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Packed with info on local art scene: Poetry by John Firefly, David Hall, Barbie Dockstader; Review of Swingin' Hemphills CD; Photography; Phoenix Art Gallery; Acting Independently Theatre Troup



POST AMERIKKAN



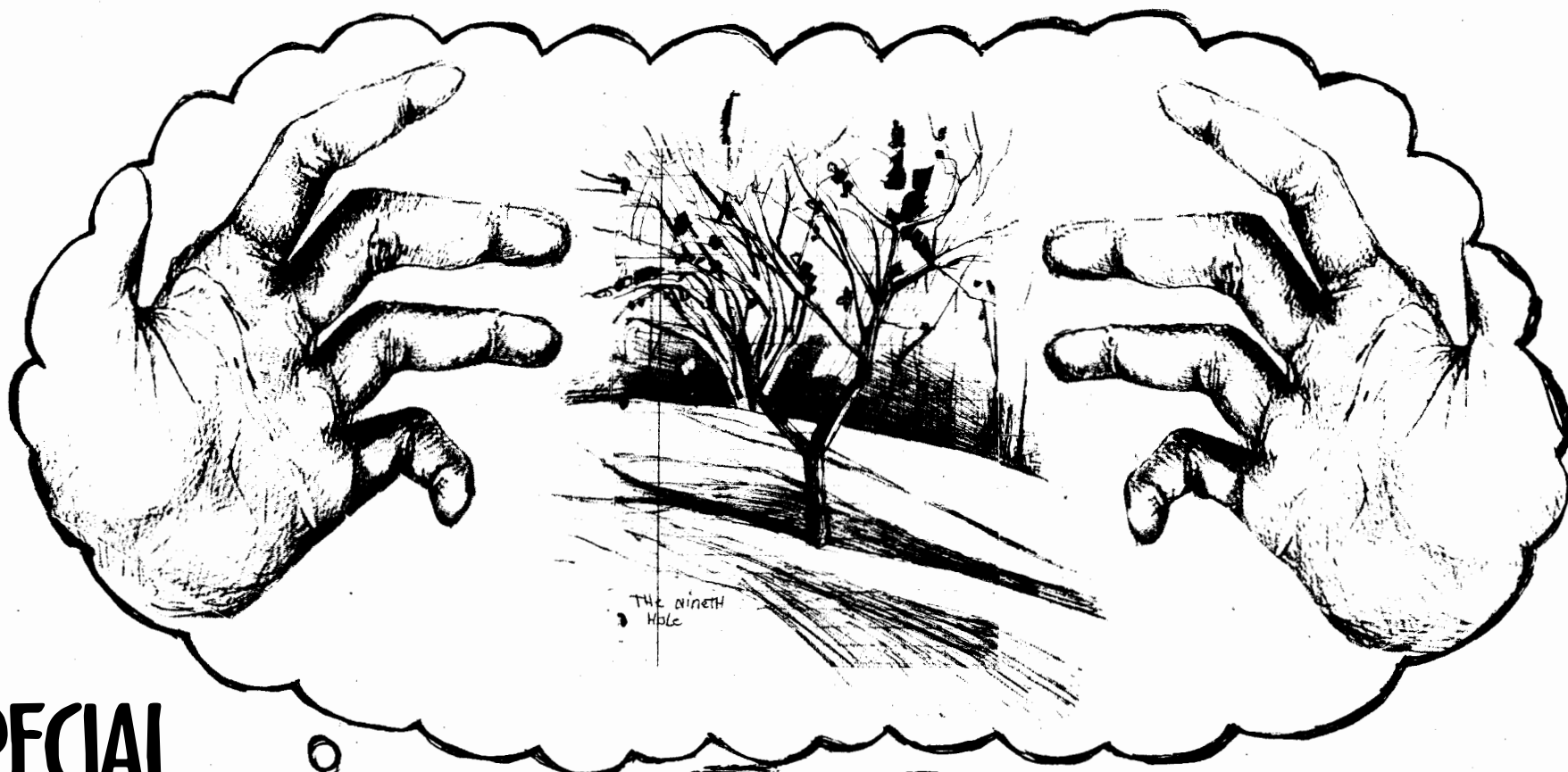
BLOOMINGTON/NORMAL

VOLUME 28

50¢

NUMBER 1

FEBRUARY/MARCH 1999



SPECIAL SECTION ON LOCAL ART

THEATRE OF TED
PHOENIX GALLERY
THE LAVENDERS
POETRY BY:

JOHN FIREFLY
DAVID HALL
BARBIE DOCKSTADER
KRISTY DEWALL

GUINEA PIG PRODUCTIONS

AMERICAN BUFFALO

PHOTOS BY J. BOHN

CROSSROADS GIVEAWAY

FEDERATION OF UNITED WRESTLERS

BOOK BY BARBIE DOCKSTADER



-Manna-

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 CYNICISM, IRONY, AND ABSURDITY WILL BE PROSECUTED TO THE FULLEST EXTENT POSSIBLE

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 828-4473 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 \$6.00 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...

Barbie, David, Gregg, Linda, Ralph & Sherrin

Post Sellers

Copies of the *Post Amerikan* (unless noted otherwise) can be purchased via our red newspaper boxes located outside these following businesses.

- Bloomington**
 AIDS Task Force, 313 N. Main (inside)
 About Books, 221 E. Front (inside)
 Barnes & Noble, Veterans & Rt. 9 (inside)
 Common Ground, 516 N. Main (inside)
 Gaston's Upper Cut, 409 N. Main (inside)
 Last Chance Newstand, 404 N. Main (inside)
 Law and Justice Center, 104 W. Front
 Lizard's Lounge, 612 N. Main St.
 Medusa's, 420 N. Madison (inside)
 Ming's Wok/EconoWash, (Emerson & Main)
 Mystic Link, 1206 Towanda Ave. Su.4 (inside)
 Shockwaves, 415 N. Main (inside)
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 U.S. Post Office, 1511 E. Empire
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 Acme Comics, 115 W. North (inside)
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 the Coffeehouse, 114 E. Beaufort
 Deadpan Alley Records, 107 W. North (inside)
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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.

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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.)

March 15

Good numbers

- 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
 Amnesty International-ISU ...Miami@ilstu.edu
 Animal Protection League.....828-5371
 Better Business Bureau.....1-800-500-3780
 Big Brothers/ Big Sisters828-1870
 Boys & Girls Clubs of B/N.....829-3034
 Clare House (Catholic workers).....828-4035
 Countering Domestic Violence.....827-7070
 Dept. of Children/Family Services....828-0022
 Gay, Lesbian & Bi teen drop in center.828-3998
 Gay & Lesbian Resource Phonenumber..438-2429
 Habitat for Humanity.....827-3931
 Headstart.....662-4880
 Home Sweet Home Mission.....828-7356
 IL Dept. of Public Aid.....827-4621
 IL Lawyer Referral.....1-217-525-5297
 Incest Survivors Support Group.....827-0790
 LIFE-CIL.....663-5433
 Lighthouse (substance abuse treatment)....827-6026
 McLean Co. Center for Human Services...827-5351
 McLean Co. Health Dept.....888-5450
 McLean Co. Housing Authority.....829-3360
 McLean Co. Humane Society.....664-7387
 McLean Co. Peace Coalition.....828-7070
 Mid Central Community Action.....829-0691
 Mobile Meals.....828-8301
 Narcotics Anonymous.....827-4005
 National Health Care Services/
 abortion assistance.....1-800-322-1622
 Occupational Development Center...452-7324
 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
 Prairie State Legal Services.....827-5021
 Project Oz.....827-0377
 Rape Crisis Center.....827-4005
 Runaway Switchboard.....1-800-621-4000
 Salvation Army.....829-9476
 Safe Harbor Mission.....829-7399
 TeleCare (senior citizens).....828-8301
 Unemployment comp/job service....827-6237
 Western Ave. Community Center.....829-4807
 Youth Build.....827-7507



Community News



Women's Coalition plans for Women's History Month

Women's Coalition will be busy during the month of March, sponsoring activities in honor of Women's History Month. The schedule will include:

March 1: Professor panel on the historical oppression of women.

March 15: How to bring up and encourage young feminists—a consciousness-raising session on how schooling, siblings, and mentoring are vital in continuing feminist work.

March 22: Recent immigrant history in Chicago and how women immigrants have survived.

March 29: Literature night—an open mic where we can share our own or others' work on feminist issues.

Women's Coalition is also hosting the second **Voice That is Great Within Us**, a women's talent exposition and open mic night. It will be held at the Agape Java Hut sometime in March, and between each of the band's sets we will have an open mic. The details for this event have yet to be finalized, but our immediate need is for female bands to play at the event. If you are in a band, or know someone who is, and are interested in playing at a Women's Coalition benefit, please call one of the numbers below.

There may be changes or additions in the schedule, so for more information call Liz (662-2906), Rebecca (451-8744), or Gina (888-9223). Women's Coalition meets in Stevenson Hall, room 223 at 7pm on Monday nights, except for spring break (March 8). Everyone with an open mind is welcome to attend.

Many other departments at ISU, including the Women's Studies Department and the Multicultural Center, will be hosting events for Women's History Month, so look for posted schedules and be sure to patronize those events. Thank you for your support.

Bistro owners Venture into the Restaurant Business

Jan and Tony, owners of the Bistro, 316 N. Main St. in Bloomington, recently opened Lancaster's at 513 N. Main St., the former site of Richard's. They are joined in the venture by Ron, an employee at the old restaurant.

We encourage everyone to get out and support these gay-friendly people and their new business.

—Rainbow Connection
December 1998

Family to Family education course

The Family to Family Education Course is designed for families of persons who have been diagnosed with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder or major depression, as well as those who exhibit behavior that strongly suggests such a diagnosis.

The course co-teachers are family members themselves and the course has been designed and written by an experienced family member mental health professional. Important components of the course are:

- 1) Information about schizophrenia and the major affective disorders (bipolar and depressive illness.)
- 2) Coping skills; handling crisis and relapse.
- 3) Listening and communication techniques
- 4) Problem solving and limit setting; rehabilitation.
- 5) Self care; learning how to recognize the normal emotional reactions to chronic worry and stress.
- 6) Basic information about medications.
- 7) Information about connecting with appropriate community services and community supports.
- 8) Advocacy; Getting better services, fighting stigma.

Cost: There is no charge. The course starts Monday, Feb. 22 and continues for 11 additional Mondays, 7pm at the 710 House, 710 East Front St. in Bloomington.

Teachers are Nancy Vandiver and Joan Huff. Advance Registration is required in order to control class size. Call Nancy Vandiver at 309-888-9081 or Joan Huff at 309-452-9081.

Letter

Dear Post Amerikan Friends,

Tis the season to be jolly. Bombs dropping on babies; the second pres to be impeached; the Speaker of the House pro tem running for cover; Y2k looming; and damn, I cut myself shaving.

Thanks to all of you for giving me a voice in the state of Harry Hyde. May all of you enjoy a fulfilling and profitable 1999, a year of enigma, wonder, ending-chapters, wishful thinking.

May Barbie Dockstader's cupboards be filled with golden light, and Sherrin's ears keep hearing distant voices. In a media filled with eyes that look but do not see, the *Post Amerikan* continues to have sapphire blue vision.

Peace and love,

Nikolai Alexanerovich Zarick #162110
Architectonic conceptualist/incarcerated human
Cheshire Correctional Institution
900 Highland Ave.
Cheshire, CT
06410-1698

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A rally in Normal? Thoughts on protest, youth and signifiers

It is Christmas time. I am watching TV, recovering from the shellshock and emotional overload that befalls me on that particular time of the year. I am watching something pleasantly mindless and amusing. Think of it as a sensory deprivation tank. I see it then; the images reach my mind.

On the screen is a young woman. She has short blond hair, suitably cool, borderline androgynous, reasonably pierced. Understanding the color, position of the camera, the type of music, and her stance, I recognize the cultural signifiers. I am looking into the face of hipness, radiant youth and its cutting edge beliefs. This is the face I need to identify with or I am truly old and uncool. The old adage rings in my mind, "If the music is too loud, you're too old."

Waiting for her, the voice piece of the hip generation, to spout groovy liberal philosophy or challenge sexuality, race, gender, or class, I listen in exultant awe. I am excited because she is going to challenge the structure, which she is the very essence, of commercial capitalist advertising. Instead, I am shattered; she begins to spout corporate American mythology.

She talks of how she believes if she works hard enough she will be able to buy her big house, her nice car, her swimming pool, her forty dollar pair of jeans, that has paid so much money to make this commercial. Recoiling in terror, I imagine how many adolescents and preadolescents, who believe in her because of these signifiers. Believe in her, like a moment ago I had, as a visual voice of my beliefs, the cool beliefs.

