

Eastern Illinois University

The Keep

The Post Amerikan (1972-2004)

The Post Amerikan Project

2-1-2001

Volume 30, Number 1

Post Amerikan

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Post debuts new columnist: Jesse Wolf Hardin



POST AMERICAN



BLOOMINGTON/NORMAL VOLUME 30

FREE

NUMBER ONE

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2001



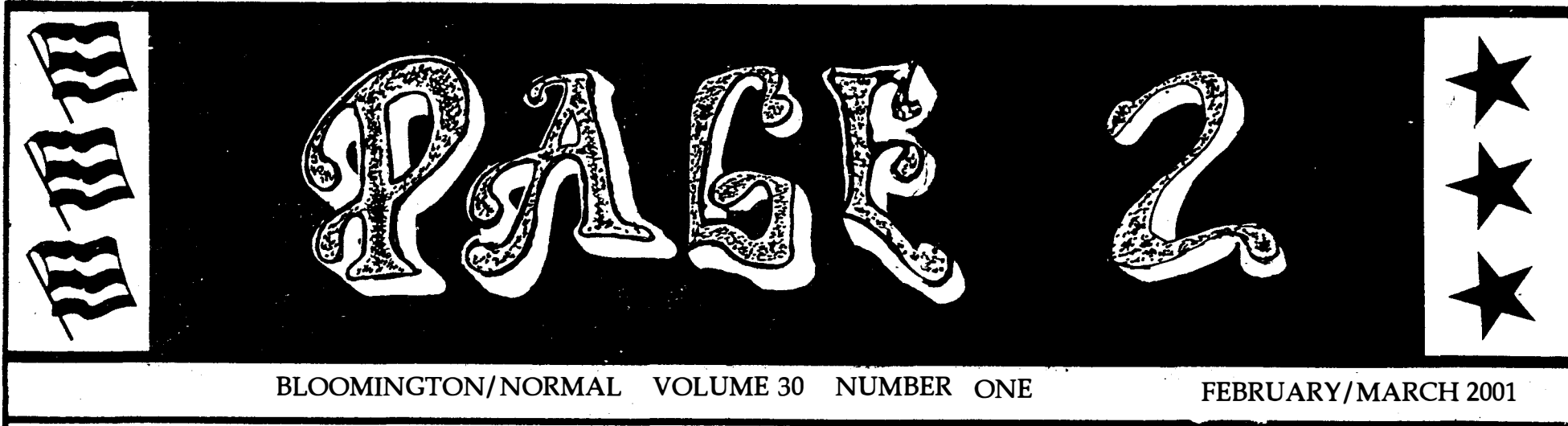
New Bong: \$50
Cocaine habit: \$500

Finding out that the good-old-boy network
can still rig an election in the Deep South: PRICELESS

source: littlegeorgebush.com

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In this Issue:

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...

David, Linda, Ralph and Sherrin

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 ...Miomi@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 Phoneline...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

Pick up a copy

Copies of the *Post Amerikan* are now available for free at the following locations:

Bloomington
 AIDS Task Force, 313 N. Main
 About Books, 221 E. Front
 Barnes & Noble, Veterans & Rt. 9
 Bloomington Public Library, 205 E. Olive
 Burwell's, 908 N. Main
 Common Ground, 516 N. Main
 Crazy Planet Kitchen, 414 N. Main
 Gaston's Upper Cut, 409 N. Main
 Heartland Community College, Raab Rd.
 Lizard's Lounge, 612 N. Main St.
 Shockwaves, 415 N. Main
 To Your Health, 1214 N. Towanda, #2
 Twin City Exchange, 411 N. Main

Normal
 Acme Comics, 115 W. North
 Babbitt's Books, 104 W. North
 Campus Town, 121 W. North
 Centennial Hall, ISU
 Coffeehouse, 114 E. Beaufort
 Deadpan Alley Records, 107 W. North
 Koffee Kup, 205 W. North
 Mother Murphy's, 111 W. North
 Movie Fan, 202C. W. North
 Normal Public Library, 206 W. College Ave.
 Stevenson Hall, ISU
 Three Crows, 1410 1/2 S. Main
 University Galleries, ISU

Peoria
 Bicycle Bus

What's your new address?

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

Name _____
 Street _____
 City/State/Zip _____

Due Date:

The due date for submitting articles to the *Post Amerikan* is: (please laser print your articles in columns of 3" using Palatino 10pt. type if possible.); or submit via e-mail at: pamerikanusa@netscape.net **Mar 15**



Community News



Reclaiming Power: The Vagina Monologues Comes to Illinois State



Through all of this comes The V-Day College Initiative – an invitation to colleges and universities around the world to perform *The Vagina Monologues* on their campuses on or around V-Day/Valentine's Day.

Under the strong, simplistic determination and direction of avada douglas and the pledge to herself, *The Vagina Monologues* will be at the Bone Student Center on the campus of Illinois State on February 13, 14 and 18. The playing schedule is February 13 at 7pm in the Circus Room, February 14 at 7pm in the Old Main Room and February 18 at 3pm in the Old Main Room. Tickets are a \$5 donation at the door with all proceeds being donated to Countering Domestic Violence/Neville House and Rape Crisis Center.

Following avada's first encounter with Ensler's book adaptation to *The Vagina Monologues*, she discovered the stage version at a 1999 Bradley University V-Day performance. The *Monologues* kept following avada, for it was later at The Feminist Expo 2000 in Maryland that avada was head-over-heels determined to bring the play home as she saw Eve Ensler perform it herself. As she watched Ensler perform, avada pledged to herself that she'd bring *The Vagina Monologues* to ISU.

"I thought to myself," avada recalled, "I'm bringing this to our campus." So I did."

"I hope the show gives people a different outlook on women and who they are and where they come from," avada said. "I want it to be a tool through which (specifically) women gain power, control and a desire to be in control of their bodies – and for them to realize that who they are physically and mentally is a beautiful and wonderful thing."

avada and the Illinois State cast will echo Ensler's desire to give women a voice, whose voice was since silenced. The production calls for the acknowledgment of the pain, anger, humor, excitement and mystery found when women are allowed to tell their stories. It consists of 17 monologues with topics spanning orgasms, sexual assault, pelvic exams, tampons, hair, female genital mutilation, child birthing among many others.

Through sharing women's stories and performing through such taboo issues, a sense of empowerment is inevitable. Some people argue against empowerment phenomena, such as feminism. They may think that through feminism, women gain power at the expense of others, while in essence – by empowering women, you are empowering everyone.

With a lingering giggle and raised eyebrow, she saw the book's title and couldn't resist picking it up. It was at that particular moment in August 1998 that *The Vagina Monologues* found avada douglas.

As she reminisces back to PRIDE Fest 1998 where the Obie Award-winning play found her, avada never imagined right then that it would be under her direction years thereafter in the exact same room where she first picked up the script.

Two and a half years after the initial discovery (February 2001), The V-Day College Initiative comes to ISU in the form of Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues*. The production, a collection of Ensler's interviews with a diverse group of women, thoroughly explores the power, anger, humor, wisdom and mystery hidden in vaginas and women's experiences. As Ensler points out in the introduction of the play, "I was worried about vaginas...So I decided to talk to women about their vaginas, to do vagina interviews, which became vagina monologues."

The Vagina Monologues was first performed off-Broadway by Ensler and she proceeded to perform the play to great acclaim throughout the world – from Zagreb to Santa Barbara, from London to Seattle, from Jerusalem to Oklahoma City.

As Ensler performed the piece in small towns and large cities around the world, she saw and heard first hand the devastating personal, social, political and economic consequences violence against women has for many nations. It was then through the many stories of women Ensler saw the need for action. A group of women in New York joined Ensler and founded "V-Day."

The mission of V-Day is simplistic in that it demands that the violence must end. It declares Valentine's Day as V-Day until the violence stops. The global movement of V-Day is a day in which annual theatrical and artistic events are produced in local, national and international venues to raise money and raise consciousness. The proceeds from these events (with *The Vagina Monologues* being the centerpiece of these events) are given to local organizations whose mission is to stop violence against women.

Ensler wrote that in the U.S., in one year, over five hundred thousand women are raped, and in theory we're not even at war. One particular monologue is dedicated to and based upon one Muslim woman's story – a Bosnian refugee interviewed during the war in Yugoslavia. Rape was never a part of her community before the war and Ensler used her interviews to let the woman's voice be heard...and to empower her.

The Vagina Monologues at ISU is guaranteed to empower all who attend. Through the production, dialogue will begin and continue, women will speak up, fight back, get pissed, create change and love themselves. As they sit and observe the show and whether they expect it to or not, *The Vagina Monologues* will find each and every audience member just as it found avada.

- by Kristy DeWall

Alternatives to jail series

On Thursday, February 15 from 7-9 p.m. at the Normal Public Library in the Basement Community Room the Alternatives to Jail Series will be on Forum #3: Drug Courts.

This part of the series will be looking for ways to provide opportunities for:
-reducing jail population
-decreasing crime
-saving tax money
-helping offenders kick the habit
-& earn expungement of their criminal record

There will be a panel of speakers from successful Drug Court programs in Illinois. From Decatur, Macon County: Don Meyer and Tim Morenz; Peoria, Peoria County: Steven Kossman and Judge Bruce W. Black; Kankakee, Kankakee County: Joe Ewers; East St. Louis, Madison County: Terry Sorger (invited).

Cont. on page 4



Community News Cont.

White Light

January 9–February 11
University Galleries of Illinois State
University

Bloomington detective a friend of the community

Most of you know me as "Momma;" I own the Bistro. First, I would like to thank the Advocacy Council for the use of this forum. I lovingly call you all "my" children so if this message helps just one of you my goal has been met.

I want to express my outrage in light of the recent hate crimes that have been published. Of course, you and I know there have been many more instances that are not made public. I don't believe there is one of us who has not experienced discrimination or harassment whether it be in physical or verbal form. Hate is NOT a family value; kids are not born with hate, they are taught to hate. This cycle must be broken, and education is the key.

I am writing this message to let you know that we do have a friendly face in our corner--Tommy Walters. Mr. Walters is a detective with the City of Bloomington and often walks the downtown beat. Tommy has a job to do but he goes out of his way to make sure the Bistro and its patrons are safe. Over the last year or so I have expressed some of my concerns to Tommy and in each case I have been very satisfied with his compassion and his actions.

I stress to you--if you experience any problems or have any questions to contact Mr. Walters directly. Any fears, concerns or questions will be handled with dignity.

This is not a commercial for the Bloomington Police Department, this is a thank you to one man who has made a difference: Detective Tommy Walters.

Detective Tommy Walters
City of Bloomington Police Department
309-434-2533
twalters@cityblm.org

--Jan Lancaster
The Rainbow Connection newsletter

Love and kisses Mind Candy fans

My dear friends, and lovers of Mind Candy, I find myself in a chapter of life that makes it impossible to do the Mind Candy review article true justice. So, for the time being, I'm putting my beloved article down for a nap. As soon as I possibly can I'll wake it up and I'll again bring you stuff to fuel your gray matter.

