

MICHAEL

MICHAEL #1, December 1975. MICHAEL is edited, published, probably written, and partially illustrated by Mike Bracken, 3918 North 30th, Tacoma, WA, 98407. It is available because I sent it to you for 1/\$2, 3/\$5. If/when a second issue comes out, this will be an irregular zine. It has little or no known reason to exist other than to be another part of me. KNIGHTS is my big, pretentious, genzine and represents a part of me. This is my little, unpretentious, perzine and represents another part of. Which part is actually me has yet to be determined.

MICHAEL is, or will be, written almost entirely first draft on stencil. I warn you in advance that there will be typos, misspellings, and random, unorganized thoughts. This is to be expected because I think in random unorganized, misspelled thoughts. If I didn't, I wouldn't be human.

I may say some nasty things (I may not, too). If I do, let them flow by; they aren't said intentionally. If they are said intentionally, so what? If I say something you don't like, tough. If I say something you don't agree with, write. If I say something poorly, I'm saying as best I can (or as best I can first draft).

The print run is unknown, and may never be known. This will go mostly to close friends. Some will go to fannish friends. Some will go to other people for other reasons. Some will rot in my filing cabinet.

This fanzine, then, will be me. Whatever I say, I mean; at least at the time I say it. Please don't read anything into it that I didn't write. That has happened before - both with fans and with non-fans, I didn't, and don't, appreciate things like that.

Anyhow, typing on this issue started on December 17, 1975, and will continue until I think I'm finished. There is no exact beginning and may not be any definable ending. There may be no resolutions of problems as happens so many times in fiction. Remember this is not fiction, it is life as I know it. In life one is born and one dies. Those are the only things we can be sure of, and even with death, our problems

are not resolved; we just no longer have to cope with them. Therefore the only thing we can look forward to with certainty is death; it is the only thing that is not controlled by dreams.

Dreams, though, are a part of every person's life. They are necessary to a sane existence. For when you lose your dreams, you lose all hope of living, and you lose all reason to live. I've been through that - having no dreams - and am, I think, ever that painful experience, so I won't dwell on it. Let me just say that I never want to go through it again.

Enough. That should give you an idea as to what this zine holds in store, and an idea as to what follows.

II

I am only eighteen, barely an adult by common standards. Life has not been easy for me, but then neither has it been hard. I've known what it's like to be poor, but I've never felt want. I know what it's like to be well-to-do, but have never been rich. In other words, I could be called a product of the middle class, silent majority.

I have led a pretty well sheltered life, at least in comparison to the lives other people claim to have led. Everything I've ever needed has been there; ie, food, clothes, warmth, love. And some things that could be called luxuries have been there when I wished for them hard enough and long enough. I've always had the money, or the equipment, for my fanatic - at least since it started. Though it has never appeared through an outright effort of mine. Frequently I've started typing an issue of KNIGHTS with little more than a few stencils and a couple of articles. By the time I've finished typing, I've used two or three quires of stencils, have a stack of paper up to my armpits, ink, and the other necessary things. I've printed issues with nothing in my pocket and still have been able to mail them. My equipment, supplies and back issues currently value more than \$1,500, but I've spent very little money, really. The money I needed appeared at the last possible moment but it has always been there.

Luck, in other words, seems to have favored me in some areas of my life. In other areas it has pointed an upraised middle finger at me. But then that, I suppose, is part of what life is about; taking the good with the bad, and accepting it without complaint.

I have complained, though, sometimes loud and clear, other times in a low mumble. I try not to.

The one thing I have learned, or think I have learned, is that, whether or not you like someone, you must accept them for what they are. To that effect, I once wrote a piece of verse that goes like this:

I am what I am,
and cannot be,
that which others wish to make of me.

I still believe that, and try hard to apply it to my views of other people. To that effect I think I can truthfully say that I hate no one. Sometimes, though, it is hard to accept them as what they are. Sometimes people are assholes.

III

I do not smoke, I have rarely touch alcohol for the purpose of drinking it, and I use drugs only under a doctor's orders. The funny thing is that I've been accused of being a doper, a smoker, a drunk. Not mention liar, theif, Juvnile Delinquent, general trouble causer, and other things.

