

Big Important Stuff in this Issue: LAYTONVILLE IN THE YEAR 2000, PERESTROIKA IN THE USA, EMERALD TRIANGLE AND SAN FRANCISCO UPDATES, MEXICO, NICARAGUA, THE DEATH OF GILMAN STREET, NORTHERN CALIFORNIA UNDERGROUND MUSIC NEWS AND GOSSIP, AND A WHOLE BUNCH OF SIMILARLY CRUCIAL INFORMATION

# LOOKOUT!

"The Solar Powered Zine"

Fall 1988

Number 32



Sweaty World Issue:  
Surviving The  
Greenhouse Effect (Or  
Should We Bother?)

# NEWS FROM ALL OVER

New York... The new logo CBS is using for its coverage of the 1988 campaign may have started out as a good old fashioned American eagle, but it appears to have metamorphized into an ugly, angular stylization that bears an uncanny resemblance to the Big Bird that along with the swastika graced everything German during the years of the Third Reich. Coincidence? Very little happens by accident in our state-controlled media. Anyway, it's widely known that the C in CBS stands for CIA. You can probably figure out yourself what the other two letters stand for.

New York... Tompkins Square Park is not exactly a prime piece of real estate. Oh sure, it's got a great location, smack in the middle of the rapidly gentrifying Lower East Side, and the landscaping, though a little on the shabby side, provides a pleasant respite from the relentless brick and asphalt that surround it.

But oh, those tenants! Loud, shabbily dressed, making the worst sort of impression on potential buyers in the neighborhood. Some of the undesirables merely hang out in the park on hot summer nights because it's one of the only places in the city to get some fresh air. Others have moved right in, because they can no longer afford to live anywhere else in New York.

Manhattan property values have been soaring, but there's always room for improvement. Enter the administration of Mayor Ed Koch. Now Mayor Koch is an old time New Yorker, and as such he has learned to put up with lots of little unpleasanties that come with life in the big city. Lousy subways, garbage in the streets, rats doing tap dance revues down lower Broadway, and the largest homeless population of any city in the industrialized world, well, he can live with that. After all, this is *New York*. If you can't take the heat, skedaddle on back to Omaha.

But there are some things up with which the long-suffering mayor is not going to put. And right near the top of that list is the failure of real estate prices to escalate at the absolute maximum possible rate. So when yuppie newcomers to the Lower East Side started griping that their newly converted condos in the Tompkins Square vicinity were not moving as fast as they could because of those unsightly people who refused to go away, the mayor was quick to lend a hand, ordering that city parks be closed after 1 a.m. and directing police to enforce the curfew.

What ensued was one of the most vicious riots New York has seen since the 1960s, with hundreds of police officers fighting a pitched battle for most of the night, and clubbing or otherwise brutalizing dozens of innocent passersby (also a popular 60s tactic). The police ultimately succeeded in clearing the park, but the low-lives and degenerates who congregate there won the more important victory, at least for now, with public opinion forcing Mayor Koch to temporarily suspend his order closing the

parks. Yuppies and other real estate speculators are now discussing other possibilities; a popular idea involves setting up snipers on neighboring rooftops to pick off obnoxious park denizens. Koch has not yet said whether he will allow city police to participate in this new program.

Another version of how the Riot of Tompkins Square came about is offered by Mykel Board in his *Maximum Rocknroll* column; he claims that the whole thing was started by Harris, the Christ-cum-Manson-like singer of the wildly unpopular Letch Patrol in order to gain publicity for his band.

Santiago... Democracy in action, US style... Fifteen years after he was installed in power by the CIA, Chile's military dictator Augusto Pinochet got around to calling an election of sorts, asking Chileans if they wanted him to continue as president. What's remarkable is not that the electorate gave back a resounding "No" vote, but that the election was held at all.

Chile's last legitimately elected president, Salvador Allende, was murdered in the CIA-Pinochet coup, and thousands of Chileans were imprisoned, tortured, or executed in the reign of terror that followed. US military and economic aid to Chile, cut off during the Allende years for purposes of undermining his mildly socialist policies, was restored following the coup, and by propping up the Chilean economy helped Pinochet hold on to power despite widespread opposition (Chile previously had a tradition of being among the most democratic countries in South America).

But don't look for Pinochet to be leaving anytime soon. His "term" doesn't expire till 1990, by his own decree, and that leaves him plenty of time to cook up some sort of crisis that will justify a return to martial law and the cancellation of elections. And just remember, your tax dollars help make it all possible.

La Paz... US Secretary of State George Shultz, in Bolivia to inspect CIA efforts to solidify its hold on the Latin American cocaine trade, narrowly escaped death at the hands of rival narcotics traffickers when a bomb they had planted went off seconds before Shultz's motorcade arrived. The CIA, concerned over plummeting cocaine prices and the widespread entry into the drug market of independent, third world-based entrepreneurs, is attempting to get US troops involved in eliminating the coca fields of their competitors, using, among other tactics, Vietnam-style chemical warfare. A similar attempt to control the heroin trade of the 1950s and 60s, was of course a major cause of the Vietnam War.

Washington... The pious blather emanating from these quarters about a cessation of hostilities in the Iran-Iraq war blithely ignores the fact that the United States bears a major responsibility for the 1 million dead, 1.7 million wounded, and 1.5 million refugees produced by this pointless eight-year holocaust.

It was US meddling in Irani affairs, dating back to the 1954 CIA coup that unseated democratically elected President Mossadegh, that produced the barbaric regime of Ayatollah Khomeini and the instability that led Iraq's equally demented Saddam Hussein to launch his ill-fated invasion. Once the war was underway, the United States, along with most of the major industrialized countries, supplied both sides with enough weapons to insure that neither side could win a clear-cut victory, thus leaving an opening for the US to establish a major military presence in the region. Is it too cynical to suppose that certain policymakers saw the death and maiming of nearly 3 million Middle Easterners as a worthwhile price to pay for keeping US gasoline prices low and providing photo opportunities for American-flagged warships? Not hardly.

Tel Aviv... Israeli troops have begun using plastic bullets, the beloved and sometimes deadly tools of British occupation forces in Northern Ireland, against the Palestinian resistance. The Israeli government, despite growing opposition from its own citizenry, continues to move toward a South Africa-style solution to the unrest, with the West Bank Arabs steadily being stripped of the few civil rights they still enjoy.

Meanwhile, the Palestine Liberation Organization, in the wake of Jordan's abdication of all responsibility for the West Bank, has declared an

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# AROUND THE EMERALD TRIANGLE

Battling Bruce Anderson, the Boonville publisher, was sentenced to serve 60 days in the county jail for fighting with County Schools Superintendent Jim Spence after a rip-roaring trial that made up in entertainment what it lacked in justice. Anderson was found innocent of assault and battery after a number of witnesses contradicted Spence's account of the incident, and several jurors indicated afterward that the Schools Supe had been not at all believable on the witness stand.

Anderson was convicted of fighting in a public place, and defense attorney Karl Leipnik then asked prosecuting attorney C. David Eyster if he was now going to file charges against the other combatant, Superintendent Spence. Eyster, a blow-dried Young Republican Ken Doll ("Dan Quayle without connections," opined Leipnik) responded with a smirk and an accusation that Leipnik was drunk (not true, although there had been a beer party in front of the Justice Court involving the defendant, friends, and much of the working press while they awaited a verdict).

Anderson was offered a sentence of two years probation, during the first of which he would be banned from attending county school board meetings, a great relief to the beleaguered Spence, whose shady hiring practices and squandering of county education funds have consistently been under attack by Anderson. The judge's suggestion caused school board member and internationally renowned home schooler David Colfax to protest that such a prohibition was unconstitutional as he stomped out of the court. At the judge's orders a deputy raced after him and brought him back in handcuffs. He was summarily tried and found guilty of contempt. The judge likened the behavior of Anderson, Colfax, and friends to that of Nazi Germany, at which defense attorney Leipnik reminded him that the Nazi era had also seen many good German judges upholding the regime.

A local drug lord overheard complaining about the quality of life in Jamaica: "They smoke pot all the time, it's too hot to do anything, and everybody's lazy. It's worse than Mendocino County."

Something looked fishy when the Harwoods came up with that crackpot scheme to put a wood-burning power plant in the middle of Willits (naturally the powers that be in that increasingly wretched little sub-urban slum enthusiastically embraced the beast and have been busily trying to ram it down the throats of their fellow citizens). Did the Harwoods really think they could get away without environmental impact statements and rush the thing into operation before the 1990 deadline (after that PG&E will no longer be required by law to buy independently generated power)?

To me it looked like the Harwoods would have to be in some pretty serious financial trouble to try and pull off such a high-risk and long-shot scam. One friend suggested, and he may have been right, that the Harwoods never expected to get the plant built, but hoped instead to get PG&E to pay them a couple million to not cancel it (it wouldn't be the first time someone's successfully milked the utility that way).

As it turns out, the Harwoods were in big trouble, and are now being forced to sell almost all of their land to pay off their debts (i.e., to avoid foreclosure). The Harwoods had a long-standing reputation as being among the more responsible loggers hereabouts, though in recent years they've been adopting some of the tactics of the major corporate loggers (forced by market conditions, their defenders contend). In any event, it's unlikely that whoever takes over their land will be an improvement. We'll probably see Maxxam-style buyouts where absentee owners

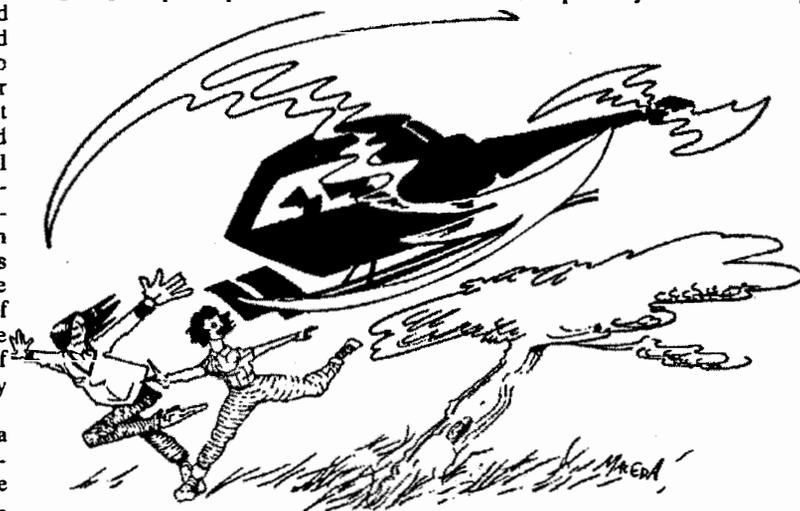
make their payments by clearcutting everything in sight. As evidence of what we can look forward to, the bank handling the sale is telling prospective buyers that they can make even more money stripping the land of its oak and madrone to fuel the power plant that the Harwoods are still allegedly going to build. Voilà, the Mendocino Desert. That a vanishing and vital resource like trees can be bought, sold and liquidated by private speculators as if they were some sort of manufactured commodity still boggles the mind.

**From the Wonderful World of Bill Bailey:** reports from deep within the mail order chain saw empire tell of

regular meetings that have been going on among the "movers and shakers" of the Laytonville community (no, yours truly was not included) to plot the development of this "town with a future" as it goes hurtling into the 21st century. Sort of a city government in exile, one imagines, presided over, naturally, by Mayor Bailey. But that's not the item... Recently Mr. Bill got himself a new table for the meeting room, at a reported cost of (believe it or don't) \$30,000, along with matching chairs at \$2500 per (for those of you outside the area, there are houses in L'ville that sell for less than 30 big ones). But that's still not the item, at least not all of it. BeeBee then followed up his largesse toward the table makers of America with a request that his employees take a pay cut. Response on their part not printable, even in this decidedly non-family magazine.

**More L-ville politicking** (ever notice: Lawrence, Livermore, Lookout, Laytonville: is this cosmic convergence of the 12th letter of the alphabet mere coincidence?): Mr. Bill's boy Skip Newell did well in the June primary, but not well enough to elbow his way into the runoff. Skip is a popular guy around town, thanks to his ability to be friendly with all sorts of people and never actually saying anything incriminating. But now the election is down to the moderately liberal Liz Henry and the overt neo-nazi Jack Azevedo ("Tinkerbell vs. Darth Vader," says Bruce Anderson).

I thought Mr. Bailey, who despite his many antediluvian views maintains a relatively benign image in the Laytonville community, would be unlikely to risk an endorsement of the coast real estate flack whose wacko-from-outer-space right wing ideology (Did you know that the Holocaust never happened? Ask Jack to explain it to you sometime.) is becoming the principal issue in November's election. But apparently Azevedo's Private-Property-über-alles stance has won Bailey's approval; in a letter to the *Ledger* of September 21 Mr. Bill gives his whole-hearted



endorsement to Nazi Jack. Yes, Bailey allows, he was a little concerned over rumors of Azevedo's fascist associations, but the Fort Bragg fithrer has assured him that there was no truth to them, that they were merely "a cheap way for far-leftists to gather half-wit votes". Among much evidence to the contrary is a report by Zack Stentz in the coast publication *Sidewalks*, in which he reviews a neo-nazi tract called *Imperium* which Azevedo has been heard to sing the praises of on KDAC's Eloise Keller show.

As for Azevedo's willingness to turn the north coast into a lifeless petroleum stew via offshore oil drilling, not to worry; the fishing industry, according to Bailey, is "not important" to us here in Laytonville. After all, we're more than 25 miles away from Fort Bragg, and we can always get our fish from the Willits Safeway. Given Bailey's occasional reasonableness on some issues, it's hard to believe he would endorse a right-wing extremist who has little chance of winning. It's also hard not to believe that his real motive is the fear that his arch-nemesis, Joe Knight, closely associated with Liz Henry, might get a leg up on him in county politics.

Nazi Jack, by the way, asked why Fort Bragg vandals might be adorning his campaign signs with swastikas, used the time-honored tactic of identifying himself with the victim. His explanation: "They paint those on Jewish synagogues too."

**Say it ain't so, Rich...** The *Ledger* reports that Laytonville's own Rich Gravier has signed up to be a local chairman for the Bush For President campaign. Rich's teammates on this hopefully doomed effort will be Louisiana-Pacific's Glennys "Mow 'em down" Simmons and Willits asphalt queen Margie "Pave it over" Handley.

Reports of illegal CAMP tactics still abound, but members of the paramilitary strike force have been conducting themselves like perfect gentlemen compared to the County of Mendocino Marijuana Eradication Team (COMMET). CAMP, hauled into court numerous times in its six-year history for unlawful activities, is under a restraining order limiting just where its helicopters and troops may operate. It appears that COMMET, which spends in excess of a million bucks a year to duplicate CAMP's functions (despite the Sheriff's constant moaning about there not being enough money to provide ordinary law enforcement services), is being used as a way of getting around the CAMP court order.

It certainly looked that way in early August when COMMET descended on a subdivision north of Laytonville, barricaded the only two entrances, and launched a house-to-house, field-to-field search of the entire area (some several hundred acres), all without benefit of warrants. Locks were cut and houses broken into, and anyone protesting was told that warrants were not necessary since they were living in a "felony area," a concept which presumably could be extended to include not only the entire countryside of northern California, but huge sections of our cities as well. Hell, might as well put a fence around the whole state, as a Texas congressman once suggested.

CAMP is a last-ditch effort by government and corporate interests to reassert their dominance over a region that only a few years ago seemed dangerously close to becoming culturally and economically autonomous. "We're out to recapture territory for the United States," said CAMP commander Jack Beecham during the operation's first year.

In keeping with that goal, CAMP has made its first targets the small "mom and pop" growers who used to be the backbone of the pot industry locally while somehow managing to overlook much larger plantations run by apolitical gangster types. Now it seems as though CAMP is also getting into the business of direct political harassment, as evidenced by their raid on the land of County School Board member Don Lipmanson. Lipmanson, along with David Colfax, has consistently been one of the only voices of sanity in that benighted bureaucracy, and it looks pretty obvious that the CAMP raid was a set up engineered by henchmen of schools chief Jim Spence. The Lipmanson home was repeatedly buzzed by helicopters at (illegal) treetop levels during the month of July, which, by the way, has been typical of CAMP tactics this year. Lipmanson's lawyer will be fighting the bust on grounds of illegal search, which means proving that the helicopters were flying below the legal limit of 500 feet, and if he wins the case on those grounds, look for most others arrested in CAMP raids this year to get off, too. Oh yeah, the grand total of plants found on the Lipmanson "plantation:" eight, although CAMP officials later tried to revise the figure upward to thirteen.

In the hideous sub-suburban sprawl that is south Willits are the particularly ugly beginnings of another shopping center, called, with characteristic adroitness, the Evergreen Center, in honor of the fact that there is absolutely nothing remotely resembling the color green on the site. The

"Evergreen" Center is a very shady scam masterminded by a very shady character, one "Dub" Baker, who is already under indictment for various fraudulent dealings in another county and is now being sued by contractors who he has never gotten around to paying for work already performed.

With at least half a dozen storefronts vacant in lovely downtown Willits and Main Street traffic frequently approaching gridlock proportions, Willits needs another shopping center about as much as a nerve gas plant in the city park ("We do need the jobs," I can hear Mayor-emeritus Bashore saying). But in the midst of his legal troubles, developer Baker came to the city with an ultimatum, stating that if the taxpayers would not pick up the tab (in the hundreds of thousands of dollars) for installing utilities and similar site-work, he would pick up his bulldozers and go home. Some chutzpah, huh? Not in Willits; even in light of his latest problems, the city council is still toying with giving Baker what he wants, and wistfully hoping the shopping center will still be built. On the bright side, Baker will probably end up grabbing as much cash as he can out of the deal and taking it on the lam. It will almost be worth it to see the voluminous amounts of egg on the faces of the Willits city fathers.

**More depressing Willits news:** the monstrosity being built on the south end of town by the right wing cult known as the Mormons nears completion, and an oppressive presence it is indeed. The Mormons, who already own Utah and run it like a quasi-Christian Iran, appear set on colonizing the entire western United States, and will probably find fertile ground for their repressive and mindlessly patriotic blather among Birchers and Klan types here in the Redwood Empire. Their tactic is to infiltrate established institutions, along the lines of the pod people in *Invasion of the Bodysnatchers*, and one of their number, Jerry Colwell, already sits on the Willits school board. Your kids been coming home with an emotionless vacant stare on their faces lately? Now you know.

**There's news in the Laytonville Unified School District** besides the brouhaha over where to put the new high school. Superintendent Brian Buckley reports in his occasional *Ledger* column that he has given up his duties as high school principal to become full time superintendent. No word as to whether he has taken a commensurate pay cut, as if you needed to ask. New principal is science teacher Mark ("Ike") Iacuanello.

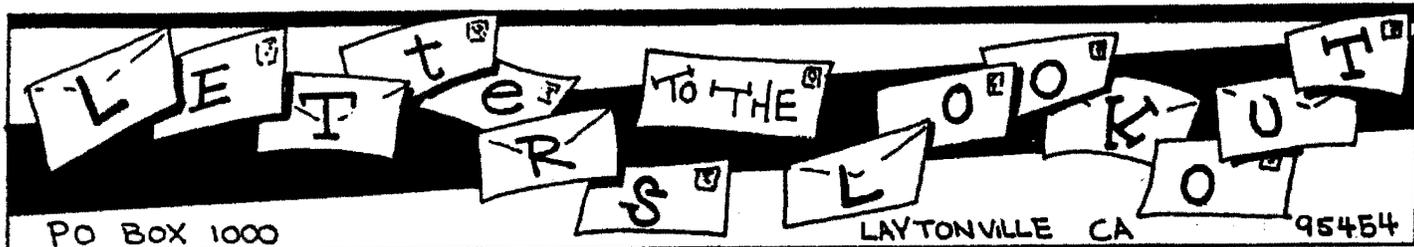
Another perhaps less than thought out plan replaces retiring counselor Olive Smith with a half-time counselor, with the difference being made up by assigning remaining counseling duties to various teachers. One of them, who will be responsible for counseling the ninth grade, is Coach Grover ("Rambo") Faust. Faust has distinguished himself on the gridiron, but his teaching record is far from stellar, and he has been known to bully students whose manner didn't appeal to him. One shudders to think of a sensitive young freshman coming into Counselor Faust's office: "Coach, I don't want to take auto mechanics. I think I'd rather study literature and become a poet." "Kid, what I recommend is a regimen of anabolic steroids, football, and enlisting in the Marine Corps as soon as you turn 18."

Laytonville schools have improved under Buckley's direction, but these new developments do not augur well. With the school district remaining roughly the same size it's been for a while, it's unclear why we should suddenly need a full-time superintendent. What we do need are good, competent teachers, which Buckley, by most accounts, was. Let's hope he's not succumbing to the first throes of Jim Spence-itis.

**This is not satire:** At least my usually reliable informants swear it's true. That bit of hillside just over downtown L-ville that looked like it was the victim of a typical rape and ruin logging operation... Supposedly the new owner is clearing the land to start a *truffle* farming operation. *Truffles?* In Laytonville? When does the I. Magnin branch open?

**But not to worry:** there will always be those who will keep alive the Laytonville spirit of mean-spirited provincialism. A fine example can be seen in the Confederate flag that flies daily in front of Zum's on the north end of town. Let's all those Yankees and nigras who might be passing through see that we ain't surrendered yet. For more local color, how about installing a neon version of a burning cross atop the Community Cretin Church at the south end of town so's we can get 'em coming and going?

**Kim Moonwater**, of Corners of the Mouth and a bunch of worthy causes and organizations, passed away in September, the victim of a motorcycle crash. I didn't know her personally, but I will never forget her appearance at the Fort Bragg oil hearings last February when she galvanized the crowd and terrorized the bureaucrats with an awe-inspiring rant/chant/prayer. So long, Kim, and thanks for the memory.



LL:  
 Oh! So now we are beginning to get the story of who is going to pick up the tab for the savings and loan fiasco in Texas, something *Lookout* readers knew six months ago.

Doc Dennis  
 Campbell CA

P.S. Looking forward to winter weather, when hopefully we may get another issue of that peerless publishing gem, the *Lookout*. We are waiting.

Dear LL:

The soil crisis created by our farming methods is a dilemma. The sad fact is that alternative methods are low-yield methods. The soil is depleted because we get so much out of it with our modern up-to-date farming methods. Sure we can go to methods which conserve the soil. It will also result in less crops, LOTS less.

But I wouldn't worry too much about our soil, but oil. We will run out of oil pretty darn soon in this country. This will end our present system of farming since it depends ultimately on cheap oil. It will also end our standard of living. It will also end many of our lives. Malthus rules!

Bag of Water  
 Edina MN

Yo, Oi, Hey, Yabba-dabba-du,

I just got through reading *Lookout* #30. Just thought that you would like to hear my impressions of education being as I am still in school. (Campolindo High (Moraga, Contra Costa) class of '90, just in case you were wondering.) First of all I would like to say that Moraga is very different from the Laytonville area. We're right between Lafayette and Orinda on the Bart Map, just in case you care. Here about 90% of the kids go to four year college and the rest go to Diablo Valley College. It seems that here at "Campo" we have a small problem.

It was announced last week (May 15) that Calculus BC, roughly equivalent to U.C second semester Calc. would not be offered in the 1988-1989 school year. 28 kids signed up for it. The reason for this action is a prime example of Lamorinda (our little walled community) reasoning. The Acalanes school board, which governs four high schools in the area, decided to raise the graduation requirements for math from two to three years. The result of this is that now the schools don't have enough math teachers. The school had to find a way to keep about 30 kids from taking math. The students in BC are in a unique position. All of them have three years of math under their belt, and, if BC is not offered, there is no other class to take. (If the school cancels a Honors Trig class, the kids will just take regular Trig). The students in BC have another distinction, they are 28 of the smartest people in the school.

Also, only one 30-seat second year Bio class will be offered, even though 90 kids signed up. I realize that half the kids wanting to take these classes are rich snots who are only interested in their college transcripts, however, the other half are the students who want to learn for learning's sake.

Wanting to learn is the most important part of education. There are many reasons to learn things. "If I don't go to college I'll never get a good job," seems to be the most popular at my school. I've found that most of the people who want to take advanced courses, actually want to know more. We live in an incredibly complex world. My dad took Calculus his freshman year at college, I started my Sophomore year in high school. That tidbit is overshadowed by the fact that as I type away on a semi-portable machine that would have filled a Gymnasium when my dad was first taking derivatives, the world can be blown up in an hour and a half (probably less.) While my parents were struggling with Calculus in the mid 50s, it would have taken SAC at least 24. Long ago, I made a promise to myself that I would not use any device that I knew nothing about. I want to have at least a vague knowledge about everything I touch, be it mechanical or biological.

How many people know how film works? How about a digital watch, or a telephone, or a Xerox Machine, a TV screen, a printing press,

or Ronnie's Star Wars tinkertoys? Point being, if we take the former for granted, we'll believe in the bullshit too. How about something as common and as simple as a doorbell? Go over and find yours, and take the cover off. Invite a friend over and have him/her press the button. Parents, do yourself a favor and give your kid an old wind-up alarm clock. Teach her/him how to fix a flat on her/his bike.

Now I want to learn more. I want to be able to decide if genetic engineering is good or bad. I sort of know how a Xerox machine works, but what if I wanted to know how to build my own from scratch? My school doesn't want me to know, that's for sure. When the government flat out refuses to teach objective things, who knows what they're feeding us in history or English class? Not everyone can or wants to learn calculus or advanced biology. I'll help you out there, I'll look out against the system's para-science b.s. I can't draw, cook or sing to save my life so maybe you can help me. Why don't you draw a poster, or write a protest song, or make a nice lunch for the Concord protesters? We're all in this together and I'll do my part if you do yours.

Mike Limon  
 Moraga CA

Howdy Hey Lawrence,

Long time. I just finished school (well, almost... I still have some revisions to do on my final version of my senior thesis), so I'm just getting back into letter-writing mode. You're the lucky recipient of the first letter I've written this summer. This is no ordinary summer vacation, I have to keep reminding myself. Today is the first day of the rest of my unemployment. That's right, I just graduated with a degree in Environmental Resources Engineering, no less! Don't ask me about my future; I'm getting tired of saying "I dunno" lately.