It's been a pleasure hearing from you all, and for all of those people who sent stuff to be reviewed over these many moons, much love to you all.

Until we meet again, keep reading, keep writing, keep producing your art.

--Nikolai Zarick

White Light is the third in a trilogy of exhibitions--including *post-hypnotic* (1999-2001) and *The UFO Show* (2000-2001)--focusing on visual manifestations of threshold states. All visual art is, of course, dependent upon the phenomenology of light; the work in this exhibition, however, calls particular attention to radiance itself as an image. In contrast to much of the atmospheric light art made by precursors such as Robert Irwin, Dan Flavin and James Turrell, the work of the artists presented here is more transgressive and jarring in terms of viewer perception.

White Light includes photography, painting, video, sculpture, and site-specific installations incorporating emanations, traces, or reflections of white light. Artwork represented: a two-monitor DVD installation entitled "Night Space" by Richard Bloes (NY), exquisitely nuanced blue-and-white paintings resembling electronic screens by Christian Garnett (Brooklyn), a large-scale photorealistic painting of lightning by renowned 80s conceptual artist Jack Goldstein (Los Angeles), visually riveting photograms consisting of golden bursts of light and radiating concentric halos by Adam Fuss (NY), a viewer-activated 100-bulb wall installation entitled "Feedback" by Ray Rapp (NY), a Venetian blind-like grid of motor-driven prisms by Mark Genrich (Normal), an audio CD that when plugged into a TV set creates oscilloscopic dances of lines accompanied by electronic tones by Carsten Nicolai, a.k.a. *noto* (Berlin), a wall-hanging wax disk by Maya Lin, who distinguished the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington (NY), a luminous oil painting by Judy Ledgerwood (Chicago), entitled "Freddy" (after Miles Davis' "Kind of Blue"), two paintings by Susie Rosmarin (Brooklyn) which produce some of the most eye-boggling afterimages and spatial effects in contemporary painting, and Kathleen McCarthy's (Chicago) ethereal eight-columned installation consisting of virtually nothing but fishing line. White Light is curated by Barry Blinderman, and will be accompanied by a fully illustrated brochure documenting the exhibition.

University Galleries is located at 110 Center for the Visual Arts, on the Campus of Illinois State University (off Beaufort Street between University and School streets). Parking is available in the parking garage off of University Street.

Phone: 309.438.5487
Email: gallery@oratmail.cfa.ilstu.edu

Gallery Hours: Sat.-Mon: 12:00-4:00
Tues: 9:30-9:00
Wed.-Fri.: 9:30-4:30

JT & ET CRUMBAUGH SPIRITUALIST CHURCH



- SUNDAY SERVICES -

LYCEUM SUNDAY AT 1 PM

CLASSES ON SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

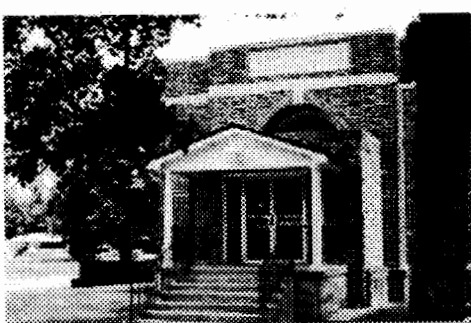
MEDITATION AND HEALING 2 PM

DEVOTIONAL 2:30 PM

LECTURE THEN MESSAGE SERVICE (CLAIRVOYANCE)

POTLUCK DINNER 3:30 PM

WE ARE CURRENTLY IN NEED OF AN ORGANIST.



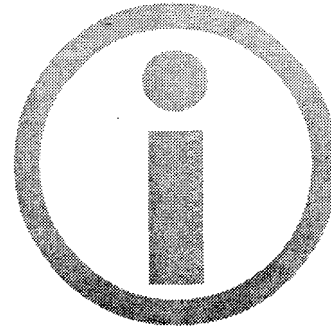
102 S. PEARL STREET
LEROY, IL

WWW.CRUMBAUGHCHURCH.ORG
(WEB SITE CONTAINS LINK TO U.S. DIRECTORY OF SPIRITUAL CHURCHES.)
309.962.9076

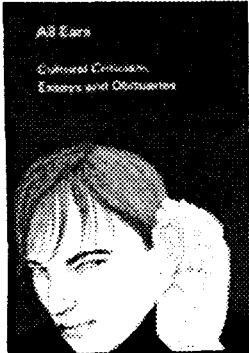
Directions: Travel 74 East to LeRoy exit. Turn left, proceed to stop sign (Rt. 150) turn right. Turn left onto Pearl Street.

- We believe in Infinite Intelligence.
- We believe that the phenomena of nature, both physical and spiritual, are the expression of Infinite Intelligence.
- We affirm that a correct understanding of such expression and living in accordance therewith, constitute true religion.
- We affirm that the existence and personal identity of the individual continue after the change called death.
- We affirm that communication with the so-called dead is a fact, scientifically proven by the phenomena of Spiritualism.
- We believe that the highest morality is contained in the Golden Rule: "Whatsoever ye would that others should do unto you, do ye also unto them."
- We affirm the moral responsibility of individuals, and that we make our own happiness or unhappiness as we obey or disobey Nature's physical and spiritual laws.
- We affirm that the doorway to reformation is never closed against any human soul here or hereafter.
- We affirm that the Precepts of Prophecy and Healing are divine attributes proven through Mediumship.

the Post Amerikan Bookstore



Featuring titles from Soft Skull Press



All Ears
Dennis Cooper
As the media monopolies consolidate, novelist Dennis Cooper marvels that "we just let political and corporate higher-ups manipulate our very ways of receiving information."
Our price: \$9.00

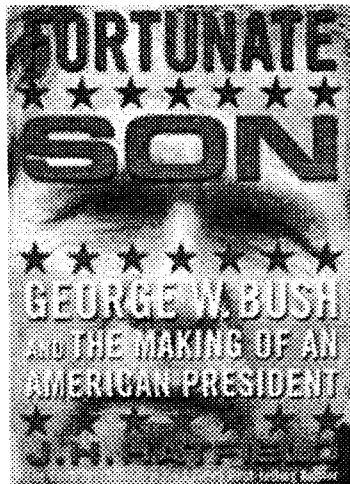


The Breaking Light
Sander Hicks
Three plays that resist the defensive conformity of contemporary America.
Our price: \$8.00



Antler
Antler
Antler is a wilderness poet, bard in the tradition of Whitman, prophet critic in the footsteps of Ginsberg.
Our price: \$7.00

No More Prisons
William Upski Wimsatt
A hitchhikers guide to community organizing, urban life, home schooling, hip-hop leadership, the cool rich kids movement and why philanthropy is the greatest art form of the 20th century.
Our price: \$8.00



Fortunate Son
J.H. Hatfield

Prior to recall by St. Martins Press, *Fortunate Son* was #30 on the New York Times Best-Seller's list. What caused this book to be censored?

J.H. Hatfield's *Fortunate Son* presents George W. Bush haunted by the specters from his past. It researches the allegations of GW's abuse of extreme privilege, draft-dodging Vietnam and a past cocaine habit, and comes up with almost 400 pages of more startling information. And there's more. The Bushes' anti-Semitism, their connection to the BCCI Scandal, GW's SEC investigation for insider-trading, and the cronyism practiced with business associates while Governor of Texas.

Banned Book (Go ahead, try to buy it at Amazon.com)
Our price: \$12.00

Online Diaries
Various

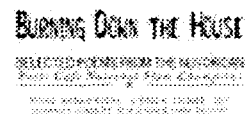
Online tour journals of Lollapalooza Tour Artists. An interactive space where fans could communicate with artists such as Courtney Love, Beck and Thurston Moore.
Our price: \$5.00



Saving Private Power
Michael Zezima
The Hidden History of the "Good War." *Saving Private Power* is the most provocative history of the "Good War" ever published. It questions the ultra-patriotic assumptions we have been taught since birth.
Our price: \$13.00



Republican Like Me
Sparrow
Sparrow lost the GOP presidential nomination to Bob Dole. "How?, Why?, Uh...What?" asks a tearful, angry America. Finally, an answer in this poetic record of Sparrow's campaign trail.
Our price: \$5.00



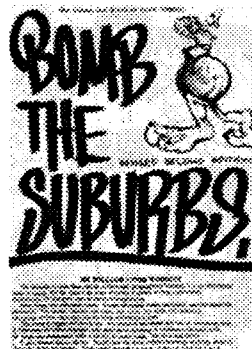
Burning Down the House
Various
Selected Poems from the Nuyorican National Poetry Slam Champions. These five poets stand at the vanguard of the slam movement, with verse that is passionate, tight, political and lucid.
Our price: \$9.00



You Don't Have to Fuck People Over to Survive
Seth Tobocman
The sick heart of conformist, competition-obsessed culture cries out resist!
Our price: \$10.00



Bomb the Suburbs
William Upski Wimsatt
Most books are suburban books. Neatly designed, neatly packaged, and automatically produced. The author chooses one topic, one voice, one style, one audience, one point of views, and lays out the book according to plan.
Our price: \$8.00



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Soft Skull products and services are intelligence and intelligence gathering for the anti-nomian community. From inside of the international workingclass and its bastard children subcultures punk, hip-hop, etc. we report on the true progress of human history. We publish the history, pop culture studies, graphic design, art, poetic records and fiction that fuel the vanguard. We are the CIA of anti-imperialism.



Union Quote book inspirational fun

Great Labor Quotations
by Peter Bollen
Red Eye Press, Los Angeles, \$19.95
ISBN 0-929349-06-7

Ever curious what scientist Albert Einstein, poet Robert Frost, conservative commentator George Will or civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. had to say about unions?

Then look no further than a labor of love from a Massachusetts postal worker, Peter Bollen, who recently compiled the *Great Labor Quotations Source book and Reader*.

Drawing from great speeches, newspaper columns, cartoons and poetry, Bollen, a member of American Postal Workers Union in Massachusetts, set out to mine topical nuggets from two centuries of labor history.

All the great labor leaders are here: John L. Lewis, Samuel Gompers, Mother Jones, Sidney Hillman, Walter Reuther, A. Phillip Randolph and many others. The book includes capsule biographies of many of these great labor luminaries.

What makes it great fun, though, is seeing quotes from those not necessarily associated with labor--like Einstein, musician Bruce Springsteen, various Catholic popes and TV star Roseanne Barr.

Noting a changing labor movement, he's even included a final chapter on the "Sporting Life," recognizing those multi-million dollar sport stars who now carry a union card and receive popular indignation when they strike and walk the picket line. In this section there's a brief biographical sketch of St. Louis Cardinal star Curt Flood, who challenged baseball's "ownership" of its workers and opened the door for free agency, damaging his own all-star career in the process.

It's true hard work never killed anybody, but I figure, why take the chance?
Ronald Reagan, 4/22/1987

When a man tells you that he got rich through hard work, ask him whose.
Donald Marquis (1878-1937)
New York columnist

Bollen has organized the book topically, with quotes around issues like strikes, unemployment, NAFTA, job safety, civil rights and retirement.