I've often wondered how I got to be those things. I don't really know. Most of my life I spent reading, writing, or doing some similar thing. I've rarely been in social clubs, cliques, gangs, or anything of the like. I prefer my company to that of many others. And I don't mean that snobbishly. I do like to be with my close friends, but there are so few of them, and right now they are so far away.

It could be, that because I spend so much time alone, people don't know me as I really am, and have only their imagination with which to judge me. And because imagination often runs away with itself, I have become strange things in other peoples minds.

Even though I keep trying to tell myself that what other people think doesn't matter, I'm not quite able to go so far as to forget about the impressions I make. I am, I suppose, basically shy. Most of what I do, I can do by myself. And this is because I was an only child and have had, most of my life, only myself to be with. I've attended 6 schools for 12 grades. The longest I stayed in any one school was Fort Bragg. And even though I made some friends there, some very close frineds, I don't think I'd do it again if I had the chance.

That place sucked. Plain and simple. There was one redeeming point other than the friends I made: I lived far enough out in the country that I could stay away from the freaks, and the dopers and the jocks, and not have their influence around me.

I liked that part of living out in the country. But at the same time, I felt lost, there was no place to go except into town -- which wasn't much better than staying where I was.

However, I grew older. Just as I grow older now. I know who I am and what I am -- at least as well as anyone can. And I know, at least in part, where I want to go. The only thing I don't know is how to get there.

It will take me awhile to find the right road, but when I do, watchout.

IV

It's funny, I doubt that anybody knows how they feel about a step-parent until the real parent dies. The two of you are thrown together suddenly and you either sink or swim.

My step-father and I never got along well. He married my mother and I was part of the package plan. He had to accept me.

When my mother died, she acted as a buffer between us, I found out that our ideals, and our morals, and our general outlook on life were father apart than I had ever thought before. It was my decision, therefore to leave Fort Bragg.

It wasn't just that our ideals and morals didn't match up, it was that we could

not communicate. We were worlds apart.

I was, at that time, having problems at school. Between my private life and my "social" life, I was fucked up.

For reasons, I don't want to go into, I did not want to go home - there was nothing there. My step-father was giving me shelter because, I think, he felt some sort of obligation. He did not throw me out, but I had the very strong impression, right or wrong, that I wasn't wanted around.

I left.

It wasn't til after I left that I found out what he really thinks of me.

I've accused of stealing his things. He has told my grandmother that I did things that I never want a part of. It is a wonder he hasn't come right out and called me bastard son-of-a-bitch. But he has implied (or is that inferred) that I'm every other kind of dispecable thing there is.

I feel sorry for his stupidity, and I try to accept him for what he is. But it is getting hard. I don't hate him, but I think I feel the closet emotion to that. It has neared hatred.

While I have tried to give him information that would help him in various areas that concern us both, he has written letters to my grandmother that have twisted what I said. He says nothing to me. I thank god that my grandmother and get along as well as we do, because anyone else could be easily swayed by his shithead logic, and vile twists of the truth.

From this point on I doubt that I will in any way cooperate with him. At one time I had thought that a fifty-fifty split of any money obtained from the lawsuit would be fair; but now I think I fight for every goddamned penny I can get.

I can no longer have sympathy for him, and I can no longer tolerate what he's trying to do to my image.

The only thing I can say now is, "Fuck him."

V

I don't know why, but I've found that I get along better with women older than me. I mean, in terms of being able to discuss deep, personal things. And I do not get along with men. And badly with guys my age.

I've never been able to figure it out until recently. I was raised by a woman, and most of the influence on my life has been by women. For some reason, an obvious one really, I think more in feminine terms. But I'm not a transvestite, homosexual, and any other terms you may want to throw up in my face.

I don't go in for the "masculine" things. I dislike hunting and fishing. Sports are, for the most part, something I ignore. Hard, physical things I'm not fond of.

I prefer to cook, write, draw, play the guitar and write music. If I had my choice between holding a job, such as one that involed physical labor, and staying home

to take care of the house. I'd stay home and take care of the house.

It is strange to look out from where I am and see a man's world, based on masculinity. It is no wonder I don't fit into it. I'm the piece that doesn't fit the puzzle.

But then, I wouldn't be a woman for all the wealth on earth, because when it comes right down to the nitty-gritty, I'm a man. I prefer, from all I've seen, to be a man. I've have no fear of my sexuality, that you can be sure of.

