

LOOKOUT!

January 1987

Number 24

HAPPY NEW YEAR!?! So Who's Happy?

December 24, 1986

In Roman days they called this the *Saturnalia*: seven days of feasting, drinking, and general debauchery that raged, as Dylan Thomas would have it, against the dying of the light. What started out as prayerful supplication to the gods and goddesses ended a week later in an orgy of mindless dissipation, and things have not changed much in the intervening 20 centuries.

Saturn was the grandfather of the gods, and represented the limitations imposed by the physical, mortal world. As such he was the appropriate deity to preside over a festival that commemorated, above all else, human frailty. The Judaeo-Christian version of the Midwinterfest has borrowed much of its imagery from ancient pagan rituals, but then it shouldn't take a great deal of insight to realize that the trappings of modern civilization are just that, trappings, and that the primal impulses of humankind have been only marginally impeded by the combined efforts of all the shamans, witch doctors, priests, and theologians of history.

Religion and its modern stepsister, science, ostensibly operate from a common premise, one best expressed by the words attributed to Jesus of Nazareth: "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." But both obscure as much as they illuminate; science, by encouraging the delusion that man can, by gaining sufficient knowledge, become master of his own destiny, and religion, by maintaining that such a notion is vain and even blasphemous.



Aberrant General Ed Meese leads the Year of the Bad Parade.

When we seek respite from our cares and woes through drink, drugs, overeating, or other assassinations of our physical and mental health, we confess to ourselves and the world at large that the path of righteousness and/or reason, noble as it may sound in principle, has failed in its most vital, in fact, its only real purpose, that of leading us to happiness.

"Happy New Year," we fervently wish each other, but in the midst of the jollity people kill,

maim, and debase themselves and others at a pace that, if anything, exceeds that of less festive times. To a dispassionate observer, the antics of a roomful of holiday revelers could be seen as the contorted writhings of souls trapped in the bowels of hell itself; the shouts of laughter only a few decibels removed from desperate screams, and the happy smiles in imminent danger of freezing into tortured grimaces.

It would be easy to take a similarly sour view of any number of human activities thought to make life worthwhile or at least bearable; sex and/or love are obvious examples. But then it's possible to put the worst face on anything; assuming that some form of human happiness is attainable, is anyone getting any?

If freedom from pain and want were by itself enough to ensure happiness, there ought to be a fair number of contented people around at any given time. Likewise, if comfort and luxury could deliver on their promise, the streets of our cities should be awash with smiling faces. But the joys of life are found, when at all, in small and unexpected places, and what passes for pleasure is, as often as not, only a prelude to far greater pain.

Philosophers and priests, and the gurus of a thousand disciplines speak of things like inner peace and enlightenment and becoming one with the universe; here, they promise, lies the way to happiness. Not so, say others; we can gain happiness only inasmuch as we share it with our fellow creatures, and that can best be done by transforming the world into a better place.

But in attempting that task we invite frustration and madness, claim the mystics and spiritualists, to whom the material world is merely an illusion. Everything we touch, everything we feel and see, even our bodies themselves do not really exist; they are the elaborate projections of the one infinite mind which we all share. To try and have an effect on the imaginary outer world is like swimming in quicksand.

One would assume, then, that those places where such a philosophy predominates, India, most notable among them, would be among the happiest on this otherwise star-crossed planet. Perhaps people do starve more contentedly there, but my western mind will not allow me to accept that this is the way things should be. Indeed, the happiest I have ever been is when I have succeeded in having an impact, however small, on the world around me. Whether to persuade someone to fall in love with me, or to teach a child a new word or how to use a pair of chopsticks, or to be told that my writing has changed the way a person thinks, these are the tiny victories that have given me strength to continue through the years.

Happiness? I don't claim to know what that is, anymore than I have discovered the meaning of love, or truth, or freedom, nor any of the other shining stars to which we casually hitch our destinies. I do know, or at least suspect, that the way

to happiness lies in finding just the right mixture of involvement and detachment, of caring compassion and enlightened self-interest, of love and not a little lust, all heavily leavened with a hilarious sense of the absurd.

That's as close as I've been able to come to a formula for being happy, and sometimes it's even worked for me. Whatever works for you, I wish you plenty of it.

A LETTER TO MY READERS

You might have noticed that this issue is fairly late, and there's a reason for that. In fact, it almost didn't get done at all, and up until a few days ago, I was ready to announce that it would be the last *LOOKOUT*. What changed my mind was going to the post office after a couple of weeks away and finding it crammed with letters thanking me for my efforts, praising me for my work, and encouraging me to keep it up.

It's not the first time my readers have saved me from giving up in frustration and despair, and I want to thank all of you who wrote to let me know that I was actually reaching someone out there. But despite my renewed energy and enthusiasm, I have decided to make some changes in my approach to the *LOOKOUT*, so while I have your attention, let me tell you about them.

When I started the *LOOKOUT*, I was at what seemed to be a bit of a dead end in my life. Trying to recuperate from a disastrous love affair, sitting alone on top of a remote mountain, out of sight and mind of nearly everyone I had once been close to, and with a world of time to brood about the dire state of our planet and the perilously fragile life forms inhabiting it, I used typewriter and xerox to cry out that I still cared, and to reach out to what Dylan once called, "...the countless confused, accused, misused, strung out ones and worse..."

My life's still harder than I would like it to be, desperately lonely at times, and filled with frustration at how little I seem able to accomplish. But my problems are mostly in my head, and minuscule compared to those faced by vast numbers of the world's people. Through writing and playing music and meeting hundreds of others doing similar things, I've been able to find my inner strength and to learn that I'm neither alone nor helpless. Yes, in the face of all logical indications to the contrary, I'm still filled with hopes and dreams for the future, and I hope that I've been able to inspire some of you to feel the same.

What all this is leading up to is that the *LOOKOUT* will no longer be a regular monthly publication. Instead, it will come out whenever I have something to say. There's no telling right now how often that will be, though it's reasonable to suspect that it will be less often than it has been. I hope to do some travelling, and more of my energy will be going into my band, my work with things like the Gilman Street Warehouse Project, friends and family, and my own peace of mind. But the *LOOKOUT* will not disappear; it's meant far too much to me and, apparently, to other people, to let it die.

What this means for current subscribers: you'll still receive however many issues remain on your subscription; it just might take a little longer. If this is not satisfactory, just write to me and I'll refund whatever money you have coming. There will also be a change for anyone wishing to subscribe in the future. Because most issues from now on will, like this one, have more pages than the traditional 10, printing and postage costs will be higher. So starting now, subscriptions will be \$1.00 an issue, regardless of how few or many you order. Let me stress, this does not affect current subscribers. And, as always, the *LOOKOUT* will be available free at various locations in Mendocino County and the San Francisco Bay Area.

So let me say again, thanks for all your support and response, and I hope that with less pressure from deadlines and self-imposed expectations, the *LOOKOUT* will continue to grow and become even better. And please, don't forget to let me know what you think.

Your editor and pal,
Lawrence

LETTERS TO THE LOOKOUT

Lawrence,

Saw an article by you in Joe Britz's zine *Tales From the Rathouse* called "Low Society" and thought your point about people in the scene becoming so blasé about corporate takeovers happening within and all around the scene is a phenomenon which lives and breeds (like a million maggots in a pile of shit) here in New York City, too.

Lots of so-called alternative media types, most notably the Alternative Press and Radio Council (APRC), seem to be losing sight of the fact that Chris Williamson (*New York punk rock promoter of Ritz/Rock Hotel fame...ED.*) is responsible for the profit motive becoming so strong in the NY scene by allowing only those bands to play at his shows that will relinquish control of their art form or any sense they might have had of doing something to change things. They just get lost in all this because money is all that matters. Shit, guys like him and the yuppies invading, that's not dissimilar, either. Anyway, take care. I'm sending you some of the latest zines from this end in exchange for review or a look at what you're doing. I would review anything sent in *Bad Newz* #5, out late February, featuring a big article on GOVERNMENT ISSUE. They were fuckin' hot this last time at CBs. What a great band.

Bob Z
Bad Newz zine
New York

Dear Mr. Livermore (though I'm willing to bet that isn't your real name):

What could possibly possess you to waste time, money and paper on this pathetically laughable "zine" of yours? The attitudes with which you persist in bludgeoning your readers might have been mildly amusing in the 1960s when this country was going through a protracted adolescence, but, as you have obviously failed to notice, America has long since grown up, leaving you and your minuscule handful of followers baying pointlessly at the moon.

Your ignorant, malicious, and slanderous attacks on the President of the United States are unconscionable, and in any sane society would result in your prosecution and imprisonment. The preservation of freedom can only be hindered by the granting of unlimited license to social deviants such as yourself. Your blasphemous assaults against religion are, if anything, even more reprehensible. Your vocabulary and style of writing would seem to indicate that you have had at least a smattering of education; how could you not be aware that church and state are the twin

pillars upon which civilization itself, and all the blessings that flow therefrom, rest?

Fortunately the malcontented and maladjusted misfits who make up your tiny constituency are an ever-diminishing minority. All indications are that most young people today are returning to traditional values. Your leather-jacketed, jackbooted hoodligans are overwhelmingly outnumbered by clean-cut young men and women in suits

and ties who are getting the wheels of commerce and industry turning smoothly once more. For God's sake, Mr. Livermore, wake up and get in step before the juggernaut of progress runs right over you. Time is short and the vengeance of the people is long.

Arnold Rasmussen
Los Angeles

Dear Annie,

As writer of the best letter I've received all year, you've been awarded a lifetime subscription to the LOOKOUT. I'll send your copies to you at the hospital; I presume you'll be there for the foreseeable future?

Lawrence

Dear Editor,

Earth First! would like to offer a synopsis of its carryings-on in the last quarter of 1986. September marked the inception of our tri-county coalition (Mendocino, Humboldt, and Sonoma). Out of that first rendezvous came six rallies, all highly publicized, including national coverage by McNeil-Lehrer and Cable News Network. The demonstrations targeted Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in Ukiah concerning their Eden Valley / Thatcher Ridge Wilderness rejection; Bank of America in Arcata concerning their financing the destruction of the world's rain forests; Maxxam / Pacific Lumber in San Francisco, Arcata, and Scotia concerning their doubling of timber harvesting of old growth; and U.S. Forest Service in Ukiah concerning their clearcutting plan for Mendocino National Forest. These events made their way to the front pages of the *Examiner*, *Chronicle*, *Times-Standard*, *Press-Democrat*, *Humboldt Beacon*, *Ukiah Daily Journal* and more, along with massive TV and radio coverage and interviews on various shows.