This book is not only fun, it's inspirational, too. It's a volume to keep handy--open any page and maybe there's a laugh, an insight or a perspective the reader's not considered before. Any union member looking for a little boost or needing to give a concise comment for a group presentation would find this book invaluable. The hundreds of quotes here can be found and read and enjoyed many times over.

This book, which proudly displays a union printers' label on its front cover, is available through Ted Eye Press in Los Angeles. The book retails for \$19.95 and can be ordered directly through the author at P.O. Box 601, Lynnfield, MA 01940--be sure and include some postage and handling money. It is also listed on-line with Amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com.

Pick up a copy, enjoy, read and marvel again at how workers and workers' issues have shaped our history and our lives, leading all walks of people to comment on a laboring person's daily concerns.

--Mike Matejka
Livingston & McLean Counties Union News

Sex

...okay, now that we've got your attention...

The **Movie Fan** can deliver...

No, we do not carry sex films

BUT we **DO** carry movies that **ARE** sexy

and interesting or if you prefer just plain

strange in an off-the-beaten-path

kind of way. Hmmm?

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Sun-Thur 10:30 a.m. - 10:30 p.m.
Fri-Sat 10:30 a.m. - 11:30 p.m.



Off-the beaten path: Movie reviews

Hello! Or should I say "Hello movie fans!" My name is David, and I'd like to fill you in on some movies that might interest you or movies that you might not be familiar with. Sitting in a theater having the lights dim and watching a good movie or catching a great flick on video are both a fantastic way of forgetting the humdrum of everyday life. With that said, maybe you can relate a bit and can hopefully enjoy my snips of movies that are new or coming soon to video. Of you ever have a comment or any questions regarding the movies, please write to me in care of the *Post Amerikan*. I would love to hear about your fave movies, stars and the like. Just a slight warning: My movie tastes run quite a bit off-the-beaten-path. Bearing that in mind, you can take what I recommend to heart or with a grain of salt.



Way of the Gun ***1/2

Video release: Available now
Rated R (extreme violence)
Category: Action/Thriller
Director: Christopher McQuarrie
Cast: Benicio Del Toro (*Traffic*), Ryan Phillippe (*Little Boy Blue*), Taye Diggs (*House on Haunted Hill*), Juliette Lewis (*Kalifornia*), James Caan (*Bottle Rocket*)

Plot: Two small-time crooks are sure they'll score big bucks when they kidnap a young surrogate mother carrying the child of a wealthy southwestern couple. The crooks (who we root for all the way) soon run into major problems and realize they are in way over their heads. Their plan quickly goes down in flames amid a tide of backstabbing, counterplotting, mind games, greed and lots and lots of bloodshed.

Fan scoop: *Way of the Gun* rocks out mostly because of the fantastic writing of Christopher McQuarrie who also wrote the now cult-fave *Usual Suspects*. Gun's plot twists and turns on a virtual roller coaster of thrills. The cast top-to-bottom gives some hard-edge performances, especially the legendary James Caan who's a knockout. This one got slighted in theaters, but has the *Reservoir Dogs* cult status written all over it—definitely pick it up.



The Big Tease ***

Video release: Available now
Rated R (language, adult situations)
Category: Comedy
Director: Kevin Allen (*Twin Town*)
Cast: Craig Ferguson (*Saving Grace*), Larry Miller (*Best in Show*), Frances Fisher (*Female Perversions*)

Plot: A Scottish hairdresser has won all the major hair awards in Glasgow, and he receives what he thinks is an invitation to fly to L.A. to compete against the world's top hairdressers. The Scot hops an airplane with BBC documentary crew in tow to record his shot at the top. Upon his L.A. arrival, he quickly learns his invitation was in error. Our hero is determined to enter the contest and win the coveted platinum scissors award. Definitely a case of 'do or dye.

Fan scoop: *The Big Tease* is breezy and fun. It's a way over the top comedy that is a perfect vehicle for the talented Craig Ferguson. If you are in a mind funk and just want a no-brainer, definitely pick this one up.



Virgin Suicides ****

Video release: Available now
Rated R (language, adult situations)
Category: Drama
Director: Sophia Coppola
Cast: Kirsten Dunst (*Dick*), James Woods (*Videodrome*), Kathleen Turner (*Serial Mom*), Josh Harnett (*The Faculty*)

Plot: Set in a sleepy Michigan community circa mid-1970s, five teenage sisters have both beauty and mystery that bewitches a group of local boys. The girls are pretty much isolated

by their over-protective parents and remain fleeting and unattainable. A school hunk wants to take one of the girls to the prom, and his actions induce a stunning chain of events.

Fan scoop: Most definitely not your run-of-the-mill Hollywood film, *The Virgin Suicides* is surreal, darkly comic and disturbing all at the same time. In her directorial debut, Coppola has utilized the talents of a top cast and paced the film in a manner that involves the viewer. An amazing score combined with perfect choice in songs adds fuel that *Virgin Suicides* will stay with you long after the last frame has been watched.



The Five Senses ***1/2

Video release: Available now
Rated R (language, nudity)
Category: Drama
Director: Jeremy Podeswa
Cast: Mary-Louise Parker (*Boys on the Side*), Molly Parker (*Kissed*), Marco Leonardi (*Like Water for Chocolate*), Gabrielle Rose (*The Sweet Hereafter*), Philippe Volter (*Double Life of Veronique*)

Plot: Through taste, touch, sight, hearing and smell, five troubled characters try to make sense of their own world. Each person's secret life unfolds and they are drawn out of self-made sheltered existence and into a passionate world.

Fan scoop: Highly recommend picking up *The Five Senses*. If you like films you can watch again and get more out of it, then this one is worth your time.

--Dave



Are we really what we eat?

If we're truly what we eat, we're in big trouble – even those health conscious people who try to eat proper nutritional foods. Fruits and vegetables are grown in tainted soil, breathe polluted air, and are watered by toxic rains, rivers, and lakes. If that's not enough, now we get to eat genetically altered foods. That, to me, means the plant and animal DNA is being changed, but changed to what? Change is not necessarily always for the best.

One example we saw last year, "gene-altered corn" called StarLink, which was not approved for human consumption because of concerns with allergic reactions after eating it, made its way into the human food supply anyway. According to an article in *The Pantagraph* dated December 3, 2000, when this first happened companies like Kraft and Mission Foods pulled numerous products off the shelf in a good faith effort. Hats off to them!

In September 1997 AgrEvo, a division of Aventis, first submitted StarLink for EPA approval. The genetically engineered strain was to "synthesize its own natural pesticide." EPA tests showed that "StarLink insecticide was resistant to digestion in the human stomach." EPA would not approve StarLink for human consumption, but did approve it for non-human consumption - among other things, feeding animals. I have several very serious questions: Was StarLink tested and approved for feeding animals? Were the owners of these animals advised that they were feeding their live stock and/or family pets products made with genetically altered corn? Or was this simply a matter of, "We have to sell this to some one for some thing or lose money?"

AgrEvo approached the EPA again in October, 1999 to approve StarLink for human consumption. Even with the new laboratory study presented by Aventis, EPA responded with skepticism and is having an independent panel of scientists make a decision regarding this issue. Once again, is this just another ploy by AgrEvo/ Aventis to sell their product, regardless?

However, this is just one example of the genetic altering of foods. The DNA of so many fruits, vegetables, and animals are being tampered

with, but John Q. Public is not being told. When we go to the grocery store there are no signs saying - "This is a real tomato, and that one is altered - take your pick." When we take our families out to dinner, are we eating real food, or altered? Should grocery stores and restaurants tell their customers whether or not they use altered food? My vote is definitely yes on this. And of course, there is the paranoid question that I must ask, "Can the chemical(s) used to alter the DNA of the plants/ animals, change human DNA as well?" And, if so, what will those changes mean to us?

Not meaning to sound like a religious or spiritual fanatic, but for someone to alter the genetic make up of any living thing is to say they can improve upon Creator's work. In looking at *any* creation story, the Creator Deity created the world and all life upon it. The human race was provided food, clothing, shelter, medicine, and other animals to help us. Had we not spent the last several hundred years destroying the Earth's water, air, land, and various life forms, we would not have the need to "improve" upon Creation.

As a substitute to altering and cloning, we should be cleaning and detoxifying the Earth so we can continue to walk in the sunshine and the open air, instead of planning domed cities for the day that the Earth can no longer support life as we know it. This will mean that the rich will not continue to get richer, and the powerful will have walk with the humble. But all life on Earth would have a chance to survive.

"Domed Cities

I ain't gonna live in your domed cities...
I will walk in the sunshine.
I will breathe the air.
And, if this is going to kill me,
I don't care."

Gregg Brown,
Activist & Musician

A song from his latest works

--Walks The West Wind

Murder King: The fast-food giant's shameful record

The young steers, chickens and pigs turned into sandwiches for millions of Burger King customers suffer agonizing lives before slaughter, yet the fast-food giant has refused to adopt PETA's demands for improvements. Here is what's behind the corporations slick ads:

Live dismembering

Burger King buys many of its animal products from IBP, the worlds largest meat-packing company. Employees at an IBP meat-packing plant in Washington state were recently caught on videotape slaughtering and dismembering conscious cattle. According to slaughterhouse workers, the killing line moves so fast that it's

impossible to stun all the animals properly. But because the demand for flesh is so great, the line is never slowed down. To date, Burger King has ignored PETA's requests to ensure that all pigs and cows are rendered unconscious before slaughter.

Laying hens are crammed seven or eight to a cage the size of a file drawer

These battery cages are so cruel that they are illegal in some countries and are being phased out in others, including the U.K., where Burger King's parent company is based. Laying hens' beaks are cut off with a hot blade to prevent them from fighting for space with other hens. In a process called "forced molting," they are starved for up to 14 days in order to force them to begin another egg-laying cycle.

Pork comes from pigs raised in small crowded pens

Pregnant pigs are kept confined in stalls so small that they cannot comfortably lie down or even turn around. These cement "gestation stalls" have been outlawed in the U.K.

Chickens raised for their flesh

Chickens raised for their flesh are crammed by the tens of thousands into sheds without fresh air or room to move normally (each bird gets an area smaller than a standard sheet of paper). When they are sent to slaughter, workers routinely break the birds' bones as they catch them and cram them into crates for transport to slaughter.

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Chickens not stunned before death

Most chickens are not stunned before their throats are slit, in the United States. Their heads are passed through an electrically charged water bath that immobilizes them but doesn't render them unconscious. Then they have their throats cut and are dumped into a scalding tank of boiling water (to remove the feathers), often while they are still conscious.

