their comics  
and artists are on the  
web:  
[www.ljudmila.org/stripcore/com.htm](http://www.ljudmila.org/stripcore/com.htm)

**Send zines to Elf's Reading Room:**

kud anarhiv  
metelkova 6  
1000 Ljubljana  
Slovenia  
[www.ljudmila.org/anarhiv/](http://www.ljudmila.org/anarhiv/)

**Alkatraz Gallery**

[www.arnes.si/~ljkdmr1s/alkatraz.htm](http://www.arnes.si/~ljkdmr1s/alkatraz.htm)

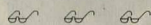
**Festivals**

rdece zore women's  
festival  
[www.ljudmila.org/metelko.rdece](http://www.ljudmila.org/metelko.rdece)

break 21 independent  
arts festival  
[www.break21.com](http://www.break21.com)

technique, mood...), so I am doing comics every time in a different way..." This year, Koko released a 32 page self-published silk-screened book of illustrations. Tea says recently comic artists or bands have put out mini zine editions whenever they felt like they had something to say.

Zine culture has always been pretty strong in Slovenia, Tea claims "years ago, there were even zine meetings of all zinemakers of Slovenia and Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia...it all really stayed connected throughout the Balkan wars, you know." She put out her first zine, "Psst" in 1996 and her most recent zine in March, an erotic compilation called Slasticarna. She also used to do a zine distro until Elf's Reading Room was established in Metelkova. The reading room, run by the Cultural-Artistic Association Anarchives and Tom D'Elf himself, is an amazingly well stocked library full of zines, books in English and Slovene, magazines, journals, comics, videos - any resource that espouses radical, revolutionary, anti-authoritarian thought and practice. Unfortunately the Pesci building (Infantry), where the radical reading room is located has a troubled past.



According to the archives of Metelkova, after the first three feverish months of the occupation in the autumn of 1993, "Metelkova witnessed apathy. A lot of people left Metelkova, some angry, some disappointed, some tired. Because of the impossible conditions (work and life in darkness and cold), there were vandalism, burglaries and robberies." Out of the darkness and the frustration a new enlarged Network called Retina was created in order to organize and legalize the situation of Metelkova.

In the summer of 1994 the government gave the unoccupied southern section of Metelkova to the Ministry of Culture to be used as a museum and art gallery. One building, Metelkova 6, was given over to non-institutional cultural devices. Today that building holds the offices of Stripburger, the Peace Institute, SKUC-LL - a lesbian office and reading room, a free and busy legal advice office and other arts and ecological groups. At the end of 1994, squatters, artists, cultural and political groups still occupied the other buildings in the northern section. Retina, with the help of an architect, produced the Metelkova Development Plan, an official plan for the development of each building. In December of 1994, a fire burnt down the roof of one of the squatted buildings and the squatters moved to the Pesci (the Infantry) building.

Finally in 1996 the city gave one of the best-kept buildings, the Lovci (the Hunters) - now home to the Women's Centre, a disabled youth organization, and a gay and lesbian club - and parts of the Pesci building, water and electricity, which were distributed throughout Metelkova. But again the city threatened war: they announced that they were going to bulldoze the buildings that were most heavily dam-

aged in the 1993 attack. The people of Metelkova managed to halt the demolition, but they did agree that the city could tear down the building with the burnt roof. In 1997 the city agreed to give money to renovate the Pesci building and later that year the city signed leases with active Metelkova artists under the agreement that they were not to live in the space. The city kicked out the squatters and the artists moved into their newly renovated studios.

From the beginning of Metelkova, there were conflicts over the official plan, over the use of individual buildings, over who had the legitimacy to be there. The war from the outside continued within; a continued conflict between culture and survival. In the official Metelkova plan, the prison building is slated to be a youth hostel. This as yet unrealized vision has long been a source of conflict, as such projects often lead to gentrification. In many cities around the world, the owners of old Single Room Occupancy Hotels along the outer edges of Skid Row kick out the occupants and turn the rooms into bunks for backpackers at \$20-30 a night. The conflict between those who would create a tourist friendly cultural space and those who want the space opened to the dispossessed continues in other ways. One of the main conflicts in Metelkova right now is between the artists and group of heroin users who use the property and one of the huge abandoned buildings as a shooting gallery. The artists have put up anti-needle signs everywhere but there is no indication that a solution or compromise between the artists and the junkies is forthcoming. Tea writes, "I am always wondering why people think it is too much of an effort to go beyond personal sympathies and/or dislikes to keep Metalkova healthy. I mean we're all fucking crippled anyway, fucked up in the head in one way or another so why not take it as the only common ground we have?"

In trying to explain Metelkova and the Balkan indie culture scene, Tea told me about a film, a short 15-minute documentary called "The Movements of June" about the student occupation of the Belgrade University in 1968. The film ends when a scream suddenly cuts through the continuous speeches and chants of the students. The director, a Serbian filmmaker known primarily in the avante-guard film scene of the Ex-Yugoslavia, did many short "fictitious" documentaries on the theme of rebellion, and has said about the works: "All the revolutions are only half-done. Undone. Welcome, I say."

In Metelkova the revolution is half done, and some are more welcome than others. Regardless, the sprawling complex thrives and changes, its very existence a permanent victory. Sometimes fiercely, sometimes in the quietness of the rubble waiting to be rebuilt, the struggle continues.

*Kara Sievwright is a zinester and writer living in Vancouver.*



I'll bring  
the  
Bikinis.

I'll bring  
the  
bombs.

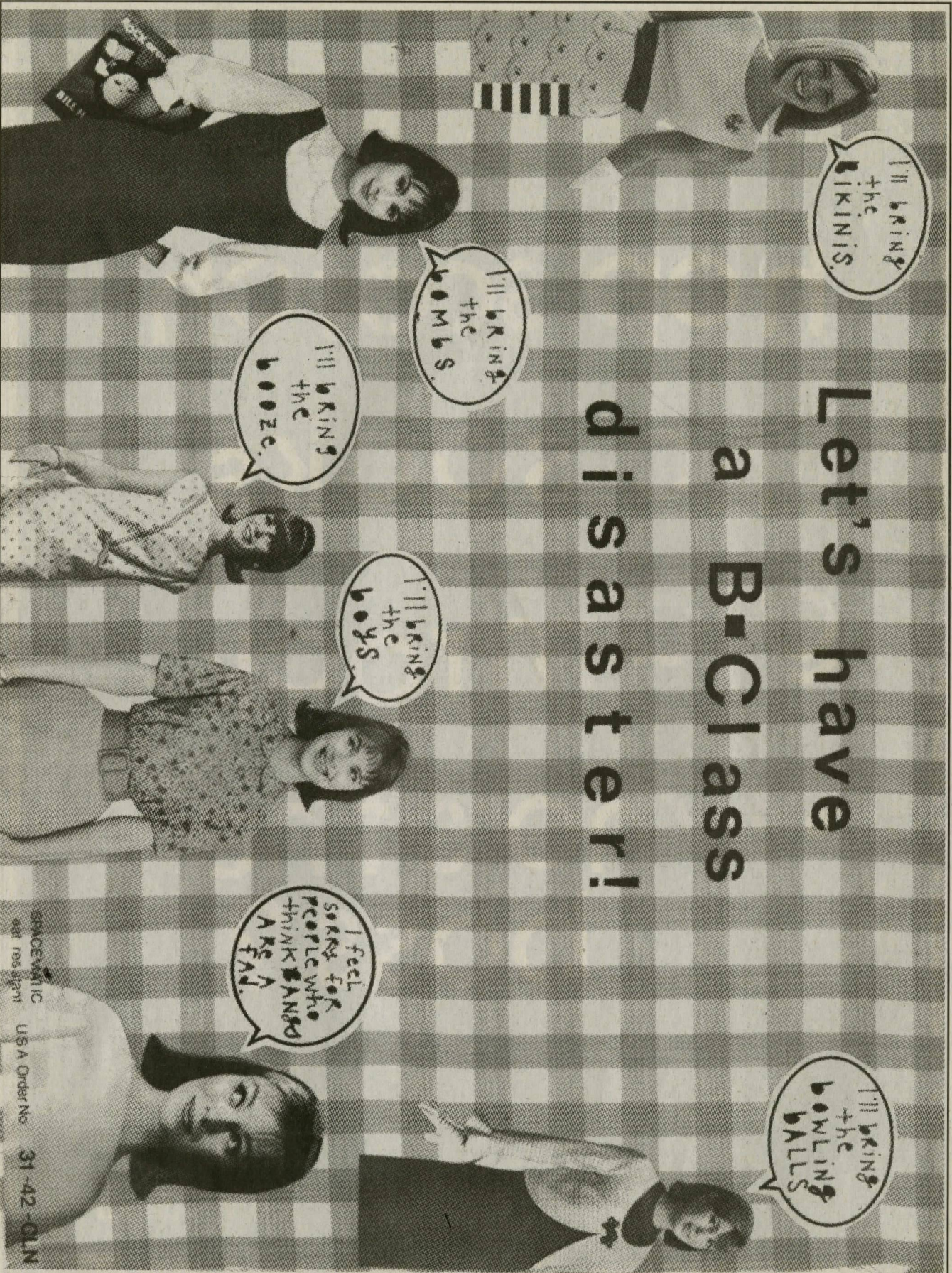
I'll bring  
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I feel  
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people who  
think BANDA  
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I'll bring  
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# The Cedar Surf

by Grant Shilling from *The Cedar Surf: Tracing the Story of Surfing BC's West Coast*  
(to be published this fall by New Star Books, Vancouver)

As we drive Highway 14 north from Victoria, B.C. on the west side of Vancouver Island, toward the Jordan River and Sombrio Beach, we are on the lookout for roof racks and boards. It's Saturday morning and the rain is pelting down. I keep wiping foggy breath from the windshield. There is snow at the side of the road. We are driving deep into the shivering heart of surf country. Canadian surf country.

First stop will be Jordan River. A windy one-and-a-half-hour drive from Victoria, Jordan River is a flat spot on a wide curve that has been logged down to dirt. To this day tug booms regularly haul rafts of logs through.

The access to the Jordan River consists of a Western Canada Forest Products stockyard full of cut trees, a restaurant, a trailer park and a roadside motel. But the most important thing about Jordan River as far as surfers are concerned is its clean waves and point break. Jordan River is the first place along Highway 14 the surfers check out. If the surf is up here and the wind is offshore, holding up the waves, most surfers will not drive the extra 20 minutes further north to Sombrio and follow its snaky logging road down to the beach.

When we arrive there are two vans parked by the side of the road, the drivers are looking out to the waves. Looking at and describing waves is an essential aspect of surfing – it's part Zen and part physics. The surfers are looking for 'mackers', aka 'ground swells', ideal powerful waves formed over great distances – as far as the Bering Sea.

For a lot of surfers the day starts with the marine broadcast (echoing the activity of fishers). Some gale up in the Queen Charlottes becomes a mysterious force that may work its way down to us.

I chat with Mike, 21, a surfer from Victoria who feels the waves are closing out way too fast for there to be much good surfing. Mike feels that the waves aren't "sectiony" which are long waves that have common characteristics and timing.

Mike took up surfing two years ago. He went into a store to buy a skateboarding magazine and found himself flipping through a surfing mag. He bought the

surfing mag, went into a surf shop in Victoria and they told him he had two options for surfing in B.C.: Tofino and Ucluelet, or closer to home Jordan River and Sombrio Beach. He has been coming out regularly ever since.

In British Columbia the best surfing is in the winter, when storms make for bigger waves. In fact wintertime is really the only time you can reliably surf Sombrio or Jordan River.

Winter or summer, the water is icy cold, a shrink wrapping cold of five-six degrees Celsius at Sombrio or Jordan River. Tofino is a relatively balmy eight-eleven degrees Celsius. Jordan River is especially cold because of the river outflow and the snowmelt from the hills above. You can freeze your butt off out there. (Please note: Dr. Peter Amschel has proven conclusively that straddling a surfboard in very cold water causes the gonadal tissue to shrivel — duh! — thereby stimulating and increasing testosterone levels. This actual scientific research may explain better than anything why male surfers continue to surf in the cold — for the testosterone dammit!)

"You don't want to surf more than two or three hours at a time, anyway," says one surfer. "You come in because you are hungry or tired and you don't want to pee in your wetsuit."

Come summer there is only a one or two degree increase in water temperature. To protect against the cold West Coast surfers use neoprene wetsuits five millimeters thick, gloves, booties and a devil and the deep blue sea determination. Surfers bring a religious zeal to their pursuit. A greater risk than the cold is getting "slammed" by a wave, having the wind knocked out of you and getting "washing machined" or "stuffed" — getting driven under the water by a wave coming down on you and waiting to catch your breath. Such an experience can be "hiddie," hideous, and is sure to test your "pucker factor," your ability to relax while waiting to catch an intimidating wave.

A huge wave in Tofino, a real "macker," would be 12 feet, though the average wave is about five feet. The surf at Tofino is a beach surf — ever changing. One of the things that makes the surfing at Tofino

a real challenge is the amount of paddling you have to do, "duck diving" under waves before you can actually attempt to catch a wave. Most waves at Sombrio or Jordan River are in the five to eight foot range. Today with very little wind and a small swell, there isn't much to surf at Jordan River — so Mike and I push on to Sombrio.

There are about a dozen cars in the parking lot at Sombrio. A group of surfers, mostly in their early twenties, are in various stages of undress, slipping into or out of wetsuits or kneeling down to their boards to "wax" them. The wax provides better foot and belly grip for paddling out to the waves. Surfboards can be divided into two categories: shortboards, about five to nine feet and longboards — aka 'tankers' — over nine feet. Most people ride shortboards, as they are easier to maneuver and carve waves with. The activity comes closer to skateboarding, it's a bit more hot-doggy, and a younger person's game of raw athleticism. Longboarders are traditionalists, they ride big boards for the same reason that people presumably drive big cars — because they can.

The cold-water tribe in the parking lot are jogging in their wetsuits to create some heat before they hit the water. The mood is friendly here with a real esprit-du-boards. A short walk from the parking lot through the clearcut and the thin remaining stand of ancient Western Hemlock and one arrives at the pebbly beach. There are 15 surfers bouncing up and down in the surf looking like seals amongst the heavy accumulation of bull kelp. In the distance are Cape Flattery and the Olympic Peninsula. Several fires burn on the beach, some with surfers huddled around them trying to get warm.

Joanne Fraser, 22, lived on Sombrio beach for six months when it was a squat community. Fraser moved from Victoria to Sombrio to be closer to nature and the ocean. The squat community has been dismantled, but Fraser, who has since moved to nearby Sooke, has become addicted to the surf and Sombrio. "I'm here at least once a week but sometimes three or four times a week," she says shivering in her neoprene wetsuit while sitting on a huge beached cedar log. Fraser





photo by brian howell

usually drives out to Sombrio alone, although she knows many of the surfers on the beach.

"Sometimes learning how to surf is intimidating for girls," says Fraser. "Surfing is not something you can pick up right away. So if there are a lot of guys out there who know what they are doing, it can be scary."

Fraser says the number of women surfing has increased even in the three years since she has started surfing and sometimes, "it's only girls out there." Generally, Fraser feels there isn't much of a competitive attitude amongst surfers, just a shared camaraderie of the total body rush that catching a wave can bring. When I ask her what is it about surfing that causes her to brave freezing cold waters she pauses for some time. Her answer is almost Zen-like and reflects the crazy calm that surfing induces: "You get fresh air, wind on your face, it forces you to take deep breaths and it makes you look at the elements different. It gets you right into the rain. Other people are sitting inside when it's raining saying 'this is lame.' But when you get right into it, it's fun."

Further down the beach is a small fire where a group of surfers, up for the day from Victoria, have gathered. The surfers have just emerged from the water and two go hustling off to their car to turn on their heaters and change into warm clothing. A surfer in a neoprene suit jogs by, trying to build up some heat before he plunges into the icy water. Two surfers have been surfing without their neoprene gloves and are pouring steaming hot water from a thermos across their hands, trying to piano flex some life back into their joints.

They have brought a picnic spread of veggie dogs, fruit and cookies and enjoy a warm camaraderie that seems characteristic of most surfers. "I don't know what it is," says Gord, 22. "Usually when you step out of the water you've had a really good time. And two hours later you've still got the smile. And so you know you've got to go out and do it again. With myself I find that if I haven't surfed in a week or so, I get a little grouchy. I miss it and I have to get back to it."

"With surfing you can't know the playing field ever," says Val Litwin, 21, a UVic English major. "It is the hardest sport I've ever attempted. Other than windsurfing or sailing it is the only sport where the medium moves with you. Nothing is constant about surfing: the wind, the tide, the current – you even have to watch out for sea lions."

Another attraction of surfing is the freedom. "There's no lift tickets, just an initiation fee, I suppose," says Gord, referring to the roughly one thousand dollars it costs for a board and suit.

A former biker-gone-surfer puts his attraction this way: "There are no cops. No authority. It's one of the last things in the world you don't have to register for and you don't need a helmet!"

While some surfers buy into the renegade attitude of surfing, that generally isn't the case. "I think there is a lot of hype around it," says Fraser. "Because in B.C. it's a relatively new surfing scene. We are our own thing, not some California scene from the 50s or something. I guess it's like anything, people get the clothes, the attitude and lingo – but it really is just a case of doing the fun."

"Doing the fun" for many surfers

includes surfing both Tofino and Sombrio. If Sombrio is a surfing locale where one spends the day or occasionally camps out for a night or two, sleeping in their vans and pick ups or a tent on the beach, Tofino is rapidly establishing itself as a surf town, a Whistler-By-The-Sea (as much as residents will cringe at the notion). As the tourist industry has boomed in Tofino so has the need for a workforce – something the predominately young, surfing crowd supplies.

"I find that it's much easier to go to work after a good surf," says Eric, 29, sitting in the Weigh West Resort where he works in Tofino. "I feel like I can handle work after a day of surfing." Eric surfs most days, but admits there are the occasionally miserable stormy days where surfing seems like a bad idea. On those days he watches surf videos with friends, "to keep us stoked."

Sean, 27, came out to Tofino five years ago from Saskatchewan and was astonished to find that you could surf. He played and stayed. After working grunt jobs and finding it difficult to find accommodation, Sean is now ready to go the next step – invest in a business. "I'm here to stay," he says. If there wasn't surfing in Tofino would he be here? "Not a chance," he says. "There wouldn't be anything to do."

This winter Eric and Sean plan on going to Baja to surf with several friends from Tofino, a common winter migration for many surfers in the area. "I have never surfed in my shorts," says Eric in anticipation of Baja. "But you know, the other day I was in the water with a couple of surfers from California. They said



they liked it here because there wasn't arguments and attitude in the water." Ugly localism and crowding that has characterized many California beaches, along with pollution, combined with the exchange on our fabulous northern peso, are factors beginning to attract surfers from California, Washington and Oregon to Tofino.

This north/south surfing dialogue is a return to the early days of surfing in Tofino. Wayne Vliet, 52, came out to surf Tofino in 1965. He brought a surfboard he made from a hardware store kit. "Surfers here were always going down to Seaside [Oregon] and Northern California to surf and buy boards," says Vliet, a carpenter who still surfs. "Of course there were even more Americans here in the late 60s and early 70s avoiding the war. I think that was Tofino's initial surf scene. There were all these shacks on Wreck Bay with plastic over them and surfboards outside their doors." A since demolished barn on Long Beach where Group of Seven painter Arthur Lismer painted in the 40s served as a surfers hangout in the 60s.

Vliet is amongst a small group of surfers his age who have lived and surfed in Tofino for close to thirty years. Many of this group have gone on to have beach babies, kids who grew up on the beaches and get the chance to surf everyday.

In fact that institution of Canadian hockey – the hockey mom – has its parallel here in Tofino in surfer moms. Mothers who pick up their children as young as eight and nine from Wickanninish Elementary School and drive groups of kids out to the beach for a surf. "I can't imagine a healthier way to spend time," says one mother whose 14-year-old son is an avid surfer.

Shelley Bauer, 47, a Tofino resident and mother of two, started a surf club for kids aged 6-11 through the elementary schools in Tofino and Ucluelet. "Surfing represents a healthy way for our kids to grow up," says Bauer.

"In Tofino in the winter time there is nothing to do," says Jenny Hudnall who was born in Tofino and now teaches surf lessons. "It pours rain. You don't need to sit around and drink and smoke pot, you can go surfing. And then drink and smoke later," she says laughing.

Waiting for the perfect wave are a group of surfers gathered at The Pod in Tofino. The Pod is a busy coffee shop just across the street from Storm, the in-town surf shop. Congregating at The Pod are surfers, geoduckers, a retired wharfinger, real estate agents, whale-watching guides and bush daddies, who mingle and provide a visual cross-section of the changes that have taken place in Tofino. "Ten years ago," says a former crab fisherman,

"if there was one pretty girl in town, it was a miracle. With surfing, this town has become the home of surfer babes."

Bodacious babes and hunky guys (Playgirl did a photo shoot here) beat angst anytime. 10 years ago, Tofino watched its fishing industry die. But with its forests protected by urban invaders, land values begin to skyrocket. Cedar shacks were replaced by suburbs straight out of Surrey. Whales became a tourist destination. The surfers in Tofino provide cheap labour for the tourist industry, which in turn allows them to live a happy, uncomplicated life. Live to play, live to surf – days of friends, parties, pay-cheques, regular physical activity and carnality.

I watch as three surfers stride into the gaping expanse of the ocean and liquid blue sky, they are grinning, 'stoked'. The white streamers of frothing foam acts like vines dragging them in. Their footsteps in the sand disappear with an oncoming wave. They look tiny, almost foolish as they cast themselves against the very physical, ever-shifting landscape. But they are laughing. They walk out as far as possible through the waves crumbling into the shoreline, before paddling out, belly down on their boards.

*Grant Shilling edits and publishes 'The GIG'-Gulf Islands Gazette, a rural alternative. Shilling surfs a 9'6" longboard.*

# The Fox Head

by Paul Jacksties

from *Misadventures of an (Amateur) Photojournalist* (68 Regent Dr., St. Catharines, ON, L2M 3L7)

"Paul, what's the matter?" someone asked. "You look pale."

"I had my life threatened today. That's all."

I'd been working for a lawn care company. Potential customers would call the office and ask for a free estimate. I would drive out in the company truck and measure up their lawn then leave them a form with a quote on how much their lawn care would cost. I would usually write something like, "Your lawn would benefit from either our gold or silver program." Then in the appropriate box I would fill in the prices for either program. It was an easy spring job.

With all the driving I was doing I decided it would be a good idea to have my camera with me in the event I happened on some news in the making. Sure enough one day I passed by a fire in a trailer park in Niagara-on-the-Lake. I jumped out, took some photos, got them developed in an hour at Zehr's, took

them to the newspaper and had my first paying photo printed in the Standard, a St. Catharines newspaper, the next day.

My friend Black-eyed Dutchie had been telling me I should go to the Fox Head Hotel in Niagara Falls to take some pictures. They were adding 10 additional storeys to the building, making it 23 storeys from 13. He was working construction there and he thought I could take some interesting photos.

"Just put on your hard hat and some construction boots and go up the worker's elevator to the roof," he told me. "Hide your camera until you get up there. You'll get some great shots."

A few days later that's exactly what I did. The service elevator ran up the outside of the building — 23 floors up to the roof in a rattling metal cage. I was dressed incognito, with a hard hat and my construction boots so that I blended right in. When the last workers got out of the elevator I talked to the operator, a 20-year-

old kid named Johnny. He had a sticker on his hard hat that read Big Phatty. I told him how I was friends with Dutchie and that I was planning to go on the roof to take some photos. Johnny didn't care and he took me up the rest of the way to the roof.

Up on top the view was incredible. I was so high up it seemed as if I could toss a stone down into the falls. Across the border in New York state I could see Buffalo's buildings through the distant haze and I got some amazing photos of the steel riggers at work. I was climbing up ladders and onto scaffolding thirty feet above the roof trying to get worthwhile angles for the camera. At one point I was standing on a recently poured concrete roof of an elevator shaft to get a shot of a worker. I cautiously backed up as far as I could in order to frame the picture for the best possible results and found myself crouching along the edge of a sheer drop with no railings. One worker noticed me





photo by Paul Jacksties

taking photos and walked out onto the end of a steel beam where he posed smiling with the falls in the background. I later took that photo to the Tribune newspaper in Welland and they printed it, although I was disappointed because it was so small and they buried it way in the back. I still believed I had some worthwhile shots and since I was going up to Toronto that weekend to visit my friend Siobhan I decided to take the photos to some newspapers there. The Toronto Star, the Sun and the Globe and Mail all had a look at the photos and weren't interested. Back in St. Catharines I took the photos to The Standard and they turned me down as well because they had already had their photographer on location. I was disappointed but not about to give up.

Although I had sold only one of my photos I was so taken with their potential that I returned to the construction site to take some more. I vaguely remembered having seen photos years ago in Life magazine of construction workers up on some skyscraper in New York City. I remembered being impressed that people were up there working in the sky and that someone had actually gone up and taken pictures. Once again I got into the metal cage of an elevator and rode the rickety ride to the roof of the Fox Head. Johnny

the elevator operator now had a couple of stitches in his lip. He gave me a look and I gave him a subtle nod back. I didn't say anything because there were workers in the elevator with us and I didn't want to get him in trouble because I wasn't supposed to be there. By the time we got up to the roof everyone else had gotten out. I was just about to exit the elevator when Johnny noticed that the big boss was up there.

"If he sees you taking pictures he'll want to know what's going on," said Johnny. "You should come back another time."

"All right," I agreed.

We rode back down, picked up a few more workers on the way, and at the bottom I got out and thanked him even though I was disappointed. I'd driven from St. Catharines with the afternoon free and now I wasn't even going to get a single photo. I wandered around the perimeter of the construction site, the camera still hidden away under my jacket. The casino was right next door and that complex had a big tower that was left behind from the old Maple Leaf Village. I asked casino security at the front door about getting permission to go up there for some photos. They made a couple of phone calls and I got my rejection. The tower, I was told, was deemed

unsafe and there were channels I needed to go through to get permission. Disappointed I was getting nowhere I wandered around some more. The construction crane would have made a good vantage point too. I thought of climbing up the crane and was reminded of a \$75 ticket I got a couple years earlier while in Welland doing a story for the school newspaper. Renovations were beginning at the old courthouse that had been built in the 1850s. I had snuck into the prison section of the courthouse and took creepy photos of the long-abandoned jail cells. I got one of a room down below where several prisoners had dropped to their deaths back in the day when hanging was still legal in Canada. Afterwards, to round out the whole photo-essay project, I climbed up the main street bridge to get a shot of the courthouse from a distance. There I was, more than 100 feet in the air, when some cop pulls up below and shouts for me to get down. He placed me under arrest and gave me the ticket. I wasn't about to let that happen again. Still, I wasn't about to give up either. I decided to find out who was in charge and to seek permission. Now there was an idea that hadn't occurred to me. I went to one of the trailers and asked around. I met Bernie, a burly six-



foot man with a red beard. He was standing behind his desk, delicately tidying things up.

"What can I do for you?" he asked.

"Well, um, I was hoping to get your permission," I told him. By now my Nikon camera was hanging openly around my neck.

"Is that right?" he asked casually. "And what would you like my permission for?"

"Well, I'm a freelance photographer and I was hoping to climb up the crane to get some photographs of the work going on."

He looked at me for a moment.

"I haven't had a chance to clean my desk in a while," he said.

I stood there silently, not quite sure what to say.

"So you want to gain some notoriety?" he asked.

"No," I said with a chuckle. "I was just hoping to get some pictures of the guys up there working. Maybe I can sell them to the paper."

"I don't know about that," he said. "If I let you go up there then everyone will want to go up there and do the same thing."

"I can make you some doubles of the photos I take. I don't have a lot of money."

He looked at me again. He was sizing me up in some way.

"What's your name?" he asked.

"Paul," I said.

"Hang on a minute, Paul."

Bernie got onto the phone with the crane operator and had a short discussion. When he hung up the phone Bernie told me that I wasn't a freelance photographer but rather an acquaintance of his. I told him that I understood and, as he requested, I wrote up a waiver saying no one but myself was responsible for me in the event of death or injury. A few minutes later, having thanked Bernie, I found myself climbing up what I would later find out was at that time Canada's tallest free-standing crane. Several times on the way up I had to stop and catch my breath. At one point the crane shifted into motion and I grabbed the railing out of surprise as the entire shaft shuddered. Near the top, close to where the crane operator sits, I found a little spot to sit. I caught my breath and snapped a couple of photos. Then I heard a voice. The crane operator was calling me. I climbed up a little higher and made my way on top of the little box out of where he worked. I took a couple of photos of him and wrote down his name. Sam asked me if I wanted to go out to the end of the crane's boom. Without hesitation I told him that

I did. He looked at me with a surprised expression then asked if I wasn't afraid? 10 minutes later, when there was a lull in the work, he brought the trolley in and I climbed onto a little platform with low railings.

"Just always hold on tight," he told me.

Next I was wheeled out to the end of the boom. One of the steel workers was still up on a beam 30 feet above the roof. I snapped away with my camera as Sam guided the boom of the crane in various positions so that I could get different angles to shoot from. The roar of the falls along with the bustle of traffic below made for quite the ride. Sam rotated the boom of the crane 360 degrees as I busily snapped away with my camera. He even stopped the crane as I changed a roll of film while suspended directly over Clifton Hill with all its museums and tourist attractions.