Thanks for #30. A winner. On the subject of public education: my observations have led me to believe it's a dismal failure in comparison with the "alternative" schools, in Humboldt County, at least. Many of my locally-raised friends started out in alternative schools, then were shunted over to the public system at junior high age, since no alternative upper-grade facilities were available. Every one of them tells me that they were ahead of the other public school kids when they first hit the public schools. By 10th or 11th grade, most of the alternative school kids were so fed up with the public schools' enforced codes that they took the equivalency tests and left school early. Most of them started college between the ages of 15 and 18 and seem to be doing well — they find the more flexible, custom-fit aspects of a university more compatible with the learning habits they picked up in the alternative schools.

Having studied the "hard" sciences in college, I tend to withhold judgment on a problem until I've seen the results of a controlled experiment, but laboratory techniques don't readily apply to social problems such as education. I have to rely upon empirical evidence and intuition, which tell me that public education is done for in its present form. I'd side with Bruce Anderson over Brian Buckley.

How about Pacific Lumber giving up old-growth clearcutting? Sounds cool, but I wonder what the net effect will be. The decision was part of a deal that calls for certain state legislators to shelve a bill that would have banned old growth clearcuts across the board (no pun intended). We'll see.

Richard Engel  
 Arcata

Dear Lawrence,

So you are still alive! I was beginning to wonder if you hadn't absconded to Rio with the vast amount of lucre from the *Lookout* publishing empire as well as the royalties from the latest *Lookout* CDs. Well, flippancy aside... I was quite surprised to see that note that I scrawled to you along with my sub in the letters page of issue #30. Hey, if I thought that you were going to publish it, I would have at least tried to make it sound

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# NEWS FROM ALL OVER

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independent Palestinian state and a provisional government to be headed by Yassir Arafat, who stands only slightly behind Moammar Khadafy as the favorite all-purpose villain of the American corporate media. Arafat, who has in the past of course been guilty of considerable excesses, has become quite the moderate in recent years, at least when compared to the rabid terrorists at the helm of the Jewish state.

There remains one very large obstacle to the successful establishment of a Palestinian homeland, however, that being the malicious and incomprehensible determination of the United States to keep Israel alive however vicious and reactionary the Israeli regime might become. Were it not for the 3 billion dollars a year in American tax dollars that finance the Judaic theocracy, a Palestinian homeland and/or a secular Israeli state with equal rights for Jews and Arabs would have long ago been a reality.

**Managua...** There's a grim sense of déjà-vu to events in Nicaragua as the United States pours millions of dollars and hundreds of CIA agents into a strategy of destabilization nearly identical to the one which eliminated democracy from Chile in 1973.

The Sandinistas are caught in a double bind. If they respond to US provocations, as they did by expelling the American ambassador and temporarily closing the CIA newspaper *La Prensa*, they give powerful ammunition to American right wingers who are trying to resurrect direct military aid to the contras. On the other hand, they need only look back at the grim fate of Chile's Salvador Allende to see the likely outcome of allowing US agents to operate unchecked.

**New Orleans...** The Republican convention was, as expected, long on tedium and poor taste and pitifully short on comic relief. But Head Goober George Bush did his best to keep satirists in business by reaching deep into the android recesses of Falwell-land for the marginally operative Ken-doll he has in mind to be the next vice-president of the United States.

J. Danforth Quayle (the name sounds more like that of a mustache-twirling silent movie villain than a blow-dried yuppie twerp) was allegedly picked because his good looks (the sort of good looks that might appeal to those who find themselves turned on by a Michelob Light commercial) would induce women, the majority of whom are instinctively repelled by Bush and Co., to come swooning into the Republican camp.

Women, the silly little things, of course have no interest in issues, and would probably vote for the Ayatollah Khomeini if he would only get himself a facial makeover and a couple new outfits. Men, on the other hand, are so level-headed that they would never allow their political judgment to be addled by some sweet-talking bimbo. Want proof? Look at the women that men put into office. Anyone dying for a dream date with Supreme Court Justice Sandra O'Connor? Which would you pick: a night on the town with Dianne Feinstein or a root canal? Exhibit A: Professional liar and warmonger Jeane Kirkpatrick, whose battle-axe physiognomy would curdle the blood of the most ardent romantic.

Little Danny Quayle has of course managed to additionally distinguish himself by his willingness to send other people's kids to get killed in whatever war the rightwing dingbats he pals around with dream up, in stark contrast with his own reluctance to participate when the bullets start flying.

Quayle explains his decision to avoid combat duty by joining the National Guard thusly: "At that point I wanted to finish law school and get on with my life." One presumes that the half million other young men of his generation who were compelled to slog around jungles getting shot at possessed no such clear sense of purpose, and had they been inducted into the armed forces would have probably done nothing more productive than slouch around street corners drinking beer and leering at girls. We shouldn't begrudge special privileges to our young aristocrats, anymore than we allow ourselves to become sentimental about the plight of the lower classes, for whom war is a positive and uplifting experience compared to the meaningless tedium that will encompass the remainder of their lives.

**Rome...** Continuing a grand tradition dating back to the Inquisition and the Crusades, the Roman Catholic Church will put its imprimatur on another shameful chapter of white European genocide when it beatifies Father Junipero Serra, the founder of California's mission system. Little Catholic children are still taught that Father Serra brought the blessings of Christ and civilization to the benighted savages who made up California's indigenous population, but what Serra actually instituted was a system of thinly veiled slavery propped up by brute force and murder, which paved the way for Spanish colonialism, hardly an improvement over the largely

peaceful and ecologically harmonious way of life enjoyed by California's Indian tribes before the European conquest.

In an attempt to gloss over widespread Native American protest at this latest insult added to centuries of injury, the church has managed to dig up an Ohlone Indian, an Uncle Tomahawk, so to speak, who will journey to Rome for the beatification (one step short of sainthood) ceremony, and, dressed in native garb, present a basket of acorns to the Great White Father.

**Washington...** Greenhouse effect? Oil shortages? Oops, wrong planet; in the wonderful world of Reaganland these dire problems have evidently been completely solved, judging from Transportation Secretary Jim Burnley's (ever heard of this bozo before? Didn't think so.) plan to scrap minimum fuel economy standards imposed on automobile manufacturers during the 1970s. The Reagan administration has already lopped a mile per gallon off the standards, resulting in more oil wasted in one year than is believed to be contained in the entire Mendocino-Humboldt offshore oil drilling area. Now it wants to do away with the standards altogether. Reason: wasting more oil will create more jobs. Really.

A consumer group, the Center for Auto Safety, says that instead the standards should be more than doubled, to 60 mpg, making a huge dent in our dependence on foreign oil, reducing greatly our chances of becoming involved in a war in the Middle East, and taking a big step toward undoing the massive damage auto emissions have been doing to our environment throughout the twentieth century. The group has promised to file suit if the Transportation Department goes ahead with its, to put it mildly, hare-brained scheme.

**Washington...** Continuing its celebration of the bicentennial of the Constitution, the Federal Communications Commission has slapped Kansas City TV station KZKC with \$2000 fine and threatened it with the loss of its license for showing *Private Lessons*, a minor T&A flick aimed at the rampant if unimaginative prurient interests of teenage boys of all ages. Perhaps mildly offensive to those afflicted with a sense of aesthetics, and a bit more so to those who prefer that it not be common knowledge that people do occasionally have sexual relations, the unleashing of *Private Lessons*, even on the infantile American TV audience, is unlikely to cause the republic to crumble, something which unfortunately can not be said about these continuing Reagan-inspired assaults on the Bill of Rights. Or maybe it's all part of a plot to clear the airwaves of anything more stimulating than the insipid potboilers the Prez once starred in.

**Karachl...** Another US-backed military dictator went down in flames as Pakistan's General Zia was killed in an airplane crash that may have been the work of saboteurs. Zia, who was in the process of turning his country into an Iran-style theocracy, appropriately took with him the American ambassador, who with Zia's wholehearted cooperation was using Pakistan as a conduit for shipping arms to the Afghan rebels. That aid continues, in blatant violation of the treaty under which Soviet troops are withdrawing from Afghanistan, and it looks as if the Reagan administration's desire to continue punishing the Soviets for their ill-conceived invasion will soon result in Afghanistan coming under the complete control of the Islamic nazis.

**New York...** L.M. Boyd, whose syndicated column, *The Grab Bag*, is hardly a hotbed of international communism, offers the opinion that the United States may well be the world's most warlike nation, having introduced its military into 150 different conflicts since 1850, averaging out to more than one a year.

**Washington...** A sad commentary on the mentality, or lack thereof in government circles these days: When postage rates went up earlier this year, the Post Office came out with a new 25¢ stamp that may well have been the most beautiful one ever issued, a color photo of our lovely planet, taken from space. It was a vast improvement over the stamps we had been using, the bulk of which were adorned with American flags or portraits of obscure bureaucrats. As one who mails a lot of things overseas, I was happy to think that foreigners might now get a different picture of us, as a people beginning to think in planetary rather than nationalistic terms.

Guess again; the planet stamp, it turned out, was not valid for international mail. What's more, it was only a temporary issue, meant to fill the gap until a new series of (what else) American flag stamps could be put into production. If we must wave the flag at every opportunity, we could at least emulate the Russians, who in honor of the recent summit, produced a stamp showing the American and Soviet flags together, along with a plea for peace.

## LETTERS TO THE LOOKOUT

...continued from page 5

coherent!

Anyway, about Jesse Jackson... perhaps I'm one of those "terminally ideological anarchists," but I find your endorsement of one of whom you can say that you are "less than convinced of his complete honesty" to be rather bewildering at the least. And you express doubts as to his plan to militarize the anti-drug wars, which is certainly understandable since you live in the middle of the CAMP war zone. But since you do know what a military campaign against drugs is like, how can you still support him considering this? This is probably the only proposal on his agenda that the butt-licks in Congress could wholeheartedly endorse in true, all-American, bipartisan fashion.

Not that it matters now, seemingly. Perhaps in a move to steal Jackson's thunder, I hear that the Congress is now seriously considering just such a plan, and according to recent opinion polls being trumpeted about in the media, "drugs" - the perennial evil spectre - are the #1 "concern" on the minds of the electorate. Setting aside the obvious questions (who was polled? is it even true?) concerning mass media opinion polls and their veracity, one can conclude that if it is true that most voters are more worried about drugs than poverty (including their own potential poverty), unemployment, inflation, corporate plundering of the economy, government corruption, environmental destruction, and the threat of imminent war, nuclear or otherwise, then we're already in worse shape than we thought. It means millions of sheep are going to vote on their greatest (media-created) fear and for the man-on-the-white-horse with the best sounding answer. It means that the general public once again fell for the spectacular moral panic without thinking about why such a situation exists (but of course, that's what we have the likes of Rev. Falwell, etc. for).

Is this Congressional proposal to send the military after drug smugglers only a cover for something else, something even more - as they say in the B-movies - sinister? Like an attempt to stop illegal aliens, or round up those who didn't make the amnesty deadline? Perhaps this is the prelude to that long-predicted/ long-dreaded advent of Amerikan fascism and the military net is to be drawn to prevent anybody from leaving? Even if there isn't any sinister conspiracy involved here, one can wonder about the wisdom, from a "pragmatic" viewpoint, of using the military in an essentially civilian (i.e. police) are of concern.

Remember the last time the US army got involved with the anti-drug crusade? Paraquat spraying in Mexico and the subsequent deaths of many who smoked it? What are they going to spray it with now? AIDS? Agent Orange? And it doesn't take one of Nancy's astrologers to know that government-approved drug smugglers like Ollie's contras and the CIA will continue to somehow find chinks in the armor of the military dragnet.

I found that piece on Israel's final solution to the Palestinian problem so apt that it made me realize that only in small zines like yours is the truth on this matter being completely told, without fear of treading on ethnic toes. Lawrence, you really should try and send that piece in to such "liberal," basically pro-Zionist periodicals like *The Nation* or *Atlantic Monthly* (to say nothing of *Commentary*) and see what happens. And to anybody interested in the astonishing links between radical racist Zionists in Israel (is the concept of being the "Chosen People of God" any less blatantly imperialistic, let alone paranoid, than being the "Master Race?") and the radical Christian fascists of the US, I recommend Grace Malsell's *Prophecy and Politics: Militant Evangelists On the Road to Nuclear War* (Lawrence Mill, 1986). And I might also recommend a zine with which I am - ahem! - associated: *4th Reich Update*, PO Box 536, Rustburg VA 24588, an anti-fundamentalist zine from Rev. Jerry's backyard and a bargain at only \$1.

Well, enough of my rantings.

Greg Krupcy  
N. Huntingdon PA

*I thought I made it clear that I was endorsing JJ not because he came all that close to reflecting my personal values but because he came so much closer than the ultimate nominees in rationality and humaneness on many of the issues. America will sink into the sea long before it nominates any candidate you or I could wholeheartedly support. — LL*

Hey Larry!

So Tad the K is using your new newsprint to namecall *Maximum RNR* and throw my kit in with the rest of the kaboodle. Well, I might as well use a cut from the same tree to answer him.

Mr. Tad must still be using the '83 edition of the E.O.A. (Encyclo-

pedia of Obnoxious Americans) when he comes up with his facts. He's got my birthday a day too early and my age a year too young. If he would've consulted the revised '88 edition (sorry Tad, you still didn't make it — keep trying!), he would have also seen that it was not *Anarchy* I wrote for when I was in England in the 70s, but *Freedom*. The former being a theoretical journal, the latter a newspaper (started by someone even older than both of us — Peter Kropotkin!). As for me "stealing my style" from there, obviously Mr. T has never read the rags. They're both as dry as a junkie's asshole. They (the *Freedom* editors) complained that my style was too provocative, too "American." In real life, I "stole" my style from Columbia College's writing workshop and my true idol, Ed Anger.

Next, my writing is supposed to resemble "bunches of pseudo-situationist stuff." I like the alliteration. But having never read bunches of the pseudo-stuff, I can't say if he's right or not. As far as I know, situationists want to destroy society by creating a "situation" (get it?) where life as we now suffer it becomes impossible. This forces a change in the world order. I guess the best example of this philosophy working is the Nazis burning down the German parliament before World War Two. It created a situation, and boy, did things change quickly.

Anyway, I guess a "pseudo-situationist" wants to create a pseudo-situation where pseudo-life as it is lived today becomes impossible (pseudo-impossible?). It sure doesn't sound much like me. Most of my writing is aimed at rattling the vertebrae of guys like Tad, who want to change my situation without my permission. Although I'm pretty far from either, I reckon I'm closer to being a pseudo-Goldwater conservative than I am to being a pseudo-situationist.

As for what I'm doing having been "done before, and just as well or better..." Maybe so. There've also been lots of books about guys looking for their fathers, or the search for a big fish. If it's worth telling, it's worth telling in different ways, at different times, and for different people.

Then there's my position in the "MRR conspiracy." Tad (and John Crawford and others) think I'm a tool. Master pseudo-world conqueror, Tim Yohannan, uses my column to prove that he is open minded. No one can question his tolerance because he can always point to me and say, "How can you say I'm intolerant? I print Board's column, don't I?"

Well Mr. Tad, the answer is, "Hey Tim, I think you're intolerant and printing Board's column has nothing to do with it." That's what I say. Besides, the truth is that Tim's printing of my column IS an example of his tolerance. By the same token, his cutting out all mention of John Crawford (the only times Tim has edited my column), not printing certain critical letters, not printing certain blatantly sexual cartoons (e.g. Luna Ticks' work), and the "banning" of certain people (like Dave Run It), are examples of his intolerance. Surprise! He's not "all good" or "all bad." He's just a short guy (I'm shorter) who's the editor of a fanzine. And yeah, I like the guy personally, even though he is wrong about almost everything.

Finally, Mr. T complains about us oldsters speaking for "the youth movement" that's supposed to be "punk rock." Ho, ho, now who's making the rules? Who said it's a youth movement? Michael Jackson is more of a youth movement than punk rock. Besides, if you read MRR and there are "three guys pushing 40, pushing rhetorical left-wing crap," what about the lots of others who are writing in those pages? What about the hundreds of other punk zines in America — in the world? If you don't like what you read, the American answer is: Don't read it! It's your choice in a free country.

Actually what comes out of the whole thing is that Tad's complaining that me, Larry L., and Timmy Y are old. Ah, there Tad's right. I hope that's a condition he'll never face.

Yours in the same spirit  
Mykel Board  
New York

P.S. By implication, Tad's right about another thing. It's too bad his and this letter couldn't appear in the pages of MRR where they belong. But, like I said, Tim's usually wrong.

Lawrence,

Well, it shouldn't have surprised me, but it does and it's a bummer of a situation. Sorta like buying some bad acid off a cop and then having him throw you in the drunk tank in the ecstasy of fear you're feeling, but enough of this...

*Lookout* has finally become an *MRR* lookalike. Considering I am NOT a regular *Lookout* reader, I do not know the full evolution process there (nor do I really care to spend time on this when a whole world is calling on me to speak my mind (altered as it is)). But the BEFORE and AFTER situation of a person in the grandstand may be a little helpful for some outside insight to the inner workings of an outside worker. Let us

proceed, please. The clock ticks away every second.

*Lookout* (#22) was the first encounter with you. You were funny! Interesting ideas, and a way to cut through Bullshit with a laugh and some sarcasm with a dash of salt to add flavor! Quality!

*Lookalike* (#31) I picked up when I was at Gilman Street a few weeks ago (I won't touch on that subject other than to say that I really enjoyed watching/listening to your appeals for some common sense attitudes during the show so no one would get hurt. Did it work? Well, I didn't stick around for the after-show casualties). No personal attacks here, cause I like you. Just an attack on your output.

You're very informative, but it's all self-righteous. It's: there's a problem. **BLAH!** There's always problems. But it's cool, there are people saying **LOOK! LOOK!**, but where are the practical solutions? Awww, but then again, maybe it's better that you left out the solutions. They could have ended up being like RCP/socialist/ marxist "solutions." I believe you're above that, but you've lost your humor in presenting things. I mean, compare "Kids Turn In Your Parents" to "Food Shortage." Big difference. I'd rather turn in my parents than stop eating CHIPS AHOY cookies and drinking RC Cola!

And your music section is **BORING!** with a capital T! C'mon, it's been done before and it'll be done again, you're no better than anyone else on presenting music! Just stick to *Lookout* Records and forget *Lookalike!*

It's become stale! Just like old hippies trying to recapture their youth and beliefs by scamming onto **PUNK ROCK!** The youth don't need no adults to lead. But adults need youth to be leaders.

Take care (sic)  
Warren  
S. Holland IL

Hey Larry

I finally read *Lookout* from cover to cover — a little too much political gobbledegook for me, but overall it was good; at least it kept me company on the toilet.

I realize this letter will probably be unfit for publication after I mention your bizarre rain dance in the living room of The Ashtray with a raw potato stuffed in your mouth or your very un-hippie like comments about getting violent with the unruly baldies outside of Gilman, but what the hell. By the way, to clarify things (now that you can't interrupt me), I'm not a fucking hippie. If you take a look into my past, you'll find I've exhibited assholeish behavior most of my life. (*How does that make you not a hippie?* —LL) Also, yes, I do want people to think I'm obnoxious — and that image has contributed a lot to the minor success of Screeching Weasel. You see, I also know a little about human behavior, but I keep my observations about people to myself most of the time because it's been my experience that nine times out of ten when you call someone on their shit, they'll deny it and/or justify it to their graves. Everybody is a poser and everybody has an image of tehmselves that they try to portray that is totally different (or maybe just somewhat different) from the reality. Ever been talking to someone and you know they're telling you lies but you don't say anything, #1 'cause you don't want to embarrass them, and #2 'cause they'll deny it and you'll be thought of as a huge asshole? People are phony, but if you can get under that phoniness, you'll usually find a very cool person. I just don't bother to do that with people unless I'm really interested in knowing them, so I guess I should take your somewhat antagonistic attitude toward me (am I being paranoid????) as a compliment. To clarify a couple of more things — I am neurotic, and I do have shifty eyes (but so do you), and if you decide to do a story on us and make some contrived hippie/punk connection, I'll come to SF w/ my Doc Martens and smash your peace symbols into oblivion.

Over and out  
Ben Weasel  
Chicago

*Fans of the more obscure forms of pop music will of course recognize Mr. Weasel as the leader of the hippiepunk fusion band Screeching Weasel who on their recent West Coast tour distinguished themselves by throwing flowers to their audiences and blowing kisses to nazi skins. —LL*

Lawrence, you suck

Just joking, I thought you might take me seriously after reading all of your hate mail. Well, I finally read the latest *Lookout* and enjoyed it very much. The organic foods interviews and articles were inspiring. I started digging up weeds and making a whole for compost earlier this year, but something happened and I didn't. I don't know exactly what happened; I

think I became demotivated or distracted. Well anyway, I think I might give it another try. Bob is very pleased and proud of his fruit trees that are now producing; the trees are very young, so the yield wasn't monumental, but they were very flavorful. When you come down we can go get fresh (still warm) tortillas at Otay Farms. Speaking of coming down, would you be interested in speaking at the [Vinyl Communications] store? We've had the Peace Resource Center speak on nuclear disarmament and the Central American committee give a lecture on Nicaragua. This week there's going to be an anarchy debate and the Youth Activism task force is going to be speaking on how to organize high school events (not the pep rally type). It isn't anything real formal, five to twenty people usually attend — well, there's always been more than five, but for you — just joking again. Oh yeah, I forgot to mention my friend decided to do a victory garden after reading the *Lookout*, which by the way has sold well at the store. I need to know if you want to speak at the store so I can put it on the calendar and make flyers. Also, if you do decide to speak, is there a specific topic you will want to discuss? Or should the flyer just say Lawrence Livermore, famous *Lookout* editor and *MRR* columnist is going to talk about something?

Reading about the agricultural business was interesting. One thing you didn't mention was the problem caused by irrigating semi-arid soils, which causes the concentration of natural toxins like salines and can be just as harmful to the environment as pesticides and other manufactured chemicals. Living and having grown up in suburban communities, I've always been amazed and disgusted by the time and money people waste on useless landscaping for their homes. They have sprinklers installed, spend time and energy mowing, spray poisons, and then cut throw away their "harvest." It's amazing how many homes there are and how many lawns there are and how much waste there is. Here in San Diego there are thousands of illegal aliens making a living working on and then throwing away the fruits, or should I say grasses of their labor. The sad thing is that the ones who make everyone's yard look "nice" are making more money than the ones picking food crops.

Please, if you do decide to give a lecture, write or call so I can schedule it. Also tell me the theme for the next *Lookout* if you want any more drawings. I don't even mind when you put your name on them.

Barney Love  
Chula Vista CA

*Mr. Love is the artist who drew the picture accompanying the food article in Lookout #31, the one that was signed "Lawrence 88" in the lower right hand corner. He did it, not me. —LL*

Dear Mr. Livermore,

I was at a party at my friend's place and had to go out back for a minute. While I was sitting on the one-holer looking out at the stark and majestic mountain scenery, I saw the *Lookout* sitting on the shelf beside me. I don't know if it was supposed to be reading material or to be used like we used to use the Sears & Roebuck catalog when I was a kid, but anyhow I started browsing through it. "Food: Where It Comes From And Where It Goes" caught my eye. I'm impressed. I'm 42, and the last time I subscribed to a magazine was *Glamour* back in 1967. Here is a couple of dollars.

I wish I could afford more and maybe I can later on if I like the next couple issues you send me. Your answer to Jennifer E. Johnson from Brooklyn was excellent. I guess this is why I'm sending you the two bucks, because I think it's important that people who believe and feel as you do should be able to keep on writing.

I used to be like Ms. Johnson. Now I'm a divorced mother of four children, handicapped, and on welfare. My small market garden and natural food business folded, along with my marriage, about the time CAMP came along. Oh well.

What I have now is one acre of marginal (very!) hillside land and one rundown mobile home, and have spent the last five years working out a low-tech, one-woman ecosystem (does that sound new age!). For the last fifteen years I have been experimenting with the basic garden-chickens-goats theme and have come up with some pretty interesting results.

The kids and I (they are age 7 to 13) live on \$120 worth of food stamps per month — that and \$30 cash we spend for animal feed is our monthly grocery bill. This is about as self-sufficient as you can get on one acre with limited water.

I am not advocating welfare (right up until four years ago I was always employed full or part time) but sometimes a person finds her/himself in a spot and it's the only thing you can do to survive. I do resent being used as a political pawn, that is, handed my welfare grant, and then being denounced in the media as "lazy, parasite, loafer, etc."

I would like to offer to individuals, or groups, my expertise in rural skills — gardening and livestock raising, for example. I've learned some things about dealing with gophers, bugs, limited water supply, etc. that are not found in *Organic Gardening*. This is strictly a volunteer thing, no money asked. I believe, like the author of "The Coming Food Crisis," that there is a crisis right around the corner, and even if there isn't, I'm not going to pay ridiculous prices for crappy supermarket food.

Fran Ransley  
PO Box 1542  
Lower Lake CA 95457

Hi Larry

I read about the demise of the Lookouts in your last issue. That's too bad — maybe you'll get back together in the future, even if there are new members. Sure was interesting to read about how the band started and about your lack of self-confidence in the beginning. Reminds me of myself — lots of fear, a delicate ego, no self-esteem. No doubt it took so much effort.

Also enjoyed the previous two issues - the one about education and about the environment and the food we eat. They really hit home. Lately I've been reading a lot about the environment, and on shamanism and nature religions. There's one book my brother lent me called *Witchcraft And The Gay Counterculture*, by Arthur Evans. I'm not gay, but Larry, let me tell you, this guy was really on the ball, and he had some valuable ideas, even though he was addressing a gay audience which I didn't relate to. He attacks our industrial society, talks about how we had to populate like crazy to keep it going; he attacks our institutions, like the military and (this is my beef) schools and universities. He really spoke to me on that topic.

Of course, he starts off discussing how the Christian religion messed things up, and also goes back to how the problems had their beginnings in the Bronze Age and got really bad in the Greco-Roman scheme of things. You know, I remember, in another issue of the *Lookout*, you wrote something about the Roman Empire and how they pillaged the Celts. I'd recommend this book highly. I wound up buying one for myself (it may be going out of print) and right now my therapist is reading it. At any rate, I really think it's great that you are bringing up topics like food, waste, and the environment, as well as other social issues in your zine. Please - keep up the good work.

