



ERIC MAYER

# DEJA VU

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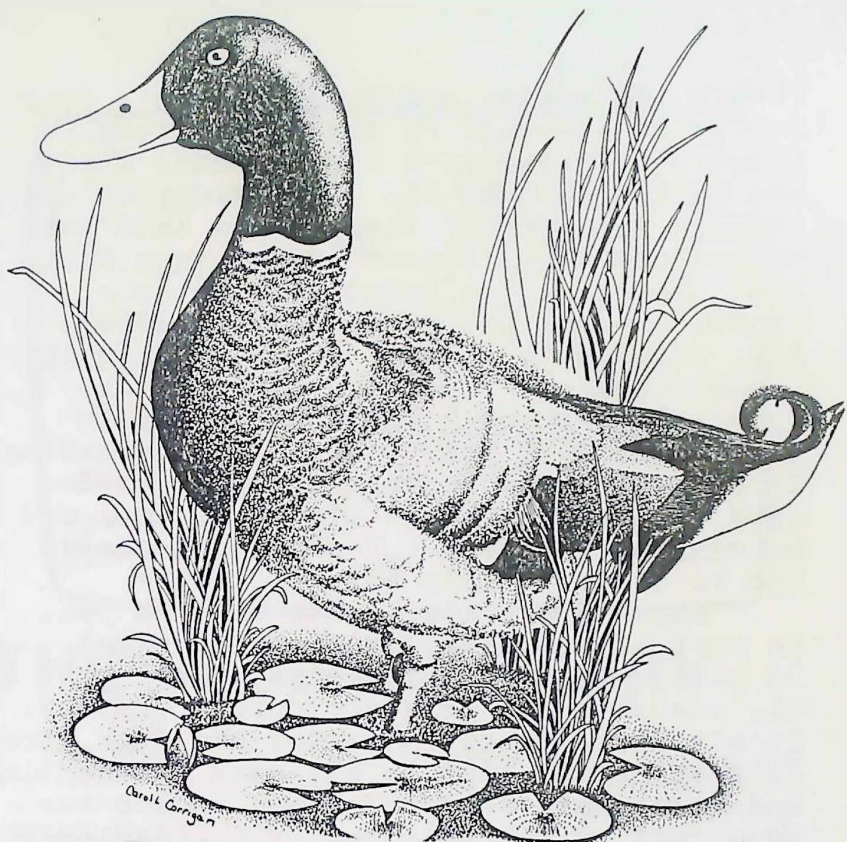
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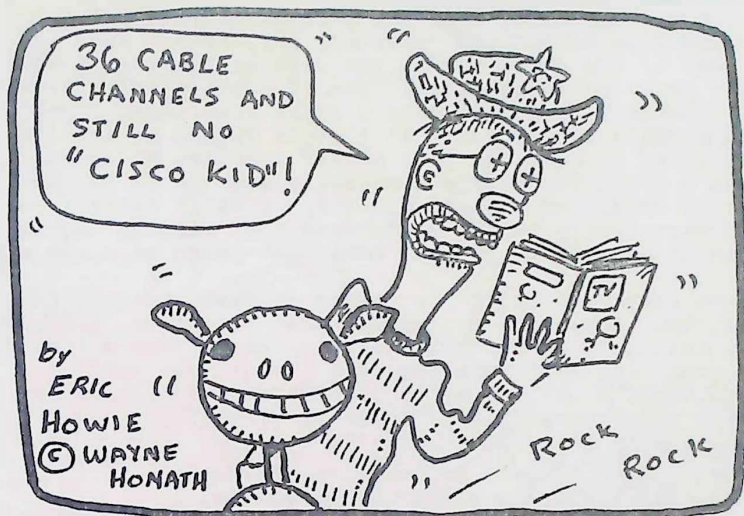
Welcome to DEJA VU -- whatever it is. Yesterday I was sitting in a lawnchair on the postage stamp lawn beside our rented "house" ( apartment behind, antique store in front of us) trying to decide how to describe this magazine. My own impressions of things are not, I've learned, always trustworthy. Until I was 34, for instance, I believed from watching cartoons that ducks had flexible, rubbery bills and was shocked when one bit me, with a very hard beak at a petting zoo. So I didn't want to describe this magazine to you as, say, a duck and find out later that your idea of a duck is different from mine.

Fleur, who's six, and Tristan, who's four played in the dust at the edge of the flowerbed (never mind the sandbox) where the last tulips of the year straggled up through the weeds. Through the tall but threadbare hedge seperating us from Ridge Road East came the sound of rush hour traffic -- an intermittant sussuration, like waves on a beach. During the lulls I could hear the sparrows carrying on. They were out early because the sky to the north, over Lake Ontario was darkening to storm. A few heavy raindrops rattled into the leaves of the big maple tree and we ran for the door. I never did decide how to describe this thing.

Maybe I'd better leave that to you. In part it's a diary/journal/scrapbook. In part a toy. A box of crayolas. The big one with the gold and copper crayons. It's a place to get together and talk, too. It's my belief that we all have interesting and worthwhile things to say, in our own ways, not ways prescribed by professional markets, or some fandom or other, or a peer group. And where else, but DEJA VU, can -- for example -- a junior high student, a legal editor, several pro comic book artists, a chemist for the Detroit department of sanitation and a former official in the government of Northern Ireland get together for a chat?

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Things I forgot...Matt Levin's work will appear in FRIENDS from Renegade. Tim's article is reprinted from BAFFLEGAB, my CLOWN THEORY is from Eric Bentcliffe's WALDO. Thanks to Tim and Carol Corrigan for donating their typewriter when my old side-kick bit the dust partway through this magazine.



## THE CLOWN THEORY

The universe is full of mysteries and scientists seem determined to solve all the wrong ones. They can tell me what the life expectancy of a muon is, how much energy a quasar generated two billion years ago and how tall I'd be a second after dipping my toe into the event horizon of a black hole. What I'd really like to know is where the TV GUIDE has gotten to.

Ever since Hemo Erectus grunted, "I know I saw that hand axe next to the bone pile yesterday" mankind has been bedeviled by inanimate objects that won't stay where they belong. Last Saturday I played hide and seek with a screwdriver. It had to be in the toolbox in the basement closet, so, of course, it wasn't. Out of the closet came winter coats, overshoes, broken mop handles, but no screwdriver. When I finally trudged upstairs, defeated, dust balls in my hair, Kathy said, "I'll bet Fleur got her little hands on your screwdriver."

The little hands theory, which blamed out then three-year old daughter, is our own addition to the long line of failed attempts to explain the disappearance of objects that show no proclivity towards locomotion except when they're out of your sight. During the Middle Ages it was widely assumed, for instance, that lost objects had migrated to the moon when nobody was looking. But this Moon Theory, was discredited when the Apollo missions failed to discover craters full of screwdrivers, hand axes and TV GUIDES.

In fact, most theories have foundered on the evidence. I once leaned toward The Paperclip Theory which assumes that matter naturally tends to disintegrate into the form of

paperclips. After all, the scissors are never in the drawer where you put them, but there are always paperclips, even though you haven't bought a box of paperclips since 1964. The Paperclip Theory cannot explain, however, why objects tend to show up again when you no longer need them.

As an example, last Tuesday, at 8:30, I decided to undertake a search of the magazine rack for the TV GUIDE. Our magazine rack is not the size of, say, Asia, so I figured that if the guide was in the rack my finding it wasn't beyond the realm of possibility. The TV GUIDE wasn't there... until 10:01 when it suddenly popped right into view, right where I'd already looked, just in time to inform me that the last episode of the fifteen part series I'd been watching had aired from 9 until 10. (Maybe I actually saw the TV GUIDE in the rack but developed instant amnesia. I still haven't ruled out The Mesmer Theory which postulates that missing objects aren't really missing at all but have the power to cloud men's minds.)

Things don't vanish for no reason either. They do it to get our goats. Socks are among the worst offenders. If you stick six perfectly respectable pairs of socks into a drawer, within a week they will have vamoosed leaving you with eleven unmatched socks, three in bizarre shades of puce or orange, the rest variations of charcoal virtually indistinguishable from one another in the dim incandescent light of your bedroom but glaringly individualistic under the office fluorescents.

