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POST AMERIKAN



BLOOMINGTON/NORMAL

VOL. 25

50¢

NO. 3

JUNE/JULY 1996

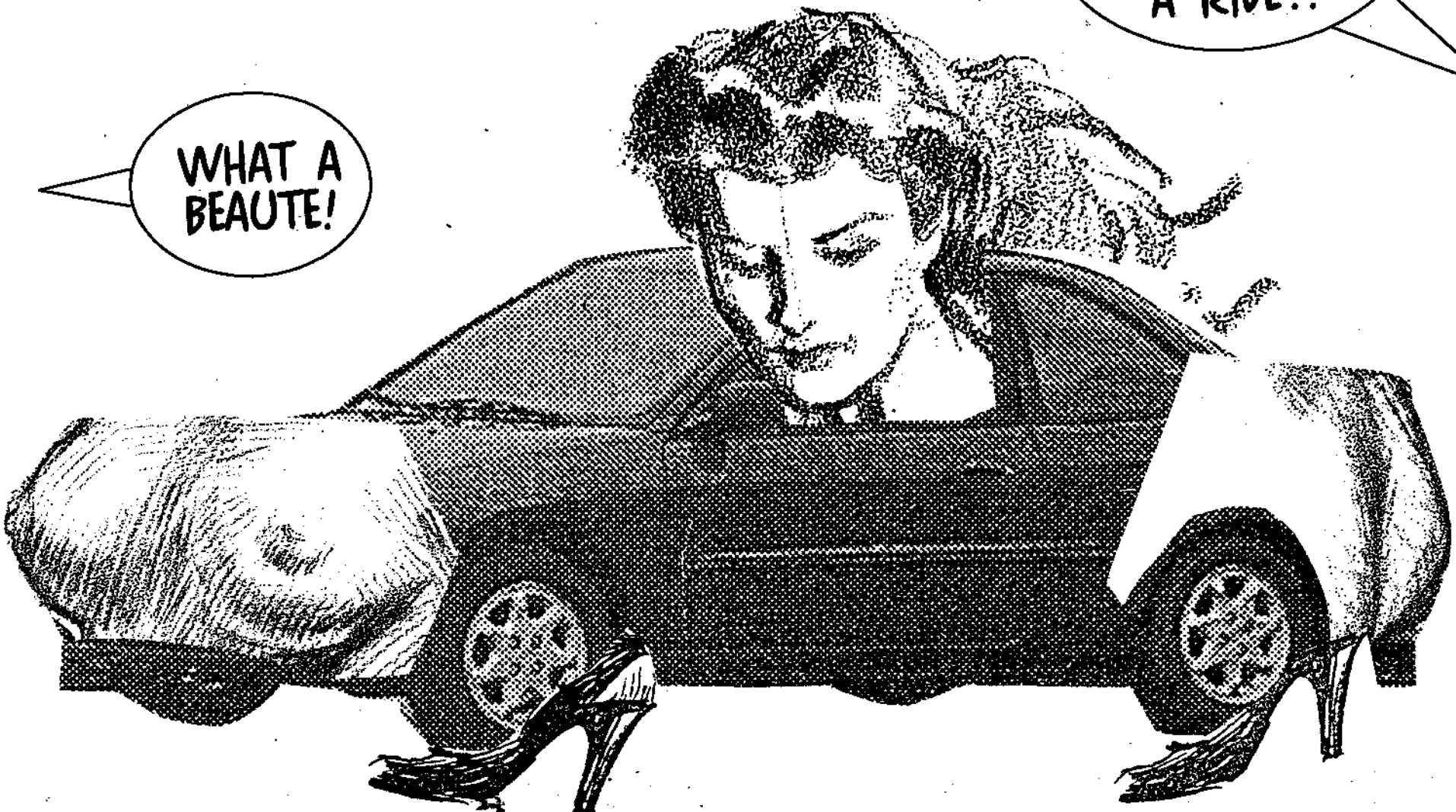
Mitsubishi's Mirage:

CHECK OUT THE HEADLIGHTS ON HER!

HEY, NICE BUMPER!

HEY BABE, WANNA GO FOR A RIDE?!

WHAT A BEAUTE!



A company's refusal to see the obvious

Bulk Rate
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Bloomington, IL 61702

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200 N. Main
Bloomington, IL 61701

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BLOOMINGTON/NORMAL

VOL. 25

NO. 3

JUNE/JULY 1996

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About us

The *Post Amerikan* is an independent community newspaper providing information and analysis that is screened out of or down played by establishment news sources. We are a non-profit, worker-run collective that exists as an alternative to the corporate media.

We put out six issues a year. Staff members take turns as "coordinator." All writing, typing, editing, graphics, photography, pasteup, and distribution are done on a volunteer basis. You are invited to volunteer your talents.

Most of our material and inspiration for material comes from the community. The *Post Amerikan* welcomes stories, graphics, photos, letters, and new tips from our readers. If you'd like to join us, call 828-7232 and leave a message on our answering machine. We will get back to you as soon as we can. Don't worry if it takes a while--we don't meet every week.

An alternative newspaper depends directly on a community of concerned people for existence. We believe it is very important to keep a newspaper like this around. If you think so too, then please support us by telling your friends about the paper, donating money to the printing of the paper, and telling our advertisers you saw their ad in *Post Amerikan*.

Subscriptions

Subscriptions to the *Post Amerikan* are available for the low price of \$5.00 per year for six complete issues. Please send a check (made payable to the *Post Amerikan*) to: *Post Amerikan*, P.O. Box 3452 Bloomington, IL 61702.

This issue of *Post Amerikan* is brought to you by...

David, Linda,
Nick, Ralph, Russ,
Sherrin and Steve

Post Sellers

Bloomington

AIDS Task Force, 313 N. Main (inside)
About Books, 221 E. Front (inside)
The Back Porch, 402 N. Main (inside)
Bakery Bank, 901 N. Main
Bus Depot, 533 N. East
Circus Video, (Emerson and Main)
Common Ground, 516 N. Main (inside)
Front and Center Building
Law and Justice Center, W. Front
Medusa's, 420 N. Madison (inside)
Once Upon a Time, 311 N. Main (inside)
The Park Store, Wood and Allin (inside)
Twin City Exchange, 411 N. Main (inside)
U.S. Post Office, Center and Monroe
Wash House, 609 N. Clinton

Normal

Amtrack Station
Babbitt's Books, 104 North (inside)
Bus stop, (School and Fell)
Mother Murphy's, 111 North (inside)

Champaign

Babbitt's Books, 614 E. Green, (inside)

What's your new address?

When you move, be sure to send us your new address so your subscription gets to you. Your *Post Amerikan* will not be forwarded (it's like junk mail--no kidding!). Fill out this handy form with your new address and return it to us, P.O. Box 3452, Bloomington, IL 61702.

Name _____

Street _____

City/State/Zip: _____

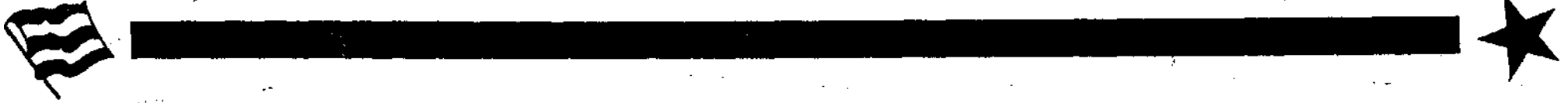
Due Date:

The due date for submitting articles to the *Post Amerikan* is: (please laser print your articles in columns of 3" using Palatino 10pt. type if possible.)

July 15

Good numbers

ACLU.....454-7223
Advocacy Council for Human Rights.830-2521
AIDS Hotlines
National.....1-800-AID-AIDS
Illinois.....1-800-243-2437
Local.....827-AIDS
Alcoholics Anonymous.....828-7092
Animal Protection League.....828-5371
Bloomington Housing Authority.....829-3360
Boys and Girls Club.....829-3034
Clare House (Catholic workers).....828-4035
Countering Domestic Violence.....827-7070
Dept. of Children/Family Services....828-0022
Gay & Lesbian Resource Phoneline...438-2429
Habitat for Humanity.....829-0693
HELP (transportation for senior citizens/handicapped).....828-8301
Home Sweet Home Mission.....828-7356
IL Dept. of Public Aid.....827-4621
IL Lawyer Referral.....1-800-252-8916
Incest Survivors Support Group.....827-5051
Lighthouse (substance abuse treatment)....827-6026
McLean Co. Center for Human Services...827-5351
McLean Co. Health Dept.....888-5450
McLean Co. Humane Society.....663-7387
McLean Co. Peace Coalition.....828-7070
Mid Central Community Action.....829-0691
Mobile Meals.....828-8301
Narcotics Anonymous.....1-800-779-6178
NAAFA (size acceptance)
Central IL chapter.....454-2128
National Health Care Services/
abortion assistance.....1-800-322-1622
Occupational Development Center....452-7324
Operation Recycle.....829-0691
Parents Anonymous.....827-4005
PATH (Personal Assistance Telephone Help).827-4005
Phone Friends.....827-4005
PFLAG(Parents, Families and Friends
of Lesbians and Gays).....663-0831
Planned Parenthood (medical).....827-4014
(bus/couns/edu).....827-4368
Post Amerikan.....828-4473
Prarie State Legal Services.....827-5021
Project Oz.....827-0377
Rape Crisis Center.....827-4005
Safe Harbor Mission(Salvation Army) 829-9476
Sunnyside Neighborhood Center.....827-5428
TeleCare (senior citizens).....828-8301
Unemployment comp/job service.....827-6237
Voice for Choice.....828-3108
Western Ave. Community Center.....829-4807
Youth Services of Mid IL.....828-7346



Community News



PFLAG chapter forms in B/N.

The Bloomington/Normal chapter of Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) recently met for the first time.

The group was started by Carol and Craig Cadonic. The Cadonic's want to provide support to those in need. The group's mission also includes educating the public on homophobia and its destructive and devastating effects on everyone, especially those who are gay or lesbian.

PFLAG plans to meet on the third Tuesday evening each month.

For more information, please contact Carol or Craig Cadonic at 663-0831.

Red Ribbon Review, May 15, 1996

Pride Festival

Who: Advocacy Council for Human Rights, through its Outreach Committee.

Contact Telephone: 309, 830-2521

What: Midcentral Illinois Pride Festival '96

Where: Unitarian Church Grounds, 1613 E. Emerson, Bloomington.

When: Sunday, June 23. 1:00-7:00p.m.

Live Entertainment: Baby Blues Band; Open stage for all homegrown talent.

Merchants and Displays: Any group, organization or business interested in participating, contact ACHR.

Other Goings On: Raffles, food, amusements, volleyball, PRIDE contest, alcohol-free.

Red Ribbon Review, May 15, 1996

Social Services on the Net

The McLean County AIDS Task Force (MCATF), serving both McLean and Livingston Counties, officially announces the opening of its home page. MCATF is currently the only social service agency in the area who has created and who maintains its own web-site. The URL for the MCATF home page is: <http://www.dave-world.net/~mcatf>

This site was made possible through a grant from the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). It provides basic information on HIV/AIDS; information of MCATF and its programs; and resource and referral information including links to other sources of information. The current version is

formatted for Netscape 2.0 and incorporates Java applets.

This project was developed to provide a safe and anonymous way to access HIV/AIDS information in this increasingly electronic age.

MCATF is a community based, all volunteer, AIDS service organization committed to peer counseling; providing information and referrals; identifying needs; offering direct services in response to unmet needs; advocating for those impacted by HIV/AIDS; and advocating enlightened, rational and humane HIV/AIDS related policies in public and private sectors. To contact MCATF, call (309) 827-2437; FAX (309) 827-0456; e-mail: mcatf@dave-world.net; visit our home page: <http://www.dave-world.net/~mcatf>.

--from McLean County AIDS Task Force newsletter

"Worms Eat Their Garbage"

The McLean County Children's Discovery Museum can now proudly say that "worms eat their garbage!". No, this is not some sort of worm abuse. The Discovery Museum and McLean County Solid Waste Management Program are cooperating to demonstrate how worms can help us reduce the amount of garbage we produce and provide all sorts of valuable conservation lessons for kids and adults.

A worm bin is just that; a bin full of worms and bedding (peat moss and newspaper). The worms thrive in the bin with the proper care, which includes moisture, air, and food. And their food is our garbage! No, not all of our garbage, but some of it. The worms will consume food scraps, mainly vegetable and fruit scraps. They also eat egg shells, onion skins and all sorts of other organic matter. Greg Merriman, Executive Director of the Discovery Museum commented "Many people in McLean County are starting compost piles and recycling programs at home. A worm bin is a great way to get started on a composting program that is also great for your garden."

Beyond the conservation lessons the worms offer, they also make great pets! Mark Dravillas, McLean County Solid Waste Coordinator remarked "The worms stayed briefly in my apartment before they moved onto the Discovery Museum. My two year old son became attached to the worms quickly. He would feed them and say 'Hi worms' every time he walked by the bin."

Letter to the editor:

Dear Post Amerikaners:

Marcie Murray's articles are excellent - including the one on "acquisitiveness." It does my heart good to know you & she are still "out there" living your ideals. I will try to be more supportive (financially-speaking) later.

Sue F.

Dear Editor:

I would like to suggest a means by which the Post-Amerikan might be able to revitalize itself.

The paper should expand its coverage & circulation area to include Champaign-Urbana.

It would be relatively easy to do this. First, at least 6 sales locations should be found in Champaign-Urbana. The paper already has one location in C-U where the Post-Amerikan can be purchased. Five more outlets--similar to the ones in Bloomington-Normal--should not be too difficult to find.

The same is true for advertising. At least a few advertisements (from businesses similar to those what now advertise in the paper) can surely be procured from C-U. And of course the paper should ask progressive groups in C-U to submit material for publication.

All this could breathe some new life into the P-A, even if it doesn't make it the hottest journalistic item in the country.

Allan Keith

Editors note: The Post is always looking for ways to increase advertising and subscriptions. Unfortunately, we don't always have the time to carry this out. We would love to hear some more of your ideas and suggestions. If you, or anyone you know of would like to help, please let us know.



cont.

Many thanks to Carey's Worm Ranch, Inc. at 106 Pioneer Drive in Minooka, Illinois, 60447. Carey's donated the worm bin, worms and "Worms Eat My Garbage" book on the Solid Waste Program and Discovery Museum. It is hoped that someday there will be a worm bin in every home and school in McLean County. Meanwhile, go by the Discovery Museum at 716 E. Empire in Bloomington and check out the worms!

Call the McLean County Solid Waste Program at (309) 888-5081 or the McLean County Children's Discovery Museum at (309) 829-6222 for more information.

--from McLean County Solid Waste Management Program press release

Radio Free Maine

A native of Central Illinois is in the forefront of efforts to help spread progressive social and political ideas by making them more accessible to the public.

Roger Leisner, who was born in Decatur, IL, operates Radio Free Maine, based in Augusta, Maine. One of his primary activities is producing and distributing tapes of speeches by a variety of liberal and left-wing activists, writers, and intellectuals. Many of Leisner's audio and video tapes feature Noam Chomsky, nationally known for his speeches and writings which expose the many shortcomings of U.S. society.

Chomsky, a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, is world famous as a linguist, but in recent years has also become well known as a speaker and writer whose critiques of capitalism and imperialism captivate audiences on and off college campuses. Some titles of Chomsky's talks include: "Bringing the Third World Home; the Domestic Policies of the GOP Right," "Resisting Corporate America's War on Working People," and "Media Censorship and Our Right to Know."

Other tapes feature such people as authors Cornell West and Frances Fox Piven and Howard Zinn, author of "A People's History of the United States." Other speakers include Jesse Jackson, Jerry Brown, Ralph Nader, Angela Davis, and Chicago 7 defendant David Dellinger.

I knew Roger Leisner when we were both students at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale during the "days of dissent" of the late 60's and early 70's. Leisner was appointed by the "radical" student government at SIU as the student representative to the Carbondale City Council. That alone was enough to keep the "City Fathers" awake during those long city council meetings!

Roger and I were involved with the underground newspaper "The Big Muddy Gazette." On-campus sales of the paper at one point was banned, but with pressure from students, faculty, and the ACLU, the SIU administration backed down from that patently unconstitutional edict.

In recent months Leisner's Radio Free Maine has become much better known nationally since

the Associated Press distributed a feature story about Leisner and RFM. Radio Free Maine was also mentioned last year in Playboy Magazine in a review of Chomsky's tape on "The Role of Media and Manufacturing Consent." Since then (and since the AP story appeared) sales of tapes, as might be expected, have increased.

Leisner also distributes the tapes to radio stations that might consider playing them. These include Free Radio Berkeley, affiliates with Radio Pacifica, Radio Havana and a number of low-wattage so-called "pirate" stations.

A list of available tapes can be obtained from Roger Leisner by writing to Radio Free Maine, PO Box 2705, Augusta, Maine, 04338. The phone number is (207)622-6629.

--Allan H. Keith

WGLT--Safe For Now

ISU's administration backed off on its plans to gut and "restructure" campus FM station WGLT, a move that has community supporters of the jazz and blues oriented National Public Radio affiliate breathing easier.

Announcing the decision April 12th to leave the station intact for the next two years, university officials tried to put a benign spin on their original actions. The discussion to revamp GLT, president David Strand told both station supporters and members of the press, was only part of a regular review process. It was never meant to upset members of the community.

University insiders, however, tell a different story. According to more than one source, ISU was planning to reduce paid staff to a skeleton crew in order to save bucks lost by federal cut-backs. This move would have effectively killed the station's NPR affiliation (which stipulates that at least eight full-time staff work for its stations) and radically changed the format.

What ISU officials didn't reckon on was the depth of community attachment to the current GLT. Local support group, the GLT'ers, gathered petitions from within the listening area, picking up more than 1,400 signatures; community voices phoned and wrote their opinions on the proposed revamping; even Bill Flick came out in opposition to the proposal. Sheltered within the walls of academia, ISU administrators forgot that their radio station is the university's most consistent communique with the outside world.

Hopefully, this lesson won't be lost on them.

But the battle is far from finished. In order for GLT to survive the collective gingriching that is spreading across this land of ours, it will need to develop other sources of non-profit funds. One good sign: when the station ran its spring pledge drive on the heels of ISU's announcement, it received a record amount of pledges. It will take more than that, though, to keep "News, Blues and All That Jazz" coming over the airwaves past ISU's two-year timeline.

--billsher

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Dear Dr. Hippie

Dear Dr. Hippie,

My problem is that on a recent journey to my boyfriend's grandparent's house his grandmother, with good intentions, I'm sure, had these humidifiers with this thick synthetic lavender scent in them running all over the house. She also sprayed this strong perfume all over my room, bed, pillows, etc. I have extremely sensitive sinuses and strong smells such as these give me severe headaches; they can even bring on asthma attacks and sinus infections. So, needless to say, I was in severe pain, unquenchable by Ibuprofen, which made it impossible for me to enjoy myself. Dr. Hippie, what would be an appropriate way to handle this? Should I have made her fumigate my room for a two day visit? I haven't told her about this yet; should I, and if so, how without offending in-law type people?