An Earth First! investigation of corruption in the California Department of Forestry is underway and a barrage of letters is being received by CDF challenging their timber harvest plan approvals. The Save the Loggers League has been formed to present how large corporations destroying the

environment will foul up life for the tree-taller as well and encourages the woodworkers to participate in the process of change. A boycott of redwood products has been put in effect, the International Indian Treaty Council is participating in our rallies, and lawsuits against various offenders are being drawn up presently.

Thanks to a computer / print shop, we have published brochures and newsletters on Maxxam, the boycott, Save the Loggers League, and a Mendocino National Forest Earth First! alternative plan. All these materials are available to the general public.

On the national Earth First! scene, Earth First! has been in five magazines, including the cover story of *Image*, as well as *Esquire Omni*, *Whole Earth Review*, and *Mother Jones*. There are some folks who feel that a high profile constitutes some kind of spiritual sellout. But a high profile can also constitute sharing of information with others so that they can learn and know their alternatives.

We have seen six EF! groups emerge where there were none: at UC Berkeley, Guerneville, Mendocino, Ukiah, Garberville, and Arcata. This is no accident. Earth First!, as it so describes itself, truly is a movement. Each individual is accountable firstly to her / himself. Because of the lack of imposed hierarchy, cooperation between groups is fostered organically. There are no bosses, except that we are our own guides.

What makes all of the above especially encouraging, if not downright fantastic, is that this has all occurred within the last three and a half months. Ecotopia Earth First! is emerging. Give us a call at (707) 923-2931 or 13 in Garberville to learn what is going on and send donations to help us pay our \$1000 debt for the last three and a half months of madness to: EF!, Box 397, Garberville CA 95440. No compromise in defense of Mother Earth!

In peace,
Darryl Cherney
Garberville

Dear Lawrence de Livermore,

This isn't really a letter to the *LOOKOUT* but kind of a letter to *Tales From the Rathouse* which you cannot extricate yourself from since you live at the Rathouse part-time. I want to applaud and marvel at Joe's comment on how zines lessen the feeling of isolation between us all (sorry to those of you less fortunates who only have to send a stamp to Box 14292, SF 94114 to receive this "free" rag). It's a wonderment to me how people can actually get together and collaborate to do something constructive

together (I guess bands do it all the time).

I'm real lonely (and confused). Lately I've wandered into the Anonymous meetings that are held all over town and country and basically it's just people getting together and supporting each other's honest and open feelings. The first few steps are admitting that life can be very unmanageable at times without help from... what? Cosmic Sources? Internal Godhead? The real power comes from people helping other people. There is nothing so special as that and I just want to say I'm grateful for FRIENDS, ephemeral or long-term (we STILL don't know each other).

Sorry this is so sappy from me again but at least I know I'm sappy and cop to it. I like going to hear people talk about their lives because it enriches my own life. It's like listening to lyrics or reading the newspaper... I know a lot of people feel the same way I do sometimes. Same old shit, same old hope.

Love and Light to you all,
Linda Lou
In Transition

Mr. Livermore,

I see my little letter provoked you to print it in your publication (Letters to the *LOOKOUT*, #23). It seems to have offended you, I don't know why. Y'see, the buck I sent you in October, I know a buck isn't very much money, but it was the most recent thing I've bought through the mail due to the fact that my international tape distribution has sucked me dry of all spare money.

It isn't so much the money, as it is money for a "free" zine. I get guilty if I let a letter sit for a couple of days. I realize that I don't get as much mail as you, but does it take a nasty letter to get your attention? But, think about it. If I have to, I'll swear, cuss, and offend everyone, if that's what it takes to get people off their asses and out of this very commercial, "Please wait 4-6 weeks for delivery" attitude.

Just to get my point across, I don't know what your circulation is/was, but I sold 22 out of 75 mags and lost over \$100 (the rest given/traded). On the tape front, I've sold 35 total (30 in the catalog). I give you permission to feel sorry for me and buy lots and lots of stuff. It's not that my stuff is bad, but the people are lame (always the case, right?). To paraphrase the punk types in the town of Portsmouth: "We won't buy your zine because so and so contributed and she joined the army." Nice and simple.

In closing, seeing as how you seem to like quotes:

*Fuck me, shit on me,
I just don't care, you see*
G.G.ALLIN

Mike
BAD LUCK zine / Urine
Sample Tapes
7 Bride Hill Drive
Hampton NH 03842

Dear Lawrence,

Thank you for your publication. I feel that your publication was kinda like the sort of stuff my friends and I did back when we were in college. Good stuff, but maybe you'll

need a bit more in terms of material if you want to attract more \$10 subscription checks. So I'll send you some stuff. Right now all I've got is two book reviews, a little money, and a case of writer's block. Things should improve by Christmas.

Thanks for trying again -- the post office has been fucked of recent.

Samuel Day Fassbinder
Santa Cruz CA

Dear Sam,

Thanks, but your book reviews remind me of the sort of stuff I used to hate having to write back when I was in college. Anyway, I'm not really interested in attracting \$10 subscription checks; the more subscribers I get, the more guilty I feel for not getting this rag out on time. And the whole idea of publishing this thing in the first place was supposed to be because it would be fun.

Lawrence

Dear LL

I was just about ready to send you a letter saying that you had become the *New York Times* issue of the zine world. But the December issue has the old punch and quality. I would pay \$2.00 for a retrospective issue, at least.

John Galanos
West Orange NJ

Dear Lawrence,

Forgive me for not replying personally sooner, but with my own newsletter now in a bit of a hiatus, I finally have more time on my hands to catch up on needed correspondence.

While I have only received two issues of the *LOOKOUT* so far (#s 21 and 23), I must confess to being somewhat mystified by your letter writers' complaints. Specifically, I refer to the letter from Dan Todd in #23, to which I thought you responded quite well. It astounds me how some people can completely miss the point of whatever magazine to which they happen to be writing a letter; their whining serves only to make them, not the magazine, look foolish. I can't understand why some people, in our supposedly technologically advanced age, still don't realize that there are reasons why type looks the way it does, or is reduced, or on a computer or such, and why (furthermore) they make that issue the gist of their entire letter, instead of concentrating on the topics discussed with the magazine itself?! The world is, unfortunately, chock full of these assholes looking for trees in forests they can't see, and I personally think you do yourself a greater service in treating them like the ridiculous ninnies they are than in attempting serious discourse with them.

Speaking, then, of the actual content of #23: Bravo for your lead article! ("The Empire Strikes Out") A very concise and (thankfully) biased overview of all the madness surrounding us and pinning us down. I'm grateful I can read articles like this one instead of having to content myself with the mainstream press' claim of "objectivity" and refusal to call a spade a spade for fear of corporate reprisal. The mainstream press

has, for the most part, been so co-opted by special interests (the aforementioned corporations, mostly, the great majority of which -- being "big business" -- are unabashedly in favor of the current Republican regime) that truth is up for grabs. The statement "all the news that's fit to print" is laughable. The only thing that ought to be "fit to print" is the truth about what these people are doing, and when newspapers can get away with using words like "disinformation" and treating them as legitimate government policy without blinking an eye or even smirking, those newspapers are hardly fit to read any more. Just once (and I fantasize about these sorts of things), I'd like to read in some mainstream newspaper, "The President lied again today..." But I digress. The caption under the picture of Raygun and Spooks was precious, and the whole article was extremely well written. I do take exception, however, to your comment about there being only two places for a crazy old coot like Ron. I think he'd do very nicely in an old actors' home somewhere, far away from any semblance of power, where he and Nancy could rock their time away on the front porch and reminisce about all those terribly bad, terribly funny movies they made in the days. I may dislike the senile old fogey, but I pity him more. He's quite obviously in the throes of Alzheimer's, his wife is a pathetic anorexic, and the best thing for all concerned would have been for them both to go off quietly somewhere and maybe come out for occasional profiles on Entertainment Tonight's "Whatever happened to..." section and infrequent appearances on The Love Boat. Naturally, I would have preferred all this to have happened before he ever ran for any sort of office but don't look at me, I wasn't one of the idiots who voted him SAG president and started the whole ball rolling downhill.

Given the alternatives you suggested, I'm not so sure I wouldn't mind a terribly bland nobody like Dole being in power; he seems so, well, harmless. Then again, they all change when they hear the words "Commander in Chief," don't they? Even Ford, once deemed one of the most harmless of them all, seemed to magically forget all his vast knowledge of the Constitution once he stepped into the oval.

I think Israel, rather than being neo-nazi, is better likened to a paranoid schizophrenic. You'd be paranoid too if your enemies were really following you all the time (or surrounding you, as is the case with Israel geographically)... but hey, you can't go around claiming you didn't start it.

I enjoyed your "Born Again Pagan" essay. According to the ultra-right-wing Sunday magazine *Parade*, "Born Again Pagan" was the "worst T-shirt of 1986." It must have really scared the shit out of 'em. (Of course their "best" one was some syrupy one about childhood... I can't remember it and just as well.) Thanks for reminding us all what Christmas is really all about. And while I sympathize, I'd just as soon not celebrate the sun's return until said sun convinces me it's really here, like in April or so. You California people don't know how nice you have it; here in New York we like to make a creative habit out of hibernation.

Thank you for your continual updates on CAMP, by the way. I do plan to live out there within the next few years, and any information I can glean beforehand about the repression to watch out for is of major help.

The music reviews didn't do much for me, as I don't follow that area too closely. I admit to being hopelessly Top 40. It's not something of which I'm proud, it just happened that way, but I'm stuck with it.

"The Good Witch" was quite disturbing in its truth. I work in the East Village, and to a lesser extent the same old thing is going on nowadays. Those of us who know better and can't (or don't want to) afford Manhattan rents live in places like Brooklyn, which is cooler than it sounds. I'm a Flatbush gal myself.

It certainly does seem as if eastern bloc countries are easier on "subversive" musicians and poets (and even journalists!) than our wonderful Land of the Free. I hear there are currently plans to have more prominent American and British rock stars tour the USSR. Although they may all be "name" stars, not all of them are bland, so we may see some interesting fireworks.

