

LOOKOUT!

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It stinks, it hurts, it comes in spurts, it's the only thing that makes life worth living, it makes the world go round, it's the greatest, it's a pain, it gives wings to our souls, brings tears to our eyes, and kills us softly to the sound of lush violins.

It's doubtful that the tin pan philosophers will ever run short of sentiments on the subject of love. It's their biggest stock in trade, and like any narcotic drug, one that fuels its own demand. No matter how much of it people get, they'll never be satisfied, and no matter how badly it burns them, they're always ready to give it another try.

Sounds like the ultimate product, doesn't it? And it's got way better P.R. than heroin. Little wonder that everyone's trying to corner the market. Love and its less couth Doppelgänger sex are the true underpinnings of any economy, even more than war and violence, which any dime-store shrink will tell you are just the sublimated versions of the above. After all, when little Johnny marches off to lay waste to the world, what's he planning on doing with all the plunder to be gained? Why, he's going to drag it back home and use it to persuade little Suzie next door to be his everlasting sweet-heart.

But there's more to love than possession and power, isn't there? Well, sure, there's a multi-trillion dollar industry pushing everything from shiny red sports cars to booze and cigarettes to cozy little love nests to disposable diapers. Not to mention its being the sine qua non of fashion, art, entertainment, and just about any other form of mass communication imaginable.

All right, you'll forgive me for being a little cynical on the subject. With a divorce rate ranging from 30 to 50%, and

which would be higher were it not for religious strictures and individual inertia, there's no doubt that the nuclear family is undergoing a bit of a meltdown. But love itself, though the way we express it might change, will always be with us. Right?

Well, maybe. But it's liable to keep getting harder and harder to recognize. Love in the hands of the mass marketers quickly becomes a grotesque caricature of itself.

And in a time when peoples' lives and the rationales behind them increasingly mirror whichever behavior patterns have climbed to the top of the week's Neilsen ratings, love is ever more likely to express itself in terms of the disposable commodities (and lives) displayed by the current soap opera heroes and heroines.

But that's not love at all, you rightly argue, that's just prepackaged lust and acquisitiveness. What about the parents who sacrifice their freedom and some of the best years of their lives so that their children will have a chance to grow up healthy and strong? Isn't that love, with virtually no strings attached? Or what about a Martin Luther King, who knew his life was on the line every time he stepped outside his door, but was willing to offer up his own very existence to the hope that his fellow human beings might some day enjoy greater freedom and happiness? Now we're talking about love.

Yeah, great, you say, but there's more to life than being a martyr. How about some true, everlasting love with the girl or boy of my dreams, the kind I heard about in all those beautiful songs?

Well, don't hold your breath. I believe in true love, too, but I think that the most important thing to remember about love is that it means wanting the best for the other person. That doesn't necessarily mean having him or her by your side every minute; sometimes the best thing you can do for your loved one is to get lost. To harmoniously integrate the needs and desires of two separate individuals is as difficult and implausible an undertaking as I can imagine. That doesn't mean it's not worth trying. HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY!!!



SWEET HOME MENDOCINO

Shuttling back and forth between San Francisco and Mendocino as I've been doing lately, I've been discouraged to see both locales under unrelenting attack from the forces of greed and stupidity. But while San Francisco evokes images of a bloodied fighter, the heart nearly beaten out of her and possibly down for the count, Mendocino is still astir with the spirit of resistance.

I'm proud to be able to tell people in the city about what's going on back in Mendocino, and tell them I have to, because they'll never hear about it through the government and corporate controlled media. By now you must have heard the official line a thousand times:

America is zipped up tight as a militaristic drum, one nation under Reagan. All that protest business of the 1960s is gone forever, and our population is now comprised wholly of beer-drinking bigots, designer-dressed whores, and a Rambo-ized youth eager to exterminate commies for Jerry Falwell.

Never mind that you don't know anyone like that; you just must have some weird friends. I mean, don't you read the paper or go to movies, or God forbid, don't you watch TV? Why, anyone who's anybody is a Republican now...

Here in Mendocino, we know it's not like that. But we exist out on the fringes of the Amerikan empire, and our acts of rebellion, as significant as they may be to us (and those who seek to crush us), run the risk of being snuffed out, like so many colonial uprisings, out of sight and mind of the general public.

You can help keep this from happening, first by being a part of that resistance, but just as importantly, by making sure the rest of the world knows what's going on in our little corner of the biosphere. That has become an important function of the LOOKOUT, now that I have somehow managed to acquire readers all across the United States and in many foreign countries. But even if you can't or don't want to publish your own zine (though why not, all it takes is a typewriter and a xerox machine), you can communicate to your farflung friends and relatives what's really happening hereabouts.

Probably about half of Mendocino's problems could be quickly solved if we could only somehow rid ourselves of that excrescent blot on the landscape known as Ukiah. The seat of county government has, since the last election, been transformed from a relatively benign irritation into a right-wing psycho ward. Graphic illustration of the quality of leadership being imposed on us could be found in an interview with County Agricultural Commissioner Andy DeGrassi which was obtained by the heroic TR Factor for the ANDERSON VALLEY ADVERTISER.

DeGrassi, who has the power to inundate as much of the county as he pleases with toxic pesticides (and has made it clear that he intends to do just that), revealed himself to be barely capable of forming a

coherent English sentence. Perhaps I'm unduly prejudiced, given my love for the written and spoken word, but my experience leads me to believe that an inability to translate thoughts into words usually indicates that the thoughts themselves are deficient. Which is an elaborate way of saying that this DeGrassi character sounds as if the dread apple maggots have been burrowing around in his brain.