Got a call from Donny [the Punk] the other day. He's back living here in NYC and is starting to look for an apartment, maybe in Brooklyn. Also made a new friend at a party just recently, as well as getting a letter from another penpal. Unfortunately, until this heat wave goes, my social life will be about nil. It's horrible! It isn't five or so days of heat and then a break. This 90-degree heat has been lasting for weeks on end! I have a hunch that the greenhouse effect is egging it on. I'll tell you, Larry, I often feel that man took a wrong turn when we stopped being hunters and gatherers. And people turn to a higher technology to study and remedy the problem, when the higher technologies are just fueling the problems and buying into the system.

Like computers. Face it, they're made out of plastic, the plastic industry pollutes, the microchip companies dump into the rivers and these machines might be fueling big business. Now maybe it's overly idealistic and unrealistic of me to expect technology to come to a total halt all of a sudden. But (and I hope I'm not insulting anyone's intelligence) I get the feeling that a lot of people see technology as some saving grace and an answer, as if they're venerating it, without seeing the insidiousness underneath. Okay, if you need to use such and such a tool, until the time comes when people wake up and see how our earth is being plundered and until we're no longer desecrating it, well, what can you do? But to put technology on a pedestal — that's lousy. Another thing that irks me is when people turn to synthetics to avoid using leather and other animal products. This is no answer — the synthetics pollute in the making, and as you may know, that stuff doesn't decompose, and is unhealthy to wear.

See, we're so over-populated that we're putting pressure on our resources. "Primitive" man killed, but used every part of the animal and had a spiritual link with him/her. No factory farming there! Populations were small — you didn't need tons of leather for shoes, now were you brainwashed by the media into having one pair of shoes per outfit. There was a balance between man and his environment. Yes, something definitely went sour — we really screwed things up. Now even the Sámi people (incorrectly know as the Lapps) of northern Scandinavia use helicopters and snowmobiles to help them herd their reindeer. And the reindeer have turned into a cash commodity. Maybe it's none of my business, but I think that is sad. If "economic" man hadn't butted in...

Sorry I went off on a rampage, but these issues are on my mind a

lot. By the way, my brother moved down to Tennessee to a gay (radical faeries) commune with no electricity! But someone on the outside may be using a computer to get out their newsletter. Boo! What are you gonna do... I guess you felt you needed that equipment for your magazine, too. We're all victims, aren't we, Larry! (sigh)

Ann Aust  
New York

Dear Lawrence,

I have been meaning to write you for some time to say how much I enjoyed the food issue (#31). You may be interested to know that there are some apparently successful gardening enterprises going in Southern Humboldt. Elderbroc Farms raises organic beef and grows organic vegetables. Camp Grant raises organic vegetables. Both of these farms are located on fertile land near the Eel, by which I mean the flat flood plain. The location is important. The fact is that steep land and clay soil doesn't lend itself to large scale farming. That doesn't excuse people from providing at least some of their own food by having vegetable gardens, however. A lot of people here do that, but probably not enough of them. Motivation may be the key to more local food production. The early settlers were motivated. If they didn't grow their own food, they'd go hungry. In these modern times, as long as we've got money we can eat.

Another problem with local food production is that we've been conditioned to expect to have fruits and vegetables out of season. If you're going to live through your own food production, you need to be willing to eat what's in season.

Take eggs, for instance. When my ducks are laying lots of eggs, we eat lots of eggs. When they're not laying, we don't eat them. Which reminds me that out towards Alderpoint there's a chicken ranch that supplies fresh, fertilized chicken eggs.

Most of us who came out here in the late 60s and early 70s had dreams of living self-sufficient lives. We're still a long way from achieving that but we're still trying. Issues like your last one serve to remind us of the goal.

Mary Anderson  
Star Route  
Briceland CA

*Some readers, especially those residing outside of the Northern Mendocino/Southern Humboldt cultural nexus, may be not be familiar with the Star Route, the monthly magazine which Mary edits. They are hereby referred to the review section, located somewhere in this issue, for more information about Star Route and other fine publications.*

Dear Mr. Livermore:

Your publication has begun to turn up with some regularity here in London, and I feel it my duty to comment on what is a perhaps well-intentioned, but ultimately no better than slightly amusing example of American cultural imperialism, something with which we have been inundated ever since the last War. While, like most Englishmen of a certain age, I feel a certain gratitude toward your countrymen for the assistance rendered us during that perilous time, I find myself at times wondering if the price of that aid, specifically, the loss of our own national identity and its replacement with our current status as an American colony-cum-protectorate might not have been too high.

But forgive me, I believe I misspoke myself in my first sentence when I referred to your country's cultural imperialism. It is of course oxymoronic to speak in such terms of a country which has yet to manifest more than the barest rudiments of a culture. The years in which England enjoyed virtual hegemony over the civilized world did indeed see some excesses on our part, but our colonial, and yes, our imperialistic efforts did at least serve the purpose of transporting to virtually every area of the globe the fruits of many centuries of art, literature, philosophy, indeed all the foundation stones of anything worthy of the name civilization. Your own country is merely one of many beneficiaries.

Now that the United States has long since eclipsed England, at least in terms of military and economic strength, it would be reassuring to see America's worldwide influence being used to expand upon the British example. Unfortunately, I see nothing emanating from the USA but a supermarket mentality nourished by religious consumerism. Granted, publications like yours do not actively proselytize for what I perceive to be no more nor less than an anti-culture, but in a sense they are dangerous in their own way, for they foster the illusion that American society is capable of producing some semblance of intelligence and reason, and therefore

should not be thoroughly scorned and avoided by all thinking citizens of the world.

Yes, I grant that there are men, and presumably women also, of good will and some ability in your country. But do not presume at this time to promulgate your views throughout other societies which are centuries or even millennia older than your own. Put simply, you do not yet know enough to take your place on the world's intellectual stage. Perhaps by the next

century, if you have not yet succeeded in annihilating yourselves (and very possibly the rest of us as well), you and your Russian counterparts will have begun to emerge as something approximating cohesive and mature civilizations. Until then, I recommend that you confine your philosophical and political ruminations to your own shores; they are of little value and even less consequence to those of us who already have a firm grasp of our identity and place in history.

G. Robert Hopewell  
London

### Good News For America!!!

## Dau Proclaims Self President, Solves Energy Crisis, and Prepares to Put an End to Poverty

Editor:

I don't see how anyone sensitive can be mellow and happy when the world has eight years of contaminating pollution before it's too late to save it. If we don't turn everything around in five years, you can forget about survival. Also, we have to stop having babies. One child per family from now on.

I can't wait for the result of the American election. I'm voting for Dukakis as assistant President. Humboldt County's counter culture has already voted me into the new presidency. Although war is on the decline, that isn't the main cause of the earth, its air, soil and water being totally, irreversibly destroyed. I will make new laws frequently. Like no oil as a main fuel source, etc.

This gets us to the biggest problem: what to do for an alternative power source. I have finally invented something to organically replace oil! I have patented this invention, so don't try to steal it. You can, however, contact me to assist in making a lot of money from developing this method of power. I'm at 707-923-3542, Box 1541, Redway CA 95560.

The large corporations usually buy good ideas from inventors and suppress the product. I want to make money to finally get free of poverty myself, which I am sick of, and from. Then I plan on donating to a special artists assistance program with my money, and I will also donate to the World Therapy Corps, which will build kibbutzes for the homeless and dissatisfied. So I want the money to free the poor and I, who don't want the job nor the power, have to be burdened with both. Yuk!

However, forward we must go. Another new law will be the Chinese idea for overpopulation. That is one child per family until further notice. Or, if people don't want kids, that's fine. Gays are good for population control. Democratic Socialistic Capitalism will be the world's united harmonious political system.

This new method of power I have discovered isn't my totally original idea I don't think. Although I did think of it myself with no coaching, I understand there was another company who had a similar invention, and people were cynical and didn't try it. It figures.

Dau The Pied Piper  
Garberville

P.S. Paul Encimer and I are considering actually creating a satirical musical entertaining event to get the new alternative government of the counter culture launched and take the idea as far as we can. Paul is my minister of the environment. Keep up the good work.

# Society to Abolish Geography And Other Useless Subjects Forms In Laytonville

A group of concerned parents and citizens is forming in Laytonville to lobby for the elimination of subjects from local school curricula that, in the words of Mrs. Millie Plimpton, chairperson, "...only serve to confuse and addle the minds of our young people by forcing them to memorize information that is of no value to them and end up distracting them from the things that are truly important in life."

Among the subjects Mrs. Plimpton and vice-chairperson Rev. Oliver Smedley singled out for attack were geography, philosophy, and social studies. Mrs. Plimpton stated that she became interested in just what her children were being required to learn last summer when she heard a guest on the Phil Donahue show state that most American students were ignorant of even elementary geography, to the extent that one out of seven could not find the United States on a map of the world, and that almost as many could not even locate the area they lived in on an unmarked map of the United States.

"At first," says Mrs. Plimpton, "I was shocked just like everyone else, just like the media wanted us to be. But then I started thinking to myself, 'Now, just a minute, Millie, what is so all-fired important about knowing how to find your own country on a map? If you're already there, then what on earth do you need a map for anyway?'"

Mrs. Plimpton went on to explain how it then occurred to her that the only thing geography was likely to accomplish was to make students curious about other places and as a result to make them dissatisfied about their own home towns. "Now I'll admit," she continued, "that back in the days of Christopher Columbus and those fellows, a bit of wanderlust was a good thing. But everything's already been discovered now, and the last thing we need is people traipsing all over God's green earth thinking that

somehow life is going to be better or easier on the other side of that hill or valley. What we need is for people to stay home and tend to business and do their jobs and look after their families, and I don't see where geography is going to do a darn thing to help that."

Rev. Smedley agreed wholeheartedly, adding that the only map a person needed to be able to read was the one that tells the way toward heaven and away from hell. "I'll admit," he said, "that certain people need to be able to find their way around foreign places, for example, missionaries and our military forces. But those are specialized occupations. Most of us don't need to know anything more than the way to our jobs and the supermarket and McDonald's or Denny's on those occasions we decide to dine out, and you don't need lessons to do that; you just get on the highway and drive."

Rev. Smedley also expressed concern over the study of history and philosophy by impressionable young people. "Now you take these so-called philosophy classes," he declared, "and they're reading stuff written by outright, admitted pagans like Plato and Aristotle and giving kids the impression there's something worthwhile to it. This Socrates character, you know he was executed because he didn't even believe in the false gods of the Greeks, let alone the one true God. And as far as history, well, as far as I and the Lord are concerned, all the history you need to know, right from the beginning of the world, is written down in the Holy Bible with God's own hand. All the rest of that junk just confuses people."

The Society to Eliminate Geography and Other Useless Subjects (STEGAOUS) will meet every Sunday after regular worship services at the Community Cretin Church on the 101 Ranch south of Laytonville. All are welcome.

## You're In Good Hands? Time To Put The Insurance Racket Out Of Business

## KMUD: Redwood Community Radio

Of all the parasitic and exploitative industries spawned by the cutthroat form of capitalism practiced here in the United States, the insurance business must be among the least savory. It's a form of gambling where the odds are completely weighted in favor of the house. You'd probably stand a better chance in Las Vegas.

Yet no matter how unfair the game, almost everyone who can afford it plays it. If you want to drive a car you don't even have a choice in many states. And while medical insurance isn't required by law (yet), there are some powerful incentives to purchase it, among them being the fact that hospitals have been known to let uninsured people die because they lacked the cash to pay for treatment.

If you want to buy a house, the bank will require you to have insurance (unless you're one of those rare individuals who can pay cash), and if you want to make sure your family doesn't end up living on the streets and eating out of garbage cans if something happens to you, you'll need life and disability insurance. An ordinary working mother or father could end up spending several thousand dollars a year in protection money to the insurance mob.

Insurance wouldn't be nearly as big a racket as it is if the state didn't cooperate in making daily life a risky affair. Many of the financial disasters that insurance is meant to protect us against simply wouldn't happen in most industrialized countries, where things like food, housing, medical care and education are regarded as human rights rather than privileges. But even those areas where insurance does make sense — for instance, fire and theft on your house or car — could be handled far more efficiently by a single, state-sponsored insurance company. Socialized insurance? Of course; how could it not be more practical than the current system?

Figure it this way. If you watch TV or listen to the radio, you're exposed to dozens of insurance commercials every day. Who do you think pays for them? You do, sucker. For the last couple months, practically every station in the state of California has at least once an hour broadcast a blatantly dishonest advertisement telling people how to vote on the insurance initiatives on this November's ballot. The insurance industry is spending \$43 million, an all-time record, in this effort to pervert the democratic process. But that's not exactly true. Actually, you and I, and anyone else that has any kind of insurance in this state is paying for it. Your rates keep going up? 43 million smackeroos has to come from somewhere, and it's sure not going to be out of the pockets of Metropolitan Life shareholders.

Why not instead have just one insurance company that functioned along the lines of a pension fund or social security? No advertising costs, no high-paid lobbyists buying influence in the state legislature, and no exorbitant salaries and dividends for executives and shareholders. In the case of auto insurance, for example, the cost could be included in registration fees. Property insurance could be computed as a percentage of assessed value, and medical insurance should not even be necessary, when and if we join the civilized world and offer national health care as every industrialized country in the world with the exception of the United States and South Africa already does. Ditto for life and disability insurance; most countries, capitalist or communist, do not allow families to be kicked out into the streets because of death or injury to the bread-winner. Our own land of the free is of course a notable exception.

There will be those who will argue, with a certain amount of justification, that government is by nature corrupt and inefficient and thus could not do as good a job of insuring its citizens as private industry now does. While a degree of waste is built in to any government program, it's hard to believe that state-run insurance, even in the hands of our sleaziest politicians, could rival the obscene practices of private insurance carriers. As evidence, just take a look at social security and unemployment insurance, two programs that, with all their abuses, have provided for millions of people at a relatively reasonable cost.

In the short run, one thing people can do is to vote yes on the Ralph Nader-sponsored Proposition 103 this November and no on Props. 100, 101, 104, and 106, all of which are sponsored by either insurance companies or trial lawyers. In the long run, we should work on eliminating the private insurance business altogether, or at least offer people a not-for-profit alternative to it.

I finally found a place in my house where if I aim the radio just right and stick its antenna up through the chandelier, I can pick up KMUD from Garberville. And what a difference it's made in my life. Till now the only station that consistently came in to my little corner of the mountains was San Francisco's news-talk KGO, with its foaming-at-the-mouth right wing hosts fomenting racism, greed, and knee-jerk patriotism up and down the west coast (all right, to be fair, Ray Taliaferro, on from 1 am to 5 am, is almost as far left as cretins like Jim Eason and Lee Rodgers are to the right, but who wants to stay up all night listening to people yell about things you already know are fucked up?). Oh yeah, and there's the Ukiah country and western station, programmed in Los Angeles by robot DJs, and I think the Christian pod people are setting up transmitters on every mountain so that eventually you won't be able to pick up anything but KGOD (once I read about some woman who was blind and crippled and lived in a little shack way north of the Arctic Circle that was snowed in for almost half the year, and the only entertainment she had was the 24-hour-a-day Christian radio station nearby that blocked everything else off the airwaves. Boy, if there was ever anything that could make hell look good...).

Anyway, KMUD is something that I'm tempted to say could only happen here in the Emerald Triangle. I may be wrong. There may be community-supported stations elsewhere that are just as good. I haven't heard of any yet. But as one KMUD DJ was saying the other day, it's pretty amazing that an area with only about 12,000 people could support its own radio station, especially a non-commercial one.

KMUD isn't strictly non-commercial; much of its programming is sponsored by local businesses, who have a little blurb read on the half hour that sounds a lot like a low-key advertisement. That's still a lot better than every five minutes, the way it is at most stations. But you know what's really a lot better at KMUD than at most stations? The programs and the people.

Yeah, this being Humboldt, of course there's a substantial quotient of flakes, sproutheads, and new age wankerama. But there's also loads of great music, including just about any kind I can think of from punk to bluegrass to reggae to classical, not to mention Middle Eastern, Eastern European, Oriental, oh, a few hippie songs thrown in here or there, and unfortunately they also allow the kind of psychotic jazz so beloved of white would-be hipsters who think all their problems could have been avoided if only they'd been born black and their mothers hadn't forced them to listen to Mantovani during their formative years.

KMUD also has politics, conversation, educational stuff, and important news like the Pacifica report every evening and information about the whereabouts of CAMP every morning. And if you still can't find a program you like, then they invite you to create one of your own. This is radio as it was meant to be, not the faceless, soulless product that has resulted from the past few decades of corporate ownership of the airwaves.

What this adds up to is that KMUD needs your support to stay on the air. If you live in northern Mendocino or southern Humboldt, chances are you can pick up KMUD. Check it out, and if you agree that it's the kind of radio station that should be giving lessons to other radio stations on how to be radio stations, why not consider becoming a supporting member? The standard rate is \$35 a year, and they have a sliding scale of \$12 to \$20 a year if you're one of the poorer folks. And when you shop at one of the businesses that currently are supporting KMUD programming, tell them thanks, and let them know that their dollars are coming back to them in the form of good will.

The new fall schedule, which is more like a magazine, should be out just about now. I don't think you need to be a member to get one, but if you can afford to send some money KMUD's way, you ought to. Write to them at PO Box 135, Redway CA 95560.

*God, what a country! Everyone with his own little vaudeville act.*  
— Bruce Anderson

*Sovereignty and independence, equal rights and noninterference are becoming universally recognized rules of international relations, which is a major achievement of the twentieth century. To oppose freedom of choice is to come out against the objective tide of history itself. That is why power politics in all their forms and manifestations are historically obsolete.*



Love him or hate him, the Grateful Dead's Jerry Garcia is as likely a candidate as any to accede to the title of Mr. San Francisco when Herb Caen and Co. wander off to the last roundup at Gardner's Tennis Ranch, even if the voluminous guitarist hasn't lived in the city for a couple decades.

He may have spent a significant part of those decades with his feet in the grave and his face in a crack pipe, but it's gratifying to be able to report that the greybearded fretmaster appears to have done an exceptional job of resurrecting and redeeming himself, at least judging from his performance at the July 16 free concert in Golden Gate Park celebrating the American-Soviet peace walk.

From a distance it sounded as if the Grateful Dead themselves were playing, and you wouldn't have known otherwise to look at the crowd, a massively tie-dyed aggregation of which the majority appeared to have migrated over from Berkeley, where the Dead were in the midst of a three-day Greek Theatre stand. The crowd, in fact, was the worst thing about an otherwise enjoyable concert, with a disproportionate number of Budweiser-swilling long-haired jocks doing their best to impersonate a Candlestick Park baseball crowd on acid.

Also detracting from the general pleasantness was the aggressive hucksterism of part-time Laytonvillian Wavy Gravy and actor Robert Blake, who during intermission were hawking T-shirts emblazoned with the autograph of (gasp!) Jerry Garcia. Asking price, 100 smackerroos, and a couple people paid it before the price started plummeting. The Grace Slick model fetched considerably less.

Yeah, yeah, all for a good cause, right? Except why not give it a rest once in a while, huh? The total amount raised could have easily been matched or surpassed by a couple of hippie bigshots sacrificing a month of their cocaine budget. Speaking of drugs, I ran into the former Mrs. Livermore backstage, where she gushingly told me how she'd started the day with a 6 a.m. Zen meditation session topped off with a dose of Ecstasy laced with cocaine. She lives in Marin, needless to mention.

Back across the Bay, I had occasion to marvel once more at the pervasive power of culture mogul Bill Graham. In days of old, when there was a particularly attractive concert at the Greek Theater, hundreds of people would gather above the facility on what became known as Cheap-skate Hill. Well, no longer. Graham, who probably raked in a couple hundred thousand bucks for what amounts to renting a hall and hiring a band, ordered several square miles of the Berkeley hills closed off, and the UC Berkeley police dutifully did his bidding, presumably at taxpayer expense.

The malling of the Haight-Ashbury suffered a setback in late September as an arsonist wiped out an entire building which was to house a new Thrifty (a misnomer, by the way) drug store and a set of condos. Unfortunately, the five-alarm blaze also took out several nearby apartment buildings, leaving over 60 people homeless. Luckily, no one was injured.

The yuppie profiteer behind the project was unperturbed; he vowed to rebuild, and punctuated that promise with a smug chortle. Representatives of the Thrifty chain, on the other hand, were not so sure they would try again.

A bit of unintentional humor in the post mortems: Sanford Kellerman, owner of the neighboring I-Beam, a yuppie disco, was heard on the radio proclaiming, "Unfortunately, fire fighters were able to prevent any damage at all to our building."

Anyone remember the conceptual "artist" Christo, he who made a name and several million bucks for himself by inducing thousands of volunteers to assist him in draping various landscapes and monuments with miles upon miles of sheets? In the fast-fleeting world of modern celebrity, not that many people do, which makes it all the more curious that Christo's attorneys have fired off a stern barrage at an East Bay T-shirt manufacturer

which has given him some of his best publicity in years.

Emeryville's Plum Graphics markets a line of gag shirts portraying the "cats of famous artists," one of which portrays a (surprise!) shrouded cat allegedly belonging to the Eastern European schlockmeister. You'd think Christo would be grateful for having achieved artist status in at least some eyes, but Plum's generosity has gained them only the threat of a lawsuit.

Post script: lawyers for dead popster Andy Warhol (one wonders if they communicate with the soup can illustrator via Ouija board, or if they simply extrapolate from the First Principle of Warhol Artistry: Get The Money) have gone Christo one better and actually filed suit against Plum for its rendition of Andy's cat.

Speaking of "art," the city is about to embark on another megabuck cultural boondoggle, the new Museum of Modern Art. Expected to cost at least 70 million smackerroos, the building is "desperately" needed, we're told, because the space the Museum currently occupies in the upper floors of the War Memorial on Van Ness does not allow room for the Museum to expand its collection.

Which is one very good reason for keeping the present facility, and if it's more room that's needed, a good start would be to get rid of at least half of the current collection, by selling it or dumping it out on the curb if necessary (and it probably would be in some cases). San Francisco has never been much of a museum town anyway, but the Museum of Modern Art is a repository of ugliness, bad taste, pedantry, and old-fashioned corruption pandering to the moneyed booboisie who typically dominate the cultural agenda in arriviste towns like this one, only a couple generations removed from the frontier and still a bit anxious about its status in civilized society.

The self-serving clowns who stocked this joint (biggest villain is Harry Hopkins, since departed to feed at bigger troughs in the southland) are positively salivating at the prospect of laying out another 100 million bucks for the latest in crumpled automobile fenders, paint spilled and/or thrown at a canvas by pretentious psychotics, and rooms full of squares artfully arranged inside of circles.

These are the same guys who earlier this year mounted a "major" exhibition of some East Coast (maybe it was Europe, but that's just an extension of the East Coast anyway, isn't it?) huckster named Julian Schnabel, whose specialty involves gluing broken plates inside of picture frames. This exciting display was advertised to the world by a dozen or so enormous satin banners emblazoned with the word "SCHNABEL" that hung outside the building. The cost of the banners alone could have supported a couple of real artists for the next year.

Mayor Art Agnos continues to disappoint; although his policies thus far don't compare to the outright malignancy with which Dianne Feinstein dismembered all that was bright and beautiful about the City By The Bay, he has also done very little to reverse San Francisco's slide into a morass characterized by the worst aspects of both New York and Los Angeles minus the redeeming cultural advantages of those cities.

Although the mayor campaigned on a platform favoring rent controls for vacant housing, something his landlady predecessor successfully resisted, Agnos has refused to endorse a November ballot initiative that would limit rent increases to between 4% and 7%, regardless of whether an apartment is vacant or not. Hizzoner claims that the measure, which would also eliminate thousands of evictions engineered by greedy landlords as a way of circumventing rent controls, is too harsh.

Agnos is also talking seriously about resurrecting the city-financed baseball stadium boondoggle (which he also opposed during the campaign) and allowing Southern Pacific to proceed with its Mission Bay development, which amounts to the plunking down of a whole new city smack in the middle of an already gridlocked San Francisco. About the

only issue the mayor has stood fast on is his opposition to the homeporting of the nuclear battleship Missouri at Hunter's Point, and if voters approve his Proposition R on November 8, it will probably deal a death blow to this Chamber of Commerce/ Pentagon scam and leave the Hunter's Point waterfront open for the kind of development that's already been occurring there of its own accord, providing affordable space for artists and non-lethal small businesses.

The new mayor's greatest single crime against the city of San Francisco reads like a chapter right out of the Dianne Feinstein Book of Horrors. With traffic congestion and air pollution at all-time highs, and with the private automobile clearly indicted as a major villain in the greenhouse effect now threatening the entire planet, Agnos has chosen to balance the city's budget by delivering what may well be a death blow to public transit in San Francisco.

Raising Muni fares to 85¢ is more of an inconvenience than a financial burden for most passengers; the time spent by passengers searching for one more coin will probably result in still more delays in the already maddeningly slow service. But the real disaster is yet to come: in October Muni will adopt major cuts in service, which will reduce it to little more than a commuter line for downtown office workers. Rush hour schedules will remain relatively unchanged, but people wishing to use buses and streetcars during midday hours may find themselves spending twice as much time standing around on street corners as they currently do. And those out for a night on the town had better be prosperous enough to own an automobile or pay for a taxi, since many lines will no longer operate after 7 p.m.

Still more Agnos-bashing: what the hell is going on in the Haight? Not only are the cops, with the mayor's blessing, rousting people who are sleeping in their vehicles along the Panhandle ("If they want to live in this neighborhood, why don't they save up enough money for a down payment on a condo like I did?" one exasperated yuppie complained about the bus people), but now the Tac Squad, in full riot gear, is arresting people for giving food away. Maybe the coalition of peace activists known as Food Not Bombs should change its name to Food And Bombs, with food for the hungry and bombs for the city hall that makes charity a crimewhile handing over millions of bucks in taxpayer money to every cheesy developer who comes down the pike with a proposal for another shopping center or condo palace. Agnos, by the way, is buying a \$600,000 little bungalow in the Upper Market area. He could have popped for one of the \$1.2 million jobs over in P-Heights, but he wanted to let us know he's still one of the ordinary working folks. In fact, to show that he's not one for putting on airs the way Feinstein used to, he's ordered that his limo only be waxed once every two weeks and from now on he's going to answer his own car phone on his secretary's day off.

