

SWINGLINE #18 (Joyce Katz, 59 Livingston St., #6-B, Brooklyn, NY 11201) is written on stencil exclusively for the gala 20th issue of APA, October 1973.

WELCOME, WELCOME ; At the time I'm typing this, I'm not certain how many of our invitees I'm welcoming: I hope that all three of you are with us, though. Nice to have you here, Dave, Paul and Ed.

(An immediate question to you, Paul: word's come to me that you no longer are going by Paj, and would prefer to have your real name used. True? What are you answering to most happily these days?)

SINCE I SAW YOU LAST things have been pretty frantic on the professional front. As you may or may not remember, I work for a largish insurance agency, in a fair-to-middling responsible position that I usually enjoy quite a bit. In the last couple of months, though, the pace has been hectic...more so than I ever enjoy, and in fact even enough to produce migraine headaches, for the first time in years. About once every ten years or so an insurance company will come out with a new policy line; ie, change the format of the plans it sells, the rates, dividend structure, etc. It's a real big deal, within the industry, when it happens: there's always an interim period when both products are on sale; when the company is pretty well fouled up, and not really into its new routines, advertising, etc. -- Well, such is the case at New England Mutual right now; this most dreaded (by the field force) event just took place, with all the problems thereto attendant. What it produced, since I'm specifically involved with New Business (ie, sales) was massive overwork, with enormous pressure to get it completed. New England handled the change-over unusually clumsily, or at least unusual lack of consideration was given to the field force. New promotional sales material was shipped from Boston to all agencies very early, providing plenty of time for it to be received before the September 10th change-over date. In my case, this meant something like 37 packing crates of manuals, ratebooks, advertising copy, etc.... replacing material already in the agency that was used with the old policy line. But, and here's the rub, it was all shipped with a sticker attached to each box stating "do not open till Sept. 10th"...consequently, there was no opportunity to unpack it and sort it out before the target date. Instead, the New Policy Line Day came...and it was necessary to unpack all of them and distribute (and theoretically understand) all the new material in one days time....naturally, impossible to do. The consequences were that the materials were being requested..required..by the sales staff before there was even a chance to open the crates, muchless sort them. -- It was Awful. But, thank god, the worst is over now.

Coincidentally, I've worked for five different insurance companies in my life. And, dammitall, every goddam one of them has changed policy lines while I was with them. (By contrast, my office manager has worked in the insurance field for thirty-five years...and this was only her second policy-line change. I have all the luck.)

I GOT INTO ARTS & CRAFTS AND THEN GOT INTO LEATHER... Have you noticed the tremendous return to popularity of arts and crafts? I think it's fascinating...everytime I'm in a store, I see some new do-it-yourself kit: kits to make jelly, kits to make soap, kits to sew, kits to paint. I even ran into instructions for quill-work....and that's been a long-time forgotten craft. I think it's an offshoot, or brought about by the same instincts, of that urge which made people return to the farm or rural communes in the last 60's. It's sort of an emotional outlet for the urges that would make our rural cousins plant potatoes and mend fences...and, in a very small

way, it makes us feel that We Too Have Fought The Bear.

I love it. I really do; I'm getting a tremendous kick from my limited involvement with the handicraft set. My first motion toward crafts was to frame a few of my own paintings...now I can look at them and disregard their flaws and feel like I'm looking at a real outburst of creativity. Then, as domesticity became an even more dominant factor in my life, I bought a cake pan...my first real cakepan since I've been in New York, and currently my proudest possession. Arnie had already, last Channukah, got me a couple of mandalas which I happily threaded, and a glass-cutting outfit...and now I can smash empty wine bottles into a million pieces feeling virtuous about it all...and this year, marking still another plateau of crafts enthusiasm, he got a rug-hooking set for me: shouldn't really call it a rug, because it's tiny..besides I'd kill anyone who stepped on it..but it's a terrific feeling to turn these little bitty pieces of wool into a real piece of fabric, with a design yet. Wowie Zowie, Ma, lookit what I done, and all that. I've even yielded to peer pressure and begun needlepointing.

I'm not sure where all this will Lead me, but until it gets old, I'm really having a lot of fun cilling my bar.

THERE'S A WAR ON, YOU KNOW

I wonder if people in other parts of the country are as concerned about the Mideastern Situation as we are in New York. Here the subject is a highly charged one that even Agnew's resignation and the world series couldn't quite push into second place. Of course, Arnie and I being Jewish no doubt increases our interest...but not that much, since we're not Zionists... but perhaps its the natural slightly-Jewish bent of this entire city that makes the subject so devoutly interesting to New Yorkers. Too, the presence of the U.N. two blocks from our offices also makes the subject more lively, I guess.

