

LOOKOUT!

August 1985

No. 8

Bush tries to finish off Reagan



"Their Gods Want Blood"

A PAGAN LOOKS AT
CHRISTIANITY

"This is almost
blasphemy..."

the LOOKOUTS
live in concert



THE VIETNAMIZATION
OF MENDOCINO:

THE CIA DOPE WAR COMES HOME

GOVERNMENT MOVES TO CRUSH POT
CULTURE; ARE STRATEGIC HAMLETS
AND FREE-FIRE ZONES NEXT?

Earlier this summer I was talking with some French people who are spending a few months in Mendocino County. The subject of CAMP came up, and they asked me to explain what exactly CAMP was and how it operated. As I related some of the things I had seen in previous years, I could see looks of incredulity spread across their faces; they had already told me that it was their impression that many Americans tended to exaggerate to make a story more interesting or impressive.

"Helicopters? Soldiers with automatic rifles? They steal or destroy whatever they can get their hands on?" they would repeat, their eyes growing wide as I recounted the all too familiar litany of CAMP abuses. "Why, it sounds just like the war in Vietnam." The French of course have their own memories of Vietnam, not particularly happier than the American ones.

Their observation dovetailed with my own gnawing suspicion that that the government was prepared to turn the North Coast into a domestic Vietnam, and while that may seem far-fetched to those with an unswerving trust in the essential goodness of the American way, but one need not look too deeply to see some disturbing similarities between the otherwise vastly disparate situations in Vietnam and Mendocino.

In the first place, Vietnam was not, as buffoons like Ronald Reagan and Sylvester "Rambo" Stallone would have you believe, a noble adventure in the cause of freedom, but rather an old-fashioned shootout between rival dope gangs, namely the CIA and the Viet Cong over control of the incredibly lucrative Southeast Asian heroin trade.

From the Golden Triangle to the Emerald Triangle (the government's new name for Humboldt, Mendocino, and Trinity Counties) is not all that far of a journey, at least not politically or militarily. Just as the CIA-Mafia coalition that shaped America's foreign policy through the 1950s and 60s was prepared to turn Vietnam into a bombed out and poisoned wasteland rather than see it fall into the hands of its competitors, so today's government gangsters will not think twice about destroying Mendocino in order to save it from further developing into an enclave of rebellion against the New American Empire.

Does anyone seriously think that the current government putsch is motivated by a sincere opposition to the use of drugs and the harm done by their abuse? Anyone with a perfunctory knowledge of the workings of organized crime and the degree to which its influence has permeated the Reagan administration would find such an idea laughable. The sleazy cast of characters appointed by Ronald Reagan to enforce our nation's laws make Richard Nixon's crew of gunsels and con artists look like the Vienna Boys' Choir. Do you detect a devotion to justice emanating from the porcine jowls of Attorney General Ed Meese? I see more the image of a small town bully suddenly having hit the big time and making America an offer it had better not refuse.

Why is this massive military effort being mounted against marijuana, the mildest and most innocuous of illegal drugs, while heroin and cocaine flood the country on an unprecedented scale? Could it be because pot is the only drug Reagan's buddies in the mob haven't been able to corner the traffic in? Does anybody believe marijuana will disappear once the government has driven every last mom and pop grower out of business and onto the welfare rolls or into a jail cell? More likely we will see huge syndicate-run commercial plantations, patrolled by the same gun-toting goons now seen dropping

out of the skies to rob and terrorize ordinary families just trying to get by.

There are only two groups of people who benefit from the current situation, police and dope dealers, and when the two groups start to overlap, as all too often happens, the outlook is none too bright. The criminals behind the current campaign are obviously none too aware of the lessons of the past, or it might occur to them that marijuana was around thousands of years before the United States of America came into existence, and that it will no doubt still be widely used long after the American experiment in democracy has landed in the dustbin of history where it seems so determinedly headed.

"Mendocino, Nicaragua, El Salvador,
We're all just peasants in this
government war"

from the song
CAMP GET OUT!
by the LOOKOUTS

HALFWIT PORNO STAR MAKES IT BIG FANNING THE FLAMES OF FASCISM

Like a host of Hollywood warmongers who went before, unable or unwilling to distinguish fantasy from reality, former porno star Sylvester Stallone has lent his thoroughly repellent presence and his utterly vacuous morality to the cause of sending yet another generation of gullible young men to their deaths in yet another meaningless war. Meaningless, that is, except to those who are killed, crippled, or dispossessed, and to the handful of greedy swine like Stallone himself who profit from the whole barbaric and bloody mess.

