

Sword and Sorcery

Cohen the Boybarian • Semi Mental • A New York Yankee in King Arthur's Court

NATIONAL LAMPPOON

WPS 34490

Jan. 1982

The Humor Magazine for Adults

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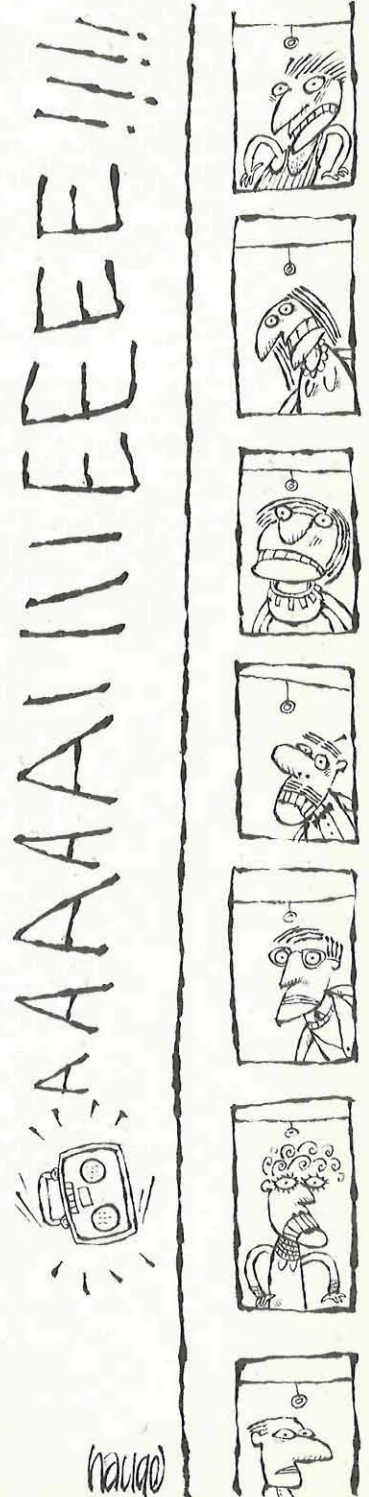
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ADVERTISING OFFICES, NEW YORK: Debra J. Resler, Jed Horowitz, Account Managers: National Lampoon, 635 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10022 (212) 688-4070. MIDWEST: Sandra Gassner, Inc., River Plaza, 405 N. Wabash, Suite 4505, Chicago, IL 60610 (312) 676-6800. WEST COAST: Montage Boss Media, 4262 Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90010 (213) 933-9217. SOUTH: Brown & Company 5110 Boswell Road, Marietta, GA 30067 (404) 998-2889.

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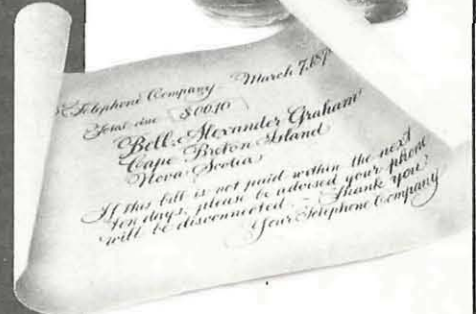
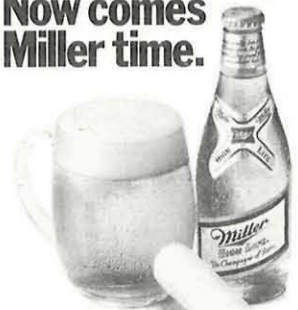
You
just invented
the telephone.
Now you can
send out for
pizza.

Now you can call people
in the middle of the night
and make those barnyard
noises you think are so funny.

Now you can do something
with that answering machine
you got for your birthday.

Now you can afford to buy
a big house with a nice guest
room for the small band of
gypsies that has taken up
residence in your beard.

**Now comes
Miller time.**



E D I T O R I A L

As part of a package of policy changes for 1982, it has been decided to open the editorial page to persons whose attitudes and opinions differ from the editors'. This month's guest editorialist is Sissy Bledsoe, a twenty-three-year-old secretary-receptionist employed in our office.



The subject of this editorial is called "Swords and Sorcery," which I guess is about the Middle Ages. The Middle Ages are supposedly important these days because they've been making a lot of movies about them. I think the movie industry has new techniques for making humps on people's backs and plague sores and eaten bodies, so they want to use them. I've never seen any of these pictures, but that's what I hear. Of course, it's a perfect type of crude subject that would appeal to the people who run this magazine. They think it's their special mission to make fun of the dark and unfortunate things in life, and when they can't find any, then they dig up some terrible event from history and make fun of that. Sometimes I wonder how the people who run this place can keep up such a critical attitude every day without ever once being cheerful or seeing the good side of things. I asked one of the editors why he was like that and he surprised me by seeming real guilty about it. He apologized to me for his sour outlook and bought me lunch to show how sincere he was. I got a French dip sandwich on a French roll. But before I could eat it, he took it from me and put the slices of beef all over his arm and face. He said this was what people in the Middle Ages looked like when they got bubonic plague. All of the other editors


continued on page 17

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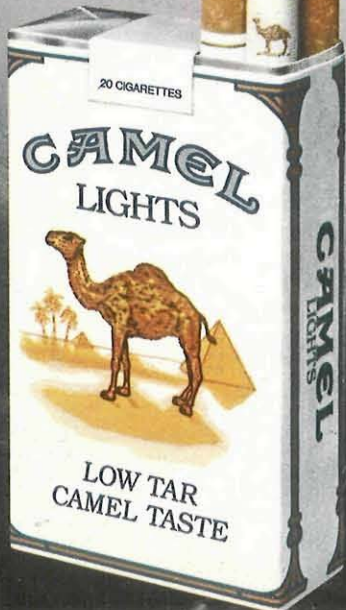
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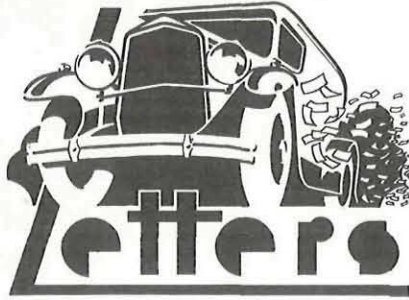
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Sirs:

I'm not a bartender, but I figured out how to make the perfect Manhattan. Just move all the Jews out.

R. S. Anglo-Saxon
New York, N.Y.

Sirs:

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other nickel if the copper is alloyed beyond our standards. No part of this deal, however, may proceed until you take us to lunch. We will be satisfied only with a full businessman's menu: drinks, steaks, and dessert. Please keep in mind that we are seasoned businessmen and that we will not do business unless all customary business courtesies are provided.

Remember, \$3.00 is our firm and final offer. Call us when you are ready to deal.

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Chief Operating Executive
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Sirs:

There are worse things than being queer, you know.

Name withheld by request

Sirs:

Have you heard about the neutron bomb of insults? It's where you go up to a guy and say, "You're an asshole, but you dress nicely."

Peter Guestly
New York, N.Y.

Sirs:

This here is my riddle. I made it up out of my head and it's real hard. What is it that walks first on four legs, next on two legs, then later it be walking on three legs? If you guess my riddle, that's cool. If you don't, I'll bust up your head.

Leon Sphinx
Palookaville, Ky.

Sirs:

That's easy: it's my family! Four legs is my wife, Joan, and me; then she walks out on me; but finally I get custody of my kid with the peg leg. Right?

"Sen." Edward Kennedy
Abigdom, Mass.

Sirs:

We tried welfare, food stamps, CETA, unemployment, and a few other things; but nothing's worked. Please give us some new ideas.

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Washington, D.C.



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Sirs:

Here are still more improbable names of real people: Mr. Typing Paper; Miss Goodyear Blimp; Mr. Chicken Salad on Rye; Mr. April in Paris; Mrs. What Do You Mean, It's Full? I Made a Reservation; and Mr. A Touch, a Touch, I Do Confess't.

Bill Jones
Centerville, Ill.

Sirs:

Do you know how to get five comedians into a Volkswagen? Two in the front, two in the back, and me in the ashtray.

Richard Pryor
Hollywood

Sirs:

Of course I know the difference. My ass is small, dark, and hairy, and lies at the end of my body. On the other hand, a hole in the ground is also dark, but lies in the ground, and...er...uh...hm. Maybe this isn't as easy as I thought.

Jane Fonda
The Sixties, Cal.

Sirs:

Is it true that you often make up for a lame letter by giving it an amusing name and address?

E. Normous Penis
Fallen Trousers, N.D.

Sirs:

He ain't heavy, he's my radio.

Cletus Jackson
Bronx, New York

Sirs:

What happened to that movie you were always advertising last year? You know, the one about *National Lampoon* going to the movies? Was that a joke ad or did you guys really have a movie? If you did, how come it didn't play in our city? Did it show in other cities, or was it not shown anywhere? Why would somebody make a movie and then not show it? Wouldn't that be impractical? It costs a lot of money to make a movie; so how can you get your money back if you don't show the movie? Oh, we get it. You guys just don't want to do what everybody

else does, right? Anybody else would show their movie to earn some money on it, but you guys would rather scrap your movie and throw away millions of dollars than be conformists and try to make profits. That's what we like about you guys. We love it when you show total disregard for everything. You're probably not only refusing to show the film, but we'll bet you made it really awful, on purpose, just to poke fun at all those real serious filmmakers who practically kill themselves trying to make "worthwhile" films. Do you guys think you'll be able to do it again? Do you think you'll find some more people with millions of dollars to invest in a movie, and then promise them that you're sincere this time and that you'll make an incredible movie, and then really bone them right up the ass and squander all their money on the most ridiculous, ferociously bad, guaranteed failure of all time? God, that would be the apex of a totally outrageous hard ass for sure. Keep up that craziness...

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Delores Stanley was gravely ill. Her husband, Harry, was sitting at her side, holding her cold, withered hand.

"Honey? Can you hear me?" Harry said softly.

"She can't hear you, Mr. Stanley," Dr. Fenner said, placing an understanding hand on Harry's shoulder. Harry kissed Delores's hand, leaving a tear and a smear of Chap Stick.

"She's going to...die, isn't she?" Harry said in a quivering, grief-choked voice.

"It doesn't look very good for her," Dr. Fenner said, with a degree of warmth uncharacteristic of a physician of his reputation. "Although, there is one treatment we haven't tried."

For a moment Harry's spirits brightened.

"I thought you said..."

"We tried everything, but..." Dr. Fenner closed the door.