That week I was doing some more estimates back in Niagara Falls when I decided to drop in at the Review, the Niagara Falls paper. Joe Wallace, the editor, came out to have a look at the photos. He said that he might be interested in using one or two of my pictures and that he had been considering having a writer do a story on the construction at the Fox Head. I told him that I was also a writer and that I could do the story. He asked for my phone number so I gave him a copy of my resume. Two days later he phoned and gave me the go-ahead to write the story.

I returned to the construction site and entered the trailer where Bernie had his office. There were several people in the trailer and one of them asked if he could help me.

"I'm looking for Bernie," I told him.

"Now I remember you," he said, noticing my camera.

He ambushed me so that we ended up in Bernie's open office. He closed the door almost all the way so that we were alone.

"You're a dead man," he said, pointing into my chest.

"Why, what for?"

"You took that picture for the paper."

"Yeah, so?"

"That guy wasn't wearing a safety line. Now the Ministry of Labour has got my ass in a sling because of you."

"Hey, I'm sorry. I didn't know."

"You better get out of here."

"Okay," I said, and made my way out of the office and out of the trailer.

"And don't let me see you here again."

"Well, I'll talk to Bernie about that."

"Never mind Bernie!" he said angri-

ly. "I'm the boss around here."

I was standing outside of the trailer by now, looking up at him as he stood in the doorway.

"Don't forget what I said," he told me.

Later that night I was recounting my afternoon to Black-eyed Dutchie and Teabag. We were at Teabag's place, sitting on the balcony having a beer.

"So are you still going to do the story?" he asked me.

"I don't know, I think so. I mean, they already know my name so that's no secret. If they want to find me to kill me..."

"Okay, but don't forget to ask him in your interview," Dutchie said laughing, "how many people working there are involved in the Mafia?"

I laughed nervously. Teabag didn't seem to think the situation all that funny. When I later asked Teabag if I could use his phone to try and set up an interview with Bernie he demanded that I punch in \*67 so that his number wouldn't get traced.

"Yeah, right," I said. "Like they're going to be coming over here to your place to look for me?"

"Hey, when you start messing around with construction workers' livelihoods, I wouldn't be too careful," Teabag said warningly. "You know what a little trick of theirs is? They run you off the road then make like they're coming to check if you're all right. Then it's game over. I'd get a gun if I were you."

"Sure, Teabag," I said and laughed. My laughter was unconvincing though and Teabag looked at me in an unusual way.

I eventually got an interview with Bernie who told me all about the operation. I even went back up to the top of the Fox Head to take more photos. When a couple of workers who were working dangerously on the edge of the building saw me with my camera, they immediately tied themselves off to a nearby safety line.

"Don't worry guys," I told them. "I'm not here to get anybody into trouble."

The 500-word story was printed up along with two of my photos and took up more than half a page of the newspaper. I was surprised and pleased that they never changed a single word. At last I was a paid and published writer and photographer both in a single shot.

The death threat still didn't sit well with me but eventually my feelings of unease faded away. That I helped give the project some positive exposure in the press probably helped me win some favour too. I'm pretty difficult to kill anyway.



# Luck House

by Una Lee from Big Boots (91 Friuli Court, Unit 22, Woodbridge, ON, L4L 4G5)

art by Sarah Butler

"What's this?" He stabs the laminated menu with a finger the size and shape of a fat cigar. I suck in air through my teeth.

"It's a rice noodle dish." I speak as clearly as I can. "Comes with vegetable and bean curd."

His face sours. "Bean curd?"

"Yes." I watch him finger the skin that hangs from his chin as he squints at the menu. I look at my watch. Table five's order would be ready soon, and the woman wearing too much perfume at table nine had asked for more "orange sauce."

"Smile," John barks in Cantonese as he marches past. I stretch my face accordingly.

Cigar Finger is adding more sugar to his tea. I wince. He lifts the tiny ceramic cup to his lips, gripping it as though he is trying to crush it. I shift my weight to my left foot, the pen in my hand still hovering over my order pad.

"Don't you have any chicken balls here?"

"No. Imitation beef and duck though."

"Why don't you have any real meat?"

But Cigar Finger does not want an answer. Cigar Fingers only wants me to stand here, waiting. I glance at the shrine near the entrance and try to calm myself by watching the smoke curl languidly up from the burning incense.

He grunts.

"I'll have this one then." He points to number 47. Vegetable fried rice. "And go easy on the mushrooms, eh sweetie?" He hands me the menu.

I am still smiling. My face is beginning to hurt. I turn, shudder, then walk briskly to the kitchen.

Vegetable fried rice. Sauce. Table five.

A cork board covers one wall of the kitchen. The left side is where we tack the orders. The right side is covered with photographs of generations of Luck House employees. They have been tacked up out of order, wherever there



was room. Faces in 1940s black and white compete for exposure with those in hazy 1970s colour. I glance at these photographs as I put up Cigar Finger's order.

I have memorized their faces, their clothing, their postures. I have invented stories for each one. They spill out of the photographs and into the kitchen cacophony. Unrequited love. Devastating illness. Head tax. Opium addiction.

"Enough daydreaming," John snaps. I turn around but see only his back disappearing into the dining room. I hear him making loud and conciliatory noises to the people at table ten. Their noodles are "too spicy."

I grab table five's order and "some orange sauce" for the stinky woman's rice. I glance at the cork board photo album before walking out of the kitchen.

From where I am standing, the faces in the photographs are indistinguishable. Nothing more than hundreds of tiny bodies pressed pathetically against each other, faces looking pathetically out at me. I think they're pleading to me.

I must be working too hard.

I hurry through the dining room, noticing that a path has been worn along the linoleum floor. I wonder when John will take my picture and tack it on the cork board. I wonder what stories someone will create for me.

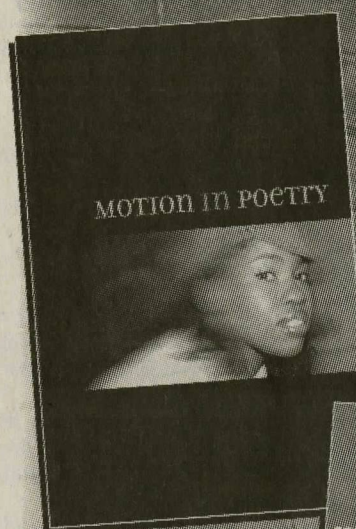
The people at table five look hungry and scowl irritably at me. Cigar Finger is looking hungrily at me. I feel sick. I try not to breathe as I place the bowl of sauce on the woman's table.

Perhaps my story has already been written.



# Don't be afraid of the F-word

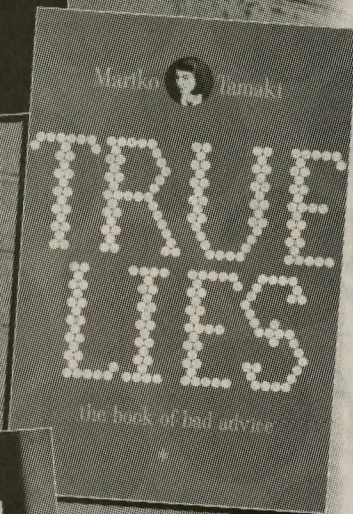
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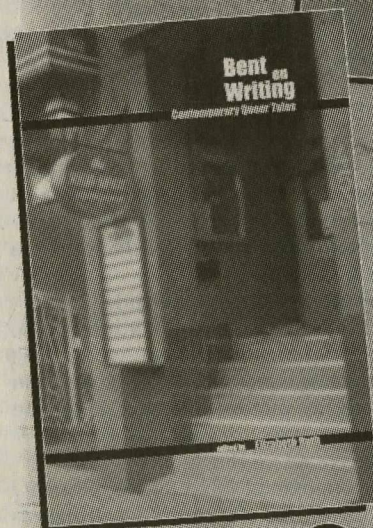
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## British Columbia

### Words Odd In The Mouth

poetry zine, \$1, Travis E. Triance, 1994 Covington Crescent, Kelowna, B.C.,  
mind\_of\_a\_sailor@hotmail.com

A nicely put together collection of Travis' poems, which vary in quality. Travis adores playing, and comes up with sometimes clever and sometimes cumbersome results. All in all, this is an even effort worth checking out for poetry fans. (Kevin Jagernauth)

### Bull Sheet

Skate Zine, #6, 52pgs, Ryan Dyck (ed), \$1.50, 2846 Evergreen St, Abbotsford, BC, V2T 2S1 sk8\_or\_try@hotmail.com

This guy's a dedicated sk8er and zinester, right down to the whiny apology for taking so long with this issue. Great interviews with Grant Britain, Andy McDonald, Narduar, stuff about various ska bands, hometown take on Slam City Jam. Actually has a fresh attack on mullets which isn't hopelessly boring. Tons of music reviews as well. Good stuff. (Flick Harrison)

### Alien Basement Food

zine, #15, 55 pgs, Ashley Lambert, \$1 or trade mixed tape, 1102 Gordon Rd, Apt #D414, Nelson, BC, V1L 3M4, BasementFreak@antisocial.com

It's cool to know that there are still self-assured young people in this world, and it's even better when they're writing zines. Think of this as a journey through the mind of Anarchy Ashley (the zine's creator), who presents readers with a picture of herself by using self-expression pieces, images and submissions from other contributors. Alien Basement is filling eye candy with its mixture of hand-drawn sketches, photographs and collages that make it a treat to read. My favourite touch is the cover, coloured with crayon by a hand who refused to keep inside the lines — how cool is that? Although some might be annoyed by the naive idealism presented in these pages, it's doubtful Ashley would really care because she is aware of presenting idealism, a model of ideas to aspire to. I'm sure this gal would agree to disagree. This is perfect for the hippie or hippie curious. (Heather Ball)

## Vancouver

### Broken Glass Barbed Wire Street Fight

zine, #6, 24 pgs, Rusty Haight, \$1, 5-2043 Stainsbury Ave. Vancouver, BC, V5N 2M9, rusty\_mf\_666@yahoo.com

The name itself oozes toughness. I clutch the zine in my trembling hand, terrified to even open it for fear some giant iron-knuckled fist will extend itself from the pages and pummel me senseless. I click open my switchblade and stiffen my hands into fists. Ready. Now for the shattering of illusions, not bones, because it turns out Barbed Wire is way less offensive than I had hoped. The opening feature is a transcript of a drunken conversation about paintings and stuff between Haight (the main creator) and his friend, the painter. Their swapped stories of drunken escapades are funny, but it's mostly just banter. Eight whole pages of banter. Next, I read the short stories, the most disappointing being one about a fake market-research company who creates a group of drones to stir up violence at the G8 Summit. My question about this one is which side are they on? The reverse Stepford Wives story was all right, but the "Truth About Archie" exposé had no real insight or comedic value. So I escaped unharmed... unfortunately. (Heather Ball)

### Columbia Journal

newspaper, vol. 7, no. 1, February 2002. 16 pgs, 12/yr., \$30.00/yr. P.O. Box 2633, MPO, Vancouver, BC V6B 3W8, cjournal@axion.net

This is a good community paper coming from a soft left/progressive labour perspective. It could soon blossom, thanks to the election of a right wing government in B.C. that's easy to attack. This particular issue looks at the early days of the struggle against the



province's Liberal government, has an interesting piece on global warming by Tom Sanborn — so, hot enough for you? — and a good piece by John Retukis on social co-ops. It likely never will call for revolution, but it will tell you about grassroots struggles in B.C. that won't be covered elsewhere. (Brian Burch)

## Black Spectre Moan

**Culture Zine, #2, 42 pgs, Randy Gatley, \$2 or trade, PO Box 21525 1850 Commercial Dr, Vancouver, BC V5N 4A5, handfulls@easyliving.com**

This was one of those awesome but weird zines whose entire focus makes sense internally, but is difficult to relate to those who haven't read it. What have Eric Von Stroheim, the silent film director whom Hollywood ruined, and old time "race records" got in common? Who knows, but this zine tells a long and detailed history of both, then uses these takes to dissent the term "artifact." To what purpose, only Randy knows, but the ride he takes us on is amazing and great. (Flick Harrison)

## Assholes Politicians Economists & Cops

**political zine, 78 pages, \$5 suggested donation, edited by Toad & Rielle, c/o Spartacus Books, 311 W. Hastings Street, Coast Salish Territory, Vancouver, BC, letitbeknown@dojo.tao.ca, www.tao.ca/~letitbeknown/**

Political writing usually falls into two distinct categories. Those who already know their audience and write accordingly, and those who simply have some views to share and hopefully will sway those to their argument. The zine APEC (clever, no?) contains more of the former than the latter. Though the general content of the scene is the typical political cartoons and vitriolic rants against various governments and institutions, there is a fair amount of good information to be found within these pages, which are surprisingly abundantly footnoted as well. That's something I wish a lot of other political zines would do, so people can look up sources more easily. Overall, APEC is well intentioned, and speaks to its own audience. (Kevin Jagernauth)

## Blood Sky

**chapbook, 23 pgs, \$7, Daniel Rajala, 32-746 Richards St., Vancouver, BC, V6B 3A4, streaker@vcn.bc.ca**

The thing that irks me most about this chapbook (and I say "most" because plenty of things bug me about it) is its price. Seven dollars for 23 pages? What the hell? Even though the packaging is pretty nice, seven bucks is a lot of scratch to drop. Other than that, here are a couple of other things: the poem "BLOOD" (all caps, here, people) is possibly the most annoying thing ever put to paper. The vaguely leftist slant to all of the writing, which isn't presented in such a way as to seem clever, comes across as dull. And, finally, the dismal layout that screams: Teen Angst! (Anthony Gerace)

## Alberta and Manitoba

### A Soft Degrad

**zine, #3, \$?, Chad Schultz, 58 2nd St. NE, Medicine Hat, AB, T1A 5K7**

A Soft Degrad has four different writers writing different stories throughout, so you can imagine that there's some diversity within the writing... but each piece in this zine is remarkably similar. The same somewhat-snarky tone, the same layout... everything. Which, when the writing is decent, is not a bad case; and the writing here is alright. So, I'm not complaining. Basically focussing on day-to-day happenings, and adding a little humour now and then. Nothing to write home about, but certainly not bad, by any means. (Anthony Gerace)

### Latchkey

**Zine, #2, 40 pgs, \$5, Jennie O., Studio #3, 468 Main St., Winnipeg, MB, R3B 1B6**

This is, apparently, "Winnipeg's leading all-girl zine" and who are we to disagree? The premise is simple. Winnipeg girls do whatever they want. The results, from comics to short stories to collages, is surprisingly fun and definitely obsessed with matters of a sexual nature. For instance, there's the double page spread, one side a tribute to men's under-

wear, the other side a look at "ladies unmentionables." There's a valentine story and some ruminations on Sex & The City that has a nice juxtaposition between the show's characters and real life Winnipeg women. Anyway, though not explicitly stated, I think there's a valentine's/love theme going on in this issue. Such a predetermined theme would prevent us from arguing that the ladies of Winnipeg have but one thing on their minds. Ah well. I guess I'll see if I can get a refund on my ticket to the 'Peg. A very solid zine with a diverse range of entertaining perspectives and talents. (Hal Niedzviecki)

## Sunburn

**Comic Anthology, #17, \$3, Karl Thomsen, Editor/Publisher, 32pgs, P.O. Box 2061, Winnipeg, MB, R3C 3R4, www.escape.ca/~mosfog/**

I guess editor Karl Thomsen is slapping on the SPF30, 'cause he has announced that there shall be no more Sunburn. After six years, the Winnipeg comic anthology is folding in high style with this death-themed final issue. Treatments of the theme vary from disarmingly solemn to charmingly nutty, the more successful probably being the latter. 21 contributions plus a bonus 28-page comic insert will keep you contemplating your mortality for some time. Just as thermometers are a better bargain in the summertime 'cause you get more mercury, you gotta pick this one up while it's hot. (Jon Sasaki)

## Saskatchewan

### The Grain of Salt

**newspaper, vol. 3, issue 3, free, 10-908 15th St. East, Saskatoon, SK, S7N 0R3**

I want you to close your eyes and imagine something with me. Imagine if The Onion were written without any of the wit and intelligence that make it so special, and that the fake articles that were so good were replaced with fake articles of a covertly racist slant, such as, "English Teacher in Vietnam Happy with the Duong He Gets," and features like "Mullet of the Month." Now open your eyes, and realize... this is not merely imagined, it's The Grain of Salt! Avoid this at all costs. (Anthony Gerace)

### Backyard Ashes

**litazine, #2, 18 pages, \$3, edited by Brecken Hancock & Adrienne Gruber, 34 MacKenzie Street, Saskatoon, SK, S7J 2R5, backyard\_ashes@hotmail.com**

This full-page sized zine, dedicated to talented "writers in limbo," is sprawling with poetry, prose and illustration, but unfortunately none of it's terribly exciting. Beautiful layout, but content that needs real editing before this can become the halfway house of authors on their way up. (Kevin Jagernauth)

## Toronto

### Exile

**literary journal, vol 25, #2, 130 pgs, \$12, Barry Callaghan (editor), Box 67, Station B, Toronto, ON M5T 2C0**

Most writers live in self-imposed exile, but it is the good ones that have the courage and patience to exile themselves to uncharted territories. As expected, this is a wonderful collection of short stories, poetry and visual art that leads readers into the unexplored regions the mind, into the darker, more hidden corners of desire and frustration. Each contributor speaks from a different place of his or her own making. The opening story by Nancy Huston, A Prologue in Heaven, is a beautiful piece that uses the writer-as-creator theme to set the mood for the beginning of the adventure. It describes the artist as a being full of contradictions, with a particular vision of creation. The longing to perfect the writing is powerful, yet the God is imperfect, "I can see that it is good but it is never good enough." A series of poems by Shannon Bramer provide a hauntingly intimate look at the life of a scarf-saleswoman. This is a very sexy issue and a special nod must be given to Peter Holka's Love as a Crime, in which the main character lives in a wild, questionable reality, and Hal Niedzviecki's The Sexographer, where seduction is art and laconic language reveals the multiple facets of lust. Each piece leads down a different road of experience, showing how in a way we are all exiled by our own headspace. This must be read. (Heather Ball)



## Fear Itself

comic, #6, \$3, Matthew Brown, 33 Orchardview Blvd., #507, Toronto, ON, M4R 2E9, teacherintherye@hotmail.com

There is basically one mostly visual story here. It's creepy. A pig with a permanently grinning leer cruises around town with a skull riding shotgun. Things heat up when he runs into a young penguin. I don't know what this means, but Brown has a way of creating tension and a compulsion to turn the page that is admirable. I will see that pig tonight in my restless dreams. (Hal Niedzviecki)

## All On Standby

perzine, #1, \$2, Toronto, jooksingmvi@aol.com  
Sometimes, when I've read too many perzines, it gets to me that the combined intelligence and articulate nature of so many talented young women is dedicated exclusively to inventing more elegant ways to say, "I am alone, confused and alienated." All On Standby does its bit in this ongoing endeavour, delivering the message admirably and inventively and with a heartbreaking clarity through found images juxtaposed with scraps of poetry, rants, stories and ruminations. Now, if only it were about something... (Wendy Banks)

## Raku

poetry chapbook, \$5. 40 pgs, Edward Baranosky, 115 Parkside Drive, Toronto ON, M6R 2Y8, ebaranosky@hotmail.com

The latest chapbook from Toronto-based poet and artist Edward Baranosky takes the Korean art of Raku pottery

as a point of departure. Raku, which loosely translates as "Happy Chance," involves the special tempering of a glazed finish to produce unpredictable patterns of iridescence. Likewise, Baranosky's poetry radiates an effortless luminescence, but one that belies his studied craftsmanship. He is an accomplished student of traditional Asian poetry, and for this one he pulls out all the Haiku, Tanka and Glosa stops. Happy chance best describes a piece of found poetry culled from the pages of the Toronto Star... a "who would have thought" article about the return of Zeppelin blimps. Hindenburgs in the age of frequent flyer points. Anachronisms abound in Raku, but the wide-ranging historical references are pregnant with meaning for contemporary readers. (Jon Sasaki)

## The Catalyst

newsletter, Feb-Mar 2002, 8 pgs, 6/yr. \$15/yr., or included in \$50 membership (cheques to Citizens for Public Justice), #311, 229 College St., Toronto, ON, M5J 1R4, cpi@cpi.ca, www.cpi.ca

Sometimes radicalism has a gentle face. This social justice publication, produced by a group rising from the Christian Reformed Tradition, calls for a radical approach to social and economic problems that marginalize and cause harm to individuals and the environment. It touches on everything from composting to immigration to inclusion after September 11. I often read publications that are motivated by anger, but the concerns expressed here rise from a view that the idea of love your neighbour is a radical and dangerous notion. (Brian Burch)

## Kiss Machine

zine, #4, \$5, Emily Pohl-Weary and Paolo Poletto (editors), 18 Virtue St., Toronto, ON, M6R 1C2

There's a ton of quality stuff in this 88 page lit-zine. As always, the theme is wacked out, and some of the contributors try too hard to work in aliens and hospitals. But there's plenty of solid writing here that doesn't feel like it was thought up just, well, because. Kerri Huffman gives us a strong, if somewhat familiar, teen abortion story. In fact, there are several pregnancy mentions in this zine, I guess playing on the theory that pregnancy is like having an alien thing inside you and usually involves a trip to the hospital. Jeff Otaku tells us about a visit to Japan that goes all wrong. Comics by Marc Ngui and a pretty impressive poster/drawing/chart thingie called Ravings of a Woman Not On Prozac round out this very entertaining and worthwhile publication. (Hal Niedzviecki)

## Peace News

magazine, No. 2446, May 2002, 42 pgs., 4/yr. \$36/yr. cheques payable to Ken Simons, c/o 710 Bathurst St, Toronto, ON, M5S 2R4, peace-news@gn.apc.org,

From conscientious objection to ploughshares actions to occasional reprints of classic statements on nonviolence, Peace News is one of the most effective voices of nonviolent activists around. The regular section called "Tools" is very helpful for movements working for social transformation. It also includes a good calendar of events and campaigns from around the world — a phenomenal

# e n d e a r i n g



EDISON WOODS PHOTO BY STEPHEN REF

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reminder that nonviolent resistance is global. (Brian Burch)

## Revolted

zine, #3, 10 pages, free, Rob Rao, 10 Russett Avenue, Toronto, ON, M6H 3M3

Full page zines are hard to pull off, but c'mon, when it's five stapled pages can you at least put some effort into filling those pages. I'm tired of both lo-tech and hi-tech zines that think "less" is more aesthetic. It's not, it's frustrating. Rob has a lot to say, but unfortunately before we get to anything substantial, we're on the last page, having quickly forgotten what we just went through and wondering why half the zine was text or images borrowed from other people. (Kevin Jagernauth)

## Resources for Radicals: An Annotated Bibliography for Those Active in Social Change

Toronto Action for Social Change, 3rd edition, \$12, P.O. Box 73620, 509 St. Clair Ave. West, Toronto, ON M6C 1C0, [tasc@web.ca](mailto:tasc@web.ca)

A must-have for anyone looking to stir up some shit for a purpose, this publication is an amazing collection of tools for any activist. It even includes a brief description/review of each item, so the prospective agitator can get a better idea of what they might need. Wherever there is opinion or the need for justice, this will

help you read about it. Transcendentalism, confronting sexual harassment, the fight against poverty, social policy — I could literally go on and on, but then we'd have to print the whole book. There is a significant amount of Canadian content (excellent) but there are also tons of references to universally-applicable theories and issues to keep any serious protester occupied for years. Plus the price is ridiculously low for such an amazing resource. Now stop reading about it and get it. (Heather Ball)

## Jones Ave.

poetry zine, #7, \$2, 88 Dagmar Ave., Toronto, ON, M4M 1W1, Canada

Finally, a poetry zine which remains interesting throughout. I kid you not: the poems in here are all fantastic! Take, for instance, Nicole Blizzard's "In Transit," which houses this awesome stanza: "and I think of/your skin/and how I want/to concoct some/clumsiness or/accident/that would let me/brush mine/against yours/however briefly/while I stifle a sigh/within". I think this is probably the first time I've ever really been smitten with a poetry zine. Or, at least, the first time in a really long while. Get this now! (Anthony Gerace)

## Infiltration

zine, #17, \$1, PO Box 13, Station E, Toronto, M6H 4E1

A new issue of Ninjalicious's Canadian classic, Infiltration, is always an occasion. I say Canada, because Ninj is, after all, the classic Canadian — shy, polite, but just a bit deceptive. This issue introduces us to the reckless lunacy of Dan, who convinces Ninj to scale the glass ceiling of

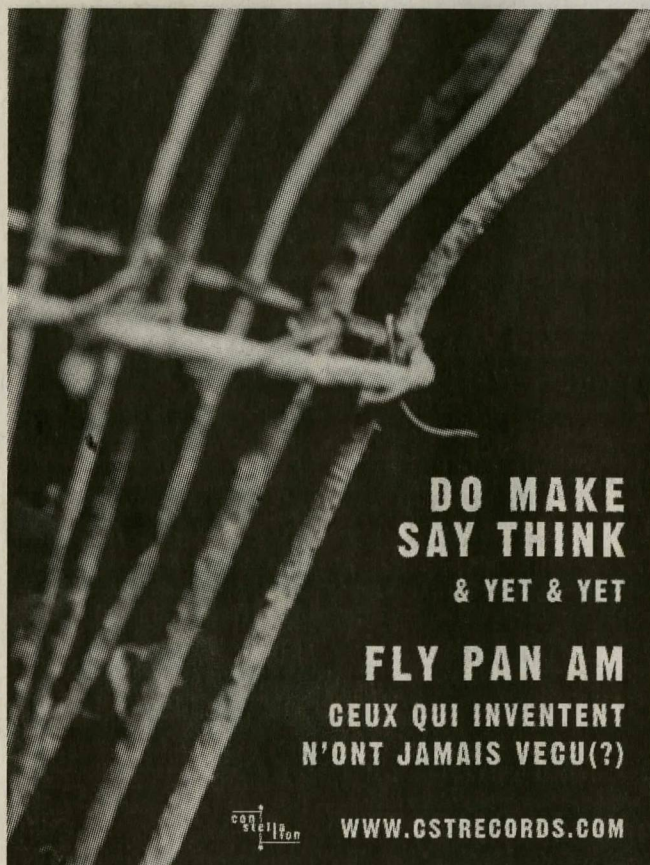
the Eaton Centre. As Ninj writes: "The escapade had felt incredibly dangerous to me, especially since I hardly knew Dan, and I hadn't been quite sure if he was brave or just insane." Well, maybe a little of both? Dan himself answers the question by then contributing a lengthy letter in which he attempts to "explore" the Toronto subway system, just about gets himself killed, and ends up arrested. Definitely not Ninj's style of going places you're not supposed to go. The rest of this fine issue is devoted mostly to climbing escapades — ie. scaling tall buildings from the outside, pretty much just for the hell of it. (Hal Niedzviecki)

## Other Ontario

### Underground — The Magazine of the North American Animal Liberation Front Supporters Group

Activist magazine, #17, 47 pgs, \$3.50, NA-A.L.F.S.G. Box 69597, 5845 Yonge St., Willowdale, ON, Canada, M2M 4K3

This magazine includes profiles of imprisoned animal rights activists, descriptions of actions embarked upon in the past year by the A.L.F. and the Earth Liberation Front, an interview with an A.L.F. activist and a guide to police interrogations. The tone is serious and competent,



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and the letters from incarcerated activists are moving and inspiring. A worthwhile read for activists, vegans, or anyone who's interested in finding out what illegal direct action's all about. (Wendy Banks)

## Lichen

literary journal, vol 4, no 1, \$9, spring 2002, Steven Laird, Ingrid Ruthig, Gwynn Scheltema, Ruth E. Walker (Editorial Board), 234-701 Rossland Road East, Whitby, ON, Canada L1N 9K3, info@lichenjournal.ca, www.lichenjournal.ca

Whether you pronounce it "like-en" or "litch-en," this literary magazine lives up to its mandate to "take a cue from their publication's botanical namesake...and publish the many creative artists whose diverse work springs from the bedrock of this community." A professionally produced, black and white magazine, Lichen is the perfect size (5 x 8) to carry with you and delve into for an entertaining, educating, and enervating read. Currently published twice-yearly in spring and fall, each volume has a theme, and this one is "fractures." Interpreted intriguingly by local and international writers, the theme runs through the prose, poetry, reviews, fiction, graphics, and even a short play. Claiming to be global, about 50% of its content comes from Canadians contributors, but work by people from New Zealand, USA, South Africa, and Bulgaria add to the excellent potpourri of this non-profit venture. Future themes include "letters," in fall 2002, and "motion" in fall 2003. Whether picked up at the bookstore, or because you're a subscriber, Lichen is definitely worthy of your attention. (Ffion Llwyd-Jones)

## The Blue Planet

newsletter, vol. 6, no. 5, winter 2001, 16 pgs, \$15, 3404 Parslow Rd., R.R. # 2, Lyn, ON, KOE 1M0, johanna@theblueplanet.ca, www.theblueplanet.ca