Golden Gate Bridge tolls are going up to two bucks every day, ostensibly for the right reason, that of improving service and cutting fares on the nearly moribund Golden Gate bus and ferry system. Most of the money will probably disappear into the bottomless pockets of the bridge bureaucracy, however, and long lines of drivers waiting to pay their tolls will waste still more gasoline and further deplete the ozone layer. What's worse, the bridge board has just voted to sell discount tickets priced at \$1.25 to regular commuters, who are the biggest villains in the ridiculous traffic snarl that plagues the bridge every morning and afternoon, and who could most easily take advantage of mass transit. I say charge five bucks to anyone wearing a business suit during commute hours, and let everyone else cross free. Seriously, the whole idea of tolls has got to be scrapped. Make people pay for mass transit, by all means, but do it through gas or auto registration taxes. The present toll system is an obscene waste of time and fossil fuel, and benefits no one but the relative handful of toll collectors.

While we're on the subject, what is one to think of the San Francisco *Chronicle* (yeah, I know, not much) calling one day for all-out action to reverse the greenhouse effect, and almost in the same breath advocating the construction of a second Bay Bridge? Yeah, exactly what we need, a way to get more cars into the city.

Another *Chronicle* mind boggler: a lengthy article on the garbage crisis, focusing on the difficulty of finding a suitable place to dump the stuff and concluding that the eventual solution will have to be massive incinerators, despite the obvious environmental drawbacks. Not once was the word "recycling" mentioned.

In the franchised pinstripe world that San Francisco has become, probably not all that many people remember the Angels of Light. A

spectacularly colorful troupe of drag queens and flamboyant exhibitionists who made it their life's mission to abolish all notions of preconceived sex roles, they burst upon the scene on Christmas Eve of 1969, when they performed their own version of the birth of Jesus for slack-jawed parishioners attending midnight mass at Nob Hill's Grace Cathedral.

In the years that followed, Angels of Light shows grew into major events that attracted thousands and drew high praise even from major media theater critics like the *Chronicle's* Bernie Weiner. The Angels brought to their art the same uninhibited, poly-cultural approach that characterized their lives; a scene featuring space aliens doing a Chinese folk dance while a bigger than life Hindu sacred cow sporting jewels and tiara meandered through a bee-hived clutch of queens buffing their nails would not be at all out of character.

What brought the Angels back to mind was the recent death from AIDS of Rodney Price, one of the founding members. Rodney was a brilliant dancer, singer, and all-around performer who very likely could have wound up on Broadway had he chosen to pursue a more mainstream career. He also played a big part in designing costumes and sets, and was a major contributor to the writing of Angels' plays as well.

The Angels, as is the case with the performing arts in general, have been devastated by AIDS; another major contributor, Tommy Pace, died the same month as Rodney, and in fact, only a relative handful of the male members remain alive today. The plague goes on and on, and the government does next to nothing, other than funnel huge amounts of money into the coffers of profiteering drug merchants like Burroughs-Wellcome (makers of AZT) and the obscenely corrupt medical establishment. Oh, did I forget to mention that the Angels were militantly radical on the political as well as the social front? As long as AIDS hits hardest at people like the Angels of Light, do you think the corporate and religious nazis running this society are going to be in any hurry to find a cure?

Closer to home, there was another death, someone who never made the kind of name for himself that the Angels of Light did, just an ordinary person who lived an ordinary San Francisco life, and who in microcosm represents the immense tragedy AIDS has inflicted on this city.

His name was Tom Counts, he had just turned 40 years old, and on the surface you wouldn't see that much to differentiate him from the three thousand or so San Franciscans who have died from AIDS so far this decade. What makes him stand out from the rest is that I knew him personally, and for the first time I experienced the shock and revulsion of seeing someone of my own age, with what looked like a full and promising life still ahead, cut down and destroyed by this awful disease. I now have a vague understanding of what it must be like for those who've already lost five or ten or more friends.

Unlike many AIDS victims, Tom chose not to subject himself to the whole medical rigamarole that keeps some patients alive for years, but at the price of constant hospitalizations and often painful experimental therapies, and the progress of the disease through his system was frighteningly fast. He first started showing symptoms last winter, and by midsummer, he was dead. The first time I saw him after he had become really sick left an indelible impression on me. It had been perhaps a month or two since I had last visited him, and the boyishly grinning, constantly clowning around youngster had turned into a gaunt and feeble old man hobbling down the hallway on a cane with his now-much-too-large clothes flapping in the morning breeze.

Somehow he kept smiling and joking right to the end, though it was obviously only with great effort. The last time I saw him in July, he was no longer able to get out of bed much, but he was still making plans for the future. I promised to come for another visit on my next trip to San Francisco the following week. I talked to him on the phone a couple of times during the week, and he sounded upbeat. But when I got to the city and called to say I was coming over, a woman's voice answered, and told me that he had passed away the night before. It was the day after the big heat wave had broken, but apparently the sea breezes had returned to the city too late; the 100°+ temperatures had just been too much for his feeble constitution.

Tom was lucky to have his friend Janice, who stood by him to the end, waiting on him, cleaning up after him, doing the kind of work that you couldn't pay a professional healthcare worker enough to do. Her story, too, is one of thousands; people motivated by nothing other than friendship and compassion giving so much of themselves to take care of the sick and dying. Another woman I know gave up her room, her own bed so that she could take a friend suffering from AIDS into her home. Devotion like this goes at least some distance to restoring faith in human nature, and stands in stark contrast to the obscene callousness displayed by those with the financial and scientific resources to make a real impact on this tragic epidemic.

## From Grubby Backwater to City of the Future:

# LAYTONVILLE 2000

*Recently the Laytonville Ledger has been offering us a series entitled "Laytonville in the 1990s," which promises a bright future for us as we become vineyard operators, Christmas tree farmers, or just chain saw operators for Mr. Harwood. Now that we know what we'll be doing in the coming ten years, the LOOKOUT, as usual, will go one step beyond and offers this vision of Laytonville at the turn of the century, at the dawning of a new millennium. Those of you who want our town to grow should be in hog heaven by the time you get to the end of this inspiring piece.*

Bill Bailey stepped from his air-conditioned limousine into the air-conditioned lobby of the 56-story Bailey Building that the Laytonville Ledger's architecture critic had described as "the crown jewel of our great city." He was not outdoors for more than a few seconds, but the sledgehammer heat left him feeling a little staggered, and he paused to wipe his brow and regain his bearings.

"Gonna be another hot one, Mr. Bailey," said the ancient security guard, as he did nearly every day. The thermometer on the Bank of Laytonville tower showed 134°, and it was barely 9 o'clock in the morning. Bailey nodded, and entered the private elevator that would take him to his top-floor office.

From his glassed-in aerie, Bailey was afforded a spectacular view in all directions, except of course for the clouds of smoke floating inland from the oil refineries over on the coast. A slight breeze had carried off much of the blanket of smog that normally hung over the city, and he could even make out a dim outline of Iron Peak, more than ten miles to the north.

When he was young, there had been days when the air was so crystal clear that you could see a hundred miles or more, but much had changed since those days, when an ambitious young Bill Bailey had set out to put both himself and Laytonville on the map. He had succeeded beyond his wildest dreams; Laytonville was now the largest city between Santa Rosa and the Oregon border, and with drought-plagued southern California turning into a desert, a steady stream of refugees from now largely uninhabitable Los Angeles promised continued growth for the foreseeable future.

It had been assumed that Ukiah would be the natural stopping place for the northward migration, but the former county seat had been destroyed by a minor nuclear accident in 1996, and the resulting fallout had made Willits, already suffering from limited water supplies and severe air pollution, a less than desirable location. Fort Bragg had undergone a significant spurt in population when the oil rigs had moved in in 1990, but rising sea levels caused by the greenhouse effect had flooded most of the original town, and what was left of the coast from Westport south to the Navarro River was now given over almost entirely to the oil industry.

Bill could see the pipeline snaking over the brown hills, bringing the lifeblood of industrialized society to the service stations and factories of Laytonville. There was a certain sinuous beauty to them, twisting and turning over the mountains, occasionally reflecting back a burst of sunlight. The pipeline, with its illusion of movement, made an interesting contrast with the lines of traffic crawling along the Branscomb Freeway.

Even though Bill was sick and tired of the whinings of environmentalists, he did have to agree with them on one thing. He missed the trees. Once the county had been almost completely forested. Now, except for a few scraggly things that would more properly be called bushes, the hills were bare. Last winter it had rained twice, once for an entire day, and there'd been a brief eruption of wildflowers and grass that had everyone oohing and aahing for a week or two. But they had long since shriveled up, and anytime a strong breeze came in, clouds of dust would come rolling down off the hills, looking almost like the smoke from old-time forest fires.

It had been during the dry years of 1987 and 1988 that the trees started dying. At first they said it was insects; it was to be expected that the weaker trees would not make it through drought years. During that same time huge areas of the county were logged over to take advantage of rising lumber prices and to pay off the Reagan administration's campaign debts to big industry. Many locals had hailed the logging boom and the jobs it created, and ridiculed those who warned that there would come a time when there would no longer be enough trees to sustain any jobs.

But even the most extreme environmentalists did not envision what

was to come. During the 1990s, the climate continued to grow drier, and after the winter of 1994 came and went without a drop of rain falling on what was once known as the Redwood Empire, whole forests started dying. Arguing that the dying trees should not be allowed to go to waste, the timber industry was given permission to clear-cut areas where, in the words of the US Forest Service, "It did not appear likely that the majority of the trees would survive." Firs and redwoods were milled for lumber, and the oaks and madrones went to fuel the Harwood bio-mass plants in Willits and Branscomb. An attempt was made to replant some of the logged-over areas, but although there was a little rain in the winter of 1995, it was not enough to sustain anything but grass and thistles through the record-breaking heat of the summer that followed. The month of July saw three straight weeks of temperatures in excess of 120°, and by the time another dry winter had come and gone, the hills of Mendocino County had begun to resemble the high desert of Nevada or Wyoming.

While many old-timers were distressed at this development, real estate and construction interests pointed out that it could be considered a blessing in disguise, since the newly available open space could quickly and cheaply be converted to housing for the flood of people moving in from south and central California. Bill Bailey, although he had made his first fortune selling logging equipment, was astute enough to see the changing conditions and position himself to take advantage of them. He bought up thousands of acres of vacant land surrounding Laytonville, and the ensuing real estate boom had made him one of the richest men in California. He was universally recognized as the father of modern-day Laytonville, and there had even been a short-lived movement to change its name to Bailey City. Bill, however, had quickly put the kibosh on that notion, as well as on a similar groundswell of support urging him to run for mayor. "Everyone knows who I am and the role I play in this city," he declared; "I don't feel that I need formal recognition. Besides, I think I can accomplish more in the private sector."

And indeed he had accomplished a great deal. He built the city's first high rise, and had a prominent role in arranging financing for many of the ones that followed. When the State of California had tried to get by with converting Highway 101 to a four lane freeway, it had been Bill Bailey who had gone down to Sacramento and made sure the governor knew Laytonville needed at least eight lanes. While most California cities struggled with chronic water shortages, Bill Bailey had pulled off a stunning coup in not only arranging to dam the Eel River to flood the Round Valley and create Lake Covelo, but through some fancy legal footwork had given the Laytonville Municipal Water Department first rights to the new reservoir. True, Lake Covelo was rarely more than half full these days, but it was enough to keep Laytonville growing, and in the wealthier parts of town, one could still see broad expanses of green lawns.

Bailey, Inc. is not the only local enterprise that has flourished. Just down the street from the Bailey Building is GeigerWorld, one of the largest shopping malls in the United States. It's centerpiece is a museum-cum-amusement park called Old Laytonville, that re-creates the era when Laytonville was a simple logging village. One can browse in a remarkably accurate replica of Geiger's General Mercantile, or stroll through a three-acre plastic reconstruction of a redwood forest that those old enough to remember swear is almost like the real thing. Babbling little brooks run between the trees, and concealed speakers broadcast the sounds of animal calls and the wind sighing through the trees. Nearby is an authentic-looking logging camp, where, for a few dollars, children can experience the thrill of wielding a chain saw and actually falling a tree, or at least a lifelike plastic imitation of one, complete with the sound effects of cracking wood and a lumberjack's voice hollering "Timber!"

Another attraction in GeigerWorld is Restaurant Row, where practically any kind of dining experience imaginable can be had. There are McDonald's and Burger King, Carl's Jr. and Wendy's and Burger King and dozens of other traditional American establishments, not to mention a rich variety of international cuisine represented by such places as Taco Bell, Pizza Hut, and Tokyo Stop. "Sometimes I can sit there nibbling on my taco or my croissant," enthused one Laytonville matron, "and it seems like I can see the whole world passing by."

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GREATER LAYTONVILLE? WHY DON'T WE ALL JUST MOVE TO SANTA ROSA?

# The New School Boondoggle: Subdivide and Conquer?

In the spring of 1987, Laytonville was turned on its collective ear by the news that certain parties wanted to erect an asphalt batch plant in the center of what passes for "downtown." Over 500 people signed petitions against the scheme, and at least 100 of them turned out to protest at the Planning Commission hearing. For once, hippies and environmentalists found themselves on the same side as the rednecks and old-timers. Almost no one except those who stood to directly profit from it favored the batch plant. Even the pave-it-over-and-put-a-price-tag-on-it real estate crowd couldn't see any advantage to the noisy, pollution-belching monstrosity.

So that idea quickly got shot down, and folks breathed a sigh of relief. Laytonville was saved. The hippies went back to the hills, the loggers back to the woods, and the civic boosters back to planning their bake sales and "cow plop" contests. Hardly any one noticed when

Superintendent of Schools Brian Buckley set in motion a chain of events that could have a far greater and far more negative impact on Laytonville's future than even the ill-conceived batch plant would have had.

This time there wasn't a broadly unified opposition, though one is now beginning to emerge. At first, though, the community seemed split roughly 50-50 (if you leave out the considerable numbers who couldn't care less) on Buckley's plan to build a new high school on the Circle 101 Ranch south of town. It's surprising, in fact, that opposition is as strong as it is; who, after all, wants to be seen as unwilling to provide our kids with the best possible educational facilities? The current Laytonville High School is no gem. It clearly could use major improvements, and tearing it down and starting over might well be the best approach.

Superintendent Buckley has managed to arrange the financing, so



Two Futures: You Choose

why not go ahead and build a real high school, one that will be capable of meeting our needs into the next century? Like it or not, Laytonville is almost certain to grow in the coming years, and it makes sense to prepare for the demands growth will place on our schools.

But while we couldn't stop this area from growing even if we wanted to, we can have some say in how it grows. Most American cities have developed with little or no planning; we can see the results in the archetypal urban sprawl, an endlessly expanding wasteland of fast food franchises, mini-malls, and automobile dealerships that devours our landscape as if it had a life of its own. In Southern California there are places where you can drive 100 miles without ever leaving the clutches of the neon monster. Northern California is falling prey, too; like a staph infection migrating up an artery, Santa Rosa creeps inexorably up Highway 101.

Ukiah, and now Willits, too, are lost causes. A certain amount of uglification on a city's outskirts is understandable, sometimes even endearing. But when full-scale urban blight occurs in the form of McDonald's or Taco Bell, you've generally passed the point of no return.

So now it's Laytonville on the front lines against the asphalt tide. Sure, there's room for more homes to be built here, and room for more businesses, too. But what *kind* of homes and businesses? Do we really want to see another version of Santa Rosa or Ukiah or Willits? Is that anybody's idea of progress?

Yes, I'm sure there are people who love those places. And if they do, they're free to live there. But why, please tell me, does every city have to be just like them? I know there are people who think Laytonville won't be complete until it has the same factories, hamburger joints, and tract home subdivisions as our neighbors to the south. So why did they move here? Do they feel it's their life's mission do bring the American version of civilization to the boondocks? Are they missionaries sacrificing their own comfort so that they can bring us the used car lots and Sizzler steakhouses that we now so sorely lack?

All right, not everyone who's in favor of the new high school wants to pave over the Long Valley and string traffic lights and parking meters along Highway 101. A lot of people don't even see the connection. "What, just because we build a new school, thousands of people are going to move into Laytonville?" they might ask, "You've got to be dumb or crazy to live in this town, anyway. You'd have to put up more than a new high school to convince anyone in their right mind to move here."

All right, I exaggerate. Not everyone in Laytonville is dumb or crazy, and people will be moving into Laytonville in the coming years, not specifically so their kids can attend our fine schools, but because we've got clean air, clean (well, sort of) water, lots of open space, and compared to most of California, it's still relatively affordable.

So where are these new people going to live? Chuck Arreola, the owner of the 101 Ranch, would like a lot of them to live on his land, after it's been subdivided and covered with tract homes, of course, with a substantial portion of the profits ending up in his pocket. But in order to do that he needs permission to subdivide, and he needs a sewage system.

He hasn't had any luck with either, so far, nor have there been any takers for the land, which has been for sale for a long time. Here's where the new school comes in handy. First off, the taxpayers will take at least 20 acres off his hands at a good price. Then they'll pay some more to put in an access road and utilities. Finally, when the high school's sewage load can no longer be handled by the mound system, as even its supporters admit will happen in five to ten years, the taxpayers will pay to install Laytonville's first-ever sewage system, which will just coincidentally be in direct proximity to Arreola Acres subdivision and mobile home park. Which might as well hook up to it as long as it's there, leaving old Laytonville to either get on board the urbanization express or wither and die while housing and business move down Highway 101 a piece.

So it's not surprising that Mr. Arreola is in favor of the new school. He's also in favor of growth, as he declared in a lengthy, quasi-biblical epistle to the Ledger which listed, Genesis-style, all the generations of Laytonville, leaving out only the begats. He likened the log-butchers and Indian-killers who heralded the arrival of Christian civilization on the West Coast as "like the Pilgrims," which may be true, and concluded that "Laytonville has always worked and grown together for the benefit of all," which is decidedly not.

The theological overtones of Arreola's letter are not entirely incidental. At the heart of Christian ideology is the scriptural injunction (I'm sorry I can't quote you chapter and verse, having recently burned my bible in a fit of pique) to be fruitful and multiply, and to subdue the earth and all the creatures thereof. This none too subtly sets the human race above and apart from its environment, and can be used to justify everything from the mind-body schism that Christianity both creates and exploits to the paving over of paradise in favor of the proverbial parking lot.

But Mr. Arreola is not alone in licking his chops over the prospect of growth. Elementary school principal Matlock likened the new school and ensuing development to "great projects" that Laytonville was too short-sighted to develop in the past, among them a resort and golf course, a three million gallon water reservoir, and a town sewage system (rejected several years ago with, guess who, Bill Bailey leading the opposition). Perennial pro-business drummer John Franklin said opponents of the new school would always find some "irrelevant garbage" with which to "cloud the issue." He recommended that we follow the example of those who built Laytonville and not "get hung up on Environmental Impact Reports."

The Board of Education hasn't allowed itself to get hung up on Environmental Impact Reports. It dealt with that issue by deciding unanimously that the new school didn't need one. "There is no such thing as no adverse environmental impact," said Kathryn Mollar, adding, "In order to line the pockets of real estate speculators and boost the careers of school administrators, this community is being told to support a boondoggle with a swamping price tag and to complacently allow the area to become a suburban housing development." Bill Evans concludes, "The consequences to the community will be disastrous both economically and environmentally."

So what's going on here? Assuming that we do need a new school, what is the reasoning behind putting it outside of town in a previously undeveloped area? And why are the people pushing this project being so tenacious in the face of overwhelming evidence that the proposed site makes no sense at all? Superintendent Buckley produced a long article for the Ledger purporting to answer all the objections (it's in a flood plain, it needs a sewage system, it's on the end of an airstrip, it doesn't even have legal access, etc.), but Philip C. Randle, writing on behalf of R.O.S.S. (Resistance to School Site; don't ask me what the O stands for) systematically demolished Buckley's arguments and made a convincing case for using the existing high school site (already owned by the district) and an adjacent 10 acres now belonging to the Larsons.

This site makes so much more sense that it's hard to believe the School Board seems to have barely considered it. It's considerably higher than the 101 site, making a septic system far more feasible, it's already got a well-developed athletic field, it's within walking distance of downtown and the elementary/middle school, it's on a road (Branscomb) equipped to handle the volume of traffic it will generate. Most of all, it make sense for effect it will have on the orderly growth and development of Laytonville. Buckley claims that the new school, with its various facilities, will serve as a community center. What more logical place for a community center than in the center of a community?

Right now, Laytonville is a relatively compact town. Though not many people choose to, you can walk from one end of the business district to the other in less than 10 minutes. You can park in front of Geiger's or at the Hoiland Center and do errands at half a dozen nearby businesses. And if you want to get in your car to drive down to Gary's or the Chief or the Laytonville Gas Company, well, that's no big problem. Unless a string of logging trucks or Winnebagos is rolling through town, the traffic's not usually too bad. Yet

But what if the Arreola-Buckley gang gets its way and we see a whole new subdivision springing up on what is now open and/or agricultural land south of town? And businesses start, Willits-style, lining Highway 101 for a couple of miles to serve the new residents? It'll mean getting in the car to run one errand, back in the car to another store in South Laytonville, in the car again to pick up or drop off the kids at the high school. And then back through town again to get the kids at the elementary school. Of course we'll need better roads and more parking spaces, so a lot of those trees and open spaces are going to have to go. And people living in the center of town will understandably get tired of the additional noise, traffic, and air pollution and say, "Why put up with this? I'll just move a couple miles outside of town so I can have some peace and quiet." More car trips, more pavement, and more urban decay.

Let Laytonville grow, by all means. But let it grow in an intelligent and healthy way, not as yet another asphalt jungle where the infernal combustion engine reigns as king. Why not instead build a community where it will be both possible and pleasurable to get around by walking? A town that counts its wealth by its trees and gardens more than its gas stations and liquor stores? A town that will make a comfortable home for its residents and an attractive stopping place for visitors as well?

When we get nostalgic for neon, glitz, and gasoline fumes, we can always head over the hill for the booming metropolis of Willits. They've chosen their path, but we don't need to follow it. Laytonville could easily sustain two or three times its current population without having to pave over agricultural land or seriously diminish the quality of life. But that's

only if we decide now that we want a different, a better kind of town, that we don't have to or want to follow the traditional automobile-oriented pattern.

Most of us came here because we weren't satisfied with the way things were being done other places, and a lot of us were urban or suburban refugees. Among us there is enough talent and imagination to create an environment that inspires and uplifts people instead of driving them crazy. Why then should we allow our future to be determined by the short-sighted and the profit-motivated? They already tried that in hundreds of other cities. Take a look around; it doesn't work.

I don't know what Superintendent Buckley had in mind when he got involved in this plan. In the past he's shown himself to be intelligent and open-minded, so perhaps there's hope that in the face of enough community opposition he will recognize that to build on the 101 site would be the beginning of a long-running disaster. Even, however, if Buckley and the School Board don't change their minds, there's a good chance said minds will be changed involuntarily in court. Philip Randle reports in his *Ledger* article that the R.O.S.S. group has already employed a lawyer and will demand an Environmental Impact Report. That alone should sink the 101 plan. Unfortunately, if lengthy court battles ensue, it will be the taxpayers who have to pay to defend the School Board's position with money that could have been used for books or computers or teachers' salaries. As always, in these cases of educational empire building, it is the children who stand to lose the most.

But in this particular case we all have a lot to lose. The kind of community we live in and that our children will inherit should not be determined by the machinations of a few fast-buck artists or the naiveté of the well-intentioned but clueless do-gooders who play into their hands. We can do better for our future. We must. In these days of greenhouse effects and vanishing ozone layers, of dying forests and acid rain, and an earth strangled with concrete ropes and exhaust fumes, there is no more time for business of usual. Yes, we are a very small community, and what we do here may be little noticed or emulated beyond our own hills and valleys. But all change, for better or worse, must start somewhere. Let's just this once try building a future that works.

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Across the street from GeigerWorld is the Boomer's entertainment complex, all 247 acres of it. What started out as a roughneck country and western bar evolved first into a huge nightclub along the lines of Gilley's or Billy Bob's in Texas, complete with mechanical bucking broncs and simulated cattle drives wending their way among the dancers and drinkers. Eventually it grew to include its own football and baseball stadium, roller and ice hockey rink, and a full-fledged amusement park.

Sandwiched in between Boomer's and Geiger World is a little bar that hasn't fared so well. Now known as the Interchange because of its location smack under the point where the Branscomb and 101 Freeways meet, it was once called the Crossroads and was a popular drinking and gathering place. But changing times were not kind to the Crossroads nor the counterculture types who used to frequent it. Now it is a rough and strictly working-class affair, where one of the chief amusements is the air quality gauge that measures ozone and hydrocarbon levels outside. It is a popular practice to make bets on when or if the pollution count would move into the red zone, giving the drinkers an ideal excuse for staying indoors at their alcoholic pursuits.

The less than savory crowd congregating at the Interchange and places like it provides a disturbing reminder that all is not well in Laytonville, despite the overwhelming appearance of prosperity. In fact, Laytonville is something of a divided city, with a line of demarcation being drawn between those who are fortunate enough to work and live indoors and those who are forced to brave the literally murderous sun.

Worst off are those who tend the fields and highways. The heat and ultraviolet rays of the sun take a harsh toll, and few who labor outdoors full time will live past the age of 40. Most of them live outdoors, too, or in the scantiest of makeshift shelters, because they do not earn enough to pay rent on a real house. The majority of them are either of Mexican descent or the remnants of the hippies who in the mid to late 20th century flocked to Mendocino County in an abortive back-to-nature movement.

The hippies' main sustenance was marijuana growing, but that was

sharply curtailed by government military action, and essentially eliminated when the trees and most other ground cover started dying off. The more adaptable of the hippies cut their hair, moved into town, and incorporated themselves into the local establishment, but others, forced off their now worthless land, were reduced to the status of migrant laborers, and, not infrequently, beggars. The police and sheriff's departments regularly break up hippie encampments when they turn up too close to populated areas, but a few miles beyond city limits, there are wretched shantytowns housing as many as a thousand of the nomads, usually lacking even the most basic of amenities. There is some sentiment among the Chamber of Commerce and other civic leaders to ask the army to come in and remove the squatters from the county altogether.

But why dwell only on the negative? For most Laytonvillians, life is not bad. What has been sacrificed in natural beauty has been made up for by the prosperity and opportunity that growth has brought to the region. And while critics decry the loss of the forests and rivers of the one-time Redwood Empire, outdoor recreation is not entirely a thing of the past. Just north of the city, for example, golfers and tennis players cavort at the quaintly named Hog Farm Country Club, now protected from the ravages of the sun and unhealthy air by an enormous dome. There's a movement afoot to erect a similar dome over a section of Lake Covelo, allowing the young and the young at heart to once more take up the traditional pastime of swimming. And eventually, when the technology makes it feasible, it's likely that a still larger dome will be put in place over much of central Laytonville.