Ten years ago, if you looked cool and cutting edge, it was because you were. In the sixties, if you looked like a hippie, it meant that you espoused a certain ideological opinion or attitude. In the eighties, something changed. Corporate America usurped the underground that was the terrain of the cool. Being the tail

end of the generation that was stuck between punk and grunge, I am continually amazed and horrified that one can buy Doc Martins in the mall. Most of my horror comes from the idea that there is a whole generation of people behind me who believe that MTV has given them an underground education. They believe that they ARE challenging the status quo and establishment. I don't think that realize that the commercial girl and MTV have, in fact, fed them establishment conservative doctrine in disguise as cutting edge.

Bringing me back to the focus of my article, I am working on my Master's degree at ISU. Recently, I tried to organize a rally to increase consumer awareness about Walmart and their free trade zone working conditions and wages. This was not a boycott, just a consciousness raising. I had contacted people who had given me the place we could rally without being arrested. I didn't want the price of bail, or the prospect of having a police record to deter folks from coming. I presented my information to an activist group and they wholeheartedly agreed. They would be there with their chants, their signs, their mobs of friends. We would liberate the oppressed workers from the Walmart Hun.

Wal-Mart's annual net profit is the same amount of the *combined* gross national product of 155 countries. (There are only 192 countries worldwide.) They make more than 3 billion dollars a year. Yet, they pay their developing country labor force substandard wages, even for their own country's standards of living. These workers cannot make a living for their families. The average Walmart shopper family makes about \$25,000 a year and is often a single parent with dependents. These consumers have no idea the oppression they support.


Often, like in Central Illinois, there are no easy answers or solutions. These families need to be able to purchase cheap quality goods in order to survive. The rally was to raise


awareness and support for the one group from the other group. To show how Walmart takes clothing factory jobs and moves them from the US to free trade zones, where they don't have to deal with unions and can pay pathetic wages, in probably dangerous conditions.

I wanted to let shoppers know that they could voice their concern over the workers, demand that there is an independent monitoring group that watches Wal-Mart's free trade zone factories to ensure healthy working conditions. Also, Walmart is in an economic position where it could pay those workers a decent wage with little or no price raising in its retail store.

The day of the rally no one showed. I'm sorry; that's not true. The press showed. A local union sent about seven people over to show support. No one from ISU showed. I canceled the rally, embarrassed, angry and betrayed. How could such a non-threatening, non-confrontational rally bring no support from an activist group of college students? Could it be they believe deep in their hearts what the commercial girl was saying is true? Or is activism passe? Could this have something to do with living in a town called "NORMAL"? Maybe I am too old to understand? I remember ten years ago, tying myself to a chain link fence to protest nuclear stockpiling on the East Coast. I believe in my generation, and I still have belief in the next. I just hope they stop seeing the cultural signifiers as a reason to believe and trust, rather than the ideas and words the images convey.

--Kelly Henry





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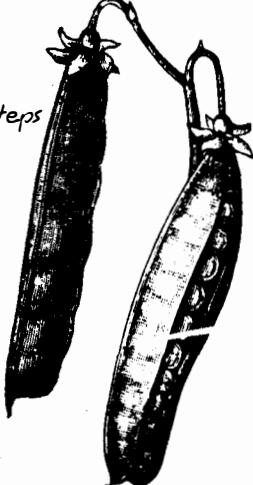
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Sweatshop goods abound in America's store

It's that holiday season, with busy shoppers jostling in the aisles, searching for bargains and that perfect gift.

Besides looking at the price tag, how many consumers stop to read the label, learning where the product came from? Was it made in a sweatshop? Was the worker who produced it fairly compensated?

A majority of Americans say they'd be willing to pay a little extra, if they new their shopping purchases were sweatshop free. The U.S. Department of Labor issues a "No Sweat" list, commending garment makers who maintain decent conditions.

Despite these efforts, American retailers aren't getting the message. Goods from third world countries, often produced in miserable conditions, continue to flood our shores. As the global economic meltdown continues, countries will push their exports even more, flooding the U.S. marketplace.

This year 60 percent of our clothing, 80 percent of our toys plus sporting goods and 90 percent of our shoes purchased are imports. In the first ten months of 1997, U.S. companies imported more than one billion Chinese-made garments. Despite corporate claims that these imports will boost conditions for these countries, manufacturers race from country to country, seeking ever lower worker wages.

Despite this, many retailers claim to support American workers. Enter any Wal-Mart store and you'll find banners proclaiming their preference for American goods. Search the shoe, toy, and clothing racks, however, and see how many American-made products you'll find. Clothing items that are especially made for Wal-Mart tend to feature off-shore labels.

Bigger than 155 countries

Wal-Mart is the 800-pound guerrilla of the American marketplace, now the nation's largest employer. Its 1997 sales totaled \$118 billion, meaning this one retail chain's sales are larger than the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 155 of the world's 192 countries. With almost 3,000 stores in the U.S. and another 600 off-shore, Wal-Mart employs 720,000 "associates," who earn an average of \$6.19 an hour and receive a 28 hour work week.

Many companies have released corporate "codes of conduct," pledging themselves to a sweatshop free environment. Wal-Mart's 1992 code allows 14 and 15 year garment makers to work at least 60 hours a week, although the retail giant states that they "prefer" these workers be given a day off weekly. Wal-Mart allows no third-party monitoring of its off-shore suppliers, instead using its "exclusive buying agents" as its inspectors.

A litany of nations and poor conditions trails this mega-company around the globe. In Bangladesh NBC's Dateline found three floors of children, ages 9-12, sewing "Jeans Wear" shorts for Wal-Mart. The children were paid five to eight cents an hour, worked past

midnight and were beaten for mistakes. When confronted by NBC, Wal-Mart CEO David Glass responded, "Children--you and I might, perhaps, define children differently."

In Guatemala, in the San Lucas factory, children as young as 13 report they are working up to 90 hours a week for 31 cents an hour, producing Wal-Mart's "White Stag" women's clothing. When the *Wall Street Journal* exposed this in 1995, Wal-Mart abandoned the producer, rather than improving conditions.

In China, where "Kathie Lee" handbags are made in the Liang Shi factory for Wal-Mart, young women were paid as little as 12 cents an hour during an 84 hour week.

Wal-Mart can't claim poverty; in 1997 the company's profits soared to \$7.6 billion. The Walton family is the world's third richest, right behind Microsoft's Bill Gates and deposed Indonesian dictator Suharto. Wal-Mart CEO David Glass paid himself \$4.6 million, plus stock option.

An international effort, led by unions, human rights organizations and churches, is calling on retailers like Wal-Mart to meet basic standards. Wal-Mart is not the only culprit--J.C. Penny, Disney, Guess, Nike, and other well-known brand names are guilty of the same activity.

December 10, 1998 is the 50th anniversary of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of

Human Rights. The coalition supporting this ant-sweatshop campaign is calling for open disclosure by companies of where their products are being made and free access to those factories by local, independent human rights groups, to insure that minimal conditions are being met.

What can you do:

Read the label when you shop--it might take a little extra effort, but "look for the union label" is still good advice.

Ask; if a store clerk offers you assistance, ask them to show you their American-made products. If they don't have any, ask why no, and ask that your concern be passed up to the management tree. This catches the eye of retailers and alerts them that consumers are truly interested in "no sweat" products.

Write a letter to David Glass, Wal-Mart CEO, at 702 S.W. 8th St., Bentonville, AK 72716 (Fax: 501-273-4894), asking Wal-Mart to abide by internationally recognized conditions, identify its suppliers and allow free access by independent human rights groups, and to quit buying from producers who maintain sweatshop conditions.

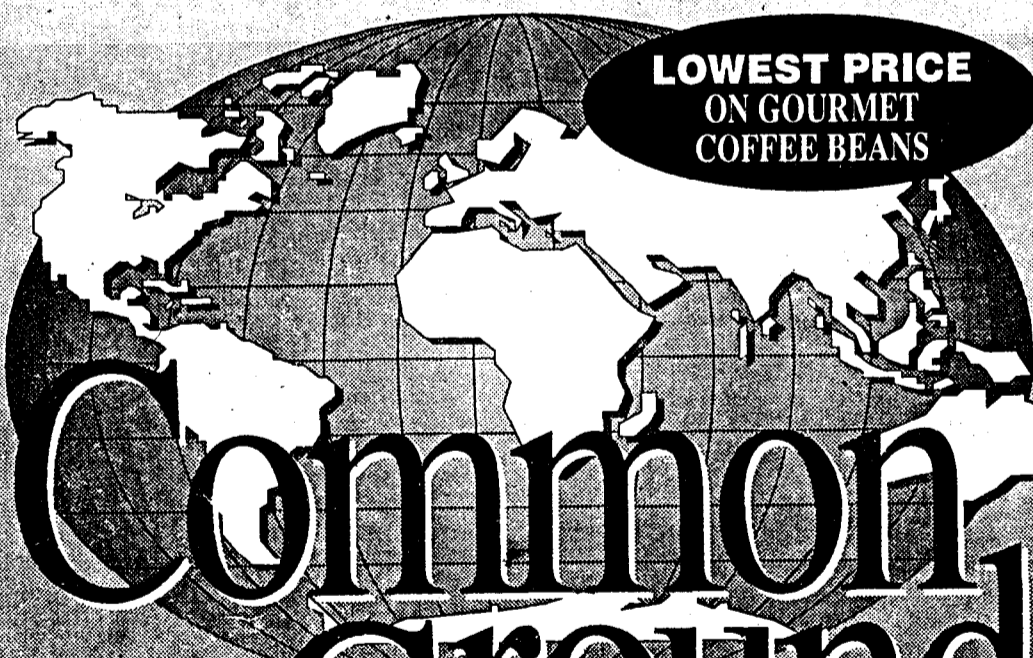
For more information: write to the National Labor Committee, 275 7th Ave., 15th Floor, New York, NY, 10001, 212-242-3002, www.nlc.org.

--Mike Matejka
McLean & Livingston Counties Union News

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Mermaid Avenue by

His songs are integral parts of American culture, instantly familiar tunes and lyrics -- "This Land is Your Land" or "So long, it's been good to know you."

Woody Guthrie was a seminal American voice, a rural wanderer from Okema, Oklahoma who bridged the nation's great themes, from the rough and tumble cowboy west of his childhood to the Depression dustbowl, working class battles and World War II mobilization.

Guthrie was never a "name" star while performing, writing and singing in the 1930s and 40s, but his music was picked up by others and he was the grandfather of 1960s folk music. He was also a constant scribbler and doodler, using every piece of paper in the house, as his ever fertile imagination poured forth songs, poems and cartoons.

In the 1950s he was no longer living in the west, but in New York City, rarely publicly performing and increasingly silenced by disease. Yet as long as he was able to lift a pencil, he was writing, leaving behind voluminous sets of

lyrics, some with chords or rough ideas for a melody, never completed in his lifetime.

The songs he did complete are part of the folk song canon, sung by school children and musicians, but what about all these lingering, incomplete musical fragments he left behind?

Guthrie's daughter Nora gathered up these yet unborn songs and sought a performer to complete them. Would it be that icon of 1960s folk, Bob Dylan, who in his youth actually hung around with Guthrie? Or Guthrie's own son Arlo, well-recognized in his own right?

Nora went across the ocean and found that voice in British rocker Billie Bragg, who has transformed these song fragments into a rich tapestry, *Mermaid Avenue*, named after the Coney Island street where Guthrie lived in the 1950s. Bragg, a working class hero in his own Britain and strong union defender, took these rough notes and has completed them, true to Guthrie's tone and style, featuring that ragged edge of musical in-your-facedness that compliments Guthrie's often challenging lyrics and strong social stands.

Backed with enough twang by an Illinois band, Wilco, *Mermaid Avenue* stands on its own power, not simply as a tribute to an American original. The music highlights Guthrie's lyrics and spirit, sometimes wistful and poetic, other times hard-edged and challenging, but always hopeful.

The opening track, "Walt Whitman's Niece," which Guthrie penned in 1946, fresh off a World War II stint in the merchant marine, rocks and yet whispers mysteriously, as Guthrie tells of meeting a girl, niece of the mythic poet, who comforts him with her presence and her poetry books.

His strong political stance echoes particularly in two songs, "Christ for President," in which Guthrie runs the Nazareth carpenter for chief executive, promising jobs and pensions for all, reminding his listeners that "Every year we waste enough to feed the ones who starve, We build our civilization up and we shoot it down with wars."

Praise for unionism echoes in "I Guess I Planted," where Guthrie talks of little seeds, joining with hundreds of other seeds, to build something strong and lasting, "Seeing all of us first separated, hurt, apart and afraid and

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Billy Bragg & Wilco

hungry for the union. And so we kept on, singing and working, fighting till we got it. And this is the big union song I guess I hear."

There a darker tone in a 1940 Guthrie composition, "The Unwelcome Guest," about a thief, riding his horse, preparing to rob from the rich, not for self-gain, but in a Robin Hood redistribution to the poor. "They'll take the money and spread it out equal, just like the Bible and the prophets suggest. But the men that go riding to help these poor workers, the rich will cut down like an unwelcome guest."

Even in his love songs that political thoughtfulness resonates. "She Came Along to

Me" is as much an equal rights ballad as a love song, ending with thanks not only for women, but a hope that "we'll have all the fascists out of the way."

