

R 11/18/95  
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TOWNLEY

# But Is It Art?

by Rich Coad

"What do you want for your birthday?" I asked the esteemed editor of this journal as we sat in a Brisbane roadhouse drinking Anchor Steam and waiting for the phenomenal Dave and Deke combo to begin playing their own special brand of hillbilly music.

"Um, uh, er, how about, hmm, er, you know, uh, an article." responded the articulate Mattingly with unusual directness.

"Okay," I said knowing I had a sure fire way of getting off the hook. "I'll write an article about my new vacuum cleaner."

"That's ALL he talked about on the drive down here," complained Bruce Alan Townley who resembles me in only the most superficial manner despite what Nikola Householder may think. She, after all, is only eighteen months old without the finely honed ability to perceive the major and critical differences between myself and Townley that prevents most people we know from looking adorably confused and blurting out "Two Bruce!!!" when they see us together. As for all those lawyers who called me Bruce and him Rich, well, the profession is notoriously myopic, thinks blind justice is not disabled jurisprudence, and were all overworked, overpaid gits, too.

"A Eureka World Vac," I continued, ignoring the Townley outburst. "I'll bet I can work up something about American arrogance calling the baseball championship the *WORLD* Series, naming their vacuums the *WORLD* Vac, hah!"

And I bet I could have, too. But fortunately a real subject presented itself in the form of an invitation from Malcolm Goldstein to attend (and be an unpaid extra in) the filming of the final scene for his art-porn epic "The Quickie". The flyer had said that recipients were invited to attend the "only" performance of "About Electra", although the performance would be filmed and eventually viewable for a quarter a minute in various plywood booths throughout the land. (A brief digression here to plug Tales Of Times Square, Josh Alan Friedman's fine 1986 collection of essays that, among others, tells the tale of Roger Kirschner who is the crazed genius behind the machinery of sleaze - "I worked with an engineer night and day for eighteen weeks to develop the A and B video system in 1983. Eighteen weeks of hell.") Come to the Noh Space Theatre at the corner of 16th and Mariposa. Look for the red door. Be there at 3:30. So said the flyer and Malcolm's message machine. So, knowing Gary still wanted an article, I grabbed a pen and steno pad and went in search of sex, art, and a Pulitzer.

Now, I have lived in San Francisco for almost twenty years. Because of this I had a sneaking suspicion that 16th and Mariposa ran parallel and, as I travelled down 16th, crossed Third Street and saw it continued into the Bay, I thought "Pay heed to those sneaking suspicions. They'll keep your car dry.". Turning onto Third, I drove to Mariposa and turned onto it. Eventually I arrived at the remains of a paint factory that had burned down rather spectacularly two nights before. The road was closed here and large dump trucks were collecting debris and trundling off to land fills (probably in Nevada since this could be toxic stuff). Fortunately, the detour led me to the Noh Space theatre that, if you ever have to find it, is not on either 16th or Mariposa and the door is red on the inside but black on the outside. Directors, I surmised, should not direct traffic.

Having arrived you may wonder why I, along with a dozen or more other invitees, were standing outside at 3:45 enjoying a typical late-Spring San Francisco afternoon. For those of you who haven't been here just take it from me - it is almost always cold and foggy in San Francisco and if it isn't foggy then it's windy. If you want the perfect weather that California propagandists talk about you have to go to San Diego (except in June) but then you'd be in

*The Outro:* well, there you have it. Some 29 shows. I'm just now easing my way back into movie houses. Can only now look a Jackie Chan double feature at the Roxie in the eye again. Every year I resolve to cut back and every year I always end up squeezing in a few more shows (e.g.: *Living in Oblivion*) at the last minute. Maybe I'm getting better. I didn't get tix for the 7 hour Hungarian dark comedy that was blurbed: "like a grimly despiritualized Tarkovsky" (More morose than a *Russian* film, sheesh!). Have to admit I was tempted for about two seconds.

Simon Agree pointed out that I left off the special showing of Pabst's *Pandora's Box*, one of the last major silents, a melodramatic examination of Berlin's pre-war seamy underbelly, starring the spectacular Louise Brooks and with a brand-new live performance score by SF's own Club Foot Orchestra. To correct this omission, here's my appraisal: "Just to hear this film merely described (*Lulu tries to sleep with everybody, including Jack the Ripper: The End*--well, let's see you do a better job!) would be to put you off--you should go see it to peer into the soul's darkness. Club Foot's score suits this film, although the fit was tighter with *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* and *Sherlock Jr.*" Ok, Si?

Anyhow, see you next year, at the Kabuki.

Concocted in the laboratories of Bob's Bathtub Brewery, Dublin, California, USA. April 1992. ©1993 Gary & Jay

MINDBOGGLING  
MAGIC  
STRAWMAN  
WEIZENBIER

This Bavarian-style wheat beer contains: Spring water, wheat malt, hops, corn sugar, liquid yeast, orange peel, cloves.

Brewed Aug./Sept. 1994 at Bob's Bathtub Brewery, Dublin, CA.  
Label © Kinney/Mattingly

STRONG — NOT STINGY  
PLAID  
THE INHALER  
SCOTTISH ALE

Ingredients: Water, Brown Sugar, Malt, Hops, Yeast, and Pug breath.

TITLE	Director	Origin	Description/Reaction Note: Shaded entries are personal favorites, in no particular order
<i>TWITCH &amp; SHOUT</i>	Laurel Chiten	USA	A documentary that has really done its homework (about Tourette Syndrome) but also has a big heart. This film encompasses a previously closed group with warmth, good humor, keen analysis. It asks a lot more questions than can be currently answered about this baffling, off-putting neuro-chemical imbalance. It's fascinating because it shows a bunch of humans seeking balance, using their heads in extreme situations, documents the process of life.
<i>THE QUEEN OF THE NIGHT</i>	Arturo Ripstein	Mexico	Since Alex Cox acted in this dimly lit mess, it might help to view it as a sort of Mexican <i>Sid and Nancy</i> . With Diego Rivera instead of Malcolm McClaren and Rancheras singing instead of punk rock. Naah, don't think so. Dunno, maybe it's just me, but pseudo biographical melodramas about sexually ambivalent, addictive, self destructive musicians aren't my idea of fun. Halfway through one of the characters declaims: "For once, let's have a dignified ending". No such luck.
<i>LET'S HOPE IT'S A GIRL</i>	Mario Monicelli	Italy	Hey, here's Liv Ullman and Catherine Deneuve as sisters in a feminist comedy, <i>both speaking Italian</i> (apparently). Well, it works better than that sounds, if only somewhat.
<i>BLUE IN THE FACE</i>	Wayne Wang	USA	So what happens if you do a movie and your actors are having such a great time that <i>they just won't stop</i> ? Well, <i>Blue in the Face</i> is what happens. Made directly after <i>Smoke</i> , with most of the same characters, actors and continuing circumstances, it grabs the same interconnectedness and jazzy plot twists that Altman's <i>Short Cuts</i> lunged for and missed. Syncopated with upbeat urban jive and driven by Wang's and the actors' (including Lou Reed and a handful of others who just dropped in to the shoot) love affair with Brooklyn, this film is a sort of love note itself, directed to the unlooked for delights of the big city. Surprising live performance of 'Fever' by one of the players capped the show.
<i>BEDAZZLED</i>	Stanley Donen	Great Britain	Still find it kind of perplexing that the same director who did the frothy <i>Funny Face</i> made this sharp, rasp tongued, deliriously dark comedy vehicle for Peter Cook (maybe it's unkind, but I've always viewed Dudley Moore as Cook's appendage--seems like half of his lines are some variation of "Whadya mean?"). Cook (playing an arch Lucifer who runs a strip club while in London) literally moves heaven and earth to snare Moore's appealingly nebbish soul. Cook did such a super job writing and acting in this film that he more or less painted himself in a corner, left himself nowhere else to go. So it's a shame that this uncommonly funny piece isn't more often screened.

TITLE	Director	Origin	<b>Description/Reaction</b> <small>Note: Shaded entries are personal favorites, in no particular order</small>
<i>THE NEW LEGEND OF SHAOLIN</i>	Yuen Kwai, Wong Ching	Hong Kong/ Taiwan	An amazing, hyperkinetic (almost telekinetic) Saturday matinee. The story (as such) doesn't make a whole lot of sense, but who cares? Fantastic, heroic, comic and historic, all in equal measures. I know a guy who's a self proclaimed expert on HK films and he tried to warn me off this one. Fortunately, I'd already gotten my ticket and, boy, I'm glad I went to this Kung Fu spectacular.
<i>ANIMALS</i>	Nicolas Philibert	France	Two short docs and a feature not so much about animals but about how we keep, view and encounter them. <i>The Laughing Cow</i> is a bovine, cinematic diary entry, even giving birth is all in a day's work. <i>Animali Crinimali</i> is a selection of views of critters eating each other, all probably staged for the edification of school children. <i>Animals</i> is largely composed of head shots of venerable, motheaten, mounted museum exhibits (mammals mostly with some fish, birds and insects). Human Parisian natural history museum workers scurry about their various tasks and the "animals" with bee-like verve. At first the exhibits are alarming and humans' motives obscure but it is most satisfying to see the result, the rebirth of a major museum.
<i>FRANK AND OLLIE</i>	Theodore Thomas	USA	The harsh penalty paid for hipness is the denial of "cute" things. Even though these guys killed Bambi they brought to life many, many Disney characters and films. Just watch this pair of artists and friends creatively interact and you'll know that the operative word here is "sincere" instead of "cute".
<i>PARAJANOV: THE LAST SPRING</i>	Mikhail Vartanov	Armenia	You'd probably do better to check out Parajanov's films (e.g.: <i>Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors</i> ), to go to the source. Over reliance on slow pans over the man's collages that do little to show the whole picture. Even more heartbreaking than the numerous shots of the drastically ill director (obviously in his final days) is the only surviving footage from his last, incomplete but apparently marvelous work of exotic beauty. Death is a cheat.
<i>THE JAR</i>	Ebrahim Foruzesh	Iran	The daily news brings stories of Clinton's efforts to embargo Iran. This film is the best propaganda to counter that, dealing with a seemingly small but eventually all encompassing facet of rural village life (the replacement of a school's water jar). Life in general and individuals are captivatingly portrayed. The small town teacher teaches many lessons not written down in a book.
<i>ACT NATURALLY!</i>	Various	Various	As a selection of cinematic bite sized morsels, all of these short films gratify. <i>Coloured</i> stands out as a sort of psychedelic Mickey Spillane, peopled with literally colorful characters.