I can appreciate Joe Britz' sentiments, but of course many people "wanna be like the Folks on the Hill." Competition is a major reason why adolescents get fucked up, and a major method of brainwashing them in preparation

for "real life" after school. When you're a kid, most of what you see (even on TV) stresses cooperation; once you start school, particularly junior high and high school, competition becomes far more important, until it is the only mindset taught as valid. There is an insane fear in this country that if we aren't the best at something, it means we shouldn't do it at all (or that we should pour the cure-all, more money, into it until we are the best); this is an alien concept to much of the population of communist bloc countries, I should think. When one report after another on TV news emphasizes how little STUPH people can buy in Russia, it completely dismisses the notion that perhaps Russians' lives don't revolve around STUPH in the first place. Hmm -- maybe I should amend what I said above about the indoctrination of children. The cartoons themselves may emphasize cooperation, but the merchandising behind those cartoons, which gets through to kids much easier than any fake-sounding "moral," is the competitive, driving need to acquire more useless toys / possessions than the other kids. The Yuppie Puppies are on the rise. What's the fuss about teaching our children proper morality

when the same fundamentalists who sneek about the breakup of traditional values buy into the nonsense as much as their kiddies? I was, I'm happy to say, fortunate enough to pick up "traditional values" like cooperation and courtesy, and can say without too much doubt that my conscience is reasonably free after this article.

Thanks for the zine reviews; I'm looking forward to sending away for one or two.

I'm not so sure "The Best of the LOOKOUT" is such a good idea. Aren't most of your articles dated -- that is, don't they apply to a specific politically oriented activity? Also, I think it's bad luck, for lack of a better term, to put out a "best of" a small press zine that's still publishing. It takes too much time, money, and energy away from your present efforts. For what my 2¢ are worth...

Again, thanks for agreeing to trade with me, and I'm looking forward to future issues with equal enthusiasm!

Elayne Wechsler
INSIDE JOKE zine
New York

County Briefs

Any doubts about who owns and operates the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors should have been allayed by a recent decision on noise complaints against the Louisiana-Pacific mill in Fort Bragg. Neighbors of the plant have been trying for some time to get the county to place some restrictions on the racket produced there, but the supes told them nothing could be done until noise levels could be measured by the appropriate experts.

And when might the county get around to that? Well, not for the next year or two, at least; it seems as if there's just not any money to pay for the allegedly necessary studies (it's not known if anyone suggested that the supes simply drive to the edge of the Fort Bragg mill and try listening for themselves). But if the complainants want to come back before the Board of Geeks in 1988 or 1989 (!?!), they can make a request that the county fund noise abatement studies which might in turn lead to some action, say around the year 2000 (this last figure my own estimate based on past county performance).

By that time, of course, Louisiana-Pacific will have long since finished clear-cutting Mendocino County, and the mill will be either gathering dust or have been converted into a tourist theme park.

Publishing a weekly newspaper in a town the size of Laytonville must not be the easiest job in the world, especially when you confine yourself to printing only items of local interest that won't upset any of the local powers that be. As a result, the *Ledger* consists of mostly ads and filler, with some occasionally interesting columns (to be fair about this, the *Ledger* does pretty much avoid the overt ideological bias that makes many larger newspapers so patently offensive).

So it shouldn't be surprising that one of the biggest brouhahas to hit the *Ledger's* pages in recent months concerned the discovery that a Mendocino County youth had, despite the concerted efforts of our encrusted educational establishment, somehow learned to formulate and express an opinion of his own. Kris Ugren, a student representative to the Fort Bragg School Board, wrote an article ridiculing the Leggett school system and some of the less than competent

adults responsible for running it. The *Ledger* reprinted the article and the excrement hit the air conditioner.

The ensuing outrage, expressed in a series of marginally literate letters to the editor, centered not around the specific charges raised by the kid, but rather on the fact that a mere child (a "child" who in a matter of a year or two will be considered prime cannon fodder for whatever crackpot war the Reaganauts will be promoting then) would dare to criticize or question the authority of his elders. Although this will no doubt strike some as a dangerously radical concept, education was once thought of as a means of helping young people learn to think for themselves, not as a sort of boot camp where they are prepared for a lifetime of unquestioningly following orders. Young Ugren should be pointed to proudly as evidence that some education actually still takes place hereabouts.

But such was not the case. Leading the charge of the know-nothings was *Ledger* columnist and all-around busybody Thelma Lute. As self-appointed spokesperson for the "Leggett community," she demanded a public apology from Ugren, who wisely ignored the old biddy. In her first *Ledger* column of the new year, Lute revealed her own warped value system when she offered her heartfelt congratulations to two graduating Leggett High School seniors who have signed on with Uncle Sam's mercenary forces. One of these lovely lads declaring themselves ready to kill for a living is also named Lute, presumably a son or grandson, though there's a lot of inbreeding in these small towns, which goes a long way toward explaining the intelligence level thereof. Anyway, Thelma, I guess it's fine to send your kids off to other countries to blast innocent people into smithereens and maybe come home as flag-draped hamburger, but God forbid they should have an independent thought in their heads. Multiply that kind of thinking by the thousands and millions and it's little wonder this country is in such desperate trouble.

The Toxic Substances Committee of the North Coast Greens (one of the few still-active chapters of that once-promising movement) has received a \$6000 grant to make a study of herbicide use in county forests.

As any marginally conscious resident of Mendocino County should know, during much of the last few decades corporate loggers have freely waged chemical warfare on our forest lands and the people who inhabit them. On one hand, it may seem strange that any study is necessary to

determine that pouring vast amounts of poison on the land and water from which we derive our sustenance is a bad idea, but if compiling data on precisely what has been done to our countryside changes even a few minds in the right places, it should be worth it.

To that end, if you have any information at all about when and where herbicides have been used in Mendocino County, or on any results thereof, contact either Sue Roberts, Box 129, Comptche CA 95427, or Kristy Sarconi, Box 284, Comptche CA 95427.

The recent Wall Street scandal concerning the slimy white-collar thug Ivan Boesky probably tends to strike most disinterested observers as little more than an elaborate Monopoly game played with real money by a bunch of moral midgets suffering from a severe case of arrested intellectual development.

But Boesky, who received the drastic and nearly inhumane punishment of having to give back fully half of his ill-gotten gains (leaving him with only \$100 million profit for all his trouble), left the North Coast a legacy which will outlast him and all his heirs: a giant scar ripped out of the heart of the world's last major stand of virgin redwood forest.

One of Boesky's last acts before being nailed by the feds was to spearhead the takeover of the Pacific Lumber Company, a family-run business that was one of the very few logging combines to practice sustained yield forest management (the very simple and self-evident concept of not cutting down trees faster than new ones can grow) by something called the Maxxam Group, a collection of scammers and parasites whose *modus operandi* is to get hold of a company and run it into the ground as quickly as possible so as to be able to liquidate its assets.

The principal asset of the Pacific Lumber Company is, of course, lumber, in the form of roughly 40,000 acres of virgin redwood. The sawmills are already being cranked up for a spring start; and timber harvest plans have been filed for a doubling of the old rate of logging.

Fortunately a resistance is already emerging, and it may be that the Maxxam speculators, most of whom have never even seen the North Coast, have gotten themselves more than they bargained for. Legal challenges are already being readied, and perhaps even more effective could be the extra-legal efforts of groups like Earth First! (see Letters to the LOOKOUT in this issue). Let's hope the Wall Street carpetbaggers lose their asses on this one, and that Mother Earth wins one for a change.

...and another letter to the *Anderson Valley Advertiser* that should have been sent to the *LOOKOUT*, too... from a writer who could clearly teach Lawrence Livermore a thing or three about the creative use of invective...

President Reagan:

Have you no shame? Can it be that you are simply too dull to understand the implications of the situation you have put yourself in?

After so many dishonest and immoral episodes perpetrated on a public that trusted you, you have finally been exposed as a disgraceful incompetent and a mendacious buffoon.

Surely even you must realize, behind your pathetic screen of fatuous braggadocio and geriatric machismo, that it is ludicrous to babble of standing tall when a man has obviously gone down on his knees.

Resign, you sham, you affliction, you cancer on all that is decent, humane, and honorable in America. Resign before the whole truth is known, in spite of you and your stonewalling cadre of shallow blundering thugs, and you are revealed to all the world as the soulless simpleton and debased and evil fraud you have always been.

Paul F. Edwards
Pacific Palisades CA
...reprinted from the
Anderson Valley Advertiser

SAN FRANCISCO BEAT

Some readers may be wondering why I've been neglecting Mayor Feinstein and her fleet of tin-can limousines, otherwise known as the San Francisco Municipal Railway.

Well, I haven't forgotten about one of my favorite targets of derision and outrage, but after spending considerable time as one of its victims, er, passengers, I have a more specific complaint. Namely, that the Muni is run primarily for the benefit of commuters and the downtown corporations that employ them. If you want to go somewhere Monday through Friday during business hours, you can probably get there without too much inconvenience, and if you travel in between the peak commute hours, you might even get a seat.

But nights and weekends? Forget it? If you can't afford to drive a car to your leisure-time activities, the mayor evidently believes you should be staying at home saving your money to buy one. Even in the middle of Saturday afternoon, when people are out and about all over the City and automobile traffic is unbearable, buses run at ridiculously long intervals and arrive packed to the gills. And at night, the Muni pulls almost a complete vanishing act.

It stands to reason that a public transportation system can serve an especially valuable function by providing an alternative means of travel for people out drinking and carousing, but most drunks still capable of extricating their car keys from their pockets will choose to drive rather than wait a half hour or more on a windswept San Francisco street corner.

Of course, if you can't or won't drive, and bus service is just too slow, or, as in many parts of the city, nonexistent at night, you can always do what Mayor Feinstein does. Take your limousine.

Outgoing City Administrative Officer Roger Boas, who has served as Feinstein's faithful axeman during her years of laying waste to much of what was good and beautiful about San Francisco, can now be heard moaning loudly to the mass media and anyone else who will listen that the City is suffering from a "depressed business climate."

What the overpaid (almost 100 grand a year) Chamber of Commerce flack is concerned about is the fact that some of the corporations who have befouled downtown with their largely pointless highrises and the attendant gridlock and pollution are now deserting the City, moving their headquarters to suburban wastelands like Concord and Walnut Creek.