This is a newsletter produced by individual activists who share a commitment to a better world. It has a small town/rural feel to it and takes seriously the exhortation to "Think Globally. Act Locally." Issues as diverse as fair trade coffee and the environmental impact of diapers are examined. I particularly liked Marianne Samann-Wyss' piece, "How Far Away is Afghanistan?" Judith Cleland's untitled poem, dealing with lists, was also quite funny. All the pieces here come out of a sense of hope, not anger. It is an encouraging effort. (Brian Burch)

## Free Society

politico zine, \$2, 571 Aylmer St. N., Peterborough, ON, K9H 3W8, Canada

This zine is everything I'm not: Political, punk, a staunch follower of the DIY ethos. Therefore, I feel that I can't rightly comment on the material within. It's good for what it is, which is something that I don't really follow. Get it if you like politics, punk, the DIY ethos, or any of those things in tandem. (Anthony Gerace)

## Freebase

lit zine, F-176 Vol 1, 22pgs, James Crabbe (ed) \$4, 782 Victoria St #6, Windsor, ON, Canada N9A 4N2

A few good if juvenile short stories. Drugs, mouse killing,

Sexy Wifebeaters, joys of travel. A good photo montage contrasting "Bullit" with car accident documents. Hmmmm.... A letter from Timothy McVeigh was interesting but simply lifted from Harper's. Oh well. (Flick Harrison)

## Big Boots

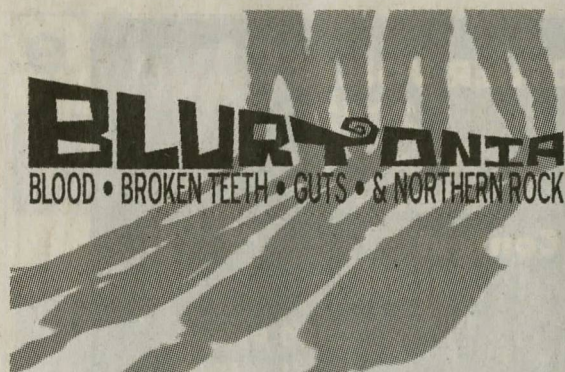
zine, #2, \$1, Una Lee (editor), 91 Friuli Ct. #22, Woodbridge, ON, L4L 4G5

The weighty question of sustenance occupies this zine devoted to issues surrounding the experiences of women of colour. A rumination on pork with sugar stretches to make an argument about ethnic diversity. Una Lee's Luck House works out better: it's a simple story about her experiences as a waiter in a Chinese Restaurant. As she deals with the rude, the ignorant and the lecherous, she notices the way the path from the restaurant to the kitchen is worn down. It's a simple way of recognizing a continuity in time, and the unique experience of the many Asian women who have done what she is doing, and who will struggle in the future to get through another night serving noodles. For the next issue, this zine will be taking on the weighty topic of language, and they're looking for submissions. (Hal Niedzviecki)

## King of the Hill of the Mentally Ill

compilation mag, installment #3, 5 pgs, \$2, Kevin C. Pearce, 4476 Concord Place, Burlington, ON, L7L 1J4, kevinpearce@yahoo.com

This third installment the mag is made up of about eight different pieces, some in the form of dialogue, others



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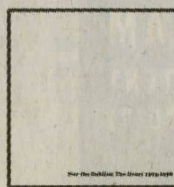
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very short (2-3 lines) stories mixed in with random stuff. Thoughts. Snippets. I just wish I had a better idea of how seriously to take it all, because the content is half angst-propaganda and half chuckle-worthy. Pearce's greatest talent is his well-honed sense of irony and playing on that would benefit the collective impact of the writing. The best example of this is a truly funny dialogue where one character explains how he's hired a hitman to kill himself, while the other speaker brutally insults him with honesty. It made me think twice about having those lame "they'll be sorry when I die" daydreams. Then there's stuff like the phone conversation between a guy and his mom about how many funerals they've been to, which flopped because the overly stale dialogue made it sound like a bad high school skit that nobody wanted to act in. Oh, between irony and falling flat, there is such a fine line. (Heather Ball)

## Coded Life

poetry zine, \$5, Tim Lidster, 84 Ewen Rd., Hamilton, ON, L8S 3C5

Tim's been busy. Sent us a package with no fewer than 4 distinct zine publications. My favourite was Coded Life, a colour photocopy job in which blurry pics of a naked guy (Tim himself?) are thrown on top of a book about the Fall of Nero. The opposing pages have captions for all this activity, like: "The ass end of reality." Stupid yet entertaining and possessing a depth that defies logic (whatever logic is) this zine worked for me. For the record, the other pubs are: This Is America (\$2), an anti-establishment cut and paste jobbie that was so-so; Minor Movements of the Whole (\$3), an unedited journal like thing that came out of Tim's trip to Naropa University's

poetry workshops. Some good stuff in there, particularly "Entering the Poem Contest" — "Remember. Half this poem exists off this page and must also be considered." I suspect the same is true for all of Lidster's work. (Hal Niedzviecki)

## Microwave Safety Features

zine, 50 cents, Claire Heslop & Mike Gretes, 49 Beaufort Street, London, ON, N6G 1A6

A short collage zine that chooses its images indiscriminately and does not know when to stop. Among the random bits that are xeroxed within the pages of this zine are Trident wrappers and a high school timetable. A headache inducing array of images accompany some personal writing. (Kevin Jagernauth)

## XYZed Magazine

zine, #14, 23 pgs, \$2, J. Anxiety-Stewart, Anxiety Press, 6 Haig St., St. Catharines, ON, L2R 6K5

We're gonna play a little game, my answer to J. Anxiety's claim that this issue is without theme. The game is appropriately called "Name That Theme," and all you have to do is read a series of article topics and figure out what they all have in common. Ready? Here we go: "Old and Rare Record Reviews," "The Black Walls: Video Store Oldies Review," "Remembered Yet Unknown: Jackie Earle Haley and Keith Gordon," "Ten of the Biggest Failures in Home Electronics" (lasers, AM Stereos, LP walkmans) and "A Case of Mistaken

Identity: 70s Tunes Embraced by the Wrong Decade." If the picture isn't coloured in yet, I'll throw in the clincher, which is that Anxiety even brings in his childhood friend as a guest-writer. This reeling-retro zine is fun to read, like faking sick and watching reruns all day long. (Heather Ball)

## Intermittent Blue


zine, \$2, Kristina Madonia & Jaime Maddalena, 77 Cricklewood Crescent, Thornhill, ON, L3T 4T8, intermittent\_blue@hotmail.com

The authors of this zine themselves claim that it is a "fragmented poetry zine", and indeed it is. Free flowing, floating but ultimately a bit empty, I wasn't sure what there was to "get." A noble effort lost on this reviewer. (Kevin Jagernauth)

## Piezine

zine, #3&4, 30 pgs, \$2, Karley Tabak & Chris George, P.O. Box 21055 LPMPO, 84 Lynden Park Rd., Brantford, ON, N3R 7W9, stop\_pop\_rawk@hotmail.com, www.piezine.cjb.net

Issue three of Piezine is mostly breathless, inarticulate young punks interviewing other breathless, inarticulate young punks uncritically about the music industry. There's an article by Ralph Nader reprinted from his website, there are some lame-ish movie and CD reviews and some tasty-looking vegan recipes... All in all, not a bad way to beguile those last sleepy drag days of suburban youth, but not exactly dazzling. Issue four is way better, more focused and political, with more interesting



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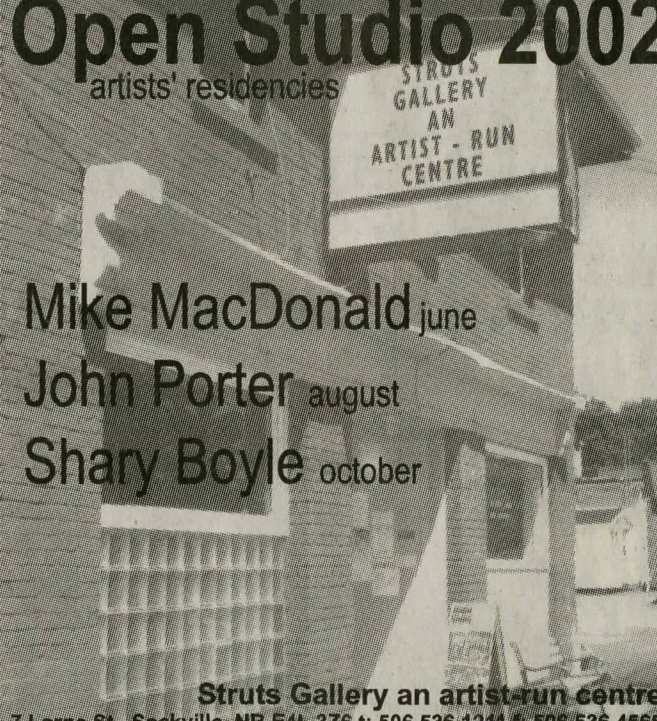
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interviews. Even the layout's more attractive. They've got the right idea, and they're moving in the right direction. I'm curious to see what they do with issue five. (Wendy Banks)

## The Science Diet Raga

comic, Friendly Rich, \$free, Brampton, ON, [www.friendlyrich.com](http://www.friendlyrich.com)

Sick little tale from Brampton's finest and weirdest indie talent. A donkey/horse creature that looks like neither, a jockey named Randy Waffles and a moral that includes life lessons regarding mortadella all inform this fine little comic book. (Hal Niedzviecki)

## Sleepy Zine

zine, #2, 16 pgs, \$2, Dan Heilbrunn, [sleepyzine@hotmail.com](mailto:sleepyzine@hotmail.com)

It's a black & white photocopied zine about bmx and photography. There's a rant about how you shouldn't wear name-brand clothing, some pretty funny record reviews, and an interview with Joe Rich. That's about it, in big-ass fonts with fancy layouts and lots of pictures. Not a lot of content, but what's there shows a good deal of enthusiasm. (Wendy Banks)

## Montreal

### Fish Piss

zine, vol 2, #2, \$3, Louis Rastelli (editor), Box 1232 Place d'Armes, Montreal, QC, H2Y 3K2

Having once received all kinds of flack for calling this the best zine in Canada, I'll refrain from those kind of superlatives and simply note that this is a very very solid zine, one of the few that spans almost 100 pages and publishes regularly. In this issue, requiems and RIP to the York Theatre (destroyed by Concordia to make space for more glass and concrete), Pierre Elliott Trudeau and Rocket Richard. Fish Piss has been around for five years now or so, and I like the way it is evolving into a more underground, Montreal-located Geist, with editor Louis in the role of Stephen Osborne, essayist/ scenester/ raconteur with a conscience. This issue, Louis writes about visiting a really scary neighbourhood of Cleveland packed with illegal factories and liquor stores selling malt liquor quarts for a \$1.29. Then there's the personal-type stories by other contributors, like Alex Megelas on a shoplifter who goes crazy when he gets caught. Huge section devoted to the Quebec Summit Protests, interviews, fiction, comics and more. The best? I have my opinion, but I'll keep it to myself. (Hal Niedzviecki)

### Mastock

experimental music zine, #4, 18pgs, Francois Marceau, trade or postage, 7375 Louis-Hebert, Montreal, QC, H2E 2X5, [francois.marceau2@sympatico.ca](mailto:francois.marceau2@sympatico.ca)

The best thing about this is the glossary of techno terms on page 1. May not be big news, but it lets you know where the zinester stands right away. Included an interview with reclusive Simon Sinistar DFS, then just tons of pages of reviews. Imagery of McDonalds workers and technogak is pretty pedestrian though chuckle-worthy. (Flick Harrison)

## de(con)struction

fiction chapbook by Vincent Tinguely, 26 pages, Egg Sandwich Press/Editions Sandwich Aux Oeufs, 5824 Clark Street, Montreal, QC, H2T 2V7

A writer has just arrived in Montreal "stripped of any sense of purpose," having lost a girlfriend and let go of what used to be his life. He mopes around for awhile, occasionally makes very interesting observations, and occasionally puffs clouds of poetic bad-breath. For example: "Punching a wall. Too long without a dollar? Too long alone?" He has a tepid affair and finally finds a degree of redemption in a relationship with the ex-girlfriend of his alpha-male friend Evan. He's her consolation cup, and we suspect, partly from a dream he has of being molested by a satyr, that she's his. I'm glad I read de(con)struction, there are many lovely, nuanced descriptions, and some memorable scenes. It makes me curious about Tinguely's other writing. But de(con)struction feels way too much like the narrator's savouring his own squalor so that he can write about it, much like Jack Kerouac did in The Subterraneans. (Donato Mancini)

## Quebec

### Kindling

zine, #3, 22pages, \$1, Stephanie Mansell, 648 White Crescent, Greenfield Park, QC, J4V 1G1

I've always been accused of being overly negative, and it's something that I don't really deny. However, there's plenty of reason to be negative! In a sea of meaningless

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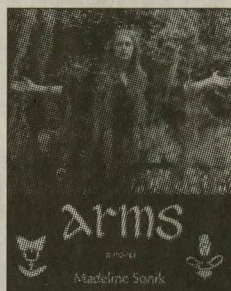






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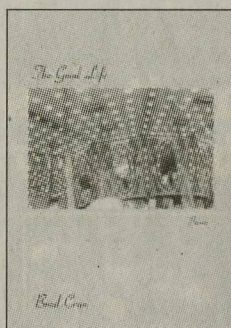
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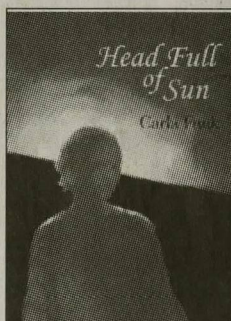


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—Hal Niedzviecki

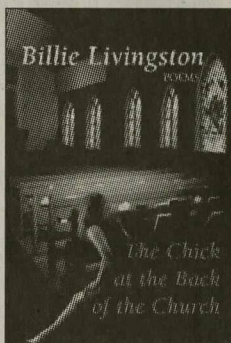


## **Head Full of Sun**

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"Her images are unexpected windows to tenderness & terror."

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## **The Chick at the Back of the Church**

Billie Livingston  
poetry • \$16.95

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—Georgia Straight

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earnest, detail-oriented mystical gaijin fiction belongs. And Jennifer Paquette's "The Song at the Sea" was lovely, intense, painful and sexy. Bravo Qwerty, don't die. (Flick Harrison)

## Bent Voices

politico zine, #1, free, P.O. Box 20111, Fredericton, NB, E3B 7A2, [mail@bent-voices.org](mailto:mail@bent-voices.org)

The thing I like most about Bent Voices is that it doesn't force its politics down your throat. It's there, and it's got some personal articles, and some political articles, and if you want to read it, go for it... and if you don't, don't! The writing is clever and interesting without being pretentious, and it's not preachy. Although this isn't really my bag, I'll recommend it knowing that it's full of good stuff. (Anthony Gerace)

## USA

## Zine World: A Reader's Guide to the Underground Press

#16, 86 pgs, \$5 CAN & \$4 US for single copy, subscriptions available, Underground Press, P.O. Box 330156, Murfreesboro, TN, 37133-0156, [www.undergroundpress.org](http://www.undergroundpress.org)

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## Round Things Roll

zine, #3, 48 pgs, \$2.50, Allison Williams, P.O. Box 11384, Portland, OR, 97211, USA, [romegrecords@hotmail.com](mailto:romegrecords@hotmail.com)

For those who might think "acoustic punk" is a contradiction in terms, all is explained in this great zine. Combining interviews, discussions, travel logs and cool anecdotes of tour life for independent musicians, it's a tribute to those who live and die by DIY. Are they hippies? Are they punks? Who knows and who cares? You can't help but be totally fascinated by the spirit of this zine. I felt so good reading sentences like "We then drove and played a fun show in a beautiful, dusty basement" or "I see revolutions in the smiles." Williams seems happy with what she has and doesn't have and puts a positive spin on situations that would leave most of us as pissed off as a quick-tempered driver in rush hour. Round is driven by life whether or not it runs out of gas, 'cause it's real fuel is having the attitude to make it happen. When I read this I was appropriately semi-homeless and out of my mind but I was reminded of what's pleasant in life. Williams lists "a shower, a bed, a breeze, decent coffee," but I just want to add "a damn great read" to that list. (Heather Ball)

## Decades of Confusion Feed the Insect

zine, \$2 US, #30, #31, Mr. Justin D., 218 Buckingham Place, Philadelphia, PA 19104, [eulogycontact@hotmail.com](mailto:eulogycontact@hotmail.com)

This zine clearly has a unique look and drawing style, and excellent writing, but does not keep a standard size, and so it probably hasn't reached its full potential. The zine is centered around music, and both issues feature entertaining interviews: #30 interviews The Scabs, and #31 interviews Tuvan Band's Yat Kha. This is an informative, entertaining, intelligent zine with a refined voice. Philadelphia-based Mr. Justin Duerr is a more than competent lyricist if the zine is any indication, as it is propelled by an appealing poetic style. This is by far the zine's strength. Images remain choppy. However, I like this zine because it is forward-thinking as it looks at the post-punk avant-garde underground. "Decades of Confusion Feed the Insect" is for readers looking for unique word strings, and a "green" underground that concerns itself with the choice for a better world: "Shooting stars shoot down my block, irradiating the faces of/ dancing dolls about to fall apart./ Into the wombed hands in the lightning begins to dart..." (from #30) The future is terribly exciting. (Paola V Poletto)



## Xtra Tuf

Zine, #4, 48 pgs, \$2 US/\$2.70 Cdn, trade/stamps welcome, free to prisoners who refrain from pornographic epistolary overtures and commercial fishing women, Moe Bowstern, PO Box 6834, Portland, OR 97228

First: It's got a dazzlingly stylin' cover. Second: It's typed on very nice yellow paper. Third: It contains two very different, but equally fascinating, autobiographical accounts by women of how they got into commercial fishing. Trust me, it's a great read, funny, confessional and observant. Moe's story, "Why I Hate Cooking, or How I Fed Glass to People I Hated and Watched them Bleed from the Mouth," is an angsty, salty, reflective coming of age story, kind of like if Joseph Conrad had collaborated with Judy Blume. It never would have occurred to me to ask for this zine, but now that I've had some, I crave more. (Wendy Banks)

## Pick Your Poison

memoir, #1&2, 48 pgs each, \$1 US + stamps, Nate Gangelhoff, PO Box 8995, Minneapolis, MN 55408, [PickYourPoison@beer.com](mailto:PickYourPoison@beer.com)

Aww, man. If I get another life after this one, I want to spend at least some of it being a little badass suburban kid, mouthing off to my teachers and doing petty crimes like Nate Gangelhoff. Especially if I get to write about it as well as he does. These two zines collect little stories about badass things he and his friends did between the ages of about eight and 15, with a few from the present thrown in for good measure — things like shoplifting, getting drunk, breaking into malls, running from the

cops. Even the sad stories about fucked-up kids have an infectious momentum, and overall the zine is hilarious the way hanging out with your favourite smart, poorly behaved thirteen-year-old is hilarious. Compulsively readable. (Wendy Banks)

## Low Hug

zine, #7, 36 pgs, \$2 or equivalent, non-poetic trade, A.J. Michel, PO Box 2574, Champaign, IL 61825-2574, [lowhug@yahoo.com](mailto:lowhug@yahoo.com)

For me, reading Low Hug was like spending a long evening at a tedious dinner party with a bunch of people I don't particularly like. I mean, I don't hate them, either, but after everybody reminisces about where in their Midwestern college town they were on September 11, launches into a lengthy discussion of DVD features, and listens to an extended rundown of one guy's favourite moments from the first season of The Simpsons, I just want to go home and lie in the dark with a cold cloth over my eyes. "Merging the personal and the popular"? Save it for the water cooler, guys. (Wendy Banks)

## Verbicide

magazine, #5, 88 pages, \$5 U.S., edited by Jackson Ellison & Douglas Novielli, Scissor Press, P.O. Box 206512, New Haven, CT, 06520, [jackson@scissorpress.com](mailto:jackson@scissorpress.com) or [doug@scissorpress.com](mailto:doug@scissorpress.com), [www.scissorpress.com/verbicide](http://www.scissorpress.com/verbicide)

Despite the awkward handle, Verbicide is a fast growing, and surprisingly good read. Only on its fifth issue, it firmly has a firm grasp on what a good and interesting

punk magazine is — Punk Planet should be taking notes. Where the aforementioned definitely takes the cake on design, Verbicide blows it out of the water on content. The interviews with punk icon Ian Mackaye, photographer Cynthia Connolly and hardcore band Grade are lengthy and interesting. The questions are fresh and original, leading to responses you won't find in print elsewhere. The magazine gets derailed by mediocre fiction and poetry, but it's a young zine and with so much going for it, that a small fault can be overlooked. Recommended. (Kevin Jagernauth)

## Unwaxed/Fightscene

split zine, #12/#6, c/o Dead Dog Productions, Pete, 1800 Engel Road #948, Lawrence, KS, 66045, USA, [deathmetalmans53@hotmail.com](mailto:deathmetalmans53@hotmail.com)

This is the weirdest collaboration I have ever come across. Unwaxed is a God-inspired personal zine with mediocre record reviews, poetry revolving around Him, an interview with the author himself and some Bible quotations thrown in for good measure. Fightscene comes out of the gates with an inverted cross, pentagram and the words metal and beer in bold marker. Following that are rants against soccer moms and an article about the important role women play in men's lives and then listing every important woman in Pete's life. Am I missing something? (Kevin Jagernauth)

## Space Car Junkie

comic, #5, 20 pgs, \$2, Micah Liesenfeld, PO Box 1731, St. Charles, MO, 63302, USA

A pen and ink comic that, sadly, doesn't live up to the

subTERRAIN

# Creative Non-fiction Contest

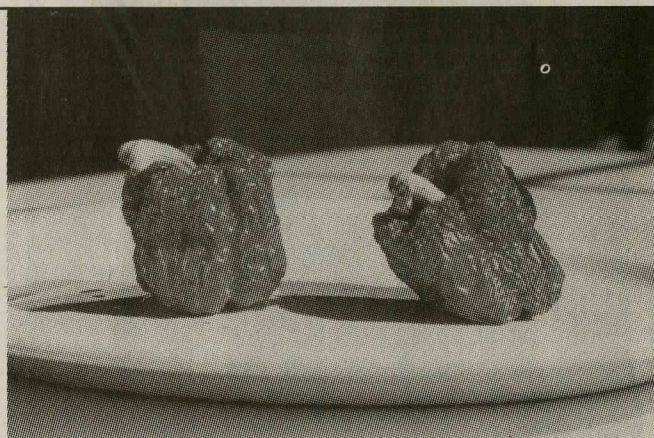
First, a note on the term creative non-fiction. What is it? is the question often asked. What exactly do we mean? It's a story conveying not just "the facts, ma'am," but an experience, a tale complete with true events utilizing the tools of fiction if necessary to present itself—the documentary from a literary, not journalistic approach. Creative non-fiction doesn't *report* as much as *tells*. We all tell stories, and a simple account of "a day in the life" can be an extraordinary example of creative non-fiction.

### Rules:

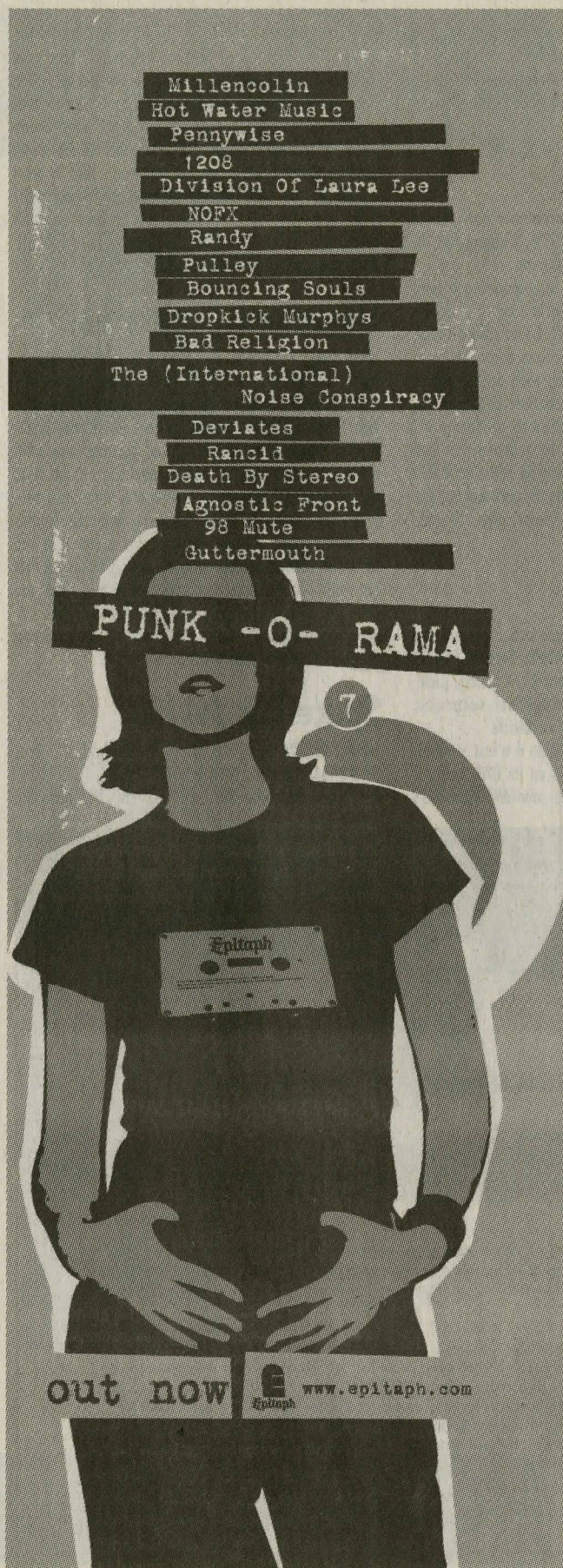
- 1) Submissions are not limited to any specific topic or subject.
- 2) Entries must be unpublished and a maximum length of 4,000 words.
- 3) Entry fee is \$20 per submission; additional entries may be submitted if accompanied by a supplementary fee of \$5 per entry.
- 4) The deadline for entries is August 1, 2002 (postmarked).
- 5) There is a \$250 cash prize for the winner plus publication in the Winter issue of subTERRAIN.
- 6) All entrants receive a one-year subscription to subTERRAIN.
- 7) Submissions to be accompanied by a stamped self-addressed envelope and typed on 8 1/2 x 11 paper, double spaced (no disks, please).

### Send submissions to:

Creative Non-Fiction Contest, subTERRAIN Magazine, P.O. Box 3008, Main Post Office, Vancouver, BC V6B 3X5. Make cheques/money orders payable to subTERRAIN Magazine







potential of the author's abilities. The evocative pen strokes that grace the beginning and end of this story (which I regret to report isn't that engaging and involves a long section about vomit stories) gives in to almost lazy stick-figure drawings. Perhaps it isn't fair to give these crude drawings a "stick figure" description, but when you've seen glimmers of talent on the bookends, you wonder why the meat of the zine is comparably barren. (Kevin Jagernauth)

## Struggle

litzine, winter 2001-02. 36 pgs., \$2 cover., 4/yr. (cheques payable to Tim Hall), \$12 U.S./yr., other countries: \$15 U.S./yr., Tim Hall (ed.) P.O. Box 13261, Detroit, MI USA, 48213-0261, [timhall11@yahoo.com](mailto:timhall11@yahoo.com), [www.Strugglemagazine.com](http://www.Strugglemagazine.com)

This is a publication dedicated to hard left poetry, drama and fiction. It may not be the most polished literature, but it is passionate. There's work in Spanish and in translation, helping to break down some of the barriers between people across the world seeking the same vision. This particular issue had work dealing with everything from police violence (Bronx Night Riders) to being fired ("Ready, Aim, Fire") to the Palestinian struggle (A Christmas Dirge). At the end of it, one feels like one's head has repeatedly been slugged by the evils of the world. (Brian Burch).

