

THE PORNOGRAPHIC FLABBERGASTED EMUS

by Wred Fright



Previously in The Pornographic Flabbergasted Emus:

A college student named Ted Abel moved unexpectedly into a house occupied by other college students--Alexander Depot, Funnybear, and George Jah--whom also happen to be in The Pornographic Flabbergasted Emus, a rock and roll band. It isn't long before Ted gets absorbed into the band as their new guitarist, practicing with them in their new, hardwon practice space, the attic of scene queen Karen Tinseltown's apartment, usually with Funnybear's new sidekick, neighbor girl Antigone watching. Meanwhile, the band/housemates also continue to look for the elusive fifth housemate, after numerous attempts.

Introduction

Welcome to the third installment of the serialized novel The Pornographic Flabbergasted Emus! I hope you enjoy it! This issue includes three chapters--numbers 6, 7, and 8.

The second issue was released in September 2002 at an Underground Literary Alliance reading in Detroit Rock City, so thanks to the ULA, Crazy Carl who shared the ride to Michigan, and Brett and Kris for putting us up and putting up with us (visit www.literaryrevolution.com for info on the next ULA event). The response to the second issue was swell. Thanks to everyone who read it, especially Sean Carswell of Razorcake, Jay Koivu of Mr. Peebody's Soiled Trousers And Other Delights, and Justin Larned of Out Of The Blue/The Blue Review for their thoughtful and kind published reviews. Thanks also to Michelle of Echo Zine Distro and to Amanda of MoonPotatoes Distro for carrying it.

Thanks to Michael Dee (mp_escuela@yahoo.com) for the great cover image! I'm responsible for everything else herein.

Cheers!

Wred Fright :)

January 2003

New Address!

P.O. Box 770332

Lakewood, OH 44107

USA

wredfright@yahoo.com

#6

Frigging In The Gigging

b/w

My Sweet Sweat

"Who made up this set list?
We don't know how to play 'The Twist'!"

Intro--Alexander Depot

Jah's found another stray and brought him back to the house. I call it Jah's buddy syndrome. I swear the guy just can't ever be alone. He always needs somebody with him. It's kind of endearing until it gets annoying because if the pickings get slim, he slims down his pickiness. There must have been some real limited options today because it looks like he's picked this latest stray out of a dumpster. He's a young one wearing a ratty green sweater, jeans with holes in them, old sneakers, and a bowling shirt with the name "Jo-Jo" on it. He would be an indie rock fashion plate except for the fact that he actually is filthy, not just fronting to be grunge.

I'm eating some Burrito Hell in the dining room, and as soon as this guy sees I'm eating, he leaves Jah's side and comes over like a hungry dog. "Are you going to finish all those nachos?" he says, eyeing my food.

"Yes. In fact, strangely enough, I had just that intention when I purchased them," I say.

He pulls up a seat and watches me eat.

"This is Sweeter," Jah says, "He's going to be my personal assistant and living in the old practice room."

"Hi Sweeter," I say, "I'm Alexander."

He doesn't look up at me; he just continues to stare at my food.

I swallow a bite of my Beanito Mussolini Burrito and say, "Jah, I guess the personal assistant bit is up to you, but don't we have to vote on a new roommate?"

Jah goes into the kitchen and speaks to me from in there, "Well, we've had trouble getting a fifth roommate so I just figured Sweeter could stay in there until we get a paying roommate since he's working for me and all. Actually he's working for us since he'll be taking over booking gigs since I'm too busy now that my art show is

coming up."

"Sweeter," I say.

He looks at me, tearing his eyes away from the food with great reluctance. "Do you know anything about booking gigs for a band?" I say.

"Oh, yeah," he says, "I did it all the time for my old band."

"Who were?" I say.

Sweeter goes back to staring at my food and doesn't answer.

I try again, "What was your old band's name?"

"Oh," Sweeter says, looking up, "Star Wharfs, then Star Whores, then Starboard Ho-Hos, then Bakery Frosh, then I Am A Jelly Doughnut, then Dollops Of Trollops. We changed our name a lot. We played all over the country so we'd run into bands with the same name and have to change."

I hear cupboards and drawers opening in the kitchen. "Do we have any coffee?" Jah says.

"We' don't have any coffee," I say, "Jah, 'I have some coffee though since I'm the only one who buys it."

"Oh," Jah says, "Can I borrow some? Sweeter needs a cup every hour or he has a seizure because he's been begging for change in front of the Coffee Catheter for the past few days and we keep running out of bagels by mid-morning so he's mostly only been drinking coffee for nourishment, and is now caffeine dependent."

"Uh, sure Jah, it's in the fridge, just don't make it, say, a habit, much less an addiction I guess," I say, as I finish my burrito.

"Are you going to use the rest of those?" Sweeter says, staring at the remaining nuke sauce packets in the debris of my burrito wrapper.

"Uh, no," I say.

He scarfs up the nuke sauce packets and sucks them all dry.

I'm amazed someone can down nuke sauce straight up since I can only handle a drop or two in the middle of my burrito, but I guess I just witnessed it so it is possible. No sense asking about it, instead I ask about another curious item, "Why have you been begging for change at the Coffee Catheter, Sweeter?"

"Huuck," he says, waving his hands in front of his mouth.

Jah comes back in the dining room, and nearly gets run

over when Sweeter gets up and runs to the kitchen. I hear the faucet running, frantic gulps, and moans. "What'd you do to my personal assistant?" Jah says.

"Nothing, but I think your personal assistant could use a personal assistant," I say, finishing off the nachos, "Where'd he come from anyway?"

Jah sits down, "He came into town for the Columbus Day protest on campus."

"Is he a flat earther?" I ask.

"No," Jah says, "Something about how Columbus was a creep since he killed and enslaved the natives he 'discovered' in the 'new' world."

"Yes," I say, "That's why they serve Christoforo Columbo Coffee at Burrito Hell, where all the products honor infamy. However, it's also probably why we're in Ohio right now and not Finland, Ireland, Kenya, Egypt, France, Russia, China, Indonesia, or wherever we'd all be if the Italian hadn't got lost on his shortcut to India."

"I wouldn't mind being in Finland or Ireland or wherever," Jah says, "I hate Ohio. Half the people here are inbred imbeciles. No wonder they named the capital city after someone who couldn't read a map."

"Jah," I say, "I'm a native buckeye and I know that's not true and I even know that you know that's not true. Besides, I'm happy to be in the USA. At least here, unlike a lot of places, we have the opportunity to better ourselves. My family's always been peasants, so I'm looking forward to being middle class."

"Do you want me to get your soapbox out?" Jah says.

I continue in my authoritative teaching voice, "I know better than to glorify being poor, which is usually only done by rich kids who pretend to be working class leftists as a fad for a while during college and then become corporate lawyers like their rich parents and spend the rest of their lives helping their rich friends get richer parasiting off the labor of the working class. Meanwhile the rest of us get to suck it, being poor."

"It sucks more to be dead and extinct," Sweeter comes in from the kitchen, his face flushed, "Think of all the people that lived by the 'Beautiful River,' on this land, whom whitey wiped out."

"That's true," I say, "I just hope you remember that when you

become a corporate lawyer."

"Uh," Jah says, "I'll go check on the coffee."

Verse--George Jah

I get the impression that Alexander and Sweeter don't like one another very much so I get Sweeter out of the house as soon as the coffee's ready. We make that order to go, for real. We, excuse me, he has work to do anyway. I just have to go with him to get him started since he doesn't have any money to purchase the tools and supplies he needs for being my personal assistant. I don't have much money, many money honey, either, but Sweeter has like none at all. At least I have some money from working mornings at The Coffee Catheter.

Every morning, excuse me, every middle of the night when I wake up to go make the coffee for Rock's movers and shakers, I debate whether the pittance I'm paid merits getting out of bed.

I usually decide it doesn't but yo, I get up anyway since I'm a professional, y'all.

Plus, at work I get a free breakfast by eating the pastry when no one's looking.

We go to The Drugstrip first since I'm into one stop shopping and like not fucking around wasting all afternoon. We need envelopes, blank tapes, pens, paper, and some other stuff so Sweeter can start sending out our demo tape and getting us gigs. Sweeter asks me if we have a publicity photo or a website or if we can burn cds for the demo tape but I just tell him to do the best with what he's got.

You've got to be forceful with the help or they start getting ideas.

We're about to go in the store when Sweeter says, "Let's check the dumpster first."

"Sweeter, we don't have time to fuck around."

"We might be able to find some of the stuff we need for free."

"In the dumpster?"

"People throw out perfectly good things all the time.

Furniture, books, even babies!"

"Sweeter, we don't need an infant, just some blank cassette tapes."

"Businesses are particularly wasteful since half the time no one knows what's going on anyway, or somebody screws something up and has to hide the evidence from everyone else."

"Hmm . . . it could save us money, and if time is money, then money is time, and we definitely have more of the time currency than

the other kind. And once when moving, Funnybear did mistakenly throw out a perfectly good vcr instead of the old broken one ('They weren't plugged in so I got confused as to which was which,' he said. Then he said, 'Whoops!' Then he swore a lot.), and since he's smarter than most of the people in Ohio, you could be on to something."

By the end of the day after we've hit every dumpster in town, the car is full. Among the highlights, Sweeter scored a stereo with eight-track player, a stack of porn magazines with the covers torn off, and twelve loaves of day old vegan wheat bread, and I scored some old hotel stationery, tapes with evangelical sermons on them that Sweeter can tape over with our demo, and three female mannequins I can use in my art show.

Alexander's right! This is a great country!

Chorus--Alexander Depot

We're playing a reggae festival on campus. There's Jamaican Jerk chicken cooking, dreadlocks flying, music playing, people dancing. It's a good time but I'm a little nervous because a) the band is banned from campus, and b) we're not a reggae band.

"Jah," I say, "Why are we playing a reggae festival?"

"Did you try the ganja in the restroom?" he says, "It's really good."

"Very good, Jah, I'll be sure to toke a spliff next time I pee, but once again, explain to me why it is that we're playing a reggae festival."

Jah is skanking to the beat. "I don't know, ask Sweeter, he's our booking agent."

"I thought he was your personal assistant."

"I gave him a promotion."

Note to self: don't talk to Jah anymore.

I go over to Sweeter, who is explaining to the people at the food stand that he's in a band and therefore deserves free food.

"I're in what band?" the food stand rastamon with his dreads wrapped up in his red, gold, and black knit cap says.

"I don't know what band you're in," Sweeter says.

"Not the band I'm in, mon, the band I are in," the rastachef says.

"The band from Ireland?" Sweeter says, "U2? Stiff Little

Fingers? The Undertones?"

"Bloodclot! No, mon, I and I, one love," the rastachef says pounding the grill with his spatula like he's playing a steel drum.