It's just that I see things differently. I can see the women's point of view more often than I can see the man's. And men don't understand that, and so I am not accepted into their group. And if being a man is some of the things I've seen, I don't want to be a part of that group. Or that group as it now exists.

To many men abuse their rights. And too many men don't accept women as human beings.

What I mean to say, though, is this, I think: I am male. I think with a feminine slant. In today's world that doesn't fit properly, and so I am not quite a part of either group.

Have I slipped a gear, or has society?



VI

Life isn't hard if you have a dream to keep you going. It isn't hard if you know who you are. And it isn't hard if you accept other people as they are.

But every once in a while you will have your doubts. Every once in a while something will happen to make you wonder. Those things are natural. Don't fight them, but don't let them get you down.

Recently I visited an out-of-state friend. We talked, and we enjoyed each other's company. For a week. That week helped me find out who I am, and it helped me realize that I haven't changed all that much this past year. Sure, the year has been a hard one. And, sure, some things that happened will have an effect on the rest of my life. But it wasn't good to dwell on them like I did.

That week answered some of my questions;

I am what I am,
and cannot be,
that which others wish to make of me.

Entire contents written by Mike Bracken.

Cover photo of Mike Bracken taken by Yvonne Crytzer in Fort Bragg California at Fort Bragg High School.

Illustration page one by Mike Bracken.

Illustration page 5 by Bruce Townley.

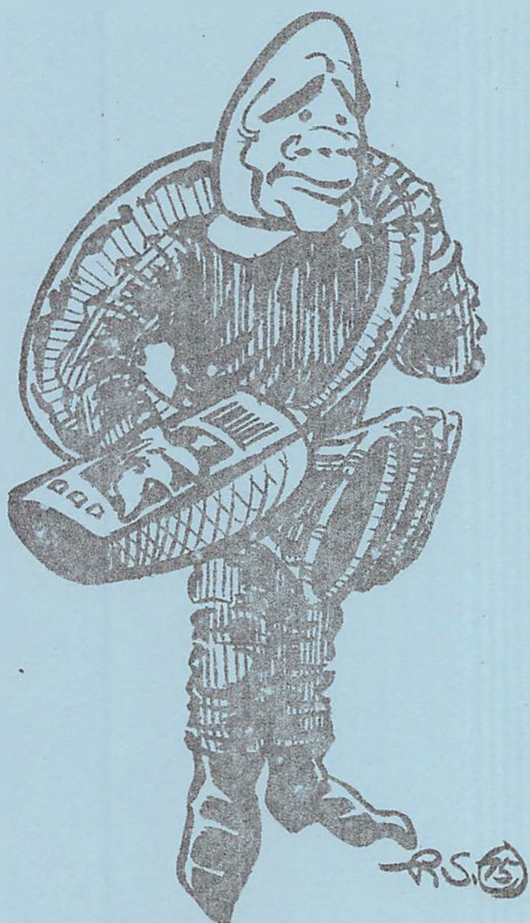
Stay loose.

KNIGHTS 15 is due out in March, 1976, but I make no promises. MICHAEL #2 could be published at any time; be prepared.

If you write a letter commenting on this, I want no cracks about the artwork, or the layout, or the typos, or the printing. That is not the purpose for this. Cracks about that type of thing should be directed towards KNIGHTS, where I'm trying for perfection.

typing finished December 17, 1975.

knights



KNIGHTS isn't a NICKELODEON yet, or even an OUTWORLDS. What it is, however, is one of the most rapidly improving fanzines being published today.

Issue 13, the 102 page September 1975 issue, contains columns by C.L. Grant and John M. Robinson, articles including, "Hal Clement: The Alien Engineer," and "Bradbury In Depth: 'The Pedestrian' and 'The Murderer'," and the usual book, movie, and fanzine reviews, as well as a lengthy letter column and a variety of artwork.

Issue 14, the December 1975 issue, is still on the drawing board but is scheduled to include articles on Robert Heinlein and Ron Goulart as well as the regular features.

Issue 13 is available for \$1.50, or you may subscribe to four issues for only \$4.00. Make checks payable and mail to Mike Bracken, 3918 North 30th, Tacoma, WA 98407.

Please send me a subscription to KNIGHTS. Enclosed is \$4.00. ()
Please send me issue 13 of KNIGHTS. Enclosed is \$1.50. ()

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____