Anyone who truly loves San Francisco will of course be applauding the departure of these marauding interlopers and encouraging the remaining ones to follow in their footsteps. And we can fervently hope that the hordes of business-suited geeks who have become a plague eclipsed only by AIDS and, possibly, real estate speculators, will also pull up stakes and take up residence somewhere on the far side of the East Bay hills where they can more conveniently suckle at the corporate teat.

San Francisco by right should belong to the artists, weirdos, and misfits who made this city what it is; it is outrageous that such worthies should be displaced by myopic outsiders whose esthetics are proscribed by the concrete and glass boxes in which they labor and whose ethics are defined by the size of the paycheck derived thereby. Everytime I have to make a mad dash to avoid being mowed down by a speeding BMW piloted by some monomaniacal yuppie on his way to close some crucial "deal," every time I have my life impeded by greedy landlords, self-appointed arbiters of commercial fashion, or find myself having to avoid whole sections of town on weekends to keep from being overrun by frenzied escapees from a Michelob Light commercial, I can only say, thanks a lot, Mayor Feinstein, for inviting these creeps to come live in our town, and, more importantly, "Here's your hat, what's your hurry?"

WELCOME TO CALIFORNIA NOW BO HOME

(Ed. Note: Though it wasn't originally planned this way, this month's nostalgia piece turns out to be a continuation of last month's. For those of you who didn't see issue #23, it was called Sharyn, The Good Witch Of The Lower East Side, and told of my adventures in the New York hippie/junkie scene of 1968. As we rejoin our tale, I'm leaving New York behind and heading out to the promised land of California.)

After the sooty canyons of New York, the sun seemed incredibly hot and blinding as we crawled across the country. The cornfields of Iowa and Nebraska were every bit as endless and boring as people had promised me they'd be. I was looking forward to a dramatic entry into the Rocky Mountains, the sort you saw in wagon train movies, but on the route we were travelling, the road climbed almost imperceptibly; as we entered Wyoming we were already more than a mile high and I still hadn't seen a mountain worthy of the name.

I was impressed, though, as we got to the outskirts of Cheyenne where a billboard of a cowboy on a bucking bronc proclaimed that we were "Where the West Begins." I'd never been west of Kalamazoo before, and like most Americans, I had the mythos of the wild frontier deeply imbedded in my consciousness. Here I was, in the footsteps of millions before me, following the sun to its final resting place.

As anyone who's ever navigated Interstate 80 knows, of course, the reality of the wide open spaces of Wyoming and the states that follow is a lot less romantic than the image they evoke: mile after mile of hot, dusty wasteland broken only by some scrubby, nondescript hills. It wasn't until we pulled out of Reno that the west began to live up to its advance billing. The Sierra Nevada, now there are some mountains. And suddenly the hills were turning green, thick with pines and firs, and streams and rivers came tumbling out of the rocks. By the time we rounded the bend and spotted the "Welcome to California" sign, I knew this was, for me, at least, the promised land.

From the top of the Sierra it almost seemed as though we could see the whole center of the state laid out before us, yellow in the midsummer sun. I was reminded of the scooped out interior of a giant banana. We descended into the blast furnace heat of the central valley, rolling quickly across the last few hours of flat monotony while I earnestly studied some tourist guidebook to the climate, culture, and geography of the San Francisco Bay Area. It was only then that I learned that Oakland, our ultimate destination, was right next door to San Francisco; I'd had a vague impression that it was situated somewhere halfway to Los Angeles. I also found out that northern California was far removed from the image of palm trees and surfboards, something that was brought home to me as we crossed the coastal mountains and slipped under the near-perennial blanket of summer fog.

Night was falling and the cloud layer glowed an eerie orange from the lights of the city. As we left the freeway, the first thing I spotted was the enormous dachshund statue atop a Doggie Diner; as I gaped in awe, a pink Cadillac slid by.

The corner of Oakland where my friends lived had been chosen for its low rent and relative accessibility to the City; its cultural attributes were virtually nil, and the next day headed up Telegraph Avenue to Berkeley, the Athens and Mecca of a generation. Before we hit Dwight Way I could smell the patchouli oil; soon the sidewalks were jammed with more hippies than I'd known existed. In most parts of the country at that time, longhairs meeting on the street would typically greet one another as long-lost members of a common tribe, but here no one took any notice of us at all. I was painfully self-conscious about the fact that my hair wasn't nearly as long as most of the people around me. What if they suspected me of being a nark, or worse, a "weekend" hippie?

So far I felt like a tourist, but that night I made my debut in Berkeley society. It started when my friend took me to a large west Berkeley house that was headquarters to a real live rock band. It was also, it turned out, the home of a major LSD lab, and when the chemist stuck his head in the door asking for volunteers to test his latest batch, no one had to twist my arm.

I had taken plenty of acid before, but apparently the rest of the country was only getting a very watered-down version of the LSD Californians were taking, because within five minutes I began to see the notes to the music we were listening to (the Beatles' Sgt. Pepper's, natch) take shape and come marching in stately formation out of the stereo. Moments (give or take a few centuries) later, a battalion of Disney characters started slipping and sliding among the treble clefs; I watched with some trepidation as Mickey Mouse and Goofy did a grinning tandem swan dive off a resonating middle E.

I experienced a sinking feeling as I realized that this was how things were likely to be going for the next 12 hours or so (it turned out to be closer to 24). But there was no fighting it now, so I settled down to watch the show.

The essence of the evening's early entertainment was that each second was divided into 128 million individual fragments (yes, I was able to count them), and in each one of those I would enter an entirely different reality. And I mean different. One instant I'd be seated crosslegged in a tent in the Arabian desert, palm trees swaying at a nearby oasis, and the snorting and pawing of hot-breathed camels just outside my door. Suddenly my friends and I were transformed into Eskimos disembowelling a freshly killed walrus on the floor of our igloo. No, we were cowboys lounging around the bunkhouse after a cross-country cattle drive. But looking up I realized there was no ceiling but the endless star-splattered sky, and our campfire (where did that come from?) became the flaring exhaust of the space ship carrying us on an unprecedented mission to the outer reaches of the universe, one from which there would be no return.

And so it went for what must have been the next few hours. One characteristic of the human mind seems to be that it can get used to just about anything, and I was starting to settle into a sort of equilibrium when someone announced that it was time to get up and go somewhere.

Get up? What could that mean? Move my body? I had a body? Where did these arms and legs come from? You mean I can tell them what to do, make them take me places and get me things? What an ingenious system!

Suddenly the door opened and my friends and I oozed through it into the California night. Wait, they had forgotten something, they'd be right back, and I was alone.

I had never been in such an utterly alien environment. The sky was bluish-purple, pulsing with electricity as if reflecting the light of a million upturned television screens. The fronds of the huge palm tree that dominated the front yard, the strange grasses and weeds that appeared to be quickly overgrowing the crumbling sidewalks, the odd shaped and colored cactus, all this unfamiliar vegetation seemed to occur in jagged edges, slicing through the darkness. The neighborhood was a little shabby, but my exaggerated mental state quickly translated that into an image of advanced decay. It was also predominantly black, so I concluded that I had somehow landed in 21st century Africa, some years after the final collapse of western civilization.

I heard a soft footstep, and suddenly I was surrounded by several dashiki-clad Zulu warriors. With grinning faces they backed me up against the wall, demanding something. I wasn't sure what, in that strange tongue of theirs. Just then my friends re-emerged from the house and saw me babbling incoherently. They introduced me to the next door neighbors, who were wearing the black-power attire that was very fashionable at the time, and had come over to borrow some cigarettes.

We set off on our adventure. This walking business, I found, wasn't so hard once you got used to it. We were headed toward Telegraph Ave. It being a Friday night, there would typically be as many as 5000 hippie types and their suburban camp followers hanging out, taking over the streets and making driving nearly impossible for the carloads of gawkers who would often be backed up halfway to Oakland.

Things had settled down considerably in my brain by now, so I was surprised when I began seeing colored lights flashing all around me. Actually, it was mostly one color, red, and it put me into a hypnotic trance that was only disrupted when a speeding fire truck missed me by about a foot.

The truck, it turned out, was going to Telegraph, too, and I found out why a moment later as I turned the corner from Haste onto the Avenue and a tear gas grenade whizzed by my head. Here came the riot squad and there went the hippies and I was right in the middle. I heard the sound of squealing tires and car doors opening; a mini-squad of helmeted men waving big clubs was heading right for me.

The act of walking had been a minor miracle only a short time before, but running came very naturally now. And that was how things went until late in the night. Stop and gawk at the fighting, burning, and looting, then run for my life when the cops would come peeling around the corner or bursting out of some alleyway. I didn't have much desire to destroy anything myself, but it was sure fascinating to watch others doing it. A girl about my age put a brick through the last remaining plate glass window of the Bank of America, then turned and gave me one of the nicest smiles I had ever seen.

The riots went on for the next two nights, and ended up with a bang, so to speak, as someone used a bomb to level some new construction at Dwight and Telegraph that had failed to live up to his or her aesthetic standards.

Explosions were pretty common in Berkeley that summer; I'd say about once a week I'd hear shock waves reverberating off the hills. Banks, draft boards, police cars: nobody except for the mass media seemed to take much notice of it. I gradually settled into somewhat of a routine. I'd moved in with the rock band, which made seven of us sharing a \$100 a month basement flat. Fourteen bucks a month rent wasn't too hard to come up with, and as for food, there were two free meals every day, lunch at the Free Church on Durant, and dinner in Provo Park, sponsored by the balloon people (they always had lots of red balloons around; I don't know why).

There was a hypnotic quality to life in California, a kind of dreamlike state that I'd never experienced back in the midwest. The air seemed softer, the light had a soothing, seductive color to it, and the almost unvarying pattern of morning fog and afternoon sun made it difficult to tell one day from another. Looking back later on that summer, in fact, it would seem as if I could recall only one long day and an equally long night. As time melted away, it became harder and harder for me to understand why anyone would want to live anywhere else.

Actually, it was starting to seem as if nobody did want to live anywhere else. The Summer of Love, when young people from across the nation were supposed to come to San Francisco with flowers in their hair to create a love and peace utopia, was officially dead and buried, but still the kids kept streaming in, most of them with even less of an idea of where they were going or what they were going to do than I had had. My first visit to the fabled Haight-Ashbury was fairly depressing. We ran into a former love child I'd known on the east coast; he had his hair slicked back and was toting a brief case packed with amphetamine and a loaded pistol. Typical, said people back in Berkeley; the Haight was totally uncool now, all hard drugs and violence.