Lest anyone think that "Rambo", Stallone's current box office smash, is just another mindless shoot-em-up catering to the blood lust of frustrated suburban warriors, Stallone has made it clear in interviews (as

clear, that is, as his severely limited verbal skills allow) that he is making a political statement. The nature of that statement was probably best expressed by Stallone's offer to step outside into an alley and fight anyone who didn't like what "Rambo" had to say.

Stallone is being touted as heir apparent to another celluloid killer, "Nazi John" Wayne, another shameless huckster of ersatz patriotism who built a career out of glamorizing America's genocide against its native peoples. Wayne and Stallone have at least one other thing in common besides their marginal ability as actors: both were tough-talking cowards who never got anywhere near a real battlefield. The case of Stallone is particularly galling; while his on-screen histrionics portray him as ready to take on the entire Vietnamese and Russian armies, when Stallone had an opportunity to participate in the real Vietnam War, he was nowhere to be found. It turns out that he was hiding out in Switzerland and making pornographic movies like "The Italian Stallion" while thousands of other young men his age were bleeding and dying.

Stallone has stated that his ultimate goal is to use acting (his term) as a springboard into the political arena; in fact, he seriously intends to be President of the United States in the not all that distant future. The current occupant of the White House (yet another warmonger who never saw combat) makes it obvious that such a scenario is far from implausible. So much for those of you who thought you'd never see a bigger idiot than Ronald Reagan elected to the Presidency.

The LOOKOUT can be obtained free at these locations:

- GRAPEWINE STATION - 10 miles north
of Laytonville
- GOOD FOOD STORE - downtown Laytonville
- ART ATTACK GALLERY - 308 Redwood
Fort Bragg
- BOUND TOGETHER BOOKS - 1369 Haight St.
San Francisco

My Day at the Seashore...

LOCUST-LIKE HORDES BEFOUL COAST;
GREED AS USUAL THE CULPRIT

I don't make it over to the Mendocino coast too often during the summer, but the other week the 47th consecutive day of blast furnace heat combined with the oppressive proximity of the CAMP storm troopers drove me into making the long dusty trek over the Branscomb Road to seek relief in the cool and foggy seashore breezes.

Well, the weather was a big improvement, even though the fog I love so much was nowhere to be seen, but the overall ambience left me a bit nauseous. I was prepared for the traffic jams that started in Fort Bragg, and the herds of white-shod and shorted geeks bovinely meandering out of the Skunk Railroad depot in search of meaningless trinkets for which they could exchange their apparently limitless disposable incomes. But Fort Bragg is too relentlessly down to earth to be overly affected by an influx of odd-looking strangers. It tends to shrug them off the way horses deal with summer fly infestations.

But the village of Mendocino is a more delicate creature, and here the tourists, to pursue the entomological metaphor, more closely resemble the ravenous grasshoppers that have destroyed millions of acres of Western farm crops the past two years. I received my first indication that something was dreadfully wrong when directly across Highway 1 from the Hill House (a condominium-type motel conglomeration that some shameless real estate speculators through careful application of money and influence managed to ram down the throat of the community) a billboard proudly boasted that a subdivision of "fine homes" would soon be rising, and sure enough, huge piles of lumber

and the skeletal framework of some overpriced bourgeois hovels had already begun the inexorable despoilage of yet another pristine landscape.

But even this dismal sight could not have prepared me for the gruesome spectacle that awaited me in the streets of what could only be dubbed Disneyland North. Of course they haven't started charging admission yet, but then there's no Space Mountain, etc... Otherwise I didn't see a whole lot of difference.

Squalid little brats stuffed ice cream cones into their bloated and sullen faces while their harried mothers dutifully clutched balloons and stumbled bewilderedly about. Automobiles from every suburb and yuppie enclave in the state clogged the narrow streets, and why no one has thought to put in parking meters to cash in on this revolting development is a mystery to me; everything else in town seemed totally devoted to the cause of separating the invading hordes from their money as quickly as possible.

My intention never had been to lollygag among the boutique-hoppers, anyway; I was looking forward to spending the day down by the ocean playing my guitar, so I threaded my way through the traffic in that direction, turning up the punk rock on my car stereo several notches beyond its usual ear-splitting volume in hopes that it would terrorize some of the catatonic pedestrians into removing themselves more quickly from my path.