"There is something very controversial that we could attempt. I was reluctant to

tell you, as I am with most of my patients' loved ones, because it is difficult to comprehend how..."

Harry cut him off.

"Tell me, please."

"If I explain this to you, you must promise me that you won't discuss it with anyone. It isn't sanctioned by the AMA."

"You have my word."

"I think you are a man of your word, Harry," Dr. Fenner said. He pulled up a chair and sat down knee to knee with Harry. "You know that woman who's been in here to visit your wife, the young one with the auburn hair? Very attractive?"

"That's Angie Parker, our next-door neighbor."

"Well, Harry..." Dr. Fenner looked deep into Harry's tired, sad eyes. "I think if you were to screw her, your wife would get better."

Harry reared back like a spooked Grand Canyon mule. His face twisted into an angry, squint-eyed mask.

"I warned you, Harry, that this wouldn't be a conventional treatment."

"You can't be serious," Harry snarled, seared by what sounded like the cruelest gag a medical man could whip on a patient.

"I'm very serious, Harry," Dr. Fenner said. "I can't explain how it works, but very often it does."

Harry stood and walked to the window. He peered through the slats of the aluminum mini blinds at the sweltering city below.

"I'm sorry, Harry," Dr. Fenner apologized. "You obviously have misunderstood my intentions."

Harry turned slowly to Dr. Fenner.

"Screw Angie Parker?"

"It might save your wife."

"Actually have intercourse with my neighbor after twenty-two years of marriage without a mark against my wedding vows?"

"What's more important?"

It was 106 degrees in the shade when Harry got home. The air conditioning in the car was on the fritz and he was soaked to the skin with perspiration. He pulled his car into the garage and closed the door. He stopped to look at Angie Parker's house. A nice place. He always admired her honeysuckle hedge—so neat, so full, so healthy. Like her breasts. Like her thighs. Harry caught himself wandering through his mental file photos of Angie. Memories of her at the neighborhood block party when Alex Burmeister squirted her with the hose and her nipples stood up like highway pylons. That black cocktail dress with the sequined neckline, the white tits inside that nearly fell out when she bent over to play Twister at the Blakes' New Year's party. Her sharp little buttocks when she bent over to pick up her newspaper in the morning.

"How's Delores?" a voice called to Harry as he stood in the blazing afternoon sun, looking at the cracks in the cement. He looked up. It was Angie Parker looking over the fence at him.

"Oh, hi, Angie," he stammered. "Not well."

Angie's pretty face grew sad, her carefully painted lips pouted. Harry thought of what Dr. Fenner said and what he was going to have to do.

"Can I do anything for you?"

Harry smiled. Good God! Should he just break down and ask? Should he try to seduce her? Should he just leap the fence, overpower her, and commit the act?

"If you had an iced tea..."

Her kitchen was sexy. Something about the fresh fruit in the basket on the maple table, the blue and white graph-pattern wallpaper, the neatly folded stack of underthings piled on the counter for delivery to the upstairs. Harry was hard as an iron bar as he sipped his tea and recounted for Angie the latest on Delores's condition, all the while wondering how he would put into play the controversial treatment his wife so desperately needed.

Angie was wearing a billowy white shirt over her bathing suit; she had been



"Here, boy..."

sunning herself in the yard when Harry came home. Her skin glowed with fresh tan. She sat with her legs tucked up, her heels touching her buttocks. The shirt obscured Harry's view of her crotch, which was all for the better, considering the pain in his groin. His engorged member was twisted around, nearly knotted, and the heat was melding his testicles to his leg.

"Can I come over and make you dinner?" Angie offered.

"That's very nice of you," Harry said. "But..."

"I can see the pain on your face, Harry," Angie said.

It should have been heartache that she saw, but it was pain. Harry shifted in his seat, hoping to free his trapped gland, but what he needed was a good old-fashioned leg spread. To open his legs all the way. Perhaps if she turned around, took her eyes off him for a moment. But instead she opened her legs, the old-fashioned leg spread. The shirt opened, the legs yawning like a bitch lion. Harry saw a fat bulge of blue bathing suit, a perfectly even, fat and full bulge, embossed with curls of hair. The sides of the suit separated from the flesh, and in the space between, Harry saw the frontiers of her privacy.

The iced tea left Harry's glass in a column straight up into the ceiling fan, where it was dispersed like a Seattle cloudburst.

"Oh, my God!" Harry shouted, as splinters of ice ricocheted off the walls. "What have I done?"

Angie laughed and wiped the tea from her face with the sleeve of her shirt.

"You threw your iced tea up in the air! That was the weirdest thing I've ever seen," Angie said, before collapsing on the table, heaving with laughter. Harry cracked a smile, then he too laughed.

"I guess I'm a little wound up."

"No," Angie laughed. "You're not wound up."

"No?" Harry roared. "What am I?" Angie put her hand over her mouth; tears streamed down her cheeks. She started to speak but couldn't get the words out for the giggles. Harry buried his face in his arm and pounded his fist on the table. Angie turned away and slapped her hands on her knees. She crossed her legs to keep from wetting her suit.

After a good minute of uncontrollable laughter they calmed down. They chuckled between deep breaths and then they were silent.

"Oh, boy," Harry finally said. A final
continued on page 22



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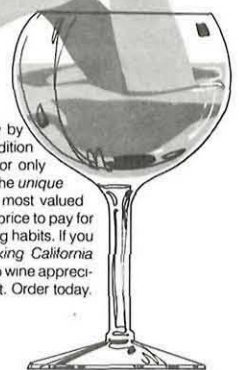
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A Bus Bursts into Flames En Route to the State Semifinal Basketball Tourney

by Kevin Curran

The yellow school bus zoomed down the road to New Canaan, Connecticut. Aboard sat a largely merry group of teens, as their Eagles had landed in the semifinals of the state basketball tournament for the first time in anyone's memory. "And they'll be playing a team with real blacks," thought Jill, a pretty blond proudly wearing her school's gold and white cheerleading outfit. She smiled and slowly licked the sugar coating off a doughnut hole with an unconscious eroticism that forces men to build bridges and tall buildings. Her fellow cheerleader and practically her mirror image, Kathy, sat next to her and sniffed dramatically at the marijuana smoke that was drifting forward from the back of the bus.

The largely male contingent in the back toked to their hearts' content, grateful for what they perceived as their bus driver's cool attitude. In fact the driver, Able Washington, didn't notice much of anything right now. Normally a skilled and cautious driver, he had first driven a school bus in the jungles of Vietnam, but a cesarean delivery of his new son this morning had him visibly shaken; he'd been up all night pacing the floors at Mount Belvedere Hospital. He not being able to locate a replacement, it was a tired bus driver who was hurtling the sev-

eral thousand pounds of teenage flesh toward the intersection by the 7-Eleven.

At the same time, approaching the intersection from the bus's right, came Wally Brodeur in his Cain's truck. Cain's is a local manufacturer-distributor of such items as pickles, mustard, relish, potato chips, and their famous mayonnaise.

As Wally neared the intersection, he was compelled to jam on the brakes to avoid hitting Jessica Sayer, thirty-eight, who was crossing distractedly against the light. Jessica, even under the best of circumstances not the most clearheaded of individuals, was additionally befuddled for two reasons. Although it was barely 6:30 in the evening, she had just freely consumed four stingers at the Coach and Carriage, a bar she generally frequented after her shift as a part-time file clerk in a large, inefficiently run insurance agency. This one stinger over the norm was rationalized by the mental upset she had suffered that day over the tragic loss of several pieces of old jewelry. At this moment, in fact, Jessica's friend Juanita was drunkenly relating this precious information: "Jessie got herself a man last night at Johnny B's. And when he wakes up in the morning, he decides to cook up some breakfast without telling her. He cooked up a steak in the Dutch oven that she

kept her jewelry in and...well, the diamonds were okay, but she had this beautiful cameo ring that just got all gooeey, and some other stuff, too... Hi, Bobby! Boy, you're a sight for sore lips."

Wally pumped hard to avoid the jeweldivested Jessie, loudly honking his horn. When his brakes locked, he ploughed into her anyway, and just narrowly missed colliding with the swerving school bus that skidded fifty feet on two wheels before toppling over. Colorful flames, in fact the orange and blue of the Eagles' opponents' school colors, shot out the front of the bus.

Wally raced from his vehicle, now full of broken catsup containers and mayonnaise jars, which mixed together in an eerie thickness of red and white. Soon police and ambulance units were rushed to the scene in answer to his frantic phone call from the 7-Eleven, made with a dime borrowed from a young nurse who was leafing through *People* magazine.

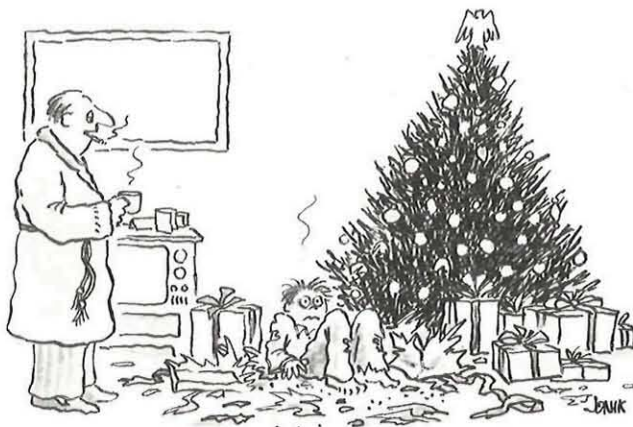
A team of four crack paramedics, who in no way could be mistaken for a popular black singing quartet, crowbarred their way into the bus and hurried inside as four doughnut holes wobbled past them down the steps. With quick efficiency they prodded most of the aching teens out the door. Suffering only minor lacerations and the loss of transportation to the game, they quietly huddled together and improvised a chorus of "We Shall Overcome" for their pals Kathy and Jill, who remained inside.

The two girls were rushed to the justly famous intensive-care unit of Mount Belvedere Hospital. And for us, or at least those of us abnormally interested in psychic phenomena, this is where the real story begins. Basketball fans must skip to the last paragraph.