TITLE	Director	Origin	Description/Reaction Note: Shaded entries are personal favorites, in no particular order
<i>SWORN TO THE DRUM: A TRIBUTE TO FRANCISCO AGUABELLA</i>	Les Blank	USA	<i>Dizzy Gillespie</i> examines be-bop's gritty urban reality and Dizz' hip exhilaration. <i>Sworn to the Drum</i> throbs with the elemental beat of Afro-Cuban culture (only the merest taste though); you'll accept that the drum master Aguabella can make the walls sweat. <i>The Blues Accordin' to Lightnin' Hopkins</i> is the best of the bunch. It brings home the power of music (the soul of the Blues) to refresh, invigorate and tells you <u>exactly</u> what to do when a big black pig runs in front of your car in North Carolina.
<i>A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH</i>	Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger	England	From the same team that made <i>The Red Shoes</i> and <i>Oh! Rosalinda!!</i> and continues on with the same outlandish staging (a lot of business on a stairway to heaven, the film's alternate title) and idiosyncratic narrative drive. This time out it all somehow hangs together as a grand, lush love story between two characters (Kim Hunter, David Niven) and two nations (England and the US).
<i>MUTE WITNESS</i>	Anthony Waller	USA/Russia	A sure footed first foray in a genre (thriller) in which even past masters can stumble. Heavy breathing point of view shots galore. The story is told in such a way that you can't always be sure who is stalking who or why. Fortunately, doesn't take long to figure out, with a minimum of telegraphing.
<i>GARLIC IS AS GOOD AS TEN MOTHERS</i>	Les Blank	USA	Even when Blank does industrial films the concern, involvement with feeding one's belly (good food) and one's soul (great, home grown music) prevails. Folklore about folks.
<i>THE SON OF GASCOGNE</i>	Pascal Aubier	France	A movie seemingly about moviemakers reduced to a series of in-joke references to the French new wave, with a workman-like romance filling in the cracks. The preceding short film, Luc Moullet's <i>Attempt at an Opening</i> , carefully twists every available gibe and wry comment and drop from the excruciating process of uncapping twist off Coke bottles.
<i>CAUGHT IN THE ACT</i>	Raymond Depardon	France	A documentary consisting of maybe four set-piece shots (most of the screen time is taken up with the accused facing a French justice official or court-appointed attorney, squared off across a desk). This rigid formula serves to intensify the exercise. Those under arrest aren't named but their testimony tells a lot about them.
<i>LIVING IN OBLIVION</i>	Tom DiCillo	USA	An extension and amplification of the amazing short film <i>Scene 6, Take 1</i> , shown last year. Filmed by the director of <i>Johnny Suede</i> as therapy to work his way through his depression at its non-reception. Would that all therapy was this productive, successful, funny and penetrating. A feature length, sharply observed, depiction of the panic-attack that is movie making.

TITLE	Director	Origin	<b>Description/Reaction</b> <small>Note: Shaded entries are personal favorites, in no particular order</small>
<i>PRETTY BABY</i>	Sönke Wortman	Germany	The director got what was probably the only authentic laugh of the evening with a line about how this film would prove whether or not Germans have a sense of humor. If they do <u>this</u> German has a lot of trouble telling a joke you'll swallow or follow. A character announces he's too hot and in the next shot he's nude and the nominally straight guy in bed with him takes no notice. A character states she's pregnant and <b>BANG</b> it's nine months later. It got so it read like bad sci-fi (shaky speculation). "Hetero" relationships shouldn't be that fantastical. Aren't lovers lovers and couples couples regardless?
<i>ETERNITY &amp; SHORTS</i>	Various	Various	Cinema exploring images of big, heavy concepts like death, life after death, faith, devotion and sexual abuse/harassment (Or is it love thwarted?). <i>Eternity</i> is gorgeously photographed. The images produced tell much more than what is merely shown on the screen. A small film about the big picture.
<i>IMAGINARY LIGHT</i>	Various	USA	Abstract painting-like short films, most even watchable. The title piece had a fascinating stop motion mid-section that tracked patterns of light and shadow through a kitchen and living room. Then it lapsed into abstraction and sat on your head. <i>Premonition</i> is a muscular black and white likeness of SF's skyline and skeleton. <i>The Red Book</i> is cut-out animation brought to life by what could be occult lore.
<i>SONIC OUTLAWS</i>	Craig Baldwin	USA	Baldwin does a good job of restraining Negativland from lapsing into Lenny Bruce-like tirades (railing against copyright battles instead of censorship). This is done by presenting a whole gang of artistic, electronic outlaws rendered all the more articulate by Baldwin's trademark (copyrighted?) cinematic collage commentary. It's almost too much to digest (or sample).
<i>THE MAESTRO: KING OF THE COWBOY ARTISTS</i>	Les Blank	USA	Les Blank in person is tall, stoic, frugal with words, somewhat forbidding. His films are unlike the preceding description, except for a quest for the <i>exact</i> , correct image betraying a welcome thrift. The Maestro, the Bay Area's Gerald Gaxiola, is a flamboyant ('I leave sequins everywhere I go!'), self-created, rapid-fire (paint balls shot from six guns at Christo's umbrellas intruding on the Maestro's home range) buckaroo. The motivating force of Blank's cinematic poetry is that of love. The love of his subjects for what they do, how they live. Blank's love of these same things is what attracts his interest, and therefore his carefully applied camera. These strong feelings intersect in the films, enhancing their vigor.

TITLE	Director	Origin	Description/Reaction Note: Shaded entries are personal favorites, in no particular order
<i>CRUMB</i>	Terry Zwigoff	USA	A literally stunning (the audience was practically speechless in the Q&A afterwards) inquiry into the correlation of genius, dementia, and one's relations. Turns out Charles Crumb is the central figure (and even "director" when he's on camera, his presence is so profound). He's the one who goaded Robert into doing comics. Charles drove himself too far, into permanent medicated reclusiveness and thence to suicide. Maxon Crumb's scarecrow-like, phantom figure deserting the theatre just before the movie started set the tone. The corporate sponsored rampant consumerism of the Festival's opening night would have both repelled and given ammo to R. Crumb. Turns out Robert is the least eccentric of the brood--his comics helped him to work it out.
<i>MOTHER DAO, THE TURTLELIKE</i>	Vincent Monnikendam	The Netherlands	The director stated that there were some 280,000 meters of archival film from the Netherlands' colonial adventure in what is now Indonesia and New Guinea (spanning the period of 1912-32). Virtual and cultural enslavement are bad but it sure makes for some fascinating cinematic artifacts.
<i>POM POKO</i>	Isao Takahata	Japan	This film was "presented" by animation master Miyazaki, that's what it says in the credits. It possesses a quaint look and feel similar to the pastoral/spiritual <i>Totoro</i> . More's the pity <i>Pom Poko</i> doesn't share Miyazaki's exquisitely intimate sense of narrative balance and scale. As it is the story is somewhat overblown, tries a little too hard. However, you can get away with a lot, using magic.
<i>BURDEN OF DREAMS</i>	Les Blank	USA	Two quotes: "On top of everything else the only soccer ball in camp has a hole in it.", "...the jungle is winning." With the amount of screen time spent in dragging that 300 ton boat over the hill, Blank echoes Herzog's technique of personal peril. The successful boat hauling is, if anything, an afterthought and not all that engaging. The process is what's worthy of documentation.
<i>THE LEOPARD</i>	Luchino Visconti	Italy	A chronicle of the Gilded Age (but <u>not</u> an age of innocence). It's hard to feel any connection at all to a class so burdened with privilege (How many Sicilian princes do <i>you</i> know?) that they're virtually immobile, exposed to approach by mere landowners clad in unfortunate tuxedos.
<i>FUNNY FACE</i>	Stanley Donen	USA	A delightfully antic puff pasty peopled by beyond belief bohemians and others (hard to accept that fashion workers are <u>this</u> exaggerated). Donen himself captivated the audience during the inexpertly miked interview by being equally urbane (cool) and amiable (warm).



# Get Lots of Rest, Eat Your Fruits and Vegetables: Two Weeks (or so) at the 1995 San Francisco International Film Festival

by Bruce Townley

*The Intro:* Some of my least favorite experiences have been at Science Fiction conventions. I'm talking generally here, total life episodes, up to and including trips to the dentist ("Dr. Asimov will see you now, for your tongue exam, young lady!"). Last one I went to was the world sci fi con in San Francisco. Piece of cake, hop on the 27 Bryant and there you are, at the hotel! Enjoyed myself a bunch at the Apa-50 parties and didn't even have to pay a nickel to get in. But it all came flashing back to me, why I'd rather volunteer for unnecessary root canal work than go to one of these things, when I got into the elevator. Get this, there were *elevator monitors* assigned to each car. That must look good on the old resume: 'I'm a people person. An example of this was that I was chosen to be an elevator monitor at grotesquely swollen sci fi con and told people what floors they could get off on.' My flesh still creeps at the thought.