When it comes to goat getting though, nothing beats the TV GUIDE. I always check for it in "the usual place" -- on the television set, or in the magazine rack -- which is where it never is. As soon as this well documented phenomenon is confirmed the familiar cry rings out. "Have you seen the TV GUIDE?"

Kathy and I then seek to reconstruct its movements. "I'm sure I saw it on the kitchen table this morning." "But weren't you looking at it in the dining room this afternoon?" "Didn't I see it upstairs an hour ago?" It's remarkable how agile a collection of printed pages can be. Just once I'd like to catch the wretched thing skulking along the baseboard.

Sometimes as we wander around the house, opening cupboards, pulling the cushions off the sofa, peering under the cat litter box, I experience a sense of unreality. Maybe there is no such thing as the TV GUIDE, I find myself thinking. Maybe it was just something I dreamed. The last time I got into this state, I accosted Fleur. "Did you take the TV GUIDE?" I asked, still clinging to The Little Hands Theory.

"No," she told me. "Clown took it."

"What do you mean 'Clown took it'? What clown?"

"Clown in my room. He took Guib on rockin' horse. Him ride."

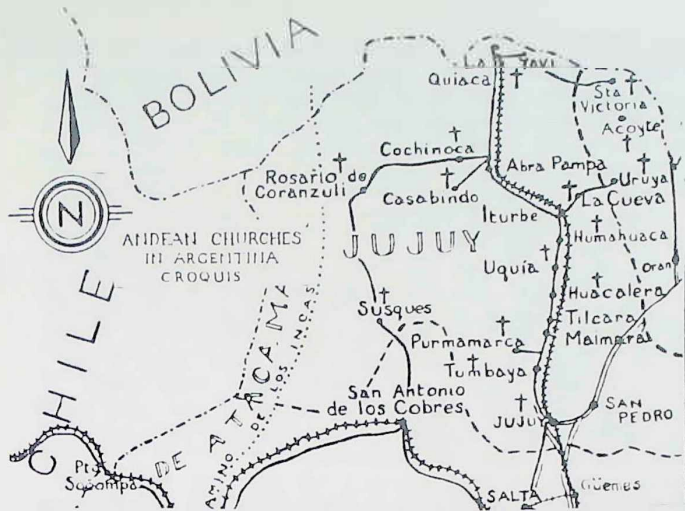
"There's no clown in your room," I said uneasily.

"Yeah. Him is," she said. There was a faraway look in her three-year old eyes. "Him live in my room. Him sit on my potty with you scoodriber."

Rod Serling stepped around the corner and turned into Kathy. "Doesn't anyone know where the TV GUIDE is?" she asked.

"Never mind," I said. "Some things man was not meant to know."





LETTER  
FROM  
ARGENTINA

Mae  
Strelkov

Last July I came down with a bacteriological infection — pancreatic. And remember, I was then just 69. (I'll be seventy this coming July) Time to die, I thought, but I didn't want to die in my son Ed's nice car (he and his wife had been here on a visit) so I clung to life all the 200 odd kilometers from the Palma Sola hospital to the big one in Jujuy town, and by then the immediate crisis was over. The heart had stopped trying to give out and was struggling along. Though almost unconscious, I enjoyed the feeling of again facing that "Moment" when decisions are made. (To go on living? To accept the "call"?) It had seemed to me a relief. "Now I won't have to study further about the mushroom. I'm being excused". For I was scared re what I might yet discover. Instead I had just one decision to make at the hospital. "Will you fight?" seemed the question. I'd been fighting all my life, against all sorts of obfuscation, injustice, spiritual darkness. I was tired. I thought I wanted out. But when a priest refused to give absolution to a poor girl in the bed next to mine simply because she'd had a baby while unmarried and she'd refused to demand that the father (very upset by her illness, a nice young lad) marry her. She wasn't going to tie him down. The priest was so scornful and rude to her, as I could not help but overhear, and he left her unshriven and weeping to "die in her sins". I blew up and chattered away to her, reassuring her "Jesus was not like that. He stood up for women."

That polarized things at the hospital. All the Catholic patients vs the few, very few Protestants. I'd been trying to remain detached but from that instant on, the fight was on for me. The reason priests here now are like that: they're embarrassed by the Radicales in power, sneering at their Catholic attempts to resist new laws like the one granting divorce. The Radicales answer, "Bah, all your faithful aren't even married. Only a few beatas are, and you're defending them against all the men's mistresses and common-law children, that's what."

Well, I got into it "thick" when I returned home. Daughter Sylvia and son Tony thought bible reading in public might wake the locals up. They tried one Sunday and along comes the Bishop and a bunch of nuns and priests to warn about Masons like us. Oh, bah, it's all blown over. What these folk need are another dozen or so incarnations. Karma is the only solution. As for this "born

again" business....Do the Billy Grahamites even know what the concept means? Born of "water and Spirit". Hal Water. Just baptism? Ah no, the flowing, overwhelming water of creation gushing over one, through one constantly, transforming one into part of the flow.

Full of inner certainty I lay in the Jujuy hospital with great amusement (serum flowing into a vein, a pipe into the stomach stuck through a nostril) and beamed my amusement whenever I woke from the daze. Before it was known I'm "Protestant" (As I labelled myself, not to say "Nature-lover" or something "worse") a priest came ready to shrive me. He knelt beside my "dying bed" sympathetically. I smiled at him sleepily, thinking he was just a friendly type. Didn't catch on at first. "How are you," he asked. "Getting better. Almost well." (I was on the critical list, might die any minute. He looked very sceptical.) Four days later I was well, though they starved me for ten days in all. Only soup. I lost three or so kilos, which pleased me, though I did look gaunt for a bit. Then suddenly the younger doctors arrived grinning. "You're well now!" And off came the needle-in-a-vein (all the veins were broken by then anyway) and out came the pipe in the nose, and in rushed a nurse: "Get dressed quick! We're going to take an echogram." (The attempts to X-ray me taken the night they'd brought me in, dying, hadn't turned out at all).

The echogram came out with the news that I was "perfect" inside, nothing wrong with me. The solemn doctors couldn't believe it; they gathered around me grouchily, ordered a whole series of tests and X-rays. By the time they'd taken all the tests and X-rays they were grouchier still.

Not an X-ray came out, no matter which of the batteries of X-ray machines they put me under. Well, the lung X-ray came out perfectly clearly, but not my "thorax"...liver, gall bladder, and so on. Chemical analysis had confirmed I'd had a terrible pancreatic attack but I was over that. The heart, they decided, was "getting old" so I do have to take five pills a week. Also, because I warned them I sometimes have asthma, they didn't dare open me up to take a peek at the mystery.

My terribly amused expression foiled them further when they'd gather about to poke me and take my pulse. After three weeks they had to let me out and I came back to our lovely wilds and have been working ferociously at the studies ever since.

My amusement was because they were stumped. Nobody, normally speaking, could foil all those X-rays or hide a single secret in a perfectly normal seeming midriff. Yet all that comes out beneath the clearly defined lungs is a blur. What sort of blur? For me? I've no doubt now. I asked the good Lord for this "water of life" years ago with perfect faith and acceptance. It's here, for free. You don't even have to be a saint. Jesus offered it to the Samaritan woman at the well.

This is not Christian. In India they'd call it "Cosmic Energy", "Prana" coming through. God is more than we think and whatever Jesus happened to be "really" he's not less than a Buddha -- surely more, far more. But what? I can't say. Not Billy Graham's "Christ" anyway...not any Pope's! They have a mere image of the Reality fixed in their heads. But the Reality? Torrential! A transforming experience. Christians call it "possession" but I don't accept that in the sense they'd present the idea. Jesus was also accused of serving Beelzebub because he was so real. Stuffed shirts, plaster images, these absolutely shrink from the "wind and water" of Cosmic Truth! They curl up and shrivel at the very idea, while singing their hymns and chanting their set prayers to the Spirit, piously.



My young doctor when dismissing me came up with the X-rays to show them to me that last day there. He started saying, "Your case is unique. There's never been one like it. Not a single X-ray came out. We gave up trying."