I grab Sweeter and pull him away before the rastachef pours some grease on him from the Kingston sweet potato fries, "I and I need to have a talk," I say.

"What?" Sweeter says.

"Rastafarians don't like the second person since everything's one so I and I equals you and I, get it?"

"Huh?" Sweeter says.

"Never mind," I say, "How'd you get us this gig?"

"I sent a tape out and they needed a band at the last minute."

"But we aren't a reggae band."

Sweeter starts to shake to the heavy, heavy beat, "I know that and you know that but they don't know that. We didn't have a publicity photo so I just cut out the picture of some Jamaicans from one of the dumpster porn magazines and taped some Bob Marley and The Wailers on the demo. Plus, I told them we'd play for free just for the exposure."

Note to self: find fifth roommate a.s.a.p. so Sweeter gets the boot.

"What?" Sweeter says, "A gig's a gig, right?"

I walk over to the rastachef, point at Sweeter, and say, "Hey! That guy just said 'Dub music sucks parrot ass, Red Stripe tastes like goat piss, and since Britain colonized your island hundreds of years ago, you should really have mastered the use of the second person pronoun in the English language by now.'"

Rastachef calmly intones, "Tis sad how ignorant some young people are these days," and pours more sauce on the grill sandwich he's making.

"He also said your bobsled team really sucks."

That does it. Rastachef's eyes grow wide and he climbs over the counter, heading towards Sweeter, "I and I go spread some peace, love, and sunshine on his ass."

This I of I and I doesn't join in, leaving Sweeter to his two souls becoming one, and I go find the band. "Do we know any dancehall?" I ask Bear, who's putting together his drums on the side of the stage, while Groovemaster plays.

"I stick my finger in my ear and I roll it all around," Bear sings in a Shinehead lilt, then adds, "No."

Abel says, "Let's just do our set and see what happens."

What happens is that during the first song, "I Pledge Allegiance To Your Mom," the entire crowd stops dancing. Rastachef, apparently finished schooling Sweeter in the achievements of Jamaican culture, yells, "You crazy mon! What is this rasclof? Play some root, rock, reggae riddims or I come up there and put you under heavy manners."

We play our reggae version of "Louie, Louie" for the next forty minutes. That ganja must be good because no one complains anymore.

Note to self: Question sanity. I skipped hanging out with my girlfriend tonight for this?

Verse--Funnybear

Through the woods and over the hills from grandmother's house, Funnybear's come. Well not yet, but being a porn enthusiast, after a weekend with family, Funnybear is ready for the sweet solitude of Funnybear's room.

Funnybear is then displeased when Funnybear opens the door to Funnybear's room and finds the homeless guy rooting through Funnybear's record collection.

"Son," Funnybear says, "What do you think you're doing?"

"Oh, hi," the homeless guy says, "I was just looking for something to play on the stereo."

"How's this?" he asks, holding up an Angry Housewives cassette.

"Pretty mine," Funnybear says, setting Funnybear's weekend bag down.

"You guys are so hung up on private property," the homeless guy says, shaking his head.

"If you like public property," Funnybear says, "Feel free to help yourself to as much of the street outside as you want."

The homeless guy goes back to rooting through Funnybear's sound recordings. "Do you have any eight-tracks?" he says.

There's a knock at the front door, saving the homeless guy from Funnybear pressing play on his head. Perhaps the pause button instead. "Son," Funnybear says, "Hold that thought."

Maybe when Funnybear returns from answering the door, the homeless guy will take the hint and exit Funnybear's room. Funnybear certainly hopes so. From the Bible group and the reggae festival, Funnybear's been trying to treat Funnybear's fellow humans with more kindness lately. Since the majority of them are little more than thoughtless pondscum, this has proved a challenge.

Funnybear goes downstairs and opens up the door.

Twin smiling faces greet Funnybear. One European woman and one Asian woman. Well, things are looking up, Funnybear thinks.

Then Funnybear notices the religious songbooks in their hands.

Yahweh Yodelers! Quick, shut the door before they start to yodel!

Funnybear slams the door shut. Funnybear gets enough religious fanaticism from Antigone's mom's Bible study. Funnybear doesn't need any more.

Wait! Funnybear has an idea! Funnybear'll give them something to yodel about! Funnybear means if you're going door to door trying to get people to think like you, then you're pretty much admitting you don't have any friends, you have a big hole in your life, and you're desperate. They're women and they're desperate so Funnybear will convert them!

Funnybear opens the door up again. Dejected, the women are already heading down the porch steps. "Hello there!" Funnybear says, "Come on in and grab a seat."

The women look at one another and shrug. "That door's been a problem all week. Must have too much grease or something," Funnybear says.

The women come on in. They aren't the best looking but hell who made up those fascist beauty standards anyway? Anyway, it's not every day that Funnybear has women in the house, besides the perennial jailbait temptation of Antigone. These women look of legal age at least. Funnybear asks them if they want any Dead Crow.

They politely say no. "We don't drink or dance," the Asian one says, "We just yodel for Yahweh."

They don't drink! What kind of religion is that? Hell, Catholics get drunk at mass, and Jesus liked to turn water into wine (though Antigone's Mom says that really means he turned the water into grape juice because our savior wouldn't condone the drinking of alcohol, but Funnybear doesn't believe her, Jesus hung out with twelve guys who liked to fish, there's no way they weren't doing beer bong hits every chance they got).

"We're celibate too," the European one adds, perhaps noting the glint in the big bad wolf's eyes.

Hmm . . . time for Plan B, and quick before the yodeling kicks in.

"My name is . . ." the Asian one is starting to say.

"Please make yourselves at home," Funnybear interrupts, "I have to go take care of something, but my roommate'll be right down."

Funnybear goes upstairs. The homeless guy is still in Funnybear's room. "Hey," Funnybear says, "There's a couple of chicks over here looking for you."

"Really?" the homeless guy puts down Funnybear's Big Hunk O' Cheese cd, and heads downstairs.

Funnybear locks the door. As the yodeling starts, Funnybear notices that Funnybear's bed's been slept in. Funnybear has a feeling it wasn't Goldilocks in it either.

Chorus--Alexander Depot

Our next gig is at a local public access television station for a taping of the Mark Tintin Variety Show. We're the special guests and Mark, a middle-aged man with a huge beard and dressed like a cowboy, is introducing us. There's no audience except us, the camera operator, and Mark's production assistant, but he acts like he's in front of the Grand Ole Opry. He takes off his cowboy hat and gives the imaginary audience a big wave with it, then he picks up his acoustic guitar and sings a song about a child who gets run over by a drunk driver. The song ends on a cheerful note though when the father of the dead child shoots and kills the drunk driver, who the legal system had let back onto the street. When Mark's finished playing this song, possibly the worst thing I've ever heard, he thanks the audience profusely like they've just given him a standing ovation and says, "Now, I'm happy to welcome to the Mark Tintin Variety Show, a terrific band, and one you're sure to love, ladies and gentlemen, The Urey-Hanna Band!"

His production assistant comes on camera with her clipboard, which I note she skillfully uses to cover her face from the camera, and whispers in Mark's ear.

"They're not? Urey-Hanna's on next week? Well, who are these guys then?" Mark says.

The production assistant whispers in his ear again.

"Say that again?" Mark says, sticking his finger in his ear and rolling it around, "I must have some wax in my ear or something."

The production assistant whispers in his ear again.

"Porno? I can't say that to 173,000 homes in the tri-county area. I'll have to call them something else."

The production assistant walks off camera.

"Well, aren't you going to give me any suggestions?" Mark says, turning around.

The production assistant doesn't come back, she sets down her clipboard and leaves the studio.

"Great! Just great!" Mark says, watching her leave.

He turns back around and jumps in the air when he sees the camera's still trained on him by the camera operator who's trying not to snicker. "Uh, sorry about that ladies and gentlemen, it looks like The Urey-Hanna band is next week," Mark says, "This week is a special treat, perhaps a little less country and western than usual but all you rock and rollers out there I think will love them."

He looks at us over on the side stage, all set up. He shakes his head in disgust and turns back to the camera, "It's The Orthopedic Flabby Elmos!"

Note to self: Be sure to forget to set the vcr.

Middle Eight--Sweeter Trustfundski

Each day Kim Kim and Ingrid came,
I knew conversion was their aim.

"How do you want to spend your life?

Dumpster diving and all that strife?"

They said, "Do something for the world.

Yahweh yodel for boy and girl"

I give George my resignation,

It's time to change my station .

Verse--Theodorable

The phone rings. It's my Mom. She asks how the t.v. show taping went. I tell her I thought it went well, but the host Mark Tintin refused to put his name on it so it probably won't ever be aired.

She asks why.

I tell her that Sweeter, our booking agent, sent Mark Tintin a demo tape with Hank Williams on it and pictures of some cowboys he cut out from

some, uh, magazines. When we ended up not sounding like Hank Williams and not looking like cowboys, Mark Tintin got a bit upset. But the camera operator liked us and gave us a copy of the tape. It looks good, but it doesn't sound too good because our amps were too loud and we overloaded the microphones in the studio so it just sounds like a large buzz with someone yelling over it.

No, that's not what we're supposed to sound like, I tell her.

Mom asks what we're going to do with Sweetener.

I tell her we had a big argument about it. Funnybear and Alexander both wanted him gone, but George said that he was getting us gigs, and unless they wanted to take over booking, we needed to give Sweetener a chance to get the Kinks out. He said he had Dave Davies out but Ray was giving him problems.

That was a joke Mom.

Uh, never mind, just don't worry about it.

Anyway, I said that in Down And Out In Paris And London, George Orwell noted that homelessness was not just a tragedy for the individual but also a tragedy for society as well because instead of being allowed to contribute to society in some way, the homeless were forced by the charity, government, and economic systems to spend all their energy on just surviving to the next day, where they did it all over again in a cycle that was just a giant waste of resources for everybody. So instead of somebody being a research assistant in a cancer institute or mopping the floor in an apartment building or any activity that helps everybody or at least more than one's self, one just spent one's time walking from place to place trying to get something to eat, only helping one's self, and barely at that. I said at least we were giving Sweetener a chance to better himself and contribute to society in, uh, his own unique way.

So we were at an impasse.

No, we didn't have to make a decision. Sweetener resolved it by running off with the Yahweh Yodelers.

No, Mom, I'll never run off with the Yahweh Yodelers.

And if I do, I'll be sure to invite you along.

That was a joke.

Well, I thought it was funny.

Yes, I've been studying for midterms. The other guys are studying too. Even Funnybear opened one of his textbooks yesterday.

He didn't read it but I suppose opening it up is progress enough for one day.

No, that wasn't a joke, Mom.