Suddenly I was brought to a complete halt by a huge aggregation of people and machinery, which turned out to be some Hollywood pinheads making a movie, surrounded by the same crowd of gawkers one usually sees clustered around fatal automobile accidents. Finally a corpulent rent-a-cop graciously allowed me through, and as I passed, I added my own bit of dialogue to the scene being shot, something to the effect of why didn't they take their blankety-blank movie back to Los

Angeles where it belonged, enlivening my comments with a couple of uncharacteristic (for me) vulgarities. Watch for it at your local theater.

One would think that when I finally reached the sea, the deep and tranquil power of its massive presence would serve to assuage my frazzled sensibilities, but nooo...; when I got to my favorite spot on the Mendocino headlands, I found it completely surrounded by a 10 foot high chain link fence complete with armed guard. Inside were tons of serious looking machinery.

What is it, I asked myself wearily, another condo complex? Or (thanks, Doug Bosco) a new oil well? I thought this was a state park, as if that mattered.

Well, as it turned out, it was only the campground-headquarters of the Hollywood pinheads, and presumably they'll go away sooner or later, but the memories won't.

The power, majesty, and sheer natural beauty of the Mendocino coast are such that one would think mere human effort would be incapable of overwhelming them. But some people are making a damn good try at it. Personally, I would like to see every last real estate speculator, boutique owner, hotelier, schlock merchant, and chamber of commerce type strung up from every last lamp post along Highway 1 all the way to San Jose if need be.

Those not willing to join lynch mobs could help by spray-painting graffiti on tourists' cars, removing highway directional signs (it has helped the situation in Bolinas), and lounging about in a disorderly and unkempt state in the doorways of the overpriced establishments catering to the tourist plague.

Or if you really hate tourists, you could always tell them there's this cute little town just over the hills, name of Laytonville...

Of course they'll never forgive you, but they'll probably never be back again, either.



A Mind is a Terrible
Thing to Waste
WHY IS THERE ALGEBRA?

School is variously advertised as preparing kids for life, inculcating them with job skills, giving them an opportunity to interact with their peers, and occasionally some atavistic throwback even makes reference to the original premise of education, that of teaching people to think.

Now, assuming your own cognitive faculties have not been thoroughly dampened by overexposure to the American school system, I'd like you to apply some thought to a question too seldom raised: what does algebra have to do with any of the above?

All right, all right, I know some pointy-head science fiend is going to come up with the answer I heard repeatedly throughout my own educational endeavors: you need algebra if you want to be an engineer. Well, I don't want to be an engineer, never wanted to be an engineer, and don't even have a very clear idea of what an engineer is or does.

But I'm willing to take your word that algebraic equations do somehow enter into the process whereby one determines how much pre-stressed concrete is required to pave over a given quantity of wilderness, or how many subatomic particles need to be stimulated to wipe out x number of species. As I said, these sort of activities have never particularly appealed to me, and I am perfectly willing to leave them to those who understand and are drawn

to them. And if it takes algebra to accomplish their goals, well, that's their problem.

And if that's as far as it went, if this nasty little science were practiced behind closed doors by its pitiable devotees, then I wouldn't have any problem with algebra. But the fanatics behind this most dismal of disciplines have seized control of the educational system and now it has become virtually impossible for an innocent child to avoid having his or her mind poisoned by this pernicious claptrap.

I myself was lucky. Through a combination of chance and strategy, I was able to limit my mathematical exposure to one year of algebra and one of geometry. Owing to the fact that the teacher, a semi-senile nun, awarded A's to any students genteel enough to refrain from shooting rubber bands at her or setting her robe on fire while she was at the blackboard, I managed to graduate high school and go on to college unburdened by even the foggiest idea of what or why algebra is. You students out there currently racking your brains over algebraic gibberish may be discouraged to hear that in the twenty-odd years since, not once have I ever had the slightest need, inclination, or impulse to employ my non-existent algebra skills. The same goes for everyone else I know who is my age. In fact, the only time the subject of algebra ever comes up is in conversations about how stupid and useless it was.

To return to the original question, why, then, is there algebra? The answer, in my opinion, is illustrative of much of what is wrong with our whole educational system. Far from being institutions of learning that place the highest value on the cultivation of intelligence and imagination, our schools

have become essentially programming centers where young people are indoctrinated into their future roles as workers and consumers.

Active and inquiring minds are the last thing our increasingly regimented society wants to see among its citizens. How better to deaden the intellectual capabilities of young people than to force them to spend hours every day in meaningless and tedious pursuits (that's what they'll be doing the rest of their lives, the philosophy goes; they might as well get used to it). Ostensibly the practice of algebra sharpens the mental faculties. I find that as preposterous as the idea that forcing children to listen to the cacophonous screeches and squawks that constitute modern abstract jazz will somehow awaken in them a love of beautiful music.