Kathy, trading in her cheerleading uniform for a hospital patient's nondescript togs, was the first to undergo surgery. During the operation her heart stopped for two minutes and she was given up for dead. At this moment, she experienced an authentic "life after life" experience, more frightening even than hearing Phil Donahue discuss such things. From Kathy's own account:

"I saw a body on the operating table and I thought, 'Gosh, that's too bad, it looks like she's having a pretty rough time.' Then I noticed her hand, and she was wearing the signet ring that Mike Weaver had given me. 'Hey, that's mine,' I said, but nobody seemed to hear me. I went over and tried to get the ring off, but my hand kept slipping through the body. That's when I noticed that she was

continued on page 18



"When I was a boy, Santa would just put coal in our socks if we were bad. Now I see he's using plastic explosives."

started laughing, and that's when they decided to do an issue about the Middle Ages. They made me come into a meeting and write down all of their supposedly real funny ideas for it. None of them ever stops to think that I have a thousand other things to get done besides listen to them giggle and throw things around the office like small children. They send out for liquor and get drunk and then they go up to the personnel office and rummage through all the employee records and laugh at all the private information on the insurance forms. They found a surgery bill for the D & C I had last month and then dialed the number I wrote down to call in case of an emergency, which belongs to my parents, and asked them the name of my dead child, "just to complete our records." This really made me mad, especially since the guy who made the call was the father, even though he doesn't know it. But that's just typical of how insensitive and inconsiderate they are around here. I spent two months trying to get a new desk chair because the one I had was solid wood and uncomfortable. Then when I finally got one, they took it from me after a week and gave it to a girl in accounting. They never even asked me or bothered to mention it after they did it. I came back from the Xerox room and it just was gone. That was my chair. I mean, I didn't pay for it, but there are certain rules in any office, and the right to have an okay chair and to have it be like your own personal property is one of them. I hate it when they take your stuff. When I came back from break one day, all of my desk drawers were gone. Someone just dumped out everything in my desk and took the drawers. Then my parents called and said a messenger had brought them a bunch of metal drawers. There was a baby-shower card with them that said the drawers were a set of cribs for my new baby. They don't pay me enough here to have to put up with that. It would make you sick if you knew what they pay me, especially if you knew how much responsibility I have and that I'm about the only one who has any idea how this place works. I can't wait to see what happens the day I walk out of here and the editors have to try to figure out what's going on. And believe me, it's going to happen sooner than they think. One day they'll walk in here and my crappy wood chair will be empty, and they'll look over at the blouse rack and my blouse won't be on its hook, and I'll be gone. □

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BUS BURSTS INTO FLAMES

continued from page 16

really me, and I felt kind of weird.”

The initial discovery of being out of the body is often quite unsettling. Many people mention a desperate desire to “get back in” but are confused about how to accomplish this. They report attempts to locate “a broom or handle or stick of some kind” with which to pry open the mouth, forcing the readmission of the spirit into the body. After the subjects find their new immaterial presence unable to grasp even a tongue depressor or plastic straw, depression often sets in. But just as quickly this turns to euphoria as they experience the authentic euphoria of the bodiless state. “Like being underwater...” “Felt all-powerful, mightier than a large Japanese movie

creature...”

Kathy recalls having great feelings of concern for her body. “I was just lying there with those doctors fussing over it, and there was that gross I.V. bottle with the needle stuck in. I was thinking about a lot of other stuff, too, but I couldn’t help noticing my hair was a real mess...”

In an adjacent operating room, Jill also underwent emergency surgery. She too experienced an out-of-body situation at a crucial juncture when her apparent life signs ceased. Unlike Kathy, Jill quickly adapted to her new surroundings. “I could pick up immediately on the thoughts of those around me. I realized that my doctor was having an affair with one of the night nurses, even though his wife was taking a course in biology so that they’d have something to talk

about. It was all pretty juicy stuff, and I thought, ‘Gee, it’s pretty exciting on this side of things.’”

Like legions of others, Jill now experienced a review of the highlights of her life. Usually a near instantaneous representation of major events, the “show” generally takes the form most accessible to the participant, such as “colored images,” “vacation slides,” or “a boring PBS documentary.” In Jill’s case, it took the form of a pep rally.

“I could see myself going through different stages of life, and my parents and all my friends were up in the stands rooting for me. They threw confetti as I took my first steps, and there was a big homecoming float when I got my first date with Bill Rogers. Everyone started chanting, ‘This is Jill territory, when I passed



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my final in algebra. It was kind of neat!"

Jill also encountered a radiant "Being of Light," which has in other instances been thought of as everything from "The Angel of Goodness" to "Reddi-Kilowatt" or "Bill Cullen done up like a Christmas tree."

"I liked him; he made me feel warm and tingly all over. I thought maybe I'd like to go out with him, even though he didn't seem to have any face, to speak of. I looked into where his eyes might have been, and they were laughing—with me, not at me. We came to a border, and even though I thought how nice it would be to cross over, I made a conscious decision to try to come back. I mean, I had cheer-leading practice all during the week, and I was going out on Friday..."

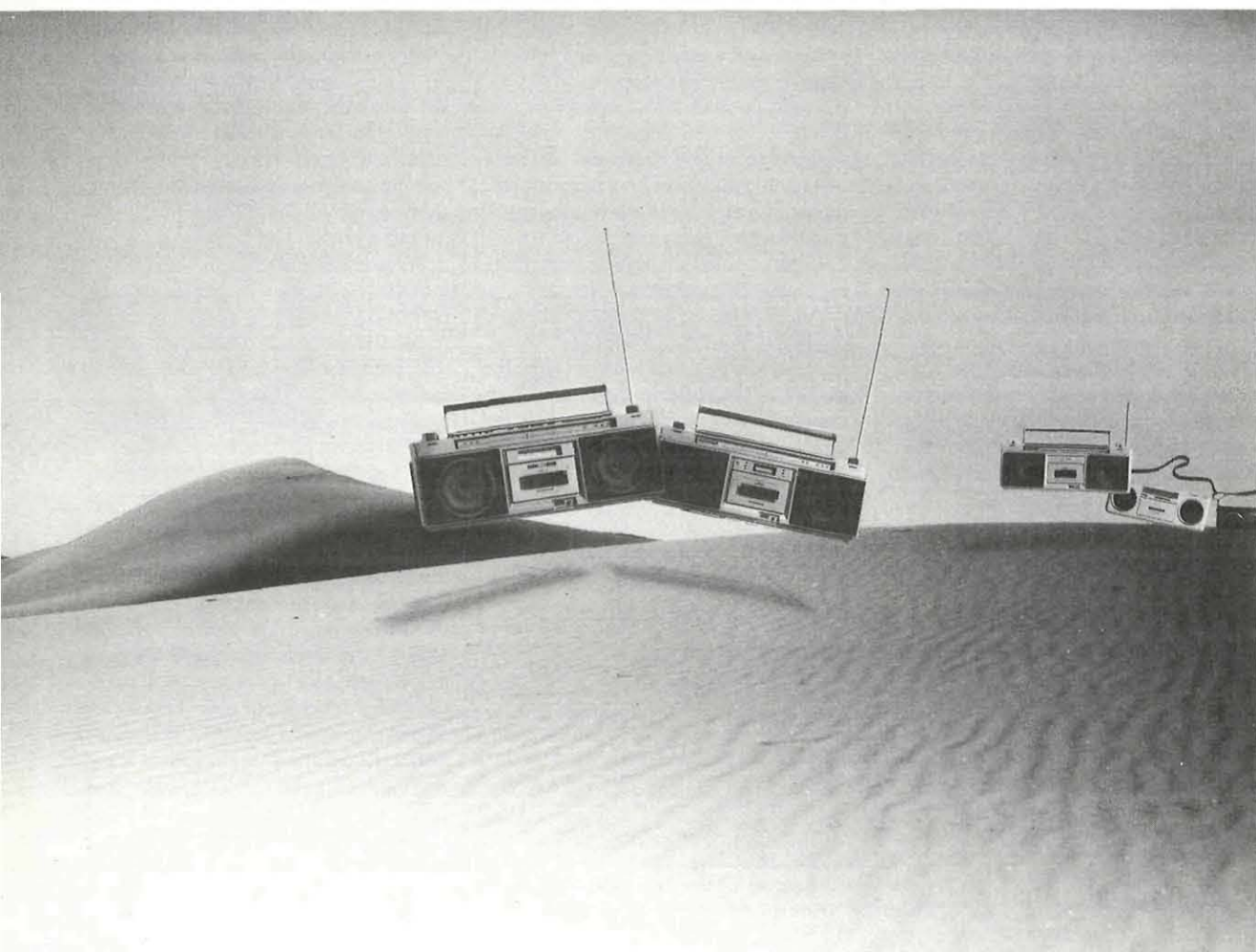
Kathy had a somewhat different en-

counter with the "Being of Light." "I decided to get out of that stuffy operating room and see what was going on elsewhere. I floated down the corridor and saw Mike in the visitors lobby. He looked all sad, and I wanted to hug him. But then Betty Nash came over and told him to cheer up, and that I would be all right, and if I wasn't, then he could take her to the prom. The slut! I was just so furious, and then I saw this big football-player type, who looked like he'd been plugged in to something. He kept tugging at where my sleeve would have been until I got so mad I just screamed at him. I guess he got kind of hurt, because his lights started dimming on and off. Then I just sort of found myself back inside me, and I fixed my hair right away."

Both girls brought back a little bit

from the other side that will be with them forever. "Maybe I'll study religion someday," says Jill. "I'm never going to speak to Betty again," adds Kathy.

Life continued on around the girls. The Eagles, perhaps concerned by the rank decimation of a large part of their rooting section, lost the game. Bill Rogers blew a lay-up with seconds left, to ensure their defeat. Wally, the driver of the Cain's truck, became morose and started drinking heavily. He was fired from his job and hasn't been able to hold a steady one since. Jessie lapsed into a coma from which she never emerged. Orderlies wheeled her body past a beaming Able Washington, who had learned that both wife and son were doing well. The kid grew up to build bridges or tall buildings or something like that. □



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An Interview with a Magazine Man: Jacob J. Firk

by Allan Appel

Jacob J. Firk recently announced that *Heel and Toe* magazine will be on the racks within three to six months. Firk, the magazine magnate, has often been described as the father of the new specialization that has characterized the magazine business in recent years.

Heel and Toe, Firk said, will be marketed to those upscale individuals who have interests in both sports and the performing arts, with an emphasis on the dance. Balletic wide receiver Lynn Swann of the Pittsburgh Steelers is to be featured on the cover of the first issue.

Interviewed in his office high over Forty-second and Park, Firk recalled his early years in New York and how he got into the business of magazines. His first job was as a counter/inspector in the ten-items-or-less express lane at his local supermarket. Firk described the chaos on the lines as customers argued with each other and with a beleaguered store manager about what "ten items or less" precisely meant. The issue, Firk explained, was whether two grapefruits in a cellophane package were to count as two separate grapefruits or as one package—that is, one item. Put another way, was there any distinction to be made by the checker between two loose grapefruits taken from the bin and a prepared package of two?