So I can't really explain why it is that I subject myself to the San Francisco Int'l Film Festival each year. Hey, I even look forward to it! The crowding is every bit as extreme, you get to stand in more lines than at most supermarkets (even if they were populated by cranky film fans) and at most big ol' sci fi cons the management can be every bit as amateurish (read: volunteer). Listening to some of the volunteers speak (typically the low totem pole ones without the walkie talkies) they, too, have fannish accents. A whine's a whine, I guess. So anyhow, why do I keep going back, even to the point of taking time off from work? Well, it *is* a good way to see a lot of movies with a assortment of other people who like to go see a lot of films from all over the world (How many films from Burkina Fasso have *you* been to?).

This year, I also got to see a lot of people that I know. Sure, there's SF Film Society members that I only see stumbling around at the fest, but none I know to say more than two words to. Saw the eskimo-like knit-cap wearing guy as well as the short woman/tall male couple who always sit in my row (even got a nickname for these two: Mutt and Jeff), always personal favorites. This year yet another woman (married, as always) just started talking to me while waiting for the show to start and wasn't even put off when I displayed a draft version of my movie commentary chart. What I mean is, I got to see some friends at the movies as well as some folks I work with. Went to a couple shows with Rich Coad and Stacy Scott (Rich actually took 20 minutes off of his continuing education this year and went to the movies instead). Spotted Jim Kennedy (his pony-tail actually) at *Living in Oblivion*. Jim appeared pleased that a movie had been made all about him, personally. This made it more of a social event this year, this sharing the experience with friends, than the obligation (or chore) the festival, at times, degenerates into.

In case you're keeping track, this piece's title paraphrases the SF Film Society's director's, Peter Scarlet, pre-fest admonition.

What follows is a chart listing my reactions to this year's SF Film Fest. I do this to help keep the event straight in my head so I apologize in advance for the shorthand nature of these responses.

I sat smoking a cigarette at the trestle table in near darkness, looking at the chain, the dog skull, the skull nailed to the tree. I cogitated over the dark little bayou and the severed deer head, and thought about humans for a while. It occurred to me that in all of the out of the way places I had been recently, I had found the weirdest signs of human activity in a rich, densely populated park, buzzing with the giggles children and sounds of family recreation. I knew that I was the only one that I had seen any of this -- except maybe that *other* guy.

I put the dog skull on the hood of the car for protection and went to bed. After a fitful night thinking of southern maniacs and the strange powers of nature I rose early, made coffee and drove off. Miles later I remembered the skull sitting on the picnic table where I had been pondering it in the early morning dusk. I had fully intended to keep it as a souvenir, but at the last moment had forgotten it, perhaps intentionally, leaving it for the next loner to run across and think about, and then discover the other skull nailed to the tree. I wondered if he would also discover the remains of the deer on the old road and penetrate beyond the other side of the fallen tree.



Homebrewed at Bob's Bathtub  
Nov.-Dec. 1992. Lot 1-A.

Brewery in Dublin, CA, USA  
©1992 Gary & Jay

**WORLD FAMOUS  
TRAGIC  
SNOWMAN**

**XMAS ALE**

Ingredients: cinnamon,  
ginger, nutmeg, malt, hops.

For best results & good head, decant into glass.

Coast or in the tropics -- pure and very fine, except when it gets wet: it turns to mud. I tried to find the meeting place between sand and mud as I walked. Mostly my cowboy boots just got covered in mud, and then the sand stuck to them. But it was pretty and worth the struggle.

Rounding a bend in the lake, I came across a dumping ground. A great garbage heap, set back up in a hollow, just off the shore. Naturally I was drawn to it to see what was there; at the same time thinking *yeah, but they don't show you these things when they sell you the postcards.*

It was mostly kitchen garbage; beer and liquor bottles, baked bean cans and crusty catsup containers. As I was returning to the beach I saw a dull flash of white in my peripheral vision. It was another skull. With a missing jaw. By the snout structure my guess was that it had belonged to a dog. I picked it up, inspected it, and kept it.

Carrying the skull, I wandered down along the beach. Ducks squawked and flapped away. Sounds of distant people. I came to a huge freshly fallen tree leading from the bank of the shore into the lake. It was passable, but I decided against it, instead went to inspect its roots. There at the upended tangle were the remnants of an old disused road, covered over with a deep bed of undisturbed pine needles. It was getting fairly dusky so I decided to take this road back to the campsite, as it seemed to lead in the general direction.

I came upon a sort of bayou on the far side of the road, away from the river. It was secluded and surrounded by heavy, leafy foliage. There were ducks floating stone still around its edges. The water was an umbrageous, burnt green. It was odd, weird feeling, like something out of a dark fantasy novel. I half expected to see small gnarled humanoids pop out of the bushes, or some lost, disoriented children who had stumbled through a magic doorway. I sat and peered into the still, impenetrable water, and then up at the deepening sky, trying to figure out why this place was so strange. As I got up to go, a large white bird flew from hiding among the trees. I stood breathless for a moment as it glided into the dark blue heavens and out of my vision.

I had been walking for a while when from a distance I saw a blue thing lying on the russet pine needles. Further along I could see a string of toilet paper, and beyond that something dark.

As I approached, I saw that the blue thing was a rumpled T-shirt, the dark thing a sock. *Hmm*, I thought, *who's been doing what back here?* Inspecting all of this, I nearly missed the main attraction sitting next to the shirt, it blended so well with the pine needles in the advancing darkness.

Under normal circumstances I would have fiddled around with the shirt, kicked it about, seeing if there was anything of interest below. When I saw the half decomposed severed head of the deer, cut off just at the base of the head, with full antlers and empty eye sockets, I forgot entirely about that blue T-shirt, and what might lie beneath it. (Or maybe I didn't want to know.)

I just stood and gawked at the thing. A severed head of a deer. With antlers. Half decomposed. So that was about a week ago in this weather. I looked around. The body? Didn't see it or smell it. Poachers? Or my weirdo at the campsite?

The old road did lead back to the camping area -- not very far across from where I had parked the Dart.

# Lost Empires of the Soul

by Wm Breiding

1.

## Old Bones

*Payne Lake, Alabama, November 7th 1987:*

My campsite last night was odd. I had been forced to retreat to Florence Marina State Park, just across from the Alabama state line and a new time zone. The marina was a section of the Chattahoochee River widened out into a reservoir and boating campsite by a lock and dam named after Walter F. George, also known as Lake Eufaula. It was big, rich and function-oriented.

The map indicated that Providence Canyon, GA, my intended destination, had overnight camping. It was a miniature Arizona up in those secluded Georgia hills. Beautiful canyons stretching out toward Alabama. Upon inquiry the ranger, sitting in his green pick up scowling at the scenery, gave me an unfriendly and emphatic NO. Rand McNally had been wrong when it denoted camping at this site. This was unfortunate; it was late and I needed to set camp. There was little chance to wander the canyons. I had been expecting to spend that night and the entire next day exploring these deeply etched, vermilion and cream canyons, just west of Plains, Georgia. Instead, I was forced to drive back down into the low lands and hitch up at the nearest camping joint.

I was driving through this ritzy marina trying to convince myself it wasn't so bad. I heard friend John Fugazzi in my head saying, "Oh, William! It's a nice change of pace from all that rustic isolation . . . families, boats, RVS, coke machines!" Even a clubhouse. Viewed John's way it seemed a little less upsetting, a little more appealing. I thought: maybe girls?

I set camp farthest from the rest rooms. Everyone had circled their RVs and campers around them like a wagon train under siege. I settled in an area not often used, a branch off the main trail, with no fire pits.

During preparations for dinner I was being continuously bugged by something in my peripheral vision. A few yards off to my left, a pine tree, and a dull white splotch. I decided to take a good look. Hammered to the tree through its center with a 16-penny nail was a skull. One of the strangest, small horned mammal skulls I've ever seen. The antlers were very fine, almost delicate, perhaps as thick around as your little finger. They gently sloped up from the skull about five inches, then curved over the eye sockets to a fine point. Beautiful.

As I was turning to walk back -- the beef stew was sizzling on the Coleman one-burner -- I saw the back bench of the trestle table. On it was a small length of chain -- braided into a hoop. I thought to myself as I picked it up and unbraided it, *who was this guy?*

There was still light left when I finished the chow. I decided to go see if the lake was interesting.

As it turned out, it was. Despite the fancy boats and the club house, the general store and the loaded RVs, the rest of Lake Eufaula was left very primitive. South Georgia and Alabama have very sandy soil. The small lake beach was like the white sand you might see further along over as the Gulf

proceeded to use it just like the mouth washes with which I was familiar, you know, put a half inch or so in the bottom of a cup and swish it around a bit. Well, I should have read the instructions on the back. You see it was supposed to be diluted with water, say 10 to 20 % mouth wash and the rest water. My mouth was rather puckered up as I returned to my seat. Patty restrained herself from laughing too loudly. Such an ending. . .

Well, obviously we got home. The dogs were fine, the house didn't burn down, and the dog sitter hadn't destroyed the stereo. Actually I doubt she even turned it on. Patty thought the two or three pages of instructions might have seemed a bit daunting.

Well I know I've left out or forgotten things. My apologies. My apologies also to those who might wish that I had forgotten or left out more. What can I say? We had a good time, maybe too good.

### **Beer Brewing**

I didn't drink beer until after I was 18 years old, not even a taste. When I started drinking beer the only beer my friends and I knew about were American lagers, Budweiser, Millers, Coors, etc. I wasn't particularly impressed with the taste. At that time it was more of a social thing. We were in college. We would go out, usually drink too much, and do and say stupid things.

When I was on the bidding committee for MidAmericon we used to buy cases of Coors and take them to the east coast and lots of people would come to our parties. I wasn't particularly impressed with Coors either but I didn't know of anything better.