Anything else? Oh, we're getting a new roommate. Alexander got one of his girlfriend's friends to move in. She broke up with her boyfriend and needs a place to live.

Yes, I said she.

No, we're not living together.

Well, we will be living together, but not that way.

Mom, we need the money.

Mom, I don't sleep with any of the guys and they live in the house.

No, Mom, I'm not gay.

Uh, let's drop this, so what's going on at home?

No, Mom, I don't know what she looks like.

She's just going to be my roommate Mom, I'm not getting married to her.

Well, I've gotta go. We have to practice. We're playing a Halloween party next.

Yes, if I go trick or treating then I'll be sure to wear orange reflective stripes.

No, I won't eat any apples without checking for razor blades.

I've heard that same rumor about a serial killer in a dormitory every year since I've been in college. It's an urban legend, Mom, and anyway I don't live in the dorm anymore.

Mom, I love you, but I gotta go.

No, I don't know what the girl's name is.

Chorus--Alexander Depot

I'm sweating but that's sweet. We're playing a Halloween party at Karen Tinseltown's apartment, and the place is packed. For once, Sweeter booked us a good gig. Maybe he would have turned out all right.

O.k., maybe not. We're still not getting paid after all.

But hey at least we're having fun. Maybe too much since we're all dressed in drag. Though I think that's in Section 2A of the International Treaty On Rock Music: Every band must play dressed as the opposite sex at least once.

And I think once will do it for us. Bear wearing a mini-skirt, caressing his fake breasts constantly, and saying, "Damn, I look good" every time he passes a mirror is probably not something one should experience twice in a lifetime.

I opted for a more conservative society matron look myself,

with a granny dress and a pearl necklace. Abel's dressed like a Catholic schoolgirl, and Jah's dressed like a supermodel, which means he's wearing high heels and a see-through red dress.

Oh, and thong panties too, but I'm trying to forget that I saw he was actually wearing those . . . otherwise I may have to go through years of therapy.

I'm also trying to forget about the guy who hit on me earlier. I don't know what I found more disturbing, being hit on by a man or being hit on by somebody who actually found the grandma look attractive. "He's a dude, dudel" Antigone finally had to say to get him to leave me alone. It's the first time I've ever been glad she was around.

Other than that it's gone well. People are enjoying it. They're laughing and dancing.

The fact that they're all drunk from the free keg of beer probably helps but it's nice getting raucous applause instead of just a polite handclap and people saying, "Well, that was certainly different. You guys are very . . . unique."

All our friends are here so that pumps up the volume too. I even got Hilde to finally come out to see us. And she brought Birgit, our invisible guitar player, and Jessica, who's going to be our new roommate, along. Gao Miao's in the house as well. He's telling Lora Rattleoffini, Traci D.C., and some other of the college radio gals about Chinese Rock. Insane Ishmael's here. He keeps asking me if I want to snort some pain pills with him. Uh, no. Karen's playing the hostess with mostess, and her long-suffering roommate Meg is counting the hours until the party's over. Leroy Shell and the rest of his band, who changed their name from My Favorite Terrorist to Leave It To Elvis, are here. They're going to play after us.

Oh yeah, Nigel's here too. Blimey! I only mention him because he's making a spectacle of himself. He's drinking beer out of a plastic Batman cup, and every so often he wanders in front of us and shouts inbetween songs, "Fuck you Americans, and your fucking Batman!"

Then he drinks some more beer out of his Batman cup and goes away for a while. I keep hoping he'll collapse pretty soon.

Best of all though is that Jon Lenin shows up as we're rocking the house, er, apartment, er, attic of the apartment. It's like running into your ex when you've got a stunner on your arm. Pretty sweet.

Even our old friend Officer Trahan shows up when the cops come by and shut down the party. We were doing our cover of The Clash's "London Calling." He pretends he's not happy to see us, but while we were playing, I saw him rocking out. Timed to the beat, he had his truncheon thing and I think I even saw him sing. He can't say we ain't got no swing.

Coda--Alexander Depot

I never felt so much alike. We're at Burrito Hell glorying in postgig, er, glory. Karen gave us ten bucks for helping her have a successful party. I opted for a Hitler Hamburger and some Nixon Fries because I didn't want to literally play for beans. Jah says one guy said we were the best band he ever saw. "Of course," he says, "He told me later that he hasn't seen that many bands but still a compliment's a compliment."

"Some chick said we were much better than Cats," Bear says, "I think she meant the rabid ones out in the alley though."

Abel says that he has a run in his stocking and he has to go home to change.

"I'm going to Karen's to help her clean up," Jah says, "I can drop you off on the way there."

Jah actually volunteering to help clean up something? My spidey sense is tingling. Frigging in the giggling. Can you say "groupie" boys and girls?

He and Abel leave, Jah wobbling in his high heels.

Very good, Jah.

Bear looks at my food and says, "Are you going to eat all those fries?"

"Yes, Bear," I say, "In fact, strangely enough, I had just that intention when I purchased them."

I think I've had this conversation before.

Note to self: Eat alone from now on.

#7

Let's Go To The Grasshop!

b/w

He Farts Art

"The Grasshopper is my favorite place,
To get a beer bottle smashed in my face."

Intro--George Jah

I would wake up not knowing where I am, except I've been up all night and haven't known where I am since about 3 a.m. Karen's fallen asleep so deep she's almost comatose so I can't ask her. I slide out from underneath her, and try to dope the situation out.

I do know I'm naked and cold so that's a start anyway.

Well, there's no ceiling so we must be outside. That narrows things down a bit. There's a nice view of the city of Rock as the sun hangs low in the sky, huffing its way up in the morning. I can see the surrounding houses cascading down the hill, the trees losing their leaves, downtown, the big mill, the industrial district, the railroad tracks, and the river so we must be high up.

Of course, we're on the roof!

What roof I don't know though.

I hum a little of The Drifters as I look for a way down. I find a trapdoor with a ladder leading down. I try to wake up Karen but she just snores a little and rolls over, so I scoop her up over my shoulder and carry her down.

It's a miracle I don't kill us both. I do get a sore butt when I slip and slide down the last few rungs, but Karen just lands on top of me and snores some more.

I hope this isn't a harbinger metaphor for what our relationship is going to be like.

Anyway, we end up in the Emu practice space in her attic so at least I know where I am now. Who knew we could get to the roof from here? Maybe we can play a concert on the roof like The Beatles sometime. We could pour hot coffee down on the cops when they try to stop us ala medieval times.

Hmm . . . maybe we should do a heavy metal concept album too like Iron Maiden.

Hmm . . . maybe I should pour some hot coffee on myself.
Sho nuff, I need to stay awake. I've got a lot of work to do

with my art show coming up. I can't let this turn into one of those weekends that I spend all the next week recovering from.

I tuck Karen into her bed and give her a good night, um, good morning kiss.

Then I look for my clothes, but all I find are girly stuff.

Oh, that's right, I was dressed in drag last night.

Great. As if being exhausted, unwashed, and drugged out aren't enough, I have to do the walk of shame dressed as a girl too.

At least I find my car outside so it's the drive of shame instead.

I must be shameless though because I go to the Coffee Catheter and mooch some free coffee and pastries from the dirty girls working the morning shift. They've been up all night too. I think the whole city's hungover from either too many treats or too many tricks, or, in my case, both.

Except of course for Jessica and her parents, who are moving my new roommate in bright and early when I get home. Jess is cute with her black rim glasses, dark fuck me hair, and arty blouse. I'm glad I already have a girlfriend because with her living in the house I clearly would get no work done otherwise.

"Hi," I croak out while trying to shuffle my way across the yard in my high heels without spilling the coffee.

Her Dad drops the box of stuff he's carrying. Art supplies litter the lawn.

"Hi, George," Jess says, "Sorry, moving in first thing in the morning wasn't my idea. This is my Mom and Dad."

Dad's still picking up the art supplies but Mom steps forward with an overenthusiastic "Good morning, George!" as if drug-prowling, cross dressing wolves were a daily occurrence for her.

We smalltalk for a while and then Jess holds the back door open for me and I go in to eat and get my work started.

"Oh I feel so much better now, Jessica," I hear her Mom say as I stumble inside, "Why didn't you just tell us the boys you were going to be living with were gay in the first place?"

I'm too tired to be offended or correct her.

Anyway, I am wearing a thong and see-through dress so it's not as if I don't understand why she'd mistake me for a drag queen.

Instead I focus my energy on staying up and working on my art show. Mind over matter, baby. Discipline and anarchy. Just do it!

After I chow, I turn the radio on to the college station and in honor of All Souls' Day, they're playing nothing but James Brown and

Aretha Franklin and stuff. I crank it up to keep me awake, gather my mannequins around me in the middle of the living room, and start carving wood for the woodcuts in my art show. I can't believe how much ass I'm kicking. It's a triumph of the will.

Zzzzzzzzzzz.

Verse--Alexander Depot

"Why is the living room floor covered with wood shavings?" I ask Bear.

"Son, it's been like that for three days now," Bear says sitting on the couch, watching tv, "You just noticed it?"

"Well, why hasn't anybody cleaned it up?"

"This anybody didn't do it," Bear says.

Abel, next to Bear on the couch, speaks up, "It's part of George's art show. I would have vacuumed it up, but last time I cleaned up after George, he yelled at me because he claimed that I had thrown out his new sculpture."

Abel shrugs, "It just looked like some empty candy bar wrappers and other trash to me."

"Son, you just don't understand modern art," Bear says.

"Are all artists messy?" I say, "Was Picasso a slob?"

"I think he was Spanish," Bear says.

While he makes an imaginary rimshot and cymbal crash, I scoot upstairs to sulk. Since I'm in a crabby mood and I don't want to take it out on my friends, I lock myself in my room and put a Stereolab disc on repeat.

Hilde dumped me. Said she was uncomfortable with me living with Jessica. Uncomfortable! It was her idea! Then she said if I loved her then I would have quit my crap rock band by now anyway. Quit my crap rock band! When we first met, she said she thought it was cool that I played in a band!

Maybe it was playing in the band that did it though. I turn on my computer and call up my own special secret sweetheart spreadsheet: Emu Romance v.2.3. Uh huh, the pattern continues. Jah gets a girlfriend, and the next day, Hilde breaks up with me. Excepting the odd one night stand and Chuck and Birgit who were members of the band really in name only, no more than one member of the Emus has ever had a girlfriend at the same time beyond the couple day crossover period when the relationships are

in flux.

I don't understand the significance of this pattern--chaos theory?--or why it's happening to us--God hates us perhaps--but it is a bonerfide scientific theory that can explain and predict natural phenomena. I even tried falsifying it once by getting a prostitute for a few days, but it still held. The night the hooker moved in, Jah's girlfriend at the time dumped him for her gynecologist.