For a magazine man, Firk revealed, the real point wasn't whether the produce

was loose or sacked. The point was this: Even on the express line, shoppers had from one to seventeen minutes of waiting time, with nothing much to do except argue and nitpick. Their shopping done, but being too far away from the racks of magazines to make a selection, they had time on their hands, had money in their pockets, and were clearly in a spending frame of mind. If that wasn't a perfect audience for which to market a new magazine, then, Firk said, he simply didn't know the magazine business. And if that was the case, the North Star was no longer in the North either.

Ten or Less magazine was an immediate hit both with shoppers and store managers. It solved the shoppers' problem by giving them something constructive to do, and it helped solve the managers' problem of how to control the growing impatience of the waiting customers, whose angry eyes, before *Ten or Less*, had roamed all over the store, finding fault with everything in sight.

After *Ten or Less* came many other successful publications. *Dollar Cigar Review*, *Dachshund Digest*, and *Modern Compicker* are among the better known. These magazines, like all Firk creations, arose out of Firk's own experience and passionate knowledge of his subject. At fifty-six, Firk is still a short man, given to wearing dapper tweeds with elbow patches, moc-casins and black silk stockings, and

cravats.

Firk emerged from several seconds deep thought and began to discourse on the trend in in-flight, in-cruise, and on-bus magazines. Hell, he said, that stuff's already old hat. Modern people want to use absolutely all of their in-transit time, not only the hours but the little fragments of time, the minutes, even the seconds; nothing is to be lost. It's a new world, a whole new market out there. To give you an example, he said, yesterday a kid came to see me with his first magazine idea. A young kid, maybe nineteen, the same age I was when I started out. He called his magazine *Elevator Rider*, and he impressed me. He had all the demographics laid out, including how much time office workers in skyscrapers of seventy-nine floors and higher spend in the elevators. He had all the numbers; he had drawings to show where he would place the dispensers in the individual elevator cars, how many inches from the floor and how many from the control panel. The kid had all the details, and that made me respect him. Hell, said Firk, I told him to start the thing out as a newsletter and give me a call in six months. If he can show me something at that point, I'll put my money behind it.

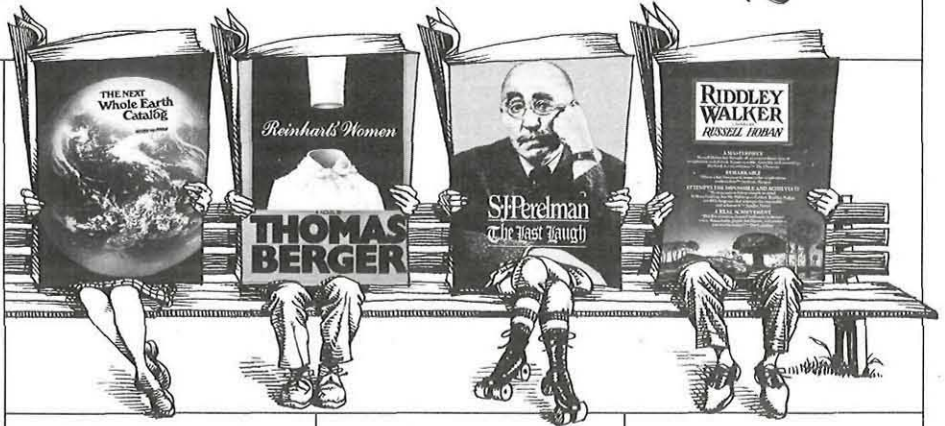
Already off the drawing board and into the test stage is a Firk entry into this new field. *Traffic Buster*, he said, will be national in scope and directed at individuals, both male and female, caught in traffic jams around the country. The average American spends .7 hours a month stuck in traffic, Firk explained as he escorted me over to his window. Forty-two floors below, a Gordian knot of automobiles inched helplessly about an intersection. That too, explained Firk, is a captive audience. *Traffic Buster* is going to have help-yourself features and tips for the driver trying to extricate himself from jams—for example, how, on occasion, to follow fire engines, police cars, and automobiles. It's going to make life a lot easier for guys out there. Also advice on how to read traffic patterns to avoid getting into a jam. But the primary thrust is for the guy or gal who is already stuck. Graphically it's going to be full of mantras and transcendental-meditation devices that we hope will keep drivers from blowing their tops. We've already tested in two markets—where the Harbor Freeway meets the Golden State in Los Angeles, and at the entrance to the Holland Tunnel here in New York. The preliminary results look great; and if *TB* shows good numbers in those markets, pretty soon you'll be seeing it in every

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"Great to see you. Next time bring something, though."

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COUCH-TIME STORIES

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wave of giggles rolled over him before he ended it all with a sigh.

"Harry," Angie said, winded from the laughter. "Like I said, you're not wound up, you're horny."

Angie's voice echoed in his head, repeating over and over, "...horny." Angie waited patiently for a response. Harry just stared at her.

"I can tell, Harry. It's written all over your pants."

Harry's face glowed like a space heater. His hands grew cold and damp; his erection withered and receded into the folds of moist scrotal skin. Angie reached out and took his hand.

"There's nothing wrong with that. I'm flattered," she said in a voice that was not so much sexy as it was understanding and almost motherly.

"Delores has been sick for so long," Harry finally said.

"I know," Angie said, nodding her head. "But let's not consider this a mercy fuck. There's no joy in that."

"Consider what?" Harry said, not trusting his ears or his brain's ability to interpret simple verbalizations.

"I'm going to take you upstairs and screw every muscle in your body, drain you so completely that all you'll be able to do is stare at the ceiling and smile."

Harry lay in Angie's bed, waiting for her to finish showering off her suntan oil. He listened to the water hissing, he smelled the perfume on Angie's sheets, and he prayed for Delores. He remembered the heat and thought how pleasant it felt on his naked body.

Angie walked out of the bathroom. She was naked and completely without shame. She pulled the curtains open and let the sunlight in. Harry thought of the Minolta XG-7 Delores bought him for his birthday and how he had shot only two rolls of film.

"I'm going to leave the shades up," Angie said. "That way we can watch the sun go down and then the stars and the moon."

She lay down next to Harry, parallel to him, touching at the hips—his perspiration and the dampness of her shower. She raised her leg and dropped it across Harry's thigh. Then she rolled over on top of him, took his cheeks in her hands, and kissed him.

When Harry woke in the morning, Angie was gone. He smelled coffee. He pulled himself out of the bed and sat for a moment, putting his memories of the night before in order, so that perhaps he could forever keep them as fresh as they

were now.

"Angie?" he called. "Hello?"

He slipped his shorts on and looked in the bathroom, then went into the hall and called downstairs. He looked out the window on the landing. Her car was gone. It was Saturday. She couldn't have gone to work. But she wasn't in the backyard. She wasn't in the house. Maybe the store?

Harry showered and had a cup of the coffee she'd made before she left. He glanced at the newspaper she'd propped up against the basket of fruit on the kitchen table. He felt like James Bond. Strong, virile, in the company of a beautiful young woman from whom he did not have to beg or buy sex.

"I could live here forever," he said to himself. "Do this every day."

But then he remembered Delores. Poor, sick Delores. The guilt rushed into him. The levee built of firm breasts and young thighs, and of kisses, bites, and musk, gave way and he ran for the telephone.

"Delores Stanley," Harry said in a quivering voice. He waited as the call was put through to the nurses' station, dreading the cold, barren voice of the R.N., who he was sure was going to tell him that his wife had grown weaker and that she would have the doctor call him.

"Mr. Stanley?" the nurse said in her cold and barren voice. "Mrs. Stanley had a very good night. She is sitting up and she's asked about you."

Harry began to cry.

"I'll be right there."

Harry ran next door and changed his clothes. He ripped a rose off the garage trellis and jumped into the car. He didn't even wait for the electric garage-door opener to pull the door all the way up, and took off a good six inches of wood.

Harry ran into Dr. Fenner in the hall outside Delores's room. He was all smiles and joy and put his arms around Harry and hugged him.

"You did it, didn't you?" he said like a school kid.

Harry nodded, yes. He did it, and it was as easy as mowing the lawn.

"And I'll tell you, just between us, it was great."

"I'll bet," Dr. Fenner said with a sly wink.

"Can I go in and see Delores?"

"You're not going to believe it, but go ahead."

Harry opened the door to Delores's room and the rose he was carrying fell out of his hand. Delores, who the day before had been near death, was running in place. Jogging in her nightgown,

her face glowing with health.

"Darling!" Harry said, choking with emotion. Delores leaped into his arms and kissed him all over.

"I'm going home today! What happened? What miracle caused this?"

Harry lifted her off her feet and twirled her around.

"This is the happiest day of my life!"

"Harry, what happened?"

Harry sat her down on the bed and took both of her hands in his. He was joyous and so relieved that he confessed the treatment to Delores.

"Honey, I screwed Angie Parker and that's why you're better."

Delores's smile faded.

"Dr. Fenner said last night..."

Delores stood up with a queer look on her face.

"You did what to who?"

"I screwed Angie Parker. You remember Angie, honey?"

"You *screwed* her?"

"Yes, to make you better."

"To make me *better*? How would that make me better?"

"I don't know, darling. Ask Dr. Fenner."

"You don't make your wife better by screwing a neighbor!"

"I know it sounds terrible, but it worked, didn't it?"

Dr. Fenner walked into the room, smiled at Harry, and kissed Delores.

"I want to see you back here in a week. I don't trust these miracles. It's too good to believe. I want to keep an eye on you."

Harry stood and put a hand on Dr. Fenner's shoulder.

"Doctor, tell Delores about the treatment."

"The antibiotics?"

Harry chuckled. These doctors, he thought, making a joke when you least expect it.

"No, tell her about the screwing-the-neighbor treatment."

Dr. Fenner leaned back a bit and looked over his half-glasses at Harry.

"The *what*?"

"Come on, Dr. Fenner, don't play games."

Dr. Fenner looked at Delores.

"He screwed our neighbor. He said you told him to."

"He did!" Harry said.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Stanley, but I don't believe this."

"Harry!" Delores said. "You are..."

She coughed.

"You are a..."

She coughed again and stumbled back. Dr. Fenner took her by the arm

continued



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COUCH-TIME STORIES

continued

and laid her down on the bed. He gave Harry an angry look and pointed at the door.

"Would you leave, please, she's having a relapse!"

"A relapse, Dr. Fenner..."

"Anybody who would come in here and upset a woman whose health is as fragile as your wife's should be taken out and horsewhipped! Now, get the hell out of here!"