I don't think I started paying more attention to other beers until after I moved to California. I still was drinking primarily lagers but I'd moved up to Dos Equus and Pilsner Urquell. Then I started finding out there were other types of beers like ales, stouts and porters. I had known about Guinness before but the realization that it was a different type of beer never occurred.

Last year Jay Kinnney expressed an interest in brewing his own beer. This sounded interesting to me too. From this arose Bob's Bathtub Brewery, named after Bob, our dog, and the bathtub where we give him baths. We've made quite a few different types of beer so far. This first was an english style bitter, the second was an ale but leaned toward a stout, and the third was a wheat beer. The brewing process is interesting. Patty is not too fond of the part where we cook up the ingredients though. The smell of hops, barley, etc. tend to spread all over the house. We do a two stage fermentation for those familiar with the process. All of the equipment that we have so far has cost less than \$100 (my memory may not be quite right on this point) and the ingredients total less than \$50 for each batch. There are a few other pieces of equipment I want to buy but I don't want to spend too much and then find out I'm not really that interested in the whole process. We still have a ways to go toward perfection. Some of the labels Jay madeup are interspersed throughout this issue.

quite nice.

Our next to last stop was Berlin, another of our favorite cities on the trip. I dropped off our rental car after we checked into the hotel. Unfortunately the travel agency had told us the wrong drop off location. I was able to get directions to the right place but it added a half hour or so to the process and was a little annoying.

While visiting various parts of the city we noticed a definite difference between West and East Berlin. Things looked a little shabbier in East Berlin. The bus station wasn't quite as nice nor were the signs as informative as were those in West Berlin. However a lot of construction was taking place in East Berlin. I feel certain that the differences between the two portions of the cities will be minimal and possibly non-existent in another couple of years. We only saw one or two sections of the wall still standing between a couple of buildings. It was interesting seeing the video cameras pointing toward the wall. There is nothing left of the wall or fences around the Brandenburger Tor. There was one older security guard watching all the people taking photos but he didn't seem to do too much else. Checkpoint Charlie has a number of street vendors selling Russian military garb, medals, etc. All of the crossing booths have been torn down.

Again we visited a number of churches and museums. Rode the bus by the Reichstag and by the park and statues around there. We even stopped by the recently opened Hard Rock Cafe to pick up a t-shirt for one of Patty's nieces. We did not stay very long there. Visited the Berlin Zoo, took lots of bus rides, checked out a number of stores, and generally had a very good time. We ate at several good restaurants. One was called the Eierschale. It had tables outside and it was a very pleasant day. The Fodor's guide book recommended their Mexican-style spareribs. Having never heard of Mexican-style spareribs but being a fan of ribs Patty decided to give it a try. Now in the United States you'll see people just jump right in, pick up the ribs with their hands and start eating. Patty was a little nervous about proper etiquette in a Berlin restaurant. It was a rather large portion and it took a while to eat with a knife and fork. At another restaurant, the Hardtke, if my memory serves me correctly, the waitress was from New England. Her German was excellent so it was a little odd when she started speaking English with an American accent. Possibly the only questionable fare we had in Berlin was pizza. It didn't seem quite right to us.

Finally we took the train from Berlin to Frankfurt on our next to last day. While waiting for the train we met a retired German couple. They practiced their English and we practiced our German with them which was moderately entertaining. Soon the train which we thought was ours called for all aboard. Unfortunately it wasn't exactly the right train. It did get us to Frankfurt but it was the milk run with frequent stops and not the fast and direct train that we should have taken. Actually I enjoyed the ride but the conductors were concerned because our tickets weren't the right ones. Fortunately it was a Eurailticket. Otherwise we would have had to pay a not inconsiderable amount extra. One mean spirited woman actually seemed a little peeved that we didn't have to pay extra. She was one of the few people that we actually didn't like that we met.

We didn't do anything in Frankfurt other than go to our hotel, order room service and rest our feet (which got quite a work out during the preceding two weeks or so). The plane ride back was moderately uneventful except for one little event. Patty decided that my breath was a little bit below acceptable public standards and pointed out that there was mouth wash in the bathroom on the plane. I decided to accommodate her (I had wondered why the stewardess was standing a bit farther away from me than normal when serving meals and asking if I wanted a drink.). I found the mouth wash and

Next day we drove onto Vienna, one of our favorite places. We stopped at the Schonbrunn Palace on the way into the city. The formal gardens are quite nice but we did not go into the palace. Particularly entertaining was the Schmetterlinghaus, you know, house of butterflies.

Our hotel was again near the center of the city although actually a bit outside of the central old city. It was a walkable distance but we usually just rode on the underground. Again we saw more cathedrals and museums. Just for the sake of seeing if either of us could have a heart attack we climbed the 344 steps of the south tower of St. Stephen's Cathedral. I don't think there were more than five or six groups of grade school kids doing the same thing. The spiral stair well is rather narrow. It's a lot of fun if the kids have back packs too. Nice view at the top though. The inside of the church was magnificent, but this doesn't seem too unusual.

We also went to the Prater, a large park which lies between the Danube River and the Danube Canal. A lot of it is like an amusement park but obviously much older than most of America's amusement parks. We rode the Riesenrad, a giant Ferris wheel, which was where Orson Welles was going to murder Joseph Cotten in the Third Man. There were a number of food booths and cafes. We stopped and had a Budweis from Czechoslovakia. It does not taste the same as that which has its name in the United States.

I believe that which we liked most about Vienna was sitting in coffee houses, walking in the evening and listening to the sidewalk musicians, ranging from classical violinists to a rockabilly band. Of course there was also the good food, the beer, etc.

From Vienna we headed north to Czechoslovakia. The border crossing took longer than the ones at the German/Austrian borders but wasn't too bad. Once inside Czechoslovakia there is a definite change. The houses and villages don't look nearly as well maintained. A lot of the houses needed painting. As we progressed further and further into Czechoslovakia the air became more polluted. Cars were older and we did have a little problem finding unleaded gasoline for the car. There were more people hitch hiking also. We picked up two women on the way. They spoke very little German and no English. We had an interesting time figuring out exactly where they wanted to go. We finally dropped them off in Plzen. They attempted to help us find the Pilsener brewery but it still took us a while. Unfortunately we just missed the tour of the brewery but we did stop for a couple of beers at the brewery's bar and souvenir shop. We even picked up a few steins and t-shirts.

Then we headed to Prague and the Hotel Pariz, supposedly where Party members used to stay. The room was okay and the bathroom was near the low end of the scale. I bet you could even sand stuff with the toilet paper. There was also a MacDonaldis in Prague. Their napkins were standard stock and were softer than our room's toilet paper.

Although we hadn't realized it, we had come to Prague during their celebration commemorating Prague Spring fourteen years before. There were a lot of musicians playing in the streets during the several days we were there. Again we visited many cathedrals and museums, including Kafka's birthplace. The most spectacular stained glass of the trip was in the St. Vitus Cathedral, a part of the collection of buildings that make up the Prague Castle.

The food and drink in Prague were pretty inexpensive but still good. My knowledge of the Czech language extended to a gigantic repertoire of perhaps 6 to 10 words. My most oft used phrase was "Pivo, prosim." (Beer, please.) Books are also inexpensive there and some of the children's books are

and a banana tree in hothouses and peacocks prancing around for tourists. It is quite beautiful there.

Next day onto Fussen and up the road a ways to Schloss Neuschwanstein, one of Mad Ludwig's castles. I believe Disney's castle is modeled after this castle. Great view, great rooms, elaborate decorations, many tourists. After that we drove south, cut through a part of Austria, then back into Germany to spend the night in Garmisch Partenkirchen. I even tried the McDonalds there. Tasted just the same but they served beer. During the day we went up to the top of the Zugspitze, the tallest mountain in Germany, via a cable car. It was a little foggy on the side we came up but the view over the Alps on the other side was excellent. In the evening I noticed that Wayne's World was playing at one of the local theaters. Unfortunately Patty wasn't particularly enamored of the idea so I didn't get to see Wayne's World in Europe. Oh well. We weren't particularly impressed by Garmisch Partenkirchen. The mountain was fun but once was enough. Doubt that it will be on our list of places to visit again.

Next day on to Bergtesgaden. It only took us a couple of hours to find our next hotel, the Hotel Geiger, which turned out to be near the outskirts of town. It is a nice hotel but workers started hammering about 7 or 8 AM in the morning. Guess they were getting ready for the main load of tourists yet to come. After checking in we decided to go back to the railroad station, reserve our seats for the train ride on our last day from Berlin to Frankfurt, and find some place to eat. At that point the local weather god decided to bring back memories from our homes in the midwest with a great drenching thundershower and hail. It did let up a bit and we found a very pleasant coffee and pastry shop. After a bit of walking we returned to the hotel and ate an early dinner at the hotel restaurant. I had something called blue trout. It was blue from being boiled I understand. Patty had the baked trout and I think it tasted a little better but I don't think I would have missed the opportunity to eat a blue fish. The eyes always bother me though.

We had a couple of tourist spots we wanted to hit in Bergtesgaden. One of them was Hitler's retreat, the Eagle's Nest. Unfortunately the Eagle's Nest was closed due to snow. We were able to visit a salt mine. Pretty entertaining, sliding down waxed wood slides, riding on boats on underground lakes, dressing up in snazzy supposed coal miner outfits. The guide was an older fellow. He was fairly comical. One might have thought that he had a tendency to imbibe but that could have been part of the tourist shtick. He also mentioned his pleasure with tourists that tipped the guide. We met an older couple from the U.S. on the tour. They did not speak German so it was entertaining trying to translate the limited amount we got from the tour guide's memorized spiel. Fortunately there were boxes with English translation recordings along parts of the tour.