But the bad times hadn't really hit Berkeley yet, and on any given day there would be 10 or 15 new faces on the Avenue, complete with backpacks, sleeping bags, cats, dogs, beads, feathers, and expectant expressions that said something like: "Well, here I am: where's my future?" As the owner of not only my own blanket, but a corner of a basement floor on which to unroll it, I was one step ahead of these folks, or one step ahead of the street, as we would say.

But that was about it. Even though I always managed to come up with fourteen bucks rent on time, my position at my new home was at best tenuous. The band I was living with had come to California hoping to follow the likes of the Grateful Dead and the Jefferson Airplane into major-label success, but long-haired, drug-oriented bands were not exactly in short supply, and they were lucky to get an occasional paying gig. Their leader, an irascible dead ringer for Frank Zappa, for some reason absolutely hated me. Everytime he would see me around the house he would threaten to throw me out, so I spent a lot of time on the streets.

But I had my allies, too. One was my roomie (our "room" was actually just a curtained-off section of another room), a 200-plus pound female folksinger with a perpetually broken heart, and another, my favorite, was the closest thing to an extraterrestrial life form I'd yet encountered. His name was Flam, and his sole passion in life was the study of medieval arcana. Days he would hibernate in the back room, and then late at night he would wrap his six-foot beanpole frame (topped with an enormous Afro that he had to physically restrain to get through most doorways) into a head-to-toe overcoat, and set off with his walking stick to sit under a street lamp and read until dawn.

But he raised barely an eyebrow in the Berkeley of those times, when weirdness was at a premium and my biggest social liabilities were having too-short hair and shoes that had once been shiny (actually, I guess that made me a real weirdo, but not in the right way). I made up for it by wearing a 10-sizes-too-big double-breasted suit coat that I'd found in an alley and throwing away my sturdy leather shoes (purloined from the Army ROTC) in favor of my day-glo splattered tennis shoes left over from New York that exposed more of my feet than they covered. In such waif-like apparel I would set out to sell copies of the Berkeley *Barb* to straights in San Francisco's financial district and tourists on Broadway's topless row.

Between that meager income and the munificent 25¢ a column inch I was paid for occasional articles in the same publication, I was able to manage a meager material existence. And if the rest of my life had been in better shape, things could have been just peachy keen. But I was still a scared and lonely kid, on the run from a dope charge that could send me up the river for more years than I'd yet been alive. Though California was an almost magical place to me, more wonderful than I would have been able to dream of during the darker days of my youth, I found my thoughts now straying more and more to the sights and faces I had left back in Michigan.

One bright Sunday morning, I was bouncing along Blake Street, and found myself thinking about an old "Little Rascals" short where one of the kids was singing "I wish I had a watermelon, I wish I had a watermelon," and before I knew it, I was singing along. As I turned the corner, my eyes popped open wider than little Buckwheat's, because there, just like in the movie, was an old bald-headed black man sitting astride a pickup truck packed to overflowing with... what else?

"Hey, boy, you want a watermelon?" he called to me. Like Buckwheat, I wasn't about to look a gift watermelon anywhere but right in my mouth, so I lugged a 25 or 30-pounder on home. Parked out front was a standard hippie VW bus with Michigan plates. My past had caught up with me in the form of three long-haired denizens of my one-time home town, come, like me, to seek out nirvana on the west coast.

I barely knew them, but they knew nearly all my friends from back east, and had hours of gossip, melodrama, and history in the making to relate. But while they talked I saw not so much the people with whom my life had once been so intertwined, but the little details that so clearly, yet so subtly define a sense of place.

Here in Berkeley it was well into September, yet summer showed no signs of departing. But in the Michigan of my mind's eye I could see the apples and pomegranates coming in, passionately red, from the harvest fields, and the leaves changing colors, and smell the yellow haze of smoke on a closely warm autumn evening, and feel the unmistakable hint of a chill that would soon follow.

I'd never felt truly at home in Michigan, but now I was realizing that, like it or not, it still *was* my home, at least until I took care of the unfinished business there. On paper, or in the logical part of my brain, it made no sense to go back. Already, because I had stayed away as long as I had, a good part of the state's case against me had evaporated, and if I waited long enough, the whole affair would likely be forgotten. And I had succeeded in establishing myself in Berkeley, something which a lot of the young hippies washing up on those shores had failed to do. Still, I had to go; I guess it was just one of those cases where the feet move faster than the brain.

Three of us set out on a cross-country hitchhiking marathon that ended up taking eight days, and included a 16-hour wait at a treeless outpost 30 miles past Reno where previous sojourners had left such slogans as, "Give up now, you'll never leave here alive," a botched freight-hopping attempt that ended with us being rousted by a whole sheriff's posse on horseback, and being met at the city limits of Vacaville (rough translation: Cowtown) by the whole city police force, who told that we wouldn't be allowed to even walk through their town.

One of our party split off in Nebraska, another in Illinois, and I travelled the last 300 miles by myself. As I hit Ann Arbor, fall was starting to make itself felt in earnest, and the parts of my feet protruding from what was left of my day-glo tennis shoes felt awfully cold on the pavement. I was naturally a little nervous, being still on the lam from the police, but no one seemed to take much notice of me.

Then suddenly, all around me, all over town, car horns started blaring, firecrackers going off, bells ringing, and people screaming. While being possessed of the same delusions of self-importance as most 20 year-olds, I didn't really think all the commotion was on my account, but I couldn't imagine what it was about. I finally asked someone, and was told that the Detroit Tigers had just won the World Series.

The Detroit Tigers. My childhood heroes. At one time I could have recited the vital statistics of every player on the team. I hadn't known they were in the World Series. I hadn't known the World Series was going on; in the world where I had been living during the past year, it didn't even exist. My re-entry had begun.

The drugs and dreams wore off fast in the face of lawyers, prosecutors, court rooms, and ultimately, a week in jail -- not bad in light of the twenty to life I had been facing, but still a sobering experience. Next would be two years of probation, with the condition that I hold a steady job and move back in with my parents. Winter found me working the night shift at a steel mill on a slag-covered island in the Detroit River where no living thing grew. I tended the coke ovens, and in between making my rounds, with the orange light of molten steel coloring the sky for miles around and evil fumes bursting into flame like so many torches in the darkness, I pored over Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, searching for a way to make sense out my ignominious fate.

It wasn't really the end, of course; spring and summer came again, and with it the lush midwestern vegetation and the almost visible humidity (another recent returnee from California said it reminded him of landing on the planet Venus). Some sultry mornings, when the light was just right, I could squint my eyes and the trees on the horizon would turn into palm trees, the clouds would transform themselves into mountains, and for a moment, at least, California was almost real, instead of a distant memory. But I knew where I belonged now. I knew I'd be back.

Why has every Republican president since Abraham Lincoln been so crooked that they need a brace of Secret Service men to help them screw their pants on in the morning?

...Hunter S. Thompson

A Beginner's Guide To Punk Rock

by Joe Britz

I have a feeling that many people still have an extremely distorted view of punk rock and the people involved with it. Only a few months ago the *LOOKOUT* printed a letter which stated, "...my idea of punk was shaped by the conventional press and TV. Punks were English boys with funny hairdos who were put out because there were no jobs to be had, so they just slouched at street corners and sneered into the TV cameras."

This is an understandable outlook given the superficial perspective of the boob tube. So in the interest of giving some of your distant observers a more realistic vision of what all the monotonous music, bizarre fashion, and nonconformist lifestyles are about, here's a little firsthand information.

First off, as with most topics, believe almost nothing of what you see, hear, or read in the mainstream media. There is little factual content, and only the worst aspects of punk are outlined. I think it was the *New Yorker* which "delved" into the New York City punk scene a few months ago and ended up profiling the most ridiculous combination of bozos you could possibly meet. The group, as with many people labelled "punk rockers", was only a microcosm of the real, ugly world, and had nothing to do with people in the scene that I actually know.

These stereotypes are perpetuated even further on television. In a fanzine entitled *Punk Junk* editor John Liberté describes no less than 34 programs and several commercials which exploit and ridicule punk. One episode of "CPO Sharkey" aired in 1978 is described thusly: "Navy geeks looking for a fun time go to a punk club and get mocked by the punks. Their commanding officer is upset by this and goes to the club to tell the punks off. He succeeds in convincing them that the Navy is cool and even gets a couple of punks to enlist." Yeah, happens all the time!

To discover the underlying truth of the matter, let's first discuss the music. If you listen beyond the "boring, repetitive beat" (I think it's thrilling, but that's neither here nor there) you'll hear many songs with thoughtful, compassionate, and inspiring words (though a lyric sheet would be useful at this point, and the majority of punk records include one). Check out some records by the PROLETARIAT, CHUMBAWAMBA, MDC, CRASS, or several thousand others, and you'll see what I mean.

Next you might like to read some homemade cheapie magazines (AKA fanzines). Again there must be thousands of these throughout the world (punk is most definitely a worldwide phenomenon) and just about every one is done as a labor of love, not for profit. If you're interested in this area, you might send \$1.50 to *Maximum Rockroll*, PO Box 288, Berkeley CA 94701, and you'll get one of the more intelligent ones which also lists addresses for others (another suggestion: *Factsheet Five*, available for \$2 from Mike Gunderloy, 6 Arizona Ave., Rensselaer NY 12144, has listings and reviews of just about every zine published in this country ...Ed.).

Another possible source to seek out is a live show, but this could very well leave a bad impression because the macho goons tend to make their presence known above and before anybody else. No, the first two sources are the best, and in case you're too busy, I'll give you a quick summary of what you'll learn. You'll discover that many of those "violent, ignorant assholes" are in reality thinking, caring, active people who devote lots of their time to changing the fucked-over world we live in. Whether it's through political activity, boycotts, organizing community centers, working at soup kitchens or whatever, there is a network of folks out there doing positive things while few people outside the circle know anything about it. Next time,

remember that for all the sellouts, apathetics, and jocks that are on the surface, there are lots of great people as well. Can you say that for society at large?

*You look at us with scornful eyes
To you our lives are so unwise
You say that you've heard everything
But it's obvious you're not listening
You don't understand
You can't realize
Ignorance is in your eyes*

YOUTH BRIGADE

GUEST OPINION

BY THE REV. ARTHUR SNIVELY

(ED. NOTE: The LOOKOUT has often been accused of harboring a thinly veiled bias against organized religion. In order to dispel that misconception, we have agreed this month to give space to the distinguished Christian scholar, Rev. Snively, to discuss an issue he feels is of great significance at this time of year.)