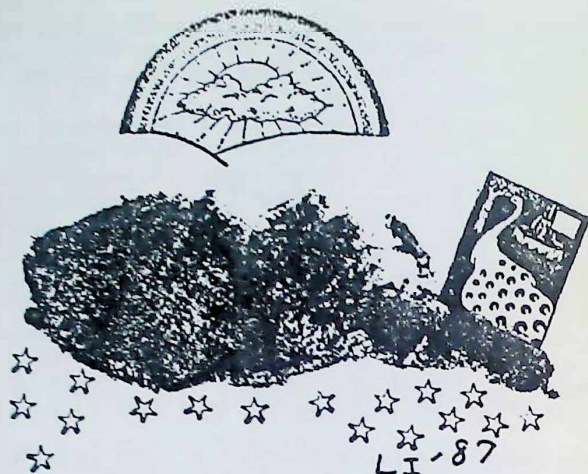
I blushed guiltily and waved the X-rays aside. "I don't understand any of that," I muttered, blushing still more. (I should have been alarmed: proper female reaction. "What have I got inside?" But I knew. By then I was convinced. By all those X-rays that came out blank where the belly is...location as per Jesus of "the well of living waters" he offered for free. Just ask. I couldn't stop chuckling deep inside myself. "So what of the echogram?" "Oh, that came out clearly. You have no gall stones: your pancreas, is functioning normally again. There's nothing wrong with you inside." "So I can be released?" "Any time you like!" I nearly yelled "Hoorah!" The doctor then added, "We don't like to let you go. You've made a lot of friends. We'd like to keep you here forever."

But the Catholic faction breathed a great sigh of relief when this "devil woman" danced off that same evening.



ASLEEP

COLIN  
LUTON



## A DREAM

Tim Corrigan

I am very into my dreams. I'm not into any weird religious cults or anything like that. I just have a lot of respect for my subconscious. Some of the stuff that bubbles up in my dreams really surprises me. Sometimes it scares the crap out of me. Images so dark and terrible I will not acknowledge them in my waking life, but they're there! Primal, evil stuff. Anger to the 10th degree. I'm glad I can purge myself of this stuff in my dreams. If some of it ever leaked out into my waking life I'd be in a mess of trouble.

My subconscious warns me when my life is getting too screwed up. When I lose sight of my values, my ol' subconscious will remind me of what's really important. My subconscious and I are old friends and I think I get along better with mine than most people do with theirs. This is because I'm not afraid of what's lurking down there. I recognize it as part of me, and as long as my conscious reasoning is in control, 'I've nothing to worry about. It's only electrical images and impulses after all. What's to be afraid of? I revel in my nightmares. In my sleep I can do all the things I'd like to do to the people I can't stand and get away with it. Dreams are really a marvelous pressure valve when you think of it. Anger is illegal in real life, so those emotions have to go somewhere, right?

Not all my dreams are dark. I have some beautiful ones too! I also have a lot of bland, seemingly disjointed ones, that don't seem to make a lick of sense. I guess those are just my subconscious sorting out and filing the day's data.

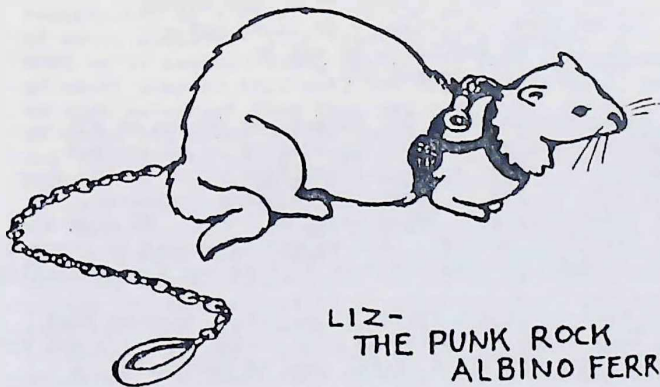
Most of my dreams are gone the moment I wake up, but the really important ones — the ones that are trying to tell me something — I remember clearly. Sometimes I even remember them long enough to jot them down and maybe use them for a story premis later.

I had a very beautiful dream many years ago that affected me so deeply that I remember it with crystal clarity all these years later. It went like this:

I was younger, maybe 11 or 12 years old (I'm 34 now). I was in my parents' backyard in safe, secure, suburbia. Suddenly it started to rain, only it wasn't raining water, it was raining INK! Every single drop of rain was a different color and as they splashed the house and lawn the drops created a constantly changing collage of shapes, forms, textures and tones. Paintings of incredible beauty and detail began forming themselves on the roof. Every second they would change and be replaced by something even more staggering. They were paintings of such quality that I could never paint them in my waking life. They were coming and going by the thousands in split seconds. Naturally I was thunderstruck. I ran into the house and upstairs to my room. I grabbed a thick handful of posterboard and ran back out into the backyard. I began placing the sheets of posterboard around the lawn. The rain would create paintings on them in a split second and I would scoop them up frantically and take them into the garage to dry. In a short time I had hundreds of them in the garage, many more than the blank sheets of posterboard I had started with.

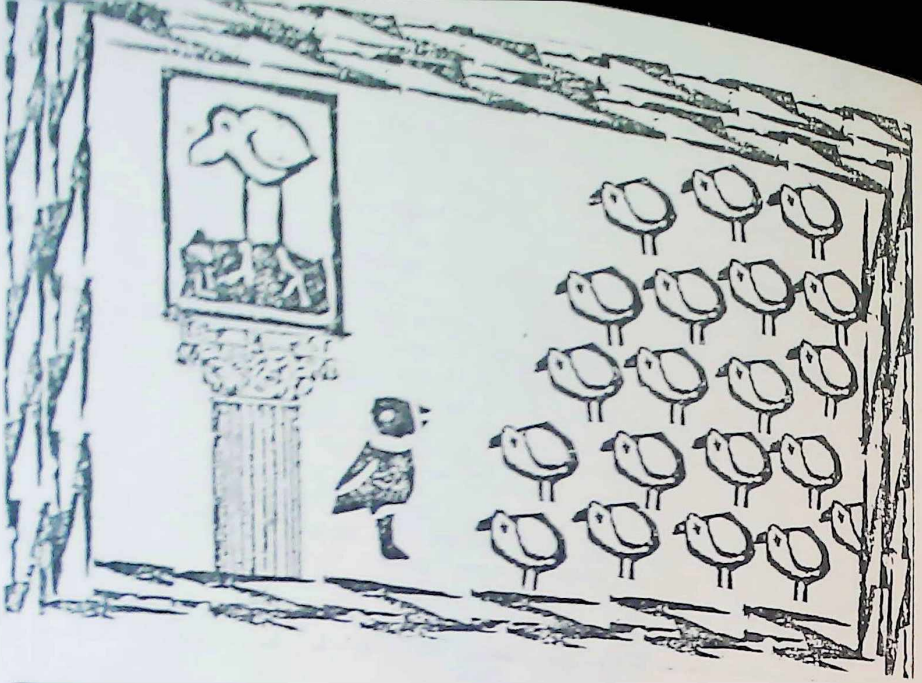
I'll remember that dream as long as I live. It told me something. In my subconscious, and in the subconscious of all people everywhere, there is a common creative pool we sometimes tap into. It contains a creative power so overwhelming we cannot consciously reach it. It is buried too deep to find at all except during the deepest sleep. The thing is -- my subconscious manufactured literally thousands of paintings that rivalled the best of Da Vinci in a matter of minutes. I believe this creative pool extends from mind to mind around the world. It exists in all human beings, to the same degree, everywhere on earth. The only difference between us is the degree to which we are able to tap into that creative force. I will never be a Da Vinci. I don't have the skill or patience. Yet the pool from which he drew his inspiration is available to me, to everyone.

I draw great comfort from this. I embrace the idea of this "pool" as being very real. At least there seems to be more truth to this than to what those half-baked frog worshippers are peddling down on Main Street.