The next day we drove to Salzburg. On the way we stopped at the Schloss Hellbrunn and took a tour through the gardens with the Wasserspiele. There are all kinds of trick fountains and mechanical theaters powered by water. From there we had another entertaining maze ride into the center of a city to our hotel, the Goldener Hirsch. The room and the hotel were very nice. Our room was facing into the center of the block so it was fairly quiet. It had another very nice bathroom and an, um, anteroom cum tv/living room leading to the bedroom. We didn't eat at the restaurant at all in this hotel, plus it was one of the few that didn't also provide breakfast.

The Mozart Museum, his birthplace, was just down the block. We didn't actually enter it but it was an interesting feeling passing by it during the day. Oh yeah, there's Mozart's house again. Yo Moz. (Sorry) We visited a number of cathedrals, cemeteries and also the Hohensalzburg Fortress. The best part was the ride on the funicular.



We soon learned which side to stay on. Beware. You can be run over by these mad bicyclists. Also we learned about paying a central parking meter instead of one next to your car. It was interesting. We finally got to our restaurant. We both ordered in our limited German. I thought I had ordered a moderate size lunch. Turns out after waiting 30 minutes or so I had only ordered soup. I only felt a little stupid. We had some good beer nevertheless.

We also stopped for several hours in Dachau. It was interesting. They have a museum set up and they have lots of large pictures of the camp, documents, the German soldiers, the inmates, etc. I guess the dormitories where the prisoners stayed were torn down but several have been rebuilt to attempt to show what the living quarters were like. Very crowded. The crematorium was still there. Several monuments had been set up by international groups and religious organizations. I'm not really sure what else I can say.

We finally found our hotel in Munich, the Spenidid. The room was fairly nice but unfortunately it was a room in the front which overlooked the street. It was a little noisy. Most of the rooms at the hotels where we stayed had twin beds shoved together to form doubles. In this hotel that was not possible since the twin beds seemed to be attached to the walls. The covers in most of the hotels with double beds were interesting. Usually (possibly always, I forget) there were two quilts for twin beds. This is pretty good where someone has a tendency to steal the blankets. I think I liked it but the quilt just covered your body. If you were of a much larger or taller build you might have a problem with cold feet or cold something else. Nevertheless the hotel was close to the downtown area.

We visited the Deutsches Museum in Munchen. They had a number of interesting German planes, cars, trains, etc. On one floor there were a lot of electronic things which had Siemens names on them, which was interesting since I was still working for Siemens at that time. In Munich and other German cities there were whole stores devoted to Siemens household goods. It was amazing. We even got some discounts at hotels because I was an employee of Siemens, not bad. I visited the English Garden late one afternoon. I was later told that I should have visited it earlier in the day. Seems nude sunbathing is a common practice there. Oh well. I did visit a nice biergarten, had a Chinese pagoda in the middle of it. Watched security advise people who had fallen asleep, you know, heads on the picnic tables, beer steins still clutched in their hands, to move on. Saw some nice dogs. One nice thing about Germany and Austria. They allow dogs everywhere: hotels, restaurants, businesses, everywhere. Almost as prevalent as people smoking (anti-smokers beware). We went by the Glockenspiel in Munich too. Watched the crowds gather around 11 AM, cameras clicking away. Visited beer halls, had huge steins of beer at the Hofbrau, saw people eating huge knuckles from cows at the Haxnbauer restaurant. I even had something called white wurz soup. Pretty good. Of course there were oompah bands at the Hofbrau in their lederhosen regalia. Blazing tubas with pretzels in hand.

Two nights in Munchen then on to Konstanz. Konstanz is a city on the Bodensee or Lake Constance, same lake, different names. On the way we stopped by the Zeppelin museum in Friedrichsafen. Fairly nice but a little small. We crossed an arm of the Bodensee by ferry to reach Konstanz. The Bodensee is very nice. Many Germans go there for their vacations. Konstanz is right on the German - Swiss border. We stayed at the Steigenberger Insel hotel which used to be a monastery. Our room was again in the back and looked out over the water. This was one of the most pleasant and relaxing places we stayed. They had several restaurants. We ate at their less fancy one. The food was the best of the trip and possibly some of the best I have ever eaten. I know the phrase about food melting in your mouth is a little trite but it did, it did. While we were there we took a boat trip to Mainau Island. It has great quantities of plants and such. Hundreds, if not thousands, of tulips were in bloom. They had orchids

Rothenburg ob der Tauber where we were to spend our first night. We were able to leave the Autobahn and travel some of the smaller roads and see some of the countryside. The area south of Wurzburg through Rothenburg and south to the German alps has a section called the Romantische Strasse, the Romantic Road. This is very nice countryside, hilly, and very green in the spring in Germany.

Onto Rothenburg. We were staying in the old part of Rothenburg. The old part of Rothenburg is contained within medieval walls. The walls and towers surrounding this portion of the city are complete. Basically it is a medieval tourist area. We were staying at the Eisenhut. (I won't linger on the entertaining time we had figuring out how to get to the hotel through the narrow and frequently one way streets.) It was a nice hotel. The hotel had lots of old pictures in the lobby, old chandeliers and junk like that everywhere.

Our room was in the back of the hotel, as we had requested. It had a very nice view of the valley below the walls. The bathroom had a huge bath tub. Most of our hotel bathrooms had a bidet. It was interesting. I never got up the nerve to give it a try. You may say that a bidet is for more feminine sorts of hygiene. In my extensive reading I believe this may not be the case. When a male has spent a tiring, sweaty day walking the streets he may also wish to freshen certain parts of his body.

We only ate at the hotel restaurant in the evening once. Everyone seemed to dress for the evening there. Besides which the hotel was pushing their spargel menu. Uh, spargel is white asparagus. All through the trip we got handed these special spargel menus. I had it the first night. I wasn't impressed. It reminded me of our dogs. If you're really curious ask me how it reminded me of our dogs. We did eat our breakfasts there. European breakfasts are interesting. The hotels where we ate breakfast usually had a buffet which included cheeses and sliced meats, like salami and similar stuff. That was fairly good and I actually ate that. I refused to eat the mueslix. Seemed way too healthy for me. I did have yogurt a number of mornings. I guess we could have ordered eggs but they rarely had it immediately available. Some did serve scrambled eggs but sometimes they were a little strange. Edible but different. I never saw any hash browns. During the day we searched for the perfect wurst und auch the perfect bier in the restaurants of the city.

We did lots of walking. Probably the first thing we saw was a store next to our hotel which sold Christmas stuff all year round, ornaments, cards, decorations, etc. Then there were all the museums and churches in Rothenburg. I particularly liked the Kriminal Museum, which had lots of torture and execution devices, three whole floors of the stuff. Unfortunately they were taking all these school kids through at the same time. If they could just have used them for demonstration purposes . . . The town center has a glockenspiel that reenacts some famous event by some guy drinking a large tankard of beer or wine and in so doing saves the town or something like that. We walked along most of the wall surrounding the inner city. The countryside around there is really quite beautiful, you know, rustic.

We spent two nights there and watched the first of many nights of CNN and some British station. These were the only two that had English broadcasts. Some of the German broadcasts were good. Lots of American reruns. Picture a German speaking Alf. Picture German speaking Smurfs. Maybe you don't want to. Gilligan?

On Thursday we left for Munich. We stopped in Augsburg on the way and had a late lunch at a place I had read about in one of the many tour books that I had bought (not more than a dozen, really). Augsburg is pleasant. It was one of our first encounters with the mad bicyclists of Europe. It seems that they really believe they have the right of way and they do have a special portion marked on the sidewalk.

Or I could talk about Twisted Puppet Theater on Showtime and the Worm Chef that loves to eat dirt and blow it out the other end. Or the dog that keeps getting hit by a car and thrown to the side of the road.

## **Trip To Europe** (1992)

We had thought of going to Europe for years. We had started to make plans several times over the last couple of years. Finally we started to get much firmer about going. We talked about a time in June. I failed to mention to Patty that it would be after June 10, when someone at work returned from their trip. I finally got around to mentioning it and Patty thought that was too far into the beginning of the tourist season in Europe. I decided we should attempt to set up something for May. This was about the second week of April. We were just able to get a two week discount flight price on Lufthansa departing May 4 and returning May 20. In the two weeks before May 4 we made all of our hotel reservations, car rental reservation, and train reservations. I do not advise this. Besides which, if you do go on Lufthansa, you can get discounts on hotels if you book your flight at least 21 days in advance.

We did all of the reservations through European Travel in San Francisco. The woman with whom we dealt was pretty good. She only messed up a couple of things. She reserved a car with standard transmission instead of an automatic (Patty cannot drive a standard transmission.) and she told me the wrong drop off point for the car in Berlin. All of our hotels were set up properly. I would appreciate it if travel agents or hotels were able to give detailed maps for driving into the city to the hotel. This, I think, was one of our main problems throughout the trip. The European cities we were in were not fun to drive in if you didn't know where you were going. I think we have decided that if we go to the countryside or Alps or similar we'll drive otherwise we will take trains into major cities and just use the local transit system.

Anyway we left the San Francisco airport on May 4 at 3PM. We were to arrive in Frankfurt on Tuesday at 10:30 AM. You may not remember this but there was a strike going on in Germany at that time. When we left San Francisco the Frankfurt airport was still open. In mid flight the Frankfurt airport was closed due to the strike. We landed in Dusseldorf instead. This is north of Frankfurt and we were to pick up a rental car at the Frankfurt airport. Some fun. After a couple of hours trying to figure out what was going on we finally boarded a bus provided by Lufthansa to ferry us to the Frankfurt airport. That ride took several hours. Lufthansa provided free soft drinks, yogurt, fruit, etc. and it wasn't really a bad ride but it sort of screwed up our schedule for the first day. Just in case you're asking, no we couldn't rent a car in Dusseldorf, none available. We had kept our baggage down to two pieces per person but while we were in Dusseldorf it was no fun carrying even that little back and forth trying to figure out where the bus was supposed to arrive that would take us to Frankfurt.