PETA wants Burger King to take these steps:

- 1) Require Burger King slaughterhouses to stun ALL chickens, pigs and cows effectively.
- 2) Require Burger King suppliers to kill humanely any animals who arrive at the slaughterhouse unable to walk, with broken limbs or in severe pain.
- 3) Make sure that every Burger King slaughterhouse is audited for abuse and stop buying from slaughterhouses that fail audits.
- 4) Buy chicken flesh and eggs only from suppliers that don't cut the chickens' beaks off with a hot blade.
- 5) Stop buying eggs from suppliers that give hens less than 72 square inches of space per bird, and phase out purchasing from suppliers that raise hens in battery cages.

6) Stop buying eggs from suppliers that withhold food and water in order to increase egg production (a practice known as "forced molting").

7) Buy only chickens who are raised truly free-roaming—with nesting and sunning areas, plenty of food and fresh water and enough space to prevent fighting.

8) Institute humane guidelines for catching chickens so that the birds' delicate bones will not be broken by rough handling.

9) Require suppliers to stop breeding chickens for weight, a practice that causes painful leg deformities and chronic leg pain.

10) Phase out the purchasing of pork from farms that confine sows to stalls.

You can help:

—Ask Burger King to commit now to PETA's list of specific steps to improve animals' lives. Please also ask Burger King to offer a veggie burger at all its restaurants worldwide, as it does now in England.

Mr. Colin Storm, CEO
Burger King Corporation
17777 Old Cutler Rd., Miami, FL 33157

In the U.K., write to officials at Burger King's parent company. Let them know that what Burger king does to animals is illegal in the U.K.

Mr. John McGrath, CEO, Diageo PLC
8 Henrietta Place, London W1M 9AG

—Protest Burger King's cruelty—at your local restaurant. Contact PETA for an action pack.

—Visit our Web site at MurderKing.com for the latest campaign information.

—Go vegetarian, if you haven't already. Call 1-888-VEG-FOOD for a vegetarian starter kit chock-full of ideas, recipes and helpful hints. Visit PETAMall.com for delicious vegan foods available through mail order.

First the clown then the king

In response to 11 months of PETA's intensive worldwide campaign, including more than 400 demonstrations, McDonald's has become the first fast-food giant to promise major improvements in the lives of chickens, cows and pigs raised for its restaurants. Visit McCruelty.com for details. Help us convince Burger King to follow McDonald's example.

—from *Animal Times* PETA magazine



Okazaki Restorative Massage

Okazaki Restorative Massage is a rejuvenating massage intended to relieve sore muscles after exercise and restore the normal chi flow in the body. It is based in oriental medicine theory and follows the meridians of the body and uses key acupressure points on those meridians. **One hour: \$45.00 / 30 minutes: \$30.00.** Call for appt.

Reiki

Reiki is an ancient energy healing technique. The Reiki practitioner channels universal energy through their hands to the receiver. Reiki is good for physical, emotional and spiritual healing. **One hour: \$45.00** Call for appt.

Also: Paraffin Dip \$20.00 Call for appt.

Raindrop Treatment

Raindrop is an aromatherapy treatment that can be added to a massage. Essential oil blends especially designed for the client's specific needs are applied along the spine and then a hot towel is placed on the back for 15 minutes to allow the essential oils to penetrate the skin and relax the muscles. **15 minutes: \$10.00** Call for appt.

Ear Coning or Ear Candling

Ear coning is an ancient method of removing earwax and any other foreign matter from the ear. It is an easy, painless procedure and has been known to improve hearing, balance, itching and sinus problems. **30 minutes: \$20.00** Call for appt.

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Earth & Spirit



The Post Amerikan is pleased to welcome Jesse Wolf Hardin (a.k.a. Lone Wolf Circles) as a regular contributor. Following are parts one and two of a four part series and we look forward to more articles after that.

Hardin is the founder of the Earthen Spirituality Project and the author of two books *Full Circle* and *Kindred Spirits*, as well as hundreds of magazine articles. He is a wilderness based spiritual teacher, offering counsel and programs at his enchanted New Mexico sanctuary.

Following are some comments on the author:

Wolf powerfully brings us into the presence of our animal elders, reawakening us to the lessons they have to teach us in the recovery of our own instincts and aliveness. Fiery... passionate...
--Paul Winter world renowned musician

There is no more important personal awareness, and political movement today, than the strengthening of human communities conscious of place in the natural world. Jesse Wolf Hardin addresses the need of human beings to search within themselves, and within their bioregions, and to make the connections that may save our sanity, and the planet too. I know of no-one more thoughtful or articulate or inspiring.

--Jerry Mander author of *In The Absence of The Sacred*

Part 1: Gaian Ministry

"We must remember the chemical connections between our cells and the stars, between the beginning and now. We must remember and reactivate the primal consciousness of oneness between all living things. We must return to that time, in our genetic memory, in our dreams, when we were one species born to live together on Earth as her magic children."

--Barbara Mor

"You will speak and act with the courage and endurance that has been yours through the long, beautiful aeons of your life story as Gaia."

--Joanna Macy

We are born into it, all of us, and some remember the time before the first forgetting-- the complete and constant experiencing of Spirit. But by age five the soulful and physical sensation of Spirit's imminence has usually started to give way to the reality the glaring television describes. Many of us become disillusioned with institutional religion, falling into a state of deep cynicism. But the feeling of bliss and connection still returns from time to time, always at special moments and in hallowed places: an interpenetration of all-inclusive Spirit and inspirited woman/man, at least temporarily overcoming the hegemony of our rational minds.

On top our personal struggle for meaning, we live in a particularly trying age. Some believe we're the last generations with a chance of initiating a human-engineered cure for this distressed planet. While we live in a culture of distraction, abstraction, and articulate denial, we can choose to be fully aware, engaged, and conscious. In times of personal or societal tribulation the majority of us turn at last to

whatever we call "Spirit"-- to that which outlasts its every form. If we look for this Spirit embodied in ourselves, in the songs of the birds and the wind on our cheeks, if we seek it in the Earth of which we are a part-- we won't have far to turn. The religiosity that matters (mater, matter, mother) is therefore both experiential, and now.

It may also be that our multiracial tribal ancestors and many of the surviving primal peoples of today were right, and the only ultimately survivable religiosity is one that honors the sacred spirit embodied in the Earth and all of creation. We, and every other lifeform are paying the price for our belief systems, for the transgressions of those with no belief in God at all, and of those positing Spirit outside rather than inside themselves, the only Heaven detached from this Earth. I give my life to teaching these truths, knowing full well that a future of artifice and ruin, or of diversity and sacrament, will be a direct outgrowth of our coveted beliefs.

Much of what we are called on by Spirit to do conflicts with the modern edicts and reasoning we were brought up with. People tend to behave "righteously" while in church and do what they want on the days between. Think of the changes if we were to envision the entire planet as our church, with every day a Sabbath, every daily, natural process recognized as the miracles they truly are. What would it take for us to begin to consciously acknowledge every bite of food as a communion with inspirited life, recognizing the sin of failing to taste, failing to glorify? Are we capable like a native, like a child, like a saint-- to experience the entire Earth as the Eucharist, as the body of wolf and flower, of beggar and mountain? Can we serve our greater selves, our experience of God, as sensitized participants instead of directors or even shepherds, plain participants in the liturgy of evolving creation? "The answer is in place... and that place is Earth."

For twenty years now I've inhabited a wildlife sanctuary in New Mexico's Gila mountains, opening to the lessons of the land, becoming sensitized to its need and call. My books and articles are a direct result of this inspirited, instructive earth, and my ever deepening relationship to it. Now with some able assistance, The Earthen Spirituality Project is hosting seekers for personal quests, group retreats, and workshops on applied Earthen Spirituality... and we've come to think of this work as our "Gaian Ministry."

"We must not expect that we can simply use the . . . image of Gaia to meet emotional, religious (or) political needs without allowing it to transform us in unexpected and radical ways. The spirituality of the Earth is more than a slogan. It is an invitation to initiation, to the death of what we have been and the birth of something new."
--David Spangler

"Gaia" was the Greek name for the Earth as living being, born out of Chaos. I am not Greek, nor do I experience the living world as exclusively female, but in a time of desacralization and patriarchy the symbol of Gaia is a strong one indeed. It is the balance to,

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not a replacement for the worshipping of a male-imagined God. The scientists Lynn Marguellis and James Lovelock seized on this ancient metaphor to illustrate their premise that the Earth functions as a living entity, a body of self-regulating systems dependent on the balanced interaction of all its constituent parts, the atmosphere its breath, the cleansing forests its lungs. They called this notion the "Gaia Hypothesis," as if the truths honored by virtually every primal culture, by our ancestors of nearly every race, and by all children before the age of their disenchantment... as if the truth of an inspirited planet, sacred, indivisible and directed were merely theory, the invention or conclusion of modern minds! Before the rise of modern religion, before the advent of technology, before toxic agribusiness and skyscrapers, these were the truths we humans of every race held to be "self-evident":

- 1) However we know God, that God exists within us, and within all of creation. We are each an inseparable part of, a dancing cell of that living planet body. All parts of that planet body are inspirited, with an intrinsic value and integrity of being worthy of our respect.
- 2) Our survival and well-being is utterly dependent on our practical and ritual demonstrations of that respect.
- 3) We serve the inspirited whole as celebrants and sensors, as the nerve endings of the Gaian body, conscious receptors channeling sensory input, communicating the anguish and jubilation of aware lives.
- 4) As aware, conscious members of the planet body, we must act on our innate responsibilities, our ability-to-respond

The fact is that the current degradation of our mental and physical environs is largely a product of how we each perceive, and thus act on the world around us. And in time we may come to realize that as conscious beings our own sacredness is conditional on, even dependent up on our mindful ecological presence.

We are not secular pilots of a dead Spaceship-Earth, nor have we been sentenced by God to a trial period on a disrupted Eden. We are blessed participants in the dance of embodied spirit. Singers. Dreamers. Praise givers. Our rightful ministry is the one which inspires and invokes awareness, reconnection, prayer and response.

It offers everyone an opportunity for a Rite-of-Passage, opens up the door and invites us into a sacred space. As from a birthing hut we rise, forever changed, re-formed into our original selves, revealed as responsible celebrants of miraculous life, agents of Godly / Gaian process, playmates and vehicles for omnipresent Spirit.

More and more I prefer to work with folks right here in this place of power-- as wilderness questers, workshop participants and long term Sanctuary interns. But I still speak to universities full of people lost in their heads, talk to congregations and religious leaders about the practical results of the cosmologies we teach, and help activist groups see how essential it is for them to personally feel the inherently sacred nature of that which they would protect. And always, I ask everyone to remember their own childhood and adult moments when the walls collapsed, when all things appeared connected by luminous threads of pulsing energy... when like St. Francis of Assisi or the enraptured John Muir the Holy Spirit appeared to them in all things, and they knew all things through their love.

In Gaian Ministry we plant our seeds, in the heart and in the earth, regardless of the chances of fruit. The immediate results, as I've witnessed again and again, are Visions...

...And every aware minute, the glad recognition of the miraculous.