Modern jazz and algebra have something in common, that being their devotion to dissonance, whether of the tonal or cognitive variety. In fact, I halfway suspect the loudest defenders and advocates of algebra of harboring an equally dark passion for that horribly twisted anti-music.

So, parents, beware. If your child came home from school reporting that some weird cultist had been hired by the school to initiate the children into the Mithraic mysteries, wouldn't you be a bit alarmed? If your kids were being brainwashed by some Moonie or Hare Krishna instructor, wouldn't you protest? Why, then, do you allow the minds of an entire generation to be poisoned by the allegedly scientific ravings of some bizarre, esoteric mathematical cult?

And as for you students, just remember that there is only one correct answer to all algebra problems, whether you're asked what $x-y$ is, or $z+q$, or some quadratic nonsense, and that all-purpose answer is: WHO CARES?

I hope soon to see the emergence of a new educational jihad (holy war)

whose rallying cry will be a loud and resounding DEATH TO THE GREAT SATAN ALGEBRA!

P.S. If any mathematicians out there are sufficiently literate to defend their perverse choice of sciences, I will be happy to print their replies, as long as they are in English, i.e., no x's and y's not attached to other respectable letters to form reasonable, understandable words.

SAN FRANCISCO BEAT

While listening to the Maximum Rocknroll radio program of July 23 I was pleased to be introduced to an amusing little ditty called KILL DAN WHITE by a cheerful little pop group by the name of BRAIN DAMAGE.

Dan White, for those of you unfamiliar with San Francisco history, is the former cop-fireman-city supervisor who supposedly went looney tunes after scarfing too many Hostess Twinkies, and proceeded to kill the mayor and another supervisor, thus making possible the takeover of City Hall by current mayor Fineswine and her downtown corporate cabal.

Dan White got four years in a private cell that more closely resembled an apartment, complete with conjugal visits, and, underground scuttlebutt has it, a million bucks for acting as the hit man in a bloody coup d'etat against the city and people of San Francisco, on which has already drastically changed the face of the dreamy cosmopolis, and not at all for the better.

The tune, which combines a 70s punk ethos with a darker-side-of-the-60s Velvet Underground late night wailing dirge sound, contrasts the plight of Sid Vicious, former Sex Pistol, accused murderer, and victim of a fatal drug overdose, with that of Dan White, now a free and apparently prosperous man. "FREE SID VICIOUS!" the singers chant and howl, "KILL DAN WHITE!" "At least Sid had the decency to kill himself," the indignant

singer pronounces in s spoken introduction.

Peaceful loving anarchist that I am, I must admit that I found the song's sentiments a little jarring. Perfectly understandable, a little harsh, perhaps, for these ears conditioned to reject incitements to violence, but let me ask you, what would you do with a man like Dan White?

THIS IS A NIGHTLIFE?

In a town with the cultural cachet of San Francisco, you'd think day and night would blur into one mad gay (in the original sense of the word) social whirl. Well, you'd be wrong. Unless you get a charge out of spending inordinate amounts of money, or are capable of getting so bleary-eyed drunk that you are not even aware of what depressing mindrot is being presented to you in the name of entertainment, you might as well stay home and watch TV or (rumor has it some people still engage in this archaic practice) read a book.

For those of you determined to go out in search of bright lights and big city glamour, the following is a review of a few of SF's gathering places. If I left out one of your favorites, send me a note about it; I'll be glad to trash it for you.

MABUHAY A rock and roll temple that should be declared a national shrine for having made cultural contributions on a par with those of the original Fillmore Auditorium, this one-time Filipino restaurant seems instead to be petering out, fading away with the proverbial whimper.

Originally managed by punk pioneer Dirk Dirksen (nephew of former U.S. Senate Minority Leader, who was himself a bit of a performing artist, as evidenced by his 1960s record release, "THOSE GALLANT MEN," consisting of his sonorous testimonials to American militarism pronounced against the background of swelling martial music), the Mabuhay was both focal point and catalyst for San Francisco's burgeoning late-70s punk scene. Nowadays,

however, punk shows have become rarer and rarer at the Mab, owing mostly to current manager Ness Aquino's understandable aversion to skinhead violence (increasing evidence is surfacing to indicate that some of the neo-Nazi skins are working as direct agents of the San Francisco Police Department for the purpose of sabotaging left-wing and anarchist activity).