Not all the songs are overtly political, some like "California Stars" and "Birds and Ships" are simply beautiful poetry and done wonderfully, including the voice of Natalie Merchant. Other songs resound with the word play Guthrie always enjoyed, like in "Hoodoo Voodoo" or in the self-deprecating bragging of "Way Over Yonder in a Minor Key." There's sexual innuendo and imagery in a ballad to a Hollywood star, "Ingrid Bergman."

Billy Bragg and Wilco have pulled off a difficult proposition. Completing the unfinished music of a legend is no small task; one could be slavish and unimaginative, or so individual that the original spirit is lost. The balance is struck here. There's fine music, enjoyable in its own right that is no empty tribute to a long-gone hero.

And Guthrie's playful spirit, political commitments and lyric qualities shine through. That makes *Mermaid Avenue* not only great listening, but a motivator to dig back and rediscover that original voice that emerged in Depression, dustbowl America. And that's always a journey worth taking.

--Mike Matejka

Antz--Cartoon digs labor message

Ever feel like you're just a meaningless little nothing, laboring away, unheralded and forgotten?

Then march in line to your local cineplex and catch the latest computer-animated film, "Antz."

"Antz" is a peek inside a busy ant colony from the lowly worker ant's viewpoint. The film's hero is Z-4195 (Woody Allen). Digging in tunnels all day is not this ant's idea of a good time. In typical Allen fashion, the film opens in the ant psychologist's office, Z is complaining about his middle-child nature, right in the center of "5 million" siblings. "I was not cut out to be a worker," Z complains, "I've never been able to handle more than ten times my body weight."

Z is a catastrophe on the worksite, never quite in sync with the anthill that boasts banners proclaiming, "Conquer Idleness" and "Free time is for Training."

One night in the "Chug," bar, while all the ants are dancing in unison to a ponderously slow "Guantanamera," Z is alone at the bar, listening to a drunk ramble about an ants paradise called "Insectopia." He catches the eye of slumming Princess Bala (Sharon Stone) and the two cut a mean rug, totally destroying the synchronized rhythm and causing a bar fight. The princess flees and Z discovers love.

To catch the Princess' attention, tiny Z switches places with an army ant friend, Weaver (Sylvester Stallone). Z waves gallantly to the princess as the army ants are marching, ten by ten, out to battle the termites and certain doom. Despite his suggestion to try a different approach than fighting-- "Why don't we just try and influence their political process with campaign contributions?"--the ants are destroyed, except for Z.

He wanders back to the anthill where evil General Mandible (Gene Hackman) proclaims him a hero, asking the ants to work even harder. But Mandible has an evil scheme, viewing the worker ants as inferior and plotting their destruction. He'll take Princess Bala off to start a new, genetically superior colony, destroying the current one.

Z kidnaps the princess, escaping the anthill. Though pursued by the army ants, they're unwittingly rescued by a kid with a magnifying glass. Searching for "Insectopia," the first find a cellophane-wrapped picnic, which proves all image and no sustenance, lorded over by two buzzing, upper-class "Wasps," Chip (Dan Aykroyd) and Muffy (Jane Curtain). They escape and find a real insect dream world-- an overflowing trash can, populated by hippy-dippy crawly refugees who welcome them to the land of plenitude.

Meanwhile, back on the hill, the worker ants begin wondering about Z's absence--what happened to the colony's hero? The worker ants strike, throwing out Marxist lines like, "It's the workers who control the means of production" and proclaiming themselves the "pawn of the oppressor."

General Mandible fools the workers back into production, little realizing they're digging their own deaths. Army ants kidnap Bala from "Insectopia" and bring her back to the doomed colony. Can Z regain the princess? Will the colony be saved or will General Mandible breed his new superants?

Antz is fun with a great message. Kids will enjoy these creepy crawly go-getters while adults will revel in the rich dialogue. It leads to great questions: who are we working for, ourselves or someone higher up "in the colony?" Who reaps the rewards of our labor or is our labor sometimes part of our destruction? How do we strike a balance between the individual and our group needs?

Join angst-ridden Z on his monumental miniature journey. Next time you're working away on the line or digging what seems an endless tunnel, you might just remember these little computer-generated comedians and their struggle for balance and justice. And like a good trade unionist, Z makes an important discovery in the end--the individual is important, but the lowly worker's greatest power is together--Solidarity in action. Not a bad message for a 90s flick.

--Mike Matejka
McLean & Livingston Counties Union News

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Notes from the land of anti-fat

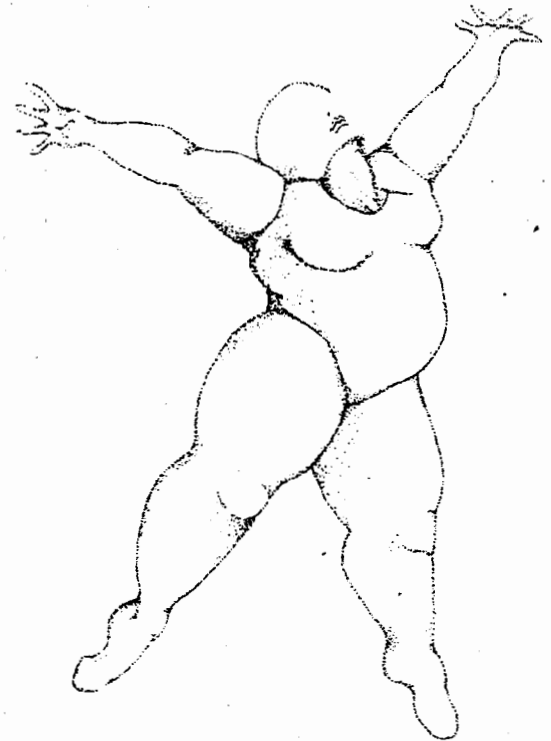
Diet Like It's 1999

News from the marketing front: with post-holiday hucksters once more revving up the guilt machine, the diet industry is working overtime to rebuild customer confidence after the fen-phen debacle. While sales of anti-fat drugs hit an all-time high of \$467.7 million in 1996, the first eleven months of 1998 have reached the comparatively paltry sum of \$169.2 million. \$111.2 of this has been for new-drug-on-the-block, Meridia, according to IMS Health, a market research company.

Meridia is not as sexy to consumers as fen-phen or its equally banned cousin, Redux. It doesn't offer the same rapid (if ephemeral) weight loss, while recent regs have made it less easy to palm prescription drugs off on the public without warning them of the possible health risks. In the 12 months before they were banned for their link to primary pulmonary hypertension and heart valve damage, the two drugs alone generated \$322 million in sales. (This from a drug that was supposed to only be prescribed for the "morbidly obese.") Clearly, plenty of fat Americans are having strong second thoughts.

To counteract those cautionary impulses, the diet drug industry is launching a whole new line of ads. One comparatively new strategy: sell to the patients before they even go to the doctors - the same approach that's worked in recent years for hair loss and allergy medications. While diet drug companies spent approximately \$12 million in 1989 on consumer advertising, they currently are on track to drop a \$100 million a month in the first part of 1999 (according to Competitive Media Reporting). That's no small expenditure.

Aside from the patent medicine merchants, other players in the diet industry are working to overcome slumping sales. Weight Watchers has begun a two-year campaign blitz featuring the slimmed-down Sarah Ferguson as Lynn Redgrave. (What is it with Weight Watchers and British accents, anyway?) Putting their money in product line development rather than ads, Jenny Craig (whose 1997 take for the last fiscal year, \$352.2 million, is more than a \$100 million less than its peak sales in 1993) is marketing a new lower-cost line of soups, drinks, energy bars and dietary supplements called "On The Go."



So let's not feel too sorry for the diet hucksters yet. They're still making millions, and they're still doing their damndest to make millions of Americans feel bad about themselves.

A Dubious Study

Perhaps the creepiest tactic comes courtesy of Knoll Pharmaceutical, markets of new diet drug Meridia. Knoll commissioned a workplace study that, not too surprisingly, ended with a call to arms against fat employees. Described as part of "an awareness campaign" to create a bigger market for its diet drug, by David Thompson, who headed the Knoll study, the study concluded that obese workers cost U.S. employers \$12.7 billion a year and ended with the suggestion that employers offer onsite weight loss programs.

The assumption behind this pronouncement, of course, is that every health problem faced by an obese patient is tied into their weight.

What worries many members of the size acceptance movement, though, is the way that such vested interest studies might be used to justify employer bigotry. "This pseudo-science certainly will have a chilling effect on the employability of fat people," Sally Smith, Executive Director of National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance said in a statement released following the Knoll report. "Already we often are denied employment and promotions, paid less and fired more often due to our size. This simply will exacerbate existing discrimination."

All in the name of fostering a drug market that itself is plenty culpable when it comes to the health problems of fat adults.

It may be a new year, but the same sleazy tactics prevail when it comes to selling fear in the Land of Anti-Fat.

--Bill Sherman

"What was really going on was a lack of newness in the product," new Jenny Craig president Phil Voluck has told market watchers. "There was a whole group of customers out there who were looking for something that Jenny Craig wasn't offering."

Something like: healthy, long-lasting weight loss?

Extra Scrutiny

It's possible that Jenny Craig's new focus away from extra ad revenue is the safest route to take. The Federal Trade Commission has been deservedly skeptical of the claims being made by companies. In 1995, for instance, an FTC challenge forced Jenny Craig to modify an ad that said nine of 10 JC clients would recommend the program to friends. In '93, the Commission took issue with a Nutri/Systems claim that its low-calorie program customers lost 29% more weight than dieters on other programs. When you've got a government agency actually paying attention to what you're saying, it doesn't pay to say too much.

This may explain the recent emergence of ads peopled with plump actors and actresses. By showing characters supposedly before they go on their "much needed" diet program, the company can't be accused of making false promises.

Even the diet doctors are considering fattening their marketing budgets. According to James Merket, executive director of the 2,200 member American Society of Bariatric Physicians, "Our physician members experienced the same withdrawal of patients from their practices after fen-phen, that the Jenny Craigs and Nutri-Systems of the world went through." Which means we can look forward to lots more weeny teevee ads from the Rader Institute and its ilk in the months ahead.

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The US School of the Americas

Established in Panama in 1946 and moved to Fort Benning, Georgia, in 1984, the US Army School of the Americas has quietly trained over 60,000 Latin American troops. After returning to their home countries, these men have been responsible for so much aggression, violence, and intimidation that as early as 1963 the SOA was referred to as the "Escuela de Golpes" (School of Coups) and later as the School of the Assassins. Consistently, the countries with the worst human rights records have sent the most soldiers. This school, according to Pentagon figures, is funded every year with nearly \$20 million of US taxpayers' money.

Supposedly established to promote stability in Latin America, the record of SOA graduates instead shows a trail of terror, suffering, and violence. Training documents released by the Pentagon (1996) and other sources demonstrate that the Latin American soldiers have been trained in Low-Intensity Conflict, a technique in which soldiers from the home country use terror and intimidation to preserve the status quo, both for the powerful and wealthy elite of the country and to further US interests. Techniques such as physical abuse, "neutralization" of targets, illegal detentions, arresting of relatives, blackmail, and false imprisonment—labeled by the *New York Times* as "noxious lessons"—were subjects of these training documents.

While the curriculum has been revised, the 900-2000 soldiers who train at the SOA every year are still taught combat skills, counterinsurgency operations, sniper fire, military intelligence, commando tactics, and psychological operations. As SOA Watch states, "Latin American soldiers at the SOA are not taught to defend their borders from invasion. They are taught to make war on their own people—specifically and especially religious leaders, labor organizers, educators, student groups, and others working for the rights of the poor." Rather than helping to alleviate the poverty, hunger, and death of Latin American countries, the training given at the SOA only furthers this suffering.

On November 21 and 22 of last year, over 7000 people from all over the country met outside Ft. Benning to demand that the SOA be closed. These two days witnessed speakers, song, prayer, reflection, nonviolence training, and, on Sunday morning, a solemn funeral procession of over 2300 people. Carrying coffins, crosses, and pictures and walking to the intonation of the names of the massacred of Latin America, these people risked arrest by entering the base. Those who were crossing for the second time did so in full knowledge that they would nearly certainly receive six months in jail and a stiff fine. After walking about a mile onto the base, we were loaded into school busses. Instead of

processing us, however, the Army simply expelled us from the base and released us. After being bussed to a park outside the base, we walked and sang our way back to the gates of Ft. Benning.

The presence and dedication of so many people is truly indicative of the power of nonviolence and of the will to close the SOA. From the previous year's presence of 2000 (601 of whom crossed the line), the physical presence of those demanding that the SOA be closed tripled this year and then some. Challenged by the speakers to bring this work and the journey of nonviolence and justice with us, the momentum to close the SOA and to bring about justice in our world can only grow larger.

--Shannon McManimon
Clare House News



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SEEING*RED

Clearer and Clearer

by Steve Eckardt

The black clouds of War and its terrible woe Gave the luster of mid-day to objects below.