Part 2: Art as Ritual

"Culture comes up out of the earth, vibrating through the body, as each individual affirms life and expresses her or his unique creativity. It is kept alive by consciously honoring the sacredness of the four Great Mysteries: food, sex, birth, and death. The ceremonial arts are channels for people to express their relationship with these primal mysteries."
-Sedonia Cahill

The most meaningful of that art is a reflection of Spirit, both human and more-than-human. It is an acknowledging and glorifying of the inner essence of the subject, the numinous essence that our creations can at best only allude to. It is the connection of Vision to the visible, Spirit to the physical, fostered by our own loving hands, the mixing on the palette of pain and joy, struggle and hope.

There's an honesty to real art that makes it more than decoration, that raises it to the level of ritual. One celebrates not only the lines and color of a particular landscape, but the character that breeds and defines its landed features, the spirits of place honored in deft strokes by one who loves the land in the hush of compost and gray of winter as much as the brilliant warmth of Spring greens. And it is just as true for our poetry, correspondence and diary entries, for craft and song and dance dedicated to the illumination of the lasting inner power, the energetic fibers that connect us to the All. Dances to the hunted animals, chants to the rain gods, magical paintings on mats of bark and myths told and retold over the proverbial tribal fire-- all are stories, and it is story that binds us to our beliefs, to our world, to the past and the future. They are the threads that weave us back into our contact and our place, that portion of the crucial lessons handed down through the inheritance of crafts rather than genes. Since the very beginnings of what it means to be "human" we have venerated and exalted the gods, the land, and our true loves-- and it is in this place of art and ritual where we know these things as one.

We may not immediately think of art when we think of the covenants of lifestyle. But it is precisely the lack of art in the substance and administration of our lives that reduces them to anything less. What is missing is not only more artistic form in life, but the art of life: the art of conscious, responsive, celebratory relationship. The assignment is not only to make the relationship work, but to make it beautiful as well. Not only meeting the needs of the other, but delighting them with our means for doing so. In our relationship to the land, the care we gift it includes our attentiveness, love, protection, and artful celebration of shared being. In our ecstatic coming together there is the opportunity for a further dissolving of boundaries. Boundaries between us and the land. Between the creator and the created, the artist and the art.

It's far too easy to relegate art to those visible forms seeming to exist beyond ourselves, to finished and salable products rather than

recognizing it as an ongoing process in which we play an essential role. Say the word "art" and many will conjure images of mummified paintings hung in sterile museums, the tastier graphics adorning the expressway billboards or the better of the year's dramatic films. For some art is whatever catches and pleases the eye so long as it was informed by the human hand, while for others it can only be found in the few of those creations that manage to stand out from the rest, enlisting, stirring and releasing our reservoirs of pent-up emotion. Others find in the creations of Nature or God, in the luster of the sunset and the grace of beating wings an artistic perfection one can barely approximate on paper or in clay. An in the end all our art, as all people and all life forms is of the Earth. Grounded in a wild and creative Nature, empowered by Spirit.

What we nearly all forget is the degree to which we can and should be participants in the artistry we're immersed in. While we may consider ourselves "spectators" we inevitably contribute awareness, experience and emotion to what is principally an exchange. Exchanges with someone's painting, with the architecture that surrounds us or the heavy-breathing clouds above our heads. We are said to be the only species capable of creating art, and yet we may also be the only lifeform ever to exist outside the state-of-art.

But it was not always so. Not for the pale villagers of ancient Europe who left us the sculpted body of the archetypal Earth Mother, the bearer of all of life. And not for the first hominid inhabitants of this state called New Mexico either. The ancient pueblo people left behind shards of painted pottery that continue to evoke the Great Mystery, fired clay fragments of a life of honoring, picture-puzzle pieces still vibrating with the energy of years of reverent

Cont. on p. 12

Karen Schmidt
Alderman ~ Ward 6

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Cont. from p. 11

touch. They spoke their fealty for the land in rock art carved out of their collective and individual souls, lightning bolts and the seed-carrier Kokopelli painted on the sides of the caves. Here too are the forms of the artists' fingers and palms: their signatures, the marks of their selves, in graphic hands reaching out to their descendants across the chasm of time. They left enduring images of their priorities and loves, deities and dreams. They left their holiest expressions of wonder and communion, the evidence of a marriage with place consecrated in timeless art.

The lover in us is a child that likes to draw, handle a sharp pencil, splash water colors or inhale the aroma of the turpentine and linseed oil that thins and binds the pigments to canvas. Vision can be as immediate as touch, direct and with no need of explanation. Like altar boys we ready the vacant sheets of tree-flesh, release our life force in a fountain of red paints, freed of all preconceptions about design as meaning proceeds to take over. One never really manufactures either adventure or art. We are confronted by it, consumed by it... and remade within it. It always has a purpose, one beyond the range of the artist's intentions, and it is willingly given away. Here today and gone tomorrow, like those golden cottonwood leaves. Like those Tibetan sand paintings intricately crafted in this ever-shifting medium, definitive colors sure to blow across one another, mixing and blending until fully melded into, fully

indifferentiable from the landscape from which they came. But then it's not in the completion of some project that we become-fulfilled. Rather, it is in the making of our art, in the living of our lives that we're made whole.

"The purpose of Art is not to represent the outward appearance of things, but their inner significance," Aristotle proclaimed. This is true for those aesthetic forms evolved independent of human influence as much as for our "own" creations, for rivers and twisted cedar limbs as well as the sculpture forming beneath the attentive motion of our tools. Each glinting rock, each flex of river muscle an inspiration to the heart, and food for soul. Art was, is, what comes of the relationship between self and other, when allowed to express itself. It is a complex and evolving structure for relating that we exist and act within. With or without the artist's brush we reach out to make our mark, from the center of our experience of art, of life, of our mated land. In the artist's vernacular our attention to form is called "style." Once we've made art into a way of being, an activity, a verb, we see the ways in which it corresponds to the word "grace"-- which can mean a "seemingly effortless beauty or charm of movement," -an excellence bestowed by God" and "a prayer of thanksgiving." It is in this sense of motive beauty, beneficence and gratitude that we impart grace to our acts, and are in turn graced by the inspirited world we act upon and within.

Repetitive chores turn into art whenever they're executed with style, then become ritual concurrent with our conscious

acknowledgement of their meaning and importance. The same acts completed without our mindful attention and conscious intent are simply habits. We don't need to take time away from living to engage in ritual, so much as we need to ritualize our daily existence. Sitting up in bed each morning to face the first sun becomes a ritual, as soon as we're conscious of it as an act of interpenetration and show of gratitude. The sharing of food moves from a quick refueling to a slow and artful unfolding, and then into ritual as each serving is consecrated, every bite undertaken as communion. Communion with the lifeforms that feed us, with the sun and rain and soil that made the salad possible, with the spiritual/evolutionary power moving through both consumer and consumed.

The result is reconnection, as our art and practice weaves us back into the material of our experience. Together with the ritual efforts of others, we co-create the living fabric of culture, jointly paint on that fabric the story of our struggles, our miracles... our beautiful, beautiful hope.

-JESSE WOLF HARDIN is an acclaimed presenter and author on matters of mindfulness and Earth-centered spirituality.

Wolf's books include Full Circle (Llewellyn Pub. '91) and the soon to be released Kindred Spirits: Sacred Earth Wisdom (SwanRaven June 2000). For information on his publications, workshops or residencies at their wilderness retreat, write: The Earthen Spirituality Project, PO Box 516, Reserve, NM 87830. You can visit their website at: <http://www.concentric.net/~earthway>

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With the big post-election brouhaha, it's easy to forget what the election itself was all about.

Nothing.

Nothing but a 5 billion-dollar show to make it look like there's democracy in the United States. A show election leaving millions homeless, some 25% of the population functionally illiterate and the whole country without guaranteed health care. A show election leaving the U.S. run by enemies of humanity ruling over a world of cheap life and savage inequality.

True, the end wasn't as neat as it was supposed to be, inadvertently revealing even the empty show as a shoddy production indeed. Turns out the one with the most votes can lose. Turns out there's no national presidential election, but 50 state elections for unknown Electors who can vote any way they like.

Turns out millions of votes aren't counted, that many Blacks are still routinely disenfranchised.

Turns out there's no "right to vote" in the U.S. Constitution.

All these revelations have shocked some uninformed people. Some of them have been brought to the edge of hysteria -- which many "Leftists" have tried to exploit with talk of a "vast right-wing conspiracy," or a "coup d' état by the ultra right."

(Meanwhile, the main propaganda engines thrump out simple messages for the masses: "look how well-designed our system is" and "see your vote counts' like a smiling Florida TV pitchman saying "Come on down, the weather's fine!" while behind him orange trees blacken in the frost.)

None of the hysteria is justified. The close election of 2000 was fundamentally just that--a close election. Working people, farmers and youth didn't have a horse in the election, or in the mess that followed it.

But it's a good time to point out that people are spectators, not participants in the electoral show. To underline that there's no majority rule in the "World's Greatest Democracy," even inside the meaningless electoral arena.

And to spotlight Cuba where everybody participates in scrupulous elections, and bribery ("campaign contributions") is illegal. Where right now union members--over 90% of the workforce--are discussing in every workplace (including written proposals) what course their country should follow--a long exercise in participatory democracy leading up to the national discussion and vote at their union confederation's meeting before May Day.

Turns out --when there's majority rule-- people decide everyone should have a home, literacy, excellent education and medical care. And that their country should help make the world more just and more equal.

Anybody see that on the ballot in the USA?

--Steve Eckardt

"Day of Shame"

We were both shocked and saddened by President Clinton's decision to deny executive clemency to Leonard Peltier. During the last few days world support for the immediate and unconditional release of Mr. Peltier had reached remarkable levels, with calls and letters arriving from such renowned human rights and religious leaders as Coretta Scott King, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Amnesty International, Nobel Laureate Rigoberta Menchu and the Archbishop Desmond Tutu, amongst many others. Grassroots support from people across the country had swamped the White House phone and fax lines for months. Native nations and organizations made their support known again and again in powerful messages. Thousands of concerned citizens walked and prayed in the streets of New York on International Human Rights Day. Yet somehow none of this was enough.

Why? The question remains for William Clinton to answer. The fact that so light a penalty attached to the perjury charge in the Monica Lewinsky case raises disturbing issues. We would like an explanation.

For many weeks now President Clinton had called for national reconciliation and racial unity in this country. He has called for "One America" and emphasized the great racial disparity and discrimination so evident in our criminal justice system. He has called again and again for respect and equality for all races. He has stressed the need for righting historical injustices and healing long festering wounds inflicted upon people of color. He has insisted that the United States take its place as a world leader of human rights affairs. He has personally visited Pine Ridge Reservation, the site of the tragic shoot out at Oglala a long and bitter quarter of a century ago, and called for greater respect and justice for our first citizens.

Yet in this last and most critical test, President Clinton has betrayed his own goals and ideals. Again we must ask why?