## Sometimes

zine, #1, \$3, Tyson McCreary, 295 Grizzly Peak Blvd., Berkeley, CA, 94708, USA, [encantic@yahoo.com](mailto:encantic@yahoo.com), [www.some-times.org](http://www.some-times.org)

If all first issues were this good, being a zine reviewer would be heaven. The first few pages of this wonderful personal zine have more depth, scope and were far more interesting than all of other zines I got for review. Tyson writes simply and straight from his heart, without any pretenses. He isn't out to change the world or come up with any grand simplifications about the meaning of life, but rather to pass his story along — if you want to listen. And I suggest you do. Travel stories, music stories and a couple of interviews too. Worth checking out. (Kevin Jagernauth)

## Sugar Needle

review zine, #17, 16 pgs, \$?, Corina Fastwolf, PO Box 300152, Minneapolis, MN 55403 or Phlox, 1174 Briardcliff, Apt. 2, Atlanta, GA 30306

This is a great little zine, in which Corina and Phlox bravely try all kinds of crazy scary candy from around the world so you don't have to. This issue features glucose-fueled evaluations of hot pepper soda, Slovenian gummy pyramids, and French caramels made from sea salt, among others. Reviews are handwritten and illustrated with photocopies and hand-drawn facsimiles of candy labels. An entertaining read, whether you love candy or merely like it. (Wendy Banks)

## Needle and Hook

knitting zine, #1, 6 pgs, 50 cents US or one 1st class stamp, Alex, 330 Brownsville Rd., Pittsburgh, PA 15210, [alex@needleandhook.com](mailto:alex@needleandhook.com)

Here's a zine for punks who like to knit! It includes knitting instructions, knitting jokes, a knitting interview, and an extensive list of albums you might want to listen to while knitting. Weighing in at six pages, it's a bit skimpy. Some practical instructions for people who want to get started and know nothing at all about needles or yarn or anything would be cool. Still, a good li'l DIY zine for people into knitting. (Wendy Banks)

## Thought Bombs

zine, #17, 58 pgs, 4/yr, ?\$, Anthony Rayson, P.O. Box 721, Homewood, IL, USA, 60430, [anthonyrayson@hotmail.com](mailto:anthonyrayson@hotmail.com)

This is a strong, primarily personal zine published by a really committed activist. Good stuff on prisoners, anti-racism and other sources for info. It isn't a slick publication — a lot of cut and paste and inclusion of whatever material comes in gives it a traditional zine feel. Content includes simple (and often powerful) graphics, poetry, essays, letters from inmates and a few pieces that I'm not sure if they are fiction or first person accounts. Living in a city with an ongoing dispute over an airport, I was particularly interested in the info on the campaign against the proposed new airport in Peotome, a small town near Chicago. (Brian Burch)



## The Whizzbanger Guide to Zine Distributors

zine, March 2002, 36 pgs., 1/yr, \$4.00/issue (U.S. cash only), Shannon Colebank, P.O. Box 5591, Portland, OR, 97228

A lot of us on the left publish zines, pamphlets, chapbooks and other material that we try hard to get into the hands of others. This is a reliable source of information about the people who work hard to get their alternative info out as effectively as possible through mail, relationships with bookshops and libraries, and other ways. It also has reviews of small press, zines and review publications. That describes about 2/3rd of the publication. Just over 1/3rd is a look at other publications by Shannon — including excerpts from poetry collections, extracts from reviews and outlines of the contents of her other zines/newsletters. The first 2/3rds is essential for small/alternative press publishers. The latter 1/3 is interesting. I've never seen a publisher devote so much attention to her own work as well as work so hard to get the word out about other people's endeavours. It strikes me as an unique experiment. (Brian Burch)

## Cataclysm Girl

perzine, #8, 40 pgs, \$1USD plus 2 stamps/\$2 (anywhere), Sarah Knowles, MCLA Box #7267, North Adams, MA 01247 USA, sarah@scribble.nu, <http://five.diaryland.com>

Sometimes I like to think of personal zines as episodes in a serial novel. Then I like to make up the next episode to suit my peculiar sensibility. In Cataclysm Girl #8, Sarah is suffering through that awkward period when you move away from home for the first time and live with horrible strangers and you seethe alternately with self-righteousness and self-loathing. I like to think that #9 of Cataclysm Girl will be less about the difficulties of writing zines and feeling alienated and more about, oh I don't know, the pleasures of writing zines and feeling alienated I guess. There will still be the musings on time and mortality and memory, I like those; also, there will be more poetry. The poetry is actually really good. (Wendy Banks)

## Thoughtworm

zine, #6, 31pgs, \$2, 2216 Terrace Way, Columbia, SC 29205, [www.thoughtworm.com](http://www.thoughtworm.com)

A mostly diary (as in diary-ah) zine which has its charms but hasn't much of a hook other than that it's earnest and personal. Will you like it? One section goes, "It's been a year since I quit drinking. Now, don't start groaning in anticipation of some preachy tract on the evils of alcohol, because that's not what this is going to be..." followed by about five pages about his bouts with alcohol. Honest and interesting if the topics touch your fancy: old lady next door, where people are from, reading fiction, Palmetto Bugs, etc. (etc?) (Flick Harrison)

## Rejected Band Names

Zine. #7, 36 pgs, Jerianne, \$2 or trade (write for trade options). Back issues \$1 or trade. PO Box 330156, Murfreesboro, TN 37133-0156 jerianne@undergroundpress.org

Not quite sure what this zine is normally about, but this issue is specially dedicated to the author's sister who died in a plane accident. An interesting read, which made me think a lot about mortality and all the issues of losing a loved one. The stuff about the relation of the two families when her sister's widower husband committed suicide was very, very intense and revealing. Densest zine I ever read and one of the best. (Flick Harrison)

## We Are Warriors: A Comp About Anti-Oppression

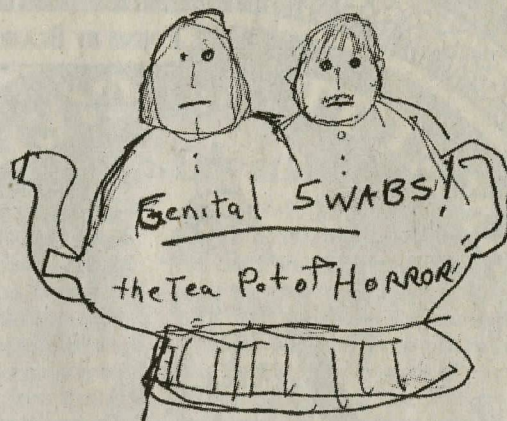
pseudo politico zine, 48pages, no price, Gog Productions, <http://members.tripod.com/gogproductions>

When I first saw this zine in my pile of review stuff for BP, I thought the cover said anti-depression. "O.K.," I thought, "this looks really interesting." It was only later that I reread the cover and discovered it said "anti-oppression," and that was probably the biggest disappointment this zine has served me. For what it's worth, the ideas in We Are Warriors aren't all that bad, it's just that they've been so played out and reiterated that

*swigs from the teapot of horror:*

# Coach House Books

## Summer 2002



### SHIVA'S REALLY SCARY GIFTS

John Scott, as told to Ann McDonald

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From catching a baseball bat in the teeth to harbouring the FBI's most-wanted fugitive in his Queen Street studio, award-winning visual artist John Scott has done it all. Join him in words and drawings as he terrifies a pair of robbers, loses a parent and struggles to get a gun permit for an art installation.

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This second volume of poems from Fitterman's award-winning *Metropolis* project ranges far and wide over the cultural geography. From Milton to Black Mountain to Aerosmith to *Better Homes & Gardens*, these poems run around an overcrowded conveyor belt whose contents are as varied, vulnerable and doubtful as those of any megacity on earth or beyond.

### HOW THE BLESSED LIVE

Susannah M. Smith

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On an isolated island in Lake Ontario live twins Lucy and Levi and their father, Daniel. While Daniel desperately mourns for his dead wife, Levi and Lucy grow up ever more entwined in their enchanted childhood of fairy tales and rhymes. Part *Alice in Wonderland*, part Egyptian myth, *How the Blessed Live* is a spectacular debut from a novelist to be watched.

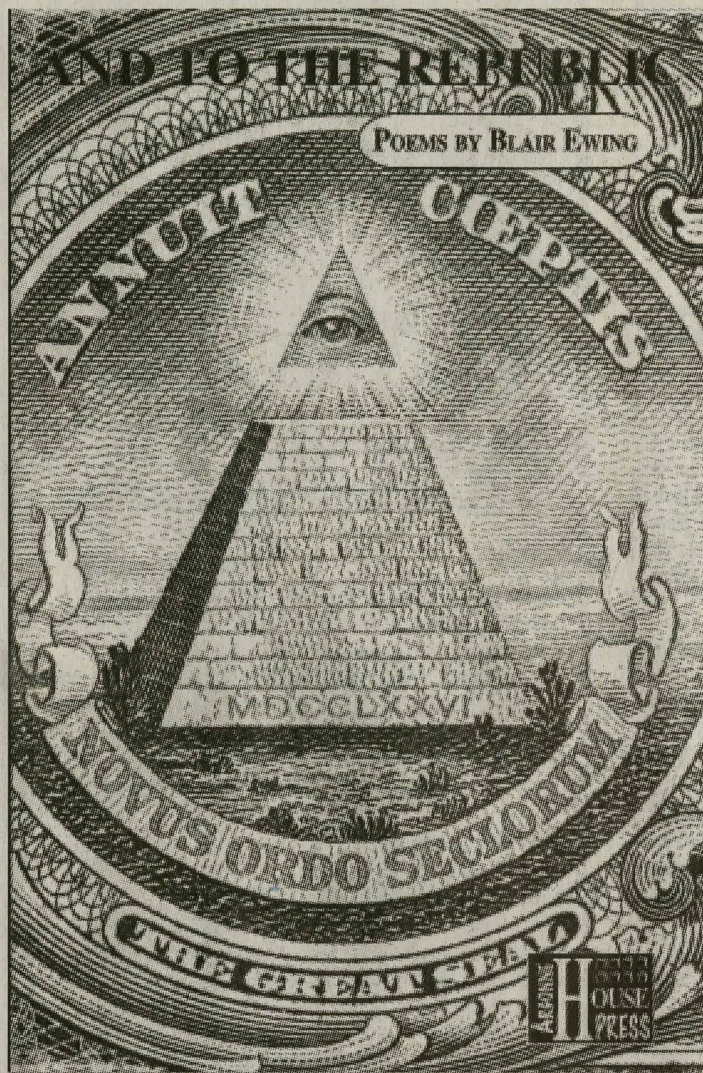


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# And To The Republic



## Poems by Blair Ewing

Ewing has produced a savvy first collection that rides the intellectual rails all the while relishing his role as political tour guide, self-deprecating comic, and Aristotelian alarm clock. Here's what could happen if John Yau had an Economics degree, Dana Gioia sported a tattoo, Charles Bernstein ate hard shell crabs, or William Blake ran for public office.

—Richard Peabody

Walt Whitman changed everything, but he had few true heirs. Blair Ewing is one. His poems are muscular, zany and unpredictable. They are data-rich without being referential. He is as observant as a crow. He brings his readers to the brink of hyperventilation, and then he sings them a song, tells them a joke. Don't miss him.

—Del Marbrook

Blair Ewing is one hell of a poet.

—Alan Herbert Barysh

## AND TO THE REPUBLIC

Poems by Blair Ewing (120 pages)

Order direct from Argonne House Press and receive a FREE COPY of Ewing's *Chainsaw Teddybear*, the limited edition chapbook of poems published in 1999 (only while supplies last—they are going fast!)

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it's hard not to be bored reading this. I just wish that "Gog Productions" would bring something new to the table instead of rehashing the same stuff. Another thing that bugs me about this zine is that, even after some research, I could not find a mailing address. Come on, be professional if you're going to try and sound academic. (Anthony Gerace)

## The Free Press Death Ship

reviews zine, #1, free, Violet Jones, PO Box 55336, Hayward, CA 94545 USA

I don't know if it is the archaic wood-cutesque drawings or the broadsheet circa 1910 style in general, but this thing feels a bit fusty to me. Reviews are workmanlike and unexpressive. Articles tend toward the how-to, with advice on zine correspondence with prisoners, and an overview of do-it-yourself printing techniques. Not much new here. Jones starts off with what is meant to be a kind of manifesto about how the press isn't free anymore. "It is our considered opinion," she writes, "that the days of true freedom of expression in America are nearing their end." That may be true, but why so pretentious? Who is "our?" At any rate, her main support for this assertion seems to be that when you publish a book you need to have an ISBN or nobody will sell it or stock it in a library. Since ISBN numbers (the barcode on a book) cost money, "those who will not pay...are officially excluded,

suppressed." Again, this may be true, but there are certainly much bigger and more pervasive problems facing the ability to publish in relative freedom. Why not give us some really powerful examples of, say, monopolistic control, ideas being suppressed, and so on? The ISBN is a symptom, not the problem. This could be, and hopefully will be, a promising mouthpiece for the indie press. (Hal Niedzviecki)

## International

### Muuna Takeena

zine, # 8, \$6, Timo Palonen, Talvipäivänseisau Productions, Oritie 4 C 24, Fin-01200 VANTAA, Finland, palonen@mbnet.fi

This is a good periodical of reviews of publications and music, primarily small/alternative press and zines. There is material here from all over the world, but a plurality from the U.S. The really odd thing, for a publication based in Finland, is that the only Finnish language used is on a one double sided sheet insert. Like other alternative review publications, this one helps people find information and views that the mainstream media ignores. The editor doesn't hide biases (i.e. he claims to not like poetry), but does seem to be fair and accurate in his comments on the work being reviewed. The claim to not liking poetry is a bit suspicious – this publication is listed in the 2002 Poetry Markets. (Brian Burch)

## Meltdown

Goth Magazine, #7, 57, Natasha Scharf (ed), 20lbs (world sub), PO Box 543, Beaconsfield, HP9 1WL England, [www.angelfire.com/zine/meltdown](http://www.angelfire.com/zine/meltdown)

How does one review a big glossy UK Goth lifestyle zine with ads for "cyberfetish stilt walking nurses?" This is too specialized for me, since I'm no goth. But the fashion spread was very chi-chi, the Emily Booth article was predictably trite (she hosts a videogame show on Brit TV and stars in horror movies). Them Goths sure do pose a lot. (Flick Harrison)

## Het Moet Onverstaanbaar

comic, #1-2, \$3.50 each, Marcel Herms, Postbus 6359, 7401 JJ Deventer, Holland

Euro comics! Bizarre, intricate, ornate yet sloppy, these aren't sequential stories, but more like frenetic outbursts. There are allusions to stories, cryptic moments of plot like "he entered the bar with the best of intentions" but things seem to quickly fall apart after that. Drawings are splatters of blue, black, green, red. But the distorted and grotesque is controlled, artful. An oddly precise outpouring of Euro-angst. Beautifully printed, these are worth checking out. (Hal Niedzviecki)

# DOING TIME

## The Politics of Imprisonment

SPOKEN WORD BY WARD CHURCHILL

*"We don't have to worry about whether we will have a political police either in the United States or Canada. We've had them for a long time ... It's not a question of how to prevent it, it's a question of how to deal with it since it is an existent reality."*

Ward Churchill, from the CD.



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# From Saugus to the Small Press

## Smart Cookie Inaugural Release A Surprise

by Emily Pohl-Weary

art by Brad Yung



**The** wild mixture of new information, literary innovation, and underground sensibility that will cause readers to devour a novel in one sitting is in short supply in the indie press scene. That's why Kris Rothstein's Vancouver-based micro-press is a rare gem. Smart Cookie Publishing recently released their first book, the novel *Saugus to the Sea*, which is the creative effort of Rothstein's pals, zinester Bill Brown of Dream Whip and cartoonist Brad Yung of Stay As You Are.

I recently met up with Rothstein, creator of the zines Pop Boffin and Girl On the Make, at a cheesy downtown bar in Vancouver. Self-effacing, reluctant to take credit for pulling together this fascinating book, and thoroughly uninterested in the promotion side of publishing, Rothstein explains why the material called to her: "Saugus is a story about important things that aren't written about. It's not exactly a reflection of my world but it is a repre-

sentation of people and a milieu not often described in literature. It's about paranoia, escape, disappearing, idleness – all things I can relate to. It deserved to be published."

"Bill came to Vancouver to show some of his films and to promote his zine Dream Whip. He was on the zine show on CITS (UBC radio) which was co-hosted by my boyfriend," says Rothstein. "We went to his films and I was really impressed. They really capture a sense of decay and desolation, which is how I feel about the States. There is also something magical about the way Bill interprets the world."

Brown is an American filmmaker, zine creator and instructor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, but his specialty is capturing cultural ephemera in the most unlikely places. *Saugus to the Sea* catalogues the hidden California of guerrilla gardeners, straightedge punks

and bicycling activists that exist beyond L.A.'s Hollywood wannabes, sunshine beaches, smog and traffic.

The novel's slacker protagonist, aptly named Billy Brown like the author, installs and maintains underground sprinkler systems around the California "everytown" of Saugus. One day he notices hand-decorated sprinkler heads that extend into the Mojave desert. They switch on randomly, killing garden flowers, causing him to lose important customers, creating circles of lush green in the arid landscape and potentially posing a serious environmental threat, because they turn quake-prone soil into sinkholes and rot building foundations.

So Billy decides to go for a bike ride to think about all of this, and discovers a mysterious road on an ancient map. The road is called *Saugus to the Sea*. Billy hunts down the map's creators to question them, and unearths a connection



between the missing road, the mysterious sprinklers, an earthquake that the Caltech Earthquake Hotline didn't report, and some Arbor Day anarchists who want to turn Hollywood Boulevard into a forest preserve.

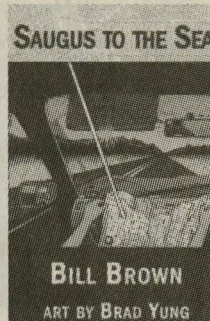
A cross between travel diary and mystery, the writing style of the book is fluid without being too aware, allowing the prose to make frequent stumbles into beauty. After reading the manuscript, Rothstein immediately approached cartoonist Brad Yung to illustrate it.

Anyone familiar with underground comics in Canada will recognize Yung's name, as well as his familiar pen and ink drawings featuring characters who look suspiciously like Yung himself.

Rothstein comments, "Brad is a brilliant guy and I fell in love with Stay As You Are (his zine) as soon as I read it.

Nowhere had I read anything which captured the cynicism I felt for the world." His weekly comic strip, Stay As You Are, oozes irony. In Yung's words, the two main characters "never seem to do too much but complain, and wouldn't know what to do with the world if they suddenly inherited it. Good thing that'll never happen."

The combination of the book and the illustrations by Yung were just too much for Rothstein — she just went out and did it. Published the book herself. It cost a lot of money — roughly \$3,000 for 1,000 copies. At the moment, a large number of the copies are still being stored in her apartment, while she figures out how to let people outside



Vancouver know about the book. In the end, was the personal expense worth it?

Rothstein has no regrets. "I've always been in love with books — I read constantly. Before I started publishing zines, I felt quite disenfranchised from the writing/publishing community, like you had to be part of a certain club to get anywhere. Now I enjoy being able to write and

publish, even if it's only for a few people."

*Saugus to the Sea*, by Bill Brown, illustrated by Brad Yung, \$17.95, c/o Smart Cookie, #4 - 2017 west 15th Avenue, Vancouver, BC, V6J 2L4, [www.webspotter.com/smartcookie](http://www.webspotter.com/smartcookie)

## Books

### The Best 10 Minutes of Your Life

poetry by Zoe Whittall, McGilligan Books, P.O. Box 16024, 859 Dundas Street West, Toronto, ON, M6J 1W0

Brave, fun, inventive poetry from a tender talent (only 25!), Whittall details the urban queer experience of Montreal and Toronto (where she practices her "high-rent low-glamour ways.") Her verse is thoughtful yet informal — the loose and jangly language conveys the in-between moments of life that arouse her muse. Favouring the emotional and sensual, these delicate reflections and reinventions create a space where desire ("Love letters/On the roof of my mouth") and distance ("Makeshift sonnets/On my airline ticket") combine. There is much ado about pop music here, with an ode to Jane's Addiction, along with nods to New Order and Cyndi Lauper. The soundtrack to Whittall's life avoids cliché, although the subject matter of "Dear Kurt Cobain" no longer reeks of relevancy. Confidence and depth lurk throughout. 10 Minutes. "Separate Bodies," a poem about sovereignty mixes humour, romance and politics without strain: "Non means I'm a fascist to you/And a revolutionary to my mother/Oui means I'm a good heart to you/Traitor to my mother." Whittall accomplishes equal impact with short and long poems, although none are over three pages. "There's no word for the sound a bomb makes," is the first of seven lines in the prose poem "Biker Bombs on My 21st Birthday," the final being "Silly Putty lungs jumping out of your chest." "Suspicious List #1," the fifth poem in 10 Minutes contains her finest image: "bras made from police caution tape." Chaste and sexy, it evokes a multitude of vivid imagery, simultaneously direct and diffuse. Whittall has established her potential and promise with this collection — if her abilities and subject matter continue to mature her 15 minutes of fame await. (Ryan Bigge)

### Taking Root

poems by Elizabeth Zetlin, 94 pages, 2001, Seraphim Editions, 970 Queen Street East, P.O. Box 98174, Toronto, ON, M4M 1J0

"Dead limbs hang around like the same/old arguments year after year." These are good poems. Whole. Earthy. Fired by a desire to integrate. My favourite parts are those where the things of this earth rise slightly, get just beyond themselves, becoming something unexpected. The book often moves quietly, unobtrusively, and images remain simple reflections. Unexceptional, in the way things we see constantly become unexceptional. It is within this space of simple reflection that certain of Zetlin's moments come as a surprise. These poems are arguments to seek in nature the silent gestures that lead us to recognize the exceptional, the presence of the exceptional in even the most common of moments. (Ken Sparling)

### Stephen Moron Presents: Two Stories

book, 47 pages, \$3, Stephen Moron, [stephen-moron@hotmail.com](mailto:stephen-moron@hotmail.com), [www.occulture.net](http://www.occulture.net)

Here are two short stories, light on character, heavy on gore, one of which is only partly written, the gaps filled in with hasty plot summaries, and both of which end, not just in mid-scene, but in mid-sentence. Is this a bold experiment in form? A clever exploration of genre that challenges the reader's notions of what a story should be? A work in progress that was published prematurely due to some ghoulish accident? Or is it a nicely packaged compilation of gross-out shock-schlock that the author was too lazy to finish properly? I dunno, but I bet you can guess which one I'm opting for. Moron sheds some light on the issue in the introduction, which he addresses to "fellow Workshopers." I guess that this is the product

of some ungodly writing workshop then, but that begs the question: why was it published? Okay, to be fair, the first story, "Castle of the Robots", has some neat choose-your-own-adventure stuff going on, where he invites Workshopers to vote on plot developments. And the writing is competent, and some of the scenes are pretty funny. And in the second story, "The Dumb Animals", I get the feeling that he may be going for an Ionesco-y feel, although the popping eyes and the brains on the floor detract somewhat. So maybe the unfinished quality is deliberate. Let's give him the benefit of the doubt. Still. Annoying. (Wendy Banks)

### One Thousand Beards: A Cultural History of Facial Hair

by Allan Peterkin, \$19.95, Arsenal Pulp Press, 103, 1014 Homer Street, Vancouver, BC, V6B 2W9

Have you ever thought about it? It's incredible to realize how many people actually have facial hair and how little we stop to consider the implications behind this fact. I confess I never thought I would have any interest in this subject until I read this great book...It's one hell of a thorough study into something we take for granted. I have to applaud the author's originality, not to mention his skill as a writer, making the text intelligent, thoughtful, funny and well-constructed. Peterkin takes us back in time through the trends and meanings of almost every variety of beard, moustache and everything in between, showing that although today a goatee is most often a fashion statement, there have been periods when it revealed a lot about social status, religious beliefs and personality. There are also cool beard-quotes from the likes of Shakespeare, lists of the infamously hairy-faced, loads of pictures illustrating the different styles, and



appendix with detailed instructions on how to style your stubble. Ever wonder about "bearded ladies" or what a hugely profitable business the facial hair industry is? It's all in here, and it's a total riot. So if you're still wondering whether or not I enjoyed One Thousand Beards, the answer's as plain as the fuzz on your face. (Sorry, I couldn't resist.) (Heather Ball)

## The Last Six Minutes of Elvis

poetry by Kirk Miles, \$13.95 plus \$2.50 S&H, Touchwood Press, 6228 Touchwood Drive NE, Calgary, AB, T2K 3L9, touchwoodpress@msn.com

Miles is a performance artist, and it shines through in his poems like light through cracked clouds. This collection is fun and moves at the unstoppable pace of a rubber ball in a concrete box as the words resonate and bounce off each other with furious rhythm. At times reminiscent of Shel Silverstein, some of these poems could easily be ridiculously fun song lyrics. Miles also has a great ability to make overly-literal interpretations of everyday phrases, thus delightfully transforming to meaning. "Mr. Heimlich, I owe you my life/for all that manoeuvring" he writes. It is interesting how there is an intermingling of the simple and original with the incomprehensible. A bit such as "Love left is stale beer/and when gone is an empty wine glass./The hangover cleanup/of a great party," resonates all too truthfully, while at times I can't make any sense of meaning whatsoever. The collection is not without seriousness, but that is perhaps its slightly weaker side. It's just hard to take him soberly at times.

As long as you don't always have to get it (I sure didn't) and can appreciate sound, the book's a catchy read. I just wish I had my own personal Miles to read it aloud to me. (Heather Ball)

## Drinks for the Little Guy

by Sean Carswell, \$12 US, Gorsky Press, P.O. Box 320504, Cocoa Beach, Florida, 32932

Another bottle of Rolling Rock and a shot of Yukon Jack please. The next topless dancer is about to begin her set, and we might as well be comfortable. We need to relax after spending the day doing roofing in the Florida sun. So goes a day in the lives of Chris Dunbar and friends. They go to work, listen to punk rock, watch MTV with the sound down, smoke pot and get drunk. So, why exactly would you want to spend 279 pages with them? For one, Sean Carswell has written a mystery that keeps you turning pages. Chris goes missing early on. During the months he's gone, his friends imagine the possible scenarios (On the run from the cops? Gone chasing after his love?) that would explain his leaving. Of course, I won't say what actually happens, but as Ian Koss wrote in his review (www.ink19.com) none of the theories we're presented with make sense, but when we read the ending, the reason for Chris' disappearance will seem obvious. What was most enjoyable about this book, however, was its great depiction of working-class life and class imperialism. Take the scene where Chris and friends head out to play football. "You could practically hear voices inside neighboring apartments," Carswell writes. "Forty years I sold insurance in Ohio and for what? So I could afford a condo next to a driving range with a

bunch of punk fucking kids coming out and throwing a football around the car I'm five months away from owning free and clear. Edith, what's the number of the cops?" An old lady next door comes out and asks them to stop. Fuck that. Still, I didn't become fully engaged in this book. It felt like I was hanging out with a group of people who'd known each other forever, and I'd just met them. (Jennifer O'Connor)

## Frightening Curves

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# NO USE for a name

## "Hard Rock Bottom"

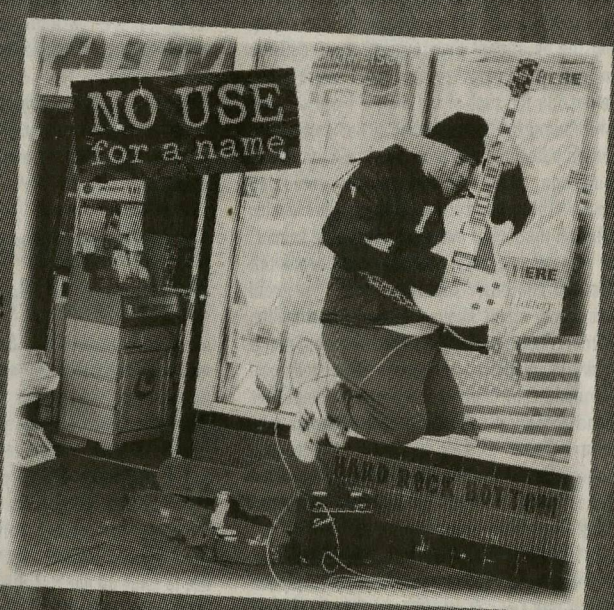
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## Chewing on Tinfoil

Comic collection by Joe Ollmann, Insomniac Press, \$19.95, 192 Spadina Ave., #403, Toronto, ON, M5T 2C2

For 12 years, Hamilton, Ontario's Joe Ollmann has been self publishing his Wag series of stories. Chewing on Tinfoil is the culmination of that work, an entertaining and oddly moving collection of comic tales that shows off Ollmann's craft and his fully developed story telling ability. "Fire Sale" is the psychological tale of an embittered used books proprietor who probably burnt down the competition's shop. "Fish Story" is more familiar to us — a woman spurns the advances of her boss and ends up getting fired. But Ollmann transcends the cliché by making her anger and helplessness real. C.O.P.S. seems like more of an autobiographical tale in which a mild mannered man has to deal with a drunken situation. Everything turns out, well, not exactly alright, but nothing terrible happens either. Still, the image of this fellow slumped in his easy chair while his kids call for him is at the heart of this book. Ollmann explores the interior of his characters the way only comic artists can — he gives us familiar situations and allows events to unfold naturally and inevitably. In doing so, he lets us into the heads of these characters who, for the most part, are just trying to do their best under occasionally trying circumstances. Ollmann shows himself to a perceptive explorer of human nature in this totally charming collection. Here's to another 12 years. (Hal Niedzviecki)