But as one would expect of an advanced civilization like our own, most important activities take place indoors where air conditioning and filtration keeps the atmosphere fresh and healthy. This takes large amounts of electricity, but we are fortunate in that regard; the Harwood Nuclear Bio-Mass Plant in Branscomb City keeps us well supplied.

Laytonville has turned into a cultural and spiritual mecca, too. There are nearly 200 video theaters and a similar number of churches. High on a hill overlooking the city is the principal Mormon Tabernacle for the entire West Coast, second in size only to the one at Salt Lake City. The Mormons have taken an active role in community affairs, too, and in addition to getting prayer re-introduced into local schools and government, are now conducting a campaign to sharply limit the times and places where alcoholic beverages may be sold. Already the bars are closed on Sundays, and church attendance is almost universal, with school-age volunteers known good-naturedly as the God Squad knocking on doors throughout the city on Sunday mornings to rouse late sleepers.

The single biggest threat to Laytonville's continued growth is the shortage of some basic resources. While oil supplies are expected to hold out for at least another ten or twenty years, water is another story. Lake Covelo continues to shrink, and it appears that the only way to keep it from drying up altogether will be to build pipelines to import large amounts of water from Oregon and Washington. There is a great deal of resistance to this idea in Oregon, and Oregonians are equally reluctant to cut any more of their surviving forests to meet our increasingly crucial need for wood. "We don't want to become another California Desert," they proclaim, and many of them do seem content with lifestyles that seem more reminiscent of the 20th, or even the 19th century than the 21st. It's predicted that if Oregon doesn't come around soon, we will have to ask the federal government to step in and force it to cooperate; it hardly seems fair that one state's self-indulgent desire to live in the past should be allowed to impede progress for all its neighbors.

But such is the nature of human experience: one of constant crisis and challenge. The fact that Laytonville has grown so much more than any of us could have imagined a decade or two ago should stand as dramatic evidence that anything is possible. If current trends continue, we will eventually be the largest city in California, and well positioned to become the principal American financial center of the Pacific Rim (while still in the planning stages, it looks likely that the Army Corps of Engineers will soon be using surplus nuclear weapons to expand Fort Bragg's Noyo Harbor far enough inland so that Laytonville will literally become a seaport). How lucky we are that men and women of vision were able to overcome the obstructionist anti-growth tactics of the nay-sayers who saw impending doom in anything resembling progress. Thanks to the inspired leadership of Bill Bailey and others like him, Laytonville was able to make far-seeing plans and bring them to fruition while other cities floundered in the shifting currents of modern times. With the 21st century now before us, Laytonville, truly a city of the future, has only begun to grow.

time we're willing to risk World War III and the permanent destruction of our coastline to feed our oil addiction.

Anyone who tells you that we can build enough highways and drill enough oil wells to continue the current system is either thoroughly out to lunch or in the employ of the auto industry. Even assuming such a thing were physically possible (it's not, and that will become increasingly obvious as industrializing third world countries begin competing in earnest for what's left of the world oil supply), continued reliance on oil and other fossil fuels will make it nearly impossible for the human race to survive into the twenty-first century.

Not that we'd want to, given the quality of life being envisioned by the traditional industrialists. Already breathing is becoming a life-threatening activity in many of the world's major cities. With the climate itself being altered now, the once-pristine countryside will no longer constitute an alternative. But those whose fortunes are built on non-renewable resources like oil, steel, and rubber will resist to their (literally) dying day any efforts to change the way the business of transportation is conducted.

A prime example: the Key System, an economical and efficient network of trains that linked much of the San Francisco Bay Area was bought and dismantled by a consortium representing General Motors, Standard Oil, and Firestone Rubber. Today in its place we have an unreliable fleet of buses (made by guess who: General Motors) and BART, some cranked-out yuppie's idea of a computerized electric train, which has yet to provide the quality of service one could expect from the Key System 50 years ago.

It's really pretty simple. Either we start tearing up the streets and highways and replacing them with cheap and effective train service, or none of us will be going anywhere pretty soon. A fringe benefit, by the way, of mass transit is that in no longer having to drive, most of us will be eliminating from our lives the biggest single source of stress and alienation from our fellow human beings. And as a friend pointed out, by not spending millions of hours trapped in pointless traffic jams and millions more working to pay for the luxury of having our own private chariots, we will save a vast amount of the most precious and most non-renewable resource of all: time.

OK, now that we've gotten rid of the private automobile, let's turn our attention to the other biggest culprit in creating the greenhouse effect: the massive deforestation of the earth. As the white man cut his swath of civilization across America, he did as conquering empires have done in countless lands before: he cleared the land. A certain amount was necessary, of course, for the sake of agriculture and the building of cities, and a certain amount was dictated by esthetics, but the real destruction of the forests was and still is for profit.

As long as corporations are allowed to cut as many trees as the traffic will bear, there is little motivation to conserve or recycle wood products, and even less to search for alternative building materials. The case in Central and South America is even more outrageous: there, the rain forests that provide the earth with a full 40% of its oxygen are being bulldozed at the rate of thousands of acres every day just to create economical grazing land for the cattle that will end up in the fast food burger joints of the United States.

A boycott organized against Burger King has caused that company to slow down its expansion into Central America, and the attendant publicity is beginning to have a similar effect on other US agribusiness concerns. An international consensus is building that the cutting of rain forests must stop, but the temptation is strong for many of the countries involved to let it continue. Brazil, for example, hopelessly in debt to US banks, has few ways of raising money, and the quick infusion of capital that can be produced by clearing the Amazon jungles must appear tempting despite the dire long-term consequences.

So while we here in the United States can pressure other countries to stop clearcutting our planet's future, and by a more equitable economic partnership reduce their need to do so, there's something just as important we can do here at home. Right here at home, in Mendocino County, to be exact. In recent years, Mendocino County has become the third or fourth largest producer of timber in California. The results are not a pretty sight. Much of the damage is not visible to passing motorists, but seen from the air the huge gouges taken out of the landscape are staggering. But what's at issue is not appearances, but the survival of the forest itself.

Already the character of the wood being milled locally has changed greatly from the days when logging was king. There are very few of the massive firs and redwoods left; most of the logs being hauled away today are closer to the size of telephone poles. Shareholders in the major logging corporations don't have the patience to let them get any bigger. They didn't buy Louisiana-Pacific stock so that their grandchildren could cash in; they want a return on their investment right now.

The size of trees being cut will continue to diminish along with the availability of timber land, and under the best of circumstances we will end up with uniform managed forests that resemble outsized Christmas tree farms. That's if we're lucky; if the greenhouse effect turns out to be as bad as many scientists are predicting, and the current feverish pace of logging continues, we could end up with deserts. Far fetched? Not at all; many of the world's major deserts, including the Sahara, were richly forested at one time. What happened? Climatic changes and too much logging.

As I said, radical solutions are in order, and here's one for Mendocino County: an immediate moratorium on all logging. No more quibbling about sustained yield or even-age management, just stop cutting right now. And don't cut again until the forest is restored to something approximating the condition we found it in. How long will that be? Probably at least 50 to 100 years, and even longer for the redwoods.

And what's going to become of the thousands of workers who make their living in the logging industry, not to mention the families they support? They should all be given jobs at similar levels of pay replanting the forest lands and undoing the damage logging has done to stream beds, fisheries, and agricultural lands. And who will pay for it? Why, those responsible for the damage, of course: the corporations that profited from it. If that means expropriating all the land and financial holdings of Georgia-Pacific and Louisiana-Pacific, what's the big deal? It's simple justice. If through my greed or negligence I inflict damage on my neighbor, I'm expected to pay for it, even if it means selling every last thing I own. Why should corporations formed solely for profit be held to a lesser standard?

We're not likely to succeed in saving the trees, and consequently the water we drink and the air we breathe, without rethinking some fundamental ideas about private property and our relationship to the earth. Trees and the land they grow on can no longer be treated as assets on a spreadsheet. They are essential elements in our environment, vital to our survival, and as such should be thought of as the property of no one and the concern of all.

In addition to restoring the forest in our area, it is equally important that we re-introduce trees to the now largely barren cities. This can go hand in hand with the removal of large amounts of pavement which originally displaced the trees when the cities were built. Between the elimination of the automobile and its replacement with trees and gardens, air pollution would diminish and temperatures become more moderate. There's no reason, in fact, that cities couldn't be as clean and healthful as what's left of our vanishing countryside.

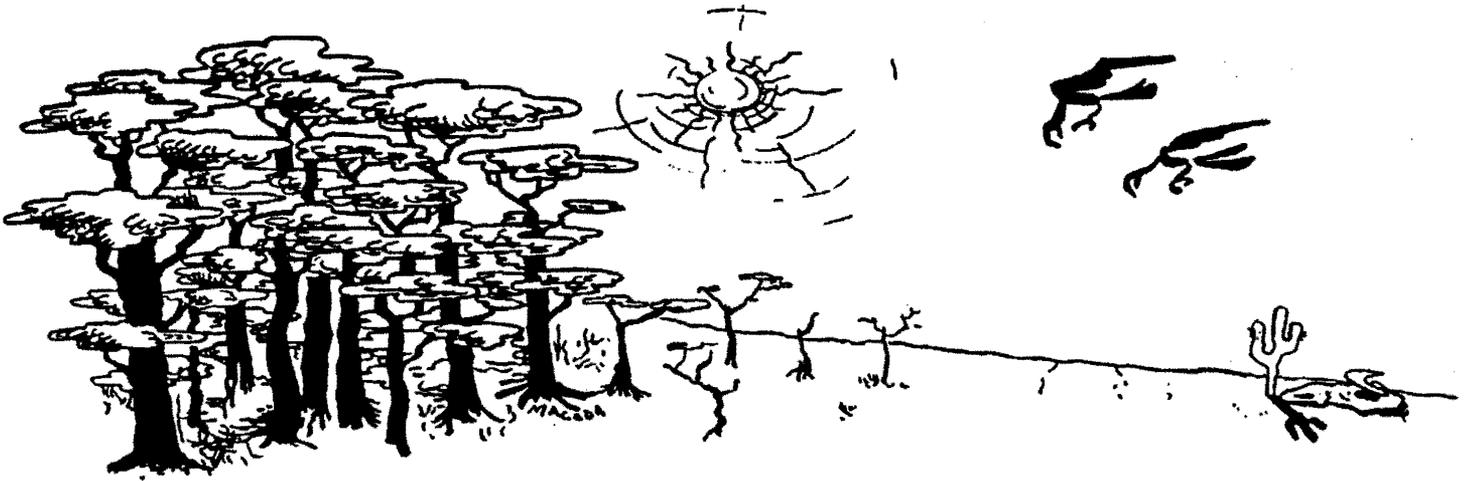
Odds are against our taking swift and decisive enough action to stave off the greenhouse effect. There is too much in the way of profit and political power at stake for anyone to be optimistic. And as conditions worsen, pressure will mount for short-term technological fixes of the sort that, if followed to their logical conclusion, could have a privileged few living inside climate-controlled domed cities while the masses of people live short desperate lives in the manmade wasteland outside.

It's getting well into October now, and like people who live on the California coastal hills have done for centuries, I watch the sky for signs of rain. These past two dry years have been hard on the trees around me, still establishing themselves on this land that was logged over some twenty-five years ago. Most of them didn't grow much this year, and some of them appear to be dying. Without some good rains this winter, more will die next year.

Walking around the land, I can see the enormous stumps where Douglas firs that must have been 200 or 300 years old once stood. I can only imagine what that forest must have looked like; there are none like it still standing anywhere near here. Perhaps it might seem a little strange that I talk to my land. But I do. I tell it, "As long as I live, no one will ever do that to you again."

Yes, one day some of the trees that grow here will be cut. I doubt that it will be me who does it; perhaps by the time of my children or grandchildren, the forest will be strong enough again to give up some of its bounty. But for now the forest needs to be largely left alone, though when I can I try to give it a hand by planting new trees where none now grow. Though it might be economically inconvenient, that's the sort of approach we must take on a broad scale, not only here in Mendocino County or in California, but all over the planet.

There's still a chance that we can reverse the destruction of our environment, though we need to make major changes in our way of life, system of government and economy, and above all in our attitudes. The earth has been patient with us for longer than any errant child could rightfully expect, but we've pushed our luck about as far as it's likely to go. It's as simple as can be. We change or we die. Isn't that what life's all about anyway?



# Are You Ready For the Mendocino Desert?

## The Greenhouse Effect and Our Future (If We Have One)

There used to be a crooked oak tree outside my window. It seemed like kind of a poor excuse for a tree, leaning over so far that I expected it to fall down any day. Although I normally love trees, this particular one and I didn't seem to get along. I was always finding fault with it.

I guess the main thing that bothered me about it was that it blocked the view of the mountains off to the east, but I wasn't about to be one of those insensitive flatlanders who took a chain saw to everything in sight for purely cosmetic reasons. So I also complained about how it kept the deck in the shade most of the day, and how there wasn't enough sunlight to grow anything on that side of the house. For about two years I'd look at that tree and think about cutting it down, but end up deciding to wait a little longer. Besides, my girlfriend threatened that she'd leave me if I did.

But eventually she did leave, for other reasons, and in honor of my new independence and because I had decided to put it in a rose garden on the hillside shaded by the oak tree, one spring morning I finally hauled out the chain saw and in a matter of a half hour or so turned the old tree — I figured it to be about 50 — into about three weeks worth of firewood.

That was three and a half years ago, and I'm still being made aware of the consequences of my action. The rose garden is finally getting established, but it took a long time, because once the hillside was exposed to full sun, it dried out so fast that it was difficult to get anything to grow. Oh, except for the foxtails and thistles, which replaced the ferns that once flourished there.

But wasn't it nice to have all that sunshine, and an unobstructed view to the east? Well, not quite as nice as I had imagined it would be, because along with the sun and view came an average temperature increase of between 10 and 20 degrees. Only in summer, of course, which was exactly when I didn't need it. You see, as soon as the sun came up, it would now shine directly into the house; the wall that faces east is mostly windows. The effect was just like that of a greenhouse; by 7 or 8 a.m. the house was already unpleasantly hot.

And out on the deck, the temperature would often reach 110° or higher. Not too great for sunbathing. During the hottest days this summer, I had to cover the windows with shade cloth; it didn't do much for the view, but kept the indoor temperature somewhat bearable.

Today I noticed that the wood on the deck is aging much faster than it was before and it looks as if I'll have to start replacing some of it soon. And where I used to look out my window and try to think of excuses for cutting down that oak tree, now I look at the nearby trees and wonder how long it will be before they're big enough to take its place. My best guess is somewhere between 20 and 30 years.

So I'll be living with the results of one thoughtless action for a long time. If there's a plus side to it, it's that I learned how important even one tree can be; some people have already stripped their land bare before they figure it out. If they ever do.

I guess my experience is just a miniature version of the planetary greenhouse effect that is finally, as well it should, beginning to put a healthy scare into people. Some environmentalists are already blaming this year's

drought and record high temperatures on the greenhouse effect, which is the combined result of internal combustion engine emissions and the wholesale destructions of the earth's forests. They may be a little premature in making the connection — a major change in the global climate is something that happens gradually, not the morning after the media discover it's coming — but the disastrous climatic conditions of late should provide a frightening preview of what we have to look forward to if we don't change our ways, and fast.

Some of the damage is irreversible, or at least will take centuries to undo, and we will have to learn to live with it. But the warming of the planet, flooding of coastal regions, and desertification of the interior is not something we have to accept as a foregone conclusion. We as a species created the current crisis, and if we act in time we can undo the worst effects of it.

One thing of which there's no doubt: radical and immediate action is necessary. This is not the kind of problem that calls for commissions to be appointed and reports to be presented. We do not have time to wait for the full impact of the greenhouse effect to scare people into taking the required steps. This is not an issue of weighing the economic benefits against the environmental drawbacks, nor is it one of quality of life versus the quantity of our gross planetary product. What is at stake here is our survival.

Industrialists will argue that we can't reverse the greenhouse effect without sending civilization plummeting back in the direction of the Stone Age. In reality, the opposite is true; with arable and habitable land steadily being lost to the encroaching desert, the struggle for diminishing resources will create a Darwinist nightmare that will have post-industrial society waxing positively nostalgic for the good old paleolithic days.

Is there anything we can do? Yes, by all means. The two greatest villains behind the greenhouse effect are the private automobile and deforestation. We here in California are in a position to do something about both. First, we've got to phase out the private automobile. I know, that's radical heresy, and un-American to boot. Besides, how would we get anywhere?

That's a good question. Government has been so biased in favor of the auto industry that it allowed most other forms of transportation to deteriorate to the point of near-uselessness. If you want to go from Laytonville to San Francisco, you drive. It takes a little over three hours, if the traffic's not too bad, and will cost you somewhere between five and ten bucks for gas. That's your only choice, unless you're too poor to own a car or are just plain masochistic. Then you could take a Greyhound bus. That's five hours and twenty-two dollars, and there are only three buses a day. Some choice.

How would you like instead to be able to hop on a train and be in San Francisco in *one hour*, and for about the same price it would cost you to drive? Japan and France already have high-speed trains that could provide that service, and other countries are building them. In America we're destroying what little train service we have left, while at the same

# Andar A Nicaragua

by Jane Guskin

## Part II

*(For those who haven't read or don't remember Part I, it ended on Monday, February 15, 1988, the first day of the big "cambio" - the money devaluation - in Managua.)*

On Tuesday, Elena and I went to Leon on the slow and dusty train. All public transportation was free during those three days of the "cambio"; the usual fare was about 5¢. There's no glass in the windows, so the dust blows right in. In the dry season of a drought year, which this was, it gets pretty bad. Most of the women held scarves over their faces and covered up their babies to protect them from the dust.

Leon was even hotter than Managua. The first thing we did when we got off the train was to buy *frescos* (cold sweet drinks made with fruit or grains) right outside the station. The woman who made the *frescos* told us, when we asked her how she felt about the cambio, that she was better off in the time of Somoza. Though most of the people who run their own businesses are less happy with the Sandinista government than the people who work paid jobs, we hadn't heard anything that extreme before. Most people said that even though things were bad now, because of the economy and the war, that things were worse with Somoza.

Walking around the city that evening, we met a man whose first words to us were (in Spanish), "I am a man with a lot of money." He invited us to stay at his house in Leon and his house on the beach. We tried to make it clear that we weren't interested but he wouldn't leave us alone. We met more reactionary people in Leon than anywhere else. We couldn't wait to leave.

But the next day, on our way to the highway to hitchhike back to Managua, we ran into a demonstration in support of the money change, with its new, higher salaries, and in support of the FSLN in general. It was really encouraging to see that, though we'd talked to what seemed like a lot of people who didn't like the government, in fact there were more people who actively supported the revolution. There were a lot of women in the demonstration, many wearing army pants under their skirts, or army jackets over their dresses. The mood of the people marching and demonstrating was one of excitement and hope, despite the war, despite the economy.

We got a ride without even having to wait in a pickup truck with a couple guys who worked in a local rum factory. They were happy about their new salaries with the cambio. They told us about their jobs and showed us the pamphlet given to them at work that explained the salary and price changes. The money change and everything that came with it was one of the most confusing things I've ever tried to understand. The pamphlet helped a little, but without fluent Spanish I couldn't understand it all anyway, and even if I could, there were things about the change that hadn't been sorted out yet (the whole process took more than a month to get straightened out) so a lot of stuff was left unexplained.

Eventually the truck broke down. (Later, when I'd been hitching for a while in Nicaragua, I came to expect this. But this was my first time). It was the brakes. They just sort of disappeared. We pulled over, and the guys looked under the hood. They discovered that the problem was no brake fluid. Next problem: how to get some. Not so easy in Nicaragua. After about two hours of searching and asking people, they managed to buy some (very expensive) red stuff in a little plastic bag, which was supposedly brake fluid. I said it looked like "Rojita," which is a kind of red (cherry?) soda commonly found in Nicaragua. They agreed; it did look just like Rojita, but they weren't in a position to be picky about it. It was liquid, anyway. So they put it into the brake cylinder. Which had a leak, of course, so it all ran back out.

We did finally make it to Managua, to a place on the outskirts of town called Siete Sur (7 South, meaning the 7 kilometer mark on the South Highway), before the brakes gave out again. The driver panicked and lost control of the truck, which stalled and rolled backwards through heavy traffic until it was stopped by a lamppost on an island in the middle of the

intersection. Elena and I got out and asked if we could help. We couldn't, so we said thanks, good luck and goodbye, and went to catch the city bus.

The city buses are always crowded, except late at night. This was the middle of the day. We crammed onto the bus with everyone else. Elena found a seat in the front, and I pushed my way to the back door and stood. When our stop came, I jumped out and watched helplessly as Elena tried to force her way out the front door while about a million people were trying to go in. She didn't make it. The bus rolled away. I could see Elena struggling at the front of the bus. I never did see where she got off, though she told me later she got off at the next stop.

I spent the next couple of days in Managua. On Friday, I picked up my permission slip for visiting the Atlantic Coast. (To get it, all I had to do was pay about \$8 to the Ministry of Tourism and give them a xerox of my passport and visa. Anyone can do it.) The next day, I went with my friend Fermin (from Spain) to a beach called Masachapa, just southeast of Managua on the Pacific Coast. We hitchhiked. (I soon decided that hitchhiking was the best way to travel in Nicaragua. I never did take one of the buses which go from city to city, buses so crowded there were people hanging out the doors and windows and sitting on the luggage rack.) One of the rides we got was in a pickup truck taking oranges and mandarins to sell at a small town near the beach. These men filled our bags up with fruit and refused to let us pay anything.

Fermin and I spent the night on the beach. In the morning we hitched to Granada, a city on the shores of Lake Nicaragua. One of the rides we got was from a handicapped man and his attendant, who both worked for the Nicaraguan organization of handicapped people. They were some of the most interesting people I met in Nicaragua. We went out to lunch with them, so we got to have more in-depth conversations than can be managed in a moving car. They dropped us off just outside Masaya, where we got a ride on an army truck to nearby Granada.

I didn't like Granada much. It was too colonial and conservative, and the woman who ran the overpriced *hospedaje* where we stayed the night was a very unpleasant, reactionary hater of the revolution. Early the next morning, which was Monday, Fermin and I parted ways. He went back to Managua to his job (volunteer) doing legal documenting for the government; I went off towards the Atlantic Coast.

I had found on my map a route to get overland to Juigalpa that looked shorter than the main road. I asked a lot of people in Granada how to get to this road, but no one really knew. Finally I found it. It was a dirt road. I walked along it, hoping for a ride. But I didn't want to wait, so I just kept walking. There was no traffic. I passed people waiting for rides by the side of the road. They told me, "Wait with us, the truck will come and pick us up." I asked them when the truck was coming and they shrugged. I kept walking. Finally a couple in a pickup truck stopped for me. They were going to Juigalpa. I climbed in the back and we sped off, bouncing along the rough gravel of the road. After about fifteen minutes, the driver pulled over to the side of the road and looked back at the back wheel. I moved to see: the wheel was about a foot away from the side of the truck. The axle had parted in the middle and slipped farther and farther out; another minute and it would have slipped all the way out or snapped.

There was nothing the driver could do to fix it. He hammered it back to where it should have been, but it would just slip out again, so he said he had to turn back. I got out, thanked them, wished them luck and started walking again. A while later I got another ride, this time from the truck that everyone had told me to wait for. It's sort of like a rural private bus, and people pay a few cordobas to ride it. It took us across the lake on a sort of barge things that crosses the narrowest part of the lake, a sort of floating platform attached to a cable. The lake was only about fifty meters across at that point. In a town just the other side of the lake, I got off. The truck was going somewhere else. I tried to pay, but they wouldn't take the money.

I walked in the direction of Juigalpa, but I didn't get very far because the road led straight into a river. I asked someone what I should

do, and I was told that I had to wait for a truck that was going to cross the river, and then I could get a ride. So I sat in a tiny patch of partial shade and waited. Soon a truck came, and the man driving said he would take me across but we had to wait for the tractor. After a while, the tractor came from the other side of the river, crossed the river and hooked up a cable to the front of the truck. We got in the truck and the tractor pulled the truck across the river. I put my feet up on the dashboard as water filled the floor of the truck. No cars could cross the river there, only trucks. A car would have been completely filled with water.

The driver of the truck gave me a ride for about ten more kilometers, and then he had to turn off onto a different road. I started to walk again. No more trucks passed me. I was completely alone. When I did pass houses, whole families came out to watch me walk by. I waved to them and they waved back. Finally, after about four or five hours, I reached an intersection with another dirt road. There were a lot of people sitting around waiting for rides. They told me to wait with them, and I did for a minute, but then I decided to walk again, knowing my chances of getting a ride as one person were much better than if I was with a group. About ten minutes later, I got a ride form a family in a Land Rover, on their way to Juigalpa. There was barely enough room for all the kids in the back, but they didn't seem to mind making room for one more.

We reached Juigalpa around sunset. I'd been traveling since dawn. I was exhausted. I found an hospedaje and took a shower. I changed out of my dusty clothes and went to eat dinner. The view of the sunset over the hills was incredible. I could really feel that I was in a different part of Nicaragua. Everything was a little greener, a little less dusty.

The next morning I left early to go to Rama, hoping to be able to catch the boat there at noon. I grabbed breakfast at a vendor's stand by the hospital and ate it as I walked. The country just outside of Juigalpa is beautiful. And at six in the morning, it wasn't too hot yet. If I had realized how many contra attacks happen in that area, in the region of Chontales, maybe I would have been afraid. But I wasn't afraid. Nobody else seemed afraid, so why should I?

I got a ride in an army truck. It took me as far as the road for Acoyapa, where I got picked up by a family in a van going to Rama. I watched out the window as the land became green, wet and jungly, and it even started to rain a little. There were small thatched grass huts in the hills near the road, and lots of tropical-looking trees. It was quite a change from the drought-ridden dusty yellow land of Western Nicaragua.