Apple maggots are of course the latest cause celebre of the agribusiness types, who think it vile and unnatural that any food crops should be grown without the benefits of modern chemistry. DeGrassi, their local point man, has repeatedly expressed the wish that Mendocino's many organic farmers would take their dirty business elsewhere. And if he gets his way with the massive apple maggot spraying program planned for this summer, he will at the same time succeed in wiping out much of the county's currently organic farmland.

Most of Mendocino's croplands are marginal at best (for legal agriculture) but the higher prices and increasing demand for organic produce have been changing that situation. Our soil may not be the greatest, but it is largely uncontaminated by the pesticides and fertilizers that have turned the Central Valley into a chemical soup. It's also worth noting that much of the current nationwide farm crisis revolves around the large capital expenditures required for the high-tech agriculture favored by corporate America.

Organic farming makes sense economically, ecologically, and nutritionally, but it's a major headache to those who think food production should be concentrated in the hands of a few major corporations. Reversing the trend toward the disappearance of the family farm, organic growers have shown that it is possible (albeit through very hard work) to make a living from plots of twenty acres or less.

If Andy DeGrassi truly was interested in the future of Mendocino agriculture, he would be doing whatever he could to encourage more organic farming. Instead, as he freely admits in the AVA interview, he is prepared to destroy most of our organic cropland to protect Sonoma County commercial apple growers. One would think our burgeoning megalopolitan neighbor to the south was powerful enough without having our own county officials in its service.

The toxic spray threat is one of the most crucial and immediate issues facing Mendocino in the coming year. But it should also serve as an object lesson in what is going to continue happening as long as the current crowd of imbeciles, halfwits, and criminals holds forth from that sickly green asylum on State Street. Libertarians and anarchists revile voting as a means of social change, but it was voting (and the counterculture's refraining therefrom) that got us into this mess. Until the most recent county elections, the Board of Supervisors was at least marginally concerned with the well-being of those of us not in the real estate, asphalt, or toxic waste businesses. Unless someone can figure out a way of seceding without bringing down the wrath of the U.S. Marines, maybe we'd better consider using the power of the ballot.

And as long as you're going down to the polling place anyway, you might want to consider dropping in a vote (or several) for the pride of Elk, Mike Koepf, who has offered himself as a very worthy opponent to our disgrace of a Congressperson, N.G. Bosco. Koepf, who lists among his qualifications the singular (among politicians, anyway) one of being a real human being, is also a highly literate columnist for the sterling ANDERSON VALLEY ADVERTISER. What more could you want?

More CRAP from Laytonville

Readers have been complaining that not much has been heard of late from the Laytonville chapter of Concerned Religious American Parents (CRAP). They will be pleased to know that the Laytonville CRAPPers swung back into action in a big way with the dawning of the new year.

A catered banquet at Laytonville's premier dining establishment, the English Mutton (our society reporter informs us that the menu featured a lo-cal Tuna Helper Melt and a delightful nonalcoholic Grape Flavor-ade Punch), saw local religious and lay leaders unveil a new program aimed at protecting and bettering America's youth.

"Do you know where your children are tonight?" challenged keynote speaker Eleanor Spurton. "At this very moment they could be falling into the hands of child pornographers or drug pushers or left-wing free-thinkers," she warned.

Pastor Normal Moron, of the Community Cretin Church, echoed Mrs. Spurton's refrain, and introduced the CRAP solution to the missing children crisis. "All newborn infants should be branded before taken home from the hospital," he declared. "Branded?" incredulous reporters wanted to know, "You mean like cattle?"

"I don't see why not," responded Pastor Moron, "after all, we brand cattle because they're a valuable resource. How much more valuable are our precious children?" The Rev. Spacy Sturgeon, another prominent cleric, entered the fray on the side of Pastor Moron. "Photographing and fingerprinting children has been helpful to a degree, he said, "but if a child had been branded, a policeman could tell at a glance if a given child was in the company of the adult to whom it belonged."

Another issue taken up by the CRAP members was that of bad language among Laytonville school children, which has apparently reached epidemic proportions. Mrs. Spurton reported a recent incident on the Laytonville Elementary School playground, where a fractious sixth-grader was overheard by her to be "repeatedly using the Lord's name in vain. And then when I approached him about it, he addressed me in the most obscene language imaginable."

The LOOKOUT has been able to locate the sixth-grader in question, and he claims that Mrs. Spurton chased him around with an X-Acto knife, threatening to cut out his tongue in keeping with the dictates of the Holy Bible, and that he was only able to escape her wrath by cowering under a desk for the rest of the afternoon.

The meeting concluded with the announcement of plans to invite the Rev. Jerry Foulsmell, leader of the Moron Majority, to come to Laytonville this summer to conduct a revival service and hopefully to help rid the area of "un-American" types. A collection was taken up to help toward the purchase of new white robes for the event.

San Francisco Beat

WORKING FOR THE CLAMPDOWN...

The City has a new police chief, another product of the Irish Catholic Mafia that gave us our previous top cop, the affable bumbler Con Murphy, along with some less humorous enforcers like Dan White.

Frank Jordan, the new man on the beat, has made it clear that, like many of his religious bent, he sees policemen as priests with guns, whose job it is to enforce the moral standards of the state-church apparatus. His pronouncement that SF's major law enforcement problem consists of drugs will come as a surprise to many City residents who are afraid to venture outside their homes for fear of being violently assaulted.