LIZ-  
THE PUNK ROCK  
ALBINO FERRET





## MORE THAN MILTON CAN SKEL

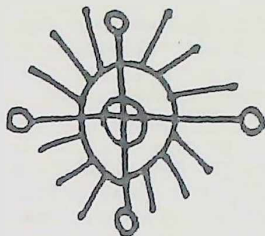
I haven't had a drink all year, not an alcoholic one at any rate. There are some who might rate that an achievement, but they probably wouldn't realise that it is still wanting nearly two hours of noon on New Year's day as I write this, and the only reason I didn't pour myself a refreshing glass of ale before I sat down to type was that I forgot. Evenso, the pouring of a pint of clean-tasting bitter, anticipating the sharp, crisp flavour on the palate, enjoying the hoppy aroma and the visual stimulation of the dark, sparkling brew — all this is somehow boldly symbolic after the sherry-sweet excesses of Christmas Past. Dean Aldrich summed up my sentiments about the brew in his "Reasons For Drinking", back towards the end of the seventeenth century:

"If all be true that I do think,  
There are five reasons we should drink;  
Good wine - a friend - or being dry -  
Or lest we should be by and by -  
Or any other reason why."

Or any other reason why. Or, indeed, no reason at all -- for why should we seek out reasons to indulge in pleasures? Partly I suppose it is our puritanic heritage which scolds over our shoulders when we are in danger of enjoying ourselves. We destruct the hedonistic and, being weak, we worry. We know that alcohol is a two-edged martini. Are we strong enough to control our pleasures without running the risk of them one day controlling us? Fear and self-doubt are useful aids. Oh, I suppose that uncontrolled they could drive one to seek relief in drink and drugs, they provide a useful goad to moderation, a

have gone its way. Perhaps it was even better summed up by Edward Fitzgerald when he wrote:

"And much as Wine has play'd the Infidel,  
And robb'd me of my Robe of Honour - Well,  
I often wonder what the Vinters buy  
One half so precious as the Goods they sell."



One good thing about quotations is that you don't have to feel guilty when using them. Quotations you see are really just cliches which haven't yet gone down-market, and cliches, as we all know, are terrible things. They are to be avoided at all costs. Or are they? The Concise Oxford Dictionary is in doubt no doubt. "Cliches? I've shot 'em!" it seems to say, or as it puts it: "Metal cast esp. stereo or electro duplicate". Hang on, that doesn't sound right, let's look again. Ah yes, it does have a secondary meaning, "hackneyed literary phrase". Of course then you have to chase it up through "hackneyed", just to be on the safe side. "Hackney" we find is all about horses of middle quality and size, for ordinary riding, hired horses, drudge horses.

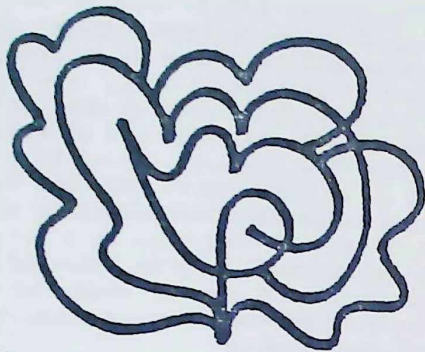
A drudge is defined as a servile worker, and "to drudge" is to work slavishly at distasteful work. I think we're getting the drift here. A secondary meaning for "hackney" is to make common or trite, this latter meaning both commonplace and worn out.

Well, that's one way of defining a word — bombarding it from a dictionary. The above paragraph is a cratered landscape reminiscent of a First World War battleground, and at the bottom of every shellhole is a fragment of a cliché. Let us summarise what we've learned about clichés — they are phrases that do a lot of work; they do this well and become much used, commonplace, to such an extent that they get worn out. By this last I assume it means the words become incapable of carrying the meaning they are supposed to carry. You start to hear them just as words because they have become so commonplace, and they no longer bring to your understanding the freight of ideas they once connoted.

Well perhaps, but who actually decides when a useful phrase has become a worn out cliché? I suspect that the intelligentsia, the literary establishment, are the first to become fed up with a phrase and decide that it is now a cliché. The problem is of course that they are the people who are writing the definitions, and so it becomes cliché. But what of the masses? What of the everyday readers? I suspect that to them the phrase may well still be performing useful work. Thus we have a contradiction in terms — clichés which are not worn out.

"Wanna go there Dad", as well as by the brittle crackling of snapping plastic as robots and ponies alike are trampled in the rush to get right in front of the set, presumably in hopes that some glorious sunshine will pour forth and warm their winter-chilled bodies. Let's face it, we are far too impatient for the joys of tomorrow so that we no longer even take the time to properly enjoy the pleasures of today, an attitude that Shakespeare himself decried:

"At Christmas I no more desire a rose  
Than wish a snow in May's new-fangled mirth;  
But like of each thing that in season grows."



I was thinking of Christmas and its cliches as I was putting up the Christmas cards. What better prompting, for after all what are Christmas cards if not little cliches of Christmas? Each one desperately trying to embody the very essence of the season in as few square inches as possible (and even fewer than seem possible in some cases). Now, I don't know what you do with your Christmas cards, but we get a load of Blue-tack, or Buddies, or whatever and cover the lounge doors with them. Well, with three kids all having birthdays in December, all the available shelf space and sideboard space is already claimed by serried ranks of birthday cards. Anyway, I was looking at the door into the living room and I noticed something that seemed odd to me. On all those cards, of all those trite symbols of Christmas, there was only one honest-to-goodness Christmas tree. As a symbol of Christmas, the Christmas tree appears to be passe. It has become a cliché and has been swept aside.

So what are our symbols of Christmas, I wondered. I did more than wonder, I decided to carry out an investigation. I saved the cards when it came time to take them down. I figured they ought to be a representative sample. I got cards, Cas got cards, the kids got cards (kids? Deborah is 20 years old, and Nick 18, whilst Bethany is 12). Cards from relatives, cards from friends, cards from neighbors, cards from workmates, and even a couple of business cards — surely a reasonable basis from which to draw some conclusions. And out of about eighty cards, only one Christmas tree. So what symbols are deemed appropriate for Christmas present?

There are 4 snowmen, 9 Father Christmases, 7 traditional characters (wise men, shepherds, Joseph and Mary etc. — including the only duplication we received), 10 Christmas/snow scenes of yesteryear, 2 Christmas puddings, 8 robins, 6 miscellaneous wildlife, 4 Christmas present decorations (6 involving candles), many that I can't seem to put into a category, and last, and most definitely least, 17 twee cuddly animals that basically have fuck all to do with Christmas, and which look like refugees from Birthday and Get Well Soon cards. There were 14 "funny" cards, of which some actually were (though neither of the two Garfield cards fell into this latter category). There were 2 cards featuring doves, both



from sf fans as it happens -- one from Sam and Mary Long and the other the by now traditional "Wishing you a Merry and Nuclear Free Christmas" from Joseph and Judith. Whenever this latter card arrives I have this tremendous urge to rush out and scour the shops for a "Wishing you another free Christmas brought to you by the agency of a nuclear standoff which means we'd nuke the bastards if they nuked us". Strangely, such sentiments are not deemed in keeping with the Christmas Spirit, which is a pity in a way because constant propaganda, or whatever persuasion, gets on my tit.

I note incidentally that when we get cards from Jewish fans they are always wishing us a "Happy Holiday" rather than a "Merry Christmas". Now at first this seems perfectly reasonable, on account of them not celebrating Christmas...but on closer consideration it's a bit dodgy. It's me they're sending the card to, and I celebrate Christmas (even if only in lay terms). Is there some small print on the bottom of the Being Jewish contract that says not only don't you get to believe in Christmas, you musn't wish a Merry Christmas to those who do? If I wasn't the sort of cheapskate who thinks money spent on cards is a terrible waste I would have no objection to sending "Have a joyous Purim" or "Happy Chanukah", or whatever cards to Jewish friends or acquaintances -- always assuming that I could get hold of the cards and also that I knew they were Jewish in the first place. The last is unlikely because, as one who considers religion to be irrelevant I never even consider the possibility of my friends being religious, never mind them cleaving to any particular religion.

It has always struck me as bizarre that anyone could actually believe in a religion. It completely blew me away a few years ago when I discovered that my father really did believe in God. He always seemed to me to be possessed of typical Yorkshire common sense and down-to-earthness. Drunken down-to-earthness most of the time, yes, but no less forthright a wisdom for all that. Perhaps, indeed, he was only bearing out the words of A. E. Houseman when he wrote:

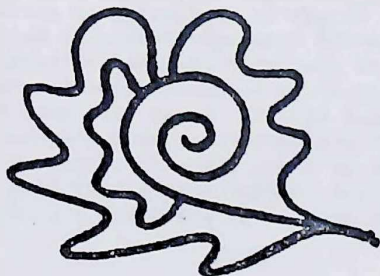
"And malt does more than Milton can  
To justify God's ways to man."