The road between Juigalpa and Rama is in terrible shape. There are places where the road just drops away into nothing and you have to bypass it on a little track. Parts of the road are paved, other parts are dirt and gravel. There are giant potholes everywhere, and lots of bridges where you have to slow down to a crawl to cross the giant humps of gravel put there as speedbumps. Every bridge was guarded by a group of soldiers from the Nicaraguan army, sitting in covered trenches by the side of the road, reading or talking, or lounging in hammocks, always holding their guns in the casual way that they do in Nicaragua. I never saw a soldier with a gun pull a macho attitude trip like soldiers and police in other countries often do. Guns are not a big deal in Nicaragua because most people have them. So soldiers and police don't handle them like it's a big deal. And they don't walk stiff and "proud" like in some places. They're just normal people, so that's how they behave.

We got to Rama at 10 am, a perfect time to catch the ferry that goes down the Rio Escondido (Hidden River) to Bluefields, the town on the coast. Except, unfortunately, the boat wasn't there. It was delayed by contra attacks on the river and wouldn't arrive until the next day or maybe the day after next. But I waited for quite a few hours before I figured that out. Before I went off to find a hotel (the one right next to the dock was full), an old man told me to get there at 5 am the next day because there might be a Red Cross boat that would take a few passengers. So the next day at 5 am, I was there. No boat was there, no other people waiting, either. I waited all day, watching young soldiers splashing around in the water with their clothes on, diving off their little speedboats, doing flips in the air.

Finally the ferry came around noon. And finally, after more waiting on the crowded boat, we left the town of Rama and headed down the river. The soldiers came with us, some on the roof of the ferry, others in speedboats. The ones in the speedboats raced around, chasing each other up and down the river. They went to the banks of the river and cut down grapefruits and oranges with their machetes from the trees hanging over the water. They tossed them up to the passengers and the other soldiers on the ferry. Some fruit splashed into the river, but the rest we shared among us.

In Bluefields, the money change was having very different effects than in Managua. The farmers weren't willing to sell their produce at the new official low prices, so the marketplace was completely empty. Only about one restaurant in ten was actually open for business. The first day I was there, there were no vendors on the streets. The second and third days, vendors would appear and sell out of their food within minutes, as people clustered around to get a fresh fruit drink for one cordoba or carne asada (grilled steak) on a tortilla for five cordobas. The prices were very low, but there wasn't much to go around. For some reason, everyone was buying shoes and clothes at new prices which some people said were lower and others said were higher than the old prices. No one could really explain to me what was going on because I don't think they really understood it either. It was a time of change and uncertainty, and it was impossible to predict what effect the devaluation would have in the long run. In the short run, it was causing problems.

On the positive side, it seemed like the Atlantic Coast Autonomy Project, which allows the people of the Atlantic Coast to make laws and decisions affecting the region independently of the Nicaraguan government, was getting underway. I was in the library of the Atlantic Coast Research Center while a couple of people were drafting the new constitution there. And I met a North American man who was working on the bilingual education program for the Atlantic Coast, which stresses cultural pride for each different ethnic group. Formerly, only Spanish was taught in the schools; with the new plan, there were three different bilingual programs for the three different ethnic groups. Reading and writing are now being taught to illiterate adults in their first language, instead of in Spanish.

On my last day in Bluefields, I met a Creole woman named Esmerelda, who took me to her house and fed me "star apples," a sweet purple fruit that has a sticky, milky juice, while we talked for hours. The Creole people of the Atlantic Coast speak Creole English, which is English with a slightly different grammar structure and a very musical intonation, like Jamaican English, but a little easier to understand. They are Caribbean blacks, descended from slaves and freed slaves of the Caribbean islands. Nearly all of them also speak Spanish, which is still by far the predominant language, since most of the people on the Atlantic Coast are Spanish-speaking mestizos (mixed Spanish and Indian blood) who came from the Pacific region when jobs first opened up in the East.

I left Bluefields on a Sunday before dawn. The boat broke down and we had to switch to another but we finally reached Rama. I decided to hitch back to Managua, instead of taking the bus, even though I wasn't sure if I could get a ride. Hitching is often harder on Sundays in Nicaragua. I walked out of town, and when a car passed that was only going about ten kilometers farther, I decided to take my chances and go, even if it meant I might get stuck somewhere between Rama and Juigalpa when night fell. I got another ride a few kilometers farther in a taxi with a few soldiers (I didn't have to pay). Finally, I got a ride in a pickup truck that was going all the way to Managua. The driver worked for UNAG, the agricultural union, and was on his way to a meeting to discuss the problems the farmers of Bluefields were having with the money change. He drove like a maniac, but he bought me lunch and took me right to the door of my hospedaje.

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The last day before I left Nicaragua for Costa Rica was International Women's Day. There was a big demonstration in the Plaza of the Revolution; Daniel Ortega spoke for almost an hour and there were other speakers and a salsa/pop band who played late in the night. There were a lot of police and army there — men and women — but, unlike demonstrations in the US, they weren't there to "keep order," they were there to demonstrate and celebrate International Women's Day. A whole bunch of new *consignias* — phrases shouted at demonstrations — were introduced for the year, most of which I forgot right away or didn't understand in the first place. The Nicaraguans seem to memorize them all with no problem, after hearing them only once or twice. The *consignias* usually have two parts: the first part is shouted by one person and the crowd shouts back the response part together. Each year there is one main *consignia* which is the sort of slogan for that year. For example: "1988: *Por una paz digna, patria libre o morir!*" ("1988: For a dignified peace, free homeland or death!"). My favorite slogan introduced on International Women's Day was: "*No solo queremos dar vida... queremos cambiarla!*" ("We don't only want to give life... we want to change it!").

To be continued next issue...

# Blood and Oil: The Betrayal of Mexico

by Mark Dréher

When Ronald Reagan thinks of Mexico, which is rare, he thinks of drug smuggling and illegal immigration. When Mexicans think of the United States, they think of *la crisis*. Understanding "The Crisis" is the key to understanding Mexico today.

For most of this decade, Mexicans have suffered extreme economic difficulties: unemployment and underemployment, low pay, hyperinflation, and a steady devaluation of the peso. In 1981 one dollar was equal to 180 pesos; Today it will buy well over 2000.

The Mexican government's "survival breadbasket," which includes the food items necessary to support a typical family, costs approximately \$4 a day, but many workers earn as little as \$3 a day. To make up the difference, people often work two or three jobs, with spouses and children working as well. Millions of Mexicans live in poverty, with substandard housing, education, and diets. The Crisis has brought untold misery to this long-suffering country.

In the 1970s, with oil prices at an all-time high, Mexico, pumping from its huge southern reserves, underwent something of an economic boom. Things had never looked so good, and the government started numerous ambitious projects. North American banks like Chase Manhattan, Citicorp, and Bank of America came calling, offering billions of dollars in loans (with the anticipated oil revenues as collateral) to finance the building of highways, schools, etc. (The banks, incidentally, were under pressure to seek out new loan markets, even those that would normally be considered risky, by the influx of OPEC petrodollars that were then threatening to overwhelm them.)

All went well until oil prices crashed. The money stopped coming in, the loans couldn't be paid, and the economy collapsed. Mexico was once again an impoverished, underdeveloped nation, now billions of dollars in debt to Northern bankers.

The plunge in oil prices was difficult to foresee (though some believe it was engineered to knock the wind out of the sails of OPEC and developing nations like Mexico), yet many mistakes were made which could and should have been avoided.

First of all, the Mexicans should have been much more reluctant to deal with the loan sharks from the North. The loans became a vicious cycle, with the government forced to borrow more money to pay the interest on the original loans. In the words of Ezra Pound: "Usury killeth the infant in the womb." Basing an economy on a poorly burning, non-renewable fossil fuel of which there are finite resources is also an invitation to disaster. Ultimately, however, the fundamental problem is the capitalist structure of Mexico's economy, which is almost entirely dependent on foreign and private sector investment.

The private sector in Mexico consists of a tiny elite corps whose lives differ vastly from those of the great majority of their countrymen. While some Mexicans live in shantytowns and pick through garbage dumps, the privileged few live lives of luxury, maintaining several sumptuous houses and vacationing frequently in Europe and the US. If these people do not invest money in productive enterprises, the economy suffers immensely. When times are hard, the elite often prefer to sit on their money or export it to Swiss banks, leaving the economy sluggish and without the ability to grow and expand.

The state has always had an activist role in the Mexican economy, controlling, for example, PEMEX, the national oil company, but it has generally taken a back seat to the private sector. Some Mexican leftists call for socialism, which in practice would be state capitalism. Considering the inefficiency and corruption endemic within "the system," this would be an unmitigated catastrophe.

Instead of a "top-down" economy, Mexico might be better off looking at a bottom-up model. In some parts of the country, it is traditional among the indigenous people to work on projects, mainly agriculture, in a collective manner. These collectives, called *ejidos*, are used successfully in many farms and businesses. They differ considerably from the forced, state-run collectives (which rarely work) seen in ostensibly socialist countries, because they come about organically among friends, families, and neighbors, are completely voluntary, and are self-run. People work together and are the direct beneficiaries of their own labor.

A loose federation of *ejidos*, providing such human needs as food, housing, education and health care, funded from the wealth of the nation by a series of regional banks sensitive to local needs, would be a strong foundation for the Mexican economy, and would go a long way toward seeing that people's basic needs were met.

The other major problem with the Mexican economy is its de-

pendence on foreign capital. Again, this means the economy is subject to the whims of the investor, and in the case of massive foreign investment, national sovereignty is compromised. Transnational corporations, mostly from the US and a few from Europe and Japan, are welcomed with open arms to Mexico because they provide employment. Yet the benefits derived from the jobs they create are vastly overshadowed by the tax concessions given them by the Mexican government, the low wages paid, and the number of Mexican companies driven out of business as a result.

Due to the low cost of raw materials and labor in Mexico, foreign companies make enormous profits, but the lion's share of the profits end up back in the United States. The shelves of Mexican stores are full of American products (mostly manufactured in Mexico) which introduce chemicals and preservatives never seen before into the people's bodies and the ecosystem. It is hard to believe such huge profits could be extracted from such a poor country, yet corporate buccaneers have made billions. Because of differences in exchange rates, American companies can buy Mexican goods cheaply, whereas American products are very expensive for Mexicans to buy. Through the practice of buying low and selling high, and then loaning Mexico the money to pay with, American capital has gained control of a sizable portion of the Mexican economy.

Tourism, too, has become a lucrative industry in Mexico. Time-share condos for vacationing yuppies from San Jose and Orange County are starting to litter some of Mexico's most beautiful beaches. Yet the millions of dollars associated with these vacation scams are not going to Mexicans; these blots on the landscape are owned and operated by Americans, thanks to broad loopholes in the laws governing land ownership by foreigners.

Ironically, the Mexican Revolution (which began in 1910) was



fought largely to free the country from foreign domination. After achieving independence from Spain in 1821, Mexico saw the English, French, and Americans vying for control. The Americans settled that issue by invading in 1847 and taking over nearly half the country; California, Arizona, Texas, New Mexico, and part of Colorado became part of the United States, and what was left of Mexico, stripped of much of its territory and resources, never really recovered. By the beginning of the 20th century, American companies were operating freely throughout the land, mostly extracting minerals and other raw materials to feed the burgeoning manufacturing industries of the American midwest. The Americans also had a loyal friend in General and President Porfirio Diaz, a cruel and brutal dictator. Movements began around 1905 to oppose the influence of the Catholic Church, the fraudulent elections that kept Diaz in power, the strongarm tactics employed by Diaz's police and military, and the practices of American firms, which had reduced many peasants to conditions of near-slavery.

While Diaz grew rich on kickbacks from American companies, the issue of foreign control over Mexico's natural resources stirred up anger, resentment, and nationalist feelings. Besides being an insult to national pride, it was enabling the US to become wealthy while preventing Mexico from growing and advancing, and added up to little more than organized theft of the national wealth. The idea that Mexico should control its own resources became one of the guiding principles in the struggle against Diaz.

Diaz was accustomed to using bloody force to put down uprisings, protests, and strikes, but the movement against him became so strong, even involving some members of the Mexican elite, that he was forced to hold an election between himself and the Anti-Re-election Party candidate, Francisco Madero. Diaz, in an obviously rigged election, "won," and the country erupted in open revolt.

Madero, a moderate liberal and minor landowner, escaped from the prison where Diaz had placed him and fled to Texas, where he plotted against the dictator. Anti-Diaz militias, and even some anti-Diaz platoons of the regular army appeared all over the country. Ricardo Flores Magon, who from exile in Los Angeles had been organizing for years against Diaz, returned with his own troops and captured towns throughout Baja California under the banner of the PLM (*Partido Liberal Mexicano* - Mexican Liberal Party).

Magon differed greatly from Madero and other moderates, some of whom desired only a transfer of power from Diaz to themselves. Magon, a dedicated anarchist, and to a lesser extent, Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa, called for total revolution, with the goal being control by the people of the means of production and the land.

With the battle cry of *Tierra y Libertad* (Land and Liberty), they aroused passions and elicited support throughout Mexico. Even more concerned than Diaz about these revolutionaries were Madero and the moderates, and the Americans, who were seeking new allies now that Diaz's days were clearly numbered.

Magon was arrested several times by the Americans for things like sedition, violations of the Neutrality Act, and improper use of the mails (to incite "murder, arson, and treason"). He eventually died in the US federal prison at Leavenworth, Kansas. Pancho Villa, vilified in the Hearst press as a bandit, was chased for years by US troops, and both he and Zapata were finally betrayed and murdered.

The killing and chaos continued for the next ten years as reactionaries, revolutionaries, and moderates fought for control. Practically all the key players ended up being assassinated, and uncounted thousands of common soldiers also died in this particularly bloody chapter of Mexican history.

Things calmed down somewhat in the 1920s and 30s. A new, leftist constitution was put into place, and the PRI (*Partido Revolucionario Institucional* - Institutional Revolutionary Party) was formed, trying, as its name implied, to institutionalize some of the concepts of the revolution. In 1934, PRI candidate Lázaro Cárdenas became President. His administration was populist and anti-Church, and he began land and labor reforms for which he is still revered today, much like Franklin Roosevelt is by some in the United States. Cardenas' most radical activity, though, was to nationalize Mexico's oil reserves, taking them out of the hands of American companies.

During this time, PRI consolidated its power, using as its base unions of workers, peasants, and government bureaucrats. They won every important election — president, governor, mayor — and were not above fixing the results or simply declaring that they had won. Mexico, despite its reputation as a pillar of democracy amid the Latin dictatorships, became more and more a one-party state. PRI came to dominate every facet of Mexican life — education, the media, business, etc. If you wanted something done in Mexico, you had to do it through the Party, and payment of a *mordida* (literally, "bite," but meaning "bribe") could speed things considerably.

Occasionally people would vote for the right-wing PAN candidates as a protest against the increasingly monolithic PRI, but none of these

defeats were reported. The left was splintered and factionalized to a ridiculous extreme, with over a dozen only marginally different parties arguing dogma and splitting the vote.

In 1968 a radical student movement shook Mexico, almost simultaneously with revolts in France, the US, and Czechoslovakia. It was the first sign of real change in decades, as thousands of young people questioned the system and called for revolution. The movement snowballed at a rate alarming to the establishment. President Luis Echeverría, worried that his country's image would be sullied by protests during the Olympics being held that summer at Mexico City, was determined to crush the growing revolt.

At a large protest at Tlatelolco, he sent in the army and police (CIA-trained, according to popular rumor) with tanks and helicopters. At least three hundred youths were killed, and thousands injured or arrested. *Time* magazine reported how a 13 year-old girl was bayoneted to death through the head. Some of the movement's leaders are said to still be in jail or are "missing." This massacre effectively killed the movement. The Olympics and the system carried on without any further problems from rabble-rousing youths.

Twenty years later, signs of change are once again beginning to emerge in Mexico. It is The Crisis and the extreme conditions brought about by it that makes the cries for change so poignant, desperate, and persistent. The left, though split and inclined to rhetorical buzzwords, is better organized and is being used as a channel for much of the pro-change energy. Their marches to the Zócalo (the capital's main square) become larger all the time). A student strike in 1986 began to resurrect that movement, and in addition to their educational demands, the students have allied themselves with the larger movement for change.

A particular rallying point has been the renunciation of The Pact, an agreement between government and big business to keep wages low as a means of controlling inflation. Another is the push for cancellation of the burdensome foreign debt.

The marches are lively affairs, with much chanting, shouting, singing, game-playing, socializing, joking, and banner waving. An impromptu march in February of this year brought out 80,000 protesters, many of them students as young as 13, and left several miles of Insurgentes Sur covered with circled As and anti-government graffiti.

The winds of change have even blown into the electoral arena. This year's election was the first real contest in decades, largely because the left was able to suspend its sectarianism long enough to mount a serious challenge to the PRI. Five leftist parties merged to form the Mexican Socialist Party (PMS). Then in June, one month before the election, Heberto Castillo, the PMS candidate, withdrew and endorsed Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas, achieving the closest thing to leftist unity in Mexican history.

Cardenas, son of former President Lázaro Cárdenas, had broken away from the PRI to protest its corruption and incompetence, and formed a new party, the Democratic Current. He campaigned heavily throughout the country, consistently outdrawing the PRI candidate, Salinas de Gortari, who had been designated heir apparent months earlier by President Miguel de la Madrid. At one PRI rally, Salinas was attacked by a crowd angered over PRI mismanagement of the economy, and which chanted Cardenas' name while throwing water and sticks at the hapless PRI candidate.

Cardenas, besides having highly favorable name recognition, was able to tap popular discontent and propel the left into a new role as the main opposition party, a position long held by the pro-business, rightist PAN. This was perhaps the most important result of the election. Cardenas preached a populist gospel similar to his father's, and was able to cut through the deep-seated apathy of the long-suffering Mexican people, much as Jesse Jackson was doing in the United States.

The PRI was concerned enough by Cardenas' popularity to resort to a fine old Mexican tradition and have millions of fake ballots printed, a plot uncovered only weeks before election day by journalists and members of Cardenas' party. Yet, although anti-PRI resentment runs high, and Cardenas' campaign was able to briefly inspire even the most jaded voters, a PRI victory was probably inevitable. They control the media, the unions, local government, and most important, the counting of the ballots.

No one will ever know exactly what the vote totals were; ballots appeared and disappeared as needed all over the country while the government held off announcing the results and clamped a veil of secrecy over the tabulations. To no one's great surprise, the PRI ultimately declared itself the victor, but Cardenas, even by the government's count, placed a strong second. There were widespread protests against what many saw as a typically rigged election, but for now the PRI remains in power, the difference being that there is now a strong and popular opposition.

If the PRI is to hold on to power, it will have to make substantial changes, something which it will find very difficult to do without running afoul of its corporate and foreign backers. The PRI has a history of speaking like leftists (especially abroad) and acting like fascists (especially at home). This was the point peasants were trying to make when they occupied the Cathedral and several foreign embassies in May of 1986: that

the Mexican government portrayed itself as progressive in the Contadora Latin American peace process, yet allowed the army and private police hired by landlords to harass and even kill peasant activists involved in the land reform movement.

Mexico has many problems and will continue to have problems. But to call the current situation *The Crisis* is no idle hyperbole. Action or lack thereof taken now will decide whether the country can survive in something resembling its current form, or whether its difficulties will not be solved short of another full-fledged revolution. Overpopulation and over-concentration in the capital are ongoing disasters. Mexico City, the world's largest city, has approximately 20 million people and grows daily as impoverished peasants, unable to make a living from the land, flock to the capital.

Corruption and inefficiency must at least be scaled back to manageable proportions, and broad economic and land reform are essential. It is important, too, for a new spirit of nationalism to emerge, not the blind chauvinist sort, but the kind of independent will that would enable Mexico to overcome its national inferiority complex, regain control of its resources, and end exploitation at the hands of the US and other more powerful countries.

Unfortunately, Mexico needs both less interference and more cooperation from its northern neighbor if it is to have a chance at solving its problems, and neither is likely to be forthcoming as long as the United States remains under the control of the far right, which looks upon the

exploitation of weaker countries as a natural state of affairs. The availability of cheap Mexican labor, on both sides of the border (illegal immigration was hardly even affected by the recent US crackdown) helps keep wages down for American workers as well, and though Mexico is not able, and probably never will be able to fully repay money borrowed from US banks, it continues to make interest payments that essentially come out of the hides of Mexican workers and consumers. In fact, the US is unlikely to take any action to disturb the status quo unless it begins to feel threatened by an increasing unrest and possible revolution in Mexico. If things reach that point, the American response could very possibly be a military one, as it has been in the past.

It is possible for the US to have a mutually beneficial and nonexploitative relationship with Mexico and other Latin American countries. But first we must stop thinking of Latin America as, in the words of Ronald Reagan, "our backyard," and begin seeing it, as Jesse Jackson says, as "next door." The advantages of a better and more equal relationship with all our neighbors to the south are many; we could benefit economically on both sides of the border, and we could greatly enrich our own culture by learning more of the one that has grown up to the south of us.

It's interesting to note that while we here in the United States are taught to think of North and South America as two separate continents, Latin Americans see both as part of single continent, *The Americas*. For the good of the entire hemisphere, maybe it's time we started looking at things through their eyes for a change.

## And A Side Order Of Glasnost, Please...

# How About Some Perestroika In America?

Is this it? Is the best we can do? Four years of almost nonstop campaigning, hundreds of millions of dollars, and when it finally comes time to elect a president and vice-president we are given a choice among four rich, conservative, middle-aged white men more remarkable for their similarities than their differences.

All the sappy patriotic get-out-the-vote commercials notwithstanding, not even half the citizens of the United States will bother going to the polls, and many of those who do will only be going through the motions, figuring that as long as there's even a slight chance that voting will have something to do with how the country is run, they might as well make the relatively minor effort. But anyone who can get seriously enthused over the prospect of either George Bush or Michael Dukakis running this country for the next four or eight years is clearly of dubious intellectual and/or emotional health.

The best argument Dukakis has been able to offer is the fact that he's not George Bush, which does carry a certain amount of weight until you consider that what got Dukakis the Democratic nomination was the fact that he wasn't Jesse Jackson. Someone who campaigns primarily on the fact of not being someone else does not inspire a great deal of confidence.

Bush on the other hand would scare the pants off any thinking person if he hadn't made the pre-emptive strike of naming as his veep one of the most blatant imbeciles to be considered for national office since the days of Millard Fillmore. Suddenly Reagan's lap dog and Cliff Barnes surrogate looks positively statesman-like by comparison.

Something is just not working here. On a political spectrum that should encompass a full 360 degrees worth of possibilities, we're asked to choose between candidates who represent no more than 5 or 10 degrees thereof. More precisely, we're being asked to choose between candidates who represent little or nothing beyond the positions deemed least likely to alienate the booboisie. Still more precisely, we are being asked to ratify a form of one-party government remarkably like the one the evil communist empire has allegedly been trying to impose upon us for these many years.

The mass media have managed to milk a little drama out of the presidential election by alternately announcing that one candidate or the other has gained the momentum. But it's a largely self-fulfilling momentum; neither Bush nor Dukakis of their own accord could generate enough momentum to even lightly ripple the seas of public opinion. They are purely manufactured candidates, and any vestiges of humanity or character were long since bred out of them. They would never have survived the long and arduous selection process otherwise.

Which is exactly what happened in the Soviet Union during some of the Revolution's darker days. The bureaucracy became so pervasive,

all-encompassing, and just plain tedious that intelligent and imaginative individuals were unlikely to survive its labyrinthine intrigues. The party of the workers became the party of the *apparatchiks*, and ordinary citizens began viewing both government and political process as malevolent forces to be avoided whenever possible.

It's ironic that just as the Soviet Union is making a major effort to correct the abuses that had made it as much a prison camp as a workers' paradise, the United States is moving in the opposite direction. The America envisioned by the far right wingers who control the Republican Party is a frightening place, a brutal, racist theocracy which if pursued to its logical conclusion would end up looking like an unholy amalgam of Nazi Germany, South Africa, and the Islamic Republic of Iran. The moderate right wingers who control the Democratic Party offer little in the way of an alternative vision. They may argue that the Republican agenda is unrealistic, will bankrupt the country, or cause undue suffering (all true), but these are considered technical, not moral problems. While they may question the means, they seldom if ever question the ends.

And what sort of ends are we talking about? It's a foregone conclusion of both major parties that America should have unchallenged military superiority over the rest of the planet, and should use that superiority to its own advantage whenever necessary. Neither party is likely to dispute the economic theories which are bandied about under the name of "capitalism" or, more insidiously, "the free market," but which could more accurately be described as industrial feudalism. And neither party admits to seeing a higher standard by which to measure our well-being as a nation than the condition of our Gross National Product.

These days our national product is gross indeed. While Americans are not a stupid people, they can be immature, as would be expected of the citizens of a relatively young country. As children do with parents, Americans expect far too much of their leaders and not nearly enough of themselves. A true leader does not merely explain and demonstrate the truths which people must know; he or she inspires people to discover them for themselves. This is best done by example; a leader with an open, inquiring mind, who visibly rejoices in discovering new ways of seeing the world and living in harmony with it, will soon be joined by millions of fellow seekers.

Such leaders are of course rare. Those with a philosophical bent and a hunger for wisdom are instinctively repelled by the demands of political life. Filling the vacuum are leaders, who in fine Machiavellian tradition, rule by fear. Among these are the Hitlers and Stalins, who crush all resistance by brute force and intimidation, and eventually create an opposing reaction that destroys them and their followers. Then there are the more subtle panders to fear, who appeal to the basest human instincts



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But let's not be too hasty in blaming the people. Throughout our history, Americans have responded en masse to all sorts of causes, noble and ignoble, and if the only cause they're being presented with now is one of lining their pockets while retreating into a bunker mentality, why be surprised that alarming numbers of them are going along with it? Those left out of the current "prosperity," and there are many millions of them, must necessarily be concerned with their own survival rather than pondering the mechanics of social change and the ideals of democracy.

This malignancy of the public spirit is not something that mysteriously appears of its own accord, the way the flu starts going around with the onset of rainy weather. It is fostered, if not created, by the system of government that has evolved in this country, and will not go away until that system is radically altered. Revolution is not yet an inevitability, but in the absence of far-reaching reform, it soon will be.

When I speak of government, I do not refer only to the various elected leaders; most of these have become mere afterthoughts to far more powerful forces. The venality and mediocrity which almost uniformly distinguish those who hold public office are only symptoms of the disease threatening the body politic. A certain amount of corruption is endemic to any political process, just as any bio-system produces its share of waste. But today we see our country, in fact our planet, beginning to strangle on the volume of waste it has generated. Such, I am sorry to say, is also the state of the American experiment in democracy.