The purported rationale behind narcotics crackdowns is that addicts commit a disproportionate amount of crimes to feed their habits. But as the LOOKOUT, along with many other organs of common sense, has pointed out, the only possible result of stricter drug enforcement is higher drug prices, which simply means that junkies have to steal even more to meet their daily quota. What's more, San Francisco's myopic narc squad has always concentrated its attention on marijuana users and dealers, who as a group are only slightly more likely to go around mugging old ladies than other old ladies are.

Lazy and incompetent cops love the drug business, of course, because it generates big headlines and big amounts of cash, some of which inevitably stick to the fingers of the erstwhile guardians of public morality. But meanwhile, whole sections of The City remain no-man's-lands, where the police, if they appear at all, glide through occasionally in hermetically sealed copmobiles, constituting an almost negligible threat to real criminals.

Has it escaped everyone's notice that exponential increases in violent street crime began about the same time cops started disappearing from the sidewalks and into cars and undercover disguises? Walking beats may be the least romantic part of police work, but history has shown that it works.

But the Police Department ultimately reflects the priorities of our Jewish den mother Dianne Feinstein, and she has demonstrated again and again that foremost among them is the creation of a sanitized environment in which her corporate backers can maximize their profits. Since most of the downtown tycoons and an ever increasing number of their serfs are safely ensconced in the suburbs, we can't expect her to be too concerned with the welfare of ordinary San Franciscans, who have become little more than exploitable commodities, to be squeezed for all they're worth and discarded.

HEY BUDDY, CAN YOU SPARE TWENTY DOLLARS FOR BUS FARE...

On the topic of squeezing those least able to afford it, Mayor Fineswine has apparently just pulled off an \$11.3 million swindle that should have landed her in the hoosegow, but will probably only result in the further dismantling of the already pathetically inadequate Muni system.

Honestly, I'm as tired of writing about the subject as my readers probably are of hearing about it, but this latest Feinstein ripoff is so high-handed and blatant that I can barely contain myself from stomping over to her Presidio Terrace mansion and drop-kicking her prim little rear end somewhere out into the Pacific Ocean.

In seven years our Wall Street centerfold of a mayor has tripled the Muni fare while almost halving service. The latest round of extortion took effect January 1, allegedly to forestall still more service cuts. Three weeks later came the announcement that those cuts were going to happen anyway.

And what about the \$12.3 million generated by the fare hike? Oh, well, buried deep in a CHRONICLE story come the revelation that Feinstein has confiscated all but a million of it for her own purposes. You know, for more important things, like building a new stadium for zillionaire Bob Lurie's San Francisco Midgets, an alleged baseball team, or tearing down the Embarcadero Freeway (producing more clients for nonexistent Muni services), or bribing still more corporations to come join in the rape and plunder of what's left of San Francisco.

What it amounts to is a new \$11.3 million tax imposed by personal fiat and falling only on Muni riders, who as a group are probably among the least able to pay. Under Proposition 13, any new tax must be approved by two thirds of the voters. This one never even came to a vote. The odds of Feinstein being called to account for this egregious thievery are close to nil; those who are sufficiently powerful to force the mayor to adhere to the law are beyond worrying about mass transit. Like Fineswine herself, they mostly cruise around in limousines provided by fare-paying Muni riders.

Need I say it again: the private automobile is killing San Francisco. Let's get these polluting, destructive things off the streets and replace them with free, reliable public transit.

WHAT IT MEANS TO SAY, "I AM A REPUBLICAN"

- a) I am stupid, greedy, arrogant, and prepared to destroy anyone or anything to maintain my position of power and privilege.
- b) I am stupid.

NOSTALGIA IS A FASCIST PLOT

...from a wall at 16th and Market

AMERIKAN OBSCENE

Word comes that VP George Bush hopes to buttress his 1988 presidential ambitions by making a guest appearance on the popular cops-and-cocaine TV show MIAMI VICE. Bush reasons, probably correctly, that there are a lot of votes to be swayed among the young and comatose who comprise the audience of the video winner of the 1980s moral bankruptcy sweepstakes (no easily attained distinction).

Richard Nixon may have swung the extremely close 1968 election in his favor with his cameo on the then-hit LAUGH-IN. The sad fact is that so many Americans have their reality determined for them by that vacuum-packed box in their living room that even Mr. Whipple or the Ty-D Bowl man could probably haul in a substantial number of votes.

Apropos of TV reality, it was recently reported that Nancy Reagan, often thought to have as much or more to do with running the country as her somnambulist husband, had sent a get-well card to an ailing character on a popular soap opera. Not to the perfectly healthy actress who portrayed the character, but to an imaginary person who exists only in TV-land.

Television producers say this is not all that unusual; soap opera personages regularly receive thousands of letters, some as extreme as death and suicide threats, whenever the twists and turns of plot ruffle the sensibilities of the viewing public. But one likes to think such reality dysfunctions occur mostly in bon-bon gnawing housewives in Cleveland, Ohio, not among those running the country.

But back to George X. Bushman... If this pea-brained hyena ever manages to ascend to the highest office in the land with the willing assent of the American public, I think the time will have come to seriously consider bailing out of here while the getting is still good. As much as I loathe Ronald Reagan and everything he stands for, I can at least see why some of the less deep thinkers among us would find him an attractive candidate. But...George (Gee golly whiz, what am I supposed to stand for this week?) Bush?!? The man has all the scruples (and charm) of a dog in heat. On the day that he begins to appear to have a serious chance of being elected President, I think the Australian consulate will be hearing from me.