We finally arrived in Frankfurt, found out the unpleasant news that we had a car with a standard transmission instead of an automatic transmission and went on our merry way. Cars with automatic transmissions are the rarity in European rental agencies, not the norm, so there were none available. Fortunately I can drive a standard transmission but it meant that Patty had to put up with my marvelous driving. It was a nice car though, an Opel Vectra, five speed and no problem going 140 to 170 kilometers per hour on the Autobahn.

We had planned to spend several hours in Wurzburg but due to our lateness we went straight to

one/friend dies. I think I got ostracized for this at least once. Sure, it was at a distance. I just didn't know what to say.

This all makes me think of APA 50. The emotions contained therein bothered me. I was never really a part of it. Never there long. Probing questions from some bothered me too. I could answer but I wasn't sure of the feelings behind the questions (nor necessarily the substance of the answers. I don't really think that much about my own emotions (What's all the BS above then, hm?). I don't usually try to find a reason for them. I think and have always thought that emotions didn't necessarily have reasons that one could immediately or even after much thought and striving cite. My belief is that emotions are not necessarily based upon reason or even necessarily are explainable by cause and effect. (Well, sorry, I could go back to determinism (is this the right term?), chemicals, the environment, genetics, and the universe.) Occasionally patterns can be seen but I don't know that I would believe the answer to Why? Attempting to explain emotions may possibly be conversational material, frequently a source for arguments, but I have never heard something that was undeniably the truth, the source, a final explanation. Of course, the question arises, would such conversations then end?) Cynicism and a distrust of this emotionalism bothered me. (So many digressions.)

Anyway the guilt was there. A certain disappointment also came about over the weekend. Many of the conversations I overheard or was even a part of seemed frequently relatively pointless, many contrived, many an attempt to communicate but not say much. I'm sure I could lay blame on my own shortcomings at finding relevancy. Unfortunately I couldn't find very much to talk about that had a point.

So let's try to return to Northern Exposure. Here are these friends for life. (yeah, yeah, I know it's a television show, but I also know people like this in this thing around me called reality.) Do I have the ability to exhibit/feel this level of friendship? I'm not even sure I have the ability to see any particular point in life itself. I harbor no desire for death. I have no proof that there is anything other than the worms coming in and going out at that point. I have no faith that there is anything beyond that point. Sleep is an escape, but I prefer to wake up.

So what's the point? Probably there is none. I turn 40 shortly (whoops, now I'm 43). I felt no noticeable qualms at turning thirty. Forty isn't much different. Unfortunately I have a bad habit of thinking it simply as another year nearer death. I worry about doing something with a point, for someone, for myself, but everyone else is going to die too. Humans will probably cease to exist at some point, as may the universe (not that I'm totally certain of the existence of anything or anyone at any time anyway). These are the thoughts I have attempted to avoid since high school and, except for occasional lapses, will continue to attempt to avoid.

Just as a final (?) aside/digression, as I become older the question of children arose and still occasionally arises. I continue to search for a reason. I am not a friend to my mother nor was I one to my father, nor am I particularly supportive. I have no reason to believe that a child I raised would be different. Would I continue to exist in some strange way through the memory of the child or the genes of the child? Doesn't really seem like a valid concept to me. Can I believe that a child of mine would make a better world or have a reason for existence? Not really. Oh well. Might as well make it moderately physically impossible and that way I will have one less thing to worry about it. Course I could add it to one more thing to get depressed about. Life and its eternal balance.

The last question. Will I look at this in the daylight, in a more "lucid" moment and decide it is just as sophomoric and stupid as much else that I have written and edit the whole thing out?

huge fight about that particular point. (Gee, do I digress, never . . . ) But I guess, jut maybe I am part of this bulging group of baby boomers, and I guess I have been part of fandom, sort of on the fringes, if you will, for over twenty-five years. Hey, it's just the group that reads a lot, likes music, and is a little nerdy, just like my group in school.

When I was in high school, and possibly even in junior high, I worried about death, growing older, determinism and free will. In the later years of high school (this makes it sound like high school was more than three or four years long) I decided that it was pointless to worry about death. I was going to die, period. I decided it was pointless to worry about determinism and free will. If all of my actions were determined by everyone else and the rest of the universe, each and every atom of all time, it definitely didn't matter. If my actions were determined by free will then it certainly was pointless to worry about determinism and the best path was just to do it. Live it and don't necessarily think that much about it. I plead guilty to possibly thinking more about these things than many of the rest of the people on the earth, but then when I think about it it was just a matter of thinking about other parts of life. There are those that think about their family, or the next meal, or hey, big booties and coochie (apologies to the feminists and socially correct people reading this) (I mean, hey, I had these thoughts too and I really don't think I can honestly apologize for them. (I'll blame determinism, genes and hormonal reaction if I'm in a cop out mood (cop out, hm, maybe sixties or seventies, questionable terminology in the 90's)), family, and much much more. Different thoughts, different people. To attempt to return to the point, I was watching this, drinking beer, thinking about life, my actions therein, and death.

Part of these thoughts arose this weekend (Many weekends ago by now actually). Joe Wesson was there, William Breiding was there, Patty was there, Gil Gaier was there, and more (uh, Corflu weekend, folks, LA, 1992) (Just in case this falls into the crack of all the other things I write, late, delayed.). What draws the show and the weekend together is partially due to Joe. I consider Joe a very good friend. I'm a horrible friend. I'm a really bad conversationalist, I'm moody (this may not be apparent, maybe it is) (If you see me walk off, it could be because I can't think of anything witty to add, it could be because I'm bored (I apologize here. I get bored easily, you know, that short attention span thing caused by early use of . . . . ), because I'm uncomfortable (like I want to be near you, the crowd, whatever, but I can't "meet and deal" ( a term from the Social Security Administration), and other things my brain can't think of at this moment (Do you really care that Del the Funky Homo Sapien is in the background?). Oh, what's the point, well every once in a while I'd just walk off, from Joe, the crowd, you know. I missed Joe scraping his head on the LA freeway rock pile. I felt bad about missing this. I felt bad about not being as wild and crazy as I was in the past (admittedly not that wild and crazy, especially when I think of SC and friends). However I don't feel totally mundane. I do many things people my age (that sounds disgusting) and younger, would consider wrong. I listen to music many would consider disgusting, (well, maybe some would consider it strange simply for the sake of strangeness). I do also listen to Perry Como and Mel Torme ( However it is extremely unlikely that I will ever buy a Lawrence Welk album. Well, maybe one, although it doesn't really fit into the category of being so bad that it could be considered entertaining. Maybe one for old time sake (wow, another disgusting trite phrase). I had a great aunt that really liked him. (Sorry a digression) Patty and I visited her once in Santa Cruz and it was very apparent that she wanted us to leave before Lawrence came on tv. I think my parents liked him. Many older relatives liked him. I didn't consider him very original, very creative. I guess he satisfied a need, but still . . . ) Anyway I wasn't there with Joe. He had more energy. Maybe I will just I was in a btchy/snide mood and leave it at that. Anyway I was not being very supportive/friendly. Actually I am frequently not very supportive . I'm really unsupportive at the time of people's death. I am personally uncomfortable with death and haven't the strength to try to help a friend when their loved

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And have you seen the latest, a Ratapult? It flings the rat into a bin or box or whatever but supposedly not with enough fervor to crush its insides. And it resets itself so no human smell (from the act of resetting) gets on it after it's placed. Technology on the march . . .

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More Harper's Index information:

"Portion of all oil produced worldwide that is used for transportation in the United States: 1/5.  
Portion of all illegal drugs produced worldwide that are consumed in the United States: 3/5.  
Percentage of Americans who say that mowing the lawn is 'risky': 54.  
Ratio of Americans killed by lightning each year to Americans killed by fireworks: 9 to 1.  
Proposed maximum fine for participating in a dwarf toss in South Carolina: \$200.  
Maximum number of aphids that FDA regulations permit in a pound of frozen broccoli: 269.  
Average number of times an American opens the refrigerator each day: 22.  
Rank of dog, cat, snake and U.S. president, among World Book Encyclopedia entries consulted most often: 1,2,3,4."

These are all copyrighted 1989 by Harper's Magazine (Jeez, six years ago . . .)

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One interesting coupon in the Sunday paper was for "Frosty Paws", the world's first frozen treat for dogs. Seems sort of strange to me. Has anyone bought this for their dog? I think this product must have died. Several years have passed and I never saw mention of it again.

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In an old issue of the Mercury News in a section called News of the Weird comes the following. "A London firm recently began marketing cigarettes under the brand name 'Death'. Said firm director B.J.U. Cunningham: 'I'm being honest. I am selling death.' A skull and crossbones is on every package along with this warning: 'Cigarettes are addictive and debilitating. If you don't smoke, don't start. If you smoke, quit.' Cunningham, a heavy smoker, said sales are going fine." Admittedly it's a bit stupid but interesting as to the lengths of stupidity people will go.