Harry backed to the door and stepped out in the hall. His thoughts were a blur. What was going on?

A nurse came running down the hall and into Delores's room. She closed the door. A moment later, two orderlies came running. They wheeled Delores out.

"She's going to need surgery!" Dr. Fenner barked at Harry.

"Dr. Fenner," Harry pleaded. "Last night..."

"I told you not to tell anyone, Mr. Stanley."

"I didn't think you meant my wife!"

"I told you not to tell anyone and now you've ruined the whole thing."

"Oh, God," Harry said, reeling back

against the wall.

"But there's one chance we could take."

Dr. Fenner put a hand on Harry's arm.

"Book yourself a flight on British Airways. Fly to London. Do you have the money?"

"I think so."

"All right. Are you familiar with Lady Diana Spencer?"

"Yes."

"Are you familiar with the 'Candid Camera'?"

"Yes."

"Would you please turn around and smile."

Harry turned around. There was a cameraman down the hall. And Angie Parker was next to him. She waved. Harry turned back to Dr. Fenner. Delores peeked around the corner. She laughed. Dr. Fenner laughed.

"You're not Dr. Fenner!" Harry said.

"No, I'm Allen Funt."

"Jesus Christ!" Harry gasped. He slapped his forehead. Mr. Funt put his arm around Harry and squeezed and shook him as the whole hospital floor roared with laughter.

"That's a print," Funt said to the cameraman.

"You made all this up?" Harry asked. "Delores's sickness and everything?"

"Everything," Funt said with a giggle.

"I didn't even think you were on the air anymore."

"On the cable, Harry," Funt said.

Angie Parker kissed Harry on the cheek.

"You were hilarious."

"Honey, we had you so fooled," Delores said, taking his hand.

"But, what about last night? What I did to Angie?"

"Oh, it was just good fun," Delores laughed. "Besides, we're getting paid enough to put in a swimming pool!"

"Well, I hope I get to swim in it."

"Anytime you want!" Delores said, putting her arm around both Harry and Angie. "I'm just sorry Mr. Funt couldn't have worked this thing out so that I could have fooled around with the two of you!"

Mr. Funt scratched his head.

"Wait a minute!" he said, an idea popping into his head. He yelled for his cameraman. "Larry! Come here!"

As the cameraman lumbered back up the hall, Mr. Funt huddled Angie and Delores and Harry.

"What if, after all this..."

□

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NEWS ON THE MARCH

PLANET

Muammar al-Qadhafi's "Walkathon for Trouble"

Libya's "bad boy" colonel walking across U.S. to raise money for world terror

"Are you tired, Colonel?" a motorist hollers, gliding past Qadhafi on a steep Colorado grade. The colonel smiles and shakes his head; he has answered the question a thou-

sand times since the beginning of his trek, 2,600 miles and eight weeks ago in New York City. Qadhafi's stride is brisk. He looks fit; the red-orange Western sun

has darkened his imposingly handsome face, and the muscles in his thighs and calves have grown limber and lean. His support crew, trailing several yards behind in a green-



A determined stride, but a lackluster response.

and-white-striped van, say their leader is holding up extremely well, becoming more vigorous every day through the power of Muhammad and the strength of Qadhafi's dedication to international violence, terror, and chaos. As the colonel walks, he talks. "I am hoping your country will not regard my Walkathon for World Trouble as merely a publicity stunt," he says. "I am very serious. Terrorism costs a great deal of money, especially when the areas of operation are spread out over so many places around the world. There are airline tickets to buy, expensive documents, hotels, weapons, bribes, training—the list goes on. One small country like my own cannot pay the entire bill. It is not possible and it is not fair. It is my hope that Americans will recognize our problem by virtue of my walkathon and donate their fair share to our cause. Dollars, dimes, nickels—they all add up. And I will not stop walking until they add up to victory." One of Qadhafi's assistants hands him a thermos of water as a pair of cyclists pass in the opposite direction. "Give us a donation," the colonel shouts to them. "Help me make more trouble." The cyclists hold up their palms, as if to say they're broke. "So often the same story, the same excuses," Qadhafi hisses, squirting a long strand of water between his teeth. "But I will never be discouraged." With that, he redoubles his pace and jerks slowly out of sight. Los Angeles is nearly 800 miles away.

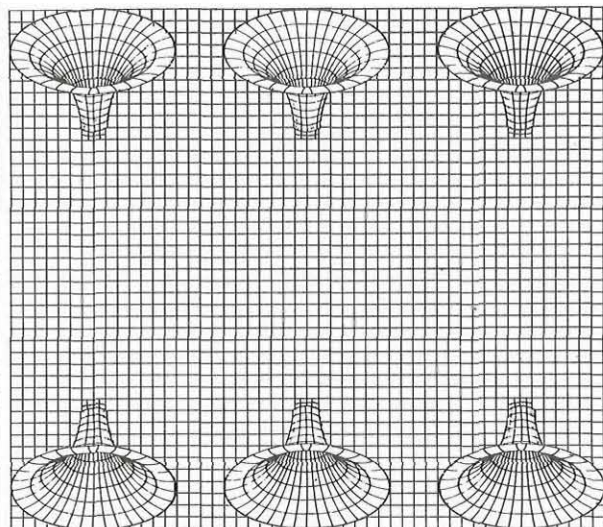
SCIENCE

Another New Discovery

Our flat, rectangular, six-holed universe

At the beginning they were just a theory—a possible interpretation of the arcane equations of general

trough physicist - cosmologist Paul Warren. Until now, most cosmologists had believed that the boundaries



Cosmologists' new view of the universe. But what does it mean?

relativity, bottomless never-never lands that could suck whole planets in like a vacuum cleaner—the scientific equivalent of Hamlet's "country from whose bourn no traveler returns." Somewhere along the way, a whimsical scientist dubbed them "black holes," and immediately they fired the public's imagination. But, theory and the public eye notwithstanding, do black holes actually exist out in the dim reaches of space? The gigantic 200-inch telescope on Mount Palomar has finally revealed an answer, and the discovery has not only confirmed the predictions of elated scientists but suggests a whole new kind of symmetry in nature.

There are exactly six so-called black holes, distributed in a symmetrical pattern around a central point, according to as-

of the universe were curved; but the distribution of the holes and the space around them seem to imply that the edges of the universe are remarkably straight, except for sudden, right-angled turns near four of the holes.

Nor do the holes have quite the ineluctable attraction of matter that scientists had previously assumed. Occasionally, Warren reports, a planet, or possibly two, will careen near one of the holes and fall in. But most of the planets seem to just miss the holes.

"We still don't understand exactly what it means," Warren concludes. "Surely such an arrangement cannot be arbitrary; surely it means that our planet, and the other objects in the universe, are headed toward some great end, whatever it may be."

Another scientist, Dr. Robert Larrimar of Princeton University, has discovered a related phenomenon: an enormous white-surfaced planet heading toward Earth. He cautioned against undue concern, however, because at its present rate of speed the planet will take several hundred thousand years to reach us and may

even miss us entirely. "If it hits us," he explained, "my calculations show, it should send us careening toward Jupiter, which will then hit Venus and send that planet hurtling toward a planet in the Andromeda galaxy. However, as I say, its aim doesn't seem to be too good, and it'll probably miss us entirely."

MEDICINALIA

Snyder: The Best Medicine

"Maybe we should call this 'The Tomorrow Show,'" quipped Tom Snyder at the start of his televised interview with five terminally ill cancer patients. The American Cancer Society later charged that Snyder, who conducted the entire program wearing a surgical mask and heavy rubber gloves, demonstrated "astounding insensitivity, even for him." But now the cancer society is lauding the talk-show host, and with good reason: since the broadcast, his five guests have shown complete remission of their cancer symptoms. Apparently Tom Snyder cures cancer.

One explanation offered for this phenomenon was the "holy host" theory, which ascribed messianic healing powers to Snyder. This theory, proposed by Tom himself, was replaced by a more scientific one: Snyder seems to secrete a unique hormone, termed *tomsnyderferon*, which retards the development of malignant cells. Cancer patients, exposed to Snyder for one-hour "rap sessions," have shown marked improvement in their health. However, most of them experienced nausea and loss of appetite from this treatment and have asked to be returned to the riskier and more expensive chemotherapy.

The time-consuming nature and unpleasant side ef-

fects of these rap sessions have limited Tom Snyder's capacity as a mass-market cancer cure. But some drug researchers believe that they



Proposed "Tom Snyder Cancer Pills" would bear Tom's likeness in tribute to his self-sacrifice.

could dehydrate and powder Snyder and release him in pill form, increasing his effectiveness ten-thousandfold. NBC executives have volunteered to break Snyder's fifteen-year contract "for such a noble cause." In fact, they have already developed a revamped "Tomorrow Show," called "Morgan Fairchild's Tub Time," just in case Snyder does decide to get made into pills. But so far Tom remains hesitant: "I know some people think I'm a real pill, hahahaha, but gosh, I just don't know." Should Snyder eventually surrender himself to the drug companies, it could mean a new Tomorrow for millions of afflicted Americans.

Fill out this coupon, and a beautiful *National Lampoon* secretary may come over to your house or apartment and play naked Scrabble with you.

Then again, she may not.
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Imagine this: You open your door and a beautiful young girl is standing there with a Scrabble board under her arm and a mischievous twinkle in her eye.

She steps into your house or apartment, spreads the little letter squares on the table, and takes off all of her clothes.

She's the most gorgeous thing you ever saw in your life. You can't get your eyes off her as she picks a letter to see who goes first.

But something seems to be missing. She gets up and her delicate fingers gently lower a record onto your turntable. Soft music fills the room.

Something else seems to be missing. "You know," she says, "you could really use a blinking neon sign right outside your window. Mind if I put one up?"

She quickly goes into her truck outside, comes back, and hammers up a blinking neon sign.

The neon flashes on and off. The music becomes more sensuous. Your skin is alive with the heat and humidity of the night.

You put down the word P-I-N-G-U-I-D-I-N-O-U-S (fatty and rich, pertaining to soil).

With a wistful, teasing smile she says she's never heard of the word.

You smugly answer, "Check the dictionary, kid."

Sound nice?

But even if our secretary gets another one of her headaches and doesn't come over and play naked Scrabble with you, there are still three good reasons for you to fill out the coupon:

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MEDIA

Puppet on a Shoestring

Midway through a Muppets command performance at Buckingham Palace, puppeteer Frank Oz was dismayed to realize that Miss Piggy and Princess Anne were wearing the same cheap gingham dress. Rather than offend the princess—who bears a striking resemblance to the glamorous pig—Oz threw the puppet away and finished the performance with his bare hand. The new character, later dubbed “Harry Hand” (“because I have a hairy hand,” says Oz), delighted the royal

family, prompting Prince Charles to exclaim, “Blimey! What I wouldn’t give for one of those!”