OH HELP ME, PLEASE DOCTOR...

While Americans were treated to more titillating glimpses into their President's rectal cavity, Ronald ("I'm all heart") Reagan celebrated his latest excursion into the all expense-paid (by you and me) health care by announcing plans to further cut benefits for Medicare and Medicaid patients.

Amerika continues to stand virtually alone among the industrialized nations in saying to its people: "Your money or your life." Europeans find incomprehensible stories of people dying as a result of being refused admission to a hospital for lack of funds.

The franchised monopoly run by the American Medical Association provides some of the world's best health care to those who can afford it, but millions of less privileged Americans get about the same concern as their fellow peasants in Africa or South America. Making health a commodity to be bought and sold not only prices it out of the reach of many, it also debases the quality of the medical profession by placing a higher value on competitiveness and aggressiveness than on compassion and caring.

If we must have a government at all, providing a national health system that is free to all should be one of its very first responsibilities. A few less doctors being able to drive Mercedes and a lot of insurance agents having to get honest jobs is a small price to pay for what should be a fundamental human right.

WE'VE ALREADY GOT MORE OIL THAN WE KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH ANYWAY...

The U.S. Government announced that it was likely to lower fuel economy standards for 1987 and 1988 cars because they were "too hard" on automakers. No mention was made of how hard massively expanded offshore drilling or fighting a war to protect Mideast oil fields might be on the rest of us.

Some solutions to various foreign policy dilemmas:

It was once calculated that for the amount of money expended in the futile attempt to bomb, burn, and poison Vietnam back into the Paleolithic Age, we could just as easily have buried the Viet Cong under a rain of brand new Rolls Royces. And if we'd been considerate enough to attach parachutes to the luxury autos and stuffed their trunks with cash, the rebel leaders no doubt would have been transformed into the sort of arrogant plutocrats that Amerika prefers to see in charge of its third world fiefdoms.

But apparently we're not content to control half the world's wealth. We also seem to have this deep-seated need to kill. The third world provides us with more than raw materials and cheap labor; it also furnishes a boundless reservoir of faceless human beings to be systematically slaughtered to placate our intrinsic blood lust.

How else to explain our idiotic and barbaric actions in Central America? It takes no political genius to realize that the problem down there has nothing to do with communists, whether of the Cuban or Russian variety, nor with contras, guerillas, Contadora processes,

nor any of the other clinically meaningless concepts bandied about by the network newsmakers.

It's as simple as this: sucked dry by corporate imperialism, frequently backed up by the U.S. Marines, the people of Central America are desperately poor. So desperate they'll risk anything, be it their lives, or merely the chance that the right-wing dictatorships they've always known will be replaced by left-wing dictatorships.

Under a foreign policy guided by the mere rudiments of morality, we would alleviate that poverty by returning at least some of the vast wealth that the United States has stolen from Central (and South) America. As it stands, millions, soon to be billions of gringo dollars are heading south these days. Unfortunately, tragically, nearly all of those dollars are in the form of guns, bombs, napalm, and state of the art killing machines.

There is a sort of macabre logic, I suppose, to attacking poverty by killing all the poor people. But what if the planes we daily send out over the countryside of El Salvador carried, instead of bombs, bags of food or tools, or, for that matter, dollar bills, all carrying the legend: A gift of the North American people to their brothers and sisters of Central America? What if the contra squads snuck into Nicaraguan villages not to blow up schools and hospitals, but to leave surreptitious gifts of books and medicine?

Why not, indeed? I am sick to my soul of the endless parade of death manufactured by the U.S. Government in my name.

Any right-wing zealot unlikely enough to be reading the LOOKOUT by now is probably frothing at the mouth, fuming to the effect that here I go again running down this great country of ours while not saying a word about what those murderous Russians are doing to the brave freedom-loving people of Afghanistan.

Well, consider it said: the so-called communism of the Soviet Union feeds on the same sort of death and plunder that fuels our capitalist, or as it is sometimes ironically known, our free-market system.

There is some evidence, though, that Russia's brutal incursion into its neighbor is having some of the same effects on Soviet society that the Vietnam debacle did on ours (though the lessons we so painfully learned seem to be wearing off awfully quickly). Many observers believe the Russians to be looking for a way out of Afghanistan, and that they will eventually follow Amerika's Vietnam example and simply pack their bags and go home.

Despite the propaganda being ground out by Amerika's media apparatus (of which Hollywood is becoming an especially effective component), the Russian people are no more thrilled than we were to see their sons coming home dead and maimed from a pointless war. If we had any rational beings in charge of public policy, we would be exploiting that burgeoning discontent by filling

Voice of America transmissions with anti-draft messages and 60s protest music. Instead we churn out a steady diet of Star Wars, massive military buildups, and nonsense about evil empires.

For all the right-wing claptrap he spouts, Ronald Reagan has done more to turn the United States into a monolithic Soviet-style garrison state than the whole Russian army could have ever done. Even our popular art is degenerating into the cartoonish "social realism" that we have always ridiculed in the communist world. The wave of moral bankruptcy engulfing American political and cultural life is starting to accomplish the hitherto unimaginable: making the Soviet Union appear as a viable alternative.