Sincerely,

Chanel #5 Makes Me Sick!

Dear Chanel,

Luckily, Dr. Hippie has no pluck of her own outside of the printed medium, so she will not berate you for being so spineless and silly. Suffering rather than complaining is a way of life for us, and later speaking resentfully about those who unwittingly caused the suffering is the only balm.

However, we can certainly scheme in order to save face for everyone next time. What you need to do is to convey to the in-law types that

you have just recently developed extremely sensitive sinuses and that you yourself have had to give up all household and personal perfumes, as much as you have loved them in the past. This strategy gives you some telephone conversation material, an item often in short supply when speaking to in-laws, and allows you quite politely to remind them to fumigate before you visit. Then all you'll have to convince them of is your severe allergy to intense boredom.

Dear Dr. Hippie,

One of my pet peeves is when people who I barely know and feel very little, if any emotional bond with, hug me. You know the types: family members that I only see once every three years, my high school principal, whom the student body had no respect for, and figured hugging 14 to 18 year olds in the middle of the cafeteria would gain her respect, born agains, etc. I feel it is extremely rude to assume that they have the right to invade my personal space when they barely know me, and extremely presumptuous that they think they have the kind of close emotional relationship that warrants that kind of affection. Dr. Hippie, am I some kind of anti-social psychopath that this insincere affection bothers me? Will I end up some kind of hermit alone on a mountain if I don't change my attitude toward these people? Or am I justified? I notice this behavior a lot with southern people (could it be something in the pecan pie?).

Sincerely,

?

Dear Question Mark,

Dr. Hippie agrees with you fully: being hugged by people whom you don't wish to be hugged by is quite distasteful. However, you may not have your stimulus characteristics exactly defined. It may not be huggers "who I barely know and feel very little, if any, emotional



bond with" that merit your protest, but actually, huggers who personally repel you for one reason or another. This is difficult to admit when they include family members, well-meaning Xians, and recovering whatevers. Due to advanced education, Dr. Hippie is able to admit that it makes her flesh crawl to think of these people touching her intimately; however, strangers such as Alex Tribeck, Katha Pollitt, Counselor Troi, and Gene Hackman would be quite welcome to embrace her at will--one trusts that they would not be intimidated by prestigious academic degrees.

While we're on the subject, hugging creates other problems than disgust. There's the issue of setting a public hug baseline and trapping yourself there. For example, if you hug your friend in joy when you see her while you are unusually euphoric, are you then obligated to hug her whenever you see her, even after you've had your drugs adjusted? If you have two friends whom you usually hug, and another friend joins you in the movie line, do you have to hug her too just to keep everything even? If the last two times you've seen your partner's best friend, you've given him a hug, but this time you're having a huge spat with your computer when he walks in, are you compelled to hug him, or may you just do what comes naturally and screech at him for tracking in mud?

The ideal stance when greeting and leaving, according to Dr. Hippie, is one of friendly composure, which is neither embarrassing nor constraining.



Uppers and Downers

Uppers to...Normal mayor Kent Karraker* and council member, Garrett Scott. These two men stood by their convictions and voted for the addition of sexual orientation to the town's human rights ordinance. Also, a big uppers to Normal City Manager, Dave Anderson for publicly acknowledging his support for the ordinance, and Harry Hightower for making it an issue.

Downers to...the rest of the town council members: Jeff Fritzen, Cheryl Gaines*, Parker Lawlis*, Sonja Reece and especially Lucille Miller*. Ms. Miller, obviously doesn't believe that the idea of separation of church and state exists, is long overdue to get voted out of office. Her statements prior to the vote all but suggest that she is incompetent, closed minded and using her position as a council member to promote her personal beliefs and not those of her constituency.

* four-year term expires in April 1997.

Rape Crisis Center

of McLean County

We're a non-profit volunteer group whose main purpose is to offer assistance and support to victims of sexual assault and their friends and families.

Female and male volunteers answer your calls and are available for crisis assistance, information and speaking engagements. You may request to speak only with female volunteers.

If you want to talk to one of us
Call PATH 827-4005
 and ask for the
RAPE CRISIS CENTER



Ngan: When the Student Becomes the

Twice recently I kept my mouth shut when I should have spoken up. Both times people were making fun of the way some Asian people spoke English. Once was behind their backs, but the other time was in front of the person. Granted, it wasn't done to be intentionally cruel, and was done after a few beers. They were just joking around, and I knew this. I felt like I should say something, but I sometimes don't know what to say to others without once again sounding preachy or "holier-than-thou"...worried about my own self-image. So, if I had to do it over again, this is what I would like to tell everyone sitting at that table.

YYY

When I was sixteen and attended church (!?!), our extremely wealthy congregation had a woman in it who had been the "sponsor" for a Vietnamese refuge. This Vietnamese woman had relatives who had lived in Vietnam, but had recently escaped and were coming to Peoria, and she and her sponsor were "sponsoring" them. She asked for donations from the very wealthy good Christians of our church of furniture, clothing, money... anything that might help these people out as they tried to start a new life here. Oh, yes, and would anyone want to volunteer to help teach them English?

This appealed to me instantly. I still can't say why. Maybe it was the Junior Social Worker in me coming out. For whatever reason, I signed up.

Apparently very few people had responded in any way. I was told I could help tutor the family: a grandfather, mother, father, and four children. No one told me what to do or how to do it. I wasn't given books, plans, orientation, or anything. That first visit is a blank in my memory, except for one thing...I was terrified.

After riding my yellow Schwinn ten speed to their house, there I was, at sixteen, sitting in their home like an idiot, not knowing what to say or what to do. I spoke no Vietnamese, and they spoke no English. I was completely lost. The oldest daughter, Ngan, was just a year older than I was. They were all puzzled by me (I think I have always been a bit peculiar) and Ngan was very shy. Eventually we became friends.

Somehow it ended up that I mostly worked with the little kids and Ngan while I was there, and the adults mostly watched and laughed. They would all talk about me and what I was doing, and I was the only one in the room who was clueless about what everyone around me was saying.

At first the only way that I could communicate with them at all was to pick out individual words in an English/Vietnamese dictionary one at a time, and hope that somehow they could piece together what I was thinking. I eventually began taking picture books of my brother's to our classes (Dr. Seuss and the like) and reading the silly words out loud. I had them try and repeat these, and since the words were obviously so goofy, we all had a good chuckle together.

One day I discovered that by using pantomime I could often act out what I was saying, making for more effective communication. This led to completely ridiculous one-woman plays on my part with me acting the part and telling them the words until they understood me and learned the words. To this day I would imagine they get a picture of me in their heads if they ever read *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* to their children.

Their house was full of strange and wonderful smells. Very exotic spices. Ngan's mother had me over for a special dinner. For an appetizer we had spring rolls with a thin, spicy sauce for dipping, wrapped in leaf lettuce (which was quite exotic for me, as my family was only used to iceberg). Our main course was some soup I had never tried. The bone and meat in the soup pot was nothing I had ever seen before. I asked Ngan (who could speak some English by now, no thanks to my lessons) what was in the soup, oh-so-casually. She consulted with her mother in Vietnamese and giggled.

"My mother says it best if you no ask."

Sigh. So I didn't. It was one of the most delicious meals I had ever eaten.

Thanks to all the *help* from my wealthy church with its own T.V. station, television show and world-wide radio ministry, they lived in a small, miserable house. Very clean, and cockroach infested. Their furniture was in horrible shape. Everything that had been donated was crap, or maybe they had gotten it out of the garbage. Their clothing was clean, but horribly out of style and mismatched. Ngan, with her ugly clothing, always had a beautiful jade bracelet on her wrist. It was one of her only possessions left from Vietnam. She couldn't get it off her wrist because she had had it for so long and had grown "into" it, so to speak.

Our classes soon stopped being classes, and that summer they became more of times for me to visit them and learn about their lives and their world. I became their student, more or less.

It was an amazing discovery when I learned that Ngan and her younger sister knew how to do beautiful embroidery. They had learned it from their grandmother before she died, and it was to them just a part of their life. I thought they were some sort of incredibly gifted young women, but they just laughed it off.

With her broken English, Ngan began telling me stories of her life. Once she told me the story of their trip here. I learned that Ngan's father had been a very wealthy and successful business man in Vietnam, by their standards. They had saved every penny they could, sold almost all of their possessions, and bought passage for everyone on a fishing boat. Their family were "boat people," willing to risk death at sea to escape the political environment in Vietnam, where they could easily have ended up dead anyway.

Two boats left together, overly crowded. On the sea, they were overtaken by pirates. Luckily for her family, the pirates went to the other boat first. They stole everything worth

stealing and then set the boat on fire. Ngan and her family watched the boat with their friends sink as everyone was burning to death, and they thought their turn was next. The pirate ship was on their way to the boat Ngan's family was on when another ship appeared, scared off the pirate ship, took the occupants of the second boat on board and carried them to safety. And from there her family made it to America.

I was stunned.

To give up all your possessions, risk the dangers of the fishing boats at sea—dying of thirst, hunger, storms or pirates—and have this as better than living where you were in your country; to live with other people's junk and feel *grateful*; to smile and laugh, and have the courage to go on; to learn a new language, and new alphabet, a new culture. This was strength beyond anything I have ever known. This was power, courage, beauty and hope. I felt at that time that there was nothing in the world that I could ever do that would compare to the *meaning* in their lives. They were happy to be alive and for each thing and every thing they had. Every meal was a cause for celebration, and every night they were thankful they could sleep safely without danger of their father or brothers being taken to serve in the army.

There seemed to me only one thing I could do. I bought Ngan a brand new American outfit for her birthday. Something she could wear every day for fun and look completely normal, but very stylish. It was some funky pair of striped shorts, a thin turquoise leather belt with a "cowboy" belt clasp, and a t-shirt. Completely frivolous, but cool, I thought. She started giggling when she saw it, and I got sort of embarrassed. I don't even know if she ever wore it because I never saw her in it. I feel rather silly now when I think of it, but somehow I felt then that after all she had gone through at her age, she deserved something that was completely her own again. Not someone's ridiculous hand-me-downs, but something nice. What great injustice this would right I still haven't figured out, but back then it was all I could come up with.

Her family shared so much with me. Once they even took me to the "Chinese New Year's Celebration" with all the other families. It was a big deal with all homemade Vietnamese food, and had traditional music, dancing and even the "dragon parade". It was all beautiful and exciting, and I will always remember it.

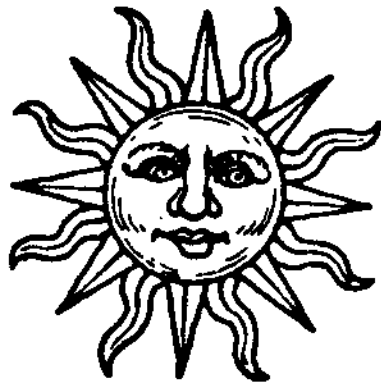
Eventually, her parents got her a scholarship to the Catholic school, and I was very busy with my senior year, so we didn't see each other much anymore. It was amazing to me how in one short year she was taking freshman classes, while to this day I can only speak English, and couldn't begin to communicate in any other language.

I went to college after that year, and we kept in touch sporadically. They eventually moved to Los Angeles to a Vietnamese community because trying to adapt to the American culture was too difficult on her mother and grandfather. We lost touch after a while, but then a few years



Teacher

Kids today...(no, try again.)



ago Ngan found my parent's address somewhere and wrote to me. She had married and had a little boy. I wrote back and told her about my life.

On my birthday this year I received a card from her. How she remembered my birthday, I can't imagine. She wrote to me and thanked me for all the kindness I had shown her family and "all that I had done" and sent me a gold bracelet with a heart and a small diamond in it as a present.

I wrote her back, and thanked her for the letter, which was the best part of my birthday, but told her that it was I who had to thank her.

She and her family showed me love and kindness. They fed me and treated me like one of the family, which I didn't have in my own home at the time. Their home was my refuge. Ngan shared many stories of her life in Vietnam and taught me about the world and other cultures. She taught me courage and strength and about conquering fear and pain, and being able to laugh in spite of everything. If it hadn't been for all I learned from her and her family, I truly don't think I would have had the strength to do all the things in my life that ended up being the most important, including going to Russia and pursuing happiness as my main goal in life. They taught me that joy is found within, and that nothing you can own or buy in life will give you that. I'm sure Ngan still speaks with a strong Vietnamese accent, but she speaks our language, learned an entirely different alphabet and writes quite well, and she made the effort. She succeeded.

I am quite sure that many of the Asian people we encounter in Bloomington-Normal have similar stories to tell. Their accents may be difficult to understand at times, but they try.

Ngan and her family's story has finally been told. I am sorry that I didn't speak up when I should have. But, Ngan, thank you so very, very much for teaching me all you did, and sharing your life with me that year. My life would probably not be so richly blessed if you and your family hadn't shown me what blessings really were.

-Marcee Murray

Recently, I witnessed a group of children acting up in public. Nothing new there. What bothered me though, is what they were doing. It was disrespectful and had the potential to damage public property. "Where are these children's parent(s)," I thought. The mother was standing right there and did nothing. In fact, she never moved, never looked up, and never said a thing. During this time, I happened to be standing next to a high school student and stated to him something about her apathetic parenting and total lack of discipline methods. He somewhat sarcastically replied, "Kids today..." I disagree. It's not the kids today, it's the parents.

When I was growing up, I always obeyed my parents, and other adults as long as what they were telling me made sense. And when I did disobey, I usually pouted. I never acted up in public or threw a fit, because, well, I knew better. My grandmother had the great gift of giving the "look." It involved arching her eyebrows as high as possible while remaining extremely expressionless. If you have ever been on the receiving end of one of these, you know what I'm talking about. You didn't really know what would happen to you, but you knew it was bad. And that enough was enough to scare the bejesus out of you. We didn't dare push grandma any farther.

My parents, (and my grandma) were able to raise three moral and ethical daughters without resorting towards negative and damaging discipline methods. How did they do it. Simple. They taught us to respect others. (this included animals, objects, etc.), not to touch things that do not belong to you, share, and among many of the other standard rules, always to say "please" and "thank you".

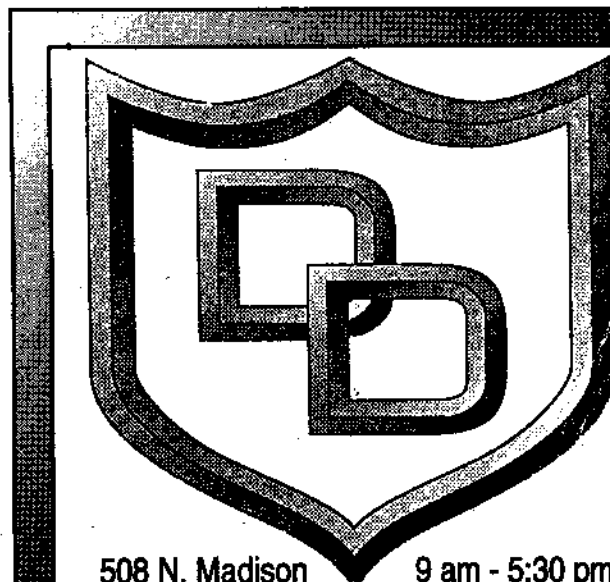
The traits my family espoused were not revolutionary concepts. Many generations have been taught these same ideals. And I'm sure that someone 100 years ago was fuming over the decline of adolescent behavior like I am today. But I'm not fuming over children. I'm fuming over today's adults and parents who choose not to educate their children of the basic rights and



wrongs, by not providing them with positive role models and by not modeling positive examples of intuition, imitation, and assimilation of values, attitudes, and behavior. Parents today all too often tell their children, by silence, that their selfish, destructive behavior is o.k. Destructive, disrespecting children grow up to become destructive and disrespecting adults. Those qualities are certainly not desired, nor beneficial towards any society and its members.

We can change this by simply becoming more aware of ourselves when we are in the presence of children. (This also works for those non-breeding types). Positive messages can come from anyone, be it a parent, relative, next door neighbor, mentor, or stranger at the grocery store. Model the behavior you wish your child, nephew, etc. to imitate. If you want them to become a confident, caring, successful person who espouses the values that are important to you, set a good example every day. Be nice, say please and thank you and show some manners. Actively encourage the child's initiative if you want them to succeed in life; be supportive and accepting, acknowledging their fears, applauding their achievements, and admit your own errors. These traits help to provide the basic foundation for a caring, compassionate and fair-minded adult, something our society desperately needs more of.

-towanda! a non-breeder.



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Seeking Reconciliation from Death Row

My name is Michael Ross. I am a condemned man on Connecticut's death row. When most people think of death row inmates, I'm the one that they think of. I'm the worst of the worst, a man who has raped and murdered eight women, assaulted several others, and stalked and frightened many more. And when I am finally executed, the vast majority of the people of this state will celebrate my death. Sometimes, when I close my eyes, I can see the hundreds of people who will gather outside the prison gates on the night of my execution. I can see them waving placards, drinking and rejoicing, and I can hear their cheers as my death is officially announced.

I have lived here on Connecticut's death row for over eight and a half years now. I live in an eight-by-ten foot unpainted concrete cell for 23 hours a day--24 hours a day on weekends. I come out for an hour of "recreation" five days a week. Other than that, the only other times I come out is for a 15-minute shower five days a week, and for the occasional visit (one half hour, through glass, on a telephone). I eat all of my meals in my cell, brought to me in a styrofoam box three times a day. I live in a single cell so I live alone--and since I can only talk to the two people in the cells on either side of me I quite often feel alone.

One of the results of this almost total isolation is that, after a while, a person is forced to look at himself. I'm not talking about the cursory, superficial manner in which most people look at themselves, but rather a quite painful, unrelenting search of one's very soul.

Many inmates in prison, and many of those on death row, are able to lie convincingly to themselves, to see themselves as basically good people who are the innocent victims of a corrupt judicial system or of an unfair and uncaring society in general. Sometimes it is very difficult to honestly see ourselves as we truly are, and much easier to blame others as justification of our actions. I know this to be true because for years this is exactly what I did. During this period I was angry--so very angry--at everyone and everything except for the one person I should have been angry with--myself. It took a very long time--years in fact--for this anger to subside and for me to accept who I was and what I had become, and even longer before I was ready and willing to accept responsibility for my actions.

Two things primarily lead to this transformation. Much of the credit for the first goes to a psychiatrist at the Sexual Disorders Clinic at the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland--Dr. Fred Berlin. He diagnosed me as suffering from a paraphiliac mental disorder and was indispensable in the fight to get the Department of Correction to acknowledge my disorder and to treat it with the medication I now receive. The drug--Depo-Lupron--clears my head of the vile and noxious thoughts of rape and murder that plagued my mind for so long, and the drug eliminates the previously uncontrollable urges that drove me to commit the crimes that put me here on death row. That monster still lives in my head, but the medication has chained him and has banished him to the back of my mind. And while he is still able to mock me, he can no longer control me--I control him; I am human once again.