**Thinking, Aging, the bulge in the population and my t-shirt**  
(e.g. more insufficiently edited rambling)

Just watched Northern Exposure. I have no idea how many people watch this. I have a feeling I watch more TV than other people in fandom. This episode concerned the death of a friend of two of the older characters. Brought me back to recurring themes in my mind, growing old, dying. Course, I guess most of the baby boomers are doing the same. I always thought I missed that group of the sixties, you know radicals, revolutionaries, activists. I certainly wasn't in the disco group. I never really considered myself part of any part of any particular group, except for the people in the advanced classes in school, the people who didn't wear the latest trends, hey, maybe even two or three trends back. I blame this entirely upon my parents for purchasing my school clothes mail order from Sears, not that I put up any type of

by Annabouboula, sort of funky rock Greek music. I only remember one song in English, strange lyrics about condoms next to the bed. I wish for a moment or two that I knew Greek. Strunz & Farah continue. Like Martin Denny walks in, bird calls, beads jangling, bit better than Martin. Sorry Martin, how's it hangin'? Although they seem to be having fun with the titles on liner notes on Annabouboula like "The Little Squirt (To Pitsirikaki)" "'The clever little beggar boy would really like a toke, but he bumps into a cop so he asks him for a smoke.' ", I particularly like the title and notes on the first song, "I'd Rather Set Myself on Fire" "'Inspired by a traditional amanes (vocal improvisation) on the lines "I will set fire to myself and let Charon search for my soul among the ashes." And it also feels good that typing those lines seem to be right in rhythm with a song on Strunz & Farah. Meanwhile Doug the dog has taken my seat on the couch. Doug the dog had three stitches to a wound from an unknown source today. I watched the vet press the needle into Doug's wound and the blood start. Then she thought she should scrape the sides of the wound a bit so there would be fresh flesh pressing together rather than dead flesh. Sorry, makes me think of necrophilia, sort of. I think the needle looked a little curved, uh, the needle she sewed with not the needle from the syringe. Which sent me off in another direction about the people who affix fish hooks into their flesh, either to hold up a holy platform on their long march to some shrine, or just to drag something along. Do they drag something along to drag out their soul? Or drag something out of their soul? Or maybe drag something into their soul? Emptiness there can be a good feeling and/or it can be a bad feeling. Maybe I should go back to reading Tours of the Black Clock and take another Severe Cold Contac. Yeah. YEah.

### Dreams

I had an interesting dream. I dreamed I was taking a class on Twin Peaks. I was in the midst of a test. The test was basically fill in the blank. A substitute teacher gave the test. It had stuff like who was Catherine's husband? Ha, that was an easy one. There were tougher one's on there though.

Oh I also started thinking about doing a song to the tune of I dreamed I saw Joe Hill last night. Instead of that it would be I dreamed I saw the dwarf last night? Meanwhile I'm listening to Les Aborigenes - Chants et danses de l'Australie du nord. Way cool, just chanting/singing, didgeridoo and sticks. Great stuff. I think they should sample it and put it into rap songs. Great beat. Now I jump forward to the present (Of course in this issue it is sometimes hard which present is the present.) and we see Lisa Simpson talking with a strange voice to the police with red curtains in the background.

Yipibibipi

### Bits and Pieces

Although Patty said it wasn't really all that unusual I saw an ad in the personal ads portion of the classified section of the paper thanking St. Jude for favors granted. We went to Jay and Dixie's later the same day I noticed it and Dixie had also noticed it in the paper and thought it interesting. I thought it was definitely odd.

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From the Grab Bag in the Sunday San Francisco Chronicle/Examiner comes, "Report is the Humane Society of Fallstown, MD., long has looked for something to repel mice. But the only good mouse deterrent they've come up with so far, I'm told, is tiger urine." My goodness . . .

local grocery stores. I'm not really sure what cereals are big on the shelves in England. I was all set to start a Send Chex to Avedon campaign but figured she might not appreciate boxes of stale cereal. (How long does sea mail take?) I also wasn't sure whether the postal service (English or American) would appreciate it. Oh well, seemed pretty funny at the time.

1993 cereal action was pretty dead. The only new non-healthy cereal I've seen is from Captain Crunch. It was okay but there was no prize inside. 1994 and 1995 were pretty dead too. Besides which I stopped eating cereal. I seem to have a problem digesting milk products. Ghod, I really love aging.

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"CULT OF ALONENESS: The need for autonomy at all costs, usually at the expense of long-term relationships. Often brought about by overly high expectations of others." -- Generation X by Douglas Coupland

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### Changes and Passing Time

Ever have the feeling it was time but you weren't sure for what? Like a change, or this is it, or okay what now?

An equally bizarre thought crosses my mind with respect to mystic experiences, almost paranormal things. I can immediately think of two experiences that are the closest I think I ever got to something people might consider not normal or real. One instance was when I was with a woman at her house at night and I was telling her about this thing/being I could almost imagine, you know, one of those monsters from the id with two claw-like feet and you can't exactly see it but it'll rip you apart. I felt it was very close like right outside the door and she made me stop talking about it because I was frightening her. We eventually broke up. At the moment I wonder if it would have gotten closer had I stayed with her. It could still be there. I think about it and even try to call it forth now and then but nothing happens, not even the feeling of closeness.

The other time was when I listening to Throbbing Gristle's Heathen Earth album with a little external aid and I really felt like I was leaving my body, floating to the ceiling nearly breaking the string, it was great and bizarre. Patty called me back though. Only that one time . . .

Each of those incidents I presently see as being beautiful (I can hear Rich Coad chortling in the background.) but I think I see violence or violence under the surface of it. Extreme damage violence, you know, of a frightening type, but one you know will fill your spirit while probably simultaneously ripping it out from you, from your throat or lungs or stomach or wherever it resides (assuming it exists at all), particularly when it's frightened or maybe at peace, the stilled inner voice in its basic form).

Anyway for bizarre, unknown reasons I think of these things at this time, awaiting possibilities, also awaiting the possibilities of the passing of untouched possibilities.

### Sick Day

So I'm sitting home listening to Strunz & Farah loud. Rhythmic. Nice. Reading Tours of the Black Clock by Steve Erickson. Brain squashing, anger, sex and violence, and maybe even some intelligence. And I'm thinking this is pleasant and the cold almost becomes inconsequential. Earlier listening to Greek Fire



(Something like that, my memory becomes hazy after a day or two.) Unfortunately we had a plane to catch so what the rest of the auction and that night's Dead Dog party were like I do not know.

This was an excellent convention. Each year Corflu seems to get better and better, which is pretty amazing since I thought the first one was great. I'm sorry we didn't make this year's (1993) Corflu in Madison.

### Meanwhile My Mother Went to China

This issue has been harder coming than most of late (which could be interpreted in a negative or positive manner depending upon your viewpoint, semantics, and the situation). What inspired me oddly enough (Oddly enough especially since when I wrote this, I didn't published anything. Must not have been sufficiently inspiring I guess.) is my normal Saturday reading of the Sunday Chronicle/Examiner. First there was the article about the warehouse people, groups or tribes or whatever of people living together in warehouses, buildings, or whatever. Some are squatting, some paying rent to absentee landlords. All of which seemed to bring to mind the writing of Bill Gibson. Maybe some of his writing seems to hold a better view of the future than others not so much because he's writing about 100 years from now, nor even 10 years from now, but more likely tomorrow in our neighborhood and probably today or yesterday in someone else's neighborhood. Make sense? My writing was never known to truly make sense, even to the point of being overly ambiguous, so it goes.

Returning to the paper we have the articles about the lack of good saving practices in America whereas in Japan families save 22% of their annual income and live in tiny apartments now. Hm. I'm still thinking about it and still not saving 22% of my income. Although we are probably saving more than most American families.

Then there's the father's day ads for radios that look like old coca cola coolers or the old at-the-table diner juke boxes. You know, you can flip the page listings of songs with the (ohmighod) mechanical page turners at the top of the thing. Sorry I don't want a radio that looks like a coke cooler or a juke box selector. Seems pretty dumb all in all to me. I'm not really sure they're any better than the ugly ties fathers occasionally get. Hm, could I put one of these things on my father's grave sorta nested in the flowers? Stupid radios in the midst of flowers on a grave covered with colored rocks (my grandfather thought the colored rocks were a nice touch, most of the other relatives didn't). What about pink flamingos on a grave? How about those yard deer figurines or the eight foot tall wind mill? Actually we both (my dead father and I) might enjoy the bird feeder on top of the gravestone. Life amongst death, huh? Except he always told me not to say huh.

Oh yeah, my mother and David, the person she married after my father died, did indeed go to China.

### Old Cereal News

Since the last Skug Ralston came out with the Nintendo Cereal System. It has two cereals in one box. One is called Super Mario Bros. Action Series. The other half is called Zelda Adventure Series. Mario is fruity and Zelda is berry. I'm not sure I see the connection. Both taste just like any other fruity or berry flavored cereal. If you really use your imagination you can almost make out a Mario Brothers figure. Definitely not a big deal. While at the New York Corflu Avedon Carol seemed amused at a cereal review column in a fanzine. She also mentioned that she had recently had a craving for one of the Chex cereals. I forget if it was the wheat or corn Chex. She indicated she could not find it at any of her

I'm tempted to write down all the names of all the people I spoke to but the list of interesting and entertaining people would just go on and on. Talked a lot to Garth and Karen Trego. (Sadly it was the last time we would see Karen.) Sat around with John Bartelt. I think we had exhausted most of our conversational repertoire in seeing each other in the Bay Area. Finally met John Purcell. Saturday morning he went on a Volksmarch (is that right?) and walked about ten miles in that marvelous Minneapolis spring weather (remember the cold and the rain?). Jeff Schalles and I tried to remember if we'd met many years earlier but neither of our memories brought forth any tangible evidence to that effect. Talked to Ted White a while about stereos and music and listened to him and Teresa Nielsen Hayden, Lenny Bailes, Moshe Feder, and a great clump of people talk about the Fanoclasts and Puerto Rico and similar entertaining subjects. Back to the talking in clumps, Fred Haskell, Susan Levy and Patty were talking about computers and programming at the same time the others were smoffing away (Just a different type of smoffing I guess). I primarily just sat and took it in. Rob Hansen looked more tired than I as the hours progressed toward 2 AM and then 3 AM and ...