Santa -- Sätan Coincidence or Conspiracy?

One of the happiest sights of the Christmas season has traditionally been that of wide-eyed little children flocking to sit on merry old Santa Claus's knee and tell the kindly red-clad gent their dreams of holiday treasure. Millions of parents have innocently allowed their babies to become enthralled by the ancient legend of the jolly man who gives without asking anything in return.

Harmless fun? Perhaps not. Christian scholars now suggest that the person of Santa Claus may be a cruel and fiendish disguise perpetrated by the Father of Lies, Sätan Himself.

Let's look at the evidence. What lies at the heart of the Santa Claus myth? Why, the idea of getting something for nothing, of course. Oh, sure, as song and story would have it, the little tykes are being rewarded for having been good all year, but can anyone point to an instance where any child has actually received a lump of coal in his or her stocking?

And what is the effect of this orgy of gift-giving? Does it help make our children aware of the true meaning of Christmas, which is the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? On the contrary, children, who are by nature greedy and uncaring little monsters, think only of the booty they stand to gain. The proper place for a child on Christmas Day is not beneath some tawdrily bedecked fir tree (itself an ancient pagan symbol) playing with trains and dollies, but in a church pew singing hymns and praying.

"By their fruits ye shall know them," said Our Lord, and the only discernible fruit of a belief in Santa Claus is a self-centered lust for material possessions. And how could anyone fail to notice that this Santa invariably dresses in vivid, satanic red, the color of hellfire itself? Who could hear the sound of his laugh, the diabolical "Ho ho ho," without recognizing the wicked chortle of the Prince of Darkness delighting in his scheme for inveigling youthful souls into lives of sin and depredation.

All good Christian men and women must take up arms against the dangerous illusion of Santa Claus. Yes, your little darlings may whine and complain that Bobby and Susie next door are visited by the gift-giving gnome from the North Pole, but all you need do is ask them how they would like to join Bobby and Susie in HELL! For all eternity! A lot of good their shiny red fire engines will do them then!

Sometimes it's hard to be a good parent, especially when it requires doing things that our less enlightened brethren might even consider to be cruel. But we have only to take for our example that of the Lord our God, Who was willing to incinerate whole cities to demonstrate His boundless love for humanity. Should we be prepared to do any less for the sake of our precious children?

AY! - O! LET'S GO!!

TWO LOVE LETTERS TO THE RAMONES

I was driving north on Highway 101 as the last remnants of summer were fading away. The vineyards ran wild with oranges, reds, and purples; the blue of the sky was showing that deeper opalescence it acquires as the sun heads south for the winter; on the hills the first hints of green were beginning to show beneath the lifeless brown straw left by another year's passing.

Even to someone who had witnessed such scenes as many times as I had, the beauty was staggering. But though it passed through my eyes, it somehow failed to penetrate to my soul. I knew it, but I couldn't feel it.

For a long time, too long, it had been this way, as if I were sleepwalking through the world. Once I had laughed and cried freely, even to the point of embarrassing those around me with my sudden fits of passion. But then a love gone bad, a retreat into the delusion of total self-sufficiency, the disillusionments and discarded dreams that turn young men into old: all combined to leave me only half alive.

On the surface little had changed. A few new wrinkles, a few gray hairs, otherwise I appeared to be the same person I and those who knew me had gotten used to over the years. Inside I was numb, conscious of only a dull, aching emptiness. "Get out and have fun," friends would say, "don't let your life pass you by."

Fun? What was fun? I went to the old familiar places, but they weren't at all familiar anymore. At another low point in my life, it had been music that had reawakened me, but now music seemed just another exercise, intellectually satisfying, but lacking the transformative magic it had once held.

Until that day, driving down the highway, with the stereo blasting a tape of practically every Ramones song there ever was. Depressed or not, there's no way I can be unhappy when the Ramones are playing, and I was bouncing around in my seat and singing along. Then, when it came to the last song on the tape, something started happening inside me.

It was "Bonzo Goes To Bitburg," which is not, as the name would suggest, a goofy takeoff on President Ronbo's tea party for dead nazis, but a truly haunting, impassioned cry that to me echoes the feelings of every soul with a shred of sensitivity who wonders just what the hell is going on in this mad world we inhabit.

I could feel my heart expanding and contracting, I could feel that bottomless pit opening up somewhere beneath my stomach, that same feeling I'd gotten as a child the first time I'd ever gotten a clue as to what true loneliness was all about, and I could feel my eyes burning and stinging in a way I'd almost forgotten.

Then, as the Ramones powered into the song's eloquently simple guitar break (as if the Ramones had any other kind of guitar break), the dam broke, and I was sobbing, as much from joy as sorrow, as much from being alive and a part of this amazing world and from being isolated and detached from it all. Each power chord, and there were only a handful of them, seemed to last for eternities and to unfold universes of meanings and understandings, and all I could do was to cry and, in between the tears, laugh like a madman.

And a madman is exactly what any passing drivers would have thought me to be. So did I care? Did I even think about it? Not likely; I was too busy being alive, in a way I hadn't been for way too long.

So some people say the Ramones are dumb, that their politics (if they have any) stink, that their three-chord antics might have been a cute novelty ten years ago, but have long since gotten pretty boring. But I wouldn't be one of those people, because for me the Ramones get right to the heart of what music -- not just rock and roll, but all music -- is about: life in all its glory and magic and infinite possibilities.

Beethoven and Mozart and the rest of those guys had the same idea, but it took them whole orchestras and page after page of sheet music that you'd practically have to be an algebra major to decipher. The Ramones manage to sum it all up in three grungy chords - now there's true genius. AY-O! LET'S GO!!

by Robert Pfeiffer

Why does anybody older than 17 care about rock anymore?

I'm 24. I want to be a rock star, even though I hate rock stars. Wanting to be one makes me feel noble and blessed -- when it doesn't make me feel silly and deluded.

What I really want is The Core.

The Core is elusive, inscrutable, and essential. The Core is a drop of Jerry Lee Lewis' sweat, flying across four rows of ecstatic hillbillies and splashing onto a 15-year-old kid's eyelid.

The Core is James Brown, screaming up to heaven, then dropping, a hurled archangel, onto the floorboards.

The Core is Johnny Rotten, spitting bile and fury and vengeance, and then laughing at the suckers gawking up at him through the footlights.

But alas, I'm an amateur. College bands, party bands, and a couple of nights in empty New York clubs constitute the breadth of my experience.

Until, I've glimpsed The Core. I am willing to dedicate my life to guitars, grunge, and scraps of glory for a chance not just to see it again, but to live there.

To most people, it just doesn't make any sense.

It didn't used to make sense to me either.

Born in the 60s, I am an unfortunate member of the Sludge Generation. We missed out on both the initial shock of rock'n'roll in the 50s -- Elvis and all that -- and the rebellious 60s -- Hendrix, Dylan et al. What we got was the sludge: The Doobie Brothers. Queen. Abba. Kansas. Sludge.

Aged, self-indulgent, and for the most part derivative, these groups had nothing that would push a musically inclined kid like me into a pawn shop with 20 bucks and a dream.

Around Christmas of 1976, four greasy kids from Queens, N.Y. changed everything.

The Ramones were at that time a blatantly dumb band, unabashedly cretinous in their outlook. They were oppressively loud. They played at unheard of speeds, in tiny nightclubs.

Hovering over them was a leather-clad guardian angel from another era. The angel's name was Fun. Fun was something the Sludge Generation didn't get much of, up there in the 145th row of Madison Square Garden.

Rock gets defined as music that can be played with only three chords. This is untrue. One will suffice. From a reformative point of view, thought, the Ramones' three-chord theory was the six-string equivalent of Martin Luther's 97 theses.

The first thing that hooks you is the sonic surge, the joyful noise of it all. To stand in a small room with two or three other people and create this magisterial din for the first time is to move an inch or two more toward God.

And then there are electric guitars.

A lot of people own a guitar at some point in their lives. Acoustic, nylon stringed, and probably a lot of mellow strumming - songs about lemon trees, freight trains.

Electric guitars are about trains, too. Train wrecks. I can honestly state I have lived through no more pivotal, life-changing moment than the one in which I first plugged in an electric guitar.

Whether this says more about my sad life or these sad times, I don't know. It is an intensely private moment, a moment of crystallization -- the self dissolves, the ego disappears, the world tilts.

The next thing that happened -- right after I hit my first electric chord -- was feedback. Feedback -- not that ear-bloodying shriek you hear when the mike points the wrong way -- but that plaintive, vicious sweep of sound that began Steppenwolf's "Magic Carpet Ride," that propelled Jimi Hendrix, back in those glory days I was born too late for, is what happens when a given acoustic vibration is amplified to a point where it causes the original source to vibrate in sympathy. Amen.

It wasn't until 1982 and playing rock'n'roll guitar in basements and garages, playing anywhere, any time for any life forms that cared to listen, that The Core sunk in. It was addictive, regenerative and righteous. I came to see it as within my grasp, set in a lush interior landscape, one composed of fans, limousines, unlimited wealth.

(Continued on next page)

RAMONES (continued)

The exterior landscape was one composed of the grunt work of rock: the lugging of amps, the endless driving, the dangerous annui of rehearsing a set until it has been bled of any real emotion or vitality.

And that brings us back to The Core.

Rock'n'roll has little to do with "professionalism," (that odious buzz word of music business hysteresers) or slickness, or intellectualism, or this article, for that matter.

It has to do with sweat. It has to do with standing in a room full of strangers and somehow believing, if just for a moment, that there is no other more important spot on the planet.

It has to do with sitting in your room, alone at night, and feeling chills on your neck, chills that were brought on by a perfect, simple change in a perfect, simple song.

Life offers a point when one decides that this noise this adolescent, adenooidal ritual is going to be a central force in his or her existence. A lot of soul-searching is usually involved. Am I too old? Too fat? Too bald? Too fed up?

I've just reached this point. The Core. I'm going to keep playing until my fingers fall off.