You cannot begin to imagine what a milestone this was in my life. Try to imagine a time that a melody or some catchy tune got stuck in your mind playing over and over and over again, driving you crazy. The harder that you try to push that tune out of your head, the louder and more persistent it becomes. Now try to imagine that instead of a harmless yet annoying tune, you experience filthy and despicable urges, desires and fantasies of the degradation, rape and murder of innocent women. Day in and day out. They fill your thoughts and fantasies when you are awake. They are in your dreams when you sleep. Imagine trying to control the urges, day by day, hour by hour. And try to imagine the self-hatred, loathing and abhorrence that you develop toward yourself when you fail. If you can imagine this then you will have only begun to understand what I have experienced, what I had to live with, what I had become. And only then will you begin to understand the true blessing that this medication was to me.

But the medication was only part of the story of my personal transformation. It gave me back my mind--a clear mind free of the malevolent thoughts and urges. And it allowed my humanity to awaken--giving me back something that I thought I had lost forever. But this was just the first step, and perhaps the easiest, for I didn't have to do anything--the medication did it for me. Now began the more difficult part of my transformation, an examination of myself--a very profound, very painful, and ongoing examination.

Now that my mind was clear, for the first time, I began to see--*really see*. It was like a spotlight shining down on me, burning away the mist, exposing every shadow of my being. I began to see things as they really were. I began to see things I didn't like. And many of the things I saw brought me great anguish.

I saw how weak and afraid I really was--I have always thought that I was strong and confident. I saw how I had allowed the monster in my mind to take control of me. I saw what I had become. And worst of all, for the first time, I saw the pain that I had brought to so many--such great and unceasing pain.

After my eyes were finally opened and I saw the truth of what I had become and what I had done, I began to feel things--unpleasant, disturbing feelings. I began to feel the terrible agony and distress that I had brought to so many: my victims, the families and friends of my victims, my own family. And I also began to feel the awesome weight of my responsibility for my actions and of my responsibility to the people that I have harmed. And finally, I felt a profound sense of guilt. An intense, overwhelming and pervasive guilt that surrounds my very soul with dark tormented clouds filled with a mixture of self-hatred, remorse, regrets, and sorrow. All of which leaves me with a deep desire to make amends and achieve reconciliation--something which under the circumstances seems all but impossible.

Yet it is this sense of reconciliation that I yearn for the most. Reconciliation with the families and friends of my victims. And finally, reconciliation with myself and my God. This will be the final part of my transformation--and undoubtedly the most difficult part.

I am fortunate to have a good friend and guide for this part of my journey. Reverend John Gilmartin, a member of a group called Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation, who makes a six-hour round trip drive to see me once a month. I have traveled a great distance and have gone through quite a transformation since that day when I first set foot on death row--most of it alone. And I am very grateful and thankful for the help that Reverend Gilmartin has given me over the past couple of years. With his help, and if it is God's will, I will achieve that reconciliation that I so desire, and hopefully complete my transformation into one who is worthy of redemption and forgiveness. My journey is still far from over, but at least now I can see that there is light at the end of the tunnel. May God give me the strength, perseverance, and moral fortitude to complete my journey before I am finally executed.

--by Michael B. Ross #127404
Death Row--Northern
P.O. Box #665
Somers, CT 06071

Author's note: If you wish to learn more about this concept of victim-offender reconciliation contact: Pat Bane, Director; Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation; P.O. Box #208; Atlantic, VA 23303-0208. Or call her at (804)824-0948. And please tell her Michael Ross sent you.



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The Poetry Page

Fire

Red.

Hot.

Find me solid!
Write your name on me!

You find,

You see

What I ain't got.

Make me feel the heat!

Cigarette.

Matches or lighter.

Cigarette me, baby!
Hard!

right
on
my
arm.

--David Hall

Cyclenow

Moonlight shield our eyes
from the radiance of night,
that all its shades of darkness melt
silver by your light.

to each his own,
just one more drop
of blood falls into place,
generations making roses
on the floor. to his own
his own blood, red,
then brown, abstracts
made empirical with timing.

as dusk creeps on society,
the shadows of what we've built
grow larger than the sum
of ourselves. if we try
to spotlight our industrial
past, no beam from any torch
can penetrate these shadows:

greed, corruption, hate, genocide

Cyclenow, sun come again
to burn away our gold
and let your children of the past
rejoice in fields of old.

--Matt Toczko

Mysterious Dreams

it is dark
it is quiet
the room is warm
and peaceful

day has ended
day has ended
the time for sleep has come
the time for sleep has come

calm yourself
calm yourself
slip away into the dream world
slip away into the dream world
send yourself into mysterious dreams
send yourself into mysterious dreams

may you have dreams of light
may you have dreams of love
and may your spirit take flight
into the realms above
and may you know
you are dreaming
may you know you are dreaming

may you have dreams of light
may you have dreams of love
and may your spirit take flight
into the realms above
and may you know
you are dreaming
may you know
you are dreaming
dreaming
dreaming
dreaming
dreaming
dreaming
dreaming

--Greg Brown



Pig

Black eyes,
like marbles,
wet.
Large;
fat and strong.
Teeth like needles.
A mouth that seems to grin.
I touched it's back.
It was covered
with rough hair.
It had spots, but it wasn't
sick sick sick
At least I
don't think so.
The tail looked like a broken flesh slinky.
(She mad a sound of disgust)
Slinky.
It had a naked pink stomach.
No spots.
It stood on it's toenails
and danced across the cement floor.
(tap-tap-tap)
It's ears were flesh and
could hear almost everything.
I don't like it's ears
or it's beer can nose.
But it was a smart ol' chap.
I enjoyed his company
as we rooted together.

--Farmer Joe

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The World

Ignorance Reigns

Americans believe in democracy so strongly that they have continuously proven their convictions by killing and being killed by the thousands the world over. In Bloomington, it became apparent that the majority of people don't know the basic principals of what a responsible democracy is.

One facet of democracy, the one everybody knows and shouts about, is that majority rules. Unfortunately, in our age of economic barriers, mass communication, deceptive marketing, and personal mudslinging, it is very possible for wealthy minority groups to appear as the majority when lobbying for legislation, and claim a majority in elections by coercing the masses. Thanks to the electorate college, in extreme cases of the people electing someone who would actually change the way things work, the majority can even be ignored.

The other, perhaps more important (in light of the First's fallibility) facet of democracy is the protection of the minorities' rights. What this means is that even if the majority (or wealthy minority) wants to deny a minority their basic inalienable rights (as prescribed to the rest of the law-abiding citizenry), they CANNOT do it. Supposedly no individual or institution has the power to vote a minority, be it racial, religious, gender-based, orientation-based,

cultural, or economic, into a second-class citizenship that does not enjoy the same liberties of said majority. Believe it or not, even the Bloomington Town Council members were taught this in school, if they were there (as only Mr. Matejka proved he was).

It was both the fact that the BTC voted down the Human Relations ordinance revision and the reasons given as to why that proved people in Bloomington don't know what democracy is. First off, that protection was denied on the basis of sexual orientation and income source is a human rights atrocity in its own, and I will not waste any more space arguing the obvious.

The reasons given for voting it down by the six ignorant council persons demand closer speculation (and then ridicule).

The first and foremost excuse was that their constituency didn't want it. Well tough. If there is one gay person or one temp worker in town, they should have the same rights as everyone else. That the rest of the town might not like this shows the absolute need for their special protection (as other minority groups) to ensure abuses don't occur. Any council member claiming this excuse is ignorant about how democracy is supposed to work, doesn't care, and/or is only concerned with re-election. In any of these cases, they should be immediately removed from office on the grounds that they can't or won't do their job.

Another prominent argument presented by these fools is that a rental owner whose religious views are against homosexuality should not be required to not discriminate against homosexuals. When put in those terms, it is easy to see how twisted this excuse is. We, as human beings, are by natural law free to exist as individuals, but the freedom to discriminate, when practiced in the government, marketplace, or anywhere else in the public sector, is detrimental to the very moral ground upon which we shed the world's blood. Unfortunately, this same twisted excuse, and most of the others used by Bloomington's Town Council and the residents who support them, are also being used to fight abortion rights, the marijuana culture, and the working-class poor.

Soon, Normal may have a vote on a very similar issue. Already, groups wielding both financial and social prowess are bombarding the town council with propaganda demanding their right to discriminate. If they win, "homophobia" is condoned as acceptable public policy there, too, anyone who claims to live both in the Twin Cities and in a legitimate democracy should never have passed eighth grade. Also, instead of one town council with a majority of buffoons presiding, we'll find ourselves with two.

Editor's Note:

Obviously Matt wrote this article previous to the Normal Town Council's 5-2 vote against adding sexual orientation to the Human Rights Ordinance. Matt forecasted correctly, we now have two town council's with a majority of buffoons presiding.

Responsible Policies

In our towns and between them, the abuses of social (alcohol) drinking have taken their toll. They include drunk driving, blackout rapes, spousal abuse, child abuse, and many others. Although we have managed damage control in most areas with tons of propaganda and harsher laws, the problem won't go away unless we deal responsibly with the alcohol itself, instead of only the abuses.

Right now, every state has a legal drinking age of eighteen or (the majority) twenty-one. What these laws state is that upon turning that specified age, the government can't deny you alcohol (where it is legally sold...). What these laws mean in real life, in the market, the bar scenes, concerts, parties, sporting events, etc., etc., is that from the last day a person in Illinois is twenty, a magical change occurs overnight. When the person wakes up or goes to the bar at 12:01 am on their twenty-first birthday, they are suddenly mature enough to get intoxicated. It at least means that they are suddenly able to make good decisions on their own, but the newspaper proves this policy wrong.

Just as guns don't kill people, stupid people doing stupid things with guns does, so it is with alcohol. When you turn a certain age, however, you can't legally hop in a car or purchase a rifle and some ammo; both require a license. Common sense should tell us that requiring a license to drink or purchase alcohol would greatly help this problem, as well as set up a social policy not dependent on magic ages alone.

Let's face it. In this world there are seventeen-year-olds who can have a couple beers and not do anything obscene. There are also thirty-year-olds who'll get sloshed at a bar, get in a fight, drive home to the wrong house and beat up someone else's family. To deal with this reality practically, a sixteen or seventeen-year-old, with the usual parental factor, could apply for a drinking license. They would first have to sit through four to six weeks of extra-curricular classes, detailing the effects of alcohol on the body and mind, anti-DUI propaganda, dependency, the raised chances of physical and emotional abuse and the virtues of moderation. They would then have to pass a test, or a series of tests, and pay a small fee. Unlike with driving licenses, individuals over the age of eighteen applying for a drinking license would still have to take the class.

In this system, if someone did something stupid while drunk, they would not only incur the normal legal ramifications, but also lose their drinking license (for a period of time determined by the offense). Drinking by, or giving alcohol to persons who had never had a license would be punishable under today's laws regarding minors (regardless of the offenders age), and drinking by, or providing alcohol to a person who's license is suspended or revoked could carry stiffer charges.

If a system such as this were implemented, those already of drinking age could continue to do so, being granted free licenses (without the class) if they had no alcohol related convictions. Those with convictions would have to take the class, but would pay no fee.

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According to Matt

This might seem a bit unfair to today's generation, but tomorrow we'd be on the track to a truly fair alcohol policy, and an America one step closer to the ideals of freedom and rationality it preaches in hypocrisy.

Although alcohol has been used to illustrate this point, similar programs could be used to regulate a legitimate marijuana market, legal prostitution (licenses required by the people on both sides of the deal, "johns" and hookers), gambling, and the tobacco industry. As long as people can prove they're informed and know what they are doing, none of these should be illegal, and as long as individuals practice these recreational choices responsibly they should be free to do so.

Life is Worth What?

With all the hype about family values, morality (porn on the 'net, teen pregnancy, etc.), and violence, a much larger, perhaps more frightening trend has become apparent in our nation's ethics. This trend has to do with how we treat other nations, what makes armed confrontations necessary, and the overall value of life.

In the past, judging by what I've read, been taught in school, and seen on documentaries, the American people only supported wars with actual, "moral" backing. In WWI, it was the suffering of our allies and the threat of a German ruled Europe. We still didn't get involved until the aggression actually turned to us. In WWII, the above situations also apply.

Later, in Korea and Vietnam, the threat of communism (actually totalitarian socialism...) was largely hailed. By the Persian Gulf War, the dangerous trend I have mentioned started to materialize. At the beginning, human rights violations against Kuwait were cited for reasons to act militarily. By the end of the conflict, we bombed Iraq into the ice-age, Saddam still held power, and we pretty much, even publicly, acknowledged that it was basically over oil. We also wanted to teach aggressive Mid-East nations a lesson (we wouldn't want our friend Israel getting invaded...).

With the past wars, ulterior motives were abound, but the common person still only acknowledged the given moral reason. We didn't want to admit that our kids were killing and being killed for anything less than the cause of the Right. I'm not that up on WWI, so I won't make any accusation. WWII totally seemed like a "just" cause, and it was (I am a pacifist and abhor any violence, but in some historical cases I can see how it was opted for). But at the end, with the use of the atom bomb, we took it a step too far. We took our buffalo

stance and tried to show the rest of the world (particularly the Russians, who, because of the way we ended WWII, became our enemies) that we were strongest. True, it saved millions of American lives that could have been lost in an invasion. But, if the cause is just, we already committed ourselves to the fact that "lives are worth it," and the American casualties would have been soldiers. Instead, we found the choice to annihilate well over 100,000 Japanese citizens, leave countless others to die slowly, and agonizingly, and poison and flatten two cities like towards from 30,00 feet in the air easier than the choice to let our army do its just job. In Korea, the threat of communism (created, in part by ourselves, in the last wars) allowed McCarthyism to flourish, destroying many lives because of personal politics, and in Vietnam we "defended" a country where 85% of the citizens wanted "communism" from the same. Vietnam was also an excuse for our government to run extensive (and rigorous) psychological, biological, sociological, and chemical tests on both our citizens and theirs, with the war a reason to hide it all away as a matter of "nation security."

Now, even though these ulterior motives were present and probably easy to figure out, the "average" citizen didn't look for them. We chose to be satisfied with the given moral cause. As Vietnam showed, if this moral cause is so stupid that the average citizen can't believe in it, we will protest. It seems that with the Persian Gulf conflict, this has changed. Recently, a television station (it could have been on the radio, too) ran a poll asking people's opinion on troop deployment in Bosnia. Six of the ten quotes given said the equivalent of "since America has no economical stake in Bosnia (such as oil in the Mid East), not one drop of American blood is worth it." Nevermind complete villages of children and women being raped and executed. Instead of concern for the common good of humanity, we have reduced human life to economics openly. At least when we clung to the cause of Right, we, the common people, refused to put a price tag on lives. Instead of searching out ulterior motives-to armed conflict (ignoring them doesn't help, that's not what I'm saying at all) and trying to end the waste of these battles, we apparently have been programmed so well by the marketplace that we are willing to let our children kill and be killed for money.

As a nation, we are constantly being further shackled by economics, while we grieve for our lost ethics. If you look at the two problems, it is clear that they are related. Gang wars are the product of high-cash black markets, and (like teen pregnancy) are worst in areas of economic despair. As the class gulf widens, the "American Dream" becomes an unobtainable goal, leading to socially deviant behavior. Now, even how we deal with other nations and peoples is decided by our bank receipts. How can we expect to strengthen individual ethics when our national ethics are so messed up? Likewise, how can we strengthen our national ethics when the individuals who compose the nation are only interested in money?



Sidewalk Bubblegum ©1993 Clay Butler

Unfortunately, what we are experiencing is capitalism at its most efficient, totally devoid of human emotion (greed is not an emotion) outside of personal ambition, it's driving force. It would take both a national effort and an effort on the part of every individual to break this downward spiral, if that is possible. If we can't, we will all, (except for the overclass) suffer under this global totalitarianism, for, in the words of Herbert Marcuse, "totalitarianism is not only a terroristic political coordination of society, but also a non-terroristic economic-technical coordination, which operates through the manipulation of needs by a vested interest."

Until we are freed from the chains of our marketplace mentality, in the face of economic profits human lives will remain an expendable commodity.

Matt Toczko

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Normal Town Council

The Normal Town Council met on May 6th to consider including sexual orientation under its human rights ordinance. The effort was led by Human Relations Commissioners Harry Hightower and Robert Hathaway. After the Human Relations Commission's four to two vote in support of the ordinance it moved on to the Town Council for action.

Both Commissioner Hightower and Commissioner Hathaway started the Town Council meeting by expressing their support for the ordinance change. Commissioner Hightower pointed out that municipalities have the right to provide additional protection to their citizens if they deem it necessary. In communities like Champaign and Urbana, the inclusion of sexual orientation has not led to lawsuits against the city or a flood of complaints, although there have been a few.

Commissioner Hathaway stated that he supported the change because gays, lesbians and bisexuals in our community do not deserve the hatred and homophobia that is directed toward them. He pointed out that despite arguments that gays are already protected under the constitution, this is not true, they can be fired, denied housing or access to services in this community based on their sexual orientation. He also pointed out that the ordinance did not protect anyone participating in abusive sexual practice as such actions should not occur in our community regardless of the perpetrators sexual orientation.

Prior to the meeting, individuals were allowed to sign up to speak. Six individuals on each side of the debate would be randomly selected to speak, each would have three minutes to address the council. First up were those opposing the ordinance.

Dwight Hanson, 600 S. Linden, Normal, spoke first. He was interesting if nothing else. Mr. Hanson stated that passage of the ordinance would open a Pandora's box by condoning behavior he didn't agree with. He also exhibited a brilliant grasp of the obvious when he uttered that "the whole issue is very clear to me - the only difference between me and a homosexual is who we want to have sex with." Well how can you argue with such an insight.

Hanson stated that if sexual orientation were included in the ordinance then two or more gay men could have orgies in their apartments, complete with animals and there would be nothing the landlord could do. Aside from the ignorance of his statements I feel compelled to point out that if no pets were allowed in the apartment the landlord would have a venue for action. He asked whether or not murderers and rapists would be next to be covered under the ordinance.

Next up to speak was a nurse, Crystal Smith. Ms. Smith stated that while she has compassion for all people, gays are a health risk and put people at risk. She stated that she doesn't condone behavior that causes disease and is unhealthy for our community. It may be worth finding out where this woman is a nurse and avoiding that doctor's office all together.

Glen Gordon, 811 N. School, Normal, was next and he was equally unimpressive. He stated that the ordinance was a solution looking for a problem. Arguing that the absence of complaints, and in his mind the fact that the only documented case of discrimination occurred 16 years ago meant that the ordinance was not needed. He went on to state that "bisexual is by definition promiscuous" and so "don't individuals deserve the right to discriminate against something they don't believe in." He ended his remarks stating that the ordinance was bad for morality and for the community.