The Mab now books a not especially interesting array of new wave and heavy metal bands, drawing crowds of more docile and better heeled suburbanites (this seems to be a trend among most SF niteries). The times when the Mab still comes alive most often occur during the 6 p.m. curfew shows (so named because people of all ages are allowed in). These provide one of the few remaining SF venues for radical hardcore punk, a music form that is flourishing over most of the rest of the United States, but is treated like an orphan child in one of the cities that gave birth to it.

THE STONE Across the street from the Mab, the Stone is an ugly place. Run by a tough-talking, baby-faced, East Coast gangster type named Bobby Corona, who invariably speaks of bands in terms of "doing business," this place does occasionally book some good acts. But the club's oppressively mercenary ambience, combined with the actual physical danger posed by its brutal goon-squad bouncers, makes it almost impossible to enjoy a show there. I stopped going there a couple years ago, and I encourage my friends in bands not to play there.

THE LAST DAY SALOON This joint is to rock and roll as generic beer is to liquid refreshment - blandness elevated to an art form. If you ever wax nostalgic for the early 1970s, or get a hankering to find out what ever happened to all those polyester-clad, cocktail-swilling, Quaalude-

gobbling nondescript nobodies you used to know back then, drop by the Last Day; they're probably still here, the ones that haven't been deprogrammed or moved to Seattle.

OASIS This one-time gay disco and swim club started out to capture the South of Market avant-garde scene, but quickly shifted to bussing in trendy suburban single swingers when the owners realized that's where the money was. You'll still see a sprinkling of downtown office workers decked out for the night and a smattering of \$50 beauty salon Mohawks, but otherwise, you might as well be in Burlingame.

MAJOR POND'S A new yuppie and would-be yuppie dump recently opened to further befoul the once gloriously sleazy Folsom Street. I haven't been there yet, and probably never will. Historical note: this is ostensibly a continuation of another Major Pond's of a few years back, which existed on the site of the original Old Waldorf, which moved uptown and was eventually taken over by Bill "I own this town" Graham. By their roots you shall know them.

WOLFGANG'S Speak of the devil... After Graham bought out the Old Waldorf, he moved it to larger location and changed its name to Wolfgang's (Bill's real name). It features, as you would expect, an almost exclusive diet of mainstream, middle of the road, corporate rock. To Graham's credit, he does sometimes present new unsigned local bands without charging them money for the privilege of playing there like so many other club owners, the Stone's Bobby Corona prominent among them, do.

I-BEAM A marginally OK disco on week nights, except on Mondays when it presents the latest trendy sensation as perceived by the post-new wave scene-makers. Once exclusively gay, the place is now about 90% straight, and if you are an unaccompanied woman, you will be reminded of that fact on an average of once every two minutes.

SOUND OF MUSIC Located in the heart (if there is such a thing) of the Tenderloin, this probably would win the honors as dumpiest night club on the entire West Coast. I haven't been there in a couple of years, and my impression is that nobody else has been, either, but somehow it carries on, presenting a variety of acts that you will probably never see anywhere else. Some of the best shows I've ever seen were here, and in its heyday, it featured almost nightly police raids. Sic transit gloria.

CLUB 181 In the same neighborhood as the Sound of Music, this late night disco was touted to me by a friend as a great place to dance. Then I heard an advertisement for it Five dollars!? To listen to records? They must think people around here are as stupid as the ones in New York. They may be right.

HAMBURGER MARY'S Now often called Hamburger Marin after the origin of much of its clientele, this is yet another tragic example of success gone horribly wrong. Started back around 1970 by a collection of misfits of indeterminate gender, this restaurant (one of few I know of with a DJ) provided both good, economical food and a hangout for a delightfully bizarre cast of characters. Its ambience and decor (nothing succeeds like excess) made it one of my favorite places for years, and one of the first places to take visitors to show them my idea of the "real" San Francisco. Then it was "discovered," and just as in Gresham's law of currency, the bad money drove out the good, prices skyrocketed, and if you still want to eat here, you'll probably have to wait an hour sardined in among garish secretaries drenched in perfume and their hot-to-trot stockbroker consorts.

STUD Across the street from Hamburger Mary's and suffering from some of the same maladies, this legendary, mostly gay disco dates back to 1967, and un-

til recently, had managed to shrug off the many changes overtaking both the City and the neighborhood. But now it has become overwhelmed by the overflow from Hamburger Mary's and the nearby Oasis, and in place of drag queens and leather boys, one increasingly sees infestations of middle-class rubes with bulging wallets and addled brains. Some even wear suits and ties, a sartorial affectation that a few years ago would have sufficed to have one 86'd in perpetuity. Beer prices have been raised, too, to accomodate the new crowd.