## An Emotional Memoir Of Martha Quinn

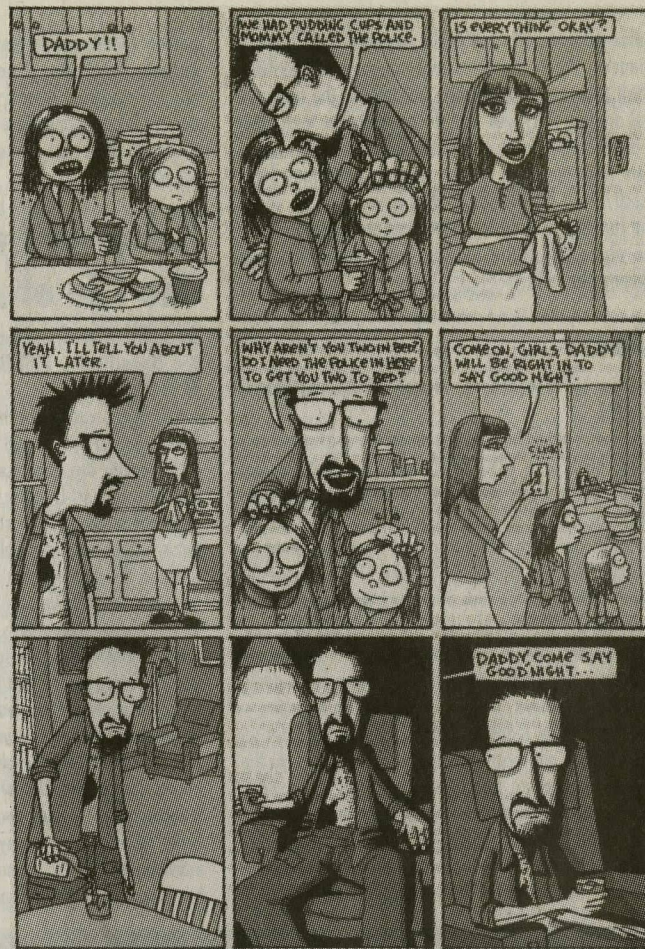
by Alan Licht, \$11.98, Drag City, PO Box 476867, Chicago, IL, 60647, USA, [www.dragcity.com](http://www.dragcity.com)

Experimental guitarist Alan Licht has not quite written a book, but something more akin to a manifesto, with his outlook on the past thirty-odd years of rock 'n' roll and punk. Deftly and comfortably weaving together topics as wildly disparate as A Flock of Seagulls and the Iran-Contra scandal, Licht somehow makes them all tie together. Jumping in time from the indie-rock of today, to his days watching the likes of Sonic Youth and Foetus in small New York clubs, his focus becomes somewhat more clear. It's when you finally stumble upon the section where he relives his days discovering the New York art-punk scene of the 80s that you realize this isn't so much a summation of music history as a wake up call to the kids of today, to make sure that the first decade of the twenty-first century isn't a repeat of the aesthetically and commercially cold 1980s. Licht, in his own, hilarious, intelligent and ultimately moving way, wants music to keep moving him like it did when he was 13. For the music lover in anyone, Licht's novella will speak volumes, and if you are in a band, it will be a fun read on the way to your next out of town gig. (Kevin Jagernauth)

## Punk Rules OK

novel by Chris Walter, \$16.95, Burn Books Ltd., #2-1346 Cotton Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3T7, [burnbooks.ca](http://burnbooks.ca)

Twenty-seven-year-old Meatboy is the protagonist of Punk Rules OK, a drunk, horny, PCP-snorting yobbo with an id simple and pure. Meatboy accidentally finds a big bunch of money in a knapsack in Vancouver's skid-row. He forms a punk band. He lives large. He tries to fuck love-interest Paula. Meanwhile, scheming bureaucrats, revenge-seeking freighthoppers and migrating Winnipeg punks criss-cross and double-cross in a plot that draws more inspiration from Carl Hiaasen or James Elroy than Maximumrocknroll. Punk Rules OK is over-amplified, crude and distorted — much like the music and lifestyle it purports to describe. Stylistically, this should complement, not detract from the subject matter, but this is cartoon punk singed by real life, with neither enriched by the fusion: "Seconds later he was knocked flat by a shot from one of the other punks. Birdies tweeted and chirped in his head." Most everyone is a paper-doll thin caricature, from a corrupt politician with a black heart (Whitney B. Porterhouse) to Meatboy himself. This all might work if \*only\* Meatboy were two-dimensional — watching other characters react to his Mohawk-in-a-porcelain-shop routine would create more than enough humour, pathos and tension to keep things interesting. But when everyone shouts, their individual voices meld and drift into the din. The unfocused flashes of anger and energy in Punk Rules OK lead nowhere substantial. A scene in a booze can is over before it gets interesting and the pace has only one speed — fast-forward. The omniscient narration hinders any sort of character development — motivations are revealed before the reader is given a chance to guess what someone is thinking. The novel is spiked with sentences like "The empty can in his hands was deader than Jerry Garcia" and "His feet swung off



from Chewing on Tinfoil by Joe Ollmann

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novel by Clint Hutzulak, 202 pages, 14.95\$, Anvil Press, Suite 204-A 175 East Broadway, Vancouver, BC, V5T 1W2, [anvilpress.com](http://anvilpress.com)

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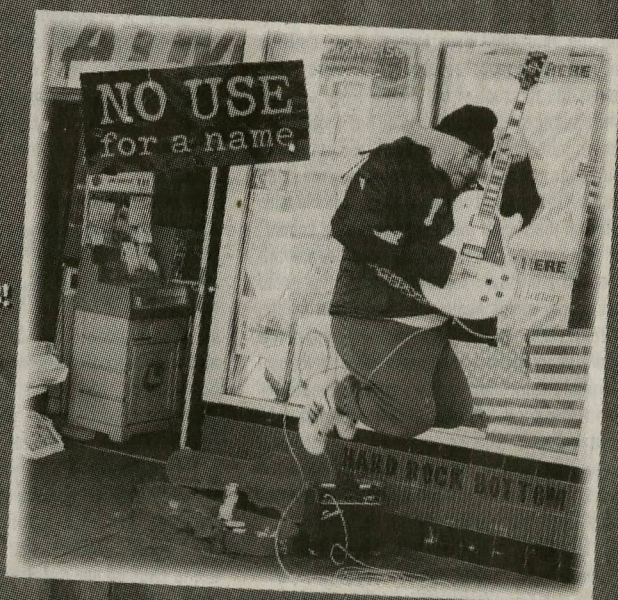
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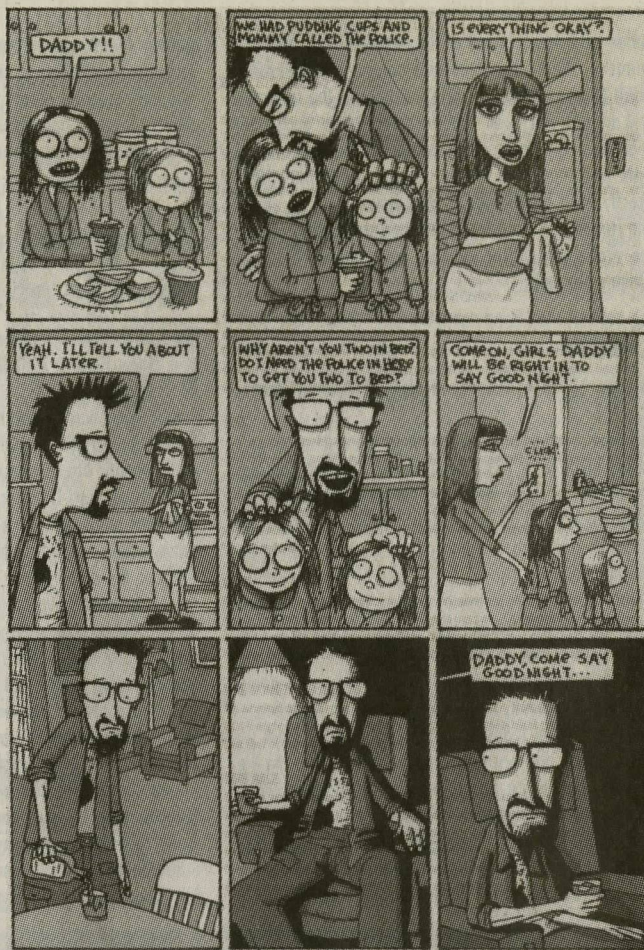
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author achieves accuracy at the expense of all linguistic panache. When the ideas and images are arresting, which they are often enough, the style fits the supernatural mystery-story well, and the scenes follow each other in just the right order, giving up exactly the right amount from each narrative thread. Keep in mind that that's exactly what big-budget thrillers have going for them, and Hutzulak's characterisations and scenarios aren't on the whole any better than in, say, *The Sixth Sense*. (Donato Mancini)

## Open

Stories by Lisa Moore, House of Anansi Press, \$24.95

I've been waiting for Newfoundland writer Lisa Moore's second book since 1998, when I read her first, *Degrees of Nakedness*. *Open* was worth the wait, but despite the title it doesn't feel as available as her first collection. The stories in *Open* are primarily about women in domestic situations and the choices they make or have made for them. From the perspective of women, we encounter husbands flirting with women who are not their wives, husbands getting jobs in other cities, husbands staying out long after the dinner party is over. *Open* is an oddly claustrophobic book, it is, in fact, anything but open — these are closed loops, situations we stare at from up above. That's not to say that this is bad writing — to the contrary. Moore is a fascinating stylist who knows when to take risks and plunge us into the delirium of someone else's confusion, and knows when to back off and let the moment happen. I very much admire these stories, but find the familiar domestic squabbling somewhat off

putting. I kept wanting Moore to break out into different territory, to take her characters out of the spirals of disappointment and memory they are all trapped in. It doesn't happen, and these stories feel a bit like looking at gems: glittering, beautiful, but inaccessible. (Hal Niedzviecki)

## Better to Have Loved: The Life of Judith Merrill

By Judith Merrill and Emily Pohl-Weary, Between the Lines Press, 720 Bathurst St., Toronto, ON, M5S 2R4

Judith Merrill was one of the first women to write science fiction. Amidst the turmoil of her ever shifting domestic and romantic life, she rose to prominence in the 1950s and 60s as a sci-fi writer, editor and anthologist. Her path was anything but straight — divorces, custody disputes, affairs, poverty, politics and self confidence each changed the course of her life, though anybody reading this book would have no doubt that she was destined to be who she was, regardless. It is not so much the political activism of Merrill or the fact of her being a pioneering science fiction writer that drives this text forward and makes it a compelling read. Rather, it is Merrill's own larger-than-life irascible argumentative passionate life. Told through letters, straight-forward autobiography and previously published essays and articles, Merrill's semi-autobiography, as ably compiled by her granddaughter Emily, becomes one lengthy manifesto on the question of individuality and the capacity of the individual to fulfill her obligations regardless of the conforming standards of

society. In a way, it seems as if Merrill doesn't really come into her own until she moves to Toronto which is, ironically, the later stage of her life and around the time she stops writing science fiction. But the parts of the book set in a Toronto the originally American Merrill picks for its congregation of anti-Vietnam America draft dodgers and the opportunity to "teach" at Rochdale College, seem the most joyful and vibrant. It's as if, by the time she came to Canada, much of her struggle — against society, conformity, and her own lack of confidence — was over. Merrill had already triumphed over her demons, and her adopted city and country were to be far far better for it. (Hal Niedzviecki)

## The Good Life

poems by Brad Cran, Nightwood Editions, RR #22, 3692 Beach Ave., Roberts Creek, BC, V0N 2W2

This is Vancouver poet and small press activist Brad Cran's first book. It is filled with hope, reckless energy and the kind of anti-nostalgia that tastes of both childhood's sweetness and bitter failure. "Walk back to your youth," writes Cran. "Your clothes don't fit." Cran wants to understand sadness and loss, but he knows he cannot. Nevertheless, he persists in this hopeless endeavor, like a man with an axe determined to cut down the forest. He swings and sweats and crashes through the underbrush. Cran's poems cut wide swathes. They tell the story of entire lives. "Dream of bowling lanes, a first fuck and the last piece of neon dangling from style's broken home." Cran occasionally lets himself get sentimental. "Do you understand your sadness? Last night I took a photograph of a tree and a

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bicycle leaning on a kickstand." But he redeems himself quickly with language as sharp as a blade and as blunt as a panicked cry of "timber!": "Today I wake and continue my variation of the good life." Read on and we discover this life includes "A broken dog", wet shoes, and giving "the panhandlers nothing." Fast and furious, these poems rip through what we know leaving a clear-cut wake already budding with new life. (Hal Niedzviecki)

## Vernacular Drawings

**Drawings by Seth, Drawn and Quartered, \$49.95, [www.drawnandquartered.com](http://www.drawnandquartered.com)**

This is a luxury item for serious fans of comics in general and anyone interested in charting the artistic development of the artist "with the unfortunate pseudonym Seth." Progress is easy to follow because this collection of drawings culled from Seth's sketchbooks proceeds pretty much chronologically. Seth moves from rough looking pen sketches to lavish colour scenarios but the subject matter is consistent — life in the first half of the 20th century. Seth draws business men, call girls, buildings and hockey players, and evokes nostalgia and loss as naturally as Microsoft trumpets the future. This isn't a monotone book though. Illustrated school yard chants, recreated high school yearbooks and even brooding brick buildings all evoke Seth's complicated overlapping sense of humour and pathos. (Hal Niedzviecki)

## Counter Productive: Quebec City Convergence Surrounding the Summit of the Americas.

**compiled by Luca Palladino, and David Widginton, non-fiction, 131 pages, \$18, Cumulus Press, P.O. Box 5305, Station B, Montreal QC, H3B 4B5, [www.cumuluspress.com](http://www.cumuluspress.com)**  
With the 2002 G8 Summit landing itself onto Kananaskis in June, Counter Productive's release is of perfect timing. The book consists of a wide variety of essays, speeches, dramatic dialogues, art work, poetry, photographs, and even a CD of songs, poems, and documentaries all focusing on the distribution of information regarding the destructive side effects of G8 policies on democracy, the environment, poverty and other global issues. Dedicating itself to the accurate and passionate retelling of events that took place during last April's anti-globalization demonstration in Quebec City, Counter Productive gathers the voices of activists, authors, poets, and volunteers who took part in the protest and whose ideas and perspectives have been for the most part distorted or completely ignored by the more mainstream media outlets. Although the past few years have seen books about the anti-globalization movement pumped out in considerable numbers, Counter Productive stands apart, offering a refreshing and accessible approach to the issues surrounding globalization and the act of protest. The book is refreshing in the sense that it gathers opinions and perspectives from people who vary in their degrees of involvement and experiences within the movement. On

the one hand I could read pieces by people who prior to Quebec City had never participated in protests but who, like David Widginton and Camille, found themselves amongst the sixty thousand others who showed up to fight for democracy. On the other hand I was also able to read about people who had previously participated in the movement and who had grown frustrated and angry with the lack of results and the utterly undemocratic practices of the G8. While reading this book, I was presented with various ideas and opinions; and most importantly, I was able to step back and see a movement that is diverse, creative and not yet ready to give up. One minor criticism of the book however, is that it sometimes gives itself up to the romanticism associated with the idea of, as Vincent Tinguely puts it: "the rag-tag defenders of freedom and beauty versus the evil stormtroopers of empire". In her article titled "medic alert", Camille feeds directly into this romantic tendency when she writes: "Going to Quebec City was, without a doubt, the craziest, most dangerous, most fun experience I've ever had". Camille sounds like she's writing about a super-fun tear-gas filled summer camp... I want to go too!! (Can anyone give me a ride to Kananaskis?). In all seriousness, despite this minor slip, Counter Productive offers a powerful compilation of ideas, opinions, and useful information. (Audrey Gagnon)

## I am Kasper Klotz

**by Sky Gilbert, \$19.95, ECW Press, 2120 Queen Street East, Suite 200, Toronto, ON, M4E 1E2**

We are supposed to hate Kasper Klotz. He tells us we will and then makes it easy for us. How can we not hate someone who kills people? Who comes while yelling, "Sorry, the condom's broken, and I've got AIDS! Here's some positive joyjuice, baby!?" This is a story about the culture of AIDS and the people who are affected by it. Kasper, a self-described Quasimodo, introduces us to the people he has killed. Among them, there's Whiny Betty, the drag queen next door whom he suspects wanted to become positive, because "With HIV, she became a glamorous drag star whose family visited her at least once a month..." Kasper also kills his other next-door-neighbour, Nick, who wants to get HIV because he thinks it will give his life meaning, and Alphonse, an ex-lover who annoys Kasper by suggesting they follow the advice in a "negotiated safety" pamphlet and do away with condoms. When he infects the one person he loved, Aaron, Kasper is charged with attempted murder. While waiting for his trial, he becomes pen pals with a prudish woman with super-low self-esteem named Cindy Lou Williams, and her letters appear throughout the story. We spend the rest of the book at Kasper's trial. It is easy to hate Kasper, but it's also easy to keep reading this story (I finished it in a day) because Sky Gilbert has written a book that is harsh and humorous. He brings together Kasper's stance on AIDS ("My theory is that AIDS is a form of masked depression, as utterly psychological as a case of mass hysteria") with a diatribe about why Glenn Close is evil for starring in *Fatal Attraction* ("Thank you, Glenn Close, for helping us all to see women as vile clingy cunts with teeth"). We get a thorough, if frightening, understanding of what drives Kasper. You may still hate Kasper Klotz when you finish this book, but you will definitely understand him a lot better. (Jennifer O'Connor)

## Arms

**Novel by Madeline Sonik, Nightwood Editions, RR #22, 3692 Beach Ave., Roberts Creek, BC, V0N 2W2**

Victoria-based writer Madeline Sonik describes her first novel, *Arms* as "a Hansel and Gretel story just different." In Sonik's version, trailer trash parents have a literally explosive argument that sends their two kids fleeing into a night forest where "bracken ferns relax their rigid hold." The daughter loses both her arms in the destruction, and is promptly abandoned by her brother. Sister is rescued by what appears to be a knight in shining armour, who outfits her with a pair of heavy silver arms. But her stumps can't stop oozing blood and the marriage is soon on the rocks. Brother, too, becomes mired in a strange domestic situation — working as an accountant until, one day, he suddenly asks his wife: "Do you ever dream?" Sonik — who wrote this book as part of a Wiccan ascendancy ritual before honing it as a student in the creative writing program at the University of British Columbia — describes the text as "healing of the creative imagination." *Arms* crafts a contemporary fairy-tale, but never seems dated: its weirdness is the weirdness of child abuse, Hollywood, poverty, and frozen dinners; but its manner of telling is otherworldly, a technique that ultimately allows us to absorb all the horror and dysfunction and accept an inconclusive ending that is apparently "healing," but remains far from the province of the predictable Disney adaptation. (Hal Niedzviecki)

## And To The Republic

**Poems by Blair Ewing, \$19.95, Argonne House Press, PO Box 21069, Washington, DC, 20009, USA**

Ewing sinks his biting satiric fangs into these poems, but the venom he spews comes out sweet and smelling like summer dusk. The result is a book that moves from angry to resigned, from past to present, from personal to political, with surprising subtlety. The best work here manages to mix a satiric take on corrupt politics with the deep personal longing and resignation that underscores this book. "Inaugurations" explores the Johnson, Reagan and Clinton eras and ends with an absent Alaskan friend's remonstrance: "Bill tells me it's past time I sought out the Puyallup, / stood chest deep with them in a coldswift Washington". Again in "Elegy for TS" friendship and politics get all mixed up when the cops search a Mexican restaurant for immigrant workers and "TS never thought of those he had saved". Some of these poems veer in other, more mystical directions, with mixed results. "A Thousand Years From Now" is maudlin but "Post-Op" merges surgery with the delicious drug of language. This is strong work though Ewing's occasional tendency to slip into rhyme and formal language can be off-putting. But, despite minor flaws, it's clear that this book represents the struggle of a man who has spent a considerable amount of time grappling with and reconciling himself to a horribly, wonderfully, imperfect life. In the end, this Maryland-based poet follows his own idiosyncratic advice, and we can be glad for it: "Remember, extract all you can from culture / & never consult the committee." (Hal Niedzviecki)



# Who Am I?

## Artists Extend and Lose Self on the World Wide Web

By Paola Poletto

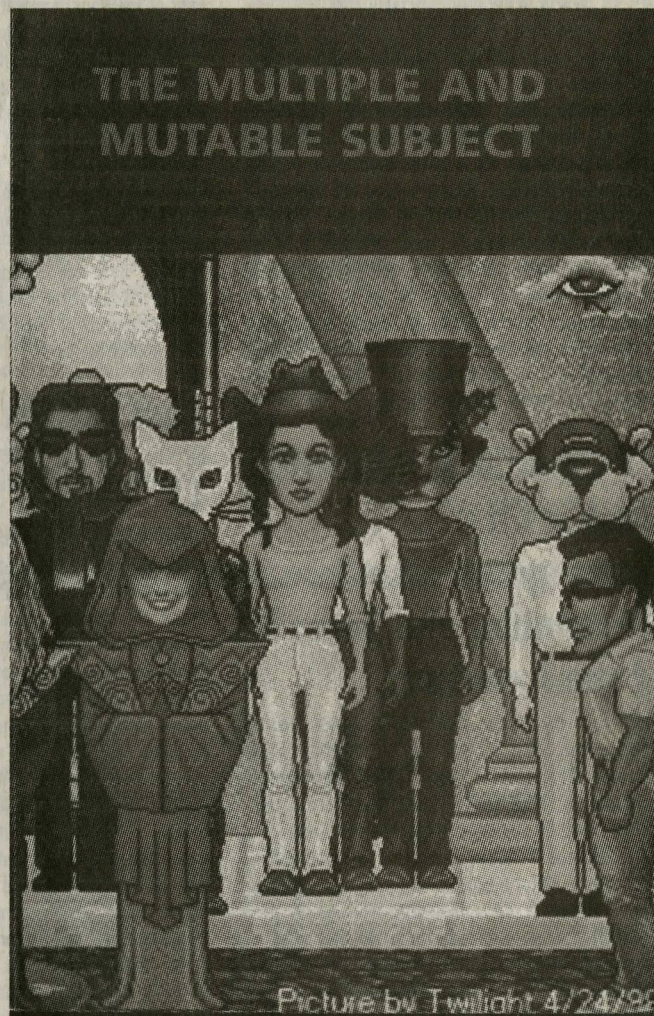
**I am** like a child who hasn't fully understood the express potential of the World Wide Web. While I have worked hard to build an identity in real life, now I must also learn to make one that is virtual. A virtual identity can function in many different ways. A virtual identity can provide a simulacrum of a physical identity, assign a theoretical context, serve as a promotional engine, and/or determine what sort of information I make available to others.

On a website I am part of that promotes the kind of art I make ([www.kissmachine.org](http://www.kissmachine.org)), I introduced my work with a baby picture of myself. Surrounding the baby in the picture are a number of terse yet friendly looking women who, along with the baby, stare squarely at the camera lens. The image is a metaphor for seeking out an online community that compliments my art practice. The Internet has the potential to create a similar community of people who engage, support and surround this little girl.

The two-dimensional medium of photography can be used to explore the depths of the Internet. Photography illustrates well the new dimensional complexities of image making and identity making, which include real time and space. I continue to explore the way self-representation through photography can interact with the Internet and respond to these other dimensional complexities.

Other artists engage on the Internet much more readily. Michelle Kasprzak is a young Toronto artist whose practice is firmly set in the use and exploration of electronic media. As a result, she has multiple online identities, including one centered on self promotion and professionally detailing her artist credits in the form of an artist resume. Another is associated to her collaborative performance work called *bad packet*, which uses sound, computer software and video. Still others are associated with online curatorial projects such as those featured on [www.year01.org](http://www.year01.org).

Despite the variety of approaches, more established artists and researchers on the subject are making theoretical headway. *The Multiple and the Mutable Subject*, edited by Vera Lemecha and Reva Stone (St. Norbert Arts Centre, Manitoba, 2001), is a brilliant theoretical survey of Internet art. It consists of seven essays and artworks (including a CD ROM piece) by artists, curators and arts writers on the subject of the Internet and how we have changed as a society through each of our own unique personifications within that virtual environment. The book addresses this issue from many perspectives, and discussions range from analogue versus digital formats, to epistemology of technology, anthropology, and technological determinism. Its publication was preceded by a symposium that asked three crucial questions: First, does the Internet allow for the democratization of subject constitution in regard to gender and ethnicity? Second, how does one's social framework and the technology itself limit what would seem to be an endless menu of role choices? And third, what are the implications for the self-created subject as constituted on the Internet in relation to the real-time subject?



The book exposes some of the most challenging yet forthright concerns about the Internet and how we relate to it. These include, most predominantly, issues regarding identity in a virtual environment. It emerges over the course of the book, and in considering the way artists are starting to use the Web, that our fear of losing our privacy is somewhat mitigated by the opportunity the web gives us to shape and maintain control over our identities.

In "Overture and Coda," an essay by performance artist Allucquere Rosanne Stone included in *The Multiple and the Mutable Subject*, Stone discusses a point in her career where she was so busy, her body forgot what time zone it was in: "and eventually I entered a weird twilight state in which alertness occurred whenever I stood up and sleep occurred whenever I



lay down." It remains to be seen what the impact of such disembodiment and distance from "natural" cycles of being will be on our future understanding of self and society. However, like Stone, I am attracted to these moments of great lucidity matched by irrationality and confusion. They represent the great potential of the virtual as much as they suggest the decline of the corporeal human being.

The Internet opens up a slew of questions, and artists are becoming researchers and programmers and curators to find unique ways to deal with these questions. Recent Governor General Award recipient David Rokeby, an artist, software developer and comput-

er programmer, builds computers that talk to each other, and that listen to what humans have to say, trying to find a way to work together. As curators, artists Michèle Kasprzak and Michael Alstad offer the splash page of year01's website up to artists to consider spaces typically left in the hands of commerce and tracking software, in the hope of finding something of value in the way we shape and significantly inform ourselves on the Internet.

Some websites promote artists, other times they are art. And sometimes they function as both. The range of art practices and concerns is complex, exciting and varied.

Painting revolutionized the way we understood depth, perspective and patronage; and the camera depicted the way we understood time and the theory of a free social system. We are no longer either viewers of paintings or the subjects of photographs. The computer has revolutionized the notion of space-time and it has concretized our dreams for more complex space travel. The computer's golden promise is that we can be self-activators in both what we are and what we want to be. On the Web, we are all babies, staring at the camera, preparing to emerge into identity.