Jerry Johnson, 306 Clay, Normal, expressed his enlightened opinion that the ordinance was not needed as there was no evidence of discrimination and because gays don't qualify for special status. Perhaps most interesting was his comment that there is no proof that homosexuality can't be changed. Well that explains his fear then doesn't it, after all, if homosexuality can be changed so can heterosexuality which of course then leads to the argument that sexuality is learned, not innate and therefore there is no such thing as sexual perversion except that defined as such by individual and societal standards. Hmhmhm.

Dan Smalley, Virginia Ave., Normal, outlined his arguments against the ordinance. He had nine reasons for voting against it: gays are not a class deserving protection, the state and federal government don't protect gays, the ordinance would require landlords to ignore adulterers and fornicators, expression of homosexuality could lead to moral decay, it violates freedom of religion, there are no cases of discrimination, in some communities such ordinances have been repealed when put on a referendum (of course some communities have upheld such ordinances but that truth doesn't support his reality and so was ignored), government should support moral behavior, and gays are already protected.

Bringing up the rear and rightfully so was Mark Warren, 1617 Erin Dr., Normal. He encouraged the council to vote no. Stating that the government can't legislate morality, this ordinance would legislate immorality (hmm, interesting if not incongruent argument). Warren stated that this ordinance would be inherently detrimental as gays spread disease and he rambled on about something he called the psychological futility of sexual intimacy. Well I for one want to reassure Mark that I have never found sexual intimacy to be psychologically futile but then maybe I'm more picky about who I am sexually intimate with.

Speaking in support of the ordinance was Goddess Gloria Jeanne Davis. She eloquently spoke to the council, assuring them that "I wouldn't blame a no vote if you believe in bestiality and orgies, but that's not true....I know you'll be able to see through that foolishness." Ms. Davis reminded the council that the ordinance offered equal rights, not special rights. To those who had argued against the ordinance because gays are less than 10% of the population, pointed out that Jews are only 2% of the population and we do

not allow them to be discriminated against. Simply reminding the council that "if someone is being discriminated against we need to do something," she pointed out that the Normal's 2020 Plan talks about inclusion, about a city that is interested in productive citizens.

Davis also asked the council why someone would speak up about discrimination if there is no recourse. She reminded them that slaves rarely went to their owners and complained of their poor treatment - when you are oppressed you tend to keep your mouth shut because there is no way to express or report mistreatment without fear of reprisal.

John Blank spoke next. John's mother is a nurse, he spoke of how she taught him love and compassion for all people. He reminded Crystal Smith that Hitler organized people against the Jews by claiming that they spread disease and were destroying the race.

Blank said "some people agree that it (discrimination) doesn't happen that often. My question is where is the threshold? Why can't we just say it's not okay to fire someone based on sexual orientation?"

Rebecca Hawkins Valdez, owner of Bec's Far East Texas Grill spoke in support of the ordinance. Identifying herself as a heterosexual Christian, Ms. Bec suggested that the council should focus on what gays, lesbians and bisexuals contribute to our community as firefighters, teachers, police, lawyers, CPA's, they are friends "who take care of us when we're sick." Reminding the council that "this ordinance won't prevent you from firing an incompetent employee, or force a landlord to rent to someone who doesn't meet eligibility," instead this ordinance would demonstrate that Normal was a community concerned about all of its residents. Valdez summed up her remarks with "you may not love all thy neighbors as thyself, but you can give them their rights." We doubt the prophets couldn't have said it any better.

In his remarks David Bentlin spoke of the legacy of seven African American World War II Veterans who had just been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. Six of those veterans had already died, for them, "civil rights came too late."

"Discrimination is here" Bentlin said, and "we have felt its sting. Help make Normal a first class town that treats all citizens as first class citizens."

Jerry Pope spoke next. He reminded the council that not all landlords will openly admit that they discriminate. Gays are the most frequent target of hate crimes, in this community gays and lesbians have been beaten, their homes vandalized and death threats made against them. Sexual orientation is not a matter of choice. As for those who argue that there is a gay agenda, Pope said the only agenda he was aware of was the desire to live in peace.



Shows Lack of Courage

Keenan Aulter (I apologize for any misspelling) was the final speaker. Speaking as a representative of the ISU Student Government, he stated that discrimination based on sexual orientation is wrong and that the student government stood in support of the ordinance. He also reminded the council that sexual orientation included heterosexuals. "This is not special status," he said, "this is asking for protection for the #1 group targeted for hate crimes."

Now it was time for the council members to express their views and cast their votes. Councilman Garrett Scott spoke first. Scott supported the ordinance stating that "if this passes we will be granting a dignity to a group in our community that is sometimes afraid for itself.... if there is an offense there will be an avenue for redress. I don't think that's too much to ask." Scott quoted from the Federalist Papers, stating that the papers ask we elect leaders who will do what is right to protect those who may be oppressed. Scott then voted yes for passage of the ordinance.

Councilman Jeff Fritzen then offered his excuse for voting against the ordinance. Stating that the issue has presented a dilemma for him, in that he must find a way to communicate the manner in which he votes. "Decisions we make are based on interpretations of what is right and what is wrong," Fritzen said. This is important because it impacts peoples lives. "I attempted to look at the basic question 'is there a problem in our community' no doubt discrimination is in our community.... the evidence is not compelling." He related a story about an acquaintance of his who works for a company that conducts diversity classes, but, he pointed out, it doesn't go hand in hand with tolerance. His friend has a negative view of the lifestyle and this ordinance would impact him too (gee and other civil rights laws impact racists and anti-semites but that doesn't seem to trouble you Jeff). Fritzen did use the term "those people" at one point to describe gays and lesbians. He recounted an incident in which a student changed his major because there were too many gays in the program and an athlete who didn't go out for a team because the coach was gay. I seriously doubt Fritzen would have had any sympathy if the student dropped his major because too many women were in it or if the athlete didn't go out for a team because the coach was Latino, but then again maybe I give councilman Fritzen too much credit. Fritzen voted against the ordinance stating it was in the greater good not to protect gays and lesbians.

Councilwoman Sonja Reece was next to express her uninformed opinion. Simply stated she felt there was no problem and stated that it was indeed a solution in search of a problem. She voted no.

Councilman Parker Lawlis was next. He stated that he could think of only two or three other issues that ha raised such widespread interest or impact. Lawlis voted against the ordinance because Normal should not legislate a lifestyle. Of course the irony is that, by failing to protect gays and lesbians Normal is in effect legislating a lifestyle.

Perhaps most mystifying and disappointing was the vote against the ordinance by Councilwoman Cheryl Gaines. But maybe it's not that surprising. I spoke with a number of individuals who know Gaines, several of them worked with her at the Center for Human Services and some knew her through other professional contacts. One person told me that, while a member of the Crisis Team with the Center for Human Services, Gaines had expressed the opinion that homosexuality was a mental disorder. This might be consistent with information provided by another person who knows Gaines who recalled that she grew up in a fairly fundamentalist Christian home. Being that as it may, it doesn't excuse her vote.

Gaines started her comments by saying that "Personally I don't believe in abuse of anyone, it is something I cannot tolerate." Gaines talked the talk but she wouldn't walk the walk.

Gaines demonstrated a very real and disturbing lack of understanding of the difference between criminal protections and civil protections. She stated numerous times that gays, lesbians and bisexuals were protected from discrimination by the Hate Crimes Act. This is not true. The Hate Crimes Act merely offers additional penalties for someone who commits a crime against another based on race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, etc.... So, unless your boss is screaming "faggot" or "Dyke" at you and hitting you while they fire your ass, the Hate Crimes Act will not protect you. In fact, even then you would only be able to pursue criminal charges against them for the assault and battery, you still couldn't get your job back. I suggest Ms. Gaines familiarize herself with the law before she quotes it as a justification denying equal rights to individuals in this community, many of whom voted for her (did you think it was the religious right who put you in office? Think again).

Even if Gaines' religious beliefs entered into her decision, she is to be criticized for not recognizing that she is protected from discrimination based on her religious beliefs. There are other inconsistencies here too. I first met Cheryl Gaines at a Legislative Open House for Planned Parenthood of East Central Illinois. Surely her support of that organization is not consistent with her possibly fundamental beliefs. The question then is whether or not her vote was merely a vote of political expediency rather than of true conscience. Most of the folks I've talked to, including those who consider themselves friends of Cheryl's vote for the expediency excuse.

I suggest that those who are discriminated against start registering their complaints with Ms. Gaines personally and have her explain to them how the Hate Crimes Act can help. Or maybe we could take up a collection to buy her a clue. Send your check for \$0.25 to the Cheryl Gaines Get a Clue Campaign. It would be a better investment than a donation to her reelection campaign.

Lucille Miller was the perfect follow-up for Cheryl Gaines. Actually she would have been a better follow-up to the first speaker who

talked about orgies and animals. Miller stated that she has a strong belief in the fundamental Bible (but I'll bet you anything she eats shellfish and pork, and doesn't wear a hat in church). Miller voted against the ordinance saying "We raise children here, this is a family town. You may be what you want to be but you can't inflict it." Well actually Lucille, you choose to be an idiot and you inflict it so why the double standard?

Mayor Kent Karraker was the last to speak. The Mayor said he doesn't believe anyone chooses to be gay. He also stated that one of the things that persuaded him to support the ordinance was the initial negative reaction he received through letters and phone calls. Karraker said that those letters and calls indicated a great deal of anger and fear towards gays, and that it is his belief that anger and fear are prime ingredients for discrimination. Karraker pointed to the diversity forums that the town had sponsored and said that it was his belief that if they were going to talk the talk they should walk the walk.

The evening was frustrating and hopeful. Clearly two members of the council had heard the intolerance and were prepared to offer equal rights to all of Normal's citizens. We applaud the Normal Human Relations Commission and Mayor Karraker and Councilman Scott. We urge those who voted against the ordinance to open their eyes, ears and minds so that they may truly understand that equal rights are not special rights, and that even if they can't, as Rebecca Hawkins Valdez so gracefully put it, "love thy neighbor as thyself...you can give them their rights."

As for those who voted against this ordinance because they do not believe discrimination exists I issue a challenge. I encourage you, for one month, to go out in public with your same sex friends and hold hands, sit next to each other in a restaurant booth, call up some landlords and ask if they will rent to you and your gay partner, tell your employer that you are gay, lesbian or bisexual. If you are correct and there is no discrimination you have nothing to fear. However, if you experience discrimination, or more likely, you are too afraid of public reaction to accept this challenge, it is incumbent upon you to support this ordinance the next time it is presented to you. Oh, and it will be presented to you again, we're not going away, we're just getting stronger and becoming more determined.

The gay, lesbian and bisexual community owes a thank you to those who support us in our struggle for equal rights. And I sincerely hope that we will, through our actions return the support by participating in the larger movement for civil rights and an end to discrimination and hatred.

--Linda Ketcham



News From Voice

FDA REVIEWS RU 486

American women may know by the end of the year if RU-486 will be available in the U.S.

The FDA confirmed April 1, that the non-profit Population Council filed an application last month seeking to sell RU-486 based on its results of testing in 2,100 American women.

FDA Commissioner David Kessler told Congress last year it would take about six months to determine if RU-486 is safe enough, and effective enough to sell to Americans. However, the review could take up to a year, the time the agency typically spends on drugs that don't address life threatening diseases.

The FDA is expected to approve the drug, based partly on records of its use on 150,000 European women, where it had about a 97% success rate. But the U.S. testing also would have to show the drug worked. Pressure from anti-choicers prompted French manufacturers Roussel Uclaf to refuse for years to bring RU-486 to this country.

SOURCE: PANTAGRAPH

MOST RECENT ASSAULT ON REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

The Communications Decency Act, a part of the recently enacted Telecommunications Reform Bill, includes a provision that outlaws abortion information on the Internet.

Essentially, the Communications Decency Act is a high-tech version of the infamous "gag rule" imposed during the Reagan and Bush Administrations. But this law is even worse. While the old gag rule only applied to health care professionals who received federal funding, the new law targets anyone who makes information about abortion available on the Internet.

It is astounding that the anti-choice Congress would attack free speech rights in its efforts to outlaw abortion. Banning abortion information criminalizes a wide range of Internet activities - health professionals posting referral guides to women's clinics...doctors conferring about a woman who may need an abortion to save her life...even individuals downloading medical journal articles about RU-486. Penalties for violating the Act are harsh: up to \$250,000 fines and five years in prison for first time offenders. Fines for organizations like NARAL— which is establishing a World Wide Web site to provide reproductive health information are doubled.

On the day the Act was signed into law, NARAL filed a lawsuit in a New York Federal Court to find the ban unconstitutional. In response, U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno pledged not to enforce the ban. Despite this temporary suspension of the ban, NARAL has a long, difficult and expensive legal battle ahead.

Fortunately, Senator Frank Lautenberg and Representative Patricia Schroeder are preparing to introduced legislation to repeal the ban. But Congressional passage is far from certain. Therefore, it is up to pro-choice individuals to contact their Senators and Representatives and ask them to support legislation to repeal the unconstitutional Internet abortion information ban.

SOURCE: NARAL

VOICES: ABORTION STORIES OF McLEAN COUNTY WOMEN

Voice for Choice has begun work on a new project, one that will educate and enlighten, as well as assist other local women.

It is our hope to publish an anthology of stories by local women, true stories, the stories of women who have had abortions. Four women have already volunteered to share their stories with us.

The Religious Coalition for Reproductive

Choice has launched a similar project. We believe they explain it best; "...stories inform our lives. By listening to each other's stories we learn about how different—and how similar—we all are... there are many stories left untold by pro-choice women who have made this difficult decision to have an abortion. Learn from them. Perhaps you have a story to tell about an abortion you had, or one your sister, mother, or grandmother had. Sharing it would be a brave thing to do." We at Voice for Choice are asking you to consider doing just that.

The Voice for Choice book will be a collection of women's experiences, told anonymously, and sold through Voice for Choice, Planned Parenthood and local book stores. The proceeds from the book will go to the Abortion Assistance Fund to assist low income women in paying for abortions. The Assistance Fund, a joint effort by Voice for Choice and the Rape Crisis Center has been in existence for three years and has provided financial assistance to some two dozen local women.

If you are interested in participating in this project please contact us at 828-3108, 829-2279 or 452-8897. It is our hope to include the stories of at least a dozen McLean County women in this book. We anticipate actual completion of the project to be next spring.

ONE STORY

When Ann Scott took the pulpit at her church in Phoenix, Arizona, no one in the pews had any idea of the secret she was about to reveal.

During the course of her sermon, Ann revealed to her fellow worshipers that she, the loving mother of two children and the stepmother of another two, had had two abortions.

She explained why she felt it necessary to have the abortions. She assured her rapt listeners that her decisions, though difficult, were fully in keeping with her beliefs as a woman of faith. And in her powerful story, Ann Scott exploded one of the great myths involving abortion: that religious women simply do not have them.

Research shows that if, for example, you were to count up to half of the women in any Catholic church on Sunday morning, or a third of those in Protestant churches, you'd be counting the women who have had abortions.

Yet sadly, the debate over reproductive choice in America today remains utterly polarized. Groups like the Christian Coalition have deliberately created a public opinion climate in which morally complex decisions are simplistically categorized as being "pro-abortion" or "pro-God." Pat Robertson and other Religious Right leaders were quick to see the political benefits of organizing their followers, congregation by congregation, to achieve their ultimate goal of creating an America where their authoritarian anti-choice views become public policy.

And what about the pro-choice religious majority? Unfortunately, most mainline religious congregations deal with abortion in particular and sexuality issues in general by avoiding them (witness only one local clergy, from New Covenant Church, speaking in support of the proposed inclusion of gays, lesbians, and bi-sexuals into the Normal's Human Relations Code, this despite the fact that other local churches and clergy profess to support gay rights).

This cannot continue. It diminishes women. And it diminishes efforts to protect religious and reproductive freedom for all. For that reason, The Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice has launched a new initiative, Congregations for Choice. For more information and a guide on starting a dialogue in your church, call 202-628-7700. SOURCE: RELIGIOUS COALITION FOR REPRODUCTIVE CHOICE

A PRAYER FOR CHILDREN

The following is by Ina Hughes.

We pray for children
who put chocolate fingers everywhere,
who like to be tickled,
who stomp in puddles and ruin their new pants,
who sneak popsicles before supper,
who erase holes in math workbooks,
who can never find their shoes.

And we pray for those
Who stare at photographers from behind
barbed wires,
who've never squeaked across the floor in new sneakers,
who never "counted potatoes",
who are born in places we wouldn't be caught
dead,
who never go to the circus,
who live in an x-rated world.



For Choice

who live and move, but have no being.

We pray for children
who want to be carried
and for those who must.
For those we never give up on,
and for those who don't get a chance.
For those we smother,
and for those who will grab the hand of
anybody kind enough to offer.

We printed this because we believe it's important to remember that, no matter how important the struggles we are involved in seem, whether it is the pro-choice movement, the drive to help WGLT, the Human Relations Ordinance, there are those in our community for whom physical and emotional survival is a daily struggle. So, if it's been awhile since you donated something to Clare House, if you have some time to volunteer with a child, please consider doing it - all children deserve a happy, healthy childhood.

We pray for children
who bring us sticky kisses and fistfuls of dandelions,
who sleep with the dog and bury gold fish,
who hug us in a hurry and forget their lunch money,
who cover themselves with Band-Aids and sing off key,
who squeeze the toothpaste all over the sink,
who slurp their soup.

And we pray for those
who never get dessert,
who watch tier parents watch them die,
who have no safe blanket to drag behind,
who can't find any bread to steal,
who don't have any rooms to clean up,
whose pictures aren't on anybody's dresser,
whose monsters are real.

We pray for children
who spend all of their allowances before Tuesday,
who throw tantrums in the grocery store
and who pick at their food,
who like ghost stories,
who shove dirty clothes under the bed
and never rinse out the tub,
who get visits from the tooth fairy,
who don't like to be kissed in front of the car pool,
who squirm in church and scream in the phone,
whose tears we sometimes laugh at
and whose smiles can make us cry.

We pray for those
whose nightmares come in the daytime,
who will eat anything,
who have never seen a dentist,
who aren't spoiled by anybody,
who go to bed hungry and cry themselves to sleep,

GERBER CHEATING BABIES

"Nutritionally you can't buy a better baby food than Gerber," says the ad. Actually it would be hard to buy one that's worse.

Take Bananas with Tapioca, Gerber's best-selling flavor. Take away the added filler and the jar ends up with a little more than half the banana of an equivalent competing brand like Beech-Nut.

And so it goes. The baby food giant runs ads that tout the nutritional superiority of products that have been diluted with cheap fillers like water, chemically modified starch, and sugar. When you get right down to it, Gerber's golden reputation has been woven out of a campaign of misleading ads.

"And that's cheating babies and their parents out of good food in order to increase profits," says Michael Jacobson, executive director for the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI). So in February, CSPI filed a petition with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), asking it to hale Gerber's pervasive campaign of false and misleading advertising.

CSPI also mailed a letter to more than 20,000 pediatricians, asking them to so support a CSPI petition to the FDA to require baby food manufacturers to disclose the main ingredient on the front labels of their products.