Leonard Peltier has been imprisoned for 25 years without ever receiving the benefit of a fair trial. The FBI forced Myrtle Poor Bear to sign a

false affidavit, then committed fraud upon the Canadian government by presenting her statement to their courts of law. Three teenaged boys were terrorized and coerced into giving false testimonies to the grand jury and at his trial. A ballistics test reflecting his innocence was concealed from the defense and the FBI expert gave distorted testimony to the jury. No consequences for these illegal acts have ever attached.

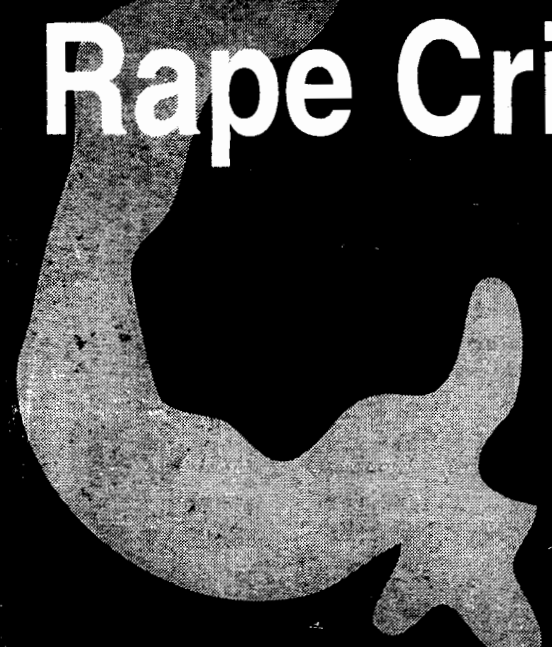
Today even the United States Attorneys admit that no one knows who fired the fatal shots. Yet Leonard Peltier was denied a new trial on a technicality, with the judge admitting that a strong doubt was cast on the prosecution's case. Even that judge now supports clemency. Meanwhile Mr. Peltier himself is long overdue for parole and receives human rights awards for the remarkable human rights work he carries out from behind bars. He is now in failing health.

Most disturbing still is the fact that Leonard's highly controversial conviction is deeply rooted in one of the most grim chapters of recent American civil rights history, specifically the Pine Ridge Reign of Terror. Between 1973 and 1976, FBI backed vigilantes terrorized, battered and assaulted scores of Lakota traditionalists and AIM supporters throughout the reservation. Houses burned and entire families were wounded in drive by shootings. While the FBI stood by, some 64 AIM members and supporters were murdered, their deaths never properly investigated or vindicated. Civil rights organizations excoriated FBI abuses again and again.

It can hardly be gainsaid that the history of our government's dealings with the first citizens of this country have been tragic at best, and oftentimes shameful. It is difficult to imagine a case more crucial to national reconciliation and healing than the case of Leonard Peltier. Yet a door, instead of opening, has been slammed and locked. Our society will pay the price.

Today will be remembered as but another day of U.S. government shame and betrayal of Native people.

--Leonard Peltier Defense Committee



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A reporter is dead--who cares?

We are coming up to the 25th anniversary of the car-bomb murder of newspaper reporter Don Bolles. The past quarter century marked the high-water mark of my belief in America's Freedom of the Press and the depth of my current belief that freedom is now a myth whose practitioners don't give a damn about journalism's duty to America.

I have seen Bolles' legacy destroyed by his own newspaper, the main paper in my state, a magazine I had believed in, and by four columnists I had trusted, the editor of the leading alternative paper in my state, and a major national journalism review.

On June 3, 1976, at 6 a.m., I had walked into the third floor editorial office of the *Amarillo Globe-News* where I was dayside police reporter and had worked since 1969. I was stunned to see our morning paper's front page (at that time the *Globe-News* company put out a morning and evening edition). It told of a June 2 car bomb that tore off the legs and one arm of 47-year old Don Bolles, a reporter for the *Arizona Republic of Phoenix*, the biggest paper in that state. I knew the name, having lived in Phoenix from 1954 to 1969.

Police, using Bolles' last words, arrested the bomber who was convicted. The bomber claimed he was hired by a Phoenix businessman, Kemper Marley, Sr., who had been angered by exposes Bolles wrote about him.

Kemper, however, (now deceased) was never charged because in Arizona because, as in most states, a man cannot be convicted to conspiracy to murder just on the statement of a coconspirator.

But a group of newspaper reporters vowed to take unprecedented action to scare off any future thugs who might think they could scare reporters into silence by murdering one of them.

This team -- from such places as the *Detroit News*, *Chicago Tribune*, and Bolles' own *Arizona Republic* -- came to Arizona to follow up crime and corruption stories Bolles might have done if he had lived. This team called itself IRE (Investigative Reporters and Editors). It was headed by Bob Greene, the 300-pound reporter for *Newsday* (Long Island, N.Y.), whose team there had won the 1974 Pulitzer Prize for its massive expose of heroin traffic from Europe to America.

Reporters drove to Phoenix -- some on vacation time and some who had quit their jobs -- to join the IRE team in what became the Arizona Project.

My own paper declined to send anyone and having a wife and small son to support, I wasn't able to raise the money to go. It is, I would say, the major regret of my life. I was not a great reporter but I would have been honored to sharpen their pencils, make their coffee or buy their donuts.

During the time the Arizona Project was working, I was never prouder to be a journalist. I was never to feel that pride again. I have never even come close.

American journalism began collapsing even as the IRE team finished its great series of exposes which would be offered around the country and lead to indictments and government changes.

The series included exposes of the family of then U.S. Senator and former Republican Presidential candidate Barry Goldwater. The senator's brother, Robert, then owner of a giant chain of department stores -- and a big advertiser -- was reported to have mob connections. The senator, having been supported for years by Bolles' newspaper, the *Arizona Republic*, threatened a lawsuit. But the crusher came when the *Republic* refused to publish the series by IRE -- selling out the memory of its own reporter to keep an advertiser happy.

The *Republic's* bad faith led to other papers declining to carry the series. And to the present day, the series has never been reprinted in book form!

Only one of the reporters on the team was able to get a book published about the IRE project. But that book was by a Kansas firm and the book has been out of print for years.

And the conspiracy of silence continued into the 1990s when, in his own autobiography, Goldwater acknowledged his brother knew people in the mob -- a claim the IRE series had made years before. So Goldwater -- now dead -- knew the series told the truth but used his influence to bury the series.

After reading Goldwater's book, I sent the above information -- while Goldwater was still alive -- to the *Nation*, and to four columnists I'd long admired -- Clarence Page of the *Chicago Tribune*, Molly Ivins of the *Fort Worth Star Telegram* (who originally wrote stories about the Bolles situation for the *New York Times*), Pete Hamill, then of the *New York Daily News* and Jack Newfield of the *New York Post*. None had any reaction, although I do not know if it was they or their papers who chose not to get involved.

The final sad chapter came just over a year ago when the *Daily Oklahoman* of Oklahoma City carried a report that the infamous Kemper Marley was to be inducted into the Cowboy Hall of Fame for his cultural and benevolent contributions! The article made no mention of the Bolles case.

Now most of the HOF directors had no background in journalism and would not have known of Marley's tie to the Bolles murder. But one longtime HOF supporter, Edward Gaylord (publisher of *The Oklahoman*), did know. His paper's own Jack Taylor had been a member of the IRE Arizona Project!

I wrote to the *Oklahoman* protesting this whitewash of Marley. There was no response. I sent a copy of the HOF story and background of Marley to the state's leading alternative newspaper, the *Oklahoma Observer*. Nothing was printed.

I sent the same info to the *American Journalism Review*. They printed nothing.

We might lament "Where have you gone, Joe Dimaggio?" But our media don't miss Don Bolles and don't care.

--Steve LaPrade

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The news media is quite elementary, Watson

The chief sin of most news media is not what they cover, but what they don't cover.

For example, when I worked on the *Amarillo Globe-News* from 1969-78, there was only one story ever done about the plight of the black section of Amarillo known as "the Heights." That was assigned to me by an ill editor who was planning to leave. He assigned the story after his two supervisors, the publisher and city editor, had gone on vacation or to business meetings out of state.

He ran my story—including pictures of unkempt city parks in the black section of Amarillo—before his bosses returned.

So if you want to know what is really wrong with your local paper, note what is NOT covered. Which brings us to Sherlock Holmes' Silver Blaze law of journalism criticism.

You may recall the classic Sherlock Holmes story "Silver Blaze" by Holmes' creator Arthur Conan Doyle.

In that story, a famous racehorse is stolen. Holmes learns during his investigation that a dog on the stable premises made no alarm. This led Holmes to assume the horse thief was someone known to the dog.

The police detective asks Holmes, "Is there any other point to which you would wish to draw my attention?"

"To the curious incident of the dog in the nighttime."

"The dog did nothing in the nighttime."

"That was the curious incident."

If Sherlock Holmes was alive, here's how his press criticism might work:

"I would call your attention to the curious incident of the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer's* in-depth coverage of the protesters' complaints against the World Trade Organization and the World Bank."

"But there was no in-depth coverage of the protesters' complaints against the World Trade Center and the World Bank."

"That was the curious incident."

So when listening to, watching or reading your local media, ask about "the curious incident" or what hasn't been reported.

--Steve LaPrade

Notes from the Land of Anti-Fat

Child Tested

From the Department of Cognitive Dissonance comes this report from the War on Obesity. According to an article in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the NIH halted as unsafe a study being conducted on children by Jack Yanovski at the NIH Institute of Child Health and Human development. Yanovski's 15-year study of healthy children 6-10 years old was looking at the metabolic underpinnings of obesity.

As a part of Yanovski's research, children of fat parents were subjected to a barrage of tests, including x-rays, psychological testing, blood draws, and abdominal MRIs. One test involved having the children hospitalized overnight with several intravenous blood lines and required them to experience extremely high and extremely low blood sugar levels for hours at a time. The study was finally halted because it posed risks of "more than minimal pain, allergic reactions or, most problematic, dangerous blood clots or phlebitis."

Federal studies in healthy children are allowed only when there is minimal risk of harm - and then only if the research promises to help fight the child's ailment. This study considered the healthy children to have an "ailment" by virtue of having obese parents. Yanovski defended the risks to the children as no greater than those children might encounter "while playing in traffic," according to the meeting minutes.

The study was halted in November 2000 - the same time period, it should be recalled, that authorities in New Mexico were keeping a young girl away from her parents under child protection laws - but several troubling questions remain. There were not, after all, sick

children; they were healthy kids whose sole distinguishing feature was fat parents. One has to wonder just how much guilt and fear the NIH researchers had to ladle on the subjects' parents to get them to agree to this borderline abuse in the name of science.

When the National Institutes of Health first started trumpeting its War on Obesity, size acceptance advocates worried that this militant stance might manifest itself in an Ethics Bedamned attitude. On the basis of the Yanovski study, it appears as if that fear was justified.

As For Anamarié . . .

The young New Mexico girl removed from her family last year due to allegations of medical neglect has finally been returned to her parents. Media reports have indicated that the child lost weight under her hospital very-low-calorie diet, but due to a court mandated media blackout, no formal figures have been released. You can bet this story will resurface again.