In the flickering CNN light of U.S. and British explosives thunderbolting into Iraq -- attacks waged to punish the dictator Saddam Hussein - - the folly of embracing London's detention of Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet looks clear as mid-day.

Could the parallels be more obvious? Both men are CIA-financed dictators hired to crush their own people and their region's -- both are now used-up and discarded as "human rights violators."

And neither men are the real targets of imperial power -- but then neither are human rights.

Crimes

Of course there's every reason to want Pinochet (and every other Chilean military and Christian Democratic leader) brought to justice. After all, Pinochet and his ilk were mass murderers and torturers who crushed the bursting flower of Chilean democracy, art, education and health care under their jackboots ... their efforts financed and organized by Washington.

But the crimes of Pinochet are dwarfed by those of Saddam Hussein's.

Recall the glory days of the Revolution in neighboring Iran-- its destruction of the Shah's terror-state, unleashing of popular democracy, expulsion of 40,000 U.S. forces, and re-nationalization of Iran's oil. Then recall its subsequent drowning in the blood of *one million* as Saddam Hussein unleashed war against it ... his efforts financed and organized by Washington.

Attacks

Yet few --even in Iran-- could cheer the later Gulf War supposedly aimed at Hussein, suddenly dubbed "a modern-day Hitler" by his former overseers. Not in the dark light of half a million U.S. troops, explosives raining on the people of Baghdad, butchery of countless fleeing Iraqi soldiers ... or subsequent "sanctions" that have killed some 600,000 Iraqi children.

And certainly there are no popular celebrations of the mid-December bombardment of Iraq, even in the lands whose leaders launched the operation.

Credit war's dark clouds for casting events in sharp relief.

Trials

Yet Pinochet's detention--ostensibly for crimes against humanity--has been widely seen by progressive-minded people as a step towards justice, especially in Europe and the U.S. Some are so delighted as to overlook that the detention of Pinochet directly inspired (gasp) Belgian legal moves against the dethroners of Mobutu, the dictator installed by Belgian troops in their former nightmare colony of the Congo. Or the similar U.S. clamor, following Pinochet's arrest, to put Fidel Castro on trial. Blame First World ignorance: few Third Worlders were celebrating Pinochet's detention, even in Chile. Blame Euro-American arrogance: the notion that the civilized world bears the white man's burden of saving natives from savagery.

Or, perhaps, blame the absence of war.

Belligerents

But ironically, war is precisely what Pinochet's detention is about. For nowadays the capitalist economy is spiraling towards disaster: economic collapse sweeps Asia, engulfs Russia and much of central Europe, and threatens Latin America. Even the mass media talks of "global over-capacity," deflation, and inevitable collapse of grossly-inflated stock markets.

Yet if big-business media coverage of looming international financial disaster --and parallels to 1929-- is growing, mention of its logical

outcome --war-- is demonstratively absent. But war is precisely the trajectory of global economics and politics. Corporations gird themselves with mega-mergers. Rival nations erect vast trading blocs--from NAFTA to the European Economic Community--against each other. Demagogic concerns over health, environmental and labor standards are wielded to restrict competitors' trade. Sharpened competition compels governmental austerity and mass corporate sackings.

Embracing Western campaigns for "international law" is a big mistake. What the moves against Augusto Pinochet and Saddam Hussein are all about.

Germany and Japan violate their Constitutions to build up interventionist militaries. The U.S. preserves--even increases--the war machinery once justified by the now-evaporated "threat" of Soviet military power ... and unleashes it in Iraq and Yugoslavia.

All signal the pregnancy of war.

Problems

Indeed war is already underway in Russia's soft underbelly, especially Iraq and Yugoslavia. It's all about who gets to grab the unexploited vastness of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

Yet anything except quick, low-casualty war remains a hard sell.

The bellicose --their eyes on profits, markets and oil-- need beguiling "human rights" cover for bombardments and troop deployments. Chilean torture victims, ethnically-cleansed Bosnians and Kosovars, and genocidally-butchered Rwandan Tutsis are coins cheaply spent for an apparent cloak of justice.

And imperial prosecutions of war criminals from Chile, Yugoslavia and Rwanda establish--under the banner of "international law"-- Western powers' right to intervene anywhere in the world.

Solutions

But places like Washington, London, Madrid, and Paris have long since forfeited any right to judge monsters in the Third World -- after all, they created every one of them.

Only Chileans and Iraqis can deal justice to the likes of Pinochet and Hussein. And it's up those in Europe and the U.S. to dethrone--not embrace--their creators.

Otherwise there will only be war, more deaths ... and no justice at all.

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Time for a New Game with Cuba

by Steve Eckardt

Fans of both fair play and baseball doubtlessly cheered recent news that the Baltimore Orioles may play an exhibition game in Havana and the Cubans another in Camden Yards.

The world is crazy enough without harsh laws against guys playing ball.

But, sadly, for nearly 40 years U.S. law and policy have staunchly opposed such sport -- at least if a ballplayer rented a hotel room, paid for a meal or bought a paper on the way to the park.

Why, they'd be "trading with the enemy," as the U.S. law against spending a cent in Cuba is named. (Perversely, traveling to the island is legal for any American ... as long as they don't leave even a penny behind.)

In fact, despite full diplomatic relations with Vietnam, Washington still has none with Havana.

The roots of that silliness lie in a far larger and sharper game of days gone by, the Cold War. Back then Americans were scouring the country for communists, building bomb shelters, and making schoolchildren practice crouching under desks in case the nukes started flying.

In the midst of that grand conflict, Washington didn't take kindly to a country ninety miles away nationalizing all the American businesses, declaring itself socialist -- and taking out an insurance policy with nuclear-tipped missiles. Nor was Cuban support for revolutionaries throughout Latin America a big hit.

On the other side, Cubans didn't appreciate U.S. support for a dictator whose favored torture was gouging out his opponents' eyes, nor decades of being told how to run their own country.

As the contest unfolded, it only got nastier. Washington wielded assassination attempts, military invasion and bacteriological warfare, while Havana pumped guns to Latin American rebels and tried to rally the Third World to cancel the billions they owed to Western banks.

But while the casualties were mainly on the Cuban side (including Che Guevara) it was the underdog who fared better in the international battle for fans. U.N. delegates gave Fidel a lengthy standing ovation, while the U.S. ambassador received the diplomatic minimum. Nelson Mandela thanked Cuban fighters against South African invaders of Angola for helping end apartheid, while the U.S. embargo against Cuba achieved nearly unanimous international condemnation.

And the island's rates of literacy, life expectancy, and suppression of infant mortality began to reach and even exceed those of the world's wealthiest nation.

But the collapse of the Soviet Bloc--ironically, the end of the Cold War--left Cuba without trading partners, fuel oil, food, or the currency to buy anything in the world market.

Meanwhile, U.S. stocks surged toward record levels, and all talk was of free markets as Washington emerged as the world's undisputed super-power.

Hungry Cubans tightened their belts at least three notches. Their government swallowed its pride and embraced tourism, foreign capitalist investment, and the use of the American dollar as their national currency.

Of course Havana stubbornly --nearly all said quixotically-- insisted that the Asian financial crisis and their own social achievements proved their socialist convictions were right all along.

But while the U.S. appeared to have triumphed overwhelmingly in the Cold War, the old total embargo on Cuba--and the refusal to extend diplomatic recognition--remained in place.

And so things stand today.

Or at least they did until the new year and its chance for baseball teams from Baltimore and Cuba to play a couple of games.

Yet now comes news that the U.S. is balking at Cuba sending their share of the take at Camden Yards to Central American victims of Hurricane Mitch. Seems they don't want a dime to touch the hands of the government in Havana -- after all, diplomatically they don't exist as far as Washington's concerned.

Isn't it time to drop all this silliness and start a new game? Of course by rights Washington should start by recognizing the existence of the other side.

But at least let the Orioles and the what--Reds?--go nine innings a couple times. Heck, allow U.S. companies to show their stuff by letting them do business there. And let Americans go see just what the opposition has.

What could be easier than that?

Come on people -- let's play ball.

Steve Eckardt (seckardt@aol.com) is a Chicago-based free-lance writer and T-ball coach who just returned from his second trip to Cuba.

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The local art scene

The Phoenix Gallery

Bloomington-Normal has another new and creative way to help you spend your time. Hidden above the Campustown Supply store on 121-123 North Street in downtown Normal, is the Pigeon Gallery. This not for profit establishment is home to artists of all mediums and styles. Visual artists, musicians, performers & writers are all welcome to host shows in an open-minded environment.

The gallery, which has been functioning since October of 1998, is run by Catherine Preston, Tony Schreck, and Nick White. It was named by the first artists featured at the gallery as a commentary towards Bloomington's The Phoenix Gallery.

Currently showing at Pigeon Gallery is "Selection from Collection" by Heather Romney and Peter Redgrave. The show will run from Monday January 25th through February 6th, and will sculpture and photography.

Scheduled events include photography, sculpture, paintings and a theme presentation on harassment against women. The harassment exhibition will be organized by Catherine Preston. She is currently seeking artists who may have materials concerning this topic that they may wish to submit for showing.

For a schedule of events, volunteer information or to submit work, please call 309-862-0675.

For a different change of pace or to expand your creative mind, come down to Pigeon Gallery. Bloomington-Normal is full of talented artists of all kinds, and Pigeon Gallery would like to help you find them.

Written by Barbie Dockstader

"Faux toe" works by James Bohn, Ted Diamond, Leah Frink, and Natalie Lenowski. The show will include a variety of photographs done by the artists. The opening reception is Thursday, February 11 from 6 to 9pm. The show will run from Monday, February 8 to Tuesday February 19.

"Which one of you is Moe?" works by Jef Powell, Dylan Palmer and Marvin Rotea. Jef, Dylan and Marvin had the honor of having the first Pigeon Gallery show in October of 1998. It was their initiative that actually named the gallery. They will help carry on the tradition with a new selection of works including painting and sculpture. The opening reception is Thursday, February 25 from 6 to 9pm. The show will run from Tuesday February 23 to Saturday, March 6.

Call For Works

We are seeking artists who have work dealing with harassment against women and the socialization of men and women which may cause harassment.

All media will be considered, including video and performance.

Deadline for Submission is February 6, 1999

Slides must be postmarked no later than February 6, 1999 or else they will not be considered.

Please send slides to: Harassment Exhibition
c/o Catherine Preston
104 1/2 North St. Apt. B
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Include a typed slide list with the artist's name, title, date, size and medium. Please label the slides with the artist's name, title, date, size and medium, and place a dot in the lower left corner of each slide. Drawings of proposed installation work could supplement the slides.

Send a self addressed stamped envelope if you would like slides returned.

Artists whose work is chosen will be notified by February 16, 1999.

There is no entry fee.

Questions can be directed to Catherine Preston: (309) 862-0675 or cawp7@hotmail.com

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American Buffalo by Acting Independently

"...a good...rough and tumble ride...(pause)...through three screwed up guys who live their , um, lives in Chicago...(pause)...we set you down in a smelly, dank, dusty hole and let you watch them try to fight their way out." Jason Spaulding

Sound interesting? Sound provocative? Does it sound just a little bit bizarre? How about the tiniest bit unsettling? It does? Well, then I guess it worked. The previous quotation is one actor's description of the David Mamet play, "American Buffalo". Winner of the Drama Critics Circle Award for best American Play, "American Buffalo" will be performed on February 4th, 5th, and 6th to a first-come, first-serve audience at 8:00 p.m. Heartland Theater Company has been generous enough to donate their space at 1100 N. Beech Street in Normal to Bloomington-Normal's newest theater troupe, Acting Independently.

The play, which creatively offers up an insight to the human mind and nature, is the story of three Chicago men and their pursuit of fortune centered around one nickel. The audience will be surrounded with aspects of the show from the moment that they enter the building. In fact, audience members will be such an integral part of this theatrical experience that some individuals will actually be sitting on the set. Although this two-hour performance will have

one fifteen-minute intermission, the show will not stop. Television sets will be scattered throughout the stage area to broadcast taped documentary style interviews with the play's characters.

The geniuses behind this production are; John Whipple, director, Tony Gorrie, "Bobby", Jason Spaulding, "Teach", Jeremy Byrd, "Don", and Stage Manager, Molly Mulcrone. This talented group masterfully conveys the internal themes of Mamet's play, or at least what they feel the themes are. Ranging from business ethics and Darwin's theory of survival of the fittest, to persuasion and manipulation and the effect of little foxes.

What would you expect to pay for an evening of entertainment such as this one promises to deliver? The members of Acting Independently don't want you to worry about that aspect. Admission consists of canned food donations and one nickel*. The canned food will be donated to Home Sweet Home Mission. The nickel? Well, the nickel goes to Acting Independently. Why a nickel? Come to the show and it will all make sense.

Written by Barbie Dockstader
*No pennies, dimes or other currency. Nickels only please. Call 451-1489 for more information.



kicks ass

Barbie Dockstader's new book

Local poet Barbie Dockstader will be releasing a new book at the beginning of February. Consisting of previously unpublished poetry, the book, "And She Said...", will be available at About Books at 221 E. Front Street in Bloomington. Dockstader has released 2 other books with local publishing company Two Ravens.