*Paola Poletto is a Toronto artist and an editor of the zine Kiss Machine.*

## Ezines

### Retort

[www.retortmagazine.com](http://www.retortmagazine.com)

Okay, so, Retort, edited by Brentley Frazer, is supposed to be an international magazine — and my first impression was where the hell is the international bit? Seemed like lots of information about Australia — and yeah, a great place I'm sure, but I'm in Canada, so do I care what's on in Brisbane? But then I started to look at all the other bits, and found out they're right, it is international in scope — you just have to know where to look. The front page is really busy — and slow to load. But be patient, it's worth it in the end. There's an exclusive serialization of a Canadian ebook; short fiction from Calcutta, India; an essay from Colorado, USA; a 1992 Esquire interview with William S. Burroughs and David Cronenberg which is great, funny, and definitely not for the squeamish (my only gripe here is it's supposed to be a journal of "new" literature — isn't 1992 about 10 years old?); and poetry from the UK. The newsroom and forum are interesting, the opinions are global and generally well written. The recommended links and readings are worth a look, too. They are downloadable mp3s and even a Retort poster. A hint — maybe check out the plain text version of the contents first, because that slow download is really a pain. (Ffion Llwyd-Jones)

### hodgepodge

[www.hodgepodgegamag.com](http://www.hodgepodgegamag.com)

The site could have been put together by contenders for the "Sassiest Girl in America" contest. Indeed, it reads like a lot like this and other grrrl rags. You get a lovely mix of topics such as sex, crafts and activism. But just because it's similar to other zines and ezines doesn't make it ho-hum. (Can there ever be too many feminist ezines? I think not.) It's a fun read, with a chai recipe, tape exchange, and an ode to Astrid Lindgren, author of the Pippi Longstocking books. Another plus: everything is (thankfully) easy to find. (From the home page, click on any section, and you'll be taken to another page where you can select your article.) Hodgepodge is supposed to be international — "an internet magazine for girls and boys of the world" — but most of the contributors seem

to be from North America, so I imagine hodgepodge would like to have more non-American/Canadian writers. There is a sense that the ezine is still finding its way. "Soooo...what is hodgepodge? Probably a better question is: What does hodgepodge hope to become?" It's worth clicking back to see. (Jennifer O'Connor)

### Umbrella Music

[www.umbrellamusic.com](http://www.umbrellamusic.com)

This slick site is subtitled "Canadian music lives here," which is a pretty high-risk claim if you ask me. Fortunately, the site makes good use of its four column format to present a dense mass of information about an assortment of desperate-for-attention musicians currently lost on their tour bus somewhere between Moose Jaw and Saskatoon. The site contains a message board where Canadian music fans can ask questions like "Does anyone know anything about punk legend Art Bergmann?? I heard that he was in Toronto. Where is he?? What is he doing?? Is he making any records? Where is he working?? Is he doing any shows? Someone please help me, Its like he dropped off the face of the earth!!!!!!!!!!!!!!" (The answer is that he's working at Rancho Relaxo.) The site includes the obligatory sound files and something called "Umbrella TV," which I couldn't get to work. A good site for folks up on the Canadian music scene. A bit intimidating for those out of the loop. Like moi. (Michael Bryson)

### Wet Ink

[www.wetinkmagazine.com](http://www.wetinkmagazine.com)

Wet Ink is intended to be an ezine that introduces artists' work to a larger audience and encourages them in their creativity; it does both well. The site is composed of music, fiction, poetry and visual art by Canadians aged 13-19. Each quarterly issue has a theme, and this was the love issue. Not everything here appealed — some of it reads like the poetry I thought about submitting to my high school yearbook, but there's also some interesting pieces, such as "What It Is," a poem by Amanda Shewfelt and "Untitled," a visual piece by Cecilia Mok in which she took pink canvas and used red embroidery thread to sew rows of red ribbons and the statement: "In 2001,

2,920,000 will die of AIDS. Help." There's also a links section that includes information about other publications that accept submissions, contests, workshops and more. The site could use some more content (for example, the music section has only two submissions), so all of you artsy teens should get sending your stuff in. (Jennifer O'Connor)

### Punk Rock Poet

[punkrockpoet.diaryland.com](http://punkrockpoet.diaryland.com)

I've only recently been briefed on the world of weblogs, so when I visited this web site I was only vaguely aware of the type of space I'd entered. Reader: Punk Rock Poet is Zachary Houle, "an Ottawa-based punk rock poet" according to his biography contained on this site. This web site is his web log, which means it contains brief biographical info about Houle, his fave bands and authors, and a daily diary entry in the form of a poem. The site tells us Houle "has been published in frictionmagazine.com (U.S.), Broken Pencil, Kiss Machine and many others. His journalism has been published in Shift magazine, The National Post, The Ottawa Citizen and others. Not punk, per se, but it pays the bills, no?" You can also sign up for your own diaryland web site. Hey, kids! Fun for the whole family! I thought this site was groovy, but way, way too pink. (Michael Bryson)

### SHZine

[www.jononation.com/shzine](http://www.jononation.com/shzine)

I'll start off by admitting that I'm not exactly the target audience for this ezine — I've only been to Rotate This (an indie Toronto music store) twice and I don't scour the listings in the alt-weeklies. Still, I liked SHZine. There are loads of reviews (records, shows, zines, and miscellaneous — covering everything from Beef-Flavoured Chunky Soup to ID vanilla-flavoured lube. Plus, there are interviews, an art section and a nice zine directory (print and e). Other good things about this ezine are its saucy-mouthed columnists such as Lux. "Watching a man, who is oblivious to his privilege and to the oppression he subjects on so many, smiling as I slave for him, is remarkably satisfying," our satiric



scribbler writes. "I realized now that baking cookies and cleaning is far more rewarding a pastime than cumming." (Jennifer O'Connor)

## Galaxy

[www.galaxyqc.qcb.net](http://www.galaxyqc.qcb.net)

Galaxy calls itself the "first online french/english cypsoésie, arts and graphics, ideas, and style." While it does have articles in both languages, it's predominantly French. The French feel to the site is also unfortunately emphasized by the mistranslation and spelling errors in the English content. The French content is fine. That said, there are some really interesting written ideas, and visual effects, for instance the bleeding raindrops and galaxy images come to mind. The contributors are global, as shown in their bio pages, some interesting backgrounds. Some of the works by P. R. Casey and Naomi Joplin are intriguing; Pedro Martinez' stuff is mostly Photoshop reworks, which is okay but not terribly innovative. Ted Koppel's poem has a really interesting visual background, and the poem is good. Intriguing ideas also include: "The Thickening of the Cosmos" and "Ideas about Space," (but the latter didn't link to anything, so I don't know quite what they were getting at). Oh and you will need Macromedia Flash Player to view the news section. If they can get the English translations and spelling errors cured, then maybe this will really be an online bilingual site. Worth a look. (Ffion Llywd-Jones)

## The Ultimate Hallucination

[members.rogers.com/breeno](http://members.rogers.com/breeno)

Why the "ultimate hallucination"? I'm not sure. This web site is a quarterly literary journal featuring fiction, poetry & reviews. It has been in operation since April 2000. The title probably refers to some literary quotation, but that is not made specific on the web site. I could also only find the current issue on the web site (i.e., no archives). That said, the site offered a handful of decent short stories and poems and five reviews of Canadian small press books. There was nothing hugely spectacular here, but here's to the magazine's founders. Canlit needs every hyperlink it can get. (Michael Bryson)

## The Toque

[www.thetoque.com](http://www.thetoque.com)

Ah, what hath The Onion wrought? It hath wrought a growing list of imitators of its deadpan news parody for-

mat. The Toque stands proudly among the rest as a rare Canadian example of the breed. Once a week the site issues forth a dozen or so news sites and columns in the straight-laced and buttoned-down tone of an eight-page community weekly newspaper. Stories like "Guy Receives Unprecedented Sixth Eviction Notice" and "Lorne Greene Remembered By Hundreds Annually." The quality of the humour ranges from mildly-amusing to kinda-funny-I-guess, but never reaches to the still-laughing-two-years-later heights often achieved by The Onion at its best. (Derek Winkler)

## The Emily Chesley Reading Circle

[emilychesley.com](http://emilychesley.com)

For too long the life and works of Victorian-age Canadian speculative fiction writer Emily Chesley have gone unexamined. That this remarkable woman, poet, novelist, journalist, activist, anthropologist, "as intelligent and twisted as she was beautiful," should be so long ignored by the keepers of the CanLit canon has been recognized as the injustice that it is by the members of the Emily Chesley Reading Circle. This group of "scholars" and bon-vivants has established a magnificent website devoted to the study of Chesley's life and works. Here dedicated students can lose themselves in the intricate details of her life and times, then refresh their fevered brains by sampling such masterpieces of poetry as "Lars of the Bar Car" or the multi-valenced, Austen-esque coming of age novel "The Brain Beasts of Blenheim Township." This lively academic community welcomes fresh insights into Chesley's oeuvre from enthusiastic amateurs, as evidenced by the establishment of The Tundra Prize, given annually for the best poetry and short fiction written in the Cheslean style. (Derek Winkler)

## Bourque Newswatch

[www.bourque.org](http://www.bourque.org)

Take a look at the picture of Pierre Bourque on the bio page of this site. Consider the furrowed brow, the skeptical eye, the grim set of the mouth. Observe the unbuttoned collar and the tie pulled loose. This is either a journalist or someone who wishes to play one on TV. All he needs is a crumpled fedora and a cigar stub. Bourque works the mean streets, pumping his shadowy sources for the latest breaking news and the juiciest gossip from the world of power. This is to say he surfs around a large collection of other news sites and links up the

headlines. Which is all well and good, but doesn't seem to justify praise like this, also to be found on the bio page: "Any MP's Assistant worth their salt has Bourque Newswatch on all day." - Hep C Rights Proponent Susan White." Maybe MP's assistants don't have that much to do, but to sit on this site all day watching the ad banner automatically reload every two minutes would be frankly feeble. Then again, the guy apparently has some clout. An April Fool's Day story posted to the site this year and read by some goofball financial analyst in New York was cited as the direct cause of a sudden one-day plunge in the value of the Canadian dollar. Not many webloggers can claim that achievement. Give the man a cigar. (Derek Winkler)

## rtlToronto

[peach.mie.utoronto.ca/events/lego](http://peach.mie.utoronto.ca/events/lego)

Lego. With the possible exception of Victor Borge, the most amusing thing ever to come out of Denmark. Is there anyone who has never experienced the simple joy of snapping these bumpy plastic blocks together? In Toronto there are a bunch of people who have taken that simple pleasure into the realm of high engineering, or mordant fetishism if you prefer. This site doesn't actually spell out what the letters mean, but its clear what rtlToronto stands for: maximum brick. These guys are mostly into the serious Lego; the sprocket and gear stuff, the robotic modules, huge electric train installations. They have monthly dinners. They have robot soccer matches. They have annual conventions. Hell, they even have T-shirts. And they have this website, where they keep track of it all. Worth the trip for the photographs alone. Ingenious machinery. (Derek Winkler)

## Geekstreet

[www.geekstreet.ca](http://www.geekstreet.ca)

This site purports to provide everything geek in the Greater Toronto Area. Yeah? Well I'm a geek in the GTA and I'm here to tell you this site provides very little of interest. Desultory news items copied-and-pasted from press releases, directories of computer stores with no indication of the stuff they carry, and exactly one (1) product review. Plus headlines ripped from Slashdot and a weather report (a weather report for cripe's sake) ripped from The Weather Network. There's a careers section, but you need to register to see what's in there. The event calendar for May contained exactly one (1) event. There is supposedly a classified ad section, but I'll be damned if I could find any ads in it. Ah, screw it. I've wasted enough time here. (Derek Winkler)

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# Royal Town of Indie Tunage

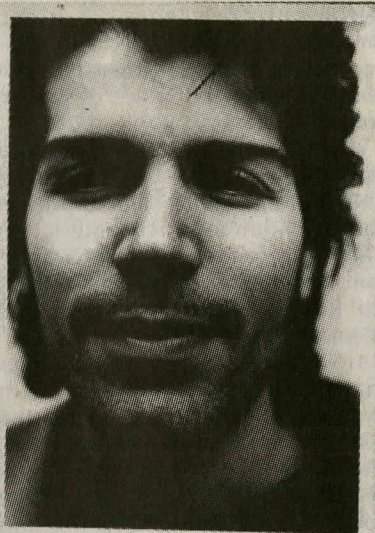
by Michael Barclay

**Guelph.** The word itself is a strange clash of vowels and consonants that don't make much sense. Yet it aptly reflects the creative spark that exists in this small, southwestern Ontario, university town. The origin of the word has something to do with the British royal family, hence the city's official alter ego, the Royal City. Recently, there have been municipal manoeuvres to change it to the City of Music. There are plenty of reasons why.

This past winter, a band from Guelph called Royal City topped Canada's campus/community radio charts for weeks on end. Meanwhile, another band from the "royal city," the Constantines, were stacking up critical praise from across the continent, particularly in the notoriously navel-gazing Toronto press – who often think that Mississauga is the beginning of Western Canada. These two bands – and their Three Gut record label, run by two Guelph expatriates – have given people many reasons to talk about Guelph again, for the first time since the glory days of King Cobb Steelie and the fledgling DROC label.

Me, I've been a Guelph music enthusiast since I moved here twelve years ago come this fall. The factors that brought me to Guelph are likely true of many others. Having grown up in the suburban wasteland of Scarborough, I knew I wanted to attend university somewhere close to Toronto culture yet outside of the bustle and with a more personal atmosphere. Guelph is as close to Toronto as any other surrounding university town, except for Hamilton. Living expenses are cheap and in good traffic, it's an hour's drive from Queen Street – probably the same distance as most Toronto suburbs. This convenience has always been productive in terms of cultural exchange with Toronto. Until it stopped hosting gigs during the Great Live Music Crash of the late 90s, Guelph's Albion Hotel was fertile ground for Toronto bands, such as the Rheostatics, Crash Vegas and the Skydiggers, looking to let their hair down and experiment during the late 80s

And as any member of Royal City will tell you, growing up in Guelph made it easy to fall into music. A high concen-



left: Barzin

bottom: Noah23

tration of hippies and punks meant that the DIY musical spirit and unbridled creativity has long been alive here, and has carried through to this day in music of all genres.

Guelph's first best-known export was Jane Siberry, who took marine biology courses here and started performing folk material in the early 80s at the Carden St. Café, which still hosts Saturday night acoustic music. It was here that she met her longtime guitarist Ken Myhr, who would also play with the Cowboy Junkies. That band would find a key component to their sound in Guelph's multi-instrumentalist wizard Jeff Bird, who was a founding member of the longstanding Canadian folk institution Tamarack, and is still a vital member of this city's musical life when he's not travelling the world with the Junkies.

But the modern history of Guelph music, as perceived by the rest of the country, begins with King Cobb Steelie. When they burst onto the scene in 1992, they were the archetypal Guelph art band, combining punk, reggae, hip-hop, and ambient music, an acute visual sense, and a Chomskyesque world view. They were also one of the first rock bands around these parts, if not in Canada, to actively incorporate sampling and

turntablism into their live shows and albums.

In the beginning, King Cobb Steelie would only play benefit shows, gave away copies of their debut seven-inch ("One's a Heifer/Duotang"), and – for the time being, at least – consciously distanced themselves from most music industry norms. It's impossible to underestimate the influence of Fugazi in Guelph, both musically and politically. This was certainly evident in both KCS and Minnow, the latter featuring drummer Aaron Riches, who booked Fugazi in Guelph when he was 14 years old. The band's sound and fury would also be heard a decade later in the Constantines, for whom Fugazi has been a constant point of comparison.





At the same time as KCS, a DIY scene on the other side of the musical fence was also taking place. Lewis Melville is a pedal steel and banjo player who built a studio in his house in 1990 and started recording anyone who interested him, from young cuddlecote bands to old bluegrass guys to late night freak-out sessions with the Rheostatics, with whom he often sat in on pedal steel. He never charged for sessions, and did it all out of his own passion for music. In 1994 he co-founded Dave's Records of Guelph (DROG) with Dave Teichroeb, and released scores of albums by local artists, mostly of the folk variety. But they kicked off with the unfortunately-named Guelph Happens compilation, featuring Minnow, Weasel, Troll, and many more, including two unreleased tracks by King Cobb Steelie from their aborted sessions with Steve Albini. DROG would be best known, however, for releasing the Rheostatics' back catalogue – they named their 1991 album after Melville – as well as helping to kickstart the career of the Inbreds.

DROG also put out the first two solo albums by Aaron Riches, who was performing his Woody Guthrie-inspired folk songs at the same time that Minnow was moving in a more progressive hardcore direction. Both feature contributions from old guard stalwarts Melville and Bird, and the second – 1997's *Rain* – was produced by Black Cabbage's Nick Craine, and was recently hailed by Exclaim! as one of the most important albums of the kaleidoscopic country movement (Callexico, Sparklehorse, et al).

Riches was one of the mainstays of the mid-90s Guelph scene, along with a trio of octets: the soul-folkestra Black Cabbage (my own band), the reggae/hip-hop/acid jazz combo House of Velvet, and the estrogen-powered folk/rock band Corduroy Leda. Also during this time, the mainstream R&B of jacksould and the snarky ska-punk Flashlight (featuring members of Weasel, Black Cabbage and House of Velvet) were struggling to find a spot on the local scene; Flashlight would find a home on Montreal's Stomp Records, and later change their name to Flashlight Brown, while jacksoul signed a major deal and scored several video hits.

But more important to our current story is Jim Guthrie, who is just as important to the current Guelph scene as Fugazi was 10 years ago. In the mid-'90s, he was leading a "home rock" explosion with his own four-track cassette releases, playing guitar or drums in almost every young band in town, and hosting a show on campus station CFRU that highlighted other burgeoning homespun post-rock talents. Most of this crowd was captured

on a 1998 compilation called *The Goods*, compiled by Gentleman Reg, as well as a sprawling odyssey of four-track weirdness called *Spring Children*. This introspective scene was fuelled by the fact that it was next to impossible to book a rock show in downtown Guelph at this time, and any venue that was open to the idea required that you bring your own P.A. system. On the one hand, this was stifling to the development of live bands, but it also meant that a new generation of musicians were learning DIY lessons and not depending on any semblance of support from straight society.

When Guthrie decided to compile his body of work onto CD, Three Gut Records was formed, its name a play on Guthrie's childhood nickname ("gut-three"). The founders were Guthrie, Aaron Riches, graphic designer Tyler Burke, Riches' manager Lisa Moran, and Gentleman Reg Vermue.

Around that time, Riches was preparing his third solo album with Guthrie and James Ogilvie. When the ADAT tapes were accidentally erased, Riches started the project again using Guthrie and his band – guitarist Evan Gordon, bassist Simon Osborne and drummer Nathan Lawr (briefly of King Cobb Steelie) – with whom he'd been gigging as the Royal City All-Stars. When the record was ready, Riches was so excited by the new configuration that he rechristened the project Royal City. Their sit-down live shows, while as low-key as their other Guelph peers, also encouraged singalongs and audience clapping, breaking down the distant pretension common to the post-rock crowd.

One by one, the members of Royal City moved to Toronto for work and school reasons, where their audience quickly expanded beyond the usual cabal of tightly knit Guelph expatriates. Meanwhile, around the corner from Guthrie's living/recording environment the RokSak, the Constantines began hosting basement shows, keeping the DIY punk spirit alive and providing a space for new or experimental bands to perform. The Constantines all migrated to Guelph from Cambridge, London, and Waterloo, either for school or for the music scene itself. But their contribution to Guelph, although certainly a significant boost, proved to be short. Soon after their debut album had all the Toronto hipsters talking, they too joined the exodus and the Three Gut takeover of Toronto. By this point, Toronto's other hot new band, the "gay church folk music" orchestra, the Hidden Cameras, featured three ex-Guelphites from *The Goods* compilation, including Gentleman Reg.

So who's left, you ask? Plenty. Local

hushcore crooner Barzin released his sparse and beautiful debut last year, and has been playing Toronto frequently. He recently secured a European release. Noah23 is a hip-hop artist who just released his head-spinning second album, Quicksand, to wide acclaim including Exclaim! and Brave New Waves. He's also the centre of a thriving hip-hop scene in Guelph, including producer Orphan and DJ DMS, and is distributed by the Peanuts and Corn crew on the West Coast. The Barmitzvah Brothers are high school students who write wry and deadpan songs to Casio and Omnicord beats, and they just released their first CD. They're favourites of Toronto's Woodchoppers Association, who invited them to help re-stage the Sound of Music at this year's Do What?! festival alongside Gord Downie and others. Evan Gordon, formerly of Royal City and briefly of the Constantines (he appears on their new EP), is always active with recording and live projects, whether it's glitch-hop techno or cathartic and screaming sludge rock. The most popular live band in Guelph is Beautiful Senseless, a jam band who can fill any venue any day of the week. Jessy Bell-Smith, one of two lead vocalists in the band, lends her gorgeous voice to torch and folk songs in her solo sets.

Basement shows are back at Guthrie's former RokSak, this time hosted by Steve Clarkson and Nancy Ogilvie of Demolara. Clarkson, who was King Cobb Steelie's original sample technician, recently buried his live dub band Superex but continues to make experimental dub under the name Bias Ply. He recently pressed CDRs of randomly selected Bias Ply material, stamped them with only a logo, inserted them in anonymous burlap envelopes, and distributed them around town on park benches, in restaurants, at bus stops, wherever. It's his own installation art project in a way, tying into his beliefs about the commodification of art. It's a unique Guelph experience in that you have to come here to discover it, and no two CDs are the same, so everyone will have their own individual reaction to it.

As far as other old fogies go, Lewis Melville is still very active, although DROG has all but folded. It only exists now to release thematic compilations curated by Melville, in which he commissions the community to write on a certain topic: past comps include *Truck Songs*, *Music for Peace*, and the 3CD set *Work Songs*; his next one is 60-second songs, due this summer. His partner Tannis Slimmon, the town's musical matriarch and formerly of the Bird Sisters, released her solo debut "Oak Lake" this year. Most of Black Cabbage is still active: Kate



Richmond released her folk/hip-hop album *Waxed Hotties* last year; Nick Craine scored major CBC play with his 2000 release *November Moon*; drummer Sam Cino is active with many projects, including the ex-King Cobb Steelie project *Microbunny*; and Tristan O'Malley and myself play in the Neutron Stars, which is record collector rock. House of Velvet is still active with a rotating lineup, and still start a party whenever they play; former keyboardist Drew McIvor heads a New Deal-ish live house band called Nice House. And straight-ahead rock band the Kramdens, who have been around longer than they care to admit, released their best album to date, *Quiet Collision*, last year.

The central musical event is the annual Hillside Festival, held just outside of town at a conservation area. Drawing several thousand people on the last

weekend of July, it not only celebrates Guelph's best talent – from high school bands to stalwarts like the Kramdens – but brings in a roster of performers as wildly eclectic as Guelph itself. This year's festival features Spearhead, the Weakerthans, Bullfrog, Neko Case and more alongside Royal City, the Constantines, Noah23, and the Barmitzvah Brothers.

The other major musical event is the Guelph Jazz Festival, which is quickly being recognized as second only to Victoriaville when it comes to progressive programming focusing on the avant-garde. Held on the first weekend of September to coincide with the neighbouring Eden Mills Writers Festival, in the past it has hosted the likes of the Sun Ra Arkestra, Bill Frisell, Chicago Underground Duo, Lee Ranaldo, Susie Ibarra, Pauline Oliveros, and John

Oswald.

All of this makes Guelph an exciting place to live and witness music. Yet is it really that different than any other small town artistic community? Is there something unique to Guelph that doesn't exist elsewhere, or is this town merely lucky to steal the spotlight now and again? It's often scorned by the neighbouring university communities for being too full of itself, too political and too pretentious – all of which is arguably true. But that's because Guelph honestly doesn't care what anyone else thinks, creating art for its own sake and at its own pace, just as every community should.

*Michael Barclay is the Associate Editor of Exclaim! and the co-author of Have Not Been the Same: the CanRock Renaissance 1985-1995.*

## Music

### Shot Spots

#### Various

CD, Visionary Production, Unit 300-1062 Homer St., Vancouver, BC, V6B 2W9, [www.visionaryrecords.com](http://www.visionaryrecords.com), [www.troopertribute.com](http://www.troopertribute.com)

As a child, the street I lived on was famous for drag racing. I saw quite a few airbrushed vans on Friday and Saturday nights from whose windows blasted the usual cock rock litany, particularly tunes that celebrated the four-wheeled warrior lifestyle. Evermore, I shall associate Trooper's "Boys in the Bright White Sports Car" with road kill, rather than rockstar glamour and excess. That's why it's so refreshing to listen to the energetic covers on this Trooper tribute album which gently take the piss out of the band's grandiose reputation. Many of the tracks on Shot Spots stand out: DOA's version of "Raise a Little Hell" and Facepuller's cover of "Knock 'Em Dead Kid" will have you pumping your fist, whilst the Sweaters "Dump that Creep" is short, sweet pop at its finest. This album is a lot of fun, with many little gems hidden amongst its thirty tracks, and no airbrushed art in sight. (Karyn Bonham)

### McGnarley's Rant

#### Fisherman's Pride

CD, Box 8425, Victoria, BC, V8W 3S1, [www.rantmusic.com](http://www.rantmusic.com)

I really don't know what to make of McGnarley's Rant (or The Rant as they recently renamed themselves). Great Big Sea alarm bells started going off when I read the title of this album, but when I found out they were from Victoria, I got confused. This was further complicated by the actual music – a mish mash of Pogues-esque rock with obvious influences from bouzouki, gypsy fiddling and folk songs, and more traditional maritime/Celtic elements. Although I'm not a fan of bands inspired by world music, I can appreciate what

McGnarley's Rant is trying to accomplish. I can't appreciate the recording quality of these songs, however. A full, rich sound is needed for bands who use such a wide variety of instrumentation but this album sounds like it was recorded in a cramped phone booth with a RadioShack tape deck. Okay, maybe it isn't that bad, but the sound quality does a huge disservice to those who might enjoy this album. (Paul Corupe)

### Run Chico Run

#### New Peak in Lowndess

CD, Magic Teeth Records, 633 Johnson St., Victoria, BC V8W 1M7, [www.magictooth.tripod.com](http://www.magictooth.tripod.com)

Kids, if you decide to name your satirical riff-rock song after a band, please choose a band cooler (or at least more ironic) than Bon Jovi. As a public service, here are some alternative titles for Run Chico Run's song, Jovi Lixx: Winger Lixx, Ratt Lixx, Halen Lixx, Leppard Lixx. As far as the rest of the disc goes, Vancouver's Run Chico Run sound to me like a lo-fi, more experimental Cake featuring Stephen Malkmus. As I got further into the album, I realized that this lackadaisical slacker rock skips past ironic and goes right into indifferent. An apparently bored singer floats over slightly more interesting lite guitar, organ and electronic blips which unfortunately makes for a pretty uninspired listening experience. Add complicated orchestration and 6-minute songs which change direction more than once and you'll understand why Run Chico Run are a fairly challenging band. I'm just not sure if I want to accept the challenge. (Paul Corupe)

### Tanner Gray

CD, Thom Edwards, 110 4th St., Box 651, Dunburn, SK, S0K 1K0

The songs featured on this disc definitely fit within the genre of classic rock. You won't find any surprises here –

just straightforward, well-intentioned rock songs with fairly workmanlike lyrics and music. Swirling keyboards, rockin' acoustic guitar and rasping vocals feature prominently throughout, making Tanner Gray apparent successors to the mantle once worn by the E Street Band and its numerous imitators. This is far from original stuff, but if you suddenly feel drawn to a long, lonesome highway or have to contend with waiting on a dream, then this is the soundtrack to your soul. (Karyn Bonham)

### Julie Doiron

#### Heart and Crime

CD, Endearing Records, PO Box 69009, 2025 Corydon Ave., Winnipeg MB R3P 2G9, [www.endearing.com](http://www.endearing.com)

Most great rock and roll librarians remain undiscovered during their lifetime. Julie Doiron is a happy exception to that rule. This mistress of dewey decimals continues to quietly serenade the corduroy masses. Bespectacled bookworms with ratty trainers sit attentive before her. She sings the songs that make the whole world sigh. (Terence Dick)

### The Waking Eyes

#### Combing the Clouds

CD, Endearing Records, PO Box 69009, 2025 Corydon Ave., Winnipeg MB R3P 2G9, [www.endearing.com](http://www.endearing.com)

After Queen Elizabeth asked the Beatles to break up (and suggested they blame it on Yoko) because they were becoming more famous than Jesus, they spent summers in Muskoka throughout the 70s recording happy music under the name Klaatu. Hipsters got hip to their masquerade and the Beatles had to leave cottage country and head west to Winnipeg. In New York, the clone of John Lennon was killed after he came too close to revealing their "Blame Yoko" pact with the Queen, and then



the clone of George Harrison was killed because he wouldn't join the revamped version of the Travelling Willburys (with Fabian replacing Roy Orbison). The Winnipeg Beatles released an album in the meantime under the name The Waking Eyes. Burton Cummings guested on a number of tracks and Joe Walsh was removed from cryogenic slumber to play guitar. A special chip was planted on the CD that restricted its airplay to AM radio stations. A CD that can be played on home stereos in mono and quadraphonic sound is also available. (Terence Dick)

## Radiogram

### All the Way Home

CD, Endearing Records, PO Box 69009, 2025 Corydon Ave., Winnipeg MB R3P 2G9, [www.endearing.com](http://www.endearing.com)

Until more record labels send me more of their product, Endearing Records will remain the uncontested best record label in all of Canada. While they can't do no wrong, they can score a decent number of thumbs up. One thumb points in the direction of Radiogram. James Keast dissed this record in the pages of Exclaim for not being punk enough. I think he's on drugs. This isn't punk at all. It's sweet hippy love country hiding under the surface of Palatial groans (but with more instruments and less gothic). My roommate made fun of the lyrics, but I couldn't get the tunes out of my head (and I never really pay attention to lyrics anyway). The New Order cover ("Love Vigilantes" as done by Willie Nelson and Emmylou Harris) is only one among a number of strong originals. The guitars shimmer like a sunset on water. And I am completely endeared. (Terence Dick)

## Friendly Rich & the Anal Assassins

CD

The Pumpkin Pie Corporation, 16 Peachwood Place, Brampton ON L6S 3Y9, [www.friendlyrich.com](http://www.friendlyrich.com)

For some reason, I thought this was going to be puerile, scatological hip hop. Turns out to be a lot more antisocial than that. Friendly's dinky dada reminds me first of the Residents and then countless other bedroom noise/casio/4-track soundtracks to drug-induced boredom. Music made on drugs is best heard on drugs. Drugs make you patient and attentive, if forgetful. Worn off drugs make most people regretful. Some mutants actually like the music they make after the drugs wear off. Sometimes they release it on CD. For this we can only be thankful. Why? Because that, once again, is truly the indie spirit; to release something so qualitatively horrible just to prove you can, just to express the distorted, deranged part of your soul, just to stir shit up. Such contrariness should be acknowledged and supported. (Terence Dick)

## Constable Brennan

It's Not as Bad as You'd Think

CD, Go! Go! Go! Records, PO Box 73559, 509 St. Clair West, Toronto, ON M6C 1C0

What a bunch of assholes. I mean the pictures in the liner notes, not the band. Constable Brennan freshen up the old school punk/ska sound with a great whirling organ sound. They're not exactly musical innovators

but when you describe yourself as one of Toronto's habitually drunk bands, no one is expecting great musical advances — just high energy, beer soaked punk rock. You can tell Constable Brennan have a cheeky live show, which is probably my only complaint about this disc — it seems to serve as a (boxers or) brief teaser for one of Constable Brennan's infamous concerts, rocking away under the pale white moon... (Paul Corupe)

## Mellonova

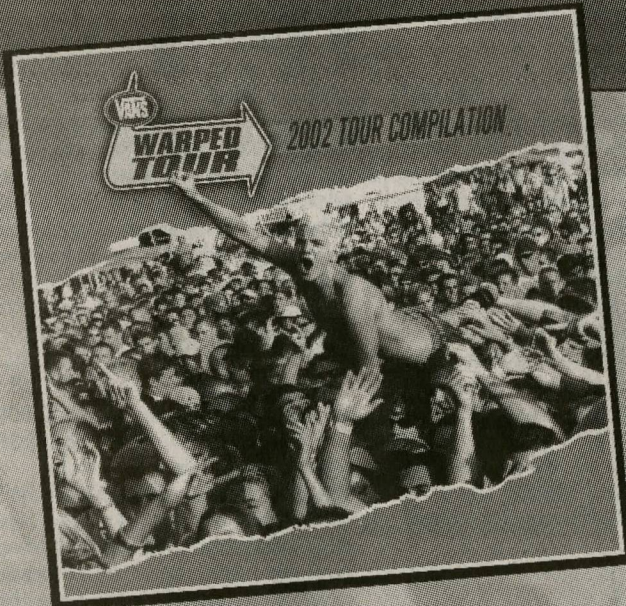
Slightly Happy

CD, Aporia Records/No!, P.O. Box 996 Station F, Toronto, ON, M4Y 2N9, [aporia@interlog.com](mailto:aporia@interlog.com), [www.aporia-records.com](http://www.aporia-records.com)