The Unfriendly Skies

Airplane seating has never been that friendly to plus-sized patrons as it is, but last December it grew even unfriendlier. In a lawsuit directed against Southwest Airlines, a California (figures it'd be California, eh?) judge ruled that if an airline determines that a passenger is big enough to fill more than one seat, it can charge for more than one ticket.

Cynthia Luther, who weighs more than 300 pounds; alleged that Southwest harassed and discriminated against her in May before she boarded a flight from Reno, Nevada to Burbank, California. Luther was asked if she needed a seat belt extension, then was told to buy a second ticket "so as not to inconvenience other passengers seated next to her," her lawsuit stated. A friend bought the extra ticket, but Luther sat in one seat with the armrest down - "with another person seated next to her in a comfortable position," according to the lawsuit.

Despite this testimony, Superior Court Judge Marilyn Hoffman said the airline's policy wasn't discriminatory. "The procedure and policy is directed in any situation where it appears for whatever reason a passenger might significantly encroach on another passenger," the court noted.

In other words, if a passenger is too big for the uncomfortably crammed seating in your average, it's the passenger's fault, not the airline's. You'd think with major airlines going bankrupt that it'd behoove em to take a less obnoxious stance with their fat customers. But blame dies hard in the Land of Anti-Fat.

--Bill Sherman



The Poetry Page

I Wanna Be A Rock Star

I wanna be a rock star
Such a pretty girl
To promote world peace
And debt relief
Wearing expensive pearls
Driving a wicked top-down car

I wanna be a rock star
Feminist bitch
Fucking like a cyber vixen
On Secanol mixing
With the rich
So my career goes far

I wanna be a rock star
Raising social conscious
On dead issues
Crying into tissues
During catered lunches
With a paid-for bar

I wanna be a rock star
With the voice of an angel
Addicted to cocaine
Throwing concerts in the rain
Covered in spangles
And playing electric guitar

I wanna be a rock star
With 300 shows a year
Sold out at Soldier Field
With a microphone to wield
Though the cheap seats can't hear
In an orange fur coat real bizarre

I wanna be a rock star
Throw a backstage party
Fill a fishbowl with weed
pay a fan to deseed
Stock up on Bacardi
Win the pop culture war

--Megan Volpert

OH, PIONEER

"Them chickens need attention,
mama," the farmer said to his wife.
The gray-yellow-green of the corn fields
were like an outdoors church
awaiting a preacher to come and set them on fire
with curses and descriptions of hell.

Last week I pretended I was a horse
and pulled a plow over half an acre.
"okay, Old Nellie, whoa, girl."
That was hard work for the old nag.
Plowing will be the next exercise fad.
my bovine dog yipped at my heels
while I was plowing, not seeing the sense.

My friendly plow told me tales of living
in a family of farm tools
before they had machines.

Last night I dreamed my farm house caught fire.
My dog and horse helped throw buckets
of water on the flames and put the fire out.

--Eileen Murphy

FISH HEAD STEW

Augusteen works
in the factory,
she tells me
stories 'bout
her hometown,
Pontiac, Ill-
uh-noy, uh
prison an some
farmland, it's uh
racist little town,
Augusteen is black,
an she knows
the stories the newspaper
won't print, she's been
through divorce, got
three kids, she
was in prison,
after that she was
losing herself in
alcohol, now
she goes to A.A.,
an she got uh smile
that says she been
through some kinda
fire, heartbreak
an things as such,
that deal with too
little or too much
trust, an she
loves to cook,
I remember her
telling me about
fish head stew,
about how delicious
it was, and how I
had ta have some,
well, my life is
too long an too
short, an this
poem is my own
fish head stew.

--John Firefly

I am an American

I am subhuman trash

But I AM PROUD to be an American. God made hell for people like me. But
I love my country, I love my automobile, my nice house, my giant TV set,
my VCR

I LOVE it, I revel in it

I love my country

My country has created a new god.

The OLD God was hopelessly out of date

Our new god is a god of high tech, consumerism, materialism

We no longer need the OLD God

We have created one that is much more pleasant and enjoyable

And we will kill anyone who stands in our way!

We are subhuman, we are trash

But we are strong

We are Americans

We are proud

VERY PROUD!

-- AHK

ORANGE IN LOVE'S rAINBOW

You stand bestowing me everything that I would like to be in this world. The
vibrant
blue in myself is shared with you.
The expression that you create with your lifestyle becomes a larger element in
my life.
My life has become fluent and expressive by the becalming, unrealized sharing

that you naturally live.

Jim, you avail through life to continue your own with a manner of dignity and
self-
confidence.

The kindness that you convey is an element in life that I strive to reach and
also give
away.

You live your life how you want, how you feel, not how others would want you
to live

and feel. You ignore the harsh and grievous society in which we all live.

You are important in my life.

I wish that I had the nerve or audacity to live my life as free and as
non-conformist as
you can.

You live a true life.

Your clothes reveal who you are.

The style in which you overuse your cologne is the style that you also portray
your color

Orange. Like the scent of the cologne that can be scented from distance, your

color can be seen from distance.

Orange is your color from the rainbow.

Orange reflects who you are and how you live your life.

--Rick Reliford



LAURA PLAYS THE JAZZ FOR ME PART THREE

Laura plays the
Jazz for me,

over an over,

black vinyl drums
die hard at any speed,

78, 33 and uh third,
or 45, CD, or D.A. T.,

when the vibe
gets uh hold
uh you,

you gonna feel
what drops the
chains of time,

over an over,

Laura plays the
jazz for me,

anyou can
fight over the
copyright,

but what grabs
your soul can't
be bought,

an my life
is the crossroads,

an Robert Johnson
was uh prophet,

who drank his
whiskey with Mephisto,

now that's got
ta do with jazz,
my moma
an daddy left the
south with warm
dreams of the cold
north,

and I think
about them,

all the while,

Laura plays the
jazz for me,

an Billie Holiday
sings Strange Fruit,

Ella Fitzgerald
does some eloquent
scat,

Louis Armstrong
brings any body
up when he blows
his horn,

an still,

after all these
years,

encore after encore,

Laura plays the
Jazz for me.

--John Firefly

Friday's Child

Sweaters on sale
Speed to the mall
In your hot car
To get ready for fall

A waste of time
Homework it seems
You still pull A's
In all of your day dreams

Smashing party
Same as last week's
Dented the car
And was hit on by geeks

A cheerleader
Trust fund baby
Never a yes
But always a maybe

Nothing special
Such an allure
What makes you think
You're so damn popular

--Megan Volpert

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Not The Earth Apart

Notice how the mind is busied?
Downtown traffic jams.
The mind interpreting?
Salesmen and priests.
The mind judging?
Criminal court and the penal system.
Sore hips, bowels, shoulders perhaps?
Trees felled above the roots,
open pit copper mines,
the burdensome weight of asphalt.
Are you having difficulty sleeping?
The screams of vanishing species, the pleadings of your untouched soul.
Troubled by feelings of inadequacy and the tragic loss of meaning,
experiencing less joy these days?
Gaia, frustrated by her inability to make us listen, perplexed over
our abandonment of purpose and delight.
Know that we used to exist in balance,
and that the need to protect and to guard came later.
We humans evolved for no other reason
than to serve as the heightened sensory organs
of the living, breathing Earth.
To sense, and to celebrate.
To connect through sensation.
You're a mite absorbed, warrior.
Remember, Gaia feels through us.
Pay attention to the effects you have.
Cry, and you join her in tears.
Laugh, and you give her a moment of relief,
the relief of laughing with you.
Love, and she'll feel loved too.
Now guard this relationship to the Earth,
not the Earth apart.

-- Jesse Wolf Hardin

Hard Lines

A metal-framed window, narrow and long,
looks out on a world I can't enjoy.
Too small to exit or enter,
hard lines on a cement wall.

The horizon is divided by contrast,
grey concrete wall against an expanse of soft blue.
My daydreams are marred by reality,
hard line across my skies.

Surrounded by men of un...
unfriendly, unhappy, unloved, unsure.
White, Black, Yellow, Brown and Red,
every face creased with cruel hard lines.

Square buildings filled with cries of pain,
angry curses, loud shouts... no joy.
Iron bars, steel fences, mortar and brick
form hard angular patterns in a world of lies and hate.

Fresh 18, out of high school and looking for state security,
a new recruit, short and cute, a female officer.
Her perfume fills the air with the scent of freedom,
she smiles and soft lines frame a radiant face.

Months later eyes dart suspiciously,
contact is lost, her smile is gone.
A rigid pillar clothed in blue,
all stern lines and angles and unbridled contempt.

Career advancement? Naivete?
Lieutenants and sergeants sought her out,
now *her* dreams are marred by reality.
Used by the system left only with us to blame.

"You gotta watch *them*," her superior said,
"they're only out for what they can get."
"Be careful not to cross the line," he cautioned,
then he used her for his convenience...

Hard lines.

--Marvin Honsinger

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Homes that are stacked

"Wow!" is the word that people say when they see a cordwood masonry home. Form a distance one might think that a cordwood masonry structure is stone masonry. Up close people marvel at the matrix of logs laid in beautiful rows with their ends kissing the sky. The ends slightly protrude, exposing the dazzling array of tree rings and wood grains rich with warm colors. Oft times people speak of the safe and secure feeling they get just being within such a structure.

The history of cordwood masonry (also known as: log-end, stackwood, stackwall construction, firewood walls, wood masonry, infilling, or kubbe-teknik in Norwegian) is sketchy at best. Many say its roots are in the Nordic lands of the Viking culture. Although ruins of cordwood masonry have been found from Greece to New Foundland to Siberia dating back a millennium, it's unclear how far beyond a millennium this atavistic method dates back. If we stretch our imaginations, that the early humans copied the ways of the animals and our feathered friends, then we can look at how close cordwood masonry is to a beaver's dam, or the countless nests that many birds build with mud and sticks; we could easily surmise that cordwood masonry is mayhap one of our oldest ways of building our nests.

As a child, my friends and I built "forts" out of "the wood pile." In New England where I grew up, nearly everybody had stacks, or cords, of wood (a full cord is 4' x 4' x 8'). Our wood pile, sometimes eight cords or more, was teeming with life and countless wonders: chipmunks, garden snakes, spiders the size of Denmark, and best of all, "wood pile cats," half feral, half tame, fuzzy and smart as, well "wood-pile cats." Our swans laid their first lone egg in a nest they made behind one of our broodingnagian wood piles. In the fall we would stack firewood along the edge of the road to stop the town snowplows from plowing snow onto our estate, because nearly nothing could take on these titans of strength. The chipmunks, "woodpile cats," and the swans all instinctively knew that the cords of wood were a safe dwelling, as did I. So when I saw photos of a cordwood masonry "home" I naturally felt attracted to this salubrious metatecture (alternative architecture).

It just came natural to me, (and to most people) to stack wood, with a rhythm and flowing motion that could build a stack that seemed as permanent as stone mountains. At first glance at cordwood masonry my initial comment was "how easy," and to a certain extent it was true. I was then surprised that this metatecture system does have a few problems. Fortunately those problems have been, for the most part, overcome by the ushers of the cordwood renaissance: Jaki and Rob Roy, and Jack Henstridge, to name a few.