Mind you, I reckon he was a boozy bugger that Houseman, as I think these two verses from separate poems make amply evident:

"The troubles of our proud and angry dust  
Are from eternity and shall not fail.  
Bear them we can, and if we can we must.  
Shoulder the sky, my lad, and drink your ale."

"Oh I have been to Ludlow fair  
And I left my necktie God knows where,  
And carried halfway home or near,  
Pints and quarts of Ludlow beer."

I know precisely how he felt. I've lost no end of neckties myself.



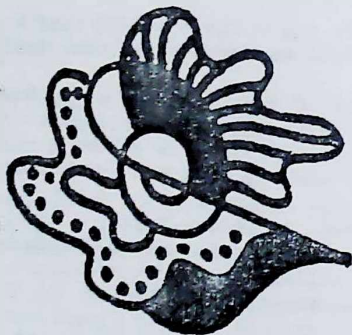
• In my own personal Christmas I seem to be finally aschewing cliché. My own personal cliché at least. Why, these past two Christmases Cas and I haven't almost gotten divorced. This is new. Every other Christmas, for mumblety-mump years, Cas and I have nearly gotten divorced. This has always been because we discovered we had irreconcilable differences....about putting the lights on the Christmas tree.

My task, whether or not I decide to accept it, is to pot the Christmas tree and put the lights on. Cas' job is then to do the rest of the tree's decoration. Ah, would that it were that simple. Cas has one other function involving this seasonal arboreal event - she supervises me putting lights on the tree. Now the sad truth is that, in all the years of our marriage I have never yet managed to put the lights on the tree to Cas' satisfaction. Every year the lights are either a complete disaster or at best "OK, but not as good as last year". As I don't particularly want to do the damn job in the first place, all this back-seat decorating expertise gets right up my nose, and invariably harsh words are exchanged. Now, whilst neither of us are worth a fart in a thunderstorm when it comes to putting on Christmas tree lights, we are Secret Masters of Harsh Words. It is only the sheer ludicrousness of what we've been arguing about that has prevented us from getting divorced every year since nineteen-thingummybob.

This last couple of years though, it just hasn't happened, and I think I can claim credit for this fact. Now that I'm pushing forty I am displaying a newfound maturity...which can also be translated into not giving a fuck. "It wants to go up there next, not down." "Oh really? Certainly dear, is that OK?" Maturity? It's cool man. So we didn't nearly get divorced again this Christmas because of my newfound maturity and self-control.

Mind you, we came pretty close shortly afterwards when I, with great maturity and self-control, threw the turkey stew all over the kitchen ceiling, but that's another story. As the Marquis of Halifax wrote, back in the seventeenth century:

"Anger is never without an argument,  
But seldom with a good one."



There was at least one other way in which my Christmas broke from trite tradition, namely in the matter of gifts. Normally, by my time of life one can bank upon receiving bottle upon miscellaneous bottle of obscurely branded aftershave, the main function of which seems to be to ensure that the wearer doesn't get jostled on a crowded street. I say "the main function" quite deliberately because I did once discover a secondary benefit gifted upon the wearer of these types of aftershave - namely it is impossible to get lost in any strange city that has a zoo. This is simply because as soon as one draws nigh within a mile

upwind of such an establishment, every warthog and wildebeast succumbs to an inflamed frenzy and goes immediately into raucous rut. It is then the simplest of matters to pull out one's guide brochure and locate the zoo, test the wind direction, and presto — one has one's bearings.

Well, I was having none of that cock this year -- not if I could help it. This year I made up my mind that I would get at least one present that I really wanted. I persuaded Cas and the kids to club together for something useful, something I've been hankering after for some time, but which I could never justify to myself as a personal purchase. I got them to buy me "The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations".

What do you mean, you'd guessed?

DRUNK  
IN  
DAYLIGHT





# THE MUNDANE ADVENTURES OF AN OLD FASHIONED POET.....

by IAN SHIRES

The most commonly asked question I get is "What got me started writing poems?" A good question but it is a long, long story. The face-value answer is that after reading Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven" I started writing. But I've never been a face-value person so I won't stop with that.

It seems that I am afflicted with what is commonly known as a learning disability. All together now: one, two, three... Aww. Yes, I've had my problems with learning. Don't pity me, a lot of misconceptions surround learning disabilities. None of us are stupid. That's one big misconception. To be considered LD, one must have average or higher intelligence. Low intelligence gets you into the developmentally handicapped range, and you won't find them writing columns like this. The biggest mystery lies in what causes the disorder. It has not been proven to be genetic. It has not been proven injury related. It is there, it is real, and it is devastating to a young child. I remember nothing of what has been told to me of my "happy childhood." Some of my first coherent thoughts are of my getting in trouble at school for not getting along with other students. I remember pain, and I remember emptiness. In my particular case, there was a chemical imbalance, in the left side of my brain. For those that don't know, that is the side of the brain that stores information and mathematical functions. What I had to learn to do was get around the disorder. Not as easy as it sounds. Let me set the scene:

I am in my last year of Junior High School, no one likes me because of my attitude — which more and more is changing, and I don't know why people don't like me. I cannot read. I cannot write. And I do not understand my problem and that there are people trying to help me.

As you can see, not an easy situation to be in. But I did turn myself around that year, and did as much, if not more, catching up as it is possible for a person to do. Like a rubber band, snap, flying upwards I was. During this time I began reading comics. During this time I began writing poetry. The teachers were content, at least I was reading and writing now. Then things cleared up even more. I began to understand what was going on. I began to take control. By the time High School was done with you could not tell by looking that I had the past I did.

But there were and still are problems. Things that will not go away. I don't remember things well, and my spelling is, well... abstract at best. On the flip side, the right side of my brain is just fine, so that it has been well exercised over the years. The right side of the brain handles creative and abstract thought. Gives me a distinct advantage in my writing. Theoretically, I like to credit my success and ability on my dedication and charming wit.

Having laid this background I can return to the question at hand. "What got me started writing poems?" Quite literally I had nothing better to do during most of high school, the very last year excluded. I had found a world of discovery in words and was developing it to the fullest. I still am, even more so now. To me everything is an art. It must be, for that is how I relate myself to the world. I have been able to develop myself an old-fashioned

poet, in that I don't like to write only for other poets to read. Once upon a time, people who didn't write poetry did read it. It is my crusade to see this again. And that, my friends, is what got me started. But the best is yet to come.

It's been a little over a year now I've been publishing in small press and I've made my share of waves for a newcomer. It's been said you can't make a profit in small press, but from my point of view that's not true. A whole world of people are out there who are willing to accept me as I am. And that's the best kind of profit I know. Oh yeah, for those y of you who are wondering about "the very last year excluded" above, I am referring to the fact that I met my girlfriend then. It took most of the anger out of my poems and my heart. We're still together, over a year now (hi Babe!). I guess there's hope for all of us.

Have you ever noticed?.....

When you get right down to it, some advertising art is downright CREEPY!... frinstance...



Look, kids!  
It's Mister  
Dry-Roasted &  
Vacuum-Packed  
Urban  
Sophisticate

Mister Turkey here! I can't wait to be ground up and stuffed into weenie-skins for you nice folks!!

Scram, wattle-face! They want pig-flesh!



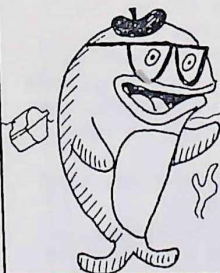
what am I SAYING?



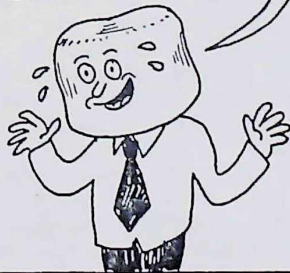
Ehhh... Charlie da Tuna's my name. My life's ambition is to be chopped ta bits, packed in oil and devoured with mayonnaise!