Worse, her gynecologist was female. Jah's ego sure took a beating that time.

So did mine though because the minute I ran out of money, the whore I hired started dating Bear for free.

In any case, the theory held up under scrutiny so I really should have seen this coming. I guess I was too in love to see that Hilde and I just made perfect sense. Jon Lenin had a girlfriend. When he quit the band, I met Hilde. Now it's apparently Jah's turn to have a girlfriend.

Oddly enough aside from the ho, Bear drops out of the cycle. That explains a lot about his behavior actually. Still, he is fairly mellow for someone who never gets laid. Must be all the masturbation. Looks like it's back to beating the bishop for me too I guess.

I've never revealed my theory to the rest of the band for fear of creating a self-fulfilling prophecy but there's no denying the evidence. Perhaps I should inform them so that maybe we can put our heads together and figure out a way to break out of the pattern. On the other hand, maybe I should keep the information to myself. After all, I could engineer a break up and position myself as the next beneficiary of the pattern.

No, that'd be immoral, besides I'm sour on people anyway at the moment. I'd rather spend time with my computer and keyboard. Like Gary Numan always said, if a machine lets you down, you know it's nothing personal.

Oh, maybe I'll tell the band, maybe I won't. At least I can write some cool break up songs now. Well, not now, soon. Now it's time to reacquaint myself with hopping the hobbyhorse.

Note to self: Fuck me.

Chorus--George Jah

Alexander seems more relaxed lately. He's back to his cool

self again. I don't know what he saw in that girl anyway.

I mean I know what he saw on that girl. Just not in her.

I told Karen just the other day, "You know you're not much to look at, but you're not annoying like most girls, which I really appreciate."

She said, "Thanks, George. I think there's a compliment in there somewhere."

It's kind of hard having a girlfriend though. Between work, school, the band, and her, it seems as if I never get anything done. My art show's this weekend and I've still got to paint the mannequins and finish a couple sculptures, not to mention my new video. I kind of miss delegating stuff to my old personal assistant Sweeter Trustfundski.

I mean he was completely useless but at least I could blame him when nothing got done.

Now it's just me. Well I guess that's not completely true as Funnybear offers to help. The stress must be driving me crazy because I actually say yes. Of course, we don't get any work done because five minutes into it he says we should stop and go vote since it's election day.

"Vote?" I say, "I never vote. It doesn't make a difference who wins since they're all rich jerks. It's like the major record labels, you know most of the acts on them are only there because they're related to somebody in accounting or something."

"You vote, son," Funnybear says, "Whether you cast a ballot is another matter but you vote."

I know I'm going to regret it but I actually ask him what the fuck he's talking about, and he goes into this whole spiel about the voting habits of peni. He says if your penis hangs to the right, you vote conservative. If it hangs to the left you vote progressive.

I ask him what about women, and he just says something about the color and size of the vulva.

I say, "Funnybear, you're scaring me. First you go to Bible study, now you're voting."

"Oh, I quit going to Bible study," he says, "We finished it, and so I said why don't we try another book, how about James Joyce's Ulysses or Finnegans Wake? But Antigone's Mom just wanted to start over at the beginning of The Bible again. I don't understand it. It's not like a Choose Your Own Adventure book, it's going to have the same ending every time. It's not like if you read Matthew instead of Mark, Jesus doesn't get nailed up."

"Funnybear," I say, "You're horrible."

"Can I borrow your video camera to film some amateur pornography someday?" he says.

"Just mix that paint, o.k."

"You sure you don't want to vote? We can get a sticker and a free cup of coffee."

"No, I don't want to vote," I say, "But don't let me hold you back from your democratic duty."

"Oh, I don't like them or the Republicans," he says, "I vote Independent, Libertarian, or Green."

I don't fling a brush at him because he actually opens up a can of paint.

Then he stops and does one of his would you rather. "Would you rather let the Republican candidate fuck you in the ass with a rotating dildo or would you rather have to clean the Democratic candidate's asshole with your tongue?"

"Funnybear," I say, "We've got to get some work done."

He starts to mix the paint, then stops and says, "What if the Democrat had diarrhea?"

He actually gets upset when I fire him as my assistant. "All right, I'll leave the artiste alone to his great artistic endeavors," he says, petulantly, "I'm going to go vote, Mr. Apathy."

Living here, it's a wonder that I get any work done at all.

Verse--Funnybear

Funnybear likes to pee. Funnybear likes to wash Funnybear's hands afterwards in the interest of personal and public health. Funnybear likes Funnybear's new housemate Jessica. Everyone else calls her the new roommate, but Funnybear has noted that sadly Jessica is not sharing Funnybear's room, only Funnybear's house, therefore she isn't Funnybear's roommate, she is Funnybear's housemate. Funnybear is working on the roommate thing though by being quite the gentleman, Funnybear thinks as Funnybear exits the bathroom.

Here comes Jessica now. It looks like she's headed to the bathroom.

Oh, shit! Funnybear turns around, runs into the bathroom, and slams the door in Jessica's face.

Funnybear puts down the toilet seat gently, then washes Funnybear's hands again. Funnybear opens the door and Jessica's looking at Funnybear puzzled. "Uh, those darn burritos," Funnybear says, "Please,

next."

Those darn burritos? Silly, silly Funnybear! Couldn't you think of anything better? Also, remember to put the toilet seat down! That's the third time this week that Funnybear has had to race Jessica to the bathroom to put it down.

She probably thinks Funnybear has bladder or bowel control problems. That isn't good. Weak bladders and bowels are seldom listed as turn-ons in personal ads. Unless she's a fetishist. There are videos for people who like that sort of thing. Funnybear has a couple of them.

What does she like anyway? Funnybear is pondering this when there is a rumbling deep in Funnybear's bowels.

All right! Where's Uncle Teddy? Funnybear can ask him to pull his finger again and then when he does, unleash a massive fart. Teddy always falls for that much to Funnybear's delight. Funnybear clenches Funnybear's buttock cheeks and climbs the stairs. Uncle Teddy's door is open, but nobody's home. He must be at class or work. Funnybear heads down the stairs, still holding back the anus cannon. Jessica is in the living room reading an art history book.

No, Funnybear can't. And Funnybear won't. It's difficult but Funnybear's finger will remain unpulled. Funnybear's about ready to explode though.

Funnybear smiles and waddles past her and heads out the front door. "Uh, I'm going to check the mail. Do you want anything?" Funnybear says.

Jessica laughs, "The mail, if it's for me."

Do you want anything? Silly, silly Funnybear. Why can't Funnybear think when she's around?

Making sure the front door is closed, Funnybear backs up, smiling at Jessica through the front window, to the far end of the front porch and passes gas out of ass.

Walking by just then, the postal carrier catches it full in the face. "My God man, what did you eat?" he says, waving Funnybear's mail in front of his face.

"Uh, sorry," Funnybear says, "Those darn burritos."

"And I thought dogs were the worst part of this job," the postal carrier says, throwing Funnybear's mail at Funnybear, and walking away.

Funnybear is disappointed. If Funnybear had known the postal carrier was coming, then Funnybear would have asked him to pull

Funnybear's finger.

Funnybear picks up the mail on the porch steps. There's a postcard for George's art show in it.

Art! Jessica likes art! Funnybear likes Jessica. If Funnybear makes some art, then maybe Jessica will like Funnybear. And then maybe after Funnybear and Jessica get to know each other better, Funnybear can start to fart inside the house again.

Funnybear misses farting inside the house. It's the little things in life that make it so sweet. Pffffffftttt!

Chorus--George Jah

It's my arty and I can cry if I want to. In fact, it's the performance art component of my show in the student gallery on campus. I weep for all of humanity's inhumanity in front of the mannequins who are seated in front of me like judges. They each have powdered wigs on and represent faith, hope, and charity. For faith, I ripped up a Bible and a Koran and some other holy books and pasted pages of them to the first mannequin and then painted her in red streaks. For hope, I pasted a bunch of facsimiles of stuff like The Declaration Of Independence, The United States Constitution, and The United Nations Universal Declaration Of Human Rights on the second mannequin, and painted her in yellow streaks. For charity, I pasted a bunch of the bleeding heart nonprofit organizations solicitation junk mail Ted always gets on the third mannequin, and painted her in blue streaks. I hope people understand I'm trying to connect the three primary colors to things like The Holy Trinity, the Three Stooges, and the Three Fates, but I'm in Ohio so probably not.

I also have some sculptures, paintings, woodcuts, and prints of stuffed animals and half-eaten cheeseburgers around the mannequins and a video of Alexander sleeping with an audio loop of machine gun fire and explosions playing in the background. I'm really interested in hypocrisy and how people negotiate the cognitive dissonance between our ideals and reality while living in our contemporary postindustrial hyperinformative society.

My basic point is that no one cares, not even me.

When I tell people that though, they usually think I'm just being ironic and classify me as a postfeminist political popartist propagandist. But honestly, I don't give a shit. Not even a fart.

I do care about what Professor O'Please thinks though. And especially tonight since he's supposed to be bringing the famous critic

Susan Sonhideandseek with him. If I could just get into grad school, I may never have to work again in my entire life.

Oh, here they come now. Boy, she's better looking than I thought she would be. I thought hitting on her for a better review would be a chore, but this'll be a pleasure. O'Please staggers up leading the way--he's had more wine than cheese apparently--dressed in a paint-splattered suit and mumbling as usual, "George, this is quite impressive bloor zdfjkd uighfjkb susdk . . . undergraduates seldom engage in a dialogue with the art world bloor sjhasju a sifh shjs as . . ."

He sniffs, "You haven't either, but at least you tried by having a solo show bloor ashas ashs skjyus sehs j . . . this demonstrates that perhaps someday you'll have something interesting to say bloor hja akn aaufasufgfigfn kgjkfa sdjkg sdgfkdgfsdjgfd . . ."

I know how the art world operates though so I ignore O'Please and focus on the big cheese. I say to Susan Sonhideandseek, "Thank you for coming to my exhibition. It's quite an honor to interact with such a public intellectual and problematic personage."

Ted comes up and is trying to get my attention about something, but I ignore him. I'm working the crowd and advancing my career. I don't have time for the little people like my friends at the moment.

"George, you're so silly," Susan Sonhideandseek says, "Why can't you just say, 'I like your new contact lenses?'"

Huh? Is this some kind of surrealism test famous art critics give up and coming artists like the tickle handshake Masons give to recognize one another?

"It's me, Jess," Susan Sonhideandseek says, "I'm not wearing my glasses."

"Oh, George, sorry to interrupt your banal youthful conversation with my date," O'Please drones on, "But Susan Sonhideandseek couldn't make it tonight. She bloor asjk dh dghd asdfadfasdiugf asg sdgs dgdkfduf . . ."