The programming covered only about five or six hours on Saturday and the banquet and auctioning on Sunday. Saturday's programming started with an opening by Fred Haskell and an Invocation by Jon Singer. The Toastermaster Jeanne Gomoll introduced various and sundry people and gave a number of good readings and speeches. One of the programming events was old vs. new reproduction (Celibacy?). The audience was advised to move to the left or the right side of the room depending upon their particular real or feigned prejudices and various points and counterpoints were made about things with or without chips, silkscreens, or whatever. Ted White, on the side of "old" reproduction methods maintained that mimeography and such time honored methods were less expensive and not as difficult as the new computer methods. Avedon Carol responded that she had always known that Ted was a "cheap and easy kind of guy". Several people were seen walking back and forth between the two opposing camps. I happened to be in the back in the middle along with all the other wishy-washy people. Luke McGuff, also in the back, made some comment about the people walking to and fro and something about spies in the house of mimeo.

Immediately preceding the banquet Garth gave Stu Shiffman, the "randomly" chosen Guest of Honor a special piece of Smurfs artwork he had created. (I'm not sure exactly what you call it.) We also learned from Karen that Dana Siegel's water had broken and would not, therefore, be able to attend the banquet. Pat Mueller looked like she would follow suit in the not too distant future. After eating a not unpalatable brunch a number of speeches were given and the auction followed shortly thereafter. During the speeches a strange salute, with which I was not totally familiar, was given to Chuck Harris. Stu was honored by a human pyramid (both stationary and mobile) which fell apart after a rather limited mobility. A roast of sorts of Stu followed, with various and sundry pieces by Andi Schechter, Avedon Carol, Andy Hooper (the past lives of Stu), Mary Ann Mueller, and others. Ted White, with the unanimous approval of those gathered, named Terry Carr the past president for 1988 of FWA. A brief and unanimous voting for Corflu 7 followed a short speech by Moshe Feder and Lise Eisenberg. After which Fred gave them jointly his symbol of authority, a whistle he blew several times over the weekend. Please hide this whistle someone. There was some mention of the possibility of the Brighton Metropole for Corflu 7 but Avedon quickly indicated that this was not a real bid. Later Richard Brandt passed out flyers for El Paso for Corflu 8 (which turned out to be another enjoyable convention).

The auction was officiated primarily by Joe D. Siclari and Jerry Kaufman. Furious bidding between Richard Brandt and Anna Vargo over a run of Terry Carr's fanzine was very entertaining, although quite possibly not so for the participants. Anna, in trying to determine if she would continue to bid above Richard, would throw a coin several times before deciding to do so. Richard finally took the coin away.

## Minneapolis Corflu (Is this old or what?)

There was this long piece at this point about the Minneapolis Corflu. I think I will chop it severely. I'll leave in at least part of it since that is the point in time when the last Skug came out. Let's forget the belabored airline misery story, the 30 degree weather and the forgotten coat.

Cut to the part where we're walking toward the hotel door, I look up and see Garth Danielson waving from the second floor. He struggles with the window. Seems it's a little difficult to open. I'm looking up with the rain falling in my face and finally decide to just wave and walk in. When I get to the door I hear Garth's triumphant yell. He did get the window open and I did walk back into the rain.

From the rain we proceed to the registration counter and encounter Luke McGuff heading in the opposite direction. I quickly ferret out SKUG 10 and the DITTO II Progress Report I and hand both to him. Although I was sure I sent him Skug 9(?) in a timely fashion, he swears he never got it and it was a number of months before I finally got him another copy. Obviously I must hand him the first copy distributed and he seems moderately appeased. Our reservation seems fine and we actually get a room on the floor directly above the party suite. This I like and it's a nice room. (Plus later that weekend I got to see the last half of "Nightmare on Elm Street, Part III". Now if I could just get to see the first half.) Also as we were registering, or around that time, a number of the con attendees went out to the Twins and the Indians baseball games. Fanzine baseball fanatics at it again. Cleveland won.

I'm not going to go minute by minute through the entire weekend. The convention committee had arranged for smoking and non-smoking con suites and the smoking con suite led directly to the pool area so on both Friday and Saturday night the party spilled out, particularly early in the evening when we learned that the hotel's happy hour included not just free potato chips but also free drinks. I was amazed. Patty indicated that hotels that she had been to on business trips had had this also and that it was not that unusual. Well, unusual or not I was going to take advantage of it. (Within reason, of course). I was fortunate enough to even obtain a couple of illustrations from Alexis Gilliland (which you may have seen gracing a Ditto II Progress Report II) as we sat around the pool.

On both nights the party suites were well stocked with soft drinks, beer, and other liquid and solid refreshments. I even arose early enough Sunday to find muffins and blue tortilla chips. Over the weekend I saw chocolate, cheesecake, cheese curls, and much more. My oh my, no wonder fandom is gaining so much weight. There was also a room with fanzines for display and sale, t-shirts, sweatshirts(why do conventions never stock enough small and medium sizes of these, not that I could fit into a small, but there are a few), etc (An intervention from 1995, I can even forget the medium at this point.). I think Ken Fletcher stayed there almost the entire time the room was open and it was open most of the time. Reminds me of John Benson in the artshow room for Autoclave 1 or 2. John even slept in that room if I remember correctly. Back to Corflu. Even though Geri Sullivan didn't speak that much at panels and at the banquet, she was often seen running here and there helping make sure things were running properly. Uh, Fred was doing the same thing too. He's just a bit more vocal.

There were about 120 or 130 attendees at the convention. Even Jim Young showed up. He hadn't gained an ounce of weight. I hadn't seen him for years. He gave a reading on Saturday with great enthusiasm and relish. I talked a while with Don Fitch who I also hadn't seen for quite some time and Linda and Bill Bowers who I'd seen at Ditto I. (It's bizarre reading this now, May 1993, and thinking about the Linda and Bill saga well documented in Bill Bowers fmz.) Hope Leibowitz said she forgave me for incorrectly putting Fran Leibowitz's name on her (Hope's) letter of comment. I was relieved.

# WHAT?

This is the first issue in some time. It should have been published several years ago. Then it should have been published three or four months ago. Many apologies to the people who sent LoCs a long time ago. Many apologies to the people who contributed to this issue. But, assuming you're reading this, it is out. Ain't that somethin. Many things contributed to the lack of pubbing my ish, such as work, taking a class, watching too much TV, reading books, going to Germany for four months, logging into varous bulletin boards, cruising the internet and general malaise, or ennui, or something like that. My thanks to all those people who kept me on their mailing lists and my apologies for my lack of response. I did actually start this issue several times, usually before Corflus. It never really felt right. This time I even coerced some people to give me some articles and artwork. Many thanks to Rich Coad, Bruce Townley and Wm. Breiding. Also thanks to Jay Kinney for the beer labels which I hopefully can get in here.

## Work

I started working for the Siemens ASIC division in 1989. As time passed Siemens came to the conclusion that there was insufficient profit in maintaining that division so they slowly cut back. I did get a trip to Germany for four months to work on one of their 8 bit microcontrollers, more on that later (well probably next ish, actually). Since it looked like the Siemens ASIC division was going away entirely I decided to follow my former manager to Toshiba. That's where I'm at now and I'm doing basically the same thing I was doing at Siemens. Amazingly enough the Siemens ASIC division did go away. While working at Siemens I normally worked nine to twelve hours a day and the average commute time from Dublin to San Jose (one way) is about one hour. Occasionally after arriving home I would log into work via modem and continue to work. I'm still working 9 or 10 hours per day at Toshiba but the 11 and 12 (or 14) hour days are somewhat less frequent and I hardly ever log into work from home. The commute is still about the same. Obviously the time I spend at work and my commute do not leave much time on a normal weekday and for some reason or another I don't seem to have much energy during the rest of the evening.

## Music

At least I have continued to buy CDs and listen to music. What I buy varies. For a while I was buying more industrial dance stuff. Some of it was/is not that great, at times rather formulaic. I like some of the dance music. Some of it sounds like disco stuff from the 70's. Then there's all the late night raver parties with smart drinks, ecstasy, etc. One of these days when I feel a little less tired and can find out where one of them is happening maybe I'll try to go. I may be a tad old and out of place, but I don't think they'll mind too much. One thing that I don't understand is why the Worldcon committee does not have a rave. Science fiction is usually about things in the future, I thought. Music from the 60's or 70's isn't exactly future stuff (well, maybe if you consider the cycles music goes through . . . ) Raves are still around although they seem to be less mentioned nowadays. It has been a while since I have been to the worldcon but did they ever have a rave? Or did they just do the same old boring thing.

I have been tempted to submit some reviews to William Breiding for his music review zine or put out something not as good. William and the others doing reviews seem to put a lot of effort into analyzing the stuff to which they listen. They go over the words, the melody, the feeling and really do a good job. Unfortunately I'm a bit lazy in that respect so I may try to put out some fast grungy stuff and see if anything comes of it. (Energy providing)

# SKUG

# 11

Brought to you by Gary S. Mattingly, 7501 Honey Ct., Dublin, CA 94568, gmatting@surf.com

## CONTENTS

COVERS.....	Bruce Townley.....	COVER
WHAT?.....	Gary S. Mattingly.....	2
LOST EMPIRES OF THE SOUL.....	Wm. Breiding.....	18
GET LOTS OF REST, EAT YOUR FRUIT AND VEGETABLES.....	Bruce Townley.....	21
BUT IS IT ART?.....	Rich Coad.....	28
WHAT'S LEFT?.....	Gary S. Mattingly.....	32

### Additional Art Credits:

Various Beer Labels.....	Jay Kinney.....	20, 27, 32
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