I work with two Egyptian girls, with families in Cairo. I felt so sorry for them the Monday after the attack; they would work a while, then stop and cry a while. I went up to them, hugged them both and kissed Hoda, the girl I'm closest to in the office, and wishd their families safety; we three cried a little, and wished there was something meaningful we could say to each other. -- I haven't yet seen my boss, since it happened (he's vacationing in Europe and though we've spoken on the phone, we haven't discussed this subject.) I'm more than a little interested to see if our relationship is going to be affected by the war, since he's from Iraq....I doubt it, though, as he's pretty far removed from traditional Arabic interests. -- Working in such an international office as mine (girls from Egypt, Phillipines, Italy, boss from Iraq) gives one a funny feeling about conflicts like this one; it's never easy to see warfare in black & white terms, and even more difficult when you have at least marginal acquaintanceship with people in the other camp.

PHILCON is the weekend of November 9, 10 and 11th. Arnie and I are planning to attend.. (about the only thing that would keep us home would be to learn no apans were going except us)...and we're looking forward to it quite a bit. Will we see you there?

BRAD & EILEEN have both been nominated; I wonder how they'd feel about being in the group together, since (I've been told) there's already a certain amount of unpleasant tension between them. But, I've not talked to either, and have no way to judge how they'd feel about the situation; the fact that I'd really dislike being put in such a position doesn't necessarily mean they'd feel the same. Can someone advise me?

ROBIN I want to extend my profoundest sympathies for the loss of your mother. I only wish there were something more meaningful I could say, opher than "I'm sorry"...but, for all its triteness, it's still very true.

TED I was surprised to learn that you believe in reincarnation; an interesting sidelight to my mental image of you. I won't argue the question with you, though; my opinion remains the same, that it would be a waste of time for me to worry about any effects of a past life on this one. And, I don't think it's even necessary for me to mention my opinion of Dianetics and Scientology. -- But, it doesn't disturb me for someone else to believe it: if the idea sits comfortably on your psyche then why not. For me, the question sat very uncomfortably on my mind and it was a relief to come to my personal accommodation of the theory. Which is I think the entire point with all of our theories, basic beliefs, childhood teachings etc. If you have an idea that causes difficulty in coping with life then perhaps you should change that idea. If it, as must be the case with you and reincarnation, causes you no anguish (and no difficulty to those people your life touches) then why not keep any idea you're comfortable with.

Personally, because of my strange childhood teachings, I've had to readjust many of my beliefs in order to be able to cope with life. I think almost everyone has to readjust his set, to one extent or another to come to an accommodation with life. But, tho I applaud the idea of re-examining beliefs, I don't think it's necessary to discard everything. I don't think it's necessarily a good thing to throw out all your sets, only those that make it difficult for you to function. (Which goes far afield from reincarnation, of course.)

ROSS Well, of a matter of fact, Arnie and I usually watch StarTrek (the cartoon version) on Saturday morning. Not that we're gung-ho fans of the series but it's at an awfully convenient time for us, right after we've been grocery shopping while we're waiting for the delivery truck to bring us our stuff. And, it beats Josie & the Pussycats in Outer Space. - Speaking of sf on tv, isn't Starlost one of the biggest disappointments tv has offered in the past year? We still watch it every saturday because, as Arnie pointed out it's hard to ignore an hour long show that is after all, science fiction. But, sigh, I sure wish it'd been better. What makes it doubly bad is that it comes in the timeslot that used to be filled with UFO..and every week I'm re-disappointed by the unfavorable comparison.

Since I'm now involved in a highly domestic phase, I have no doubt that if I won the Million Dollar Lottery I'd quit work and stay home and bake cakes and play the autoharp and do needlepoint. A month from now I'd probably have a different opinion, tho; I notice that these phases of mine do change frequently. I suspect that my domestic tendencies of the moment are brought about by what you describe as the Settling Down Syndrome; I'm much more interested in the sweet pleasures of home than ever before.

Why are you distressed by the settling-down syndrome? It's as much a part of life as all the other phases; to miss it, or ignore it, would be to miss a very significant chapter of life. I really believe that a person would throw himself fully into whatever is happening with him at the time..and one phase of life is just as significant as another. It's sort of a life-amputation when you freeze yourself perpetually at one stage and refuse, by force of will, to flow into the next stage.