"And She Said..." will contain approximately 75 new poems and will be a limited edition. Only 100 books will be printed.

Theatre of Ted

Theater of Ted has once again started up at ISU. The "anything goes" open stage in the ISU theater building features students and local residents in a non-restrictive environment. Ranging from stories & poetry to musical performers and off-the-cuff skits, Theater of Ted dares you to go all out in whatever creative medium you desire.

Doors open at mid-night every Saturday and the show length depends on audience participation. Everyone is encouraged to get there early and be prepared to be enlightened. Theater of Ted is many things to many people, but it is never boring.

Guinea Pig Productions

Guinea Pig Productions is back. The gentlemen who amazed you with "The 4a.m. Variety Show: a dark exploitation of mind, body and Aristotle", have teamed up again to bring you a "modern tragedy written entirely in verse concerning morals and values in the artistic world." (Mark Hackman)

Although very few details are being released, the promise of an excellent production is definitely there. This full-length drama is written by Mark Hackman and will be performed in an ISU studio theater. There will be an open call for a prospective cast in mid July, because there's nothing Guinea Pig likes more than having people they've never seen before auditioning for their shows.

Also in the works for Guinea Pig is a tentative experiment entitled "6 in the morning". This pre-cast show will take place at Denny's restaurant and is yet another secretive production.

Guinea Pig would also like to produce shows by other local artists, but nothing in the near future. Although Bob Kalmbach has turned to writing full-time, other Guinea Pig members, Mark Hackman and Brett Presson, have been cast in a studio show at ISU.

The Federation of United Wrestlers

The Federation of United Wrestlers once again proved that wrestling is real, this time they had the pleasure of proving it to over 160 spectators.

The ISU sponsored event in January was held in Watterson Towers and was highly successful. F.U.W., known as Bloomington-Normal's #1 backyard wrestling federation planned to outdo themselves with their first ISU endeavor and blew everyone's expectations away.

Although there was one major injury, F.U.W. has released a statement saying, "that Disco Stu's injuries were serious and reconstructive surgery was necessary."

Why do these 30 men endure such great risks all for the sake of performance? Because their goal is to entertain the world. This is not a goal that they take lightly. More time, effort and money is spent on F.U.W. than most larger wrestling organizations spend on their shows. But then again, F.U.W.'s motto is "keepin' it real", and rumor has it that those other organizations have choreographed events.

If you aren't entirely up to date on your F.U.W. information, here are a few important details. F.U.W. consists of 4 factions, Targets of Christ, Arkham, BS, and Team Ubermensch.

The current World Heavyweight Champion is Arkham's Big Daddy. He will be wrestling T.O.C.'s Angel at the next pay per view to defend his title.

The current Light Heavyweight Champion is Little Bitch (a non-faction F.U.W. member). Appropriately enough, Wife Beater Brett Presson will be attempting to win the belt at the next pay per view.

The owner of F.U.W. is Carlson Man.

Pay per view events typically occur at least once per month.


Although the first F.U.W. match consisted of 5 males and 2 females, F.U.W. has no plans to include female members. This decision may somehow be related to the controversy as to whether or not Disco Stu was actually beaten by woman wrestler 34 Caliber during that first match.

T-shirts are available for sale. F.U.W. carries both faction oriented shirts and straight F.U.W. t-shirts.

For more information on the upcoming events products, and F.U.W.'s website, contact Brett at 436-0103.

Finally, the most important detail about Bloomington-Normal's #1 backyard wrestling federation... Wrestling is real, and F.U.W. is all about "keepin' it real."

Barbie Dockstader



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I've already got 2,000 beanies, but want another one, dammit! Enclosed is \$6.00 for a complete one year (six issue) subscription to the Post Amerikan. Please make your check payable to the Post Amerikan.

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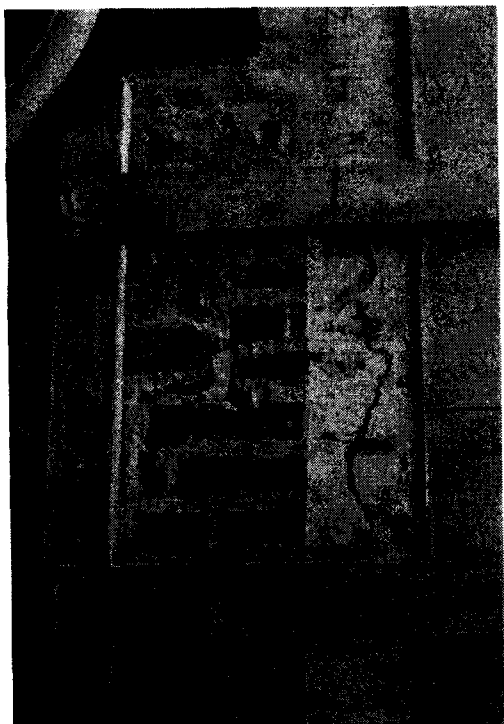
Moloch in whom I sit lonely!

According to the bible, Moloch was a god of the Ammonites and Phoenicians. Worshipers of this god would offer up their children for burnt sacrifice. A second definition is "anything exacting merciless sacrifices" (Funk and Wagnells Standard Encyclopedic Dictionary, 1966). Fritz Lang used "Moloch" in his groundbreaking film Metropolis (a modern socialist allegory to the parable of the tower of Babel) to represent the dehumanizing aspects of technology. Allen Ginsberg used "Moloch" in much the same way in the third section of his epic poem "Howl." "Moloch in whom I sit lonely!" is a line from this poem, and I have recently appropriated this line as a title for a composition for string bass (with optional amplification and live processing), tape and optional computer projections. To date I've finished the composition, but I have yet to complete the visual projections. The first version will be done using scans of black and white photos I've taken of urban decay images. The pictures presented below portray the beginning of Ginsberg's poem...

J Bohn
<http://www.arts.ilstu.edu/~jbohn/moloch>

1
What sphinx of cement and aluminum bashed open their skulls
and ate up their brains and imagination?

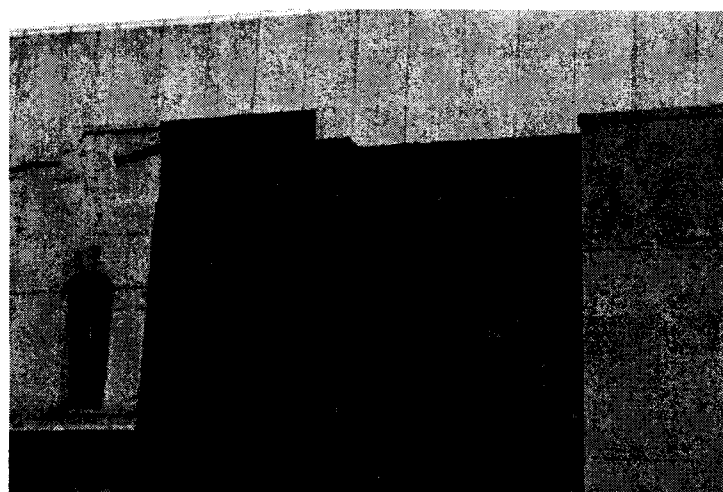
Moloch! Solitude! Filth! Ugliness! Ashcans and unobtainable
dollars! Children screaming under the stairways! Boys
sobbing in armies! Old men weeping in the parks!



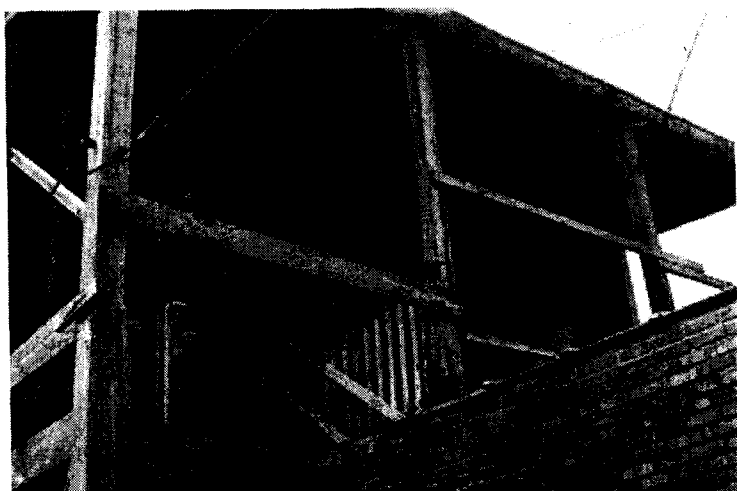
2
Moloch! Moloch! Nightmare of Moloch! Moloch the loveless!
Mental Moloch! Moloch the heavy judger of men!

Moloch the incomprehensible prison! Moloch the crossbone
soulless jailhouse and Congress of sorrows! Moloch whose
buildings are judgement! Moloch the vast stone of war!
Moloch the stunned governments!

Moloch whose mind is pure machinery! Moloch whose blood
is running money! Moloch whose fingers are ten armies!
Moloch whose breast is a cannibal dynamo! Moloch
whose ear is a smoking tomb!



3
Moloch whose eyes are a thousand blind windows! Moloch
whose skyscrapers stand in the long streets like endless
Jehovahs! Moloch whose factories dream and croak in the
fog! Moloch whose smokestacks and antennae crown the
cities!



4
Moloch whose love is endless oil and stone! Moloch whose
soul is electricity and banks! Moloch whose poverty is the
specter of genius! Moloch whose fate is a cloud of sexless
hydrogen! Moloch whose name is the Mind!



Giveaway at Crossroads

Those who have been reading my articles for the *Post* know that I have been writing about tribal culture. One of the few places in the area that has any real and positive connections to these cultures is the Crossroads Global Handcrafts store, located at 428 N. Main Street in downtown Bloomington.

The store gave me the backing necessary to produce a tape of the instruments that are sold there being played by a group of musicians at Sinewave Studio.

That tape will be available at the store at no charge. The volunteers, who do the work for the store, will help make copies to keep them available.

Also, we ask that others, who want to help with this project, make a copy or a few and bring them to the store to keep the process going.

All the music heard on the tape, with the exception of the guitar played by Eva Marie Hunter, was made by the tribal instruments from around the world that are available at Crossroads.

There are drums from Africa and India; there are gongs from Nepal; there are flutes from Peru, and many other instruments from many different tribal cultures.

They weren't designed to be played together, but they sound good together.

Walk into the store and see the instruments and the many other beautiful things.

The store is not-for-profit and helps the artisans who produced the work. So, if you can splurge a little, you help the world's tribal people.

There will be a tape there for you. I hope you enjoy the music.

Walk in beauty.

—Gregg Brown

WGLT: Year of the Duke

GLT, your source for all that jazz, is celebrating the centenary of one of the most influential composers of all time – Edward Kennedy Ellington.

The celebration, which began January 1, features a four month on-air tribute to Duke Ellington, culminating in a grand celebration of his musical legacy on April 29, 1999, the master's birthday. Over the next few months, GLT Jazz will feature classic performances by the legendary Duke Ellington Orchestra itself, as well as Ellington masterworks performed by jazz giants like Armstrong, Fitzgerald, Monk, Vaughan, Webster and many more.

GLT 89.1/103.3 FM is a listener supported National Public Radio affiliate licensed to Illinois State University.

GLT presents *This American Life*: radio like you've never heard it before

GLT 89.1/103.3 FM is proud to announce it has added the award-winning radio program, *This American Life* to its broadcast schedule.

This American Life is a weekly documentary that uses journalism, fiction, interviews and audio art to explore contemporary American culture. Each week the program focuses on a theme: immigrant parents, a job that takes over your life, the kindness of strangers, outsiders trying to be insiders, what happens when things *really* go wrong. An eclectic group of writers and performers tell stories around that theme: stories of, well, this American life.

The result is highly original, provocative and compelling radio. Since its national debut just three years ago, *This American Life* has won a Peabody award and is already airing on over 250 public radio stations nationwide. Fans of the show are fiercely loyal to the program and at times evangelistic.

"Requests for *This American Life* from GLT listeners who have heard the show in other markets caught me off guard," says GLT Program Director Mike McCurdy. "We think this program will make you gather around the radio with your friends and listen for the entire hour, shooing away anyone who dares to interrupt."

This American Life airs on GLT 89.1/103.3 FM every Sunday morning at 10:00 a.m.

This American Life originates from WBEZ in Chicago and is distributed nationwide by Public Radio International.

GLT 89.1/103.3 FM is the listener supported public radio station at Illinois State University.

Link to *This American Life*'s web site from the GLT site: www.ilstu.edu/depts/wgl. For more information, please contact GLT Program Director Mike McCurdy at 309-438-2394.

post-hypnotic

University Galleries is pleased to announce the opening of *post-hypnotic*, a traveling exhibition that examines the resurgence of pronounced optical effects in the work of 28 painters living in the U.S., Switzerland, England, and Japan. The Op art movement – peaking in the wake of mid-sixties World's Fair optimism – lost its critical appeal as it transmuted almost overnight from canvas into clothing design. Since the 1980s, however, numerous artists have revisited perceptual phenomena involving pulsating patterns, afterimages, vibrating illusionistic space, and other sensations often associated with altered states.