Not to the rabidly anticommunist American people, of course; a century of indoctrination is not quickly undone. But in large parts of the third world, and even among our European "allies" (our "satellites", the Russians could justifiably claim) people are starting to say, "Hey, this Gorbachev guy actually seems more reasonable than that trigger-happy cowboy in the White House."

And while I'm hardly ready to join the Mickey Gorbachev fan club (when he gets out of Afghanistan, opens the borders, and ends all restrictions on free speech: and assembly, I'll think about it), I must admit he seems to be making a more sincere effort than Ronald Reagan toward ending the threat of nuclear war. But then, I've probably just been lulled into a stupor by the endless barrage of communist disinformation.

LETTERS TO THE LOOKOUT

Dear Larry:

I received the sample copies of the LOOKOUT and thoroughly enjoyed them. In my younger days I used to dream of putting out just such a paper, but time and money were in short supply (I was a single, working mother with four children!); today, I have plenty of time and perhaps a little more money, but energy is lacking. However, it makes me feel very good to know that the LOOKOUT is on the scene and I send you my best wishes for a long and fruitful undertaking.

I admire your lively style and agree with most of the ideas you express--perhaps that is why I want to subscribe. But I did feel that your remark about the men in the military being "the dregs of society" was a too-quick judgment, not very well thought out. It's true that those who need authority in their lives, both the sadists and the masochists, are attracted to such an organization. But there are also plenty of down-and-outers such as blacks and poor whites who have no other place to go. Perhaps three squares a day is better than street life for them. I, of course, am referring to the enlisted men and not the fellows in the elite officers'

corps. The enlisted men are, generally speaking, victims twice-over. Victims of a cruel, ruthless system before they enlist and victims again of a brutalizing military system after they join up. The point I'm making is that more time and effort should be spent trying to change our socio-political system rather than kicking the victims.

Again, best wishes!
Dorothy Hardin
McMinnville OR

Dear Dorothy,

I agree that the bulk of military recruits are the victims of a cruel, ruthless system, but that does not absolve them of the moral responsibility to refrain from killing their fellow human beings, who more often than not are even worse off. What is the difference between a young man who seeks to better himself by going off to Central America and murdering peasants and another who makes a living robbing and killing folks in his own home town, except that the former commits his crimes under official auspices? LL

Dear Larry,

Great issue. Your lead essay (Macho America, LOOKOUT #13) is right on the money. Keep up the good work.

In solidarity,
Bruce Anderson
Boonville CA

Dear Friend

Hi. I'm a 16 year old girl from Sacramento and I was really inspired by your Laytonville scene report in MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL #32. I think it's great that you can have something going in such a remote place (despite how big or small the scene may be) and it sounds like your scene must be really tight. Sometimes the smaller it is, the better, because you can avoid a lot of the competitive "macho-er" and "punk-er" than thou attitudes that prevail in the bigger scenes. Furthermore, I think it's great that you have a band member that's in elementary school! Lately it seems pretty hard to avoid age-ism, with a lot of the older ("more established") punks putting down the newer ones, saying they're "trendies". We can actually add a lot of new ideas. Anyway, I think your attitude is great.

About myself, I'm rather new to the scene. I've only been going to shows since May (to see the DEAD KENNEDYS and SUBHUMANS) and I've gone to every show since. Sacramento has a show about every month, but over this Christmas vacation I've seen CHRIST ON PARADE (have you seen THE YUMMIES? They have a ferocious sound and a great female vocalist) and night before last I saw YOUTH OF TODAY, DR. KNOW, and SOCIAL DISTORTION. YOUTH OF TODAY were interviewed in MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL #32, and I really like their positive attitude.

Anyway, I see a lot of stupidity and hypocrisy in the scene, but in many other ways I think it's great and I'm really glad I'm getting involved. One thing that really bothers me is the sexism in the scene. Actually, it's everywhere, but I'm really sick of seeing all the girls sit back "pretty" at the shows-- personally I think all the make-up and hair goop is nauseating--and not get into the music. Approximately 400 people go to shows, and I'm the only girl who thrashes. Even during the 7 SECONDS song "Not Just Boys' Fun" only one other girl came out. I've found that thrashing is what makes the shows. I couldn't just sit and listen to the music!

Last, at this point I'm still developing my musical tastes, but my current faves are UNITY (positive, 7 SECONDS sounding), OFFENDERS, D.R.I., BAD RELIGION, CONFLICT, HUSKER DU, 7 SECONDS, SOCIAL DISTORTION, etc. My tastes are very flexible at this point. I don't really like metal, but it's OK to the current D.R.I. sense.

One last thing. I'm kind of curious about the "hippies" that live in your area. Are they kind of burn-outs? Or is there any kind of peace activity there (you know, Central America, the arms race)? I've been a peace activist since I was 13. I've founded my own youth peace group here in Sacramento (45 members, no punks!) and we've put on demonstrations at our local air force base, etc. I've been arrested at protests four times since I was 14, and while I've seen no results from that, I have seen a lot more people becoming involved in the movement (though it seems a lot more conservative than the movement in the 60s).

Anyway, enclosed is a 90 min. tape (fill what you can with the LOOKOUTS) \$2, and an extra stamp for your zine. Keep up the good attitude.

Good luck, and peace,
Emily
Sacramento CA

Well, local hippies, what should I tell Emily about you? Burn-outs? I personally found her letter among the most inspiring I've received since I started the LOOKOUT.