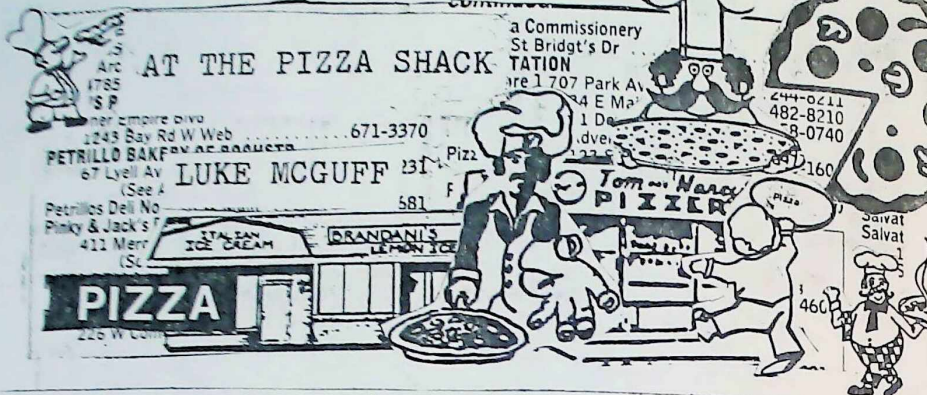
Sorry, Charlie. We're going to let you Live!!



Hi, there... I'm the cute li'l guy on the bag of Campfire Marshmallows. Pierce my head with a stick and thrust me into a fire until my skin is charred and my innards are a runny white mass... I LIKE IT!!!



W. Henrich 3-5-87



Joe, Paul, and I walked into the dimly lit, sticky floored Pizza Shack and sat down at a back table, near the counter where the waitresses placed their orders. As whenever anybody goes into the Shack for the first time, Paul expressed amazement at the Zenith b&w tvs on every table, with the quarter slots so you can watch the late show while eating your pizza. "You guys brought me to heaven and I didn't even know it existed," Paul said.

At the table behind us, a mean looking man chewed the hell out of a pepperoni pizza and glared at a Christmas movie. Elves in tights danced around his small screen, singing "We need a little Christmas! Right this very minute! It hasn't snowed a single flurry but Santa please we're in a hurry!"

The waitress came and took our order. Joe said Quietly after she left, "God, she was really gorgeous." I hadn't even noticed but said loudly, "Yeah, and she's got really big tits, too!" Joe's habit of falling in love with every single woman he glanced at was annoyingly like my own.

We talked about typical guy things, vomiting puppies, how to get your red wings. The cook came over and leaned on the table, knuckles down hard, telling us the waitress was really upset at our talk about her breasts. We apologized. We got nervous about people getting offended at what we were saying. So we talked a little quieter.

There was a guy across the room from us asleep on his table. His pizza came, and he woke up to pay and take a bite out of a piece. Then he fell back asleep unto it.

Our pizza came: large house special, which is everything but anchovies, pineapple and black olives. There was a big pile of meat in the middle, pink and greasy. We decided there was a certain amount of meat they had to use every week, and since it was Friday night, they were piling it on. The guy across the room from us was still asleep in his pizza, sauce and congealing sheese smearing his face when he stirred.

During a lag in the conversation and eating, Joe fished two quarters from his pocket and told Paul to pick out some tunes. Paul went over to the jukebox. As he stood and tried to decide between "Afternoon Delight" and "Almost Paradise" (I mean the Shack should have Hank Williams or Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys, not pop crud) two policepeople came in and walked behind him to the sleeping guy.

The policeman tapped him on the shoulder, saying "get up, time to get up now, gotta go gotta go now," etc., while the policewoman talked to the manager and got a box for his pizza. Joe said he hated to call the police to the Salvation Army Shelter



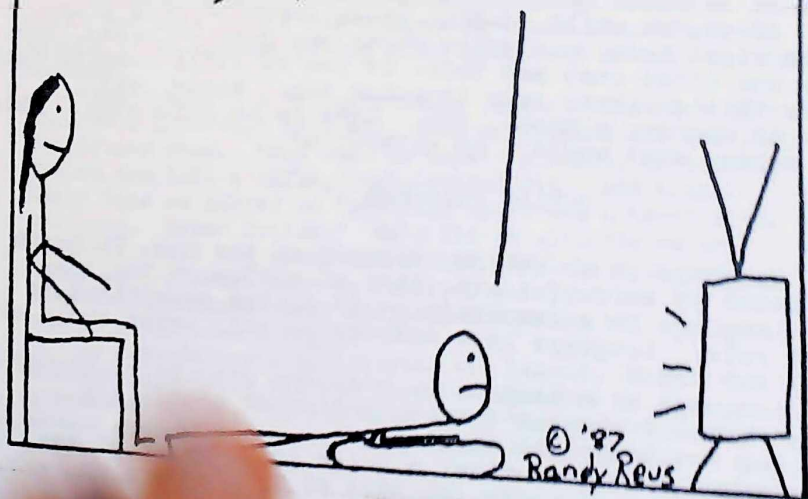
to take away the guys too drunk to stay there, because the boss always got beat up on the way to detox. The police were still pounding the sleeping guy on the shoulder when "Grandma Got Run Over By A Reindeer" came over the jukebox. They carried him out to the strains of "She drank too much eggnog, it mixed up with her medication, we found her in a snowdrift Christmas morning."

Paul came back and said "There were six Christmas lunches and we got five of them." Joe and I congratulated him on his sense of the surreal. Watching the cops carry the guy out under the arms, with the Indians and drunks all watching tv and the Christmas novelty tunes playing on the jukebox made me feel so patriotic if I had had a flag I would have waved it and sung the national anthem.

As we left, the cops came back in, talking about what they were going to get on their free pizza.

RANDY RECOGNIZES SOMEONE IN A MOVIE ON TV THAT HE'S WATCHING WITH HIS MOM, BUT CAN'T REMEMBER WHO SHE IS. THEN, HE REALIZES WITH A JOLT OF HORROR THAT IT'S PORNO STAR MARILYN CHAMBERS.

I KNOW I'VE SEEN HER SOMEWHERE BEFORE. OH, YEAH, SHE'S MARIL... OH SHIT! NO, NO, I DON'T KNOW HER.



# 3

## MATT LEVIN

Okay, here goes, some prone, right-on-the-nose prose, some what don't oppose what I compose (that is, this prose) to a restful repose with those -- and before I decompose from overdose of "ohs", I'll close.

\*\*\*

I'd like you to know the weather is your's, enjoy it, take credit, why not, why not if you're making a nice day even nicer -- the weather is your's -- you're stuck with it, might as well make the best of it you can, and if everyone's helpin', keep lookin' up and rememberin' those gentle words, "Dootndoodoodew, here comes the sun, dootndoodew, it's alright!"

It's YOUR weather.

And you're not ever to blame.

It's your weather; it's free, enjoy it, take credit and spread it around and share it. If you don't like it, forget it; tomorrow's another day.

\*\*\*

This's for words; I owe'm my living, for what would I be without my greatest of playthings, the jumble of sounds, words and phrases I pile on each other like a mad mason with bricks and no lime? This isn't rhetorical; I dunno: I'm just asking.

But this's for words, especially those in the great set of English, my favorite language, being it's wild and slippery and as sexually sensual as innuendo in an eye. This language here can be vague as fog. Or precise. I speak ten different tongues'n all of'm're this'n; just depends on how I use it, doncha know.

If you're still reading these words -- this these words right here, now, those words you just -- these, too, this one (that one) and this: if you're still reading these words this's likely your language too. Nifty, eh? It's an outlaw, y'know. Yup. Says so in this song. This's for words; what would I do without'm?

### OUTLAW PALABRAS

Language is an outlaw, forever on the run. To north and south by word of mouth, it's an outlaw on the run. Language is a desperado -- it claims exceptions to ev'ry rule. Language is a desperado, pal; never could sit still for school. Language is a desperado, sneaking over ev'ry border-line, without respect for convention or sect, it's sneaking new words all the time. Language is an outlaw, a smile in the face of the law. To north and south, by word of mouth, it's an outlaw on the run.



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BY Eric

My grandfather was quite a ballplayer in his day. Or so it was said when I was a kid. My Uncle Ben, who I was afraid of on account of his glass eye, used to tell me the stories.