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Reviews

WORLD OF POOH, CAROLINER RAINBOW, GLORIOUS DIN, STICK DOG at MCS, San Francisco, December 14

Some of you are probably already rolling your eyes at the above list of bands: "What in hell is Lawrence doing at one of those South of Market artsy-fartsy scenes? We know he thinks they're all a bunch of pretentious dilettantes, so why is he going to waste more paper telling us the same thing all over again?"

Well, as Gomer Pyle was fond of saying, surprise, surprise. I enjoyed myself quite a bit, and didn't find the people involved to be any more pretentious, in fact, possibly even less so, than those at a typical punk gig.

Of course, a few years ago, the goings-on here would have been considered an integral part of the then-burgeoning punk-new wave-underground scene, but that was before things got split up into so many sub-classifications that only a Ph.D. in punkology could begin to keep track of it all. But now I felt like an observer from another planet, though I did recognize a few familiar faces, and the aliens definitely weren't unfriendly.

Actually, I had a distinct feeling of being in some basement dive around 1966 with a bunch of college students and bohemians on the verge of turning into hippies. **WORLD OF POOH**, the first band up, did nothing to dispel that image, sounding like a very early version of the **VELVET UNDERGROUND**, though maybe a little less discordant. I later learned that this was the group's first gig ever; there's definitely some potential there. Next up was **CAROLINER RAINBOW**, already much loved (and hated) in certain S.F. circles. As much performance art as musical experience, **CAROLINER** has a reputation for assaulting its audience both mentally and physically, so I stood back a ways from the stage. This proved to be a wise decision, as the singer concluded the set by charging into the crowd, using his strap-on dildo to spray unwitting bystanders with a liquid of indeterminate origins.

Much of **CAROLINER**'s music was minimal in structure, if it had any at all, but except for brief intervals wasn't unpleasant. Especially striking were their handpainted costumes and tiaras glowing eerily under black lights. I could see why some people would hate these guys (I use the term loosely;

all the band members wore dresses, but at least one had a beard, so I assume gender is not a major consideration here), but I thought they were hilarious, and maybe even guilty of practicing real art.

GLORIOUS DIN was the band I'd specifically come to see; unfortunately I had to leave to take someone to the bus station and was only able to catch one and a half songs. I was even more bummed when I found out this was to be their last gig, as the singer is splitting from the group. **GD** have been together a while and have put out an album or two, but this was my first experience with them. They've been accused of (or praised for) being a **JOY DIVISION** clone, and they do sound a lot like that group, but they have (had) a character all their own> I'm kicking myself for not getting around to seeing them until now.

STICK DOG, from Iowa City, closed out the evening with a (for me) uneven performance; some songs came dangerously close to the pseudo-art wankings that I'd feared the whole evening would consist of, while others displayed outstanding musicianship producing a gut-wrenching 80s sort of psychedelia. Equipment problems or something of that nature led to an early conclusion of their set, but the night was getting late anyway, and people gradually straggled away.

A word about the MCS gallery: it has a feeling of being a larger version of the Club Foot, and would seem to have the potential for continuing the tradition of great underground shows established by that late and lamented venue.

ZULA POOL, THE LOOTERS at the I-Beam, San Francisco, December 15

Back around 1980 the I-Beam was a gay disco that was having trouble attracting enough customers on week nights, so somebody got the idea of booking punk and/or new wave bands on Mondays. The place was soon jammed nearly every Monday; it didn't even seem to matter that much who was playing. I saw some pretty good shows there myself, and some pretty mediocre ones, too, like the San Francisco debut of England's premier haircut band, **DURAN DURAN**.

But about that time I was in the process of moving to Mendocino, at least in part because of being burnt out on the clothes-makeup-and-drugs consciousness that seemed to be taking over the scene. The last time I went to the I-Beam, somewhere around 1983, was an excruciating nightmare, with new wave secretaries babbling tales of office intrigue and nickel-and-dime dope

dealers trying to inveigle them into the bathrooms for a line of cocaine, all of them seemingly oblivious to the evening's "entertainment", the psychotically ugly junk-noise of Australia's **BIRTHDAY PARTY**.

I vowed never to go back there, and kept that promise until now. I had been thinking about checking out the place again for the last several months, but I kept waiting for a band to play there that might be of some interest to me, but week after week there was nothing but limp college-radio faves or post-punk art-trend crapola. Finally, though, I saw an I-Beam flyer advertising a band that I'd long been planning to see anyway, San Francisco's **LOOTERS**. Great name, even if it does sound a little too much like **LOOKOUTS**, and the first U.S. band to tour post-revolution Nicaragua: it didn't seem to add up to I-Beam material. But let's check it out...

Unfortunately, my arrival at the Haight St. nightspot was ill-timed; the opening band hadn't even started playing, and so I had to sit through what seemed like an interminable (probably no more than 20 minutes in real time) assault of new wave disco and white-boy funk aimed at the swinging singles crowd. My flesh crawls even now, just thinking back to it. Then came **ZULA POOL**. These guys are way lame; they look and sound like they spent a year or two watching MTV and listening to AOR radio and then tried to duplicate every cliché contained therein on the theory that this would somehow land them a major label contract. And well it might; they didn't sound any better or worse than any of the generic Top 40 stuff I occasionally hear.

Then still more disco, until the **LOOTERS** finally took the stage, looking as equally well dressed for guerilla warfare as

for a rock and roll show. The **LOOTERS** are generally categorized as a world beat band, which theoretically means that they draw their inspirations from a broad selection of the (mostly third) world's music. But by far the strongest influence I could detect was Central and South American, and since some of my favorite music comes from those regions, I was immediately sympathetic.

It's hard not to dance to the **LOOTERS**, which gives them another big plus in my book, but unlike most dance bands, the **LOOTERS** have a relentless and uncompromising political message permeating both the lyrics and the between-songs comments. The most significant part of that message to me was the idea of unity among the various peoples of the Americas. As one who finds himself on the verge of bitter tears every time I think of what my country's despicable excuse for a government is doing to the rest of this hemisphere, such a

message is irresistible, especially when you can dance to it. The LOOTERS also have some breathtaking *a capella* harmonies that obviously owe something to the music of the high Andes, but equally much to the songs resonating in the guys' own hearts. The only weakness, and it's a minor one, is, as is often the case with rhythm-based music, the LOOTERS occasionally get into a sustained groove and just jam on it instead of getting on with the story (as in about 95% of all reggae). But all in all, a great band; I hope to see them soon in a more favorable environment (like the Gilman Street Warehouse?) instead of this superannuated disco. But no hard feelings; I imagine the I-Beam pays fairly well, and the boys can't win the revolution on an empty stomach now, can they?

INDIANA SLIM AND THE RED HOTS, at the Crossroads, Laytonville, December 20

People (including myself) like to complain about how Mendocino County is a cultural desert. But they forget that, given our tiny population, we have a remarkable number of uniquely talented individuals. I think of people like singer / songwriter Michael Ferretta, who, if he had chosen to actively pursue a musical career instead of devoting the bulk of his energies to raising a family, could easily have surpassed the likes of Jackson Browne and similar folk-rockers. Another example is the *Anderson Valley Advertiser's* Bruce Anderson, who should and probably will some day win the Pulitzer Prize, and there are quite a few more artists, artisans, and general all-around fine human beings who come perilously close to meriting the catch-all appellation of genius.

Well, there's another one I'm about to hang that handle on. Indiana Slim, who came to Mendocino County as an overtly normal psychology grad and then proceeded to re-invent himself into a hep-talking 50s-style cool cat who is one wizard of the traditional electric guitar.

When Slim talks to you, he uses expressions that you probably haven't heard in the last 30 years, and may never have heard if you're less than a certain age. But it never sounds pretentious or dated, because the man clearly speaks right from the heart. And that's exactly the way he plays his guitar.

Anyone familiar with my musical tastes will know that I have almost zero tolerance for flashy guitar pyrotechnics that serve no purpose but to showcase an individual musician's technical ability. So I find it all the more remarkable that Slim's guitar playing pleases me so much. What it amounts to is that Slim is not bullshitting around, and more importantly, he lets the guitar play him as much as the other way around. And the raw emotion and understanding that comes pouring out can be breathtaking. As his longtime musical and life partner Baby Lee says, "When he's playing his *real* stuff, he can make you cry and come at the same time."

Slim was in fine form this night at the Crossroads, which is clearly becoming the best place for live music in the north county. Baby Lee unfortunately blew an amp early on in the show and so wasn't able to take as much of a part in the proceedings as usual, so this gig became more or less the Indiana Slim show. And that ain't bad; check these guys out first chance you get.

GILMAN STREET WAREHOUSE, the first seven shows, Dec. 31 - Jan. 17

I've been writing about this place since last summer, it seems, and now it's finally open. And wow, what a feeling! So unlike going to a regular club or concert hall; when you can look up and think to yourself, hey, I put that electric wiring in, I helped nail up that wall or paint that door, it's more like having a second home.

And a second family, too; as good as some of the music presented at the warehouse has been, even more important is the feeling of friendship and community that I've found with the people who pitched in to put the place together. Some nights, in fact, I've barely seen any of the bands, being too busy talking with old and new friends. Try and tell me that cooperative effort doesn't work and I'll show you at least one little corner of the world where, right now, it's working just fine.

And the music? Well, I was going to list some of the bands that have played so far, but then I realized that I couldn't do justice to them in such a small space, and I'd be sure to forget some of them and unnecessarily ruffle some feelings. But while there have been a few turkeys, there have also been some outstanding performances. One mildly surprising thing: the groups who have gotten the best receptions so far have often been the more unusual ones, the artsy-experimental types that many people thought would be rudely scorned by the more hardcore crowd. And so far, the warehouse has been fairly successful in attracting a mixture of people that one rarely sees at straight punk shows.

Next question: if you're not already a part of this scene, what are you waiting for? There are shows every Friday and Saturday nights, and meetings Saturday nights at 7 p.m. Anyone can become a member for the lifetime fee of \$2, provided he or she agrees to refrain from violence, vandalism, and the use of drugs and alcohol on the premises. And who knows, you might even get to see the LOOKOUTS there some night.

Oh yeah, to any of you who might have gone to Al's Radiator Shop by mistake, I printed the wrong address last month. It's 924, not 928 Gilman, two blocks west of San Pablo, in Berkeley. And if you have a band, theater group, art project, poetry, any kind of thing that needs an audience, call (415) 648-3561 any day between 3 and 5 p.m. and invite yourself to perform. I'll look forward to seeing you there.