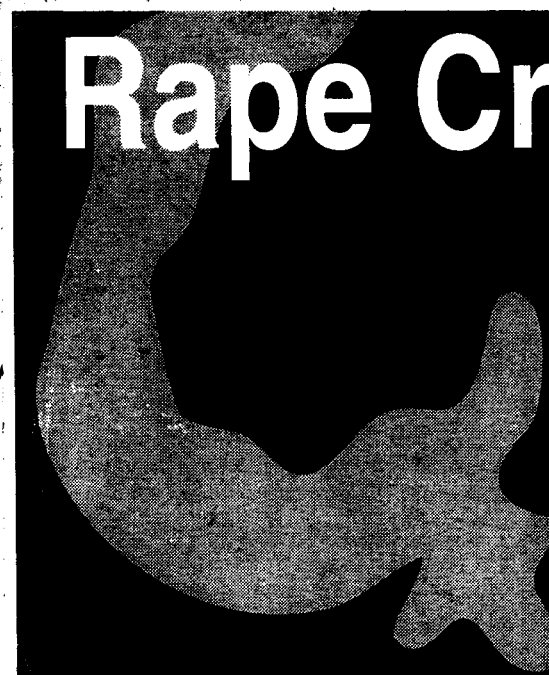
Employing diverse media, strategies and techniques, these artists either paint on canvas, aluminum, stainless steel, or wood panel, or work in other two-dimensional formats, using materials such as resin, collaged xeroxes, pharmaceuticals, light bulbs, and computer printouts. As *post-hypnotic* is concerned with painting, or works that "read" as paintings, the exhibition does not include sculpture, holography, or screen-based images.

post-hypnotic will be shown at the University Galleries Jan-Feb 21, 1999.

University Galleries is located at 110 Center for Visual Arts, on the Illinois State University campus (off Beaufort between University and School streets). Parking is available in the gravel lot off University in spaces marked Gallery Parking.

<http://www.orat.ilstu.edu/cfa/galleries>

—University Galleries



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



Reviews, reviews, reviews

The Swingin' Hemphills Second Crop

The thing that makes the Swingin' Hemphills stand out from the crowd is that they seem like they are having so much fun when they are playing. They also seem to be the kind of people that are always involved in a band, one way or another. The above may be true about a lot of musicians, but these guys are actually good.

Playing in a style that is hard to define, (you'll find hints of the Grateful Dead, bluegrass, the blues and oddly enough, punk) the Swingin' Hemphills successfully incorporate many musical styles into their songs. The instruments played are just as varied - you have electric guitars, keyboards, trumpets, kazoos, harmonicas, bass guitar and drums. The result is a body of work that you'll want to hear over and over again, not just it gets your body shaking, but you'll want to pay closer attention to the entertaining lyrics.

Produced and mixed at SHINY ON TOP
Available at Mother Murphy's in downtown Normal.

-towanda!

New Ani cd disappoints

I bought the new Ani DiFranco cd, and all I can say is I WANT THE OLD ANI BACK! The Ani of past that brazenly declared "I see you and I'm so uninspired / I see you and I dilate" over the backdrop of powerful hooks is AWOL on her newest release titled, "Up Up Up Up Up Up."

Her current (and 13th) cd is an overproduced, experimental jazz-filled annoyance that is hard to listen to and virtually impossible to sing along with.

Long time fans of Ani will be upset to find that "Up Up Up Up Up Up" does not contain one song that incorporates the typical musical elements that have defined Ani's playing style. The marriage of acoustic guitar, and occasional drums and bass are nowhere to be found on this release. Instead, we are subjected a wide variety of instruments such as: the banjo, accordian, upright bass, wurlitzer, pocket cajun, organ, space phone, clavinet, drum machine and water cooler. Although I do give credit to DiFranco for pushing the artistic envelope and experimenting with a wide variety of musical effects, it just ended up being a messy production from someone who is capable of much greater results.

The two strongest and most appealing songs on this 11 song cd are "Tis of thee" and "Everest." But compared to material on any of DiFranco's past releases - these would prove to be the weakest.

Just like the title, "Up Up Up Up Up Up", this cd relies on too many elements to relate its message when fewer and less subliminal instruments would have been suffice. Less, indeed, is more.

-towanda! rather strongly suggests that you buy one of Ani's past recordings, such as the angst filled "Not a Pretty Girl" or "Dilate."

Cont. from p. 20

"Good luck, bad luck....who's to say?" was his response. A couple of months later, the horse returned....with a herd of beautiful, strong horses following. A rich merchant came through town the same day, saw the horses and bought all of them from the man, excepting the horse the man originally found, making him the richest man in all the countryside around. "Ah, what good luck you have!" the villagers said. "Good luck, bad luck...who's to say?" is what the man responded with to the villagers.

With such a simple outlook, life is transformed. If each moment is accepted and lived in itself, not keeping a scorecard of past transgressions, it is possible for a person to rise above the petty differences of life and become content, happy, filled with love and joy. I'm not saying that it isn't okay to be angry, but to hold it, harbor, feed it....to let it control you and not the other way around diminishes the person venting the rage, and wounds the earth. It prevents our own personal growth. I don't expect that I won't ever slip again--I expect I will. I won't lose sleep over it though, and I will continue to try to see with an open heart in each moment of each day. The pattern is broken. I can see myself clearly now. And I know now I am truly fine, already perfect.

If you have any interest in learning more about this form of meditation, Ascension, please feel free to call me at 827-5843 or call The Society for Ascension at 1-888-926-7853. There is a workshop scheduled for Bloomington/Normal March 26-28 to teach this technique. For more information, call Debbie Dehm at To Your Health at 827-8812. It is simple to do, takes little effort, does not require stilling your mind or any belief to work. It only requires an openness to trying it and letting it work in your life. You could also purchase the book Ascension! by MSI at Barnes & Noble if you want more detailed information about it. For my part, I didn't want too much of an explanation of the technique before I started and approached it with innocence and an open heart.

--Marcee Murray

Book & zine review

Becoming Anna: The autobiography of a sixteen-year-old.

Anna Michener

"My grandmother says I destroyed my mother before I was even born." These are the first words in Anna Michener's memoir of her painful childhood in which she suffered physical and emotional abuse by her unstable parents and grandmother.

Anna became the scapegoat for her family's many problems and was institutionalized as a result.

"Becoming Anna," is a poignant story of a young vulnerable child who was thrown into juvenile mental health wards on the insistence of a family who would rather get rid of her than to face their own problems.

Anna takes us into the world of psych wards, where the neglect, abuse and a lack of compassion is sometimes much greater than many of the homes that these children came from. This is a harrowing, forthright account of a sixteen-year-old girl who was eventually saved because someone took the time to listen and most importantly - believe her story.

Washer: A zine for women.

October/November 1998
volume one/issue one

There's a new publication in town--it's a university and community feminist zine called *Washer*. The inaugural issue (20 pages) is packed with personal essays, prose and rants on body image, bisexuality, sexism in the trucker culture and the hidden anti-woman message manifested in the Cruella De Vil character. Also included is some valuable addresses in case you wanted to contact your Illinois representatives and senators, calendar information, and a listing of local support groups and activist organizations.

Let's hope the material in the first *Washer* is indicative of future issues. They certainly are off to a great start!

contact Washer:
P.O. Box 953
Normal, IL 61761-0953

309.452.9558 (Blm/Nrml)
217.355.5065 (Chambana)

www.soltec.net/~arbitrar/washer.html

Pick up a copy at Last Chance Newsstand
404 N. Main, Downtown Bloomington.

-towanda!



The Poetry Page

My hell, my sin, my fright: the men.

I could sit here and compose endless rhyme
with no concept of time
or I can get off my ass and confess my fears

I go to a church
entering hesitantly, defensively
I approach the hypocrite box, untrusting,
where hell and demons are expelled

I've no other option

I enter, confess,
and release.
The monster bids me farewell with my penance.
In closing the boxes door
I close my hell, my sin, my fright: the men.

Neither closure of that confession door,
nor the chanting of penitence prayers
Rid me of the memories
the aversion
the fears

They haunt me still
The monster in black lied, in fact,
the men, the demons, they come back daily remind me
of such things as power, pride, force and their fucking violation
known as intercourse.

I run from them, they find me and my inner being
They expose me and trash me repeatedly again.

Why must I face this hell?
And why must these demons exist?
I thought the box would diminish this --
or the God I hear of,
but that which was confessed has returned.

The evil of their existence is apparent:
under my bed, in my closet, in my head
they dwell and feast and steal and kill.
Their destruction is their joy;

My existence is my death.

The monster in black is one of them, too
(Who am I to trust?)
Is the God a male, as well?
My father, my brother, my mailman, my Savior --
all lined up to take my innocence from me.
It's in their minds, their hearts, and their blood:
Power and dominance
-they employ against me

Expression of my fear in that confession
Exposed the animals clear
And caused me to fall once again
Into the box that first brought me here.

--Kristy DeWall

Prisoner's First Laugh

Old man watches from afar

Young man fights back the tears for dreams
that will never be realized, children that will
grow up without a daddy to hold them.

Old man with haunted numb eyes watches from
afar

Young man walks with his head obsequiously
bowed searching for answers on an over
polished floor

Old man has seen too much, watches from afar.

Young man's silence is broken by a word of wit.
He laughs, he laughs like he has never
laughed before. Months of sorrow and pain
washed away by tear blessed laughter.

Old man watches, and non verbally says with
an uninhabited stare, Laugh boy laugh, boy
you laugh, let it go, laugh today, for tomorrow
you will be me.

--Nikolai Alexanderovich Zarick

Two Eyelashes

She had two
eyelashes on her
cheek, fallen, lost,
brother, sister,
one upper,
one lower,
two delicate
angels that
guard the
vision, so
forlorn, I
wipe them off
with my thumb.

--John Firefly

Eraser

The eraser of a
pencil is sad, it
knows so much lost
history, turned into
a smudge, heroes
an villains alike,
a dry mist on
paper, forever
sang good-bye.

--John Firefly

YOUR POEM HERE.

The Post Amerikan is seeking poetry
submissions for the Poetry Page.

If interested, please mail your poem
to: Post Amerikan, P.O. Box 3452,
Bloomington, IL 61702 or e-mail to
pamerikan@aol.com.

We have the right to
reject any poem.

For Sale

There's an old man at the bus stop selling memories.
From a suitcase he swears holds all my dreams.
He promised that he's locked up life's miseries.
As he offers the simplicity that brings me peace.

There's confusion all around me in every way.
As I struggle for an instrument to keep me safe.
And I'll purchase any wisdom I may someday use.
If it leads me from the horrors of the evening news.

The billboard in the sky proclaims our ignorance.
The preacher at St. John's is screaming eloquence.
As if we could attempt to own some common sense.
Yet, we're living in society's embarrassment.

There's a vagrant on the corner wearing sanity.
Clutching tightly to the last bit of humanity.
He's not fulfilling any ancient prophecy.
But he says he knows the answer to every plea.

An old lady's living underneath the mission steps.
And she covers up at nite with all of our regrets.
They keep her from the memory of the life she left.
She's wearing the contentment that we all forget.

While a small band's playing Dylan out on Clark and Tenth.
A guitar case catches change to help them make the rent.
And I listen to the memories from every song.
'Cause the old man sticks around until my money's gone.

--Barbie Dockstader

Inspired by a conversation with Mark Hackman

Writer's Block

I'm lost in my pen,
I can write and, such,
but I can't get nothing out of
my gut
nomore.
There's strain in my
heart.
I'm losing my art?
Fight to survive
with my cold, cold hands,
and, maybe,
I'll write something.

--David Hall



The whys, and following a path

An Architectonic Conceptualist, Quasi-Renaissance man is how I like to think of myself, unfortunately I have to add to that the appellation of incarcerated human.

I invested my time by conducting research in my autodidactic way. For the most part my research and designs of metatecture, metaculture, and koyaanisqats (a society in the midst of its own destruction).

I tend not to write about the "whys," the things that motivate me to invent solutions and to integrate them into my alternative-intentional community concepts. The reason why I generally shy away from writing about the "whys" is that people seem to turn out negative sounding prisoners. So I negate the darkness which looms over our fragile planet, and I write in the light of harmony. This resembles the argumentum and fortiori that humor justifies obesity. Which is as unfair to our plus size brothers and sisters, as asking the incarcerated to be nice, coy, non obtrusive little slaves.

But, for a moment please indulge me as I focus on the "whys" before I revert to the solutions that seem to be so blatantly obvious, yet need to be reiterated. The "whys" are crying to all of us each day via the mass media like an ankle biting dog, that we try to hush away, but the pain and tension persists. Some of these "whys" are in the here and now, some are in the cusp between the century and the impending new millennium. They are part of our current, and future human condition, for which solutions, answers, and agape must now be afforded.