LL

Dear Larry,

Keep up the good work and send me some more of the LOOKOUT. Your comments on the Dan White case (LOOKOUT #11) were especially good.

Donald Risley
Pennsauken NJ

Dear LL:

As long as you are smart to the dictator-loving Catholics, you're in my camp. The San Francisco police force always was Catholic, gung-ho, and the worst bunch of bastards in law (!??) enforcement.

Reagan, Meese, and Shultz are more of the same.

Sincerely,
Dennis
Campbell CA

Dear LOOKOUT:

OK, punk underground if you must. But how about steering some of your devotees to Bach, Handel, Beethoven, Mozart. They, too, have written music worth exploring, and most of it is "listener-friendly".

Best wishes,
Jan Winter (Mr.)
Accokeek MD

Dear Jan,

I don't mean to slight your guys, it's just that I feel they get adequate coverage elsewhere. More importantly, I don't cover the punk scene just for the music (though it's the type I personally prefer), but also because it's the only youth movement I know of that successfully combines politics and culture into a creative alternative to the sterile fascism enveloping our land.

LL

ON THE FAST TRACK TO NOWHERE: A Yuppie Diary

(Ed. Note: Our erstwhile correspondent failed to get his copy in on time and was last seen disappearing into a seedy South of Market dive with his new wave girlfriend. We hope he'll be back in time to continue his gripping tale in the next LOOKOUT.)

MUSIC CAN MAKE YOU STUPID

I was going to write about how the dominant male ego played such a big role in keeping most music boring and repetitive, but not wanting to be boring and repetitive myself, I think I'll just leave it at that and go right to the reviews (there are a bunch of them). But I think I'll come back to the subject in a future issue.

Reviews

THE YUMMIES, FOOLISH MORTALS, VIOLENT COERCION, CHRIST ON PARADE, STICK AGAINST STONE, YOUTH OF TODAY at the New Method, January 10

Excellent! The New Method is the way best music spot I've seen in a while. I don't know why it took me so long to make it over to this converted Emeryville warehouse (well, I'm sure its being in Emeryville had a lot to do with it), but I'm glad I finally did.

This place is run by and for punks, and it shows. There's a palpable feeling of community, and a decided absence of the mindless violence and destructiveness that have ruined so many venues in the past. It hasn't got a whole lot of room, but only devoted subterranean types are likely to venture into these nether realms of the mysterious East Bay, anyway.

I arrived as THE YUMMIES were setting up. As it turned out, they spent a lot more time setting up than they did playing. THE YUMMIES are from Sacramento, I believe, and ordinarily have a woman lead singer whom I've heard good things about. But this night she couldn't be there for some reason, and her place was taken by a guy named Uji (sp?) who did a creditable job considering that he hadn't rehearsed with the band and was singing his own lyrics to THE YUMMIES' music. The music itself seemed intended to irritate the audience (at least the circus calliope-style keyboard parts), as did the stage act ("Hi, we're THE YUMMIES and we love you"). They concluded their set after what seemed like about two songs by tossing Snickers bars to the audience. I think they were trying to demonstrate affection by this gesture, but carcinogenic chemical and white sugar concoctions? It's not only the thought that counts, guys.

FOOLISH MORTALS did pretty well considering that only half the band showed up. A guitar player and bassist had to be drafted from the audience and somehow managed to sound like it wasn't the first time they'd played together. The drummer did an excellent job of keeping a solid rhythm going, and also wins the award for the night's biggest mohawk. Maybe this pickup version of FOOLISH MORTALS should stick together; I enjoyed them.

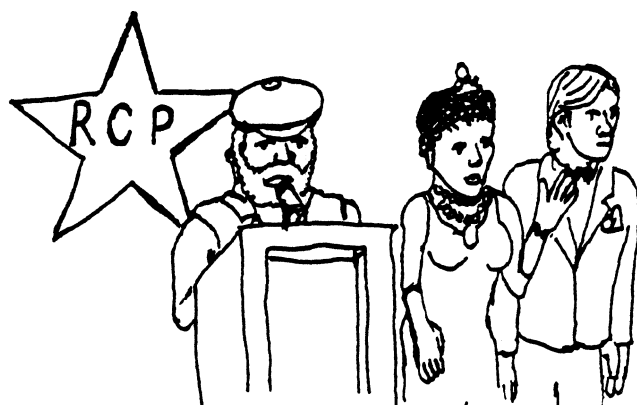
This was supposed to be the final show for VIOLENT COERCION, and they ripped. I was sorry I hadn't seen them before. I don't know why they're breaking up, either. Maybe they thought they were getting too good. Their set saw the best thrashing of the night, too. I can't think of anything else to say about them except that I really enjoyed their set.

This was the third time in the last couple months that I'd seen CHRIST ON PARADE, and each time they've gotten a lot better (in my opinion; one of their long-time fans told me he couldn't believe how lame they sounded). The big news is that the guitarist with the sideways mohawk has cut it off (the mohawk) and has apparently been cured of his insane desire to play guitar solos. That by itself has resulted in a vast improvement in CHRIST ON PARADE's sound. One curious thing: hardly anybody thrashed during their set. Maybe they were still thrashed out from VIOLENT COERCION.

STICK AGAINST STONE were kind of out of place on a mostly thrash night. They play a very rhythmic but relatively quiet sort of music with politically correct lyrics (sorry, did that sound sarcastic?). I'm tempted to say that it falls under the heading of world beat, but I've never heard any official world beat music, so I can't say for sure. The best I can say about them is that they mean well.