“Then I finally realized what I had long suspected,” says Muppets creator Jim Henson. “People are enthralled by anything that hobs around with a funny voice.” Henson, who has made a small fortune selling the do-it-yourself Harry Hand kit (a bag of hair clippings and a roll of tape, retailing for \$12.95), quickly extended his Minimalist Muppets line to include Harry Foot and Harry Face.

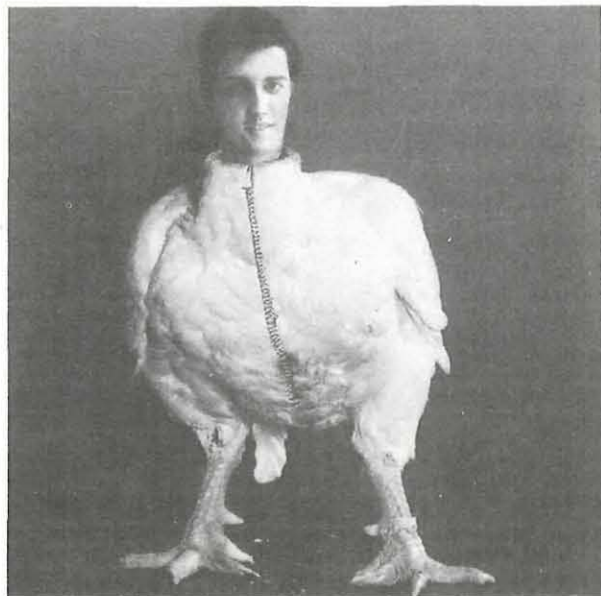
THIS AMERICAN WORLD

Fame and Fatheads

Shattered dreams shattered by unshattered records

One morning last week, Frank Antidisestablishmentarianism brushed his teeth

(unshelled), washing it all down with ten gallons of coffee. Hopping into his car,



Judges cried “Foul!” at Frank’s attempt to become the world’s smartest chicken.

with an eighteen-foot toothbrush. Then he sat at his breakfast table and ate eight pounds of bacon and 150 eggs

Frank drove in reverse for fifty miles and then parked on top of a fire.

As usual, Frank’s attempts

to break the world records for longest last name, biggest toothbrush, worst breakfast, and most traffic tickets all fell short. For the past ten years, he has unsuccessfully attempted to get into the *Guinness Book of World Records*, and each failure has only served to increase his determination. After he first read the *Guinness* book in 1972, Frank ate the book, cover and all, in seven minutes flat—just three seconds shy of the record. While being rushed to the hospital to have his stomach pumped, Frank bribed the ambulance driver to try to break the world land speed record. As the speedometer approached the 614 mph milestone, the ambulance suddenly collided with a gasoline truck, causing the third

most spectacular conflagration of all time.

In the years since his release from the hospital, Frank has made a number of excruciatingly close attempts to win world-record immortality. Among these were tries to grow the world’s longest beard, to set the endurance record for walking on his hands, and to get into the *Guinness* book by drinking fifty cases of Guinness stout in one hour. These attempts have only made him a shaggy, upside-down drunk. Will Frank ever overcome these handicaps to become a record holder? “Not a chance in the world,” replies *Guinness* editor Norris McWhirter. “He’s probably the stupidest man I’ve ever seen, but we don’t give out awards for that.”

LITEREMIA

Heartbreak Hotels

Thomas to sue Irving in best-seller fracas?

Author D. M. Thomas may bring suit against author John Irving for “title exploitation,” New York lit-crit book-chat folk say. Thomas, whose estimable and beautifully written *The White Hotel* enjoyed many weeks on the best-seller lists, has objected to Irving’s use of the title *The Hotel New Hampshire* for his latest excrescence, currently number one.

“People may get our books confused,” Thomas notes. “Not only do they both feature the word *hotel*, but both our names feature last names that are actually first names.”

Author and critic I. P. Nitely has added his voice to the swelling chorus of literary people condemning Irving’s use of the word *hotel*. “Were people to confuse these two works, it would constitute an art crime of the highest magnitude,” Nitely has written. “Thomas’s novel is excellent and, although marred by

what some might call a high-brow variation on the they-all-got-hit-by-a-bus-type ending, deserves lavish praise for its portrait of a woman suffering from hysteria in Europe between the wars. Irving’s book, however, is absolutely terrible: tedious, flaccid, unbearably coy, destitute of literary skill in terms of humor, language, description, and character revelation, and marked by that awful combination of glib violence and nauseating sentimentality that made *The World According to Garp* so unreadable.”

Nitely, whose *Yellow River* is in its fiftieth printing, added, “Both books make use of characters named Freud, and of the city of Vienna. Both use hotels as their central metaphors and dominant locales. One was written by a literary artist, the other by a pop hack. Can you guess which was which? Hint: the artist is Thomas.”

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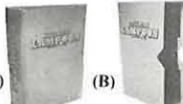
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BUSINESS AND DOLLARS

Feet, Don't Foil Us!

It is rare in the commodities market that a purchaser of an option actually takes delivery of the commodity in

school cafeterias in the Washington, D.C., area for the next several months, and if the measure is successful,



"Good is not necessarily expensive," comments Secretary Regan.

question, even rarer when the commodity in question is flash-frozen chicken feet, but that is just what Treasury Secretary Donald Regan did. The treasury secretary did so on behalf of the General Services Administration, which purchases food for most of the nation's school-lunch programs. The flash-frozen chicken feet are to be served

the plan will be extended to most of the nation's schools. During the trial period the federally mandated lunches will consist entirely of chicken feet, but there are plans to later expand the menu to include dog bosoms and anchovy spines. These measures are expected to save the GSA virtually the entire cost of the lunch program.

GAMES AND RELIGIONPLAY

In Yo' Faith, Mo'fo'

Muslims and Christians and frogs in overtime

A wise man—or, at least, a wise guy—once said that an atheist is someone who when Notre Dame plays Southern Methodist doesn't care who wins. And although that epigram is implicitly anti-Semitic (slighting, as it does, a believing Jew who might lose interest in the contest after the Fighting Irish have covered the field), it does say some-

thing about the intimate connection between sports and religion in America.

Hardly a postgame interview goes by without one of the victors offering thanks to whatever Supreme Being he worships for guiding his hand, the ball, the horse, the puck, or the car, across the line, into the net, out of the park, or upside the head of

the other guy.

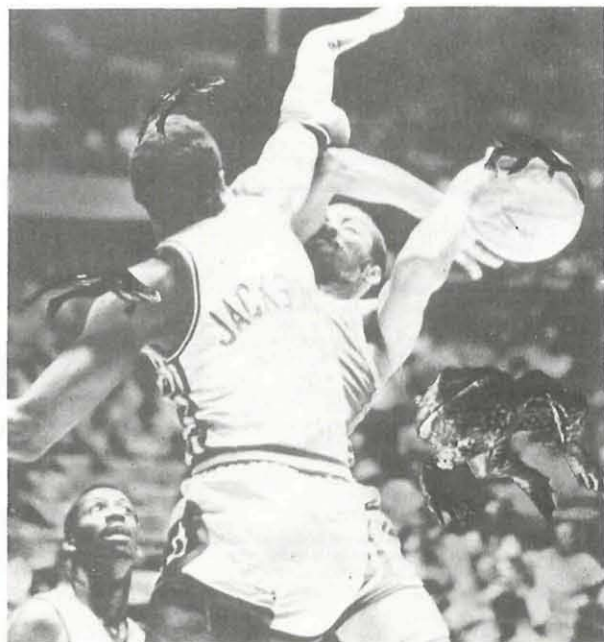
Atheists are scarcer in locker rooms than in fox-holes, and the Lord God, busy as he is with plagues and famines around the world, must find it a bothersome distraction to be so frequently summoned to the aid of a bowler, batter, or collegiate semipro shooting two for three from the line. Team chaplains, born-again coaches, and other prayerful supporters must look upon the success of Soviet dialectical-materialist Olympians as a true test of their faith.

So strongly do fans and players believe that the First Cause is intimately involved in the games people play that it was inevitable that some genius promoter would stage the event: an all-Muslim (i.e., all black) superstar basketball team against an all-Christian (i.e., mostly black) all-star squad, to meet in a sudden-death (is there life after sudden death?) contest, both

cans (not to speak of Afro-American professional athletes) have adopted the religion of Islam is a mystery to many Euro-Americans, who cannot understand why their dusky fellow citizens would prefer the religion of the people who sold their ancestors to the religion of those who bought them.

Nonetheless, a list of NBA starters reads like a page from the Cairo phone book (*Ring* magazine's ratings resembling more the dramatis personae of *The Arabian Nights*); so the Allah vs. Jesus hoop shoot-out was a natural. It was billed as "The Last Crusade" and booked into the Astrodome, with the high-priced tickets selling like passports to paradise, and a lucrative closed-circuit TV deal (to churches and mosques only) signed and delivered.

Many and ferocious were the side wagers as well, and the clergy of both faiths geared up for a wave of mass



Not a few suspected divine intervention.

sides agreeing in advance that the losers will convert to the victors' religion in a postgame midcourt ceremony.

That many Afro-Ameri-

conversions—or apostasies—following the contest.

The promoter figured to make a bundle, and international interest, too, was

running high, with all three sides in the Lebanese round-robin genocide shelling out big bucks to pick up the game via satellite.

Then, a few hours before the opening whistle and the first jump ball, a terrific and unexpected hailstorm hit the Houston area, cracking many of the Astrodome's glass exterior plates. (The power black-out that followed was doubtless a result of the storm.)

And the boils that suddenly broke out on the bodies of everyone suiting up for the game can safely be attributed to the mysterious swarm of flies that suddenly and inexplicably entered both locker rooms.

Authorities are still maintaining that the water in the drinking fountains and showers only *looked* like blood, and was in fact merely tinted by rust in the 'Dome's plumbing system; and with the aid of auxiliary generators and powerful insecticide sprays, the contest between the boil-smitten teams would probably have been played as scheduled had not the 'Dome itself somehow acquired a new, wall-to-wall carpet of frogs.

Thus, the event was canceled, all monies were refunded, and all bets were off, in what may be the only authenticated example of supernatural intervention in an athletic event.