That way, Gerber could still make its Bananas with Tapioca, but at least parents would know that it "Contains 50% bananas."
SOURCE: NUTRITION ACTION HEALTH LETTER: CENTER FOR SCIENCE IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

SODIUM STRIPS BONES

According to researchers at the University of Western Australia, lowering your sodium intake may also lower your risk of osteoporosis, or brittle bones.

Researchers examined the sodium and calcium intakes of 124 postmenopausal women who took part in a study of calcium's effect on bone loss. They analyzed the sodium the women excreted in their urine to get an accurate measure of their sodium intakes. After two years, researchers found no bone loss in the hips of women who typically consumed about 2,100 mg. or less of sodium a day. But above 2,100 mg., the more sodium, the greater the bone loss. According to Amanda Devine, a researcher with UWA, if a woman cut her sodium intake from 4,000 mg. to 2,000 mg a day, she would protect her bones as much as if she consumed about an extra 1,000 mg of calcium a day.

"We suggest that dietary information encouraging postmenopausal women to increase their consumption of calcium-rich foods should be coupled with messages to reduce their sodium intakes, promoting a two-fold dietary strategy for prevention of osteoporosis."

SOURCE: AMERICAN JOURNAL OF CLINICAL NUTRITION

COURT CASES

Declaring that a "no pregnancy" condition of probation violated state law, the Illinois Appellate Court for the Fourth District issued



a decision on December 29, reversing the prison sentence of a Woodford County woman whose probation was revoked solely because she became pregnant. The ACLU of Illinois, which represented the women, had argued that the "no pregnancy" condition was unconstitutional and violated the statute prohibiting court ordered birth control.

Last August, a federal appellate court upheld an injunction on the parental notice provisions of South Dakota's abortion law, which does not provide for judicial bypass. The state of South Dakota has asked the U.S. Supreme Court to review the case. On January 2, 1996, the ACLU filed a brief in the Supreme Court opposing the state's petition, arguing that the case should not be reviewed because the Supreme Court's decision in Casey clarified what standard of review courts should use when considering pre-enforcement facial challenges to abortion laws; and, the constitution requires a one-parent parental notice statute to contain a judicial bypass mechanism.

It is astounding that the anti-choice Congress would attack free speech rights in its efforts to outlaw abortion. Banning abortion information criminalizes a wide range of Internet activities - health professionals posting referral guides to women's clinics...doctors conferring about a woman who may need an abortion to save her life...even individuals downloading medical journal articles about RU-486. Penalties for violating the Act are harsh: up to \$250,000 fines and five years in prison for first time offenders. Fines for organizations like NARAL - which is establishing a World Wide Web site to provide reproductive health information are doubled.

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Voice for Choice (cont.)

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SOURCE: NARAL

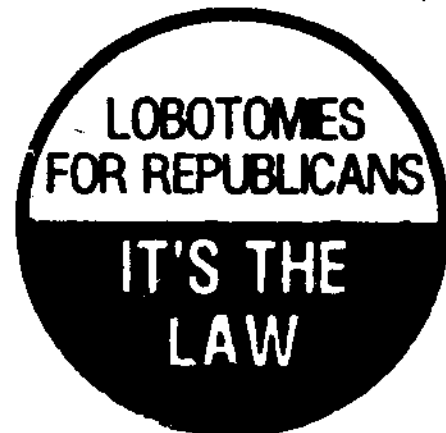
It is our hope that the women who have filed complaints and on whose behalf the EEOC is acting will be allowed their day in court. It is also our hope that their experiences will be validated by this community in a supportive, non-threatening environment.

...We will work for the appointment of judges at all levels of the judiciary who respect traditional family values and the sanctity of innocent human life."

REPUBLICAN ABORTION PLANK GETS LESS PLIANT

In 1976 the Republican Party included in its platform the following, "The question of abortion is one of the most difficult and controversial of our time. It is undoubtedly a moral and personal issue but it also involves complex questions relating to medical science and criminal justice. There are those in our party who favor complete support for the Supreme Court's decision which permits abortion on demand. There are others who share sincere convictions that the Supreme Court's decision must be changed by a constitutional amendment prohibiting all abortions. Others have yet to take a position, or they have assumed a stance somewhere in between polar positions.

In 1980 the party expressed its support for efforts to restrict Federal funding for abortion. The platform read, "There can be no doubt that the question of abortion, despite the complex nature of its various issues, is ultimately concerned with equality of rights under the law. While we recognize differing views on this question among Americans in general, and in our own party- we affirm our support of a constitutional amendment to restore protection of the right to life for unborn children. We also support the Congressional effort to restrict the use of taxpayers dollars for abortion.



We protest the Supreme Court's intrusion into the family structure through its denial of the parents obligation and right to guide their minor children. The Republican Party favors a continuance of public dialogue on abortion and supports the efforts of those who seek enactment of a constitutional amendment to restore protection of the right to life for unborn children."

In 1984 the plank read, "The unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed. We therefore reaffirm our support for a human life amendment to the constitution and we endorse legislation to make clear that the Fourteenth Amendment's protections apply to unborn children. We oppose the use of public revenues for abortion and will eliminate funding for organizations which advocate or support abortions. We commend the efforts of those individuals and religious and private organizations that are providing positive alternatives to abortion by meeting the physical, emotional, and financial needs of pregnant women and offering adoption services where needed."

In 1988 it was tightened even more. "We hold that the unborn child has a fundamental right to life which cannot be infringed. We therefore reaffirm our support for a human life amendment to the Constitution, and we endorse legislation to make clear that the Fourteenth Amendment's protections apply to unborn children. We oppose the use of public revenues for abortion and will eliminate funding for organizations which advocate or support abortions. We commend the efforts of those individuals and religious and private organizations that are providing positive alternatives to abortion by meeting the physical, emotional and financial needs of pregnant women and offering adoption services where needed."

In 1990, "We believe the unborn child has a fundamental individual right to life which cannot be infringed. We therefore reaffirm our support for a human life amendment to the Constitution, and we endorse legislation to make clear that the Fourteenth Amendment's protections apply to unborn children. We oppose using public revenues for abortion and will not fund organizations which advocate it. We commend those who provide alternatives to abortion by meeting the needs of mothers and offering adoption services. We reaffirm our support for appointment of judges who support traditional family values and the sanctity of innocent human life."
SOURCE: NEW YORK TIMES

LET WOMEN HAVE THEIR DAY IN COURT

We are sick of the public relations campaign being waged by Mitsubishi Motors. Public rallies do nothing but create an even more hostile work environment for those seeking to exercise their right to appeal the treatment they have received. We are equally sick of reading letters to the editor by individuals who seem to imply that sexual harassment doesn't occur because either they've never witnessed, experienced or participated in it. To discredit the complaints of these women through such tactics seems to suggest that one could also argue that racism doesn't exist if they have never personally witnessed, experienced or participated in it. Such arguments are absurd.

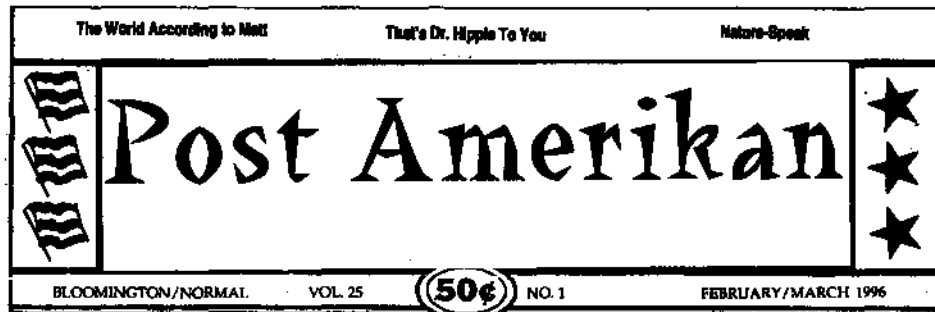
The EEOC is charged with protecting workers. The EEOC official who signed the complaint is a Reagan appointee to the EEOC - so much for the argument that this is some sort of liberal partisan political game.

SHOCKWAVES
SKATEBOARDS & MUSIC
Best place in Bloomington to shop for :
CLOTHES POSTERS ROCK/SKATE SHIRTS
BLACKLIGHTS JEWELRY BIKER JACKETS
 FOR YOUR FEATS **Doc Martens** and **VANS**
We Also Buy & Sell - RECORDS
TAPES & CD's
315 N MAIN 828-4521
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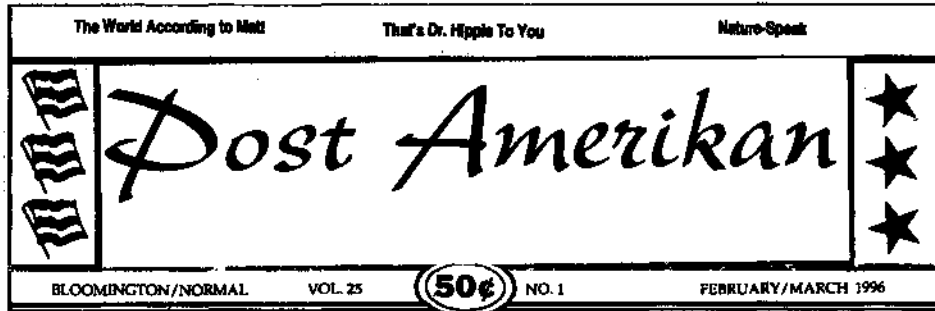


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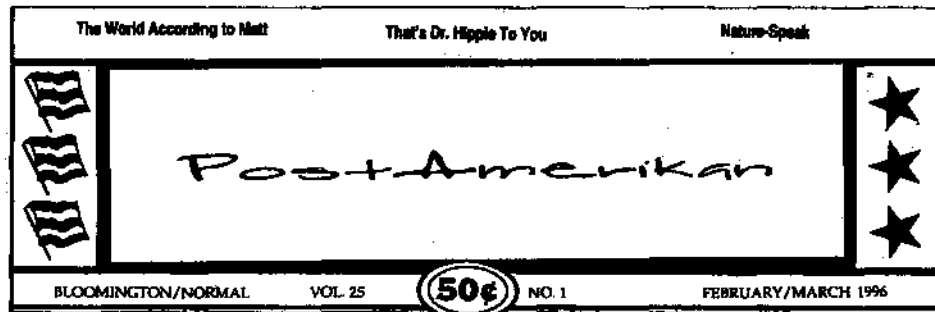
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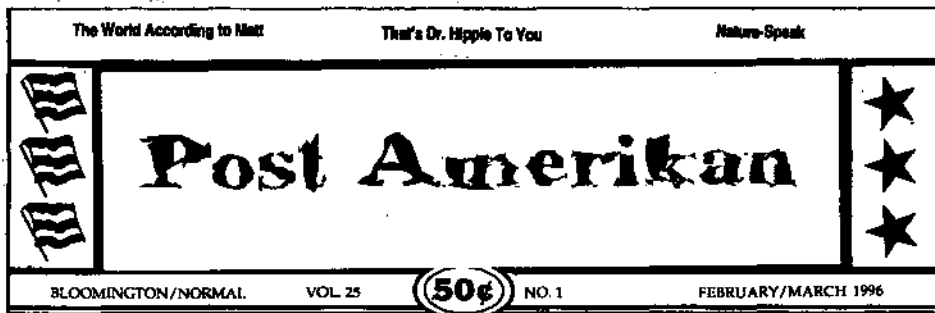
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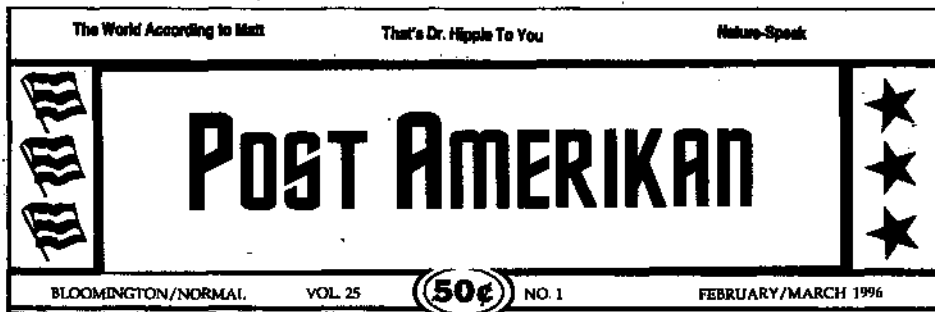
friendly, real
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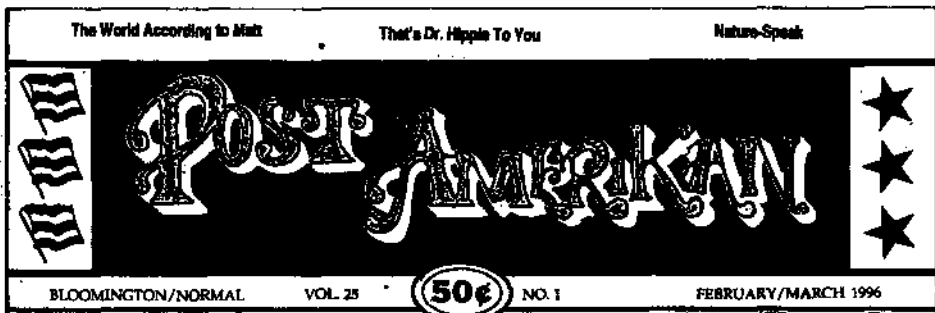
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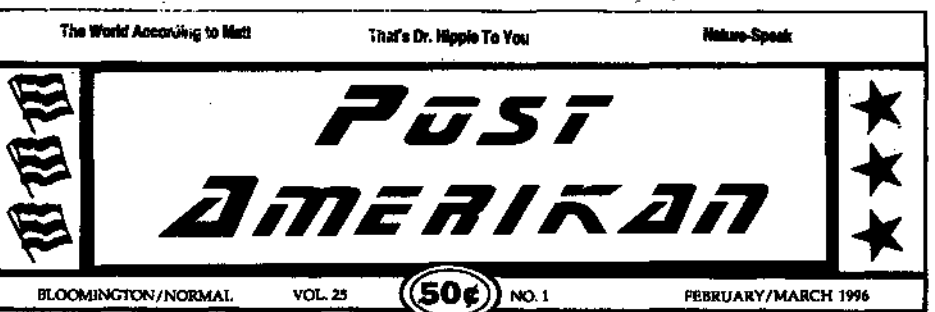
Yeah, like,
burnt-out,
Shield-punk!



Pop Culture
Star Trek
Classics



Traditional
hippie, can't let
go of Woodstock.
(original w. admit!)



Futuristic,
high tech,
sticking it to
the man on
the internet,
dude!



We Speak for the Seed: or Hey Everybody...

Our beautiful planet and her diverse, interlocking ecological systems depend on vast biological diversity for survival. Yes, Earth thrives as a motley soup, delicately yet dynamically ordered through her chaos. Of course, humans, being both dependent upon and part of this delicate balance, are at risk (and deliberately so) when this oh so tasty soup gets spiked.

So who's spikin' the soup? Well, duh, we are...but we'll save some of the more specific indictments for later. First, how's about a quick brush up on our evolutionary history? Without much detail, let's just say that life on Earth began about 4 BILLION years ago, and over a great many million years an amazing number of diverse life forms gradually emerged. Primitive humans didn't come into the picture until about 3 MILLION years ago, and so are mere newborns measured against many of our fellow Earth-dwellers. However, unlike any other species, we consciously seek (and nearly possess) total domination and control of the planet. There is scarcely a pocket of land, air, mineral, or water that isn't claimed as human territory, hardly a plant or organism that we don't seek to engineer and patent. As a consequence, we are the only species ever to threaten to bring about our own extinction, and along with it exterminate most of the planet's inhabitants, many of whom are much our evolutionary elder. Scientists estimate that over the next thirty years humans will be responsible, either directly or indirectly, for the extinction of roughly 100 species per day. Ironically, our own population is expected to explode from 5.2 billion to 8 billion in that same amount of time.

As the human "progress" machine spins ever faster and expands ever wider, many of us get lost along the fringes and paradoxically get caught up in the middle of the problem without even realizing it. For instance, many of us in the wealthy 1/5 of the planet (yes, that's all of us in the United States), and especially those of us here in our nation's bread basket, might be surprised to find that thousands of varieties of plants are rapidly disappearing, especially non-hybrid types of garden fruits and vegetables. Over 86% of known apple varieties, 67% of known rice varieties, and 2,300 pear varieties have been lost in this century alone. Nearly all of Florida's known citrus varieties are extinct, our present commercial supply deriving from only 3 surviving breeds. The picture looks like this: thirty plants contribute to 90% of humanity's caloric intake; four of those plants are responsible for 1/2 of our calories.

Geez, how did this happen? Well, prior to World War II, most gardens and farms were planted using seed that had been saved from the most promising fruits of the previous year's harvest. These seeds, called heirloom or open-pollinate varieties, had been carefully selected and exchanged for generations to develop genes which would ensure survival under local weather conditions and insect and disease pressure. But, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, commercial seed packets appeared on the market to accompany the new and improved "American dream" lifestyle and, like

so many other new gadgets, they not only took the place of their predecessors, but seemed to wipe out common knowledge of their very existence. These commercial seeds were available at reasonable prices and featured numerous "improved" hybrid varieties. The hybrid seeds promised to produce plants more uniform in shape, color, and texture, higher in sugar content, and more durable for mass production and distribution. Heirlooms abruptly became difficult, if not impossible, to buy from commercial sources. Meanwhile, generations of humans were brought up to believe that seeds came manufactured and packaged from Burpee rather than freely from the plants around them. By 1980, the US Supreme Court ruled that the genetic engineering of new life forms was not only commendable, but patentable (in economic terms this means even more profitable) thus sealing the fate of heirloom cultivation in favor of corporate creation and exploitation of bioengineering technologies.

So what's so bad about that? Well, we know from biology that rigidity and uniformity work against species' survival. Put simply, the genetic uniformity of any organism amounts to an invitation for an epidemic. Historically we've seen this occur in a number of situations; among them, the red rust wheat epidemic, widespread peach yellows and tobacco mosaic in Southeastern United States, a strain of grape mildew that nearly destroyed the French wine industry, and, perhaps most notorious, the disastrous Irish potato famine brought on by the failure of the potato crop of 1845 which, combined with increased emigration, decreased the population of Ireland by more than 2 million people.

But perhaps the most perverse feature of genetically-engineered hybrid seeds lies in their inability to reproduce. In the latter half of the 20th century, science discovered ways to replace nature's offerings with technologically designed replicas, making it possible to tame a planet teeming with spontaneous life energy into a controlled, isolated, and predictable food machine. Hybrid seeds have a male sterile line which gives no second generation seed. Hybrids aren't designed to give seeds. They just yield crops. Farmers and gardeners must go back to the corporation every year to buy the next year's fix. Out of this perfectly perpetual dependency is spawned "MONOCULTURE" AGRIBUSINESS. And (surprise, surprise) transnational agribusiness corporations have a powerful interest in reducing the diversity of the gene pool to protect their market share.