Though founded on genocide and slavery and originally limited to a handful of white, property-owning males, our system of representative government made a great deal of progress over its first two centuries. Yes, it was painfully slow, but barriers were gradually broken down to the point where in theory all citizens were allowed to participate in the political process. Why then, after all this time, are almost all important decisions still made by a handful of white, property-owning males?

The right to vote, we are told from childhood, distinguishes us from the less fortunate totalitarian states of the world. But of what value is the right to vote if our choice is limited to candidates pre-selected by the same

sort of power brokers who run nearly every state, totalitarian or "free." We sneer at the Soviet Union, where voters are asked only to approve a slate of officials selected by the Communist Party. Yet as recent events have demonstrated, there is at least as much diversity within the Soviet Communist Party as there is between the Democratic and Republican Parties.

The measure of any political system is the caliber of the leadership it produces, and by that standard the United States is clearly falling behind the Soviet Union. To compare the intelligence or vision of Ronald Reagan to that of Mikhail Gorbachev should be deeply embarrassing to any thinking American. And yet Reagan, disastrous as his rule has been, displays more leadership qualities than either of the candidates who will replace him.

Is Gorbachev merely an aberration, and his much-vaunted perestroika (restructuring) an attempt to reform a hopelessly flawed system from the top down? Or does his rise to the top of the Soviet heap indicate that Russian Communism may finally be able to deliver on the promises that accompanied the most significant revolution (so far) of the twentieth century? This much appears certain: if glasnost and perestroika continue to be broadened, and the Soviet people given the personal and political freedom which that entails, the USSR could, without a shot fired or a missile launched, replace the USA on the world's center stage.

This would hardly be an unmitigated disaster. Western Europe yielded its position of dominance without suffering unduly; in fact the quality of life in most European countries has if anything improved since the United States has taken over the burdens of empire and world domination. But while the USA may be seeing its deservedly brief moment in the sun slipping away, we can and should attempt to salvage what is worthwhile.

The most valuable legacy of our brief history is the notion of democratic rule, despite its current sorry state. The idea that human beings are born with inalienable rights rather than having them granted by some benevolent king did not originate with the Declaration of Independence, but it was the American experience that popularized the concept to such an extent that democracy is now a standard by which all governments are judged. True democracy can work, but because it necessarily involves a large degree of trust, it is easily subverted. And, as we are now learning, it is even more easily bought and sold.

The infusion of staggering amounts of money into the electoral process is probably the biggest single reason that democracy is no longer working in America. The only way that a person of average means can become involved in politics at higher than the precinct level is if he or she can attract backing from the wealthy. And while there are the occasional philanthropists who don't mind letting go of a few million for the sake of putting good candidates into office, most people in a position to play the big money game expect some return on their investment.

At the heart of the need for high finance is the cost of access to the mass media. While pundits bemoan the way in which candidates are packaged as if they were soap suds or hemorrhoid ointments, the true scandal does not take place in the commercial arena. After all, simply being able to buy advertising time does not guarantee success; fringe candidate Lyndon LaRouche has never attracted more than a handful of votes with his half hour diatribes on national TV. The real power of the media is its ability to confer or deny legitimacy on a given candidate or party.

If we have a two party system which looks more and more like a one party system, it is not for lack of other ideas. But if those ideas do not appear in print or the broadcast media, to a large extent they simply do not exist.

Why, for example, is socialism a major force in the politics of most industrialized countries, while in the United States it is thought of, if it is thought of at all, as the province of fuzzy-minded academics and wild-eyed radicals? Is it because Americans are politically more sophisticated than their European counterparts and realize that socialism just won't work? Not likely; most Americans learn little or nothing about socialism from either their schools or their media and as a result remain blissfully ignorant of it.

But we need not go as far afield as socialism, which according to polls many Americans think of as something alien to or opposed to democracy. Even the more progressive elements of our major parties are systematically shut out. A Jesse Jackson may be allowed to make some speeches, and occasionally a reasonably liberal candidate like George McGovern may be allowed to run for national office, but such candidacies are "unrealistic," the media tell us with numbing regularity, until even the candidates and their supporters begin to believe it.

The kind of money required to open and operate a major media outlet means that those who report and comment on the news are subject to the same sorts of pressures as would-be politicians. And broadcast media in particular, which are licensed by the government, have a particular interest in accommodating themselves to the status quo. While it is a popular article of faith among right wingers that the media have a left/liberal bias, it is a fact that somewhere between 80 and 90% of the nation's newspapers endorsed Ronald Reagan in the last election. The national broadcast networks do not overtly endorse candidates, but it is not hard to deduce where their self-interests lie; they are primarily owned by the same corporations who have profited so greatly from the Reagan administration's massive military buildup.

If we are to salvage democracy in this country — and there are indications that it may already be too late — we must immediately move to take the profit out of it. Public officials who wish to hold on to their jobs must devote a large part of their time to raising campaign funds, most of which come in the form of thinly disguised bribes. This is necessary not only because the high costs of media access, but because campaigning, especially at the higher levels, has become pretty much a full-time affair. Ronald Reagan had barely been inaugurated for his second term when the first polls and first candidates of the 1988 race appeared.

Two relatively simple reforms could improve the situation. First of all, campaigns should be sharply limited, to perhaps 60 or 90 days. Second, all paid political advertising should be eliminated. In its place we should have a series of programs on radio and television in which any and all candidates would be given a significant amount of time to explain their

views. The costs of such a campaign, which because of its brevity would not be too great, could be underwritten by the government, or alternatively, borne by the broadcasters as a public responsibility and as a fair exchange for their having been granted a license to use the public airwaves.

These two steps should enormously improve the quality of both the candidates and their discourse, but will still leave too much margin for error. An additional reform would be to ban any elected official from voting or otherwise acting on any matter in which he or she has even the appearance of a conflict of interest. If, for example, a congressman has ties of any kind to a defense contractor, he has no business voting on military procurement bills. It would probably also be wise to limit the amount of time any politician may remain in office. The original concept of democracy is that ordinary citizens set apart a few years of life to devote themselves to public service; by the time someone has spent several decades on the political merry-go-round, he or she is not likely bear much resemblance to the ordinary citizen.

Still, these and most other reforms will be ineffectual if we do not begin doing a better job with the raw materials of democracy, which are of course the citizens who must make it work. With subjects like history and geography in danger of becoming lost arts, and with nearly half our population unable to read things more complex than the lowest-common-denominator daily newspaper, we can not expect too much out of the electorate. Unfortunately, our educational system has become another victim, and tool, of the political process. Those who have the most control over society today are more interested in obtaining a pliant, well-trained work force than a new generation of philosophers and political idealists.

The strongest point we have in our favor is the long-standing tradition of independence and anti-authoritarianism that characterizes the American spirit. In the Soviet Union, glasnost is taking a long time to establish itself because people are so unaccustomed to being free to speak their minds. In the United States the opposite is true; we take freedom of speech so for granted that the many attacks being mounted against it by the New Right and the Reagan administration often go unnoticed.

Because we are a rebellious people, and, one should not forget, a heavily armed one, revolution is almost inevitable if the government continues on its current course. The economic and environmental disasters resulting from present policies will eventually become intolerable. But we should not anticipate that our problems will be solved that way; we are just as likely to see a form of fascism or bloody civil war as we are a progressive and humanitarian restructuring of society. That's why it would be far better to try reforms now than struggle for survival a few years hence. It's a slim chance, yes, but if this country is to survive in anything resembling its present form, it's the only chance we've got.

## GILMAN STREET CLOSES; CAN IT RISE AGAIN?

The Gilman Street Project, the greatest place in the history of rock and roll, closed its doors on September 11. The club was the victim of several factors, among them the high cost of rent and insurance, the growing difficulty of attracting enough volunteer labor to run the place, and the continual harassment of a couple gangs who felt affronted by the club's policies against violence, racism, vandalism, and on-premises consumption of alcohol or drugs.

The situation was further complicated when *Maximum Rockroll's* Tim Yohannan, who had put up the original \$40,000 investment to get the club started (*Maximum Rockroll*, a monthly magazine with a circulation of about 13,000, is produced by a staff of unpaid volunteers, and it has a long-standing policy of putting any profits back into similar community-oriented efforts) felt that he no longer wanted to be financially and legally responsible for Gilman Street.

Several other people stepped forward and agreed to put their names on the lease, but before the transfer of responsibility came about, members decided at the September 11 meeting that they weren't confident of enough support from the volunteer workers necessary to run the place, and that they feared Gilman was evolving into "just another rock club." They voted to close after that evening's show.

The loss of Gilman, while not entirely unexpected to those involved in its day-to-day operation, came as a shock and disappointment to many who might have only attended an occasional show there, and others in far off places who had never even seen the place, but saw it as a sort of punk rock mecca that perhaps they would some day be fortunate enough to visit. I myself have gotten questions or comments about its passing from correspondents in at least half a dozen other countries.

Ironically, only weeks before it closed, Gilman received official recognition of its being on the cutting edge of the new underground when

no less an establishment organ than the *Wall Street Journal* did a substantial and relatively accurate feature on it (its main deviation from reality was characterizing the place as the headquarters of straight edge punk, a misrepresentation that a few days later got a lot of laughs at a beer party heavily peopled by Gilmoids).

In its year and a half existence, Gilman spawned at least a dozen bands, some of which are on their way to being very successful, and gave a reliable and well-paying venue to hundreds of other bands that otherwise might not have had one. It also had a big part in the birth of Lookout Records; oh well, let's admit it: Lookout Records would probably not exist if it weren't for Gilman. Most important, from a purely personal point of view, it gave yours truly some of the most fun times of my life, and gave me the opportunity to meet some of the coolest people on this planet (no, I'm not sure they were all natives). The void its demise has left in my social life is roughly akin to the void it's left in the world of northern California underground music.

Fortunately there is still some hope that a resurrected form of Gilman, probably under a different name, will emerge out of the ashes. A group of people, most of whom were Gilman regulars, is trying to establish a nonprofit foundation to run the place. Apparently they've been having regular meetings and things look at least possible. I'm sorry to say I haven't been able to be a part of it so far because I've been holed up in front of a computer in the Mendocino backwoods for about a month or more now trying to get this issue to you. Now that it's finally on the streets (or in them, as the case may be), I'll be able to spend more time in the Bay Area seeing what's what. But if you're not already part of it yourself, you'll have to wait till next issue to find out. You should know from experience how long that can be. So if you want Gilman or something like it to happen, you know what to do. Don't you?

# Music Can Make You

## STUPID

CRIMPSHINE, the story continues... It was sometime in the summer of 1988 that a large brown van lumbered out of Berkeley headed south toward a rendezvous with destiny. CRIMPSHINE, not your ordinary band (would you expect any enterprise involving AARON COMETBUS to be?), was, after no more than five years preparation, off to see the world, or at least the United States punk underground part of it. Things got off to a pretty decent start down Chula Vista way (for more info on the cultural capital of southern California, if that's not too extreme an oxymoron, see elsewhere in these pages), but somewhere between the last of the palm trees and the first of the saguaro cacti, things started going a little sour. The next thing we heard back here in NorCal was that the band had split in half, with bassist PETE and guitarist IDON heading back to California with the van and AARON and guitarist/vocalist JEFF vowing to continue the tour as a two-piece, if necessary.

Which they did, and not without success; a couple reports have already filtered back from the east coast from people who said the two-piece CRIMPSHINE was better than many of the local four or five-piece outfits. But meanwhile, AARON was busy on the phone trying to, as is his wont, arrange things. One of the things he tried to arrange was for me to meet them out east and become the driver for the rest of the tour. Unfortunately it was not possible to detach myself from the many responsibilities incumbent on the LOOKOUT empire, so I had to pass on this opportunity, which I am sure would have at the very least given me a whole new perspective on music, punk rock, America, life, and the reasons, if any, for existence. But I am sure AARON, when he at last revives the late and lamented COMETBUS zine, will enlighten me on these and many other matters.

But do we digress? Of course. Not only did AARON and JEFF manage to keep the tour going, but by the time they got to the Chicago headquarters of international culture mogul BEN (SCREECHING) WEASEL, they were able to become a full-fledged band again by inveigling the pride of Benicia, PAUL POULTRY MAGIC, to join them as bassist. And not incidentally, to bring his car with them. The rest of the tour went off as scheduled, and the new version of the CRIMPSTERS arrived back in lovely CA at the end of September. As of this writing, I haven't seen them yet, but PAUL is an excellent bass player (and guitarist, too), so I'm looking forward to hearing their new sound.

And as for PETE and IDON? There's talk about them forming a new band with STEVE of PEACE TEST. On the other hand, according to JESSE OP IV, they're starting a new taxi service, unique because "it only goes one way."

What's going on with LOOKOUT RECORDS? Well, it disintegrated and got back together, probably without most of you even noticing. Somewhere around June, DAVID "SPROCKET" HAYES, the other (and yes, I know some of you meanies will say better) half of LOOKOUT de-



*The new CRIMPSHINE somewhere in America. That's PAUL in the foreground. AARON looks like he's put on some muscles from lugging his drum kit from truck stop to truck stop.*



*The waning days of Gilman: DESTROYER conducts a hootenanny. That's JASON ISOGRACY flailing the skins, while MARTIN, in the lumberjack shirt, attempts to conduct the orchestra*

cidied to go his own way, including resurrecting his SPROCKET RECORDS label, with a motto of "Fun, Not Profit" (unlike LOOKOUT, which of course is no fun at all and brings in the millions faster than we can count, let alone spend them).

But whatever differences there were have been patched over (of course you know none of it was my fault because I never do anything wrong) and DAVID and I are continuing to work together. And guess what we're doing next, well, actually DAVID is doing most of the work: like the mega-compilation double LP of all time, or at least of the second half of 1988. It will have about 35 bands on it, including almost all the LOOKOUT bands and a whole bunch of others from GILMAN and nearly everywhere else that matters in the Golden State. Yes, CHULA VISTA is represented by the wonderful and only slightly obnoxious NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH. And sometime in the reasonably foreseeable future will be the soon-to-be-long-awaited LP from OPERATION IVY, who are rapidly becoming internationally famous, but still haven't got enough money to fix their mostly handmade equipment. Was that them on the cover of FLIPSIDE? And then not even from LA? We hear they're being made honorary citizens, though.

Those of you who with tear-dimmed eyes read the story of the tragic demise of the LOOKOUTS in the last issue may have given in to despair too soon. July 4 saw a LOOKOUTS reunion show at GILMAN for which yours truly sported the actual jeans, or at least the remains thereof, that he wore to Woodstock. Yes, bell bottoms. With many colored patches. We

were well received. Everyone threw garbage at us, even TIM YOHANAN. But that was to be expected, in fact taken as a great honor, considering that the main event of the evening was the grandreunion of the sorely missed ISOOCRACY. The LOOKOUTS are at least temporarily back in action, pending bassist and very loud singer KAIN KONG's decision on whether or not to move away this winter, but in the meantime, we're getting ready to record something for the compilation and maybe even a record of our own. Yes, we're actually practicing. It's this new concept we're experimenting with.

ISOOCRACY, meanwhile, are playing all over the place, and even found time to invade tiny Boonville in what was probably the first show of its type to ever grace that mostly tranquil (don't forget; BRUCE ANDERSON lives there) hamlet. Accompanying them were KAMALA AND THE KARNIVORES, who with the addition of their new guitarist are now an all-girl outfit. And who with the departure of their new guitarist are now looking for one. They recorded a great track for the LOOKOUT comp, and will be doing a 7" of their own later this year, assuming a guitarist materializes. Oh yeah, look for both ISOOCRACY and KAMALA AND THE KARNIVORES to be doing some more Mendo-land shows, with Fort Bragg, Boonville, and Garberville all definite possibilities, and if you're really lucky, the LOOKOUTS might even show up, too.

Further proof that high culture is at last overtaking the Redwood Empire: spotted at the REGGAE ON THE RIVER festival near tiny Piercy were JASON ISOOCRACY and the wonderful CHANTEL, of whom it was once proposed that a life-size statue be erected over the entrance to GILMAN STREET. And what about Mendocino County's newest celebrity resident, JELLO BIAFRA, who is living part-time on some country land outside of Ukiah. BIAFRA's place is near that of his longtime friend and associate WINSTON SMITH, perhaps best known for doing the cover art on several DEAD KENNEDYS records, but probably on the verge of becoming even more famous for his unique color xerox work, which back in June wowed a crowd of underground artsy types when it was displayed at the COPY ROSE in San Francisco. Anyway, BIAFRA is hoping to find time at his Mendocino hideaway to (finally) write some new songs, and there are rumors about a new band emerging some day.

"We are the BEAT NIGS and we are not afraid of revolution!" Not afraid to speak up for their rights, either; the San Francisco multi-media funk, punk, and found-art car bumper thumpers have been sending out contracts to prospective promoters outlining demands such as eight quarts of orange juice, hot towels (or was it cold towels; I don't remember) and the like. No word on the brown M&Ms yet. The BEAT NIGS, with a new LP out on ALTERNATIVE TENTACLES and a possible 12" dance single in the works, look poised for success, and have apparently decided that while the revolution may not be televised, it should at least be catered.

LINT of OPERATION IVY got a new hat (but then who's counting?) to replace the one stomped and torn to bits by an enraged member of another East Bay musical outfit and quit his job as a downtown SF bicycle messenger (OK, yuppies, it's safe to come back out on the streets again) to pursue a new career as a Telegraph Avenue tie-dye salesperson. No confirmation yet on the rumor that he will be growing his hair and leaving OP IV to follow the GRATEFUL DEAD around next summer. But he and MATT OP IV and a whole bunch of other East Bay types like JOEL (THE SPIFFY DRESSER) WING, formerly of CORRUPTED MORALS, are getting together a strictly ska band, complete with horns, which should be gigging around some day soon. And back to OP IV for a second, European readers should watch for them over there sometime next spring.

Everyone knows SPIKE ANARKIE, the unreconstructed, beer-swilling, safety-pinned, mohawked, spitting, cursing and uncompromising relic of bygone punk days, but not quite so well known is MR. ANARKIE's alter ego, or should we say walter ego, the notoriously wonderful, wholesome, and gentlemanly WALTER GLASER, who now that you mention it does look a little like MARLO THOMAS. Anyway, WALTER, who happens to be one of the LOOKOUT's favorite people in the whole world, had just set the needle down on a record by his favorite rock star, HENRY ROLLINS, when his heart went out of control, soaring to a hyperrate of 250 bpm (yes, I know 600 bpm is normal for a hummingbird, but it's not considered good for a human being, even a very busy and active one like WALTER). This news was relayed to MR. ROLLINS in Hollywood, where he reportedly responded with an inarticulate chortle and growl. Fortunately, WALTER, after a few days hospitalization and a spiritually channeled visit from MR. ROLLINS, returned to normal, or as close as he'll ever get to it, anyway.

Spotted at the Santa Cruz Boardwalk: internationally famous punk photog MURRAY BOWLES in an apparent hypnotic trance, staring into the screen of a heavy metal video game. No, he wasn't playing the game.

Just looking. For four hours, according to our reporter. Also making the scene in a big way at the anarchist unconvention in Toronto: our own DAVE MDC. What were DAVE, an unnamed but highly inebriated young woman, and the frolicsome dog of J.D.s publisher BRUCE LA BRUCE doing in Mr. LA BRUCE's bathroom? Watch for the video. Yes, there is one.

Speaking of video, AL FLIPSIDE made a quick trip into the Bay Area in late June to tape the Rock Against Racism gig at GILMAN, which featured MDC, BEATNIGS, and OPERATION IVY, plus some speakers and films from the JOHN BROWN ANTI-KLAN COMMITTEE, which may or may not be an RCP front, depending who you listen to. MDC were especially impressive, just back from a national tour and featuring a leaner, meaner sound than they have in years, thanks in no small part to their new guitarist ERIC. In keeping with the long-standing MDC tradition of mixed messages, their luxury motor home was parked outside.

Also bubbling up from the underground into the mainstream: GILMAN's own YEASTIE GIRLZ, who did a half hour guest shot on ALEX BENNET's morning show on LIVE-105. The GIRLZ did three of their acapellarraps, including their especially appropriate one on the subject of FCC censorship, and repartéed with a professional aplomb suggesting that they'll be ready for JOHNNY CARSON any day now. The YEASTIES' new 7" (no double entendre here) is called *Ovary Action*, and late breaking news is that the YEASTIES, three out of four of whom have managed to land in various parts of Europe, may be doing some sort of tour there this fall.

So: last ish, you may recall, it was reported that San Ramon moshers RABID LASSIE had regrettably changed their name to the more generic BREAKAWAY. Since then rumors have surfaced that the ill-advised moniker alteration was not entirely the brainchild of JOEY and company, but was suggested by RAY OF TODAY CAPPO, who felt that if RL wanted to appear on an upcoming REVELATION RECORDS (big and getting bigger) compilation LP, they would need a name that was more "straight ahead." This is not the first time that RAY has played the name game; it's reported that he started the new trend of bands naming themselves after laundry detergents by transforming CRIPPLED YOUTH into BOLD. But a still later update has JOEY BREAKAWAY denying that RAY had anything to do with the name change, and JOEY having always been a straightforward and honorable sort of guy, this column is inclined to take his word for it.

Straight edge moshes on: BREAKAWAY's brothers in X-dom, UNIT PRIDE, also have a cut on the REVELATION comp, and I believe also their own 7" elsewhere (Soul Force?). And in more recent news, have apparently broken up. And doing their bit for scene unity, MYKEL BOARD and his band ARTLESS have given us *Crass-Driver*, which allegedly fuses the intelligent and sensitive lyrics of SKREWDRIVER with the driving, tuneful music of CRASS. Sounds like another winner for the SEIDBOARD WORLD empire.

What's the VICTOR H update? It seems that his ALCHEMY RECORDS, home of nearly every long-haired guitar attitude band from Seattle to the Mexican border, has signed a pressing and distribution deal with semi-major ENIGMA, which may or may not be a front for CAPITOL (which as everyone knows is a totally cool corporation even if they are megalithic because as well-known scenester LYDIA (she's the "Typical Chick" on the STIKKY LP) reminds us, "The BEATLES were on CAPITOL."). At the other end of the spectrum, BLACKLIST MAIL ORDER has been in business for a few months now, selling records through the mail with all labor being done by unpaid volunteers, which makes it a bit difficult for the larger companies to undercut them. The question now is whether BLACKLIST will eventually evolve into a much-needed wholesale distributor capable of challenging the big guys' stranglehold on the industry.

Hold it. Stop the presses. Although RAY OF TODAY has already enjoyed his two minutes of fame in this issue's column, this latest development is too crucial to pass over. It seems that RAY, whose interest in spiritual matters was already widely known, is on the verge of becoming a full-fledged Hare Krishna. At YOUTH OF TODAY's August appearance at GILMAN STREET, RAY was hawking Krishna bibles and cookbooks along with the usual YOT paraphernalia. He also reportedly abandoned his usual digs at the MRR MAXI-PAD to spend the night at the Berkeley Krishna temple. Bay Area fans of Krishna consciousness may recall that it was not that many years ago that the chief swami of the Berkeley temple was arrested when police found his Mercedes sedan loaded down with illegal machine guns. One also wonders if RAY, the virtual pope of straight edge, is aware that the Krishnas were involved in major-league drug dealing throughout the 1970s, and for all I know, may still be. You

don't fund a multi-million dollar worldwide empire selling flowers in airports.

Also in a religious vein: Berkeley's SWEET BABY JESUS is about to get a new name to go with their recently recorded LP on RUBY RECORDS (subsidiary of SLASH, which is a subsidiary of WARNER BROTHERS), scheduled for release around the first of the year. Apparently the name change is not due to record company pressure, but was a group decision reached by the band itself. Lead singer DALLAS says that a major factor in the change was that three of the band's four members are Christians (news to me — I didn't realize I knew any Christians) and felt uncomfortable with the old name. All right, music lovers, who out there can guess which member of SBJ is the unrepentant heathen? Oh yeah, the tentative new name: SWEET BABYS, which at first hearing, fails to, shall we say, resonate? Maybe it'll grow on me...

STIKKY have a new 7" record out on OFF THE DISK, an independent label in Switzerland, which seems an appropriate country for those vigorous defenders of capitalism and Republicanism. STIKKY did turn down an opportunity to perform at last summer's Republican convention, not, as some suggested, because they were afraid to appear on the same stage with their idols, the BEACHBOYS, but because, as their publicist explained, "The boys felt GEORGE BUSH is just too soft on anarchy." Oh, the new STIKKY 7", which contrary to rumor, LOOKOUT will NOT be repressing, occurs on the most amazing marbled vinyl that, if you stare at it long enough while it's spinning round and round, will probably make you sick to your stomach. And then there's the music...

New bands in town: among others there's SWOLLEN BOSS TOAD, featuring TOMMY STRANGE, once of FORETHOUGHT, and EYEBALL, with lead singer DAVE DURAN, who was far and away the best thing about the late CLOWN ALLEY (the band, not the hamburger joint, which as far as I know is still functioning). Then there's the absolutely frenetic STEELPOLE BATHTUB, and SCAPEGOAT LEMONADE, who I haven't seen yet. All the above are from San Francisco, a good sign, since the Big City had been falling far behind the East Bay (aka Hoboken West) in producing exciting new music.

Up here in the Deadwood Empire, there's a couple of happenings, too. 15 year-old wonder DJ CHRIS APPELGREN and fellow 15 year-old just plain wonder ABE are putting together a new band in Garberville, hard upon the ruins of CHRIS' recent and short-lived DIRTY DONUTS. Name: well, CHRIS wants to call it BUMBLESCRUMP, which sounds about right for southern Humboldt, but ABE, being a total speed metalhead, doesn't think that's such a hot idea. He's thinking more along the lines of MECHANIZED ARCHIPELAGO OF SATANIC DESTRUCTION. As

a compromise, I offer the name which ROBERT EGGPLANT thoughtlessly rejected for his band (which broke up as a result): DALMATIONS FROM HELL. Farther up in Humboldt, the lost town of Fortuna somehow managed to produce an excellent band by the name of NUISANCE. Unfortunately they've now moved away to Sonoma County to pursue their educations and because lumberjacks kept trying to give them mohawks with their chainsaws. Just kidding. Honest. Hey, I've got a chainsaw myself. Spike my hair with it all the time.