YOUTH OF TODAY have almost everything going for them but a sense of humor. Incredibly powerful, with intelligent and constructive lyrics, this "militant straight-edge skinhead band," as they had been billed, never cracked a smile during their intense set. Even temporary drummer Kevin Seconds, who normally sports a grin capable of melting a cast iron heart, looked uncharacteristically dour. By the way, ace photographer Murray Bowles gave me the best capsule description of the 7 SECONDS singer that I've ever heard when he referred to Kevin as, "the Leo Buscaglia of punk rock." Buscaglia, for you non-PBS viewers, is an unctuous New Age snake oil salesman who believes that all human problems can be solved by increased hugging. Honest, Kevin, we were just kidding.

But oh yeah, YOUTH OF TODAY... The singer had some really good things to say in between songs, especially when he silenced the usual "Shut up and play!" heckler by explaining in no uncertain terms that the punk scene was about more than just music. He talked, or rather shouted, in staccato bursts much like YOUTH OF TODAY's songs. If this band could just learn to laugh at itself even a little bit, it would be totally overwhelming. Even still, they represent what I hope to see a lot more of on the punk scene.



AS YOU know all our money is turned over +
the Masses so they can better their lives.
And here they are Mr and Mrs. Masses.

KILL TREE
KILL TURKEY
MERRY X-MAS

graffito seen on Fillmore St.

From CIRCLE A
PC Box 5714
Atlanta GA 30345

RABID LASSIE, CLOWN ALLEY, at the Club Foot, January 18

Ever since I heard a tape of RABID LASSIE on the MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL radio show, I'd been wanting to see them. They sounded real young and real full of positive energy, something the jaded punk scene needs way more of. Unfortunately, they were not at their best at this show for a couple of reasons. Still, I was able to detect a lot of potential in this group, and I think if they stick together and keep practicing, they could become one of the Bay Area's best bands.

Though the Club Foot bears a certain resemblance to the New Method, especially in size, its energy is way different, tending much more toward the drunkcore scene. So a lot of RABID LASSIE's positive qualities went right over, around, or through what there was of a crowd. Also, the vocals were muffled and indistinct, and when you can't hear the vocals clearly, RABID LASSIE start to sound a little generic, which they really aren't at all.

On their last song the vocals came through better, and they were really melodic. In fact, I picked up a distinct 7 SECONDS sound. Go check out this band when they play at New Method on February 22. I think they'll be a lot better.

CLOWN ALLEY has been getting a lot of attention lately; they've got a cassette out, and have been playing quite a few gigs. But this was the first time I saw them, and I can't say I was too impressed.

Oh, they can play all right; in fact, they're outstanding musicians. But what does it all add up to? Some very tight thrash along with some slower numbers, some very flashy performances, a lot of energy in the crowd, which had gotten a lot bigger by now, and still it left me feeling a bit empty and unfulfilled.

Though the vocals were clearly miked and the singer was probably the best performer of the lot, I don't remember a single word of the lyrics. Why? Either I wasn't functioning at full capacity or CLOWN ALLEY didn't have much to say.

It may have been me, I'm willing to admit. Much of the set was ruined for me by some guy who was pathetically drunk and who decided he wanted to fight with me because I told him to stop tackling me and trying to

drag me down onto the floor of the pit (he was doing it to everybody, but I was the only one who asked him to quit it). His friends told me he was a real nice guy when he wasn't drunk. Where have I heard that before?

THE IDIOT, VOMIT LAUNCH, CHILD SUPPORT, SOCIAL UNREST at the New Method, January 24

I probably shouldn't even be reviewing this show at all because I didn't have a very good time and I don't want to take it out on the bands. In fact, thinking about it makes me wonder whether any critic can ever be truly fair, because like most people, they have their own idiosyncratic mood swings that seem to operate independently of whatever's going on around them.

Symbolic of how the night went for me was my missing the bus back to San Francisco and having to wait for an hour on a chilly Emeryville street corner without benefit of a coat. Now can I blame the musicians for that? No, it was more a case of, as BOB DYLAN sang 20 years ago, where "...people just get uglier and I have no sense of time."

Now what's that have to do with anything, you might well ask? Let's just talk about the show. The crowd was a little sparse, maybe because people were saving their money for the following night's 7 SECONDS show, which ended up being cancelled. It was also more diverse, maybe a little older and artier than the teenage thrash gang that predominated at my first New Method show, possibly because this was a benefit for the Berkeley fanzine BRAVEAR.

First up was (were?) THE IDIOT, definitely more diverse, older, and artier. They started by announcing that they'd been accused of being a skinny-tie band, which I don't think they really were, though they did have a keyboard and more than one tone setting on their guitar. They obviously didn't take themselves too seriously and engaged in lot of self-deprecating humor, most of which wasn't deserved. While they didn't exactly set the house on fire, they got a moderately warm reception.