Oh, Susan Sonhideandseek is Jess. I thought she looked a little too young to be famous. What's she doing with a creep like O'Please?

"George," O'Please leans in and breathes on me with his winey breath and whinier wordslurring, "I'm going to give you an 'A' based on that piece alone bloor ashsj shs ajas fasdjgas as . . . I'd like you to do more work in that vein."

O'Please points at a piece I've never seen before. It's a comic

strip drawn with magic marker on cardboard, and concerns two stick figures grooming one another's hair. It's attached to the wall with duct tape. There's a crowd of people gathered around it. I leave O'Please and Jess and go up to the crowd.

"This is absolutely brilliant!" the visiting artist from Los Angeles is saying.

"What a challenge to the hegemony of the art media typically privileged in museums and universities," the owner of an art gallery in Cleveland says.

An elderly woman pulls me aside and whispers in my ear, "How much do you want for it?"

"It isn't mine," I say loudly, "And I want it the fuck out of here."

"Well, if it's not yours," the gallery owner says, "Whose is it?"

From behind the mannequins, Funnybear steps out wearing a beret, and says, "It's mine!"

"Is it for sale?" the elderly woman inquires.

"\$5000," Funnybear says.

"Ooh, that's out of my price range, dearie."

"How much you got?"

"Well, I have a twenty dollar bill and some free pizza coupons from Lotsa Pasta," the woman says, "My social security check doesn't arrive until next week."

"Do you want me to carry it to the car for you?" Funnybear says.

Middle Eight--Jessica Marine

So at George's show I met Zand,

I said my friends are in a band.

He says he's got a club downtown,

And we should really come around.

Art, film, music, bring your own beer.

Bring your own anything, that clear?

Hey! Out of town band on Friday,

He needs a local act to play.

Verse--Theodorable

So Jess tells me that she got us a gig at some place called the Grasshopper. I've never heard of it but she says it's really cool and I should call the owner Zand tonight to confirm for tomorrow night.

Tomorrow night? I say.

"Yeah, he's looking for a band to play," she says, "This could be your big break."

So I check with everybody which is tedious since George won't talk to Funnybear because he claims that Funnybear ruined his art show and Funnybear won't talk to Jess because he thinks it's gross she's dating her middle-aged professor and Alexander's moping in his room because he's depressed again about breaking up with Hilde, but I finally get everybody to o.k. the show. Then I call up Zand at the number Jess gives me and he's really confused on the phone. At first he thinks I'm calling from St. Louis, and keeps yelling at someone in the background to turn the music down because he's on the phone long distance. Whoever it is never turns the music--it sounds like Pere Ubu--down though.

"So, how's St. Louis?" he says.

"I don't know," I say, "I've never been there."

"I thought you said you were from there."

"No, I said I'm from the Pornographic Flabbergasted Emus."

"You guys are from Houston?"

"No, we're supposed to play at the Grasshopper tomorrow. You need a local act, right?"

"How can you guys be a local act if you're from Houston?"

"We're not from Houston. We're from Rock."

"What kind of rock: indie, classic, punk?"

"I don't know. Rock and roll."

"That's cool. I like rock and roll. I like jazz too. Do you guys play any jazz?"

"Uh, not really."

"Well, you're from Louisiana, I thought jazz was big there."

I just pretend we're from Louisiana from then on and he gives me directions to the club all the way from New Orleans.

Then he says, "Can you make some flyers?"

"Uh, sure."

"Good, if you get here early go on campus and hand 'em out to every good looking girl you see and tell 'em you'll be at the show."

"Uh, o.k."

"The girls'll bring the guys and then I can get enough money at the door to give the bands some gas money. It might not be a lot but it'll be enough to get you back to New York."

New York, right.

Chorus--George Jah

The Grasshopper's in a downtown building. It's pretty much one big, long room on the first floor with the decor of a 1980s crack house. It's repugnant but I like it because it's refreshing that it's not corporate clean to comfort the yuppies like a lot of the places in town where you can tell they care less about the music than the money. Here, there's outsider art splattered across the walls, hordes of crust punks sprawled over trashheap furniture, and the scariest restroom I've ever seen. The owner, Zand, is a guy who's a little older than us with long hair and a beard and moustache. He's working the door but no one ever seems to stop and pay the cover charge. Occasionally he strongarms somebody coming through the door, but then somebody else asks Zand a question and the person he's stopped slips away in the confusion. He keeps asking us how the drive was from New Mexico, which confuses me.

And, in fact, confusion seems to be the theme here because there's about nine bands playing instead of three like there was supposed to be and every band that shows up keeps bringing in their equipment until on the left side of the stage there's all the people, and on the right side of the stage there's nothing but amps and drums and guitars. And then nobody knows when they're playing so one member of the band is always missing having gone to get something to eat when the band's supposed to be playing.

Fortunately, everyone's too drunk or stoned to really mind. I've never seen so much underage drinking and illegal drug use in one place in my life. It's like delinquent heaven.

Most of the early bands suck but everyone dances anyway. The bill gets better when The Exchange play, then The Lenin Spoonful, The Merry Can Men, and The Party Of Helicopters. For some reason Zand wants us to play last, right after the out of town band. He's apparently finally figured out that we're from around here, and not from New Jersey or wherever and thinks people might stick around to see us. He's probably wrong because one friend after another has been saying good night to me since about 1 a.m.

I don't mind though because the out of town band, The White Liberals, are the best thing I've ever seen in my life. They all wear identical suits with blue ties and pass out condoms and safe sex literature after one song and then information about alternative fuels after another, and so on. It's a hilarious shtick and their songs are catchy as fuck. Then just when you think it can't get any better they put on blackface and change their ties from blue to red and play some

more as The Black Conservatives berating and preaching at the crowd inbetween songs about abstinence and the magic of the marketplace.

Gulp! They're done and we're up! I hope people stick around. On second thought, I'm dee-runk, I hope they don't.

Coda--George Jah

Some people do stick around. We don't even know all of them either. After the second song they start chanting "P.F.E.! P.F.E.!" like we're arena rockers. It feels so good I can't tell you. I even forgive Funnybear and tell him that I think we've found our Cavern Club or CBGB. He agrees and says we should do an art show here together too.

I stop talking to him again when he says that.

After we're done playing, Zand tells me that he thought we were going to suck so he was happy we were good.

I think there's a compliment in there somewhere.

#8

This Thing Of Ours

b/w

I Gotta Gatto

"Loving you bambina-doo wop, wop do!-is like hit after hit,
My cuore feels like-doo wop, wop do!-it's throwing a fit!"

Intro--Funnybear

There's this little thing of Funnybear's that Funnybear does. When a band gets up to go play, Funnybear goes and chats up one of their girlfriends. Since she's usually pretty bored because she's seen her honeybunny's act a dozen times before, she's usually pretty receptive for anything that relieves the tedium, and Funnybear is sure to provide that anything. So Funnybear and girlfriend chitchat punctuated by applause after each song. Then when Funnybear hears those three magic words--"our last song"--Funnybear makes Funnybear's self scarce before "my boyfriend's back" and no wiseguy's ever the wiser.

Now the supergeniuses out there may be wondering where that thing you do gets Funnybear since all the trim Funnybear talks to already have boyfriends.

Well, they all have boyfriends today, sweetheart. Tomorrow, well, there's another story. You see, relationships are always in motion, "in play" if you will, and sometimes it's game over, and that's when Funnybear's thing does its thang. Because when girlfriend is boyfriendless and Funnybear sees her around, Funnybear doesn't need to work any awkward pick-up line, Funnybear just picks up the conversation from where it left off last time. It's all about the long term, sugar.

And sixteen year old girls won't always be sixteen.

So, tonight Funnybear's band is playing at the Grasshopper with some other local band called The Our Things. They all dress like mobsters in suits with flashy jewelry and play fast garage rock punctuated by slow doo wop interludes. Funnybear kind of likes them even though Funnybear thinks they push their gimmick a little too far by acting like gangsters offstage too. Even their girlfriends get in the act by dressing up like mobwives, complete with pantsuits, B-52s hairdos, and long fingernails.

While the Our Things play their "big hit" "Cement Shoes Blues," Funnybear chooses which goomah to chat up. Wait! These chippies look

familiar--they're the Happy Hour Hos! So named (well, not to their faces) because they often hang out at Vic's Happy Hour Club and seem to have a thing for guys in bands. One can always tell which local act is top of the pops at the moment by the presence of the Happy Hour Hos: Jugsy Carmichael, leader of the pack; Paulina P. Pazzo, second-in-command; Jada Spada, rear admiral; and Eroina Cocaina, the royal foodtaster.

Funnybear decides to debut at #1 and chat up Jugsy. At first Funnybear is met with omerta, but Funnybear wins her over with Funnybear's flask of Dead Crow whiskey and chatter about Martin Scorsese movies. Funnybear is doing a Robert DeNiro imitation from *Taxi Driver* when Frankie The Face, lead singer of The Our Things and Jugsy's current love interest, comes into the audience to serenade Jugsy up close and personal.

Frankie The Face does not look pleased about Funnybear's proximity to Jugsy. He gives Funnybear the evil eye as he starts to croon.

Funnybear gives him a wink and says, "Are you singing to me?"

Verse—Theodorable

I just got paid and I'm in the local indie record store, A Fist Full Of Discos. Someday, I'll cut out the middleman and tell them to just send my paycheck here, but for now I do the legwork myself. There's no one in here but me, the middle-aged, cranky owner who thinks all rock music crapped out after 1980 (pinpointed to about the day John Lennon was murdered), and one of The Our Things, who's still dressed like he should be onstage in his Gotti suit and Gucci watch, and who seems to be tailing me. I go to the jazz section, he goes to the jazz section. I go to the rock and pop section, he goes to the rock and pop section. I test my paranoia out by going to the polka section, and sure enough, a moment later, he's next to me, pretending to examine a Frankie Yankovic cd.

"Are you following me?" I say.

The Our Thing puts down the Yankovic cd and looks around him from side to side, and says, "Me? Are you talking to me? 'Cause I don't see anybody else around."

"Nobody ever notices me," the middle aged owner grumps behind the counter, "Just like all the great albums from 1978 that are ignored."

"Yes," I say to The Our Thing, "I'm talking to you. You're one of The Our Things, aren't you? You play guitar, right? What's your name?"

He leans in and whispers, "Are you wired for sound?"

"What?" I say.

"Walk with me," he says, and heads back into the rock and pop

section.

I'm amused enough to follow.

"I'm Vinnie Piano," he says, "And you're Ted Abel of The Pornographic Flabbergasted Emus."

"Why do you play guitar?" I say.

"What?" he stops in front of the R's.