NEUROTICS, *Kickstarting a Backfiring Nation*, LP

This is a totally great live recording of a totally cool English band covering 10 of their old songs and a few new ones. The drumming is totally excellent. The vocals are totally clear and snotty. Totally recommended, dudes!

"Fragile Life": This disgusting poverty is immoral and unnecessary, There's little care for the old who broke their backs making somebody else wealthy year after year. It's always, always the same: the throwing of crumbs to the hungry

...Joe Britz

FORETHOUGHT, *Dejenlos Cruzar Las Fronteras (Let Them Come Across the Borders)*, 7" EP, \$1 to PO Box 880312, San Francisco CA 94188

This local band releases an excellent follow-up to their demo tape with this 5 song EP. The combination of perspective, socially concerned lyrics, and a wide variety of musical influences gives FORETHOUGHT a tight, unique sound. Also comes with a nice sleeve that includes lyrics in both English and Spanish, so to hell with California's recently approved English-only initiative! One more thing: amazingly, this record is being given away for free, so if you happen to meet Chris, Hilary, or Tommy, pick one up and say, "Thanks!" (I hear, in fact, that there was a slight disagreement among band members over charging one whole dollar by mail).

*"Let Them Come Across":
Don't label me,
No government is mine,
I'm a member of humanity*

...Joe Britz

MAD PARADE, *Right Is Right, 7"*, Toxic Shock

These guys have been around for quite a while, and it shows in the tightness and polish that give this record such a crispy sheen. The title song is a catch enough ditty, though nothing that special, but "This Is Life" on the other side is a shredding little slice of pop-trash, replete with the BYO-style whoa-oh-oh-oh choruses that I'm such a sucker for. Also included is a cover of the STONES' "Mother's Little Helpers" that manages to be both cleaner and harder rocking than the original. My only qualms about recommending this record would come from the fact that it seems like a lot of money for only three songs. How about an LP, guys?

...Lawrence

BOMB, *17 Reasons Why*, Cassette, 1334 Jessie, San Francisco CA 94103

This is quite a bit different from the stuff I usually review or listen to, but I find myself liking it quite a bit. It's definitely not hardcore or thrash, and bears only a tangential relationship to punk, but it's definitely underground, in the best sense of the word. Most of the songs are pretty slow, at least in terms of what I'm used to, and often hypnotic (I know some people equate that with "boring", but I'm listening to the tape at 3 a.m. while I type this and it's not putting me to sleep). It's pretty hard to pigeonhole the sound; the song playing right now has echoes of, believe it or not, early TRAFFIC, and as is the case with nearly any post-1980 group that delves into the moody and melancholic, someone is bound to detect a JOY DIVISION influence, but overall BOMB are highly original. They even manage to use a saxophone, one of the most abused (in terms of self-indulgence) instruments in modern music, to create some hauntingly beautiful sounds. And in a sudden departure from the overall tone of the tape, the song playing now distinctly reminds me of the GRATEFUL DEAD in their *American Beauty - Workingman's Dead* period. This band bears watching, and now that they've started gigging in the SF area, I'm looking forward to a chance to check them out live.

...Lawrence

TEN TALL MEN, *Nickelbrain*, 12" EP, Box 7813, Berkeley CA 94707

Another band that's tough to classify, though *Maximum Rockroll*'s Tim Yohannan, who's practically a professional in such matters, had no trouble labelling them "post-punk". Another reviewer called them standard college-radio fare, though I have yet to hear them played over that medium. What I do hear is very loud and very rhythmic, almost-but-not-quite dance music with quirky and individualistic lyrics that shows a lot of musical talent and almost no willingness to cater to prevailing trends. If there's a weakness, it's that the guitarist-singer-songwriter often appears to dominate the proceedings; I'd like to hear more of an ensemble effect, especially with some shared, or at least backing vocals. But overall, an impressive, and creative debut.

...Lawrence

THE M^CGUIRES, *Start Breathing*, LP, Righteous Records, Box 6111, San Francisco CA 94101

My experience with this record was almost enough to make me give up doing reviews at all, because I was once again reminded of how utterly subjective any review has to be. I started out prepared to detest this record before I even put it on the turntable, based mainly on the accompanying promo material, which was an embarrassingly amateurish imitation of your typical Hollywood hucksterism ("These guys are not only the greatest thing since sliced bread, they're self-toasting"). And sure enough, by the time I'd heard the first couple of songs, I was ready to toss it out the window. It sounded limp, whiny, and exactly the sort of post-new wave tripe that KUSF daily pollutes the airwaves with.

But then I was in a really bad mood that day (so what else is new, ask those who know me well). A week or two later, feeling a bit more expansive, I decided to give the M^CGUIRES another chance (after all, they'd given me their record). Guess what? I almost liked it! I've listened to it a couple more times since, and it's still a little limp and whiny, but I guess I feel that way myself sometimes. Anyway, it's not that bad, well recorded and fairly easy to listen to, though I'm not sure I could wholeheartedly recommend that anyone who more or less shares my musical tastes should buy it. Call up your local college radio station and request it instead.

...Lawrence

AND NOW!!! A SPECIAL BONUS!!!
THE FIRST EVER LOOKOUT BOOK
AND MOVIE REVIEWS!!!

LAST OF THE MOE HAIRCUTS - The Influence of the Three Stooges on Twentieth-Century Culture, by Bill Flanagan, Contemporary Books, Chicago, Paper, 129 pages, \$7.95 (way too much).

And with a title like that, you might well ask, why even bother reviewing this book; what could there be to add? Despite the inflated cover price and Mr. Flanagan's occasionally overbearing intellectual arrogance (he is, after all, "self-appointed director of the American Stooze Symposium"), this little tome goes as far as any I have seen in presenting a scholarly

analysis, well grounded in philosophical and scientific theory, of the state of modern culture.

Mr. Flanagan's thesis, as might easily be inferred, is that virtually every salient feature of western civilization can be traced back to and laid squarely at the doorstep of those modern Renaissance men, those twentieth century Leonardos, Larry, Moe, and Curly. But Flanagan does not stop at such easy assertions; listen to an example of his convincing documentation:

Who but the Stooges could have translated Freud to the masses, spreading his example through living example, personifying the wacky id (Curly, of course), the middle-of-the-road ego (that Larry), and the ever-restraining superego (oh, that Moe!). What self-sacrificed! Could we truly understand the great Freud's theories without the Stooges? We think not.

In similar fashion, Flanagan shows how the Stooges defined and shaped such things as literature, sexual mores, politics, art, the papacy, the Iranian revolution, the Ford administration and the CIA (an almost completely Stooze-like endeavor!), and even the most significant cultural development of all, rock and roll. You owe it to yourself to read this book. But don't buy it until this guy lowers the price. In the meantime, go hang out at your local book store and read it there. After all, what would the Stooges do? Probably wait for the movie, come to think of it; have you ever seen any of those lunkheads reading anything more demanding than a racing form?

DEMOCRACY SPAWNS BAD TASTE . . .

Anarcho-peace punks should love this one: a recent visitor to the Southland reports that a Melrose Avenue paraphernalia boutique is selling Frisbees emblazoned with the logo of CRASS, the resolutely anti-capitalist and deadly serious British band that make the RCP look like a frivolous bunch of wankers. Presumably CRASS had nothing to do with such crass commercial exploitation, but then one never knows, do one? But it things like this that make me, unlike most northern Californians, so fond of Los Angeles and the way that it effortlessly embodies everything tasteless and trashy about America (and that's saying a mouthful, isn't it?).

Another note from the high-tack front: *Spin* magazine, the Bob Guccione, Jr. attempt to produce a version of *Rolling Stone* for the 12-and-up set, headlines an article on some new countrypunk band, "Millions of Dead Cows," a clear takeoff on the renowned west coast band MDC (Millions of Dead Cops, Multi-Death Corporation, Millions of Damn Christians, etc.) who have been outspoken exponents of vegetarianism.

SID AND NANCY, movie, directed by Alex Cox

Anyone should have seen it coming; ten years down the road, it's time for the punk nostalgia boom. Only trouble is, movies like this are not likely to make anybody very nostalgic, except maybe those who think there's something romantic or fun about killing yourself on the installment plan.

This is really more of a junkie movie than a punk rock one, and as is the case with most junkie movies, you know from the start how it's going to come out. The main reason I went to see this one (the first in many months) was the director; his last film was the absolute classic "Repo Man." "Sid and Nancy" is nowhere near as good as that, due mostly to its lack of humor and depressing subject matter. The funniest thing I can remember is that the actor playing Johnny Rotten looked and talked more like John Lennon. I had to wonder if that was a conscious statement on the director's part. Hey, I had some fun times back in '77, but this movie sure didn't remind me of many of them.

PunkBEAT

writers smoke long cool reefers
under moonlit rooms under
coffeetables cluttered with bad poetry
musicians smoke the same jay
with long inhaling breaths
like a simmering blue note held
sustained the bass line throbbing low in your gut
painters take a hit and look at you through
splattered eyes their hysteria getting
beautiful van gogh saw mad love blossom
roses with brutal thorns turned steel point
the smoke exhaled floats above their heads
wreathchristlike
they wear their crowns dipped in the poison
they make like badges
given the license to destroy they opt for
the chaos that comes first from entropy then
the bliss of pure energy punkBEAT
my ears ache but the pain is not enough
they beat up punks dont they?
if you smoke a joint with black hipsters
staring at you through yellow brown eyes
hand you the rolled reef with big brown hands
it's wet on the end and somehow you feel
like a real brother to him smoking herb
with his spit it's cool and he buys a bag off ya
beat punk hiphop rasta
what's the dif?
roll my arms in sinks of crushed glass
fill my head with the readings of Ginsberg
playing with the Clash
i read Kerouac till my eyes bleed with mad awakening
punkBeat burns into me like a frenzied barrage of
wild uncontrollable feedback bursting from my amp
from my SG i shake the axe and it responds by changing
tones screaming high A's middle C's
I recite Ferlinghetti
under my coffeetable i am stoned and it isn't enough
i must get straight again
wired into that punkBEAT
endless frenzy a timebomb waiting to explode
my head it explodes
and my painter friends take another hit
they are painter's painters they take color
like i used to take drugs
their eyes are drenched with the stuff they see
colors i read in words and others hear in notes
our thorns dig deeper blood runs down her face
i lick it off
just another wine then the radio goes static

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