I've spent the afternoon listening to Mellonova's first full-length release and I can say this about it: they are often compared to bands such as Spiritualized, Travis, Coldplay and Slowdive, and those comparisons are accurate. Mellonova get all pretty and emotional like Travis and Coldplay, and they know their way around band toys, like the flanger, but to sum it up by simply comparing them to other bands wouldn't be fair or telling. The thing that would be missing is that a lot of the songs are middling and ultimately unfulfilling. It's not sad enough for you to get a good wallowing session out of it and it's definitely not happy, although it tries to be hopeful and inspirational at some points. I did like the spy versus space pop track, "Ground Down," featuring no vocals! On some songs, Mellonova's Michael Brennan does sound a bit like Thom Yorke, take of that what you will. Maybe they would be better live. (Alex Mlynek)

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## Various Artists

### Noise Factory – The Sampler

CD, Noise Factory Records, 79 Playfair Ave., Suite 002, Toronto, ON, M6B 2R1, [info@noise-factoryrecords.com](mailto:info@noise-factoryrecords.com), [www.noisefactoryrecords.com](http://www.noisefactoryrecords.com)

This second collection from Noise Factory Records displays the fine talents of most of the label's roster (now are missing in action on this release). The album opens up with a song by Sparrow Orange that I would describe as quietly hopeful. I could imagine the beginning of this song being used in a romantic moment in a John Hughes movie. K.C. Accidental and Beef Terminal contribute two tracks respectively, while Broken Social Scene—another project of K.C. Accidental's Kevin Drew—provide a single song. The aforementioned Sparrow Orange contribute three songs in total, including my favourite on this album, "this side o' thee river," a song that fans of the gurgling and burbling form of electronic/ambient music will enjoy. Despite the fact that there are only four bands on this sampler, the songs are varied enough that it doesn't all blend together. I would say that the sequencing plays a large part in this. Early on there are subdued tracks from K.C. Accidental and Beef Terminal. Things move up a bit with Sparrow Orange's more beat-laden-but-still-ambient effort and build in a shuffling way. The one drawback: those of you who picked up the first Noise Factory Records collection, beautiful noise (the apocalypse!), will already have the last track on this album, "Tired Hands," and this feels like a bit of a cheat. (Alex Mlynek)

## Alex Baird

Ish

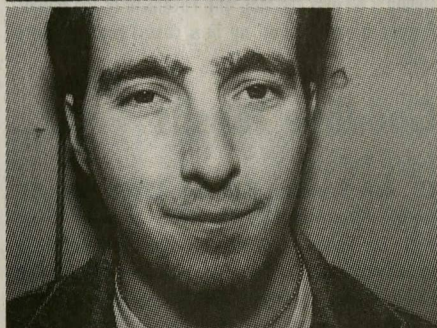
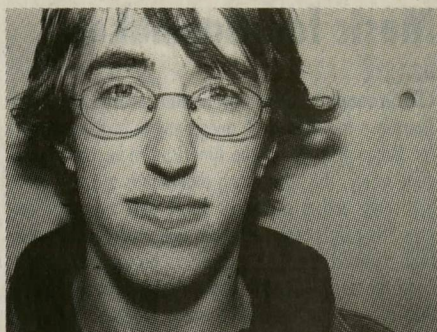
CD, Hunt the Sandman, [www.alexbaird.com](http://www.alexbaird.com)  
[alexbaird@hotmail.com](mailto:alexbaird@hotmail.com)

This CD is really not my thing, but I will try to be fair. Good points: her voice is nice and clear and on the first song she kind of — and this is a bit of a stretch — sounds like Harriet from The Sundays. The first few tracks are upbeat, girl with a good outlook on life songs. She does a bluesy number in the middle that sounds like Alannah Myles, but isn't as gritty. Then, it's back to shiny pop! That's the territory we're working in here folks. Commercial, polished, studio musicians; these are words that come to mind. If anything, do check out her website to take the "music personality test" and read her bio. They're kind of funny. I wish her music was more like that, but it seems, in that respect, she's destined to be the next Jann Arden. (Alex Mlynek)

## The Creeping Nobodies

I-X-U

CD, Derek Westerholm, 162 Grace Street, Toronto, ON, M6G 3A6, [www.thecreepingnobodies.com](http://www.thecreepingnobodies.com), [creeping@thecreepingnobodies.com](mailto:creeping@thecreepingnobodies.com)  
The Creeping Nobodies smoulder through six stellar tracks which see them take on their musical influences — The Fall, Wire, Clinic, fellow Torontonians The Fembots — and wrestle them gently to the ground. From the blissed out guitar jams of bookend tracks "Creep In" and "The Long Creep Out" to the slow, grinding pop of standout tracks "Theme from Happy" and "Fight the Good Fight", I-X-U showcases a band brimming over with fresh ideas



The Constantines rock, but they are not reviewed in this issue.

and ferocious energy. Catch them, before they creep up on you. (Karyn Bonham)

## The Jr. Grease Chiefs

Mini-CD

Michael Elvidge, PO Box 663, Durham, ON, N0G 1R0, [Jaye@log.on.ca](mailto:Jaye@log.on.ca), [www.angelfire.com/droid/michael\\_elvidge](http://www.angelfire.com/droid/michael_elvidge)

Michael Elvidge is my patron saint of indie music this issue. He has moved from cassette dubs and tape loops to sample loops and CDRs but the spirit of independence is still there in everything he does. This is truly the musical equivalent of the zines that Broken Pencil caters to. Home made, funky in a junky kinda way, reckless and slightly annoying, the music is fine but the package is what fires me. Here's an example of someone just doing it. And that's a miracle in itself. (Terence Dick)

## Rhume

Jeu de Puissance

CD, Kelp Records, 173 Greenfield, Ottawa, ON, K1S 0X8, [www.kelprecords.com](http://www.kelprecords.com)

Jon Bartlett is god. Il est dieu. C'est magnifique. Très bien. So good. The best record of the year. Go now. Buy it. E-mail Jon. Pay for him to come to your city and play a concert. And then buy his CD. And then start a band that sounds like Rhume. And then sing in French. And then wear out your CD and buy a new one. And then give it to the cute exchange student from Quebec. And then have sex. And buy the CD again. And then play it at a party and sing as loud as you can to Caline De Binne. And then beat the shit out of the guy who tries to put on Jay-Z. Listen to that one song eleven times. Make everyone else listen. Play them Vous êtes une Province. Explain at length how brilliant the drumming is. Lose the CD. Buy a new one. Play it in the car. Blast Double-X out the windows on a sunny day. Have sex with whoever smiles at you. Play the CD while you have sex. Interrupt

your coitus to mime the trumpet solo. Go back to having sex. Listen while your heart rate slows and your sweat soaks into the sheets. Fall asleep as happy as you'll ever be. (Terence Dick)

## The Kief Show Ones

Musick 5000 A.D.

CD, Michael Elvidge, P.O. Box 663, Durham, ON, N0G 1R0

Who knew the tranquil countryside of Grey County contained an alien musical presence? The Kief Show Ones sound like a high school orchestra rehearsing the theme from Close Encounter in a wind tunnel. Mr. Elvidge has been creating these scratchy-scratchy recordings for a number of years now, and it's great to hear how far he has advanced since those early cassettes. With The Kief Show Ones, he proves there is no excuse for sitting on your hands — you should be recording your own music right now! (Karyn Bonham)

## Aaron Booth

Transparent

CD, BoomBox Records, [www.aaronboothmusic.com](http://www.aaronboothmusic.com)

When you open Aaron Booth's debut CD, the back flap of the CD booklet is a picture of a two lane highway in a white out with a truck in oncoming traffic. Musically, Mr. Booth's CD opens sparsely with shuffling, brush stroked drums and an acoustic fingerpicked guitar. His voice floats softly over top. However, by time the second verse comes in with backing vocal arrangements that are frankly stunning, the covers are slowly being pulled up to your neck to keep your warm. "Where Is That Son", "Song Never Played", "Sleep In Cinescope" and "I Was Guest" demonstrate that Mr. Booth's abilities lie beyond that of the average singer/songwriter. With assistance from producer David Draves (Kepler, Julie Doiron), and musical help from the likes of Jeremy Gara (Kepler,



Weights & Measures) and Michael Feuerstack (Snailhouse, Wooden Stars), Mr. Booth has crafted a warm, subtle and ultimately, beautiful work. (Kevin Jagernauth)

## Do Make Say Think

& Yet & Yet

CD, Constellation, PO Box 42002, Montreal PQ H2W 2T3, Constellation@csrecords.com

On the home stereo, this sounded like more of the same slow, instrumental prog-rock that falls under the mantle of post-rock. I was going to be a contrarian and trash it despite all the accolades the Do Makes garner across the world press pages. I was going to be a voice in the wilderness, pointing out the Emperor's lack of clothes, the cheat we all felt, the hype we should not believe. I'd be the whistleblower. But then I heard this over big loud speakers in a concert hall and it soothed me and made sense and was pretty. So I guess I was wrong. (Terence Dick)

## Fly Pan Am

Ceux Qui Inventent N'Ont Jamais Vecu

CD, Constellation, PO Box 42002, Montreal QC H2W 2T3, Constellation@csrecords.com

I was lost in the suburbs staring at the repetitive architecture that defines the bedroom community listening to Fly Pan Am, which coincidentally uses the repetitive noise and movements that make up the architecture of post rock (I apologize for the term but I have yet to hear, or come up with, a better genre name). What makes this album stand out is the surprising amount of groove this group has in their songs... They delve into the hypnotic drones of the avant-guard and then release, with surprise, into a euphoric state of bass and rhythm...not unlike a teenager leaving the suburbs to head downtown for a Saturday night. Who would have thought that art rock could be such a toe-tapper? (Munro Cullen)

## Music for Mapmakers

02

CD, Grenadine, www.grenadinerecords.com

There is a fair amount of geography in rock and Music for Mapmakers spans the American indie rock world quite nicely. This seven-song collection is a city of solid pop songs with a suburb of angry post university art rock throw in for spice. The one thing that I would wish from them on their next album is a bit more consistency in the song writing because, as the easy metaphor that comes from their band name suggests, the song styling is all over the map with Pavement as the capital. A good album caught up in a carrot rope. (Munro Cullen)

## Goodbye Tonsils

Tender Ballads

CD, Kurt Beaulieu, P.O. Box 32166, Succ. St. Andre, Montreal, QC, H2L 4Y5

Wake up, sinners — the time to repent is at hand! Let these twelve spiky and twisting tracks convince you that God and Satan are waging Armageddon with feedback, distortion, and splices of television so demented you will fall on your knees and pray! If the squeaking terror of "I'm a Mormon" doesn't convince you, than perhaps the skittering demons of "Bladder Impact" will. You've always suspected your TV might be channelling forces more powerful than Magnum P.I. — now hear proof! (Karyn Bonham)

## Shalabi Effect

The Trial of St. Orange

CD, alien8 recordings, P.O. Box 666, Station R, Montreal, PQ, H2S 3L1, www.alien8recordings.com

A cut above the usual sort of tranquil, meditative music found in your dentist or chiropractor's office, the

"Middle Eastern psychedelia" of Shalabi Effect is somewhat marred by the sounds of hooting birds and forest rainfall. This is lovely, relaxing music at times, but it suffers from overdone arrangements which always sound a bit forced. A great find for yoga instructors everywhere but not necessarily the psychedelic classic one might have hoped for. More mistakes might have made this a far more interesting album. (Karyn Bonham)

## Slight Return

You Are Not Our Demographic

CD, Matlock Records, 1858 Blvd. Auclair, Ste-Foy, QC, G2G 1R7, www.matlockrecords.com, info@matlockrecords.com

Dartmouth, Nova Scotia's answer to the question: what would a band sound like if they tried to be a 1997-era math-rock/emo group in 2002? Produced by Mike Catano from North of America, this album does a good job of entertaining, but it feels like something I've heard before. (Alex Mlynec)

## Sewing With Nancie

Take a Look at Yourself

CD, Fast Music, PO Box 206512, New Haven, CT 06520 USA

Sure there's lots of pop-punk bands like Ontario's Sewing With Nancie, some with much better names. But it's hard to resist any band that starts their album with a warning that they can't play and then includes a song named after Toronto Blue Jays pitcher Dave Stieb. Sewing With Nancie seem to be having a tremendous amount of fun on their album, even delivering anti-corporate anthems like Starbucks Sucks with wry smiles. Sure, there are a few too many songs about "the scene" (If I wanted to read how "the scene sux," I'd read MRR), but otherwise, Sewing With Nancie's energetic debut is pure pop punk for kids up to no good. (Paul Corupe)

# Turntable Boy

By Kevin Jagernauth

Going from west to east across the country, here's what's been going on in Canadian music: **Neko Case** has just finished recording her follow-up to **Furnace Room Lullabye**. **Blacklisted** was recorded in Tucson, San Francisco and Toronto, and will be released in August on Mint in Canada, Bloodshot in the States and Loose in Europe. The **G7 Welcoming Committee** has also been quite busy of late. They have welcomed **Warsawpack** into their home, as well as releasing records by **Che: Chapter 127** and **Hiretsukan**. **Endearing Records** will be busy putting records by **Paper Moon** and **Morella's Forest** on store shelves this summer. **Aaron Booth** has just released his first full length, **Transparent**, on BoomBox Records and will be on the road across Canada in July supporting his latest effort. **Holding Pattern** have finally released **Small M Manifesto** on Matlock Records. **Rebecca Simpson** has released **Robot Drama** for mass consumption on Die!Venom. **Rockets Red Glare** will

have released their hotly anticipated full-length by the time this issue of BP hits the newstands. The CD will be available on Sick Room Records and the (double!) vinyl on Blue Skies Turn Black. Toronto's metal monsters **The End** have parted ways with their singer and are currently on the lookout for someone to fill his shoes. Think you've got the glass-eating voice they need? Contact them at allchaos@hotmail.com. **The Weekend** have released an EP, cheekily entitled **Teaser**, on Teenage USA Records. Via Ottawa's Kelp records, **Rhume's Jeu De Puissance** and 1978's **Quit The Human Race** have found their way to record store shelves. **Kepler** have returned home from Europe and will be checking the oil and kicking the tires before they head out across Canada in September, with **Snailhouse**. Both bands will be supporting their latest releases. Last but not least, **Shy Child** have released their debut album **Please Consider Our Time** on Grenadine Records.



## Plogg

comic, #4, \$3, Richard Beland, P.O. Box 97042, Toronto, ON M6R 2L3, plogg2@hotmail.com

Plogg's only story this issue is called "Funk Rage," and despite the sexist pornographic overtones, I loved this modest work! The heroine is black, beautiful, buff, assertive, and sexy. These are the ingredients for a thrilling sexual fantasy. The comic also alludes to 70s blaxploitation films, and has the potential to invite the genre of film that turns comics like Batman and Spiderman into huge commercial successes. I hope Sarva (who really does look a lot like li'l kim) makes it to the screen too! I totally lost myself in the violent plot, held together by ingenious situations, including a murderer dressed as a circus clown, a thief dressed as a guerrilla, the hard shark "Funk Rage" sporting a Hawaiian shirt, and an urban landscape propelled along by street wars initiated by fast food chains competing for the market. Brilliant! Beautiful! Sexy! (Paola V Poletto)

## The Beauty of Life

artist's book, 28 pgs, colour, \$6, T. Lacroix, #201 350 E. 2nd Ave, Vancouver, BC, V5T 4R8

We got all the hot buttons here...holocaust references, porn, religious leaders, new age cult motifs, oppressive dictators, Kenny Rogers, all snipped out and collaged together. The images are too loaded to be seen as purely formal elements, yet the connections between them seem haphazard and frankly opaque. It's like a game of Tetris where not one piece interlocks with any other piece, and before you know it, it's over. You'll find a generous helping of appropriated images of nude women grafted onto an odd assortment of things. (Kraft Dinner, swastika-wearing carnival freaks, a woman resembling Karla Homolka.) This looks like an art-therapy exercise. Baffling contents aside, *The Beauty of Life* is a very nicely fabricated book. Full colour on cover stock with fold-out flaps and sewn construction. If I had the Cole's notes to go with this, I might get into it. (Jon Sasaki)

## Heironymus Bush

Comic, B/W, 32pg., \$1, James Turek, 710 Barnard Street Apt H Savannah, GA 31401, jtturek@hotmail.com

By the end of this title, the President takes some pills, meets Zeus, and decides to become a punk rocker. It was a little whack, though, and I saw it mostly as one intelligent person's way of blowing off the steam of living under the presidency of such an idiot. My favourite part was in the middle; after murdering a teenager, his sidekick "Jensen" goes on a feeding frenzy, while Bush decides to take a walk. Bush lays down in the grass and has some sensitive thoughts. It reminded me of Beckett's plays, in that his works have both farce and dumb jokes but then they get all serious when one of the characters starts thinking. Endgame for the presidency. If only he really laid on grassy knolls thinking about the nature of life. Later, I noticed the title, which plays off three different ideas: "Heir" as in heir of the throne, "onymus" as



from Plogg

in anonymity, being the disguise of the generic, and then of course, by putting them together, we get Hieronymus, as in Bosch, the master of the grotesque, and favourite of the media when they want to do a Devil story, but combine nicely to signify an immoral generic entitlement. (Timothy Comeau)

## Exercise Book – Name: Lucifer

bookwork, \$5, Toronto, 1/1

I picked up *Lucifer's Exercise Book*, which is actually one of those books once used in elementary school, with thinly lined paper about 6" wide x 8" high. This one is a lovely apple green colour with a wave motif in white line drawing. Mark Connery sold it to me at the Small Press Book Fair. Page one has only the words "potato chip."

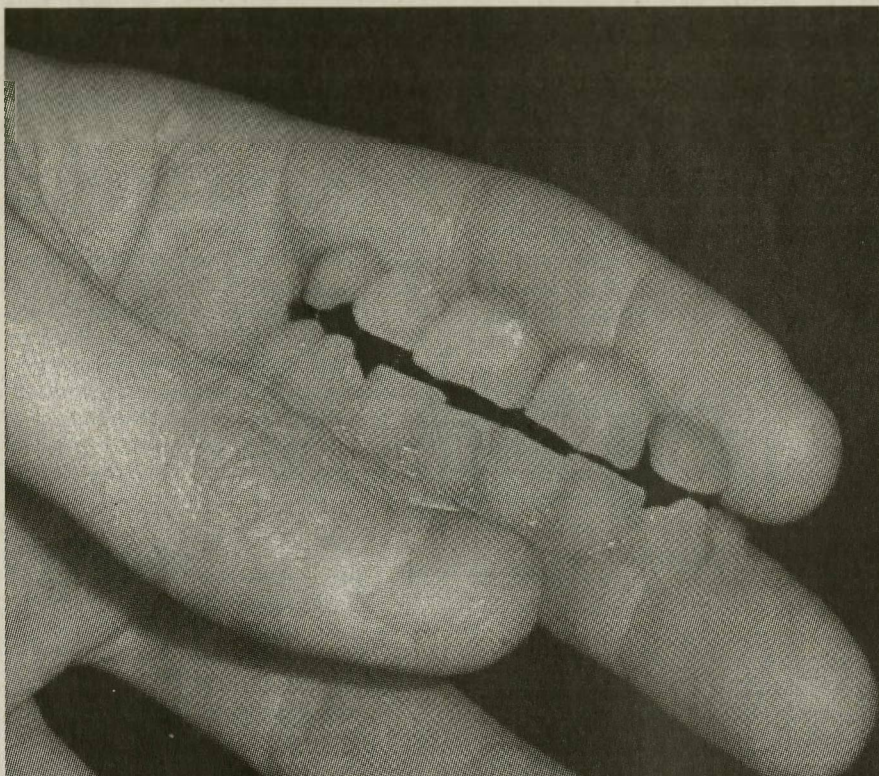
The rest of the book is a series of magic marker drawings of figures and words that look a lot like potato chips and crumbs, and also make it look like Lucifer is either: 1/ in grade two, 2/ he used the hand typically reserved for bad deeds, hence, his good hand, 3/ look for the drawing of Lucifer providing oral sex to an oversized potato chip, or 4/ "depmts dica pirt" flip the page, and it reads, on a "stumped acid trip." I love the way the magic marker has a deliberate way of penetrating each thin page, turning this into a dreamy sea of floating backward drawing. (Paola V Poletto)

## Brampton Indie Arts

comic, Vol.1, No.1, \$1, Brampton, Ontario

Featuring artists John A Kelly, Karen Stewart, Brian Ramdohr, Dan Phelps, Matt Daley, Lindsay Gibb, Hal Niedzviecki, Michael Comeau and Richard Marsville, this





from *The Carbon Based Mistake*

is a publication made from stark white paper and high quality copy work. Topped with a card blue cover, these pretty doodles notch the comic compilation up a scale to be mistaken for art. While there are some idle thoughts about suburban culture throughout the disjointed pages (it feels much like listening in on bits of conversation at a firken pub, if you were a waiter there) the form does not support a clear function. I wish I had more to go on from this competent group, at least slightly more to compel me to look for a comic strategy. I'm still not sure whether this acidic humor is a critical commentary of a suburban entertainment model — the franchise bar — and whether it's been appropriated in good faith or otherwise. (Paola V Poletto)

## The Carbon Based Mistake

(various)

Please refer to website ([www.thecarbonbased-mistake.com](http://www.thecarbonbased-mistake.com)) or write for details on specific publications. Mark Calvary, 650 w. 12th Ave, studio#122, Eugene Oregon, 97402

The work of prolific Mark Calvary, self-proclaimed "instigator" all falls under the banner of *The Carbon Based Mistake*. "Exhibitionistically displaying perverse, tragic, and bizarre behavior since 1975," he announces. At times, Calvary seems too determined to shock his reader, and he misses his mark by a wide margin. An instigator needs a virtuoso's touch, not a ham-fist, to push the right buttons. When he takes a more subtle approach, however, he is extremely persuasive. *Carbon Based Mistake* #5 and #7 for example, are photo-essays par excellence.

Five is subtitled "Highway 99", and chronicles the bleak industrial landscape of presumably highway 99, (wherever that is.) It's eerily familiar, probably because every Province and State in North America has an ugly strip of highway that resembles ol' 99. #7 documents "Pocket Despairs" with images of dirty dishes, unpaid bills, an empty P.O. Box, and so on. Again, charting familiar territory. Issue #8 is a very slickly packaged bookwork with a potent effect. It deals with slickly packaged prescription medications, and their detrimental side effects, told through excerpts from correspondences with sister Rae Calvary. The author has flexed his formidable design skills to produce a superb book where form and content are in perfect harmony. Even with the obscene U.S. exchange rate, these books are under-priced and worth picking up. (Jon Sasaki)

## Moonlight Chronicles

Chapbook, 110pages, No.26, \$?, d. price, box 109, Joseph OR, 97846, USA, [www.moonlightchronicles.com](http://www.moonlightchronicles.com)

This is a hefty chapbook loaded with delicately-considered line drawings of every day life, including images as diverse as spark plugs, chairs, farm machinery, kitchen goods, people and animals. There are enough references here to go wild with, and then don't seem to be firmly planted in any particular era or lifestyle, as references seem to oscillate between neo-Victorian architecture and Modernist commercial office. In addition, there are texts detailing the virtue of drawing and additionally, inspirations derived from and footnoting the drawings. I lean toward drawings, particularly here, because they're good, that should stand buoyantly on their own, free of

text, and what's odd here, is that even author d. price thinks so. So just do it, d. price, and give us that wonderful ability to roam through the unencumbered images. (Paola V Poletto)

## Silkscreen a.k.a. Screenprinting or Serigraphy

instructional booklet, free (donations suggested in U.S. stamps or currency.), 20 pgs, Violet Jones, P.O. Box 55336, Hayward, CA, 94545

When I was about 10, I tried to build a silkscreen press out of an old canvas stretcher and some other scrounged parts. The first image I attempted was a portrait of Colonel Sanders, but it ended up looking more like a blobby, inky drumstick. Had I access to a how-to guide like the one Violet Jones has penned, the result might have been different. I might have been sued for logo infringement. Jones' booklet gives step-by-step illustrated instructions for setting up a silkscreen press, rendering those cool "photo-emulsion" stencils, printing and storing a finished edition. To prove she's got the chops, the author has bound the publication with a flawlessly-executed screenprint of Hokusai's Great Wave. The rest of the manual was printed using vintage equipment, giving it some sweet retro action. One caveat: silkscreening can be pretty toxic, and this guide doesn't go into much detail about safety precautions. Don't eat the ink. (Jon Sasaki)

## drawings

untitled drawings, approx 60 pages, , Jeff Ladouceur, L'Oie de Cravan, 5460 rue Waverly Montreal H2T 2X9

As my friend said about these haunting drawings: "The lines do something to the figures, the figures do something to the line." Neither would survive without the other, if that makes sense. The book is populated mostly by baby boys with deep frowns, stubble-faced drunks, and a few elephants in very bad situations. They have fabulously long skinny arms, and heads unraveling into piles of useless cloth, which are part of a sewer drain, or have trees growing out of the gap left by a chopped-off nose. Few of the drawings are dull. The best are close to amazing, as imaginatively rich as bpNichol's allegories. The lightness of touch, and vintage cartoon style (that all readers will immediately identify with in an unconscious way) make you feel like you these surreal, pathetic characters are about to float off the page. (Donato Mancini)

## 3.05 Metres: A Ten Foot Rule Primer

comic, 32 pages, \$3 Canada (\$2US), Shawn Granton, TFR Industries, 3719 SE Hawthorne #243, Portland, OR 97214, USA

This issue, boasting a clean look and flavor, was prepared specially for Canzine 2001. In it, Granton chronicles a trip to New York, and more specifically, a concert given by veteran punk musician Joe



Strummer. The comic format, for what is essentially a music review, fits together very well. The comic style is less successful for the proceeding content filling out the zine. The images are great, but I can't resolve how they benefit snippets of every day life and conversely, how they make for interesting comics. For instance, "Stupid Point" consists of four distinct scenes, and four independent characters represent real-life experiences that happened to Granton. While humorous, the characters, if not intentionally, remain one step short of becoming caricatures. There is enough content to nonetheless entertain you during a lazy afternoon. In Granton's other recent and much smaller zine, entitled "Insanitrn," he employs a formal contour drawing style to build shriveled apple faces, and this proves to be a good departure for styling mature characters who have gone crazy in this thin plot. (Paola V Poletto)

## Long Time Journey

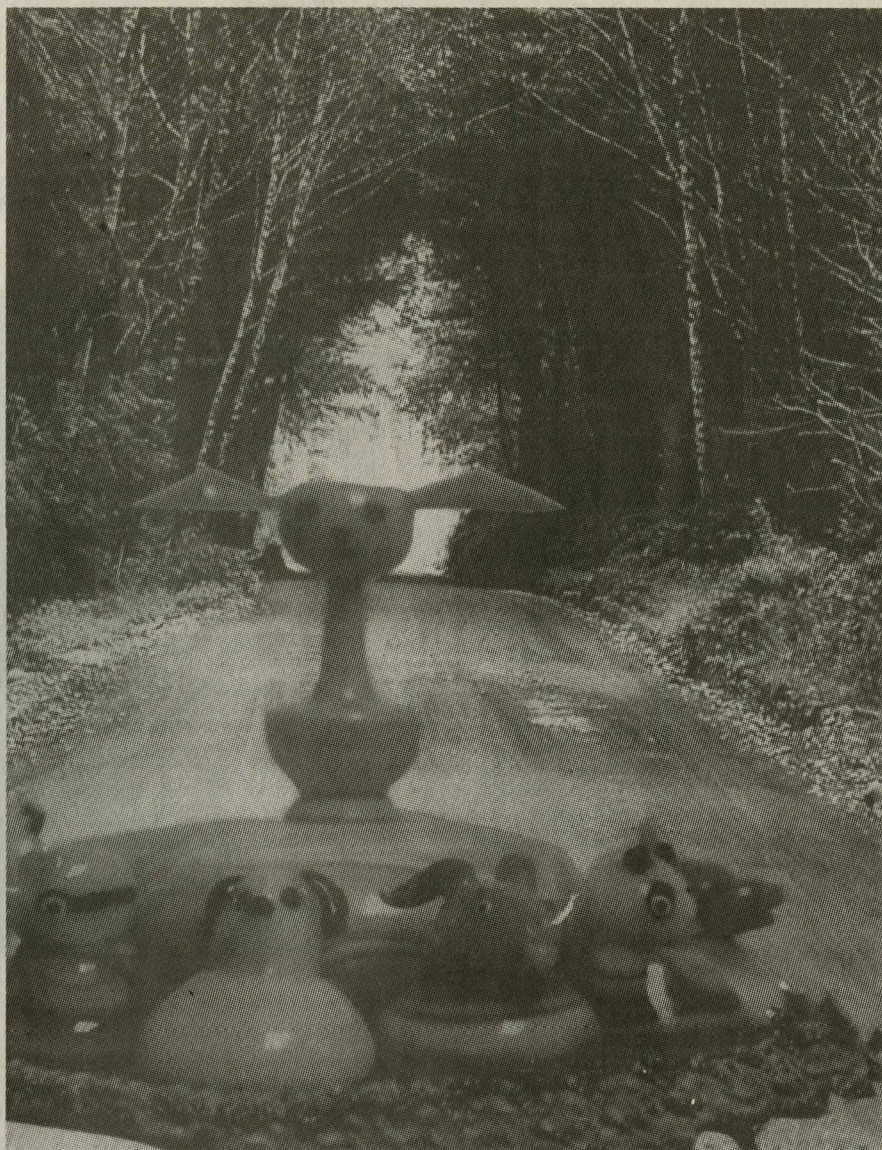
artist's book, \$4, 36 pgs, summer 2001, Scott Evans, 220 E. 16th Ave, Vancouver, BC, V5T 2T4

Scott Evans has photographed little dioramas of detritus. He takes crappy little plastic things like the stuff you find in the \$0.99 mixed bags at Value Village, and sets them up among natural crap in strange tableaux. The resulting hyper-saturated photos are totally captivating, being both heroic and pathetic at the same time. Evans performs some kind of alchemist's trick, turning solid crap into solid gold. Perhaps his secret is hidden in the accompanying suite of sketchy drawings that resemble algebraic equations and chemical formulae. They seem to echo the photographs, suggesting some kind of rationalizing system. So yummy, I was left with a witless desire to lick this zine. (Jon Sasaki)

## Santa Barbara, Aunt Joan and Frosty Sang in the Shower & Path of Wonder

two artist's books/comics, 24 and 16 pgs respectively, \$2.50 each, Jason McLean, 713 E. Pender St., Vancouver, BC, V6A 1V8, all-starschnauzer@yahoo.co.uk

Jason McLean rocks harder than Iron Maiden. Like, a full 30% harder. His sparse, goofy cartoonish drawings incorporate little non-sensical blurbs of text. Outbursts like "died in Florida" and "sleep in the attic for three nights" pepper his demented world. It's like being on a bus and overhearing dislocated snippets of conversation that don't immediately relate to one another, but given enough time, they begin to paint a picture of something. Anyone familiar with the 80's art star Jean-Michel Basquiat will recognize the tactic. This is the same idea, only way less self-important and lots more fun. (Jon Sasaki)



from Long Time Journey

## Coagula

art journal, #55, free or \$24 for 6-issue subscription, edited by Mat Gleason, 2100 N. Main St. #A8, Los Angeles, CA, 90031, USA, coagula@hotmail.com

A full page, newsprint art journal covering the indie art scene in and about Los Angeles. Featuring interviews with artists Carlee Fernandez and Cannibal Flower, as well as a good amount of art criticism, Coagula has a lot of good going for it. However, some of the critiques are too conversational to be effective and some are of the outright "upper/lower class vs. high art/low art" argument that is a pain to read. All we want to know is if the show by the artist is a) good and/or b) representative of their work. The comments about the snooty art patrons can be left at the door as can the comics and poetry. (Kevin Jagernaut)

## loaded symbols

colour zine 12pgs. \$5, 2002, Daniel Venema, 331 Wallace Ave Toronto ON M6P 3N8 harmakhet@angelfire.com

This book is nicely printed. Daniel has put a bunch of pictures together through Photoshop or good old-fashioned scissors and glue, and invested in the colour copier. Unfortunately, the title doesn't follow through into the imagery. This little book corresponds to my concept of books being an alternative to gallery space: why put pictures on a wall and have an opening where everyone stands outside smoking and gossiping, when instead you can put a book together with a colour copier? What it's lacking is an artist statement, or some titles, to give the audience an in. Why invite someone to a party if you're not going to give them the address? But a nice show nonetheless. (Timothy Comeau)



# Criminal Cinema

## Stale Spunk and Tears Can't Save B-Movie Scheme

by Rachel Sanders

**The** concept was a hipster's wet dream. The Criminal Cinema: edgy, underground films screened on the weekends in a classic porno palace, five bucks a flick, cheap beer on Saturday nights. How could it lose? But the latest contender in Vancouver's repertory theatre business lasted barely two months before equipment problems and low attendance forced The Criminal Cinema to rethink its strategy. Ultimately, the porn-tastic venue was just too yucky for all but the boldest of cinephiles. Not even for the chance to finally see Smokey and the Bandit on the big screen were Vancouverites willing to endure the disagreeable porn house odor of stale spunk and tears.