"If your name's 'Piano,' then why do you play guitar? Why don't you play the piano?"

"Fuggedaboutit!" he picks up a Replacements cd, "We're here to discuss business."

"Business? What business?"

"Act natural!" he hisses, "Keep shopping while we talk."

I pick up a Pogues cd. "I like them," Vinnie says, "There's just one problem with them."

"What? They're great!"

"They're not Italian," he says putting the Replacements down and wandering backwards through the alphabet.

"What? What does being Italian have to do with anything?" I say.

"Fungoo! And you're a paizan too, I hear. I just thought your family's name got clipped at Ellis Island coming over from the old country but you must be a halfbreed to say something imbesilly like that. The Roman Empire, the Renaissance, pizza, my dear mama," he picks up a Natalie Merchant cd and points to it, "The best things are always Italian."

He dashes up the aisle and picks up a Bruce Springsteen cd, "Italian."

Then he saunters further up the aisle and picks up a Frank Zappa cd, "Italian."

He sweetsteps back down the aisle, picks up a Frank Sinatra cd, does the sign of the cross, and mouths, "Italian."

"You're pretty ethnocentric, aren't you?" I say, "Every culture has wonderful things about it."

"Every society has merde, only the Italians have a culture."

"All right, whatever, when was the last time you read a book?"

"Hey!" Vinnie Piano says, "Let's not make this personal. This is strictly a business relationship!"

"So what's the business?"

"Have you guys recorded anything since your demo?" Vinnie asks.

"Well, Zand from the Grasshopper told us to 'get that shit down on tape a.s.a.p. and send it to Sub Pop,' but we weren't sure if that was one of his lucid moments or delusional ones. It doesn't really matter though since

we don't have enough money to record anyway."

"I'll give you a loan. Get it down soon because without documents it's like you never existed."

"Without documents . . . what is that supposed to mean?" I say.

"Lemme tell you a story. Last year a band came through town on tour. They were called Leggo My Dago. They weren't Italian; they just thought it was a funny name. We disabused them of that notion. They got some hits on .45 all right and I don't mean r.p.m.s."

"R.E.M.?"

"Dem neither. Anyway, Leggo My Dago never made it to the next stop on their tour."

"Their van broke down?"

"Ah, fungoo, are you stuned or what? I like your band so I'm trying to give you a warning. Keep the little drummer boy away from Frankie The Face's moll. Capische?"

"Ho capito," I say.

Chorus--Funnybear

"Hi! Are you here for an abortion today?" the woman behind the counter asks Antigone and Funnybear as Funnybear and Antigone come through the door of Responsible Reproduction.

"No, just some copies," Funnybear says, and the woman hands Funnybear a counter and points out an unoccupied photocopier.

Antigone and Funnybear are going on a flier run for the next Emus' show at the Grasshopper. George made the flier, which features a horde of ants dressed as punk rockers carrying a middle-aged dowdy woman away from a picnic, her parasol shaking in the air furiously. The caption reads in large print, "The Pornographic Flabbergasted Emus. November 22. Grasshopper. Bring your aunt and get in free!" then adds in fine print, "Only you get in free. Your aunt has to pay the admission fee."

Antigone looks at the flier as multiple copies of it pop out of the photocopier, "Dude, when are you going to portray a strong, independent woman such as myself on your fliers? It's either helpless old women or sexpots. Either way they all seem to need men. Look at me, I don't need a man."

"That's because you have your Mom," Funnybear says, "Everybody needs somebody."

One of The Our Things steps out from behind the free condom display stand and says, "Thatsa righta and youa needa mea!"

"Why?" Funnybear says, "Are you going to pay for the fliers?"

"Ha, ha," The Our Thing laughs, "That'sa funny. I'ma Salvatore Tellmeastory and I'ma goinga makea youa an offera youa can't refusea. Youa worka harda walking around towna hanging up those fliersa. Youa don't wanta thema to alia geta torna downa. That's beena happeninga to a lota of the bandsa latelya and nobody's beena coming to their showsa. Lucky for youa, my boys and la can makea surea nothinga happensa to thema. Wea can givea youa fiera protectiona."

Antigone kicks Salvatore Tellmeastory in the balls with her combat booted foot. Wop!

Salvatore doesn't flinch and laughs, "Seea, I'ma wearing protectiona. Youa needa somea tooa."

He fixes his hair to make sure no lock is unlocked and looks at Antigone, "Why isn't shea homea stirring the saucea anyway?"

"Go play some bocce ball, you sexist creep!" Antigone says.

Funnybear picks up a string of condoms from the free condom display. They cascade down to the floor in a rainbow of vibrant hues, "I have all the protection I need, thanks!"

"Youa thinka it overa, Orso Buffo," Salvatore says as he leaves, "Maybea youa changea your minda."

"What a jerk!" Antigone says, "Trying a shakedown in a copyshop!"

"He must be nuts trying to squeeze blood from a stone. I don't think I have enough money for these fliers even," Funnybear says, "Do you have any money?"

"Dude," Antigone says, "Is the Pope Protestant?"

Verse--George Jah

"Have you seen any of the fliers for our show?" I ask Ted at dinnertime. I'm making spaghetti, and he's eating a bowl of minestrone.

"No, actually. Isn't the show tomorrow too?" Ted says, slurping his soup.

"I think those mafia goons tore them all down because everywhere I go I see fliers for their show at Vic's Happy Hour Club tomorrow instead."

"Well, maybe their fliers should all disappear too," Ted says, and then drinks the rest of his soup from the bowl.

"Are you crazy?" I say, returning to the kitchen to drain the water from my spaghetti, "I'm beginning to think those guys actually

are gangsters."

"So what?" Ted says, "We're a band right? That's kind of like a gang. Somebody has to stand up to them."

"Maybe I'll just publish a local music zine anonymously and make fun of them. I can give us a good review too," I say.

I dump the water and spaghetti from my pot into the colander, you know the thing that makes the macaroni stop and the water go, except I sneeze and half of my spaghetti ends up in the sink on top of the dirty dishes. "Dammit!" I say, "I'm fucking hungry too!"

Ted comes in the kitchen with another dirty dish, "What?"

"It's that stupid cat of Karen's," I say, "I must have some of his hair on me. And she wonders why I always want her to come over here instead of hanging out over there where everything is covered in mounds of cat hair. I tell you what, we're moving our equipment and practicing over here again. It's cold enough so no one should be outside or have the windows open to complain about the noise. Fuck the neighbors anyway. The less time I have to spend over there the better."

"Trouble in paradise, already?"

"No, Karen's fine, it's just her dumb feline I'm allergic to."

"Camus's a nice cat," Ted says.

"No, he's not," I say, "If he was nice then he'd keep his hair on him where it belongs and not on me so that I sneeze later and drop dinner in the sink."

I scoop the spaghetti up back into the pot, "I wonder how much The Our Things would charge me to whack her cat?"

"Am I in a Seinfeld episode?" Ted says, "You'd actually put a hit on a cat?"

"Don't act all innocent," I say, "You told me about the time you killed the hamster you were taking care of for your friend."

"That was an accident!"

"Yeah, right. I'm surprised you didn't send a postcard to your friend on vacation saying, 'Your hamster sleeps with the fishes.'"

Ted gets all inarticulate after that and goes upstairs to study. I eat my spaghetti alone and plan a trip to The Don's Doughnuts And Black Hand Espresso tomorrow, where The Our Things always hang out, to find out the going rate for rubbing out a cat.

I wonder if you can use catgut for bass strings.

Chorus--Funnybear

Funnybear's band is playing on campus at Home Aid, a benefit for

the homeless. Also on the bill are Pogeypait, Ungoat, Sockeye, Deep Six, and those noted philanthropists The Our Things. As Funnybear's band plays on, two of The Our Things, Frankie The Face and bass player Sid Fishes come to the front of the stage. Inbetween songs, they exchange banter and heckle us.

Frankie: "Look at them. They're dressed like slobs. My mother would be ashamed if I went outside the house to do yardwork dressed like that, much less perform in front of people."

Sid: "They have no respect for the audience, Frankie."

Frankie: "Look at that drummer, boy, that greaseball's sweating, his hair looks like an overturned bowl of calimari."

Sid: "You said it, Frankie, check out the bass player, the only piece of musical equipment he can tune is a radio."

Frankie: "What's wrong with the guitar player? Why does he shake like that?"

Sid: "Don't make fun of people with epilepsy, Frankie, my cousin has that."

Frankie: "Sorry cumba, look at the keyboardist, I think he's playing the Casio I threw away a few years back. He must have dug it out of the trash."

Sid: "Well, you know, it's nice they let a bunch of homeless guys play at the homeless benefit."

Frankie: "What do they call this type of music? Emo?"

Sid: "No, Emu."

Frankie: "Emusic?"

Sid: "We are not Emused."

Frankie: "It's too bad there's not a mute button for real life."

Sid: "Sure there is, Frankie. It's called a gun."

Funnybear would like to say that Funnybear is surprised when it's George that cracks first but Funnybear is not. George puts down his bass, jumps off stage and tackles Sid. George puts Sid in a side headlock and walks him outside while Sid punches George in the ribs along the way.

Just outside a campus police vehicle is passing by. It stops and the cops handcuff both George and Sid and throw them in the back of the paddy wagon, er, minivan, and drive away.

People in the audience are wondering if this is all part of the show. Funnybear and the rest of the band don't clue them in since Funnybear and the rest of the band are Emazed that George went from being on stage to being in jail that quickly. Funnybear and Alexander and Uncle Teddy look at

one another and shrug. Teddy steps up the mike, "I guess that's the end of our set. Thanks for coming out!"

Frankie The Face says to Teddy, "You want me to play bass for you so you can finish? I've never played bass before but since you guys only know two notes it can't be all that hard to fill in."

With his guitar, Uncle Teddy takes a swing at Frankie but misses.

"Hey!" Frankie yells and touches his head with both hands, "Watch the hair!"

Middle Eight--Sid Fishes

After we get out of the clink,

George and I go out for a drink.

We make up, it's Cin Cin! and Cheers!

You would think we'd been friends for years.

He says his girl's cat's a bother.

I tell him I'm The Godfather,

And all he's got to do is ask.

Whacking that pussy's my next task.

Verse--Alexander Depot

It's the night before Thanksgiving, a typical depressing November night, with bare trees, wind, rain, a chill in the air, and bookended by an early sunset and a late sunrise. The evening is made more sinister by the knowledge that there's extended family members on their way to my Mom's house. In fact, they may be there now, which is why I'm still at the Emu house, and won't be heading up to Cleveland until tomorrow. Jess is in similar circumstances, thus in a similar mood, and since we're the only two people left in the house as we haven't left for break yet like all the others we do the sensible thing and go to the Toon Tavern and get drunk.