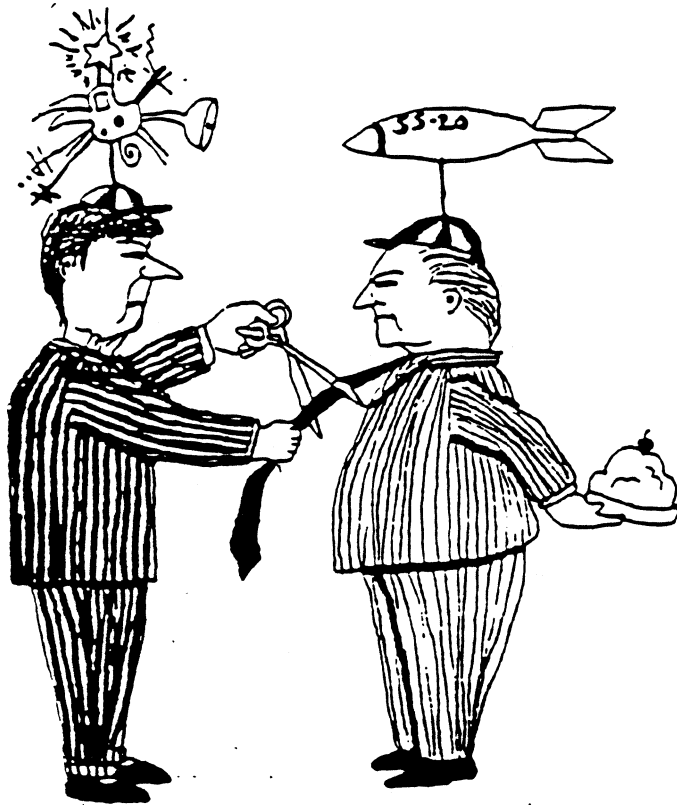
VOMIT LAUNCH hardly live up to their name, being a fairly melodic, almost pretty sounding band. I wanted to like them just because of the fact they hail from Chico, a city I have a strange affinity with (I've never been there, but the only TV station that penetrates to my Mendocino mountain home comes from that strange mythical land and I feel like I've walked its streets in another life or something...oh, shut up, Lawrence, and get back on the subject).

Well, I couldn't get too excited about VOMIT LAUNCH because they were kind of slow and mellow, except for a manic (and great) drummer who I'd swear was wearing a long-haired hippie wig. The lead singer wore mens' pajamas and was quite attractive except for the cigarette constantly protruding from her mike-holding hand. Maybe FRANK SINATRA can get away with it, but most other singers shouldn't even try. What was VOMIT LAUNCH singing about? I don't know.

CHILD SUPPORT had some good political lyrics and a tight driving sound. But I still couldn't get very excited about them, and that was probably more my fault than theirs. I promise to go see them again when I'm in a better mood.

Headliners SOCIAL UNREST hardly need reviewing; everyone already knows they're one of the best bands in northern California. Their set saw the first serious thrashing of the night, but by this time I was so lost in my own existential nightmare that I didn't even join in. So that's why I missed the bus and didn't get back to San Francisco till three in the morning. I probably should have been home working on the LOOKOUT, anyway.

RONNIE AND MIKEY ENGAGE IN FRANK AND EARNEST
DISCUSSION ON THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD



Graphic from WORTHLESS, the zine that proves that deep within the harsh concrete bowels of New York City there still beats a passionate human heart. Write:

Joe Britz
67-11 Fort Hamilton Pkwy
Brooklyn NY 11219

GRATEFUL DEAD at Kaiser Auditorium, Dec. 31
(All right, I wasn't actually there, but I watched some of it on TV)

Long-time LOOKOUT readers will know that the DEAD fall only slightly behind the Reagan administration and global corporate imperialism as my favorite targets of abuse. I really don't have that much against the old geezers; in fact, between 1968 and 1980 I probably saw them at least 25 times. But the last couple of times, they not only put me to sleep; I woke up with a severe headache.

"But they were just going through a bad time then," insisted the local cabezas muertas, "they're way better now." And I was willing to give them another chance, as soon as someone provided me with a ticket, since for years I have abided by a vow to avoid further enriching Bill Graham, the all-powerful Daddy Warbucks of San Francisco commercial rock (at 25 bucks a pop, and up to a hundred on the black market, this concert was obviously meant mainly for yuppies and dope dealers).

But it was nice of Bill to let us peasants see his boys on TV, even if I only had a beat up old black and white. The first thing I saw when I got the set tuned in was Jerry Garcia's stomach. I mean it took up pretty much the whole screen. When the camera pulled back to show us the rest of him, I thought there must be something wrong with the picture, because he was playing this tiny guitar that looked like a kid's toy.

But no technical difficulties here: the dude really is that fat. He must have doubled in size since the last time I saw him. The guy really ought to take better care of himself, because without him there's no GRATEFUL DEAD, and where else are the rest of those guys going to get jobs at their age?

All right, I guess that's enough personal slurs for now: let's get down to the music. Well, the DEAD are much improved since the last time I saw them in 1980. In fact, at times they were outstanding. I could have done without the twenty-minute drum solo, but the crowd seemed to love it. Of course, from the degree of dilation observable in their pupils, I suspect they were nearing quite a few things that escaped my notice.

The DEAD themselves were hardly in a frenzied trance state; to them it was just another night at the office. In their earlier days the types and combinations of chemicals coursing through their collective blood streams played a large role in whether the performance would be transcendent or embarrassing, but these days I get the impression that they confine most of their drug use to offstage locales (like Golden Gate Park, Jerry?).

But the old-timers played well and even rocked out at times, and the audience danced and had a great time, and I can't sneer at that. Nor can I put them down for initiating and maintaining a sense of tradition, something rare in these transitory times, with their annual New Year's Eve spectacles. In fact, assuming the world doesn't blow itself up and Jerry doesn't eat himself to death, the DEAD are well on their way to becoming the GUY LOMBARDO ORCHESTRA of the LSD generation.

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