NEXT MONTH: THE LOOKOUT GOES TO THE NABES (NEIGHBORHOODS)

MUSIC CAN MAKE YOU STUPID

Very little music news this month, unless you consider July's LIVE AIDS concert worthy of note. Wouldn't it have been a lot more humane to just give the money to the straving Africans and spare the world the sight of this bloated spectacle, of rock and roll having become a grotesque caricature of itself? I only saw a few minutes of it, and I don't know what was more distasteful, the solemn reverence of the MTV jocks ("yes, I think everyone here feels the presence of John Lennon today"), the insipid quality of the performances, or the mindless acquiescence of the rich white suburban crowd, who had the unmitigated gall to cheer on their heroes by waving American flags. Lest we forget, that bloody rag is one of the reasons Africa finds itself in the plight it is in today.

Of course some people liked it. The Mendocino GRAPEVINE music critic (actually I don't think I've ever heard him criticize anything; he's the kind of eager consumer that the record companies must love), who goes by the ludicrous and anachronistic name of Jazzbeau (San Francisco's Al Collins has been using that name for at least

the last 20 or 30 years), admits to not only watching, but taping the whole 16 hours or whatever it was. Maybe he can show it to his grandkids so they can see how boring it was back in the 1980s.

On a slightly more exciting note was the LOOKOUTS' first public concert, which would have been a lot more exciting if more of the public had attended. I was prepared to have things thrown at us, to be greeted with shouts of derision, even to be booed off stage (though I doubt anyone in these parts possesses that kind of lung power), but yawning apathy is harder to take.

True, it was a wretchedly hot day, but there was plenty of shade, and while not everyone might want to come out in the noonday sun to see a new and virtually unknown band, the popular Laytonville group THE FRONT was also playing (and we'd like to thank them for working with us to put on the show, and for playing their best despite the dispiritingly small audience (actually, I guess it wasn't that bad; we all made a little money, which is rare enough for musicians these days)).

I was just hoping more people would be curious about new music. Maybe there was something good on TV that day. I don't know... Oh the review... we were okay, not quite as good as were 4th of July. The best comment came from a former pot grower who found Jesus and moved away from the mountain (this paragon of spirituality, by the way, was the only one who tried to weasel his way in without paying, and it took repeated pleas and imprecations of three different people to extricate one measly dollar from him, which was still only a third of the requested admission price). "This is almost blasphemy!" he sputtered indignantly in response to rather rude song of ours about the religion business.

We'd like to thank him for his

perspicacious analysis, which could well prove to be the title of our first album.

GRAPEWHINE EDITOR ATTACKS RIVAL IN FIT OF JEALOUS PIQUE

I can forgive the Mendocino Grapevine's plastering of little Dougie Bosco's smirking visage across a center-fold portfolio, and even its subsequent endorsement of Bosco's sellout to Big Oil, since people have a right to their opinions, ignorant as they may be.

But Grapevine editor Elizabeth Christian's persistent attacks on Anderson Valley Advertiser publisher-editor Bruce Anderson are more that I can abide. Anderson is unquestionably a journalistic genius who ranks on a par with such greats as H.L. Mencken and Sam Clemens. For Christian to criticize him, especially in her snide schoolgirlish manner which has all the intellectual depth of a schoolgirl thumbing her nose and going, "Nyaah, nyaah," strikes me as both pathetic and preposterous. Christian's own writing skills are marginal at best, even for a small-town rag, while Anderson's are first rate. And her belittling of the AVA ("his tiny paper" she calls it) ignores the fact that when you subtract the Grapevine's plethora of advertising, legal notices, puff pieces, and full page portraits of nouveau-tacque ruppies wrinkling their efflorescent noses at yet another bourgeois wine tasting, the Grapevine probably has less readable copy than the AVA.

I don't mean this as an all-out attack on Christian; she's done some good things with the Grapevine, too, and I still enjoy reading it. But in taking on Bruce Anderson, she's way out of her league.

Ditto for Laytonville Ledger editor John Weed, who saw fit to change my reference to the LOOKOUT in my letter on the Bill Bailey imbroglio to read "newsletter" instead of "newspaper."

A month's worth of Ledgers, at a cost of \$1.00, contains less solid copy than one free LOOKOUT. Is Weed feeling insecure these days?

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