We order drinks, and grab seats. We each light a ciggie.

"I'm going to miss smoking," Jess says, "Patrick wants me to give it up."

"Why?" I say, sucking on my cancerstick.

"Oh," she ashes, "Didn't I tell you? I'm moving in with him next semester. He offered me free rent."

"And you don't have to do anything for this free rent?" I ash.

"Well," she takes a puff and blows some smoke, "Nothing I don't want to."

She takes a drink of her White Russian. I take a drink of my Black Russian. "I'm sorry," she says, "I told George, I thought you knew."

I roll my eyes, "I'm not surprised, in addition to his usual spaciness, he's been distracted ever since Karen's cat disappeared. She keeps freaking out and making George go out with her looking for it and hanging missing cat fliers on telephone poles."

"Poor kitty," Jess coos, "I hope it turns up."

I take another drink, "Well, dammit, I'm going to miss you. It was good having the female perspective in house."

"There you go being essentialist again," she laughs, "You're getting the Jess perspective, not the female perspective."

"Well, either way, it was nice," I say, looking her in the eyes and trying to understand what someone as wonderful as Jess sees in that old bag of bones and wind Professor O'Please, and not, say, me. I hope it's not just dollar signs. Of course, the way my money stash is going, if someone offered me free rent and all I had to do was be a gigolo in a nursing home, I don't think I'd say no. I'll have to work my ass off in the restaurant over winter break to bring my bank account back to life.

The bartender comes over with a tray of drinks. She sets them on our table, "A gentleman over there bought yuns a round and will be joining yuns shortly."

Hey! Things are looking up already. Then I look up and see Frankie The Face coming over with Jugsy Carmichael on his arm. I get up out of my seat, and pick it up in the air.

Frankie leans back and waves his hands in the air, "Hey! Relax! I'm here to make peace between the families. You have my word of honor."

I set it down, and we all grab a seat.

"Besides," Frankie says, "If I was gonna kill you I woulda done it by now."

He leans in and raises his left pinkie, which has a big ring on it, "This one time, we rigged up a theremin with so much juice it grilled the guy when he went to play it. Now there's some good vibrations. Too bad it was the wrong guy. Still it was impressive.

There were Sparks everywhere."

Jugsy says, "Frankie!"

"All right, all right," he says, "I think this rivalry's gone too far.

I didn't appreciate you guys sneaking in front of us to play at the Grasshopper the other night. You were supposed to be the headliner, you know the guys who get stuck ending the show. I need my beauty sleep you know, I can't be playing to a bunch of lowlifes and degenerates at 3 in the morning when I gotta take my mamma to church the next day."

"Frankie!" Jugsy says.

"All right, all right," he says, raising his hands, "Anyway, there's no sense in our two bands fighting when we like each other's music. I mean there's a lot of worse bands out there that's for sure, and anyway music isn't really a contest like who exclusively runs the drug trade in town, it's a form of expression with room for everybody."

We drink to that. Salute!

"So, how come hardly anybody writes any songs about Thanksgiving?" Frankie says, "It's a good holiday, but Christmas gets all the juice."

We used to sing a Thanksgiving song," Jugsy says.

"Oh yeah," Frankie says, "What's that?"

Jugsy sings and flaps her arms like wings, "Gobble, gobble, turkey, turkey! The gravy's dark and murky! Gobble, gobble, turkey, turkey! Until they eat, everybody's perky!"

"Shutupa your face!" Frankie says.

Jugsy sticks out her tongue and continues, "Gobble, gobble, turkey, turkey! My boyfriend's acting jerky!"

Note to self: I'll have to remember that song for tomorrow. Maybe if I sing it, my relatives will leave early.

Chorus--Funnybear

So after Funnybear gets back from Thanksgiving break, The Our Things invite Funnybear and Funnybear's band to a party at their house. Uncle Teddy stays home fearing a St. Valentine's Massacre type trap but the rest of us go. Whoever heard of a Week After Thanksgiving Massacre anyway? The only massacre that happens is what Funnybear does to all the Italian cookies and pastries The Our Things serve. Funnybear also helps Funnybear's self to shot after shot of Limoncello too. Salvatore Tellmeastory

says, 'You'rea supposed toa sipa that.'

"Whatever, son, just pour me another shot."

Funnybear drinks Sal under the table until his girlfriend Eroina Cocaina gives him some double espresso to wake him back up.

The Our Things made Funnybear swear an oath not to hit on any of their girlfriends anymore. In return Funnybear is a made man now.

So is George. But in a different way. He's in with his girlfriend since he got her a new kitten because she was so upset by Camus's disappearance. Karen's so happy that she's showing it to everyone at the party and asking what she should name it, Sartre or Beauvoir. She shows it to Funnybear.

Funnybear holds the little orange ball of fur up over Funnybear's face for a good look, "Son, I don't see any balls there so I gotta go with Beauvoir, although I like Simone better."

"Simone!" Karen squeals, "That's it! That's what I'll call her!"

She sticks the kitten in George's face, "Oh, Simone! What do you think, George?"

George sneezes, "Oh, that's great."

Vinnie Piano wanders up, with his girlfriend Jada Spada, "Ho! Another cat! This place has more pussy than a whorehouse!"

Jada elbows him. "Ow!" Vinnie says, "At least, this one's a small one. Sid's got a big bastard in his room."

Frankie The Face wanders up with Jugsy, who's munching on a sfogliatelle, "You wanna see Sid's cat? His name's Dante. He just got him not too long ago. I think Paulina's jealous of him since Sid pays more attention to the cat than he does to her anymore."

Frankie leads us to Sid's room. He shouts "Buon Giorno!" and opens the door.

Paulina's on the bed wearing a naughty nightie, and looking pouty and bored. Sid's sitting on the floor shaking a string in front of a big black and white cat which tries to catch the string with its paws. They all look at us. We look at them. Karen screams, "Camus!"

The cat scampers up to Karen and Karen hands Simone to George and scoops up Camus. She hugs him and kisses him, and says to Sid, "Oh, Sid, you found him, thank you, thank you."

"Yeah, good job Sid," Paulina says, walking out into the party, "It's too bad you won't be able to pick up a new girlfriend at the Animal Shelter too. Or maybe you can if you get a bitch. Then you can do it doggie-style all

you want."

Funnybear watches Paulina as she goes. Did that oath apply to ex-girlfriends too? Funnybear doesn't remember but Funnybear doesn't think this is the appropriate time to ask.

Karen holds Camus up to George's face, and says, "Camus, George and I have been looking all over for you."

"Oh, yeah," George nods his head, and sneezes.

He wipes his nose on the kitten and sneezes again. "Dammit!" he says.

Funnybear isn't sure but Funnybear could swear George is mouthing Italian curses at Sid, but all Funnybear hears George say to Sid is, "Boy, you're a great hit, man," which he says over and over.

Sid pets Camus in Karen's hands and says, "Basta! Camus was too cute," to George.

"I thought the cat's name was Dante," Frankie The Face says, "What kind of cat name is KaBoom? That's the sound my car bombs make when they go off."

Funnybear goes to eat some more Italian cookies.

Coda--Funnybear

So at the cookie table Funnybear meets an olive-skinned cutie with long, dark hair. She asks Funnybear what's going on with the people yelling about cats. Funnybear tells her and Funnybear and she get to talking. She stops at one point and introduces herself. She says, "Hello, my name is Vera."

Funnybear says, "Hi, I'm Funnybear" and then Funnybear drops Funnybear's plate of cookies when Funnybear tries to shake hands.

She helps Funnybear pick them up but some of them have fallen under the table so Funnybear and she have to crawl around under the table scooping them up.

From above, Funnybear hears Frankie The Face's voice, "Hey! Where'd my sister Vera go?"

"I don't know Frankie," Salvatore Tellmeastory says, "She was just here a minute ago."

"She better not be messing with some guy again cuz I'll moider the both of them this time!" Frankie yells.

Funnybear decides to stay under the table for a while. Funnybear bites into one of the cookies that fell on the floor. Ooh, how delicious!

Yips!

1) **Emus In The News!**

I'd like to call to your attention two news items you might have missed in your busy lifestyle. The first is that Tom Waits filmed a new video costarring emus. Unfortunately, the night before filming the video some of the emus were eaten by coyotes. Don't worry, they replaced them with some more emus that didn't get eaten. The second news item comes to us courtesy of Reuters News Agency which reports:

Escaped Emu Mistaken for Naked Man

Fri Aug 23, 12:47 PM ET

HAMBURG, Germany (Reuters) - An escaped emu caused confusion in Hamburg after a woman called police to report what she thought was a bare-chested man with two big white dots on his forehead staring into her window, police said on Friday.

The large, flightless, Australian bird resembling an ostrich has been on the run from a local zoo since Thursday.

"The woman heard someone tapping at the window at night and when she looked out she saw a head with two big eyes and a bare chest," a Hamburg police spokesman said. Officers said they knew there was an emu on the run and put two and two together after they found no one suspicious.

"We're still looking for either a naked man with huge eyes or an emu," the spokesman added.

The bird has escaped twice in two weeks. Last week it ran away and frightened a horse, but was eventually captured.

I bet it was Funnybear.

2) **Moby-Dick by Herman Melville**

Groan all you want, but this is one fine book. It's full of weird characters, intense drama, stunning philosophical insights, and lots of details about whaling. A whale of a tale! All right, after that pun, now you can groan.

3) **Fightin' Fun Comics #2 by Bob Socha and crew**

A hilarious super-hero parody/homage comic, which unlike most comic books nowadays, actually takes longer than five minutes to read. They're even

brave enough to publish a story by me! I penned the secret origin story of one of my favorite super heroes, Astronaut Urine Gorilla. Then they bumped him off in the same issue. Oh, well (\$4 postpaid in the USA from Bob Socha, P.O. Box 770332, Lakewood, OH 44107 www.mediocrityoflife.com).

4) Let's Get Killed Vinyl LP

This is a great comp from Cock Punch Records. It features many rocking tracks from some of my favorite bands including Kill The Hippies, Radar Secret Service, and Sexual Tension. There's even some folk song on it by a guy named Wred Fright (\$8 postpaid in the USA from Elias Newton, 614 1/2 Mantua St., Kent, OH 44240).

5) The Zine Yearbook

This is the 7th year Jen Angel and company have worked to put together an anthology of the year's zines, and this year it's going to be published by Soft Skull Press. Very cool! If you'd like to nominate something from a 2002 zine (less than 5000 circulation) for it, send a photocopy of the article or artwork with the zine's name and address by 28 February 2003 to: P.O. Box 1225, Bowling Green, OH 43402. Ahem, in case you were wondering, the Emus circulation hovers between 100 and 200 so issues 1 and 2 are eligible.