Genetic uniformity is being pushed by corporate agri-business to improve the mass marketing and sale of not only seed and crop, but also of AGRICHEMICALS. Of the ten most powerful seed companies on the planet, nine are either transnational petro-chemical companies or pharmaceutical companies, most of which having origins in the United States. Hm... Hybrid seeds do a lot for these "seed company" conglomerates: they require large doses of chemical fertilizers and pesticides (consequently sold by these same companies), they benefit the large, high-volume corporate farms immensely, they withstand broader

distribution, and, as we know, hybrid seeds do not reproduce and therefore create a continuous annual market for seed and agri-chemicals. This monopolistic production of high-tech, hybrid seed is the bedrock of the evolving industry of "monoculture" agribusiness. This enterprise masked as agriculture relies on non-sustainable methods and seeks to dominate global food production by breeding isolated, sterile crop varieties with industrial traits to be grown with high energy, chemical and pesticide inputs. Scientists have now begun to point out that corporate agribusiness practices actually lead to diminishing yields; increasing petro-chemical fertilizer and pesticide costs; serious top-soil loss; non-point, run-off pollution of waterways and aquifers; the return of resistant pests and blights requiring ever-larger doses of pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, and miticides which consequently raises health and safety questions.

The unavailability of heirloom seeds is no coincidence. Their scarcity stems from global corporate politics and culture. Not only do heirloom varieties not meet modern consumer expectations, but more importantly, they do not easily translate into global market dollars. Heirlooms, which are open-pollinated by wild honeybees, draw from a broad base of naturally occurring genetic characteristics and therefore breed and produce through local adaptation and diversity rather than chemicals and genetic engineering. They grow better, taste better, and store better in their native environments, making them inappropriate for mass marketing and distribution. Surely their greatest divergence from the transnational corporate ideal is found in their natural ability to avoid the commerce racket altogether. Traditionally, heirloom seeds are exchanged and passed on from gardener to gardener, often in families, and they represent an irreplaceable genetic heritage that is recklessly being forfeited in the names of profit and domination.

OK, so what's your strategy for the conservation of our precious genetic resources? Well, the professor and I can think of many a nefarious rogue approach, but realistically, ECOLOGY AND JUSTICE IN AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMPTION are the keys to stabilizing the numerous imbalances that are fast becoming totally unsustainable.

Modern farmers have a conscious role in determining the level of biodiversity in an ecological area. They are not merely another natural factor like the soil or the climate, they are a deliberate and major force in determining the level of diversity within a field and a crop. Their decision-making process is connected to their livelihood. Like the rest of us, family farmers are concerned about the impact of chemicals on our soil, water, food supply, and health. They drink the water beneath their fields, eat the food they produce, and live on the land they farm.

Together we see what greater corporate freedom means for farmers and rural communities. Over the past 15 years, more than 350,000 farmers have lost their farms and their livelihoods. Today, 500 farms go under every



It's Spring! Wake Up and Smell the Greed

week, as farmers continue to face low crop prices and rising production costs. While family farmers struggle, the rural communities that depend on them suffer as well. Many rural hospitals and clinics have closed due to insufficient insurance funding and lack of rural doctors. More than 330 rural hospitals closed during 1990 and many more have followed in the past several years. It is currently estimated that 12 rural hospitals fail each month.

In order to integrate traditional farming knowledge, which is critical to the protection of genetic material and in developing a sustainable food supply around the globe, we need to protect the right of farmers to freely and feasibly produce and exchange the seeds on which they have long depended for their survival. We as consumers need to support grocery stores and restaurants that buy their food locally from family farmers and shop at farmers' markets for fresh, locally and organically grown produce.

As gardeners (and more of us should be gardeners), we must resist grocery seed packet carousels and plant and save heirloom seeds. We must also replant indigenous plant life wherever it has dwindled or been lost. Relatives and neighbors are good sources for sharing seeds (and stories!) or seeds can be purchased from certain heirloom seed savers organizations. After the plants have grown, save seeds from the best fruits and vegetables and store them in glass jars in a cool, dark place until the next planting season. It's that easy. Heirloom seeds are not only socially just and ecologically sound, but they are family treasures to be sown in our communities for generations to come.

We must all use our political and dollar ballots (VOTE, BOYCOTT, BUYCOTT) to cast votes in favor of a healthy and sustainable food system, based on crop diversity, community empowerment, self-sufficiency, cooperative marketing, recycling, seed saving, local (and fresh) production, and organic methods. We must demand that our congressional and corporate representatives nurture policies and practices which support sustainable food productions and increased farm income that will enable community farmers to stay on the land.

Democracy is a farce as long as we allow certain monopolies to control global economies and political structures through a stranglehold on the planet's food supply. We must recognize that international trade agreements (GATT and NAFTA in particular) which have precedent-setting provisions protecting corporate control over the "intellectual property" of their genes, hybrid seeds and proprietary products are poor ecological and community policy. We must also call for the reauthorization of a strong ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT based on the principles of conservation biology. Greater freedom for the corporate world will mean the dispensability of community and the environment unless we are committed to playing active and responsible roles in our global future.

The struggle over the production and quality of our food supply is critical and is far from resolved. The outcome of this struggle will have an intimate connection to the health of the human race and the future biological diversity of our beloved Earth, and her many living communities. We owe it to ourselves, our children, and the community of life on this planet to be aware of the risks involved with our "progress." It is time we admit that our endless pursuit of a controlled and commodified world of human design carries with it a great cost. Will we be remembered as the species who sacrificed the planet for a shiny penny? Or will we choose to reassess and redefine our notions of progress so to better nurture and renew stewardship of our genetic heritage?

— nanny & the professor

SOME GOOD PLACES TO START

Online:
Brown University's Heirloom Seed Directory:
<http://www.cog.brown.edu/gardening/f16cat.html>

Algy's Herb and Seed Exchange:
<http://www.algy.com/herb.html>

Midwestern Addresses:
Down on the Farm Seed, PO Box 184, Hiram, OH 44234

Flower and Herb Exchange, 3076 North Winn Road, Decorah, Iowa 52101 — Membership \$7/year — annual Yearbook with listings of flowers and herbs for exchange.

Home Grown Exchange, 16428 Woodstock, Macomb, MI 48044 — Membership \$12/year — monthly issues of a newsletter which includes articles and letters from seed savers as well as a seed exchange listing; send \$2 for a sample copy or a send a listing of seeds you will offer for exchange and get a free copy.

Seed Savers Exchange, 3076 North Winn Road, Decorah, Iowa 52101 — Membership \$25/year — 3 large publications: summer and harvest editions with informative articles, and the spring seed.

Southmeadow Fruit Gardens, Box SM, Lakeside, MI 49116 (616) 469-2865 Offering scores of historic fruit varieties, particularly apples.

Books & Articles:
Ashworth, Suzanne. SEED TO SEED. Seed Saver Publications, RR 3 Box 239, Decorah, Iowa 52101, 1991

Ausubel, Kenny. SEEDS OF CHANGE: THE LIVING TREASURE.

Nabhan, Gary Paul. ENDURING SEEDS: NATIVE AMERICAN AGRICULTURE AND WILD PLANT CONSERVATION. North Point Press, San Francisco, 1989

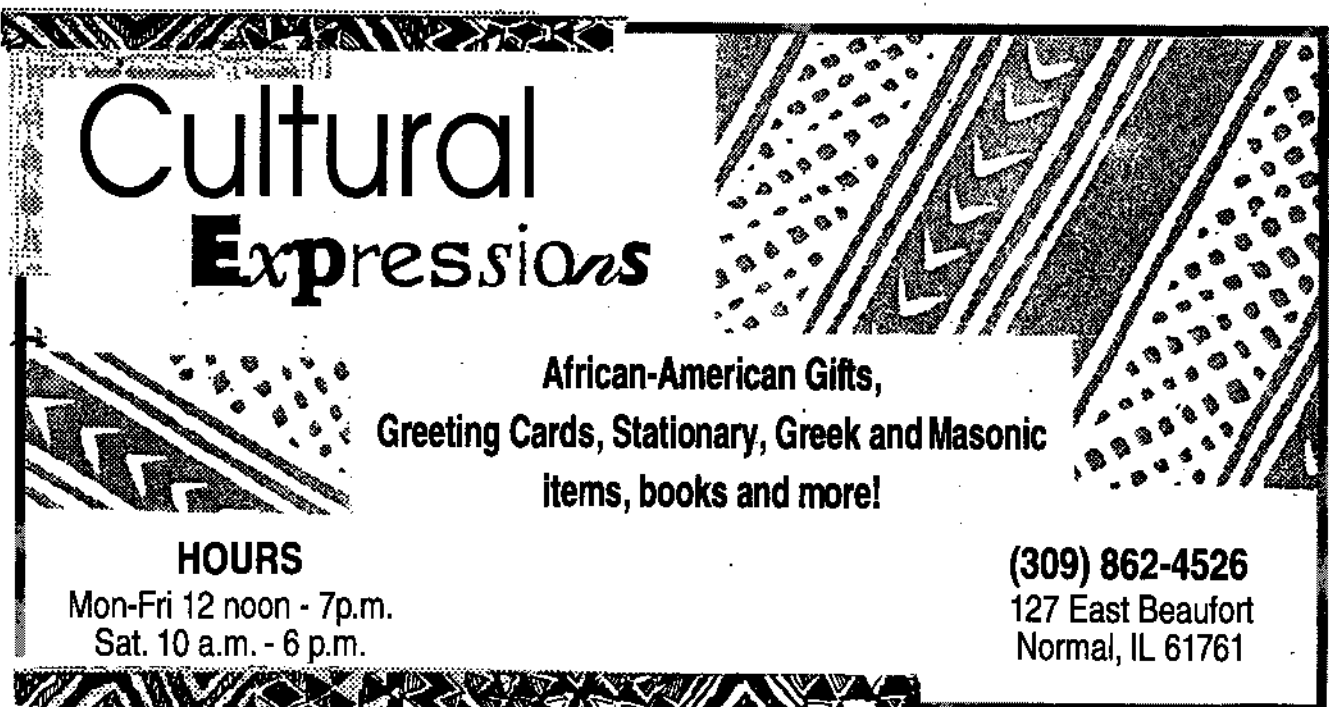
Raeburn, Paul. THE LAST HARVEST: THE GENETIC GAMBLE THAT THREATENS TO DESTROY AMERICAN AGRICULTURE.

Any book or article by Jeremy Rifkin.

Shiva, Vandana. BIODIVERSITY, BIOTECHNOLOGY AND PROFITS. in Vandana Shiva et al. Biodiversity: Social and Ecological Perspectives. London: Zed Books Ltd., 1991. pp. 43-58.

Shiva, Vandana. THE SEED AND THE EARTH: BIOTECHNOLOGY AND THE COLONIZATION OF REGENERATION. in Vandana Shiva, ed. Close to Home: Women Reconnect Ecology, Health and Development Worldwide. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers, 1994.

Organizations:
The Green Party
The Illinois Nature Conservancy
The Ecology Action Center
ETC..



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Foreign Aid

Opponents of foreign aid generally explain the motives of Congress in one of two ways. They claim that in giving foreign aid the U.S. government is trying to buy the friendship of foreign governments (alliance-building being important to U.S. Security) or they claim that there is strong support in Congress for redistributing wealth from the First World to the Third. Although both of these explanations contain some truth, neither is entirely correct.

Foreign aid is a form of corporate welfare. Money is taken from U.S. taxpayers and given to foreign governments so that these governments can purchase heavy equipment, expensive machinery, and armaments from U.S. corporations. The strongest supporters in Congress of foreign aid are therefore neither those concerned with U.S. security nor the compassionate, but those people who receive large contributions from big corporations.

There are many countries in the world where poverty is widespread. Any rational observer would say that what is needed most in the form of aid are schools and medical clinics and a climate favorable to the development of small businesses and farms. How much of U.S. foreign aid is devoted to such purposes? Very little. Foreign aid is devoted to the building of huge hydroelectric dams, international airports, and large armies and air forces. Projects of this type necessitate the purchase of billions of dollars of Caterpillar tractors and McDonnell Douglas airplanes—buying pencils for school children simply will not do.

Now that the Cold War is over, the explanation that foreign aid is for alliance-building purposes does not sound as credible as it once did. The superpowers are no longer competing for friendship of third-world countries. Large corporations have thus been deprived of one of their best covers. Their other cover, that we need to help all of those poor people, has never carried much weight (only a very small portion of the foreign aid budget). The real purpose of foreign aid is thus exposed.

Some might say that what is good for large corporations is good for the country. This is not true. The burden on U.S. taxpayers is tremendous. People are being deprived of the ability to spend their money in ways they see fit. How can forced taxpayer-to-corporation transfers be seen as beneficial?—especially when one considers that corporate shareholders and corporate workers tend to be relatively well off as compared to the working poor and small business people upon whom the tax burden is most onerous.

It should therefore come as no shock to anyone that President Clinton has proposed giving billions of dollars in aid to Bosnia. When Commerce Secretary Ron Brown and a group of corporate executives were recently killed in a plane crash in that region, I knew immediately the purpose of that trip. The U.S., purely out of the goodness of its heart, has committed billions in aid to the rebuilding of Bosnia. U.S. corporations would be the direct beneficiaries of this aid. Hence the purpose of the ill-fated

mission to Bosnia. The business executives were there scouting out the territory.

--David Hoscheidt

David Hoscheidt is a member of the Central Illinois Libertarians. Call (309) 452-1219.

An Essay on Liberty

Liberty and freedom have as many definitions as there are people on this planet. Perhaps if we each lived in our own bubble (as some of us already do), each of our personal definitions could be fulfilled without ever having to compromise someone else's convictions. Until utopia shows up, we must find some kind of social liberty.

Social liberty is supposed to be an unalienable right in the United States. The functions of our government and the guidelines in our highest national law do not guarantee money or power, only that no individual or institution impede on the rights of others. In order to exercise these freedoms, the birthright of every U.S. citizen, we must first comprehend what exactly liberty is.

A lot of people feel that the government has gone to hell, and that liberty is one of many ideals lost in the shift back and forth from oligarchy to bureaucracy. Some, for various reasons, feel that it even borders on useless. Liberty transcends these arguments, for it is not empowered and unalienable because someone made it so in the eighteenth century. It is a part of natural law, defeating legislature, international borders, and economics, and it is a right simply because we are human. Government itself was invented to exercise natural law and to ensure equal distribution of its benefits (and hardships).

This is the first clue we have as to the actual dimensions of liberty. Humanity, unlike any other species on Earth, can adapt the environment to fit its survival. Instead of foraging for berries in the forest, we cultivate the land to produce acres of edible crops. In order for any society to successfully survive, the same human ingenuity must be present in its synthetic law. Liberty is an inalienable right because common survival is an inalienable responsibility. The two cannot be separated, nor deviated from. If they are, the wheels of natural law terminate said society and replace it with a more conscious one.

With that on the table, consider our current society. Liberty, it seems, has been left to the vultures of minority groups and lobbyists. Although these people have perhaps the best intentions, they still damage liberty's meaning. By fighting for "special" rights subdivided from the liberty of all humanity, the ability of this society to survive is weakened.

The government has, furthermore, worsened this dilemma by ignoring the requirements for a successful society. The persons who originally ran this country and set up its mechanics for distribution of wealth were woven into the physical economy, both as farmers and as industrialists. Today we have investors and a tyrannical banking system. None of these people really "lose," even if the economy were

to entirely collapse. As it is the governments job to make sure we don't shirk the responsibility of successful survival, in these post-industrial times, through the denial of natural law, we the people are paying a bunch of incompetents.

In the end, the question remains: What do you have to lose or endure before you are willing to stand up and fight for what is yours? For me, it is this inalienable right of freedom and liberty which is being ravaged the world over. For our American ancestors, it was tea taxes, quarter orders, and economic distress caused by Britain. In every case of revolution, the power of change is solely in the hands of the people, and it is the people's responsibility to change a government detrimental to the survival of our species. This responsibility demands that revolution starts on an individual level, with you, and when the time comes each of us "yous" must take action.

--Ned Lawrence

What American Dream?

While still teaching at the university level, there were many "isms" my students and I explored. Racism, sexism, ageism, and classism were the primary foci. After examining each, I'd inquire, "of all these serious social problems, which do you believe is the most pernicious and pervasive?"

There were a few adherents to each, but they'd wind up in agreement that classism was the most cruel and damaging, especially in a society which claims to be open to all.

The thing which disturbs me is that the ever-widening gap between those who are affluent and those in poverty is getting worse and worse!

The cost of living keeps increasing, but our representatives in Washington, D.C. refuse to raise the minimum wage. Some people who work at minimum wage hold down three jobs and still cannot get above poverty level.

We have such a strong emphasis on the work ethic, but for most racial minorities, many women, and older Americans, there is a ceiling against which they bump their heads and can't get no further. That isn't right! In fact, it's downright amoral.

The value of the dollar decreases even as the availability of work shrinks.

One of my granddaughters, who loves to work and is downright pernickety about doing jobs well was working at a coffee shop here. Her boss, who owned the shop, called her in one day to tell her that he had to "let her go".

She inquired, "Have I done something wrong?"

"No," he responded—and started crying. "you are one of the most responsible employees I've ever had. You are always on time and willing



to stay longer than you've planned. But--you have no telephone."

Did it ever occur to him that if he paid her a decent wage, she could get a telephone?

It is a simple story, but is illustrative of the psychological frame of mind which abounds in this nation.

On whose backs will the Republican majority in Congress balance the budget? Minorities, women, the elderly, and children! It makes me sick.

When I think what this nation can be, I yearn for a new commitment to the principle that the door of opportunity should be open to all.

As for those who have become so disconsolate and disillusioned that they have given up, I'll repeat what a friend of my mother's said about being a parent, "No matter what, don't ever give up on your children."

We are all children of God. We are all brothers and sisters, and we must keep faith in one another.

--Emily Dunn Scott Dale, Ph.D

The J.D. Mistake

It was around Christmas. The weather was getting colder, so we decided that we should prepare for the winter by doing a "winter cleaning." Some of the things that needed to be done, like putting the storm windows down, taking the air conditioner to the attic, etc., were things that we were well equipped to accomplish. However, there were some things that we felt required the assistance of a handyman; J.D.'s Handyman Service to be exact.

After being discouraged by a few pricey estimates and some scary handymen, J.D. was indefectable--so we thought. He seemed like a decent enough human being and his price was right, so we hired him. He told us how appreciative he was to be able to work for us because it was the Christmas season and he wasn't sure if he was going to be able to buy presents for his children (don't that just getcha right there?). It was for that reason that he requested to be paid in advance. We didn't have to think too long about it until we told him, as best we could through our tears, that we would be more than happy to oblige him, and his children. We paid him cash, without a receipt (a mistake we will never make again), and got out of his way.