Many believe it to have been a typical (in the words of your insurance contract) act of God—whom Grantland Rice called the Great Scorer in the Sky, and whose motto remains: "It isn't if you win or lose, it's how you plague the game."

Edited by Tod Carroll. Contributions by T.C., Ted Mann, Sean Kelly, Ellis Weiner, Michael Reiss, Ed Subitzky, and Al Jean.

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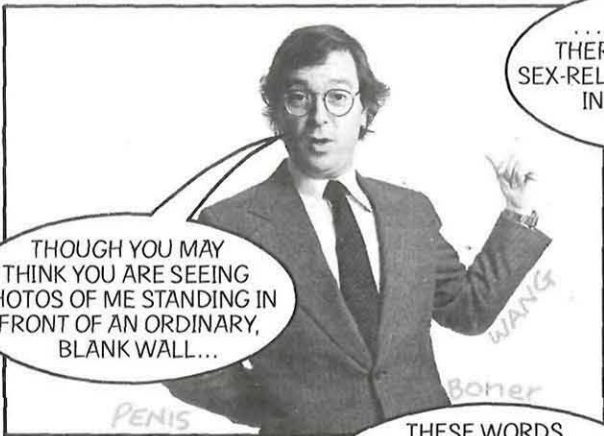
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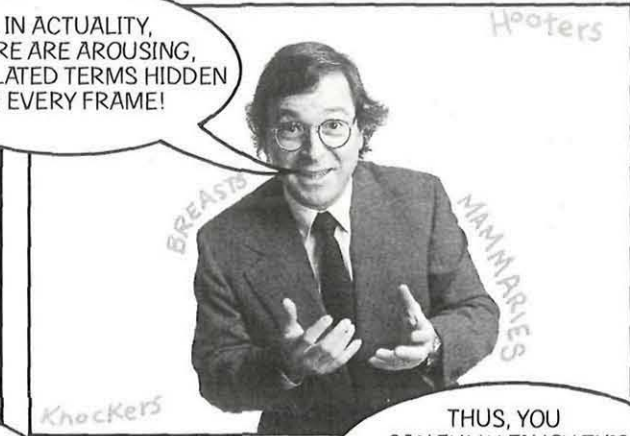
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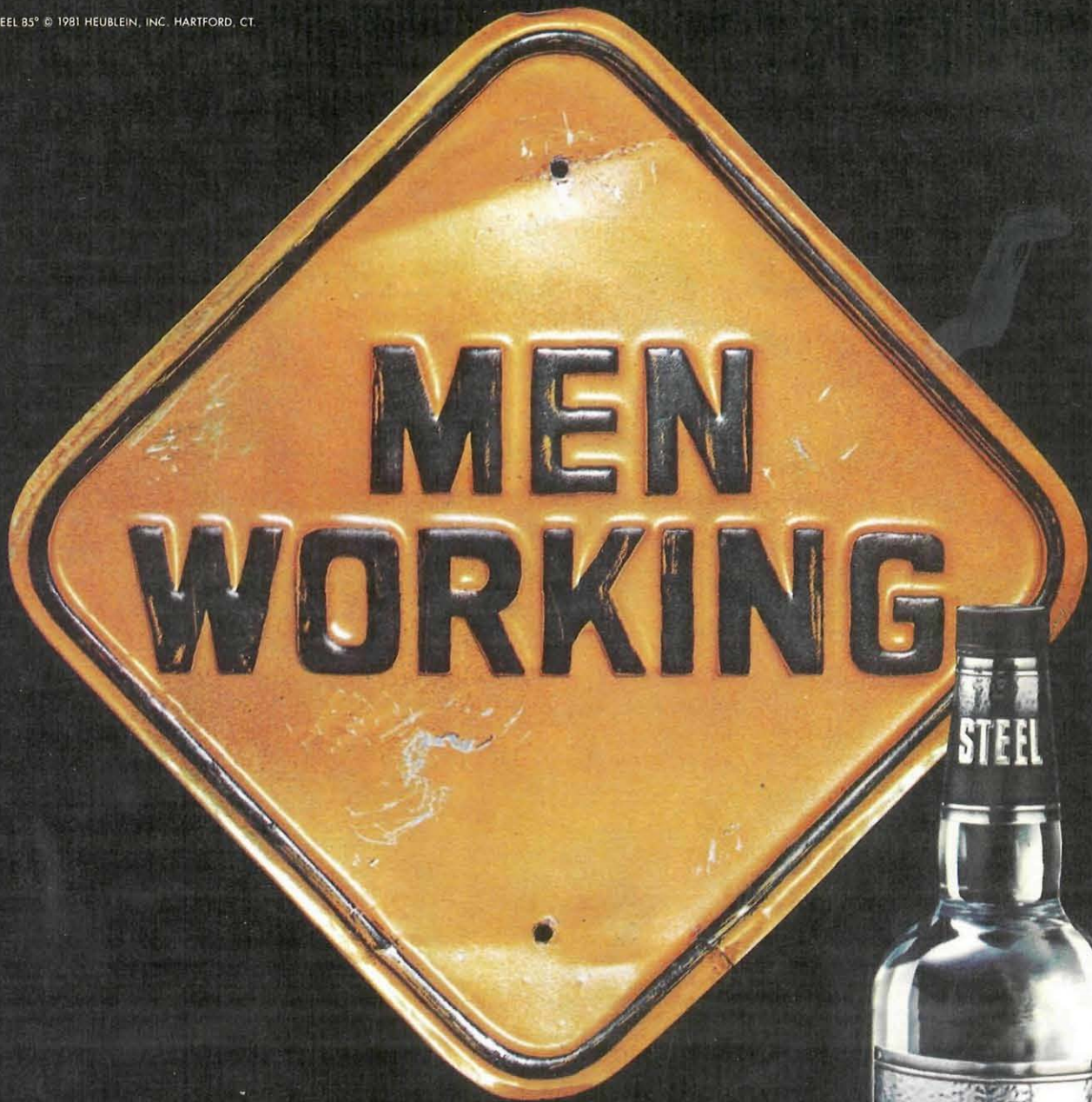


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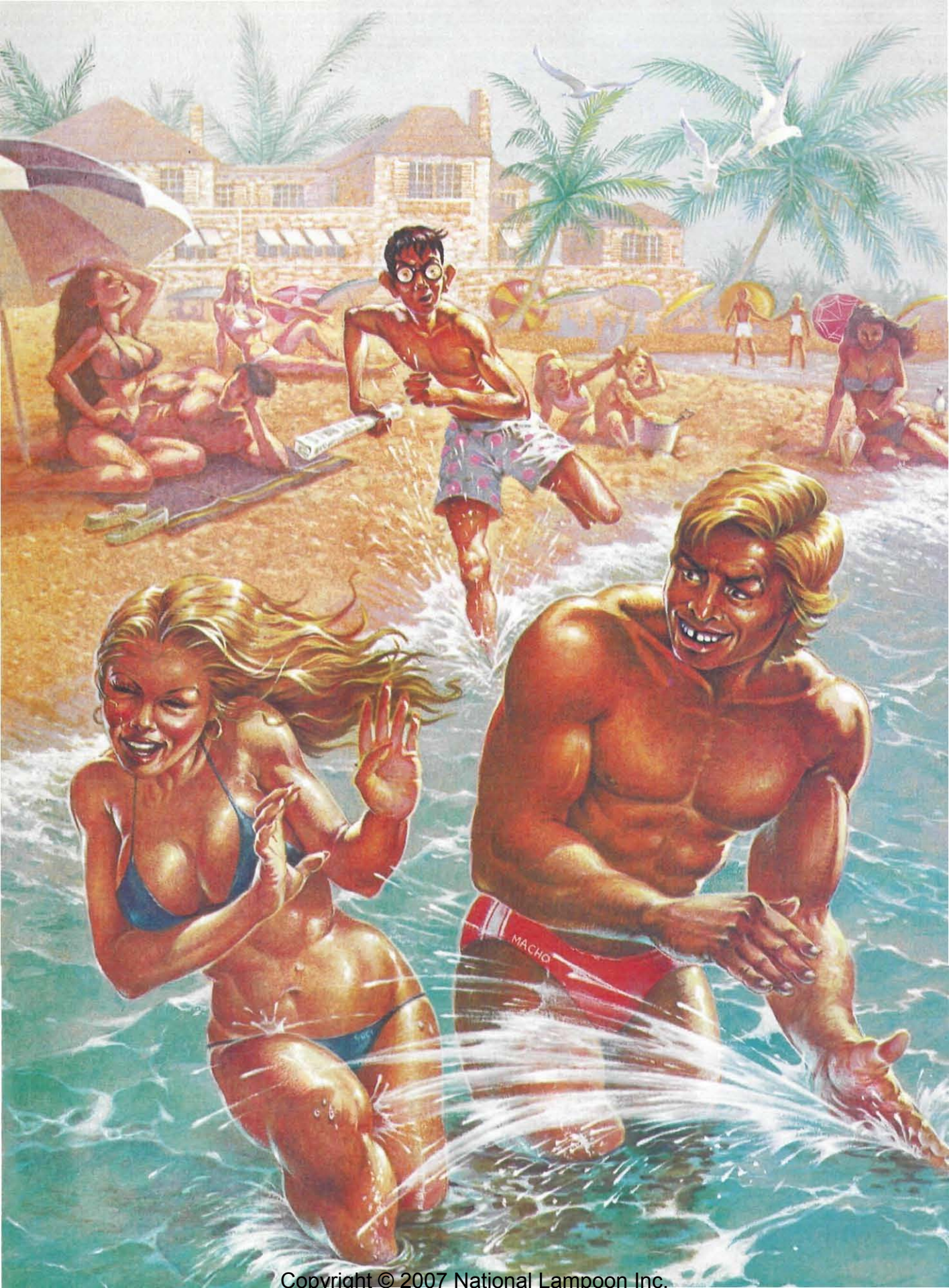


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COHEN

THE BOYBARIAN

The Princess by the Sea

by Ellis Weiner

1.

To the Hotel of the Blue Fountain

The rattling vehicle, a full-size Olds, pulled to a slow halt before the mammoth glassen doors that gave entrance to the richly décorated interior of the immense white building. Emerging from the contrivance with fierce vitality, Cohen looked warily at the dusky savage in doorman's livery whose white-gloved hand tipped from his kinky woolen head a patent-leathern cap in that gesture of servile greeting typical of the ill-bred colored races of the South. Before Cohen could utter aught, the son of his father's father, the Old Man, debarked from the coach and in the grinning ebon's hand placed a shining silver coin.