Let us start with this poetic licensed barrage of the images that haunt me in the midnight hours, and to which I dedicate my life to creating an environment that most of these horrors are absent.

Once playing, then slaughtered, now mummified Rwandan babies are stacked up like so much driftwood; millions of forgotten souls are being warehoused in mind void wastelands

called correctional facilities in which there is little correction.

Mountain tops are erased like ant hills under the spray of a garden hose by the greed of the mining consortium; the last of the noble old growth forest, cling on like fingers losing their grip on a cliffside; swine waste that could be utilized to regreen deserts, is turning millions of fish into B-movie mutants; Johnny and Mary use hypodermic syringes as flag poles on the beach front sand castles.

Bottled air is about to join bottled water on the supermarket shelves; and the question lurks, will headless human clones be harvested for their organs as another commodity?

Religion against religion, faction against sect, brother against brother; sisters fear the dark; little ones are conditioned to fear everything.

The Three Gorges of thousands of poems and works of art are about to become a ghost's memory. Erstwhile, damn dams have turned endless riverbeds and miles of lush lands into toxic dust bowls. The aquifers of Chiapas, Kosovo and countless other blood stained and tortured lands pump reddened water.

The potable water is as fleeting as the plains buffalo. In the United States 40% of the surface and ground water is contaminated. Whilst 50,000 chemical dumpsites provide water treatment for much of the rest, like a poisoned nightmare that we pass off as somebody else's problem.

A whole generation is losing its self empowerment because they are incapable of planting, hauling, building, teaching and self-governing.

"Them thar terrorists," or should I say, somebody's freedom fighters, bomb us; we bomb them, and mothers pull their broken children from the rubble. They care not for which cause, or whom killed their little flowerbuds only that they will never bloom.

In the next century we will need two to three planet Earths to support this one. Every ten seconds we have thirty more mouths to feed, and food demand will be more than double of the available arable land.

Cyber taught, genetically altered children will potentially become the ultimate "Haves" to a struggling world of mostly "have nots."

The y2k panic (a 1.6 trillion dollar oopsy) is about to force the techno dependent chickens to come home to roost. The doomsayers continue to use the end of this millennium and the book of Revelations as a vehicle for terror tactics to convert the lonely and to gather alms from the poor.

Organized crime globally is now raking in more than one trillion U.S. dollars per year. In many developing countries "the shadow economy" out does the main stream economy and is crushing their infrastructures. Pornography sales outweigh music sale and seven legged frogs really sing on summer nights.

We all live at the end of a smoke stack, or somebody's tailpipe; death flows downstream into our yard. None of us are immune to this madness, but from chaos comes order; even fractals can be mathematically solved.

Despite what I just wrote, or what the doomsayers clobber us over the head with daily, the human race, in some form, will probably survive until our sun is snuffed out in millions of years. We simply need a broodingnagian "new think" for a rapidly approaching new millennium.

We must take back our misplaced personal power, and regreen our shattered planet. Nobody is going to solve our common woes but us. And ironically it will only take a few hours a week of our time to tackle the vast majority of what needs to be dealt with.

Margaret Mead said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world, indeed it's the only thing that has," a quote that I proudly overuse. If enough of us humans dig a mere teaspoon of dirt we can move mountains, and build a shining global society for a new ecozoic age, in which solutions are amalgamated into its fundamental design.

It might have been pragmatic to have written the following in a list format, but solutions which I will now attempt to present are so crucial, that I did not want them to be trivialized; most of them are known by many, yet they are lost in our social stew.

(This is probably a good time to take a sip of your beverage)

The Path

It takes a few days to learn the basics of nut and fruit propagation. Within a year's time, you, yourself, could create a life sustaining forest.

It takes not much more than a week to learn how to build a house made from oft time discarded straw bales, or from wonderful traditional cob construction method. Metatecture "decade house" can be grown in seven to ten years for little more than the price of a few bags of seed. Other homes can be built for a month's wages (US), that would have been the envy of Henry David Thoreau.

You can take a first aid course and/or alternative medicine course. But when it really comes down to it you heal by healing. Many of the former flower children, of which I am one, threw themselves into the sea of conflict and strife of peace and civil rights marches, the great music festivals, and the initial "Earth Days." Along with the eco-protection sit-ins of the 60s and 70s, as medics with little more than a backpack of hope, love and ideology. That backpack needs to be given to a new generation of healers.

The same tenet goes for teaching; you learn by teaching, mentoring, and sharing your soul. My two decades of teaching Asian Martial arts solidifies my own beliefs, and most people that have taught will tell you that it is the zenith of learning; we all have something to teach and we must do so.

We soon forget or black out the slogans of our times, that are so simply said, and so arduous to enact, yet deserve to be said here. Reasons beget reason; read everything; network internationally with like minded souls; organize; invent solutions daily; think deeply; pray; think globally, act locally; simply words

that represent a way of life, as they forge a mantra for the ecozoic age.

Another solution based slogan is "get back to the land" which in these times is so imperative. I am certainly not advocating becoming a modern liddite, but to embrace the older proven way with the new "green" philosophy and tomorrow's technology. Enjoy your personal computer and your DVD recorder, but learn how to raise your own organically grown food. Watch HDTV via digital satellite dish, but practice a performance art.

Seek, and strive to maintain a higher plane of existence of your own self actuated design. Live "the examined life" by examining your path in the universe and through daily introspection.



of light into a new millennium

Don't let the day end until you've at least learned one thing that betters your life, even if it is just a single word, song, thought, or concept. Master one great signature culinary dish and invite someone to share it, even if it is a fried tomato, and you have to dine under a bridge.

Find a Habitat for Humanity chapter (or an equivalent organization) and enjoy the warmth, and togetherness of an old fashioned barn raising party, whilst learning the trade, a new skill, doing a little networking, or mayhap building sweat equity that can go towards your own home. All of these are just rewards for helping house a family.

Picket, start a petition, or design some other instrument of change to correct an injustice, practice civil disobedience, nonviolent philosophy, consensus decision making and passive resistance religiously.

Make love romantically, imaginatively, passionately and with love in your heart, and always consentiently, on equal ground. Enjoy "equal power" in your love relationships by empowering your life partner(s).

Laugh at bigotry, teach tolerance and acceptance of all *modus vivendis*, and that racism, sexism, ageism, and division between classes and cultures do nothing but keep us all separated and down trodden. You can't add by subtracting.

Conserve energy as if you're on an ongoing sacred mission, by insulating; weather stripping; replacing insufficient applications, lighting fixtures, vehicles and anything that is part of the disposable-planned obsolescence mentality.

Swap air conditioning for fans, compost, vermcompost, recycle and find ways to "reuse" whatever you can; use plastic lumber in your construction; "repair it instead of tossing it," and demand ethanol at the filling station. Likewise, support funding for "new energy" research.

Support, sponsor, and use alternative/soft energy such as wind turbines, passive and active solar systems, nonevasive small scale hydropower, geothermal, biomass production for use in power plants and soil improvement, cogeneration, cooling towers, air wells, and treatment wetlands and "living machines" (solar aquatics-TM).

Integrate "metatecture" (alternative architecture), "metaculture" (alternative and sustainable agriculture), and "artification" (creating works of art wherever and whenever possible and by turning human made objects into natural appearing objects) into your daily living, and your local, state, nautical and global community designs.

Adjust your consumer purchasing habits by buying bulk, making more efficient trips to the market; shop with others, ask for recyclable packaging that has the highest post consumer product content available. Co-op, co-op, and co-op some more. Boycott Mother Earth's enemies, and only purchase from responsible "green" companies and individuals, even if they cost slightly more.

Create and sponsor public art, free music concerts, community plays, and arts and music education in public schools at all grade levels. Check in on neighboring shut-ins and permanently schedule visitations with our elders, and when it is mutually agreeable record their lore.

Volunteer where you can do the most good for the sake of doing good. Befriend, sponsor and work with an incarcerated human(s).

Nourish your body as if your, and your offspring's life depended on it; protest anything that is not salubrious, and does not promote peace and harmony. Love your fellow human with an open and uncluttered heart, free of veils that keep us from fully being our true selves. Write out your mind and soul on paper, share yourself in a wider context.

Stop and take a little bit of time to pick up litter, clean up and beautify an abandoned lot, building, an entire brown scape or any eyesore within view. Make your own space an example of amaranthine pulchritude.

Walk a Sister to safety when the shadows are long; tell a child that the boggy man is a myth and in a rational and soft way that the human race has a dark side but that we are a species to be admired.

I have basically wrote about everything under the sun here, and I apologize for the hodge podge way in which I related these topics to you. But how could I have ignored any of them. I brought up many points of interest, but the point is not what I brought up; it is what is within your view or your path that needs you to heal it. It is not an insurmountable task to change the negative patterns of our common existence.

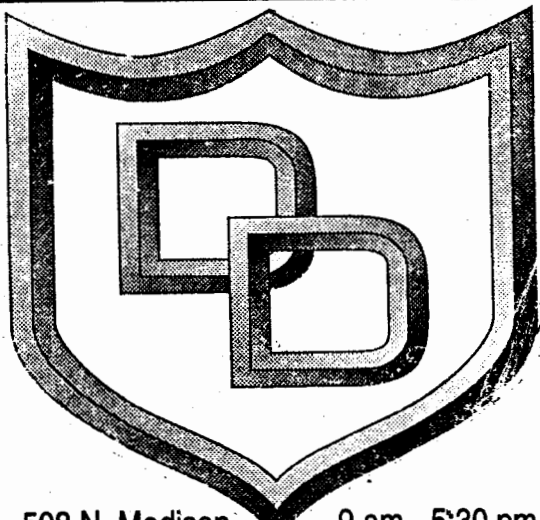
If you have little or no funds or assets, there are still millions of little free or inexpensive things you can do. If you are financially solvent, and pressed for time hire someone to act in your stead, and/or give a little to a N.G.O. non-profit. The essential thing is that you "act."

All of this may sound utopianistic, or like an ideological chimera, and many may say all of this is trite and overly cliché, in part because so many of us have become jaded and numb to what the solutions are; likewise we have been emotionally beaten down by the "whys," but we can, together, do something about this and so much more.

We are brainwashed that we are helpless and that we need someone or some private or governmental organization to come and save the day. We are convinced by a service industry driven culture that we need specialists to bail us out of everything no matter how trivial.

Everybody says "call the guy." I am saying "be the guy." Become a superhero. The day that you take back your personal power, help a fellow human, improve your immediate surroundings and "act," is the day that you will smile before you fall off to sleep.

-Nikolai Alexanderovich Zarick #162110
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Letting go of anger

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, do not resist him who is evil; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any one wants to sue you, and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. And whoever shall force you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you. You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor, and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax gatherers do the same? And if you greet your brothers only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

—Jesus Christ, Matthew 5:38-48

"Do not judge lest you be judged yourself. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it shall be measured to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly enough to take the speck out of your brother's eye."

—Jesus Christ, Matthew 7:1-5

"And you who seek to know Me, know that your seeking and yearning will avail you not, unless you know the Mystery: for if that which you seek, you find not within yourself, you will never find it without. For behold, I have been with you from the beginning, and I am that which is attained at the end of desire."

—from *The Charge of the Goddess*

"Two wrongs don't make a right."

—Unknown

"It is time for all the co-workers for peace, all those who wish to be or already are enlightened, all those who possess goodwill for humanity, all leaders everywhere to drop their surface and petty differences and unite with one voice of understanding and praise for the Source of all that is. The simple guiding principle here is this: If we are sowing division, preaching destruction, seeking or finding evil in the world (even if we are looking for it with the intention of removing it!), then we are part of the problem, not the cure."

—MSI, Ascension! (5-6).

I have been on a journey to discover joy in life--the peace that passes all understanding. I knew that the trip would be short, once I found out how to get there. It just couldn't be that difficult once I found the tools to accomplish this. I have finally found the key, the tools to

this type of growth and enlightenment, through a meditation technique called Ascension, which I can only describe as miraculous in my life and in the life of others. It is perfect in its simplicity. It will work easily for anyone who is open to trying it.

The most amazing discovery in myself that has come out was one I had absolutely no idea of: the effect of rage upon my life.

I somehow had felt that over the years I was justified in my righteous indignation about situations and events. I felt my anger was deserved by others. I thought I had a RIGHT to be angry with others for what "they did to me." Surprise, surprise, but "they" have not been doing anything to me. I have been doing it all to myself.

How many times have I deliberately fed my anger? Far, far too many. I think I always had an inkling during the rages that I was doing this. A pause. A moment where I would begin to calm down, or possibly think "Is this really that big of a deal?" and would then think, "Yes! He didn't tell me such and such, deliberately, and hid it from me, which is deceit, and since I would never do that to him, he should never do it to me! He deserves this!" or some other such justification for a different perceived transgression. Off I would go with my rage. I have done it in multitudes of instances, over the years with different people. There has always been a self-righteous justification for it. The reality of the instances is that truly NOTHING was ever done TO ME. By this, I do not mean that I don't think there are instances where anger is not justifiable, but in my daily life, there are rarely those instances.