"There wasn't a better pitcher in the whole Back Mountain then your Grandad," he'd say, when my grandmother had left the living room. "And when he wasn't pitching he caught. Had an arm like a rifle, your Grandad did. And tough? Every time we played in Fernbrook there was a brawl after the game. Never failed." He'd fix me with his watery good eye while the glass eye stared off into the past. "They were a tough crew in Fernbrook, but no one was tougher than your Grandad. Best ballplayer and the best fighter too. Charly never lost a fight."

My grandfather's ballplaying was legend. Hard evidence was sparse. There was the yellowed snapshot of him tossing a baseball to me. He was dressed in the work clothes he always dressed in — dark gray baggy trousers, light gray shirt, gray felt hat. His lean, weathered face reminded me of photos of Ty Cobb. I must have been four when the



the headset. Then he added, pointing to a socket next to a red light, "Just don't plug into that'un. That's the boss's home phone."

The chilling realization that a slip of the hand might bring to life one of those baleful board room faces made the game all the better.

My grandfather won his fight, lasting at that job the requisite five years, though at the end he limped home, half crippled with arthritis and an ulcerated leg that never did heal. My parents urged him to collect unemployment. For a few weeks they helped him into the car and drove him downtown to the unemployment office. At last he refused to go. He was too proud to steal.

"I oughtn't tell anybody I'm looking for work. I can't work a lick and anybody can see it." He took off his hat and didn't put it back on.

I remember him building me a tree house and the yearly "corn hut" made from shocks of corn lashed onto a wood frame with a spongy floor of pine needles. There was the giant rutabaga he borrowed a neighbor's garden tractor to pull out -- to impress me with its size -- and the times he'd take my brother and me down to the cellar to roast hot dogs over the embers of the coal stove. But we never played ball, and he never talked about it.

My Uncle Ben told me how my grandfather had once driven to Philadelphia just to see Pepper Martin -- the feisty reckless third basemen of the St Louis "Gas House Gang" who my grandfather admired more than any other player. I never asked my grandfather about that, or about his own playing days.

By the time I'd gotten really interested in baseball my grandfather was gone. He was still working at the phone company when he climbed a ladder, to get at the fat, Bartlett pears that only grew in the upper branches of the pear tree. He fell, broke ribs and was never right afterwards.

We used to take his bat and mitt out of the hot, wasp haunted dark of the barn on summer days. I could hardly lift the bat, let alone swing it. We kept it for times we needed a "big hit". There seemed, to us kids, to be something magical about a bat that had existed in the days of Babe Ruth. And, oddly, though we shattered innumerable bats on our old, sodden, heavy baseballs, we never broke my grandfather's bat.

I still remember the best hit I ever got. John kept throwing the ball harder and somehow I got the barrel of my grandfather's bat out in time. I can feel the old hickory telling my hands it'd caught the ball just right. It was a rising line shot. It was still rising when it clipped the top of the pear tree, where the Bartletts grew, and dropped to the lawn in a shower of twigs. If it had just cleared that limb it would've gone all the way into the backyards of the houses along Clause Street or as far as I wanted to imagine.

I wish I'd seen some of the shots my grandfather must've hit with that bat in his day. They say he was quite a ballplayer.





LET'S HAVE A BIG HAND FOR OUR

# ARTISTS

These folks all contributed to a pig in the poke and I really appreciate their confidence.

## SKEL

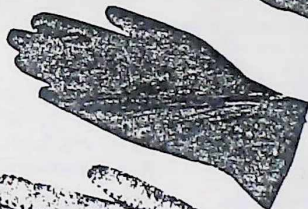
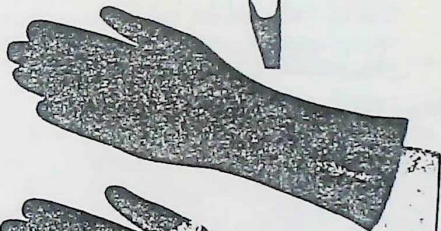
25 Bowland Close  
Offerton, Stockport  
Cheshire SK2 5NW  
ENGLAND

When he isn't analysing systems (or whatever it is systems analysts do) brewing his own ale, bicycling through the English countryside or building rabbit hutches, Skel is busy writing better, and more articles for sf fanzines than anyone else. His humor and sharp insights are unsurpassed. "More Than Milton Can" is the first installment of a column he intends to be interactive. So I'll be immediately passing along to him any pertinent comments, you want to make.

## MAE STRELKOV

Estafeta Postal  
4501 Palma Sola  
Jujuy  
Argentina

A missionaries' daughter, born in China, Mae has spent most of her life in South America. She has published fanzines by such esoteric means as hectograph and postcard mimeo. For years she has conducted a monumental study of ancient symbols which resonant throughout the world's languages. You'll be seeing some of that material here. (Some forms the basis of KI'ANNI - DAUGHTER OF THE DAWN due this fall from C&T Graphics) Presently with husband Vadim, son Tony and daughter Sylvia, she is developing a tree farm in the mountains near Bolivia.



TIM CORRIGAN  
45 Wilcox St  
Rochester NY  
14607

Tim is head of C&T Graphics which publishes, among many other things THE SMALL PRESS COMICS EXPLOSION, CZAR CHASM and MIGHTY GUY. Tim's work is even now appearing in his own C&T line and also in Lightning Comic's HEROIC and GIANT SIZE MINI COMICS from Eclipse. If you can't find any of these at your local comic book store you'll find listings for them and Tim's own minis. in SMALL PRESS COMICS EXPLOSION. (available from Tim for \$2) And find another comics store!

CAROL CORRIGAN  
The other half of C&T Graphics. Carol's newest publication is RECESSIVE DREAMS. A gorgeous hatched cover, a story by me, drawing by Carol and writing by Matt Levin. Send for it. 50¢ and a stamp. (Carol is currently working on a new Corrigan, due in September.)

KATHY MAYER  
Half of the GROGGY COMICS team, in case you couldn't guess. She has two 25¢ minis available - DANDY, an sf fashion mini done in collage and MOM, featuring things we can't believe her mom said - but she did! Send a quarter and a stamp. Kathy's currently working on DANDY # 2. All this with two kids underfoot.

IAN SHIRES  
17914 N Inlet Drive  
Strongsville OH 44136  
A small press dynamo, Ian's DIMESTORE COMICS is responsible not only for Collier Award winner DUNGAR THE BARBARIAN, but also HERMAN HANKS (the time travelling penguin) and MYSTERIOUS VISIONS ( a poetry mini) among others. Send for a catalogue or just ask for samples of the above at 25¢ and a stamp each.

RANDY REUS  
9412 Huron Ave  
Richmond  
VA 23229  
College student and small press' most famous produce clerk, Randy has published under the Elegia Press imprint hilarious titles like SNAPSHOTS, PARTY GUIDE, STRANGERS and DEMON CHILD. Each 25¢ and a stamp.

RICHARD BERGERON  
Box 5969  
Old San Juan  
Puerto Rico  
00905  
Richard's last address was "The Dakota". In the interests of space it's just as well he doesn't want his achievements listed. In the 60s he published the sf fanzine WARHOON which was recently revived - one issue being the 600+ page Willish - the writings of Walt Willis -- sf fandom's best ever writer. Probably still available, hardbound, for \$25.

LORI ICKE  
98 Beynon Court  
Midvale  
UT 84047  
I'm sure Lori must be plotting a publication. She's shared with me her encyclopaedic knowledge of mail art, rubber stamp art and other fascinating mail networks. Another artist with children!

ELLEN O'DONNELL  
2 Spring St  
Stoneham MA 02180  
Owner of "Loving Little Rubber Stamps". Stamped on Ellen's letter was "PARENT PENDING" after which she added, "Yes, I'm due to deliver our first baby in 3 wks!!!" That was more than 3 weeks ago....

JAY HARBER  
626 Paddock La  
Libertyville  
IL 60048  
Despite an extremely serious eye problem (He's looking for tape correspondants) Jay has continued his art and publishing. Send a couple bucks for THE BEST OF NOTES FROM OBLIVION.

MATT LEVIN  
44 Lincoln  
Northampton  
MA 01060  
Matt is the creator of WALKING MAN -- unique stories told with rubber stamps. These are highly evocative minis. I think Matt feels about nature much as I do and he communicates some of the same sensations I sometimes attempt to capture in my writing. Send a buck and a stamp for three.