And even farther up the coast, there's whole bunches of stuff happening in Eureka and Arcata, and I don't know anything about it, because I only get up there once every four years, and there are still three and a half years to go before next time. But back down in SoHum (Southern Humboldt, for all you unhip big city geeks), I hear tell that some members of LAS MALANDRAS, the brilliant all-women's salsa band that unfortunately broke up earlier this year, are putting something new together. DARRYL CHERNEY will be lead singer. No, no, come back, that's just a joke, but if DARRYL weren't so busy saving the planet, he might have time to put together a brilliant musical career for himself. I still think his tape "I Had To Be Born In This Century" is the best collection of music to come out of the Emerald Triangle so far, even though a certain friend who will remain nameless so DARRYL won't beat him up doesn't agree.

OK, this is getting too long to fit on the number of pages I still have available, so no more gossip. I put in some pictures, too, some of which have nothing to do with anything in this column (illiterates have feelings, too), and if you, your band, or your musical output is not covered here, it might be because I'm stupid, it might be because you're stupid, or it might be because we all are. Refer back to the title of this piece for elucidation. Next issue: no news or gossip, just full-page nude pictures of all your favorite punk rock and reggae stars (sorry, LINT fans, no ska). Till then, keep those earplugs in; you wouldn't want to hear anything that might disturb your equilibrium, and besides, it looks like the musical agenda for the next four years will be dominated by GEORGIE BUSH AND THE QUAYLES. It's a long way to Australia or New Zealand, so maybe you'd better start swimming now. Bye.



# Reviews

To all of you who sent in books, records, magazines, whatever: the following, long as it is, represents only a small portion of the material that's arrived over the past few months. If you don't see it reviewed here, that doesn't necessarily indicate disapproval; it may simply have disappeared beneath one of the alpine piles of rubble that adorn my desk. It's a minor miracle that I got this much stuff done. Really.

## PUBLICATIONS

**HIPPY CORE, (\$1? Heck, send \$1.50, it's worth it), PO Box 195, Mesa AZ 85211**

This zine rules! Simply put, the highest expression of the xerox-zine art form to yet cross the threshold of my mailbox. Stimulating but not distracting layout with lots of cool graphics, and very intelligent writing, even when it's about dumb subjects. Though they're plunked down in one of the less culturally distinguished backwaters of the universe (I mean, we Californians get a lot of flak for giving Ronald Reagan his political start, but what are you going to say about a state that would elect Evan Mecham?), editors J@ck and Joel stay well plugged into the international cultural/political scene through contributors and kindred spirits in far off places, including South Bay Mosh Crew stalwarts Chris (Stikky) Wilder and Wayne The Silly Skinhead. People wondering about the origin of the *Hippycore* name might think that it was meant to rag on the old flower-power gang or that it reflected a wistful hearkening back to the idealistic 60s on the part of today's youth, and yes, it's true. I was looking for something to criticize about *Hippycore* and I was going to complain that there wasn't enough negativity in it, in fact at first I thought there wasn't any, but then I searched harder and found a record review (ART PHAG) that was a pretty total slag job (though they still found something nice to say about the cover art). Whether it's politics, music, underground publishing, or youthful idealism tempered with a great sense of humor that appeals to you, you need this zine. Don't delay, send today.

**THE AMIGO, \$1 to PO Box 412, Chula Vista CA 92012**

Another good poli-cultural zine, not as big or ambitious as *Hippycore*, but just as intelligent and idealistic. *The Amigo* is part of a small but vital Chula Vista scene that also includes Vinyl Communications, which also puts on shows and has recently opened a nonprofit record store/community center run along Gilman Street lines. In fact, *The Amigo*, VC, and related activities of the Chula Vista gang provide ample evidence that the new healthier, happier, more caring Gilman-style version of punk rock is not confined to the Bay Area, but is starting to bust out all over. The most recent issue features interviews with CRIMP SHRINE GANG GREEN and MORAL CRUX, some lively letters, and (well, nobody's perfect) an absolutely moronic anti-drug diatribe which seeks to advance the cause of "anarchy" by beating up and/or killing dope dealers and users.

**ABSOLUTELY ZIPPO, varies, 50¢, 1550 Mann, Pinole CA 94564**

A creation of Gilman stalwart Robert Eggplant and his buddy Matt, AZ delves into the more subterranean realms of East Bay punk rock, with special attention paid to the teenage perspective. Most things in this zine are done by high school students (and/or dropouts) except for a column by yours truly, an honorary high school dropout. Don't expect professionalism or polish, but there's lots of sincerity and intensity, and a few years from when these guys are big-time publishers (and of course will have long since fired me), you'll be able to say you were hip to them from the beginning.

**BROCCOLI MAKES ME SAD, varies, 50¢, but you have to know someone to get a copy of this exclusive publication**

Primarily the work of Chris (STIKKY) Dodge (also the new lead singer for NO USE FOR A NAME), this South Bay gazette of sheer silliness is a joy to behold. In addition to the considerable talents of Mr. Dodge, the nonpareil titan of tomfoolery Walter Glaser is a regular contributor, not to mention the Finnish Filet, Big (and we mean it man!) Wayne. Band interviews, pinup photos of the Fonz and Edith Massey (the egg lady from *Pink Flamingoes*), a dissertation on the anarchistic tendencies of Alf, and of course, the all-important Underwear Page. You must have this zine. It's almost worth moving to San Jose for (but not quite).

**SIDEWALKS, monthly, only in summer; if you didn't find a copy yet, you'll probably have to wait till next year**

A lot of kids come home from college and spend the summer lying

around on the beach soaking up the sun. If you've ever been to Fort Bragg or Mendocino in summer, you know that's not a very likely prospect. So these kids started a magazine. Actually, they didn't exactly start it; *Sidewalks* originally saw the light of day a couple of years ago as the brainchild of *New Settler* editor Beth Bosk and Radio\*Free\*Earth honcho Marco McClean. But it was intended to be a young peoples' zine, and Beth and Marco, while full of youthful energy, are no longer the proverbial spring chickens. So in the absence of young people willing to keep it going, *Sidewalks* came out once and then was rolled up (ha ha! get it? rolled up? never mind).

But this summer a bunch of college students home on vacation as well as some Fort Bragg and Mendocino High School kids resurrected *Sidewalks*, using the whole logo and graphic design (which, I must admit, makes the *Lookout* look like a provincial rag emanating from some hick town like, say, Laytonville) and did, as someone like Bruce Anderson might say, a crackerjack job of it. (No, you wouldn't catch me saying something like that. Uh uh. Never.)

Anyway, they promise to do it again next summer, and I hope they do. In fact, after they graduate, I hope they come back to the coast and keep *Sidewalks* going permanently. In my opinion quite a few of these young people have bright futures as writers — I was especially impressed with the work of Dan Timms and Zack Stentz — and who knows, Mendocino County may some day be as renowned for the quality of its literary output as it is now for its marijuana, timber, and wine. Oh yeah, Lisa Henry's graphics are very impressive, also. If you're anywhere near the coast, see if you can track down either of the two issues these guys put out this summer.

**ANDERSON VALLEY ADVERTISER, weekly, 50¢ on newsstands, \$22/yr in Mendocino County, \$27/yr USA, \$45 Canada, PO Box 459, Boonville CA 95415**

Anyone in Mendocino County who doesn't read this is probably either illiterate, reactionary, or broke. Almost certainly the best weekly newspaper published in the United States, and, if there's any justice in the world at all, a future Pulitzer Prize winner. A hundred years from now Editor/publisher Bruce Anderson will be regarded with the sort of reverence now accorded Mark Twain or H.L. Mencken. But why wait? Bruce is here right now.

**TRUST, bimonthly, 3DM in Germany, \$3 seems about right for Yankee Imperialists, c/o Dolf Hermannstädter, Salzmannstrasse 53, 8900 Augsburg, West Germany**

The best and most significant punkzine in Europe. Unfortunately for predominantly monolingual Americans, it's almost all in German. This shouldn't bother a lot of punks who only look at the pictures anyway (they're generally excellent, especially the original artwork of Hamburg cartoonist Andreas Michalke), but the writing is almost worth learning German for (at least as far as I can tell; my own German is not likely to get me appointed the next ambassador to Bonn), and looks to be several cuts above that found in most US fanzines.

**MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL, monthly, \$2 on newsstands, \$2.50 by mail, PO Box 288, Berkeley CA 94701**

Most younger *Lookout* readers will already be familiar with this, one of the two granddaddies of hardcore fanzinedom (*Flipside* being the other). But unless you've kept up with it of late, you may not know that it recently expanded from 72 pages to 128, added some new departments (most notably news and news analysis), and finally increased the size of both print and graphics to more reasonable proportions. There are still weaknesses in some of the writing, particularly in band interviews, articles, and (some) scene reports, due to *MRR*'s policy of accepting most things that are submitted. But the record and zine reviews, the letters, the columns (yes, I do write one of them, now that you mention it), the news, and even a lot of the advertisements make *MRR* as close as you get to essential reading in the punk rock universe.

**THE NATION, weekly, \$36/yr, but you can probably find a discount rate, especially if you're on a lot of left-wing mailing lists, 72 5th Ave, New York NY 10011**

If you're only going to subscribe to one serious political magazine, this should be it. It's packed with solid information that you're not likely to find elsewhere, and while it's not always as entertaining or flashy as some journals, the quality of both writing and research is outstanding. *The Nation*'s star columnist is of course Alexander Cockburn, indisputably the best political writer in America today, and not far behind him is fellow expatriate Christopher Hitchens. I don't always find time to read everything in here, but almost everything is worth reading. My newest discovery is the film criticism of Stuart Klawans, which is light years beyond that of most major media. His piss-take on *The Last Temptation of Christ* in the September 19 issue was not only hysterically funny, but the only truly

intelligent commentary I've seen on the film.

**FACTSHEET FIVE**, quarterly, newsprint, 8 1/2 x 11, \$2, 6 Arizona Ave, Rensselaer NY 12144

If you're at all interested in the underground media (or if you're still convinced the alternative press more or less vanished with the 60s), you must have this zine. It's an encyclopedic listing and review of publications of every kind from every corner of this country and quite a few others. Editor Mike Gunderloy apparently reads enough of every one of these magazines/ books/ literary broadsides to render an incisive commentary thereof while at the same time making his way through graduate school. How does he do it? I don't know, but what he's doing deserves your attention. *FSS* also features extensive record reviews and some regular columnists. \$2 for weeks of entertaining reading and access to some of the best journalistic/ literary output of our times? What a deal. Don't pass it up.

**ANARCHY**, varies \$1, Box 1446, Columbia MO 65205

Most anarchist magazines are, to borrow a phrase from Mykel Board's letter elsewhere in these pages, "dry as a junkie's asshole," or hopelessly muddled in internal doctrinal disputes that are as pointless as they are impenetrable to an outsider. *Anarchy* manages for the most part to avoid those pitfalls, providing lively and irreverent critiques of a wide-ranging variety of society's ills. Where it occasionally does fall short (and this is true of most publications by and for the disaffected, including, probably, the *Lookout*) is in providing sufficient insight into how things might really work after the revolution and/or in the absence of governmental constraints. After all, as I have become fond of pointing out lately, we already had anarchy once, and look what we ended up with.

**CONTRA WATCH**, monthly, \$15/yr, San Francisco CA 94140

This is a specialized publication dealing with just what its name implies, keeping an eye on contras everywhere. It deals primarily with the Nicaraguan variety, of course, but takes a global perspective, with the understanding that the attempt to crush the Sandinista revolution is part of a global strategy aimed at indigenous and working peoples everywhere. The material presented is well documented, and should prove highly useful for writers and political activists who, unlike yours truly, insist on backing up their rantings and ravings with facts.

**MENDOCINO COMMENTARY**, Box 1222, free on Mendocino County newsstands, \$15/yr by mail Fort Bragg CA 95437

Quality varies widely, from the revolutionary and sublime to the liberal and pathetic. I never miss an issue if I can help it, though I'm not sure I would pay to subscribe. One weakness is the practice of printing verbatim most of the press releases and letters that arrive in the offices of every Mendocino County publication (I know because I get them too). Editor Carol Root is usually right on the mark with her column, while publisher Harry Blythe often lapses into wishy-washy sentiments in his. Regular columnist Raven Earlygrow usually has some good stuff to say, while Radio\*Free\*Earth's Marco McClean teeters precipitously between the radical and the ridiculous.

**NEW SETTLER INTERVIEW**, every six weeks, \$10/12 issues, \$1.50/sample, Box 730, Willits CA 95490

I have a special place in my heart for the *New Settler*, partly because we started out in the publishing business about the same time, partly because editor Beth Bosk was interested enough to print an interview with me back in 1986, but mostly because it's just a great magazine, and a unique one.

The *New Settler's* greatest strength is the depth of its interviews; its occasional weakness is their length. Not that I would change anything about it, really; even though chief interlocutor Beth Bosk sometimes delves further into various arcane points than I would find necessary, her style is a pleasant change from the cocktail party chit-chat type of interviews found in most publications. And it's impossible to value too highly what Beth is doing in terms of documenting the genesis and growing pains of a whole new culture. Not only is she writing history (and in a format far more accessible than the traditional one); she's helping to make it, too.

**STAR ROUTE**, monthly, \$10/yr, \$1/sample, Box 1451, Redway CA 95560

Although in name *Star Route* hearkens back to an earlier magazine, *Star Root*, that used to be one of my favorite Humboldt publications, the new, or, if you prefer, resurrected version has little in common with its more homemade predecessor. Under the direction of editor Mary Anderson, *Star Route* has become a fairly professional-looking magazine, one which covers both politics and culture, but with greater emphasis on the cultural side of things. Its fascination with hippiedom, in both a historical and a present-day sense, is both a strength and weakness. While it's great that

Mary and friends are documenting the history of the 60s and 70s counter-culture (one ongoing feature is entitled "Whatever Happened to the Hippies?"), it limits the appeal of *Star Route* to a relatively narrow group. That's no problem for me, since I happen to be part of said group, but I'd like to see her incorporate more stuff by and about younger people, and maybe to find some more common ground between the Mendocino-Humboldt post-hippie culture and the rest of the world.

**COUNTRY ACTIVIST**, monthly, free on newsstands in the Emerald Triangle, \$10/yr elsewhere, Box 92, Redway CA 95560

Just what the name implies, a journal by and for politically active people here in the Emerald Triangle/Redwood Empire. Most of what's covered here centers around Humboldt County, although there's a fair bit of international news, too. If the *Activist* has a weakness, it's that it's a little dry, maybe even stodgy at times; as with its sister publication, the *Star Route*, it could benefit immensely from more input from young people. But it's a vital link in the north coast communications network, and these people deserve a lot of credit for keeping it coming out month after month like clockwork (Remember when the *Lookout* used to do that? Naaah, most of you probably aren't that old.).

**SWELLSVILLE**, varies, \$1.50, PO Box 85334, Seattle WA 98145

Lengthier articles than you will probably ever want to read providing endless anal-retentive detail about artists whom you've mostly never heard of (usually with good reason). *Swellsville* patterns itself after the early-70s school of rock criticism pioneered in publications like *Rolling Stone* and *Cream*, with page upon page of reverent, almost biblical egress lavished on the most inconsequential bits of pop fluff (example: seven full pages analyzing mid-60s one-hit wonders the Music Machine). Nevertheless, some of the writing is good to excellent, and it's always sincere, even when you wish it wasn't. Worth a look, especially if you spend a lot of time in the bathroom.

## RECORDS

*As I've often complained before and probably will again, doing record reviews is one of my least favorite parts of publishing this magazine. So usually I just skip them altogether, which makes me feel bad because it doesn't seem fair to the nice sincere people who are constantly sending me records in hopes that I'll give some favorable publicity to their artistic efforts. So this time, with deadline looming, I hit upon a brilliant idea. Instead of trying to do the job by myself, I recruited some assistants, namely KMUD DJ Chris Appelgren and his friend Abe, both 15 year-old sophomores at South Fork High School in Miranda. I also figured that since these guys were younger, they'd presumably be more open-minded and less cynical about the quality of the recorded product we were examining. Boy, was I wrong. They're more negative than I would have ever thought of being. I think I'll put them on the staff permanently. Anyway, what follows is more or less a transcription of our reactions to the various records. Unfortunately I lacked the foresight to bring a tape recorder to capture the pearls of insight that were tumbling from their lips faster than the mind could comprehend, let alone than the pen could write, so you're only getting a bare-bones approximation, which should suffice. If this doesn't cure labels of sending me records to review, nothing will. Oh, you can probably figure it out, but C = Chris, A = Abe, and L = me.*

**METAL MC, Born To Party, LP, Synthicide/Enigma**

C: "sexist, macho, really lame" A: "generic sitcom music, like everyone get on the floor and boogie with the Jeffersons" L: "if John Travolta were making *Saturday Night Fever* today, this would be the soundtrack" C: "sounds better at 45" A: "straight off the streets of Stockton"

**TOKEN ENTRY, Jaybird, LP, Hawker Records**

C: "starts out like Duran Duran. oops, it's on the wrong speed. no, it still sounds like Duran Duran" L: "Duran Duran with generic mosh chords" A: "the drummer sounds like Verbal Abuse, just like the shirt they're wearing in the picture" C: "you mean Verbal Assault" A: "whatever" C: "fairly mainstream New York thrash. not very melodic. when you mosh hard, this is the one to get. not much variety; the spaces between songs sound like long pauses"

**SUICIDAL INFANTS, LP, Indigo Records**

A: "two of them have pompadour mohawks" C: "no intellect at all" L: "if punk's not dead, this record is a good reason why it should be" A:

"I'd rather sleep in a garbage bin than listen to this"

**ART PHAG, LP, Wanghead Records**

L: "the cover is handmade" C: "pretty original. reminds me of the Minutemen" L: "a little too much art" A: "acid core" C: "sounds intelligent. kind of mid-tempo sludge core" A: "kind of a stupid name. music to die to" C: "Touch and Go/Big Black sound. you could get tired of it pretty easy"

**ELVIS HITLER, Disgraceland, LP, Wanghead Records**

A: "listenable" C: "guitar-oriented" A: "the bassist has a lot of motivation" C: "biker core. their name says it all" A: "doesn't bring back memories of sitting out in the cornfield in your truck with your woman?" C: "kind of funny but kind of tacky" A: "tacky bell bottom music" C: "it's got S-O-U-L with all capital letters"

**VAMPIRE LEZBOS, LP**

A: "haven't I heard this song before?" C: "they can change from slow to fast" A: "basic" C: "lively" A: "good drummer. they're big on animal rights. greenpeace records. sounds like Christian Death" L: "kind of reminds me of Follow Fashion Monkeys" A: "touching animal lyrics" L: "generic punk lyrics" C: "predictable"

**ARTLESS, Boy With A Cunt, LP? EP? (It's only got one side), Starving Missile Records**

A: "kind of neat. where'd they get their guitarist?" L: "hilarious" C: "I really like this" L: "music to be obnoxious by" A: "square dancing slamcore. sounds like Country Bob and the Blood Farmers. the singer sounds like El Duce if he joined the Pretenders" L: "the title song is like a 70s prog-rock magnum opus. good record"

**DETOX, LP, Flipside Records**

C: "sounds like clean punk, similar to DI" L: "nothing special" A: "set it on fire" C: "for the person who can't choose between Devo and DI" L: "lasts a long time" C: "slow-moving. drug-related lyrics. side two doesn't even sound better at 45"

**COMPLICATED BONE MARROW TRANSPLANT, 7"**

A: "sounds like the Minutemen" C: "no, the Adolescents" A: "bubblegum hardcore" C: "the lead vocals sound like Telly the muppet monster on Sesame Street"

**CREAMERS, 7"**

C: "balding drummer. they look pretty punk, they have a skull. more bubblegum, kind of poppish" L: "good female vocalist. they were real good live" C: "kind of cheesy" A: "sounds like the movie Michael J. Fox made with Joan Jett" C: "they're only hard and raw cause they don't have the money to sound slicker" A: "they look old, like Led Zeppelin people"

**CHEMICAL PEOPLE, 7", Two Inch Pecker Records**

C: "the Misfits cover sounds better than the Misfits" A: "kind of mediocre guitar. a harder Duran Duran" L: "real annoying guitar" C: "they like having their pictures taken next to porno movie posters. the singer sounds like Milo from the Descendents. definite guitar hero-ism"

**PAGAN BABIES, Next, LP, Hawker Records**

L: "my partner David thinks this is great - at least I think that's the word he used - but nothing about it really grabs me" A: "singer sounds like Dave MDC. they look like preppies experimenting with hardcore. this is original, isn't it? the whole album is making up for lost time, it's all filler, sounds like the Offenders meet Minor Threat" C: "Dag Nasty, totally" A: "mild skate vocals" C: "nothing out of the ordinary. I don't have any bad feelings about it. I might buy it" A: "they're playing on key" C: "sounds more like DC than New York"

**VARIOUS ARTISTS, Metal Gives Us A Headache, 7" \$2.75 (proceeds benefit Concerned Arizonans for Animal Rights and Ethics) from Hippycore fanzine, PO Box 195, Mesa AZ 85211**

(cut by cut analysis)

**Dead Silence** C: "metal-tinged punk, dark lyrics, kind of gloomy"

A: "kind of melodic, but it's okay. the singer sounds like Udo Dirkschneider of Accept on 'London Leather Boys'" C: "I liked it. the singer sounds like D. Boon. he might be kind of fat, cause he's got that thickness behind him"

**Cringer** A: "listenable" C: "pretty straight ahead hardcore. sounds like the singer's trying to be English. pretty nice"

**Stikky** A: "cool" C: "I love it. this is rad. brings back lovely memories of the 70s" A: "the singer sounds like that girl at school that's

got a cyst in her throat and can't talk right and goes around beating up guys"

**Subvert** C: "sounds like Stikky" A: "no, like Metallica" C: "it's metallish" A: "no it's not" C: "dude, you gotta see the band members, they've all got like Jack Daniels shirts and long hair. but it's got good lyrics"

**Dissent** A: "where's the bass?" L: "basses are hard to get in South Dakota" C: "kinda sounds like Social Unrest" A: "do they have a bassist?" C: "kind of vague political lyrics. doesn't say anything in particular. I like the guitar" A: "it's kind of choppy, but kind of neat. the singer still sounds like Dave MDC" L: "that was a different band"

**Desecration** C: "yawn. the artsy-fartsy intro is probably Henry Rollins' favorite part of the record" L: "does it shred? does it kill balls?" A: "it's all right. guitar's kind of mixed up" C: "metallish, a whirlwind frenzy of guitar notes swarming around your head and screaming vocals throwing heightened awareness into your ears. and it's good, too"

**STEPHEN J. MORRIS, Loud Whispers and Silent Screams, LP, Veracious Records**

C: "is that a recorder I hear? I think the cover might be a joke and this might be good" A: "this is pretty good" C: "I like this" A: "it's like this guy is one of the first Americans, like a pilgrim" C: "interesting lyrics. this song is about an unemployed artist and a hooker in downtown LA. but I don't like it" A: "where'd you get this? are you sure they didn't send it to the wrong person?" C: "reminiscent of the Dead Kennedys on Frank-en-christ" A: "music to drop acid to. like the Doors, or Tiny Tim. C: "Jello Biafra" A: "kind of, but more squeaky. Ozark yodel and Hawaiian music" L: "Jello Biafra singing for the Doors" A: "like the guy in the Talking Heads" C: "now it's like Milton Berle" A: "no, it's like those singing puppets on the Nashville Network" C: "Bob Dylan" A: "Ravi Shankar" C: "new age Indian music. the Beatles" A: "KMUD music, folk from the heart of the fucking redwoods" All: "we like it"

**ARTLESS, Crassdriver, LP, Starving Missile Records**

A: "sounds like Weird Al Yankovic. I hope all the songs don't sound like this" C: "I don't like it as much as Boy With A Cunt. sounds like New York, though" A: "the singer looks like that guy on Riptide, you know, the computer nerd" C: "so far it sounds like straight ahead punk" A: "I like their lyrics, like on 'God'" C: "sounds like they regressed from Boy With A Cunt. this is more like hardcore. I like this song ('New York's All Right)" A: "it sounds like Sting" C: "the straightedge song is cool. maybe it would be enough to buy the record for"

**STIKKY, Cuddle, 7", Off The Disk Records**

A: "nice beginning" C: "sounds fine" A: "dandy" C: "a nice little package" A: "nice guitar solo. oops, wrong speed. well, it sounded good at 33" C: "doesn't sound that different at 45" A: "is this a joke?" C: "it's making me laugh. reminds me of Killdozer" A: "I like this, it picks up" C: "yeah, it does. oh, this is 'Boy Do Girls Ever Suck'. I like the lyrics" A: "yeah, it's like what happened to this friend of mine. did I ever tell you about Ursula?" C: "let's not talk about that now" A: "sounds like Mr. Bungle, huh? like disco. I mean funk. nice and short, you know how some bands drag things out? these guys get it over with quick. they're like good at not being serious, too" C: "all in all, a nice little package. I like the LP better, though, for some weird reason"

**EYEBALL, 7"**

C: (reading from lyrics) "the world is shit and I'm a fly." I like this" A: "isn't there a glam metal band called Eyeball?" L: "these guys are glam metal" C: "yeah, look at the cover, dude" L: "wait, now Dave MDC's back again" A: "yeah, singing 'No More Cops'" C: "I don't know, a good effort, guys, but not outstanding"

**SURROGATE BRAINS/I AM THE HAMSTER, split 7"**

**Surrogate Brains** A: "I like this, kinda nice production" C: "he's biased from being from Stockton" A: "I like the singer" C: "nice echo effect there" A: "drummer's good. sounds kind of like the Exploited" C: "you're wrong. Doggy Style"

**I Am The Hamster** C: "this is nice, this is so weird. reminds me of those chants they do in the army when they're running around. now it sounds like grandma's singing. really good" A: "no bass?" C: "no bass" A: "singer sounds kind of warped. like he just hit puberty. he's probably middle-aged" C: "I liked them, they're totally original"

**NEUROSIS, Pain Of Mind, LP, Alchemy Records**

C: "wait, I think this record's screwed up" L: "no, it's supposed to sound like that" C: "thick, fast, hard. definite moshability. good cover art" A: "I like this, what song is it. 'Self Taught Infection'?" C: "sounds kind of like an American Exploited" A: "sounds kind of like 'Nazi Go Home'" C: "yeah, it is sort of German. I sort of like it. three stars" A: "three and a half"