The Criminal Cinema is the brainchild of Kier-la Janisse (founder of Vancouver's horror film festival, Cinemuerte), David Whitten (American producer/film distributor), and Darren Gay (owner of Black Dog Video). The trio is devoted to programming "outlaw films," an expansive genre that covers avant-garde Mexican westerns and German horror films as well as John Hughes-directed teen flicks from the 80s. "A lot of these films are perceived by aware, intelligent people and connoisseurs of film of being unworthy of respect," says David Whitten. "Kier-la disagrees vehemently. She's like a public defender and these films are like a group of street denizens that are constantly being arrested for being derelict." From the beginning, Janisse felt that the Fox Theatre – one of the last 35 mm porn theatres left in North America – was appropriate to the tone of her programming. "We kind of like the co-existence of our exploitation films and their porno films in the same theatre. That's one of the charms it had for us."

They had their gala opening on April 6 with a screening of Peter Jackson's repulsive/magnificent *Meet The Feebles*. There was an atmosphere of nauseated camaraderie in the dilapidated auditorium and the bravest stayed and partied until 4 a.m. with some of Vancouver's



more colourful live musicians, including the inimitable Canned Hamm. The evening was a success and when I spoke to Janisse and Whitten shortly afterwards they were upbeat about the cinema's future.

"I think a lot of people had fun and were able to look past the fact that it's a porno theatre during the week," said Janisse. "That's obviously one of our concerns, that people aren't going to be able to see past that." Whitten agreed that the porn stigma would be hard to beat. "There are probably some potential patrons of The Criminal Cinema that are put off by the fact that it's porno theatre and we need to win them over. I think we possibly can once we've accomplished a few more things, like replacing the seats. We've gone in and completely disinfected everything but the place is still pretty much a pit."

The crew spent a whole month before their debut doing a theatre rescue operation – "it was rank in there," said Janisse – but their efforts weren't enough

to completely resuscitate the shabby, malodorous venue.

During their first two months of operation, The Criminal Cinema's time and funds were occupied with more important issues than renovation. "There's all kinds of projector problems," revealed Janisse more recently. "We're fighting with the people who own the building. They're supposed to pay for it and they're not." Hmm, surprisingly, pornographers don't make the most reliable of business partners. "We had a technician in that says this equipment's actually been faulty for a while... [the theatre owners] knowingly rented us non-operational equipment."

Projection booth repairs chewed up so much of the group's resources that plans to re-cover the theatre's seats had to be abandoned. And those nasty seats certainly had an impact on attendance. After opening weekend, the cinema averaged only 30 people per screening. "Which isn't actually that abnormal for a rep theatre," Janisse says, "but I think it



could be a lot better if the condition of the theatre was different. If people want the kind of programming that we have to offer then we do need a bigger attendance. We just have to be in a venue that's more pleasing to people."

So bye-bye to the Fox. And what now? Restrictive parking laws prevent the trio from building a brand new theatre, which means The Criminal Cinema might

just have to wait until an existing auditorium becomes available. But Janisse refuses to focus on the disappointment. "We're just going to be a floating theatre for a while," she says. "The Criminal Cinema will continue, it'll just be on a monthly basis at other theatres around town who have agreed to host us until we find something." The first of these monthly events is scheduled for June 15th, an

all-nighter at the inimitable Blinding Light!! in Gastown. When I ask Janisse what she'll be screening she snickers gleefully.

"A lot of really offensive little videos," she says. "Stuff that you'd never be able to show legitimately anywhere."

And so the uncrushable spirit of The Criminal Cinema lives on.

## Film & Video

### Front Desk

drama, dir Pale Christian Thomas & Bryce McLaughlin, 78:00, VHS, ?\$, #1407 1933 Robson St, Vancouver, BC, V6G 1E7

This Vancouver feature proves the directors are wide awake, concise and have a few cinematic tricks up their sleeves. It's another service-industry-strikes-back caper, about a front-desk clerk who wants to get fired the day he's eligible for Employment Insurance. The actor is rock-solid, and the number of good bit parts is mind-boggling - something this genre needs in order to work. It was full of original and hilarious anecdotal indictments of the public, with several gutbusting gags. I was amazed how much story can fit into one movie! Not a slack moment in here. But it tends to slide off focus at times - now it's a rock video, then it's a caper, then it's melodrama, now it's back to social realism. For example, the battles with car-breakers and hijinx with prostitutes seemed Hollywoodish. Somehow the cinematography was never amateur but let the seams show too often. And finally, the character's objective - getting fired - would be pretty easy to achieve, methinks, and yet somehow he never does. He doesn't even really try that hard. If the creators were to choose either fluffy comedy like "Slackers" or more of a "Road Kill" indieness, or better yet refine their own personal microgenre and stick to it, their next feature would be awesome. (Flick Harrison)

### Suspects (Performance for the Police)

documentary/experimental, 2001, Canadian, by Warren Arcan, Shelley Guhle & Josh Schafer, Susan Stewart, Teri Snelgrove, 27 minutes, VHS, price unlisted, Video Out Distribution, 1965 Main St. Vancouver BC, V5T 3C1, [videoout@telus.net](mailto:videoout@telus.net)

Suspects (Performance for the Police) is an Artspeak Gallery produced collection of films by Vancouver artists. These films are all meditations on the ideas of surveillance, security, and threat. The catalyst for Suspects is the Vancouver Police Department proposal to install surveillance cameras in the desperate and drug-ridden streets of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Susan Stewart's scene unseen includes surveillance-like images of people on the street. Thus the viewer is treated to an unsettling taste of Big Brother vision. Eastside residents are then interviewed and most are firmly against the



from Femme

cameras. The interview segment with Edna Brass, a women's centre volunteer, is particularly affecting. Her daughter was beaten almost to death one night on an Eastside street and she wonders if surveillance would help prevent such crimes. By documenting the opinions of the residents of the area Stewart gets to the heart of the matter and sidesteps all pretension. Pretension is the name of the game in Shelley Guhle's A Survey of Bio-design Carcinomal Interfaces in which we are presented with much uninteresting footage of mutating cells. Guhle's idea is to re-imagine drug abuse as a cancer and then to show the cancer attacked by chemo drugs. Also, a UBC immunologist is shown going about his business while under the surveillance of a hidden camera. It's all very abstract and not nearly as deep as it's meant to be. In Warren Arcan's powerful piece Oopsy-Daisy he leaves children's stuffed toys on Downtown Eastside streets and then videotapes their theft by passersby. Oopsy-Daisy therefore functions as a "document of crime." The viewer is left to wonder how such documents should be interpreted or used? The discoverers of the stuffed toys momentarily shed their veneer of toughness and it's fascinating to watch. As with Stewart's piece, another level explored here is what Arcan calls, "the unsavoury-ass feeling when viewers are implicated in the activity of surveillance." (Ted Baker)

### Femme

videopoem, creators Nicolaos Stagiass & Michael V Smith, Ssee website, [www.videoinstudios.com](http://www.videoinstudios.com)

This videopoem from the filmmaker of "Out and About" and the writer of "Cumberland" certainly goes the distance: Smith plays Cookie LaWhore, his regular drag persona, going out on the street to pick up tricks. Stagiass' editing slickly abridges time without becoming a rock video. (Flick Harrison)

### Culture Jam

documentary, dir Jill Sharpe, VHS, [www.culture-jamthemovie.com](http://www.culture-jamthemovie.com)

It would be hard to overrate this awesome doc about people who fuck up the system through viral power - the leverage of existing structures and symbols to undermine themselves. Check it out, that's an underground order! Judo of the subconscious is here displayed through the Billboard Liberation Front, the Church of Stop Shopping, and other wackos. The BLF come off as a tight operation - walkie talkies, business suits, nightvision cameras, no tackiness allowed. We see them plan and execute an operation to cover highly-concentrated dot-com bill-





from *Bad Ideas for Paradise*

boards with a sticker saying "Error: Illegal Stock Value. Abort, Retry, Fail?" Then we follow Reverend Bill of the above-mentioned Church as he bursts into a Times Square Disney store to mouth off about slave-labour factories while his followers wave a crucified Mickey Mouse. The cops arrest him. The BLF gets away. Watch this video. (Flick Harrison)

## Chopstick Bloody Chopstick

**2001, Canadian, experimental, by Wayne Yung and Shawn Durr, 14:16 minutes, VHS, price unlisted, Video Out Distribution, 1965 Main St., Vancouver, BC, V5T 3C1, videoout@telus.net**  
Chopstick Bloody Chopstick, directed by Wayne Yung and Shawn Durr, is a murder mystery that does double duty as an experimental film. A split screen technique ensures that contrasting images crowd the screen. Scenes of Chinese soldiers marching, Tai-Chi practitioners, and clips from a Chinese revolutionary opera fly by at sensory overload speed. The nameless narrator of the film is a scrawny, late twenties, neurotic white guy who has a penchant for Asian men. He tells us stories about a string of ex-boyfriends all of whom have disappeared from his life without a trace. He thinks they've just bogged off but we know better because we keep seeing dead boyfriends piling up on the screen. The murder weapon is invariably a pair of chopsticks. Chopstick Bloody Chopstick includes some mildly gruesome gore, is sometimes disturbing, but mostly it is extremely funny. The script gives the narrator some zingers. He tells us of an airline pilot boyfriend who agreed to take a flight route over the Bermuda triangle. Appalled, the narrator berates him: "You know, if I wanted a high risk boyfriend I'd be barebacking Courtney Love!" In the end, as the dead boyfriend body count continues to rise, the narrator's delusional obliviousness seems to function as a metaphor for the jingoistic self-absorption of the West. (Ted Baker)

## Bad Ideas for Paradise

**artist tape, creators Emily Vey Duke and Cooper Battersby, VHS, \$10 (Cdn in Can, US in US), 2641 1/2 N Spaulding Apt 35, Chicago, IL 60647 USA**

Chicago has been good to these kids. This latest vid is a refinement of their artist-tape collage, with more intense fonts and trippier music accompanying sharper editing, broader scope and deeper expression than their last work, *Being Fucked Up*. Especially gratifying is a poem about being a teenage boy, read in a girl's voice, which discusses yelling at mom from the shower and fucking teenage girls. There's also some found footage from what looks like an early portable videocam of kids playing soccer, one of whom gets a ball in the stomach and is comforted in fatherly/jock-standoffish/caring/nobody's-chargin'-ME-with-pedophilia fashion by the gym teacher. The artists haven't given up their amateur aesthetic or from-the-gut honesty but they seem to be venturing to comment on the world at large a little more, rather than risk navel-gazing absolutely all the time. I just can't imagine what ten years will do for them (providing they don't commit suicide - some of their stuff dwells in the least-fashionable neighbourhoods of unironic depression). (Flick Harrison)

## Crushed

**videozine, creator Meesoo Lee, VHS, \$5, meesoo@direct.ca / 1745 Napier Street, Vancouver, BC, V5L 2N1**

Meesoo is back in slack with another compilation of zany short-video investigations on the limits of pointlessness - I mean that in a good way. He reaches nirvana with the sublime "Rock Walk," wherein he takes a loudly-drumming casio keyboard from his house to his friend's house, videotaping it in a single shot. The mundanity of the event, combined with the ambiguous reactions of

passersby, under(m)/(l)ine the earnestness of the effort to tie it up with a neat bow through the simple use of beginning and end credits and call it a work of art. The next peak is more like Valhalla; "Trio" takes a second and a half or so of Gilligan, the Professor, and Skipper running away and repeats it three times. The hokey orchestral "da-dum" which must have been the lead-up to a commercial, or the punctuation of some lame joke, takes on a techno-fascist vibe in repetition, and the eminent recognizability of the character fragments suggests that television might indeed be cinematic. There's plenty more worth seeing on this tape. (Flick Harrison)

## HIV Rollercoaster

**documentary, 2001, by Paul Lang, 27 minutes, VHS, price unlisted, Video Out Distribution, 1965 Main St., Vancouver, BC, V5T 3C1, videoout@telus.net**

Paul Lang's film *HIV Rollercoaster* is a powerful in-your-face work that confronts head on the issues of gay identity, the AIDS epidemic, and the politics of barebacking, among other things. The rollercoaster metaphor here is that life as a gay man in the era of AIDS is full of highs and lows, thrills, scares, and danger. This film is not for the squeamish as it is saturated with scenes of hardcore gay male porn and includes some rather brutal surgical footage of what looks like a colon undergoing exploratory surgery. Interspersed throughout *HIV Rollercoaster* are interviews with gay men of different ages, backgrounds, and HIV statuses all talking about sex and AIDS. Older men talk about the dangers of living in sexual denial and then, in stark contrast, we are introduced to a young guy who lives for barebacking: sex without condoms. He is aware that he could get sick but seems to get off on courting death saying, "I want to feel the raw, the skin, the cum." A young lesbian woman proclaims with terrifying cluelessness, "If we got it we'd just start taking the drugs. There's good drugs out there." *HIV Rollercoaster* is critical of the tantalizing, condom-free-disease-denying-fantasy-world presented by porn. Lang's voice comments wryly, "You see bare dicks sliding in and out. You take your pills." The impulse, among the interviewees, to shirk off the soul killing, desire killing awareness of AIDS is strong. Many are unwilling to accept the modern disease-conscious new world order and want to rebel against it. They feel it unnatural to have to think about death every time they get into bed with someone and many are tempted to deny the risks and remain in fantasy land. But the price paid for this state of denial is often steep. Paul Lang delves into these issues in no uncertain way. (Ted Baker)

## Freshly Squeezed

**self-promo, Daisy Goldstein, 20min, VHS, \$5, daisy\_fresh@hotmail.com**

I dunno whether this is making fun of DJs' self-importance by pretending to be a doc about the world-shattering first concert by Montreal DJ Daisy Fresh, or if it's an earnest attempt to overblowingly advertise a new DJ, or if it's a new DJ making a self-deprecatingly humorous but still self-promotional little vid. Not sure it matters, though it's probably door #3. But if the art of propaganda is to disguise itself, then this vid succeeds. The ravers who go outrageously over-the-top pretending to worship



DJ Daisy Fresh (without having heard her music) also lie in some weird category because there's no telling where their regular wardrobes, voices, lingo and attitudes end and the self-parody begins. If satire died when Kissinger got the Nobel Prize, then pop-culture-parody died when the first DJ called him/herself an artist. (Flick Harrison)

## Onus

art video, Colleen Collins, 5 mins, VHS, colleen-collins@ns.sympatico.ca

Not as interesting as some of Colleen's other stuff, this art vid nevertheless has depth. The amateur aesthetic doesn't necessarily always convince, but the use of screen space, contrasting images and the occasional silly pathos are satisfying. Check out some of her stuff on [www.120seconds.com](http://www.120seconds.com), especially "Let's Go." (Flick Harrison)

## View From the Summit

documentary, directed by Magnus Isacsson, \$19.95, National Film Board of Canada. Sales & Customer Services, D-10, P.O. Box 6100, Station Centre-Ville, Montreal, QC, H3C 3H5, [www.nfb.ca/viewfromthesummit](http://www.nfb.ca/viewfromthesummit)

One of the many frustrating things about the National Film Board of Canada's take on the Quebec City protests is the way Isacsson squanders his phenomenal privileges of access. No, I'm not complaining that he didn't "get" the cops. If he wants to provide a balanced, multi-character narrative, fine. But where's the balance? Where's the characters? Where's the narrative? Instead of following some riot cop into the melee, for instance, we focus on the chief of police, in a controlled interview setting. Chiefs of police are trained in public relations and spin control, so you can be sure that we will learn nothing of human interest from his segments. You can also be sure that when the crackdown revs up, he is nowhere to be found. The protesters he interviews are also presented as spokespeople rather than human beings, but either protesters are idiots or this project needed a different editor. Talk about wasting access - now how hard will it be for other, more committed filmmakers to gain consent for such an intimate project? Thanks a lot! Sure, the suits look like idiots too - but even that seems to be a thin cover for the paucity of analysis, of insight into what's actually going ON in there. Narrative undermining journalism undermining narrative, sheesh - I asked for dual power and I got bipolar. (Jonathan Culp)

## ELEGY

Experimental, Dir Julia Churchard, 3.5 minutes, \$?, [jchurchard@hotmail.com](mailto:jchurchard@hotmail.com)

An interesting if pedestrian look at the body in motion. Deconstructive closeups of a dancer in performance in isolation, sweating forearms, protruding spinal column, spinning feet, etc. Would fit nicely into all sorts of evening's programs, with strong, clear, lasting imagery, but didn't blow me away on its own. (Flick Harrison)



from Dildo Goes Home

## The Human BEEing

Comedy, Dir Tony Shea, VHS, [www.piefight-films.com](http://www.piefight-films.com), 327 Detroit St., LA, CA, 90036

This is a fairly witty little take on the 50s horror genre. A scientist creates a bee/human hybrid which types really fast but tries to kill everyone. If it wasn't such well-worn turf, this might be worth the whole watch. But the cast and crew seem too timid to take it to the next level; in the many scenes which involve typing, I could almost see them adding this slick little L.A. film to their resumes instead of worrying about being funny. Wasn't sure if I was meant to empathize with the characters, laugh at their shticky shenanigans, or both, or neither. It's not possible to mock a genre - undermining its conventions and exposing their banality - while attempting to showcase your own acting, writing or directing talents according to the genre's own standards. Then again, there were a couple of good belly laughs involving the word "flam-gobblety-blib." (Flick Harrison)

## A Tasty Moment

drama, dir Jeff Birch, 3 mins, VHS, \$?, [www.pinpoint.bc.ca](http://www.pinpoint.bc.ca)

A really simple, frat-humour video which shows it has class by being short and to the point. A jealous girlfriend takes revenge on her beau who takes it right back. I chuckled and moaned, as does everyone I show it to. (Flick Harrison)

## Dildo Goes Home

experimental, 2001, Canadian, by Lynne Kamm, 13:38 minutes, VHS, price not listed, Video Out Distribution, 1965 Main St. Vancouver BC, V5T 3C1, [videoout@telus.net](mailto:videoout@telus.net)

Lynne Kamm's Dildo Goes Home is a very funny and enjoyably subversive piece of work. The film concerns the incredible journey home of a lost and heavily anthropomorphized dildo. The dildo has the misfortune to fall out of his mistress' bag after she leaves her girlfriend's house one morning. The dildo resembles an erect, silver penis. He has goggle eyes and a claymation mouth that make for remarkably emotive expressions. hilariously, throughout the course of the film, the dildo undergoes "more costume changes than a drag queen doing an ode to Cher." as it says on the video's box. We get to witness the dildo pass by numerous Vancouver landmarks like the Vancouver Public Library, the Art Gallery, the Granville Market, etc. I particularly enjoyed the scene showing the dildo taking in a gorgeous English Bay sunset. If you don't laugh at his absurdly gyrating silhouette contrasted against the poetic, darkening sky then you should check your pulse. In the credits Kamm sends a special thanks out to: "Everyone who called security on me - and the lady who screamed at me for filming a remote controlled penis." Dildo Goes Home makes delicious fun of the straight and humorlessly sexually-repressed society that we live in. (Ted Baker)



# Nurse

by Phillip Quinn

art by Angela Hodge

Time for the review, she said smiling. Have a seat.  
No thanks.  
There have been complaints.  
I suspected as much. My efforts?  
They have been noted but...  
That woman in accounting again?  
It's her and others.  
Could you mention the dizziness and the planning you  
made me suffer?  
If you wish.

(&)

Could you leave before me, she asked.  
If that's what you want?  
I will meet you on the corner.  
Outside the store?  
Yes.  
I waited, the neighbours suspicious of my rain coat.  
She never showed. At home, I showered.  
I found out later, she left by another door.

(&)

In the elevator after lunch, standing close to the women, I ride  
past my floor. I tell my wife this, as she applies her night face.  
Are you taking precautions?  
You know that.  
Good.  
Is that all you want to say?  
For now.

Coarse, black hair on her arm.  
The vaccination mark.  
How her belly button pushed out, a rubbery knot.  
How she frowned.  
The gap between her front teeth. Specks of green in her  
brown eyes.  
Her dark roots showing a month after her last hair appointment.



(&)

University students introduced pathogens into the small towns  
where they were born.  
After I read this statement on the chalkboard, I put up my  
hand.  
Please stand and state your name.  
I blushed, pushed back on my chair so it scraped the floor. I  
stood up.

Your name?  
Ebias Marconi.  
What childhood diseases did you suffer?  
I was inoculated in '87.  
More specifically?  
I was given full immunity.  
The measles?  
No.  
Why not?  
I'm not sure.  
At night what do you see?  
Stars like a rash.  
What else?  
I feel a bliss.  
Why?

Even when she squeezed my hand, pricked my arm with a  
needle, I worshipped her.

Phillip Quinn is the author of *Dis Location* published by Gutter  
Press. He lives in Toronto.



# Lessons in the Afternoon

by Lynn Bey

art by Lorenz Peters

Esther Pokalski hung the child out the window.

"This is what happens if you play what you hear, Mira," she said. "Please, then, do not play what you think I want. Play only what is in your fingers, how it is your ears are hearing the music." She laughed, and the child shook in her hands. "Ha!" Miss Pokalski laughed again as the child's squeals drifted into the studio. With a quick sharp jerk she gathered the child to her, folding the plump brown legs and cottoned buttocks against her stomach like a washerwoman pulling linen off the line. The child lay draped over the woman's left arm, limp, until Miss Pokalski flipped her to her feet.

"Now," she said leaning over the sofa back, "you must try it again. This time do not reach F-sharp when you leave the G. Hold it there instead; make it steady like I showed you, yes?"

Mira picked up her violin and tucked it under her chin. "Stay away from the sharp," she reminded the child. "Or else I let go your ankles." Miss Pokalski tapped her foot on the floor, the clipped beats sure as a metronome. Her pen hovered over the notebook; only occasionally did it dart downward to scribble 'Intonation!!!' and 'Second movement—phrasing!!'

Mira came to Esther Pokalski's studio three times a week and every Saturday afternoon. She was not Miss Pokalski's first protégé, but she was the youngest – six, and tiny, not yet three feet tall. She rarely spoke; even her forte sections were infused with a reticence that Miss Pokalski knew would one day break open. She played on a one-eighth size violin, and her favourite part of the lesson was hanging from the window.

"Get the B-flat right, make it broad, broad. Then we finish with the hanging," said Miss Pokalski. Mira lifted the bow and began again, the two of them disappearing into the music, becoming conscious of nothing but the note, then the next and the next, each one seemingly borne of the other, as inevitable as the ones that followed. Miss Pokalski believed the child knew she was learning more than what was being taught, but she was too much a teacher now to marvel at how completely she understood the needs of another.

"Again," Miss Pokalski said. "Broader! Make them think you will never bring back the bow. Ha!" She laughed, the end of her pen held still against the notebook.

*Lynn Bey is a project editor in Portland, Oregon. She writes fiction whenever it's raining and has been published in several e-zines.*



## Darcy & Izzy

by Corina Hitchcock

The jacket was too big. Face peering out from dark folds of fabric. Izzy wanted to look mysterious. She wanted to be an unknown figure.

Darcy smoking by the window. The sky lead-coloured. Rings of smoke. Darcy did not care about snake-goddesses, dancers or mysterious lands.

Izzy stopped before the mirror. Stared.

Darcy let out a great blast of air. She drew a circle – a fat, lazy O, like rings of smoke. Her hand shook.

Izzy twirled.

*Corina likes to write short stories that other people think are weird. She works as a web designer. She lives in Toronto.*





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## Publisher Registration for Canzine 2002

Sunday, October 6th, 1 to 7 pm

The Big Bop, 651 Queen St. West, Toronto

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name of zine \_\_\_\_\_

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### Step 1

## Step 2

### Step 3

### Step 4

### Step 5

A black and white cartoon illustration of a large, white, rounded character with a spiral on its back, wearing glasses and holding a pen, sitting at a desk cluttered with papers and a clock. The character has a simple face with two dots for eyes and a small mouth. It is leaning over a desk filled with various papers and documents. One paper has the word "CLOCK" written on it, another says "CLOCK", and others have numbers like "100", "900", "800", "700", "600", "500", "400", "300", "200", "100". A clock is visible on the wall behind the desk. The background is dark and textured.

### Step 6

### Step 7

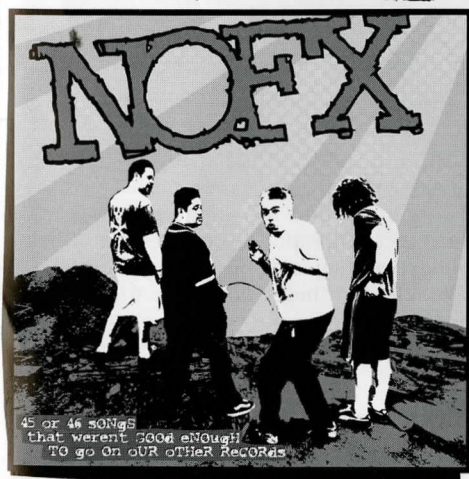
Christian Bok is a Toronto based poet whose latest work, *Eunoia*, won the Griffin Poetry prize. *Eunoia* is published by Coach House Books, [www.chbooks.com](http://www.chbooks.com)



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