At first, he proved our confidence in him by completing all of the minor tasks quickly and efficiently. We were impressed, until it came time to do the largest, and most expensive (\$55-70) job on the agenda: insulating the hot water pipes in the basement. He explained to us that he needed a few things to complete the job, and since we gave him money to buy some of the things he needed for the minor jobs, we assumed that he would, again, use our money to buy the necessities for this job--all he needed to do was to tell us when he needed the money.

After missing a few appointments we had set up for this financial transaction, we got a little worried. When he didn't return our phone calls, we got a little more worried. When two months had passed and our pipes were still not insulated, we got pissed off! At first when we would call him we would get suckered in by his sincere-sounding apologies and empty promises. Eventually, though, we became numb to his deceptiveness and began using threats of legal recourse. Of course it was a bluff, because we had no receipt or contract of any kind that would prove his irresponsibility, but it was worth a shot.

Since all of our attempts to rectify the situation failed, we humbly ate at least \$55-70. If you don't want to go through the same bad experience that we did, I would suggest not ever hiring James Durbin, owner of J. D.'s Handyman Services, for anything; always get a receipt, too.

--David Hall

Leonard Peltier Freedom Forum III

On June 26th, 1975, a tragedy on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. Hundreds of FBI agents, BIA police, US Marshals, local police, and vigilantes surrounded a camp of Native American men, women, and children and engaged in a fire fight that left three people dead. Agents Jack Cooler and Ron Williams as well as a young Indian

activist, Joseph Stuntz, were slain.

June 26, 1996 marks the 21st anniversary of that terrible day, and symbolized the ongoing injustices suffered by Native Peoples, particularly in the case of Leonard Peltier. Peltier, the only human being ever to serve time for the incident at Ogala, Pine Ridge, is serving a sentence of twice his natural life for the deaths of two FBI agents.

The murder of Joseph Stuntz was never investigated.

Despite indisputable and unimpeachable evidence of his innocence, the United States Justice System continues to ignore his pleas for equity, content in keeping an innocent man in prison rather than exposing its own brutal record on Indian land. Every piece of evidence presented at trial has been proven untrustworthy, forcing the prosecution to admit there's no direct evidence of murder against him and that they don't know who killed the agents. This has resulted in Court of Appeals Senior Judge Gerald Heaney's writing to the President to support executive clemency.

Please join us on June 26 and/or 27th to learn more about this important and historic case, and what we plan to do to rectify it!

We thank you for being a human being of conscience.

In the Spirit of Crazy Horse,

--from Leonard Peltier Freedom Campaign,
Leonard Peltier Defense Committee,
American University Washington Internship
for Native Students

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Make Democracy Work

The Blue Mountain Working Group has announced publication of *How Democracy Works: Civil Rights, Civil Liberties and the Issues of Our Day*. This easy to follow handbook uses the U.S. Constitution to answer questions about various current issues including affirmative action, government regulation of the Internet, civil rights for male and female homosexuals, and flag burning. *How Democracy Works* is intended for use as an educational tool in community organizations, classrooms and workplaces, as well as to promote conversation across the dining room table.

Action: Get a copy of this free publication by contacting the Blue Mountain Working Group; 1402 3rd Avenue Suite 421; Seattle, WA 98101; 1(800) 477- 6233. If your organization would like to join to distribute the pamphlet, and have your logo on the pamphlets, contact Jim Anderson (206) 622-3486, <bluemnt@nwlinc.com>.

The Program That Stole Objectivity

Last year, Birdie Jo Hoaks, a 25-year old transgendered indigent person, first sought shelter at a women's facility but was turned away because a shelter worker considered Hoaks a young boy. Penniless and still in need of a bed, Hoaks went to Salt Lake City Child Services shortly before Christmas, 1995, carrying a note saying s/he was a 13-year old boy abandoned by his parents. Hoaks was then successful in getting food and a bed and was subsequently sent to a Salt Lake City boys home. When it was discovered that Hoaks had female genitalia, Hoaks was arrested and charged with two misdemeanor accounts, Theft of Services, and Making False Statements, for which Hoaks was sentenced to a year and a half in a Utah prison.

Hoaks was approached by NBC Dateline with an offer to tell the true story of what happened. Instead, the Dateline segment was titled "The Birdie Who Stole Christmas" and featured Hoaks as a scam artist, single handedly stealing the Salt Lake City Christmas and resources from the deserving. During the segment, NBC aired information about Hoak's current employment. As a result, Hoaks lost the job and is indigent once again.

Action: Contact NBC and Dateline and demand that they present a balanced view about transgender and refrain from sensationalism... Neil Shapiro; Dateline Executive Producer; NBC, 30 Rockefeller Plaza, NYC 10112, (212) 664-4444. Other NBC Staff can be reached via phone at: Warren Littlefield, President of NBC Entertainment (818) 840-3870, Roz Wineman, head of NBC Standards and Practices (212) 664-5443, Daniel Ferguson, Media Relations (212) 664-3733, Andrew Brewer, Standards & Practices, Community Relations (212) 664-4458.

Hot Air In San Diego

The Republican National Convention will be held in San Diego, August 12-15. NGLTF along with Voters Organized In Coalition for the Elections (VOICES '96), are planning to demonstrate against the Republican Party's campaign message, which to date has scapegoated disenfranchised peoples as the source of America's woes, rather than offering real alternatives to transform society. NGLTF is committed to mobilizing progressives to have a large and visible presence at the convention.

Action: Contact Scot Nakagawa, NGLTF Field Director, ext. 3301; <SNakagawa@nglftf.org> if you plan to attend the Republican Convention, or if you want to mobilize progressives in your community to take action during the time of the Republican Convention.

1st Annual Dyke March

The Chicago Lesbian Avengers are writing to inform you of Chicago's first annual Dyke March to take place Saturday, June 29th. As you may know, New York began this practice a few years ago as a way to promote Dyke Pride and also to protest the male dominated gay pride parades.

During last year's Pride Parade in Chicago womyn were needlessly harassed about everything from hairy armpits to daring to march topless. We feel the misogyny must end and that Dykes all over the midwest need and deserve a safe forum to celebrate our pride. There is no better way than to follow San Francisco and New York's example and have a womyn only Pride Parade.

We are looking for cooperation and support from everywhere and expect a turnout in the thousands. Come to march, flirt and enjoy.

We welcome anyone who wants to help us in our endeavor. We are urging sisters to organize themselves in their area to get to this womynly event. More information can be obtained by calling the Chicago Lesbian Avenger voice mail at 312-866-0907. One of our amazing Chicago Chicks will get back to you.

To help curb traveling expenses the Chicago Lesbian Avengers will also be offering space in their homes to anyone journeying to this event.

Rock the status quo.

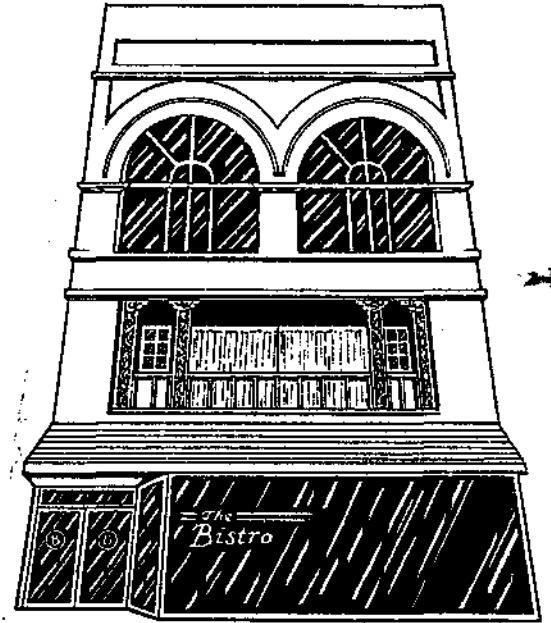
--The Chicago Lesbian Avengers

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Notes From The Land Of Anti-Fat

SUPER-SIZED NAAFAN HUMILIATED IN DEATH

This is a story of death and indignity, of bigotry so naked that if you saw it in a movie, you'd be sure that the filmmakers were indulging in the sickest sort of satire.

And yet it happened in Chicago recently.

On Tuesday, May 7, Patricia Mullens died in the bathroom of her home, public housing on North Magnolia Street. She had died suddenly, from a heart attack of unknown cause, and was unclothed when one of her three young children came home from school to find her body. On her head was a gash and blood from where she'd hit it upon falling. The child called "911," and police from the Halstead/Addison station were soon on the scene. They removed the children from the scene and phoned Ms. Mullen's nearest relative, a niece named Dawn.

Ms. Mullen, a former secretary for the Chicago chapter of NAAFA (National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance), was a super-sized woman in her thirties who weighed over five hundred pounds. It's likely that she was the largest woman that any of the District 23 cops had come across in this situation, though that doesn't excuse the way they handled it. In front of a whole neighborhood of witnesses, city police subjected the late Ms. Mullen's body to a series of indignities.

When they contacted the dead NAAFAN's niece, she was asked which funeral home to reach to pick up the body. Concerned that her aunt's death may have been the result of medication that she was taking, Dawn instead requested that the body be transported to the coroner's. The unidentified cop on the phone told her that Ms. Mullen was "too fucking fat to take to the coroner." The niece insisted, and so police were left to wait for the coroner's arrival.

With a growing number of neighbor folk watching through the open windows of her house, they dragged Ms. Mullen's body from the bathroom. There she lay for close to four hours, while officers played Nintendo, snacked and drank pop from her refrigerator. Occasionally, witnesses state, a cop would walk up and kick the corpse, then make jokes about the way the body fat moved.

When her children reappeared at one point to find out what was happening, one of the officers present bluntly told them that "the fat lady is dead." Finally, they dragged her rigor stiffened body out of the house and into the front yard, bloody head knocking against the steps as they pulled her off the porch. A woman neighbor asked the police to cover up the still naked body and was cursed at for her efforts. No one else stood up to protest.

Ms. Mullen's body would not be covered until the coroner's wagon arrived and she was rolled into a tarp. In the meantime, men, women and children of all ages got to view her hours dead body. Through it all, police continued to make jokes at her expense, apparently oblivious to whomever might be listening.

At this writing, the identities of the uniformed cops involved in this shameful side show have not been revealed, although reportedly, the matter is under internal investigation. The story has been aired on Chicago television and gone over the AP wires—though in considerably more homogenized fashion. Members of the Chicago NAAFA Chapter are currently discussing ways to protest the treatment of one of their members.

How could such a tasteless display of insensitivity happen so openly? Though Ms. Mullen was white, she lived in a predominately Black public housing neighborhood. It's unlikely that police would have behaved with a similar disregard for neighbors' sensitivities in a different part of town.

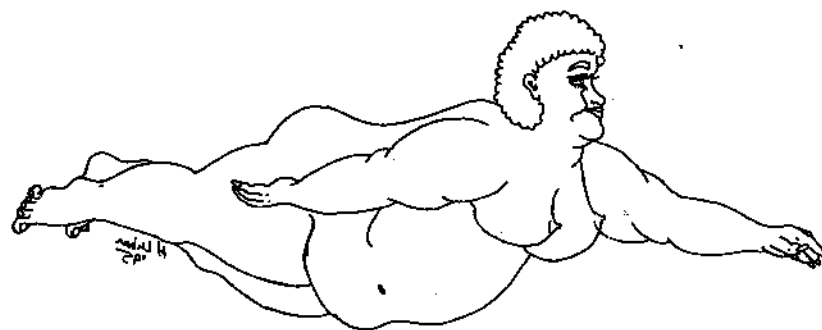
When someone of Pat Mullen's size dies, the cause of death is typically listed as "Obesity." Considering the difficulty that her niece had getting her aunt's body to the coroner's—and the unprofessional handling which it received—that automatic judgment is suspect. One can't help but wonder how many other fat men and women have been so cavalierly treated in

death.

This writer met Ms. Mullen at several Chicago NAAFA functions and found her to be a vibrant, personable woman. She did not in any way deserve the kind of mistreatment and public humiliation that she received. Her children do not deserve the kind of memories that they've been given by Chicago's Finest.

In the book and movie *What's Eating Gilbert Grape*, the titular hero sets fire to the Iowa home housing the body of his deceased 500-pound mother. He does it to protect her from the laughter and judgment that he knows Bonnie Grape will face once her body becomes public property. Looking at the events surrounding the mistreatment of Patricia Mullen's body, it's clear that real life is much more grotesque than fiction.

--Bill Sherman



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Mitsubishi

Mitsubishi Motor's response to the sexual harassment charges against the company has created an environment that has divided workers and resulted in a backlash against the plaintiffs.

Instead of acknowledging that sexual harassment in the workplace exists, the company has chosen to deny the charges. Many people, MMMA employees included, think that there is not enough evidence to warrant the sexual harassment charges or that they have been blown out of proportion. However, the EEOC does not initiate a class action suit based on rumor. They must have documented evidence and depositions.

The lawsuit accuses MMMA of:


sexually harassing a class of female employees because of their sex by creating a hostile and abusive work environment based on unwelcome verbal and physical sexual conduct, including sexual graffiti, sexually derogatory and explicit comments and innuendo, and unwanted groping, grabbing, and touching.

John Hendrickson, EEOC's regional attorney in Chicago, said that the suit contains allegations that sexual favors were often a condition of employment and that the company retaliated against employees who opposed the unlawful harassment. EEOC Vice Chairman, Igasaki said that male auto workers frequently grabbed their female co-workers in the breast, buttocks, and genital areas and made drawings of female body parts and sexual acts on auto fenders and cardboard signs used on the auto assembly line. Sexual drawings and notations about female employees were commonly scrawled on walls in men's washrooms. He said that female employees were commonly referred to as "sluts, whores . . . and other names I cannot repeat in front of TV cameras."

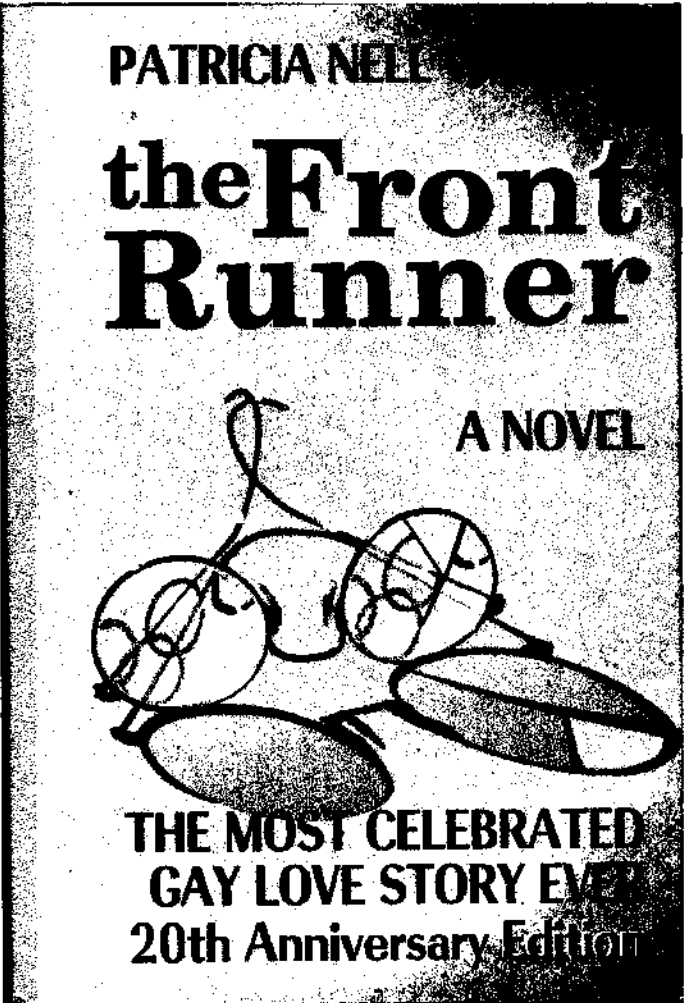
Luellen Laurenti, lobbyist for the Illinois National Organization for Women, notes these behaviors go beyond dirty jokes and in fact several of these behaviors could actually be defined as sexual assault under the Illinois Sexual Assault Laws. By the time the case goes to court over 400 women could be represented in the class action suit.

Even employees who support the company acknowledge that some sexual harassment occurs at the plant. A female employee who did not wish to be identified stated that she is certain some of the harassment claims are legitimate. Although she personally has not experienced any problems she believes that sexual harassment is inherent in factory work. She noted that in her crew there is a lot of joking going on and "sometimes things get out of hand." Since new workers may not know how to respond to the group's behavior, they are "careful when temporary employees" work in their area.

The woman interviewed believes that if you are sexually harassed you can simply walk away or tell the person that they cannot talk to you in such a way. If they do not stop the offending behavior she notes that there are proper channels to go through. When she first came to work at the company two years ago she witnessed two men being escorted to their cars by security personnel because of sexual harassment complaints. The men were dismissed. However one of the charges of the



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Intimidation

lawsuit is that the company: "Fail[ed] to take immediate and appropriate corrective action in response to complaints or other notice of sexual or sex-based harassment and/or retaliation."

In addition to denying the women's charges the company has coerced employees into supporting MMMA instead of their fellow workers. MMMA has made it very easy for the workers to support them. Telephones were installed at the plant so that workers could call the EEOC and legislators at no charge. A three page handout was distributed with names and addresses of local and regional newspapers, the White House, the EEOC, as well as legislators.

A memorandum sent to *The Pantagraph* by attorney Pat Benassi, who is representing the women in the original lawsuit, stated that workers were told at a "unity" meeting at the plant that if they did not stick together, car sales would drop and people could possibly lose their jobs. This manipulation by MMMA has influenced workers to support the company instead of the plaintiffs.

At the suggestion of employees, a bus trip was organized to take workers to Chicago to demonstrate support for the company at the EEOC headquarters. Fifty buses of 2600 Mitsubishi workers descended on the EEOC on Monday, April 22nd. A handout distributed to people attending described the objective of the trip: "To demonstrate our support for MMMA. To show the public that the employees of MMMA are honest and hard working citizens who want to refute any misunderstandings or negative public perceptions." The handout also reminded participants that the "behavior of rally participants must reflect the objective of the trip. Professional behavior and courtesy will be expected of all participants. Please remember that you are representing yourself as well as MMMA." Workers who attended the rally were paid day-shift wages and bought lunch. Employees who chose not to attend were put to work at the plant cleaning.

Not only has there been a lack of support for the women from the company and fellow workers but they have experienced direct intimidation from both. Laurenti is concerned with what she sees as backlash against the women who have filed charges. She believes that Bloomington/Normal is going to have to respond and show the public that there are people in the community and across the nation who support the women.