How many times have you felt that someone deserved to be told off? That they should feel badly for "what they did for you"? Who died and left us judge and jury? Is it really worth the energy to cuss at the person who cuts you off on the road? How about your anger at the waitress who has screwed up your drink order, your food order? Does it really have anything to do with you as a person? Is this not a choice to allow their actions to put a glitch in your day?

A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.--MSI

I recently went through a rage with my beloved Mark over a perceived attack upon my identity by his actions and behaviors. In part, it was a deeply personal response to a behavior of his. My belief was that since I never would have allowed that to happen, that he should never have done the same thing. This then escalated to the uncovering of another event in the past that he never told me of, and this brought out the full force of my fury. I was beyond reason and control. Confession? I said the most mean, hateful things I could possibly think of. I WANTED to crush him. I didn't even care about the behavior that the deceit was for...I was in a rage that he hadn't told me. In truth, the behavior was something that was inconsequential, that I wouldn't have cared about normally, but by coincidence, it occurred

on a day when I was already pissed off at someone else who had vented on me. He was right--I would have railed against him if he had told me that day because I was already pissy, not because he did anything wrong. I would have turned it into something else, by choice, because I "could" justify it...after all, a lot of people get annoyed over little things like that.

Him delaying the telling of this event was to me one more example of how he couldn't be trusted. Since I practice full honesty and disclosure with him, I had decided that anytime he didn't practice this with me he was "doing something to me." I used it as one more example of how he cannot communicate with me and how this is such a horrible flaw in him because I will communicate about anything with him.

How sad to have done all this as many times as I have to people! How joyful to know that is not me but a behavior of mine, and I don't have to behave this way any more.

In speaking with a friend about all of this, chosen for his compassion and unbiased viewpoint, coupled with his open mindedness, I made amazing discoveries about myself and my beloved. I have the problem with dishonesty.

In my programmed view of reality, I crave honesty and full disclosure to feel safe. It feels like the safety of the world has been kicked out from under me when someone doesn't tell me everything that I think I should know, and this is usually defined by something they would rather me not know. They not wanting me to know is perceived as a rejection of me. In my dreams, this fear is symbolized by being in the elevator, traveling up or down, and the floor starts to rock and shift as I desperately try to hold on so as to not fall down the shaft. Sometimes it is like being on a teeter-totter, trying to balance. Sometimes it is literally me slipping, slowly, off the edge, as I desperately clutch for the edge of the elevator floor, trying to prevent the inevitable drop (which never comes in the dream...I always wake up). I think of this dream as I ride in elevators, and am always aware of the fragility of the moment, of each aspect of my very existence.

The rage I feel when confronted with others' "behaviors" is nothing more than a reflection of how I feel about myself inside and/or my fears. If I am angry because another doesn't live up to my expectations, that is nothing more than MY problem. My inability to accept another in the moment, to understand that their behavior is also a reflection of their insecurities and fears is MY problem. Often that which makes us the angriest/most repulsed/outraged is nothing more than the fear of that inside of us.

The perfect example of this that we have all seen is the reaction of the homophobic person. If sex with a member of the same sex doesn't turn you on, you probably don't care if someone else does it. Likewise, you may really get turned on by a mild S/M scene, while your homosexual friend is in fact very, very "conventional" in their sexual behaviors and might never do anything like that. Neither is



& judgement

right; neither is wrong. It is all about personal preference. But where is the person reacting with rage against the homosexual coming from? Do you torture and kill someone because it isn't your cup of tea? Does hatred spring from nowhere? Probably not. This type of reaction most likely rises from the deep fear in the persecutor that s/he might be gay. Even extreme homophobic jokes, rude comments, etc., meant to harm is because of the deep fears and inadequacies of the person feeling them, not because homosexuality is in any way wrong. Apply this to all areas of your life. My anger with most people in most cases arises from fears inside myself: that I am not adequate or good enough. We can see the reflections of our shadow side in what pushes our buttons.

By another way of example, if your partner has an "infidelity," what is the common reaction? Rage. You perceive this action as an attack directed at you. In some instances this may be true. The reality is that in all cases it is still a reflection of how the other person is feeling and isn't your doing or responsibility. In fact, in most cases it has more to do with the "offender" feeling inadequate, needing their esteem boosted, or some such issue. Even if it is because two people are TRULY drawn to one another, does this mean it is because you aren't "good enough"? Is this an indication of your reality and perfect or your perceived inadequacies? Is this then a point for rage, or a point of growth for yourself or the relationship? Even the end of the relationship should be perceived as a new beginning.

To change your world, change yourself.--MSI

For years I have tried to improve myself, be better, try to be as perfect as I could. Why? Well, in part I thought that people should act this way. Mostly, it was the desire in me to be lovable. My life has been spent feeling rejected by all those around me. On the surface, I was rejected. My mother gave up custody of me in 1965 so she could party and have her freedom. There have been small "rejections" ever since. The totality of my existence could be summarized by this: No matter what I did, I was not good enough. I could never be loved the way I am--and maybe if I was good enough, I could be loved how I needed to be loved. What an egotistical existence! How sad! How happy I am to have learned that I am already perfect in myself! I don't have to be this way anymore! I don't have to "try to be better"! As my past patterns of behavior fall away around me, I have discovered that I AM FINE.

My mother didn't reject me. Even if she consciously thought, "I don't want to take care of a crying brat" that still wasn't about the perfection of the young child I was. It revolved around her fears of failure, of her striving to be good enough for her harsh father, of her insecurities and fears. And every perceived rejection I have experienced since then has been all in my head, and nothing to do with me. Even break-ups with those I loved, thinking that once again I "wasn't good enough" had nothing to do with my perfection as a person. In each moment of existence, I am perfect. You are perfect. I may not behave perfectly, but I am already perfect.

Oddly enough, I can say that for the first time in my life I have fallen in love with myself. I have never understood what was meant by self-love. Ah, it is so much easier to be this way! It is so much easier to stop "trying" and just be! In doing so, my heart has opened wide. Each interaction I have on a daily basis has changed.

What you put your attention on grows.--MSI

My biggest discovery about myself recently was really twofold. The first thing I discovered was that I have usually chosen to allow myself to get out of control over something that has nothing to do with me (yes, even if the person does something to me out of their anger, their anger still has nothing to do with me!). It was hard work to keep that anger going, to not be nice for days. I've lost sleep over it, my appetite, and respect from those I "loved." My "love" had nothing to do with me loving, really, but with needing to be loved. I learned that I don't have to choose to feed that anger.

When my attention shifted in this way, I then discovered the results of my rage. Nothing my beloved has ever done "wrong" has even once been to deliberately hurt me or make me feel badly. However, I, in being so self-righteous, justified my anger and lashed out to try and wound him. I struck fast, hard and deep. I kept at it. I tried to show him how inappropriately he was behaving, how inadequate his existence was compared to mine since I would NEVER act like him. Maybe I wouldn't, and maybe it is better to not behave like that, but he would NEVER behave like I was either...he wouldn't try to deliberately harm me, wound my esteem. Acting out of his own issues or fears is much different than me deliberately going for blood (which was also acting out my own issues and fears). I was the one unleashing evil into the world. I had the most room for growth, and I was the one convinced I was so "enlightened" in the "perfection" of my behaviors.

And how do I feel about myself and behavior? Fine! I am sorry I have acted this way with people, but I can't sit here feeling sorry or guilty or bad for my past. The past is the past. I can't change that. My reactions I see with as much compassion as I am now seeing others' actions. My reactions were the results of me not seeing the perfection in myself and others, of not understanding that their behaviors and mine were like the scratches in the grooves of records that the needle is stuck in. We reenact the same themes and beliefs and dramas over and over, in an non-ending circle until, sometimes, somehow, we manage to step outside of ourselves, out of this groove, and heal ourselves. I am so happy that I don't have to waste all that time and energy in feeling bad, hurting others. I don't have to be that way anymore! Such a simple thing to do! Such an easy way to be!

Ironically, one of the things that have always angered me the most about Mark is his inability to communicate with me. He doesn't talk, tell me his thoughts and feelings. I am left on my own guessing. I thought this was his

problem. In some ways, yes, it is one of the grooves he is stuck in. Imagine my surprise when I discovered that I was helping to dig the groove deeper by my anger. A typical argument is this: He tells me, after much digging, what is wrong and what he did. I respond with, "How could you possibly do that!?! That is so wrong! I can't believe..." Maybe it wasn't a wise choice on his part, maybe he shouldn't have done that, maybe I disagree, but my adamantly airing of my viewpoint further disabled his communication skills. It's okay to have differing points of view, it is okay to disagree, but to blatantly disregard his uniqueness is unacceptable. By not treating him with respect, he grew quieter and quieter, not wanting to speak ever if he thought it would make me angry. I then got even angrier by him not speaking. Such a silly loop to be caught in! What a waste of time, energy and growth! The stopping of this senselessness has had a dramatic impact. Mark has started talking. And talking. And talking! The things I have learned about him, about me and about us together have been astounding. They have also been simply wonderful. Though we have always loved each other, we have fallen in love again, deeply and in many ways for the first time we are truly in love with each other.

All you need is love (all together now).--The Beatles

By opening up your heart to another with love, your reaction is transformed. How can you react in anger, if you know the whole story? Each emotion, each moment becomes transformed. There is no good luck, no bad luck. Just each, individual, perfect moment, complete in itself.

I don't fully recollect the story, but the Ishaya monks tell of a poor village man who finds a horse. The villagers all say, "Ah, what good luck you have! Now you have an animal to plow your fields!" The man responds with, "Good luck, bad luck...who's to say?" The man's only son, who helped him with his farming, was riding the horse and fell off, breaking his leg, and leaving him permanently crippled, walking forever with crutches. The villagers said, "Ah, what bad luck you have! Now your son won't be able to help you as much as before with your farming." "Good luck, bad luck...who's to say?" was the farmer's response. The country went to war, and the army came through, taking all the able-bodied young men. The farmer's son was the only young man left in the village, which was a blessing because, though lame, he was still a help to his father. "Ah, what good luck you have!" the villagers cried. "You're son was spared the war and is here to help you!" He responded with, "Good luck, bad luck...who's to say?" The farmer had his son to help, and the horse to plow the fields. His horse ran away right before the harvest. "Ah, what bad luck you have! Now you won't be able to get all the harvest in, since only your crippled son is left to help you!"

Cont. on p. 20



Rainbow Connection News

You can make a difference

Your help is needed in our struggle to ensure we are fully recognized as citizens in our own community. The issue of adding a clause pertaining sexual orientation to local human rights ordinances is very much alive. Even if you are not "out" you can make a difference by doing several very simple things, a few of which are:

- 1) Attend your city or town council meetings frequently. Let our elected representatives know you are interested in their actions and send the message that we are indeed members of the community and intend to be witnesses to what happens in our community. In a peaceful and non-confrontational way remind them that we exist and will be heard.
- 2) Write a letter to the editor. Help keep our issues in front of the public. The more people we make aware, the more allies we will gather and we will need those outside the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered community to win the rights we deserve.

When writing a letter, always include name, address, phone number with your letter. Don't ramble - sharpen your point, make the letter as brief as possible, and reread it to be sure you've made your point and it won't be misunderstood in any way.

Stay calm and reasoned; don't lose your cool no matter what. You can express a strong opinion without offending or sounding shrill. If you are responding to a mean, nasty, idiot, bigot homophobe who makes you fume, remember - the point of your response is not REALLY to convince the writer who makes you mad (which is probably impossible anyway!) - he's just a means to educate the general public.

Send letters on topics that are "hot" in the news. This increases your chance of actually having your letter published and keeps that topic fresh on the public's mind.

3) One more thing - GET INVOLVED!!! Join the Advocacy Council and attend meetings. Send us your email address and we'll keep you informed about events going on in the community.

4) Make a donation to the Advocacy Council, McLean county Aids Task Force, PFLAG, Connections community Center or another organization in our community. If you don't support these wonderful organizations, they may cease to exist. All need money to cover everyday expenses.

Most important, as Audre Lorde said, "We must be the change we wish to see in the world." Believe you are the only one who can bring about change and then act to accomplish it.

-Jacqui White
Rainbow Connection
December 1998

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Church sues WGN

from Associated Press

WGN-TV has deflected question about its ethics after a Metropolitan Community Church parish slapped the Chicago-based station with a lawsuit on October 27 for refusing to run a pro-gay infomercial.

The 30-minute paid program, produced by the Cathedral of Hope in Dallas, was designed to

counter ads taken out by conservative religious groups promoting a "cure" for homosexuality. WGN scheduled five showings of the infomercial and accepted a check for the first payment in July. A week later the check was returned.

"We just wanted to make our voice heard against the overwhelming onslaught of people using the media to say how bad gay people are," the Cathedral of Hope's Rev. Michael Piazza told *The New York Times*.

WGN argued that it often rejects infomercials with sensitive themes and the WGN has turned down paid programming that had gay-bashing themes.

-Rainbow Connection
December 1998

the lavenders

-david



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