6) Donahue

Pick on Phil and his hair all you must but I'm still fond of him even if I don't always agree with him (I took a shit once next to the stall where he was wiping his ass so we have a special bond), and his new MSNBC show is a breath of fresh liberal/progressive air on cable television which otherwise seems to be a conservative/wrong wing hellhole of idiots like O'Reilly and Hannity. Even the people supposed to be "left" on tv usually make me want to puke (George Stephanawfulus, anyone?), so it's a pleasure to have someone with a brain inviting guests such as Michael Moore, Studs Terkel, and Ralph Nader on five nights a week. I wouldn't recommend getting cable just for ol' Phil (I don't have it and live quite happily) but I'm happy to know that The Return Of The Liberal has begun in the "liberal media."

7) Cleveland, oHio

This place is actually pretty cool. I'm happy to be here (well, Lakewood technically).

8) Midnight Skater

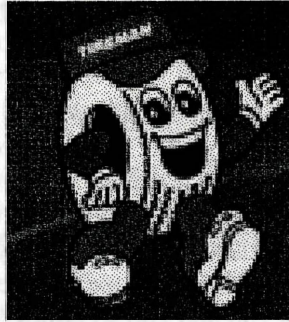
Hilarious horror film about zombies, drug dealers, and serial killers filmed on the campus of Kent State University by a platoon of punk rockers who dress up as pirates in their spare time. These guys may be geniuses but I was too busy laughing to find out for sure (<http://www.angelfire.com/darkside/speedfreaks/main.html>).

9) Weekly Columnists

Yes, most of them write about some dumb things once in a while, but if you had to churn out the same amount of column inches every week, you'd be hacking it out too. I'm writing a weekly column called "From A To Zine" about zines and underground literature for 26 weeks for Babel Magazine (www.babelmagazine.com) and I can now better appreciate why George Will writes according to a formula in Newsweek (I won't forgive him for being a rich prig with his nose up W's rear though).

10) **The Belle Tire Mascot**

Such a friendly tire!



Yips! Are Good Things!

Zine Yips!

1) **Que Se Vayan Todos: Argentina's Popular Uprising**

artactivism@gn.apc.org

Edward Mujinga brought this nifty newspaper to my attention. It chronicles two travellers' experience in Argentina, where massive street protests against corporations and the government are leading to the establishment of a people run direct democracy. Fascinating and inspiring reading!

2) **M@B**

mattb@mattbcomic.com www.mattbcomic.com (\$2 US)

Deadpan slice of life comic strips about Canadian twentysomethings. Issue #14 You're Looking Good These Days made me smile.

3) **The Second Coming!**

americanporn2000@yahoo.com (\$2)

Hilarious minicomic featuring Jesus as a Thor type super hero on Earth.

4) **Skunk's Life #21**

D. B. Pedlar, 25727 Cherry Hill Rd., Cambridge Springs, PA 16403

dbpedlar@toolcity.net (\$2)

D.B.'s been publishing this charming literary zine for years, and now he's

added postcards of the military industrial complex to his oeuvre! Always a surprise and a delightful read!

5) Steviezine #2

Steve Kolcow, P.O. Box 9575, Schenectady, NY 12309 steviezine@aol.com (\$2)

Cool zine full of work stories (the trenches of doughmaking at Pizza Hut) and crazy hilarious movie reviews by one Fred Hosley (think crack high Ebert).

6) The True Modern

Christian Zappone, wwmi@mindspring.com (\$3)

Three engaging stories of social protest from this ULA member, even though I wanted to smack around the characters for being too whiny.

7) Fun With Zombies, Jape, Untitled, and many others.

Sean Bieri, 12033 Lumpkin, Hamtramck, MI 48212 elefish@earthlink.net (\$1 each I'd guess).

From the center of the minicomics universe, Hamtramck, Michigan, USA, comes a cornucopia of minicomics from an eminent stylist. All witty, all drawn with amazing craft, and he makes fantastically funny pornographic magnetic drawing toys to boot!

8) Rat Blood Soup #7

Will Ratblood, P.O. Box 26098, Philadelphia, PA 19128 willzine@aol.com www.ratbloodsoup.com (\$3)

Witty wacky essays. I particularly like the way the rhetoric of newspaper articles are mimicked and ridiculed for the formulaic pieces of swill they are.

9) New Unionist

1821 University Ave. W. #S-116, Saint Paul, MN 55104

www1.minn.net/~nup/ (\$1 each?)

While The New York Times and other mainstream media organs pretend Bush is a real president instead of the moronic smiling frontman for nasty greedy corporations trying to undermine democracy and human rights worldwide, the commie papers call it like it is: "2002 America is led by the village idiot, elevated to the presidency by virtue of his parentage, itself nothing to inspire awe and wonder. Even then, it took a dose of election fraud big enough to make a third-world dictator blush to get him into the big house." Now who's publishing the propaganda?

10) Razorcake #10 and #11

PO Box 42129, Los Angeles, CA 90042 www.razorcake.com (\$3)

Excellent punk zine from LA. It follows the standard punk zine format (columns, interviews, reviews, etc.) but transcends in all other ways, particularly the quality of the writing.

Zine Yips! Are Good Zines!

Oh My Gosh, It's Letters!

9/2/2

Hey Fred,

Call me a dick, but I finally got around to reading PFE#1 all the way through. Quite a funny bit o' writin' there, my friend. I could kinda sadly relate to some of the stuff in there.

Hey I just realized I own a copy of the Yeast?/Porpoise 3 7". Don't know how I got it.

Take Care!

Jay Peebody, POB 931333, Los Angeles, CA 90093

Thanks for writing, Jay! Cool handmade envelope too!

Hi Fred!

The arrival of the new Emus caused quite a stir around here. M. beat me to the punch and snatched it up first. You have officially hooked us . . . we are like putty in your hands waiting for the next installment. I like this idea of the zine as serialized novel. new trend, perhaps? Actually, I can't see most zinesters as being capable of such a feat! Keep to that Emus' schedule, Dammit!

Take Care,

Sean Stewart, 1703 Southwest Pkwy, Wichita Falls, TX 76302

sean@thoughtworm.com www.thoughtworm.com

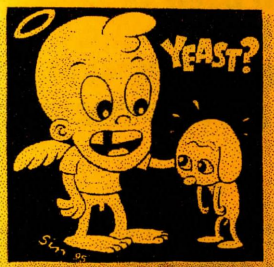
Ah, grazie, grazie! Cool handcrafted postcard Sean! The only serialized zine novel I know of before Emus is Stephanie DuPlessis's The Snopses Go Camping and if anybody knows how to contact Ms. DuPlessis or otherwise get ahold of issues of her zine, please let me know. Also, Jeff Gomez's debut novel Our Noise, another novel about a rock band which one of these days I'll finally read, started as a zine, but it was a set of related short stories when published in zine form, which Gomez later worked into a novel, so it wasn't quite a serialized novel. And the whole serialized novel idea is fairly insane anyway, so I don't know if it's such a feat as much as it is an act of madness. I fell off the schedule due to the holidays and the flu, but God willing and the creek don't rise, all of the Emus should see publication in 2003. Much as I love it, I'm looking forward to the fin!

Merch Table

The next issue (#4) should be out by the end of March, but email me first to make sure. I enjoy trading with other zine publishers so it's usually a done deal but please email or write first to make sure. Otherwise it's \$3 postpaid. Additional copies of this issue and issue #2 are \$3 each postpaid as well. Issue #1 (32 pages) is available for \$2 postpaid.



Yeast?--Dick Bennett 7" Ep. This puppy's on clear vinyl and has four songs on it: "Johnson Wants To Rant," "Generic Smokes," "Big Daddy Pane," and "Warm Fuzz." \$2 postpaid. There's only 100 or so of these left and I'm hoping to sell them out before the tenth anniversary in 2004 so I can repress it and drag it around for another decade.



Yeast?/Porpoise 3 Split 7". This one was sold out but then the P3 threw out about 50 of them so I dug them out of the trash and brought it back "into print." There's three songs from each band and the record labels are cute. \$2 postpaid.

Pick up both Yeast? singles for \$3 postpaid! Wow! What a bargain! It must be 1994-1995 all over again!

Well-hidden cash, checks to "Fred Wright," or Paypal please. Prices are for those residing in the USA. If you're residing elsewhere, please write first and we'll figure something out.

Wred Fright
P.O. Box 770332
Lakewood, OH 44107
USA
wredfright@yahoo.com

THIS IS A FICTION. THIS IS A SERIALIZED NOVEL. THIS IS THE THIRD ISSUE. THIS IS ABOUT A GARAGE ROCK BAND CALLED THE PORNOGRAPHIC FLABBERGASTED EMUS. THIS IS QUITE SILLY. THIS IS \$3 POSTPAID.

"FRIGGING IN THE GIGGING"/"MY SWEET SWEAT" IS THE SIXTH CHAPTER AND CONCERNS THE BAND'S FIRST FEW SHOWS WITH THE NEW LINEUP. BASSIST GEORGE JAH HIRES A PERSONAL ASSISTANT IN SWEETER TRUSTFUNDSKI, DRUMMER FUNNYBEAR SOLICITS SOLICITORS, GUITARIST THEODORABLE TALKS TO HIS MOTHER ON THE PHONE, AND KEYBOARDIST ALEXANDER DEPOT TRIES TO EAT A MEAL IN PEACE.

"LET'S GO TO THE GRASSHOP!"/"HE FARTS ART" IS THE SEVENTH CHAPTER AND CONCERNS THE BAND FINDING A VENUE THEY FEEL RIGHT AT HOME AT. ALEXANDER DEPOT SPENDS SOME QUALITY TIME WITH HIMSELF, THEODORABLE RELOCATES THE BAND TO LOUISIANA, FUNNYBEAR TRIES NOT TO FART IN FRONT OF THE NEW HOUSEMATE, AND GEORGE JAH PUTS ON AN ART SHOW.

"THIS THING OF OURS"/"I GOTTA GATTO" IS THE EIGHTH CHAPTER AND CONCERNS THE BAND'S RIVALRY WITH ANOTHER BAND IN ROCK. THEODORABLE GOES RECORD SHOPPING, ALEXANDER DEPOT DREAMS THANKSGIVING DINNER, GEORGE JAH GETS ARRESTED, AND FUNNYBEAR NAMES A CAT.

THIS SHOULD BE PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER. THIS IS NOT REALLY PORNOGRAPHIC BUT DOES CONTAIN LANGUAGE SUCH AS THE WORD "COLANDER" WHICH MAY OFFEND SOME READERS. THIS IS COPYWRITTEN BY THE AUTHOR EXCEPT FOR THE COVER IMAGE WHICH IS COURTESY OF MICHAEL DEE.