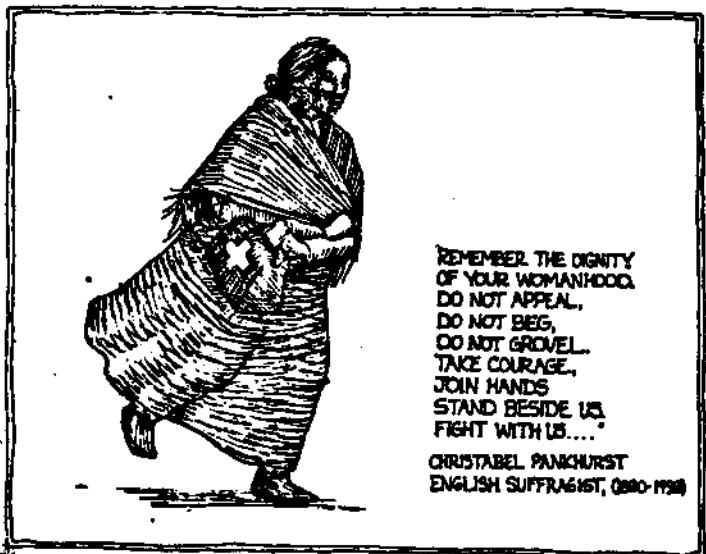
A leaflet distributed at the Chicago rally by Washington Feminist Fax noted that Mitsubishi attorney Roy F. Davis has asked the court for documents on the women involved in the private lawsuit against the company, including complete gynecological records, information on abortions, divorce records, the names and addresses of people with whom they have cohabited as well as the women's credit card records. The information would be made available to top Mitsubishi executives. A press release from Illinois NOW says that they "are appalled at these maneuvers and consider such actions further intimidation, and an attempt to humiliate and further harass the women plaintiffs."

Pat Benassi said that she was told that a message in the men's bathroom warned that if women caused him to lose his job, he would "go hunting" for women. *The Pantagraph* reported that as a female employee was leaving an employee meeting someone told her "watch your back bitch." The woman had filed sexual harassment charges against the company in 1994. Another woman found a note in her locker which read "Die bitch! You'll be sorry." As of yet, no official connection has been made between this incident and the lawsuit.

Laurenti believes that women "shouldn't have to go to work in combat gear... ready to do battle with the boys on a daily basis." Men who expect women to tolerate this behavior in the workplace are sending a message to women that says "We don't want you here; We'll be damned if you're going to come into non-traditional jobs." She notes that "We are living in a changing society" and likens it to the Civil Rights movement of the 60s. She is sure that there were people who said then that they didn't care about race relations and that they wanted to be able to go to work and tell racist jokes and "sing 'Ol' Black Joe." But people then did have to change their behaviors concerning race, as people need to do now concerning women in the workplace.

We can no longer tolerate this "boys will be boys" attitude. Women need to be able to go to work free from fear of harassment. They need to know that if they do report harassment that it will be taken seriously and dealt with appropriately. They should not have to fear retaliation from fellow workers or employers. The Mitsubishi lawsuit offers us the opportunity to stand up in defense of women everywhere who have suffered the humiliation of sexual harassment.

--Sherrin Fitzer



Karen Norberg

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Judging books by their covers... (and titles and length)

If you've been following this column (o.k., so I've only written two and they appear about every six months or so), you know that a: I judge books by their titles (hence the article title, duh) and b: I also judge books by their title. Well, I've got another one for you. c: I judge books by length. Pages, silly you. And, preferably under 300. For that reason alone, I refuse to read the book by the Twin Cities' current media darling. You know the one with its 1000+ pages. Dear Lord, I could read five maybe six books in that time span. What could possibly take that long to say? As my grandmother puts it best, "Shit or get off the pot."

Here are some reviews of less bothersome, straight-to-the-point books that I like so much, and, maybe you will too.

The liar's club

author
Mary Karr

When Mary Karr was 5, she told her teacher to "eat shit". When I was around that age, I wish I had of known that phrase because I would have used it on that bitch I had for a second grade teacher. Miss Kalmus, I did not cheat off of Tristan's paper. Oh, and by the way- if you happen to be reading this, *eatshiteatshiteatshit*. There, that feels better.

Mary Karr as a child, somewhat reminds me of myself when I was her age. But my family was not screwed up like hers, my mother was not mental, and my language skills were not as, well, *developed*. Nonetheless, I was a dreamer, and I liked to create things, both visually and physically. Yet, I was tough and stubborn and didn't like adults who didn't respect me just because I was a kid. I didn't take shit from anyone, and still don't. Mary Karr needed those exact same attributes just to endure *one* single day in her crazy, fucked-up childhood. Mary Karr explains her childhood experiences with humor, sharp wit and stubborn determination - all without whining *once*.

* available @ both Bloomington and Normal Public Library.

Atomic Books Catalog2

A month or so, I was cruising the internet for bookstores and zines and came across the home page for Atomic Books. Their catchy slogan caught my eye. It reads, "Literary finds for mutated minds."

Of course I was immediately taken by this (for I have a mutated mind, you see) and decided to order a catalog via snail mail. I anxiously waited for my postal carrier to personally deliver my discretely packaged catalog. hee hee.

Inside, is an odd assortment of underground

publications pertaining to: alternative comics, wimmens comics, zines, trash and pop culture, alternative fiction, prison life and drug information. Always present in these type of catalogs are your mayhem, sabotage and revenge, death and torture, pinups, and adult comics who always seem to de-humanize segments of our society. If you can past these aspects, and take in the whole picture (the whole is greater than the sum of its parts), you will find that Atomic Books provides a much needed outlet for voices otherwise left silent.

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**literary finds
for mutated minds**

Live girls

author
Beth Nugent

It's been awhile since I've read anything so haunting and dreary. In fact, I don't think I ever have because, well, I like happy stuff.

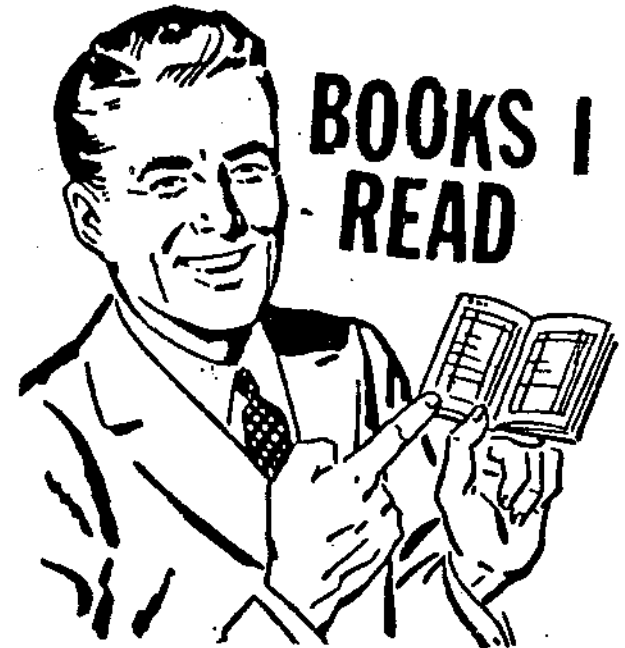
The story centers around Catherine, who in her mid 20's, sells tickets at a run down porn theater in a run down port city. Her only friend is Jerome, an anorexic drag queen.

Live girls is filled with a handful of pathetic, tired characters. There's Dave, Catherine's boss, who yearns for a better livelihood, her neighbor on the right, who constantly beckons his sickly cat, Debbie, and Catherine's dead sister, who's spirit reappears throughout the book to taunt Catherine and remind her of her futile past - and future.

Nugent craftfully creates these pitiful characters - all of them in search of simple dreams, yet carry on with the drudgery of life, day after day, hoping, somehow, to be still holding on to those dreams as the day ends.

The period book:

everything you don't want to ask (but need to know)
author
Karen Gravelle with Jennifer Gravelle
Illustrations by Debbie Palen



This book is recommended reading for all females who are on the cusp of puberty. Every single question about menstruation is answered by Karen Gravelle and her 15 year old niece, Jennifer. From awkward situations to vaginal secretions, they inform the reader with honest and humor-filled answers. Hurry and buy one of these for your daughter, niece, sister... you'd wish you'd been so lucky to have your little, naive hands on this.

* available @ Normal Public Library.

Bust

editors
Celina Hex
Betty Boob

I've reviewed this once, I've reviewed this twice. If you haven't gotten around to getting this zine, it's your tough loss, cookie. For the second year in a row, *Bust* has been nominated by the *Utne Reader's* 8th Annual Alternative Press Awards. This year, they were nominated under the following categories: general excellence with circulation under 10,000 and special interest.

Bust is published four times a year with each 90+ page issue having a separate theme. Recent issues have included such subjects as sex and beauty, girlhood, men we love, and the most recent - vices. Inside these issues are humorous, well written and incredibly honest stories, poems and insights from the editors as well as submitters. *Bust* also prints reviews of female-friendly bands and 'zines/books, including bands such as Luscious Jackson, Come, and Lisa Germano and the Geraldine Fibbers.

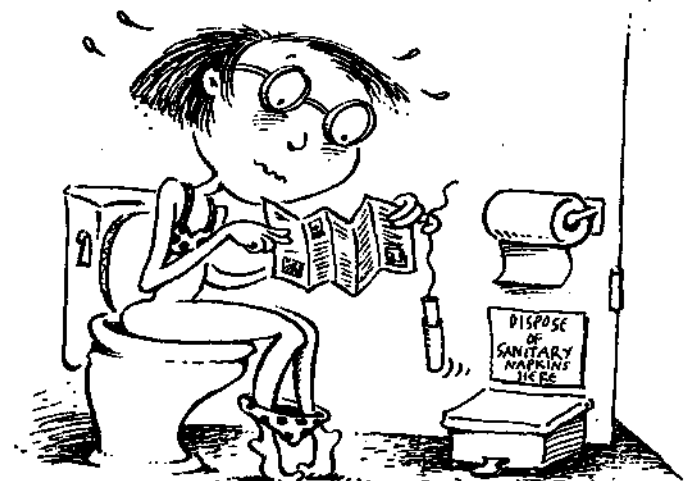
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Platforms, pop tops, and the peanut president:

a microwaved cultural chronicle of the 1970s
author

Pagan Kennedy



"Gee, your hair smells terrific!"

Pagan Kennedy is fast becoming one of my favorite writers. I discovered her well written articles in the Nation, the Voice Literary Supplement and other magazines some time ago. So, when I found out that she had written an intelligent book critiquing the seventies, I couldn't resist!

In the first few paragraphs, Kennedy attacks Newsweek's 1991 article claiming that the seventies were a bland era. On the contrary. Kennedy states that "many of the political ideas proposed in the sixties did not have repercussions for mainstream America until the early seventies." She convinces us that this is so, through humorous social commentary and well-researched facts concerning the emergence of blaxploitation films, blue-collar culture fads, absent tv fathers, the selling of sex, and so on...

Kennedy explains her reasons for dissecting and entire decade only until we near the end of the book. She states, "We study the seventies not to escape into our fantasy version of that time but to become more aware of how the present got to be like it is. We never lose sight of the fact that many of the guys who brought us Watergate, Vietnam, and Three Mile Island still run our country. We never forget that the seventies are our future." Right on, sistah.

*available only through inter-library loan from your local library or special order through a bookstore (ISBN # 0-312-10525-8) \$14.00 or so.

Hey, you, put down that wallet! Some these books are free - at your local library. If the book is not currently available, or not in the collection, put it on reserve or inter library loan, 'kay? You've got to eat too ya know.

-towanda! the picky bibliophile

What the Hell is a Spelunker?

Spelunker: "one who explores and studies caves" or "a ride at Six Flags Over Texas in Austin." There's a band around here that chose that name for one of those reasons. And if there's anything in a name, for whatever reason they chose it, you can guess that they have a fantastic original sound and put on a hell of a show.

The musicians you might know from The Something Brothers (may they rest in peace), another great band. Tommy O'Donnell is playing an even more amazing style of guitar than he did with the So Bros. John Ganser, who in my opinion is the best drummer around, is a Spelunker, too. Clay Thompson's bass is heavy duty and he knows how to play it. Together they put out a sound that he describes as "a wide variety of expressions and musical motifs." It's really impressive that a three piece band can put out such a full sound.

The style of their music is poppy enough to be alluring with something added to keep it from sounding grossly popular. Tommy, the song writer, describes their music as "jazz influence disguised by pop structure." Speaking of influences, some of the music that influenced The Spelunkers' sound is quite diverse. Music of the '70's and '80's, given the ages of the band members, is obviously an influence. But music from a Bugs Bunny cartoon? Very unique. I asked Clay what about cartoon music could be such an influence to him. He pointed out that cartoon music reaches a wide range of emotions and changes emotions in a second. If you pay attention to just about any cartoon, especially the older Warner Brothers', you will hear what Clay is talking about.

As you can imagine, The Spelunkers' music is very interesting; now imagine it live! Tommy on lead vocals and electric guitar puts on quite a show. Once he gets started, his baseball cap flies off and he does an energetic dance, all over the stage, with his electrified partner. Clay, on back-up vocals, jams with his bass and sings some impressive harmonies. John goes steady and strong on his elaborate drum set, with an occasional solo that reminds me of a combination of Bill Bruford and Ringo Starr.

I have seen a lot of bands in the bar circuit, and I have a pretty good knowledge of various types of music, and I know what is good. The Spelunkers are definitely a good band and I expect big things for them. They have already signed a deal with Whitehouse Records and will have a full length CD in stores everywhere in August. Until then, you can see them at Stubs in Cedar Falls on June 7, The Fourth Quarter in Terre Haute, Indiana on June 14, or The Beat Kitchen in Chicago on June 29. And to keep track of any other dates and places The Spelunkers are going play, you can get on the mailing list by writing to: The Spelunkers; 605 E. Market; Bloomington, IL; 61701. They also have an E-mail address which is: jjchris@rs6000.cmp.ilstu.edu. The Spelunkers are a hot band who know how to put on a great show. If you love good music and good times, a Spelunkers show is definitely the place to be.

--David Hall

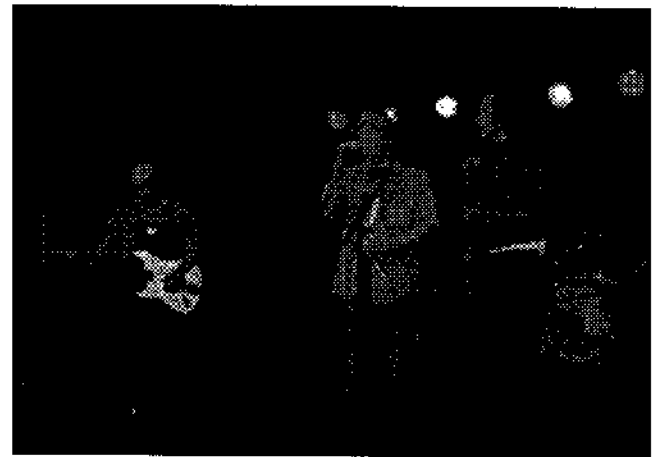
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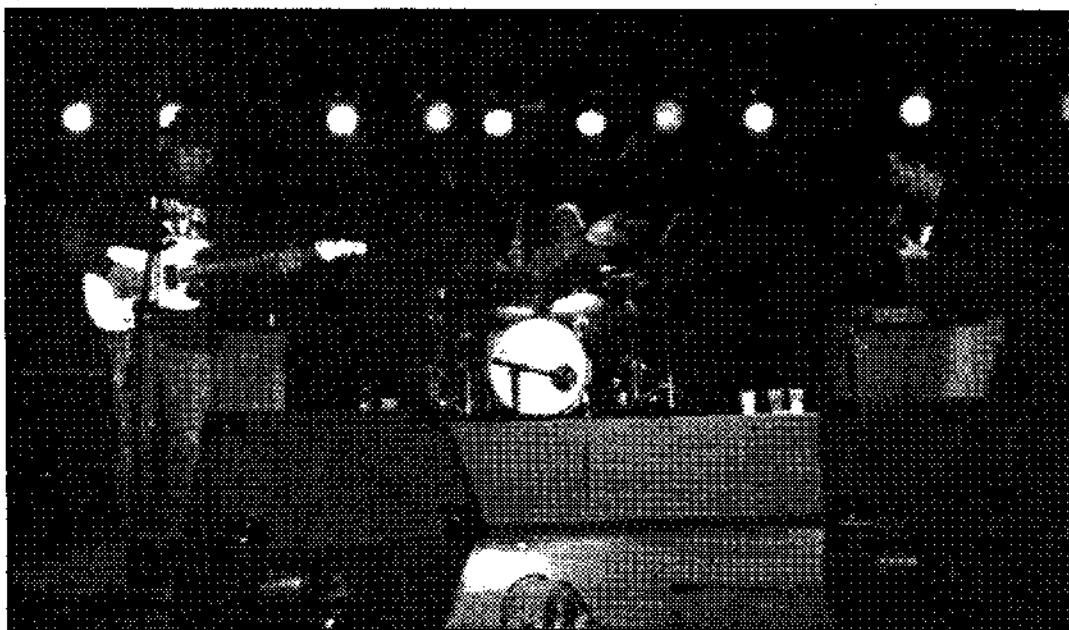


Post Benefit at Lafayette Club A Groovy Time Had By All A Groovy Time Had By All

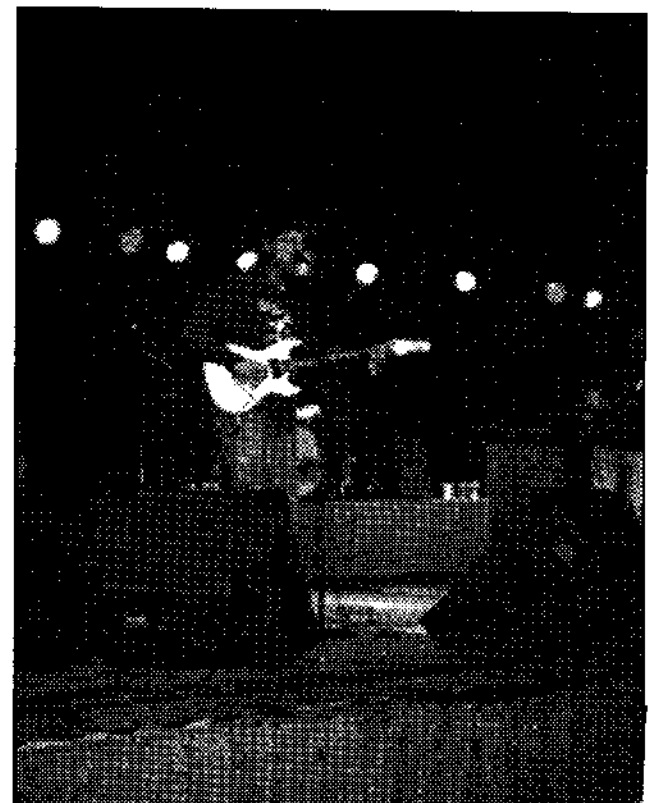
Thanks to Baby Blues, Stumpwhoopt and The Spelunkers, as well as the Lafayette Club for generously donating their time, talent and space. We're sorry our pictures of Baby Blues didn't turn out. You would have been able to see Jan's cool "Cat in the Hat" hat.



Stumpwhoopt



Tommy, John & Clay of The Spelunkers



This is a Spelunker!



Gary from Stumpwhoopt adds his harmonica to the Spelunkers' sound.



Brian, Gary & Scott (Sorry James!) of Stumpwhoopt