Without going into exhaustive detail, I'll try to give you a synopsis of this amaranthine metatecture. Hopefully I'll whet your appetite to delve further into Jack Henstridge's and the Roy's wonderful books, reports, articles, video tapes, or better yet, one of their cordwood masonry courses, ranging from a day to five

days for a very reasonable tuition fee. At "Earthwood" you can even rent a cordwood masonry cottage overnight, or during your course, to try it on for size (first come, first serve).

Why build with cordwood masonry?

Besides the aesthetic reasons, which are plentiful, and reason enough for many people, there is cost, which is very low. One cordwood (infill) pole barn was built for \$1.21 per square foot, which is about 1/40th the cost of most conventional methods. But like I always say, you get what you pay for. Quite a few case studies listed in Rob Roy's book The Complete Book of Cordwood Masonry Housebuilding: The Earthwood Method (see recommended reading) listed homes built for \$10.00 and \$12.00 per square foot (sq. ft.). One elaborate place was built for \$25.00 sq. ft., still drastically below the national average for housebuilding cost.

There is the energy savings to be considered. An inch of cordwood masonry comes in at slightly below one "R" (resistance) factor (.91). The walls can be quite hefty; a 32" thick wall is not uncommon in cordwood masonry. one home built in Saskatchewan was built with double walls, one 6 inches, the second 8 inches, with and insulation infill. Various case studies range from R-9.6 to R-26.4 which translates to low heating costs and cordwood masonry homes tend to be naturally cool in the summer. "Earthwood" experimented with "earthtubes" to increase their natural cooling ability.

Several cordwood enthusiasts have promoted the inclusion of "masonry stoves" (also known as Russian stoves), which are somewhat like a chimney structure that slowly heats up the entire stove structure, and retains heat for long periods of time. Rob Roy's book has a good section on the construction of a fabulous masonry stove. Yet, I would personally recommend the late 'n' great Ken Kern's book on masonry stoves still available from Owner Builder Publications (10735 Ferguson Road, Clovis, California 93611-9313). (In fact, all of Ken Kern's books are a "must have" for anyone building or improving their home.) Masonry stoves are perfect not for just cordwood masonry homes, but all metatecture homes, and many conventionally built homes as well. One masonry stove within a cordwood masonry home in an upstate New York clime used only a few cords of wood to fend of the frigid north winds for an entire cold season.

Reuse: The ecological equation

"Reuse" metatecture (sometimes called recycled goods architecture, deconsumer architecture, "Earth ships," building with junk (found objects), etc.) of which cordwood masonry could be broadly included, is highly adaptable, accepting of whatever is on hand.

One lucky fellow was given 6 miles of cedar telephone poles. He cut off the bottoms which are treated with creosote and made roofing shingles, and then built a cordwood masonry home with the remaining sections of the cedar poles.

"Reuse" is becoming more and more accepted. If you're a person who is clever at salvage or scrounging, you can save lots of money, not to mention what you'll be saving environmentally. Rob Roy's book has some great ideas for reuse. One is to gather "slash" (the leftover wood pieces from logging operations, or clearing land, that nobody really seems to mind if you haul away). He also talks of the use of "slat-ends" (the piece of a log, especially in log cabin building, that is cut off a timber to "square it"). Fire-killed timber and scrap lumber can also be efficiently used in cordwood masonry or "Earthship" construction. Moreover, the use of bottles, fish bowls, car windows, bits and pieces of glass, sculpture, and pottery shards, along with pebbles, marbles or just about anything can turn many "reuse" metatecture structures into a work of art you live in. This process of architecture art work is one of the aspects of "artification."

Wood generally not deemed suitable for lumber because it may be twisted, bent, too short, filled with knots, or is a junction or split, easily makes its way into metatecture. These wonderful wood anomalies make the cordwood masonry matrix all that more beautiful.

For every inch that some "reuse" material is used, an inch of prime timber, or some other raw-virginal material is not wasted. Furthermore, one might also contend that cordwood masonry sequesters a great deal of carbon that might have been floating around the universe via some furnace.

The building materials in cordwood masonry are for the most part natural, low-tech stuff: logs, sawdust, mortar, lime and sand. This makes cordwood masonry, like many of the other metatecture methods (i.e. strawbale construction, cob, rammed earth, pressed block, adobe, super adobe, and bamboo structural construction, etc.) great for people who are chemical sensitive or worry about "sick building syndrome." Although cedar seems to be a preferred wood, almost any kind of wood is acceptable as long as it is debarked, cured properly, and laid into the wall using the much hard-won-proven methods set forth by the Roy's and Henstridge. This diverse use of wood varieties means that fast growing, sustainably grown timber may be used. This is a significant environmental Godsend. For instance, multiple-use trees such as black locust, or honey locust, which is fast growing, offers a high yield, high protein bean crop, and is a highly efficient coppice wood crop, could be used. The locust also has a low shrinkage rate and is fairly resistant to expansion, which is essential for cordwood masonry.

The Yin and Yang of cordwood masonry

Without going on and on about how to build a cordwood masonry structure, let me say that as long as you follow the guidelines and think "overbuild" there shouldn't be any real problems. Two big problems do exist in the cordwood masonry universe: shrinkage and expansion of the logs. When shrinkage happens, gaps between the logs and the mortar appear. "Chinking" (or sealing) compounds are



up to what they should be

then employed. This is just part of the cordwood masonry process and shouldn't be really feared; certainly not feared as much as the dreaded expansion nightmare. When uncured wood is used, or some sort of moisture enigma happens, expansion can ruin your whole day. In one case a frost heave caused a rude expansion in a cordwood structure thus causing the mortar to crumble. As my "peeps" in Arkansas would say, "That ain't purrtty!"

In an ideal world, the logs are debarked then dried over a reasonable span of time (3 months to a year, depending on the type of wood, or if it is air dried, solar, kiln dried, or whatever. . .). This step along with some other elementary counter-measures can help halt excessive shrinkage and expansion.

Another problem that has been stemmed by the acumen of the gurus of cordwood masonry is "water extraction." Wood can suck the moisture out of the mortar creating quite a hassle. When sawdust (that has been fine sifted and presoaked in water at least overnight in water) is added to the mortar mix, the water extraction problem is quelled. The presoaked sawdust acts as zillions of tiny sponges that retain a good balance of moisture within the mortar. This sawdust solution also slows down the curing process which creates stronger mortar in the long run. There is a whole myriad of mortar mixes; one may use "sugar" (fine sand), another may use coarse sand as in cob construction. yet one good formula seems to be: 9 parts sand; 3 parts presoaked sawdust; 3 parts light masonry cement; and 2 parts hydrated lime. Mortar is used on the outside and the interior face of the wall, leaving the middle section of the wall open for insulation. Here, too, the gurus of cordwood masonry have come up with an ingenious method: using inexpensive sawdust treated with hydrated (or "S" type) lime (one might also consider using borax pentahydrate, or some type of insect control medium). This has been proven to be a wonderful insulation, and the lime helps protect the wood as well. At the end of the cordwood masonry workday, the fresh mortar is "pointed" (pushed, prodded, caressed and sculpted into place). This not only improves the appearance of the wall, but also improves the bond between wood and the mortar and the overall stability of the wall.

Michael Smith, one of the brilliant minds of metatecture and best known for his work with cob, has been experimenting with amalgamating cob (the conglomeration of clay, sand, and straw, also known as course adobe) and cordwood masonry. In what Michael Smith calls "cobwood." This would bring both cordwood and cob one step closer to an all-natural building method that uses indigenous materials. I support the marriage of various metatecture methods, although cob reacts very differently than cordwood, which seems to have a hard enough time adhering to mortar. But it will be great if Michael Smith can solve the adhesion conundrum.

All of this, and more, can fit into a structural frame (such as "post and beam," bamboo, pole framing, rammed earth, etc.) as an infill (or nogging) method. Or these methods can stand alone as a "load bearing" method. But, because cordwood masonry relies on gravity for its primary strength, it isn't all that great for an earthquake prone area. The load bearing method may save lots of money because less timber is used, and it is much easier to build a load bearing structure. But it is not recommended where the walls might shake, rattle and roll. So if you're thinking of building a cordwood masonry roller coaster, don't!

With that said, greater stability has been achieved by basically "overbuilding," adding buttresses, substructure framing, rebar, armatures, metal strapping, etc. Or perhaps one could play around with an exoskeleton like the strawbale construction folks are doing. One of the great things about cordwood masonry is that it can flow into rounded structures, curved walls, etc., which gives you more structural strength and will increase volume (space wise) for the same amount of materials. It can give you 25% to 43% more space for the same buck, which is true for all rounded or domed structures, more bang for the buck.

In an age when houses can be slapped up in a day, some people might be deterred by the length of time it takes to create a cordwood house. Case studies have shown cordwood masonry to take an hour and half per square foot. The beautiful "earthwood" home took 3,000 hours. Cordwood masonry is a labor of love, just as most metatecture methods are. Metaturists fund themselves looking for other projects to do after their nests are completed. These structures are more than a building; they instantly become "home." Sure there are a few cautions, but in many cases even the relatively inexperienced builder can build one of these metatecture delights with rounded walls that flow like water stilled in time. A home that hugs peoples' souls and says "welcome." Cordwood masonry creates a sense of well being as it shares an honored place in the realm of aesthetics. But is it for everybody?

Connecting the dots

In my own conceptual use of cordwood metatecture I envisage it playing an essential role in co-housing, or "cluster" designs. Cordwood masonry in this type of setting would make great short walls, spatial dividers, built-in furniture, privacy nooks, or rooms within rooms, etc.; and of course a whole myriad of out buildings come to mind.

Cordwood masonry is not for people who crave conventional, normative ticky-tacky "houses," and forget trying to fix it into a conventional suburban neighborhood. Not to mention zoning regulations (we won't even go there). But in the right setting, and for those with the right mind set, cordwood masonry offers an inexpensive "answer" for those who long to express their individual metatecture voice.

Mother Earth News, always ahead of the times, has shown some amazing examples of cordwood masonry over the years. Dating back to issue # 45, to the more recent cordwood masonry sauna in issue #177, contact M.E.N. for back issues and the books they offer. If you're not in the market for an alternative home, perhaps a toolshed, chanting chamber, private chapel, sauna or a hot tub enclosure might fit into your personal universe.

My bottom line is: That when the guidelines are stuck to, cordwood masonry is definitely all that its stacked up to be.

--Nikolai Alexanderovich Zarick
Architectonic Conceptualist

Recommended Reading

-The Complete Book of Cordwood Masonry House Building: The Earthwood Method


by Rob Roy
Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., New York
ISBN 0-8069-8590-9

(Available through Earthwood, along with a companion video)

-Alternative House Building

by Mike McClintock
Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., New York
ISBN 0-8069-6995-4

(Available through Mother Earth News)



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