COLIN UPTON  
6424 Chester  
Vancouver BC  
V5W 3C3  
CANADA

I can't begin to list Colin's comics. The two characters in Deja Vu were drawn from his collections of character studies REAL RUBBIE but he also puts out great slice of life FAMOUS BUS HIDES and his Ned has appeared in GIANT SIZE MINIS. Send him a buck for a sampling and a catalog.

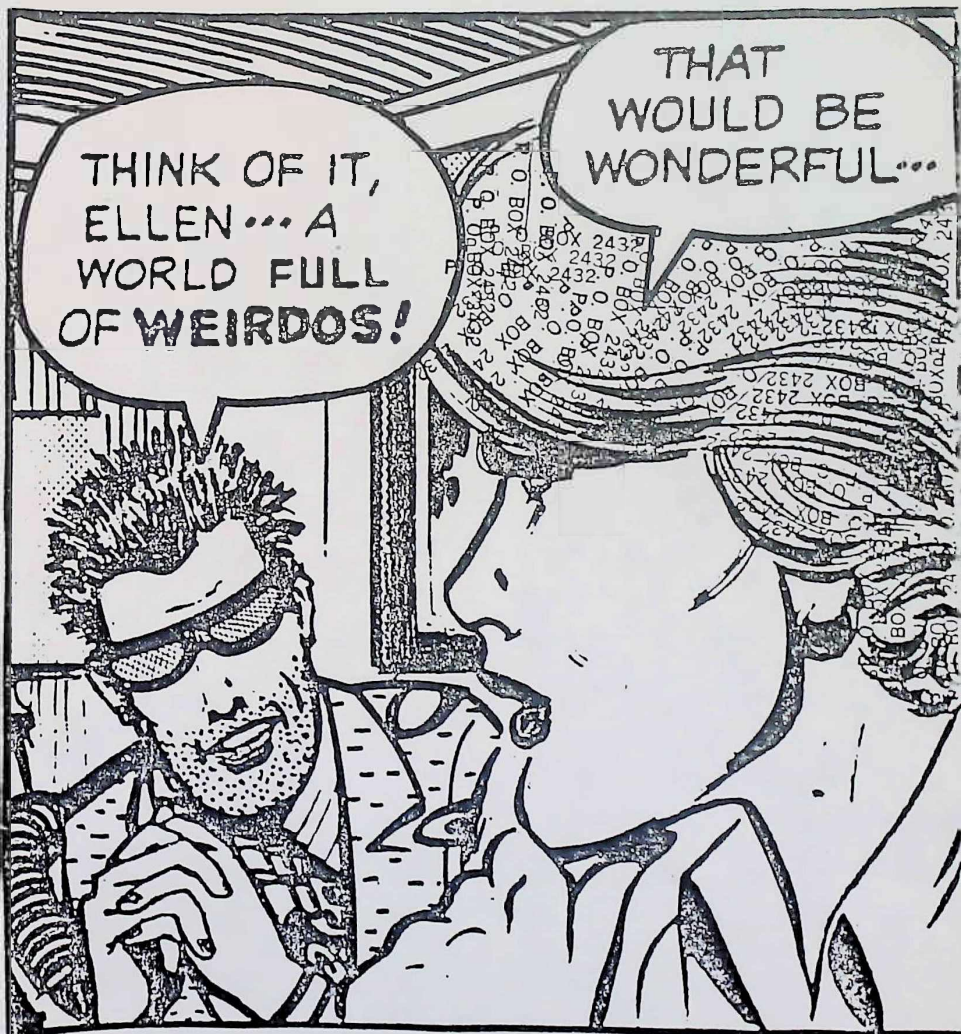
WAYNE HONATH  
332 Atlanta  
Pittsburgh  
PA 15228-1125

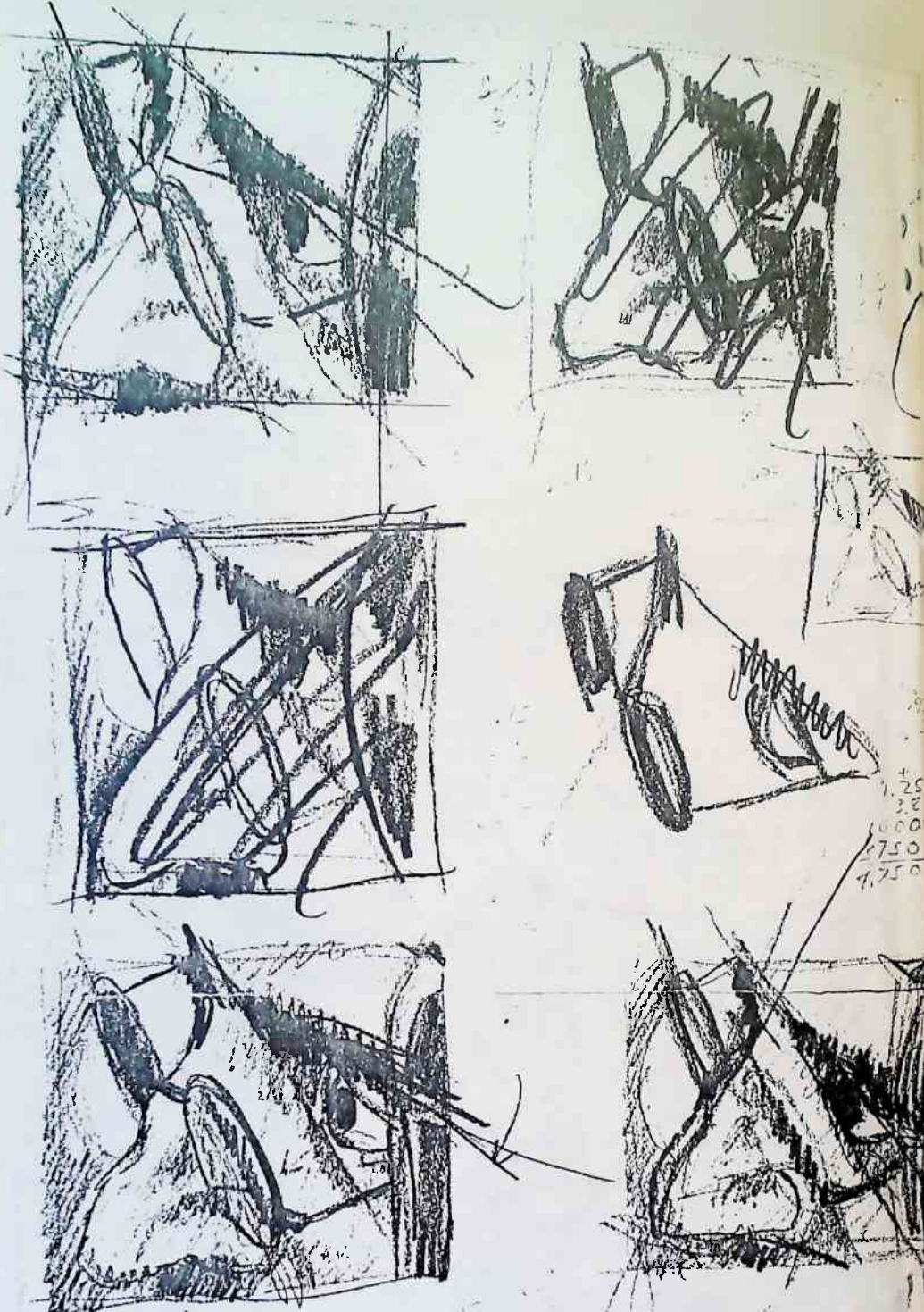
Wayne's No Way Comix are real works of art, always unpredictable. GHOULMIRE features rock related humor; Howie is another alumni of GIANT SIZE MINIS; for jazz fans Wayne has, for \$1 a set of Louis Jordan Memorial postcards. Send \$1 for a sample or

a stamp for a catalog.

LUKE MCGUFF  
Box 3680  
Minneapolis  
MN 55403

Luke told me a long time ago there was more out there than sf fandom. He's a pioneer of the "nondenominational" zine — see LIVE FROM THE STAGGER CAFE (\$1). Next issue you can catch me frothing at the mouth about politics.





JOHN LENNON'S NOSE  
Study for a woodblock by Jay Harber

Deja Vu © 1987 by Eric Mayer  
All rights returned to contributors