"Thank you, sir," quoth the Moor. "Enjoy your stay."

"We have two suitcases in the trunk, and be careful with that garment bag," commanded the Old Man. Cohen watched impassively as the dark-visaged servitor set about unlading the sundry vinylen and samsoniten bags, which

held Cohen's garments and tools of personal hygiene, as well as those of the Old Man, the Mother, and the girl Marcie. Suddenly the colored man's task was interrupted by the appearance of an ancient hag, her face painted with the red dyes and pink powders of her tribe, her hair an unearthly cloud of weird light blue, with the brown pelt of a lushly furred animal draped across her shoulders.

"We want that cab," she nasal'd to the black. "Keep that cab. Leo, here's a cab."

"You can have it as soon as we're finished," retorted the Mother. "Stuart, help your sister with the fruit."

With a snarl of impatience, Cohen seized from the girl Marcie a papered satchel in which bulged various fruits native to the tropical clime of Floriditum.

"Ow!" yelped the child. "Stew-wert, quit it!"

"Mom, can I go to the movies tonight?" Cohen inquired bluntly.

"Don't start, you two," warned the Mother. "We'll see." From his years of fighting the old woman's powers and grappling with her inexplicable whims, Cohen knew that the Mother was not to be pressed at that moment. Later, perhaps, when the band's journey had ended and all were at last installed in their lodgings, would Cohen be able to bargain for what freedom he could, and extract what concessions he might from

the woman. The Father himself, who had already breached the structure's entrance to attend to the checking-in, might be used to some advantage in these negotiations.

"See the big fountain, Marcie?" the woman inquired, indicating the great fount that ran the length of the building's facade and from which the building derived its name.

"I'm hot," whined the child.

"Wait'll we get to the room, and we'll put on our bathing suits and go to the beach."

Cohen turned away, disgust for the girl's weakness blinding him like a dark cloud. Aye, it was hot, he thought. Yet why else had they trekked the hundreds of miles from the cold, snow-covered vastness of the suburban outlands of Baltimorios if not to flee the wintry inclemency of December in their native land at that time when the schooling institutions at which both Cohen and the girl-child labored declared a fortnight's interruption in honor of the birth of the Christian god?

The trip had been taxing, but Cohen, although unused to the forced confinement and occasional rough lurchings of travel through the air, had found keen excitement in the jettish plane's magical defiance of gravity. Both takeoff and landing had pleased the boybarian,

whose lust for things technological was insatiable. Even the food served to the passengers, miniature in every aspect, as though fit for half-men, or dwarfs, held a certain otherworldly fascination. Once aloft, as snowy ranges of clouds drifted beneath him like foothills of mashed potatoes, Cohen had immersed his brainy mind in one of the several fantasy-adventure texts he had brought from the Baltimoriosian cold. In silent awe he read as Xaltotun, revived evil wizard of ancient Acheron, brought the great stone cliffs of Valkia crashing down to sunder the hosts of Valannus.

To a lesser young man, these texts would be, for a week's release from schoolish duty, as encumbrances to mindless sport and similar base pastimes. To Cohen the boybarian, however, they had been as balm and antidote for the boredom and frustration that are the fate of a proud, untamed boybarian trapped for seven days with only his immediate ancestors and siblings for company.

Preceded by the Mother and the girl Marcie, Cohen entered the Hotel of the Blue Fountain. He strode with a forthright bearing, keenly alert. Yet even he felt momentarily overwhelmed by the regal magnificence of the structure's main entrance hall. Everywhere thronged men, women, and children in all manner of costume. Unearthly white shoes and brightly colored polyester suits of leisure adorned men of tanned and elderly aspect, whose equally bronzed wives displayed stoles and coats of animal skin against the deathly chill of the conditioned air. Down vast sweeping staircases stepped thin young couples in pastel-colored slacks, exuding a triumphant indifference to all save themselves. Smoked mirrors gave back in mysterious obscurity gaudily splendid examples of the upholsterer's and draper's cunning art. Massive chandeliers cast harsh incandescent light upon plump dowagers, whose strange and horrible speaking voices resembled those of the yapping, loathsome lapdogs they shepherded.

Cohen had been observing, with the stealth and wariness that are the legacy of boybarians up to whom at any moment an unruly braggart might sneak and up whom such a bully might without warning beat, when he spied a young woman his own age, likewise accompanied by her forebears and similarly checking in to the lodging. Her face was fair to look upon, her hair a frosted mass of black and ashen foam. The insouciant way in which she chewed and cracked a supple piece of juicy-fruited gum lent her a

wanton air of savage haughtiness. Cohen felt his blood run hot at the sight of her slender form, and so enraptured was he as he gazed at her supple body, he did not see the bellboy into whom he trod.

"Ey, watch it, brother," protested the dark-skinned lad.

"Sorry," Cohen replied with lightning reflex, his mighty thews charged for whatever further apology might prove necessary.

"I got loose joints, two dolluh," murmured the black in more conspiratorial tones. "Name's Willie." And with that he vanished into the milling throng.

Loose joints! Cohen had heard tell of such things. They were smoking sticks of magical powers, often used by others of Willie's race in strange and illicit rituals. Cohen had never tasted of their magic himself. Yet, here in this foreign place, where women wore fur skins and the sun burned hot, where men wore white belts and *sport coats* as of carven plastic, where Nature herself seemed strangely undone, who knew what might befall him?

.....

2.

The Depths of the Atlantic

The sun glared hotly as Cohen ventured out onto the batherstrewn plain of sandy beach that led with mythic inexorableness to the blue green sea. The air was alive with the musky scent of Sea & Ski and the headier aromas of Royal Tan, Hawaiian Blend, and other coconut and aloe preparations with which the children of the Caucasus guarded their light-hued epidermis against the fiery ultraviolet of the merciless solar intensity. Cohen spat an oath as his bare feet touched the scalding sand.

"I told you to wear your *zori*," quoth the Mother. "Be sure to use the cream, or you'll burn."

"Okay, okay, I will," retorted Cohen, his ferocity easily awakened.

"Don't be flip. The sun is very strong."

"All right," the boybarian moaned in hellish impatience.

"Here's a good spot," the Mother said, dropping her bag laden with rich Turkish towels and exotic fresh fruits.

Cohen barely heard her. He was directing his burning gaze a few yards down the beach. There, lying indolently on a great white towel imprinted with the figure of a large cat playing a guitar, was the

girl he had seen in the entrance hall. A small *bikini* of purple covered her loins and breasts. Her supple body gleamed with oil. Beside her, on folding *chaises longues* made of good Alcoan aluminum, stretched her parents.

Cohen stared as a man ensorcered by some fell hypnotic trance. The girl lay on her magnificent stomach, and as Cohen watched, she reached behind her to adjust the lower portion of the *bikini* with a tug. It snapped back into place with a ripple of tawny flesh. Then, as if she had felt the hot gaze of the half-panting boybarian upon her, she sat up and with sun-blinded eyes glanced wildly about.

With catlike quickness Cohen averted his eyes from hers and directed them into the pages of the fantasy-adventure text, where the barbarian from Cimmeria slew the man-eating gray ape in the dungeons of the palace of King Tarascus, in the city of Belverus. Only after sufficient time had elapsed for Cohen to assume that she no longer looked toward him did he again glance in her direction. She was gone, the singing cat on the towel bearing mute testimony to her departure.

Cohen's boybarian instinct told him that the girl had run into the roiling sea, and standing brazenly upright and directing his gaze thither, he spied the back of her purple *bikini* as she skipped with a child's playfulness into the foamy surf.

"I'm going into the water, Ma," Cohen grunted with vital ferociousness.

"Take your sister," the Mother replied. "Marcie, you want to go in the water with Stuart?"

"Ma-aa," Cohen protested, coiling his sinews for yet another fierce struggle of wills with the woman—a contest he was seldom able to win, so great was the power of the Mother.

"Yuck," remarked the girl, and in a trice Cohen was up and loping with animal grace toward the waterline.

"Put the cream on when you come back," the Mother called. "And be careful. It's an ocean."

Indeed it was an ocean, Cohen thought grimly. Nay—it was *the* ocean. The mighty Atlantic, 'neath whose tempestuous jade green waters wise Atlantis had sunk from the history of men, across whose bounding main Columbus had sailed the ocean blue. This was the ancient sea that the ferocious Spanish Armada plied as it proudly pursued its tragic destiny at the salt-stained hands of plucky England's noble Lord Nelson, whose stony likeness now gallantly stood idly surveying the bustling throng that

continued on page 43

CLASSICS OF SPORTS *Illustrated*

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A New York Yankee in King Arthur's Court

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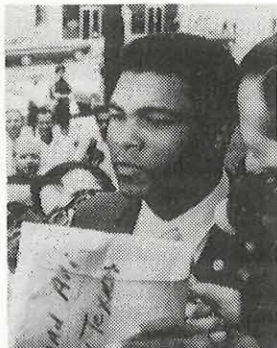


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—BABE RUTH

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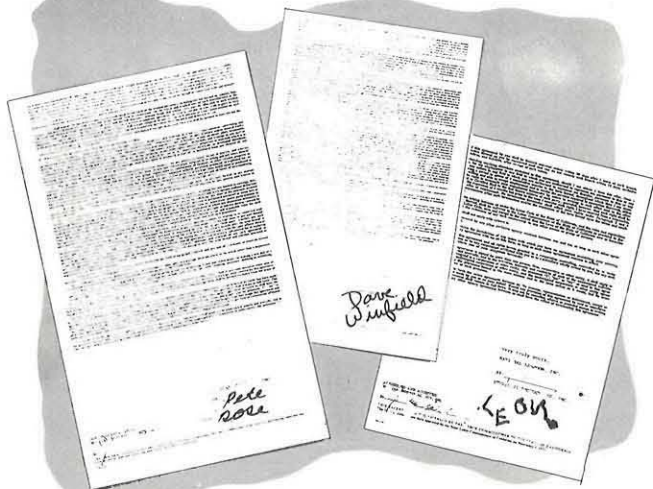
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Reggie Jackson was one of baseball's greatest stars, with a self-admitted I.Q. of 160 and a slugging percentage to match. Known as "Mr. October," because of both his prowess in the World Series and his pumpkin-headed attitude during the rest of the year, Reggie little dreamed he would soon become...

A New York Yankee in King Arthur's Court

...What do you mean, only \$5 million a year? Look, I pay you a lot of money to handle my negotiations, so you better get Steinbrenner to cough up some more... What?

Excuse me, Mr. Jackson. You're up next.

Huh? Look, I gotta go. I'll call you back later.

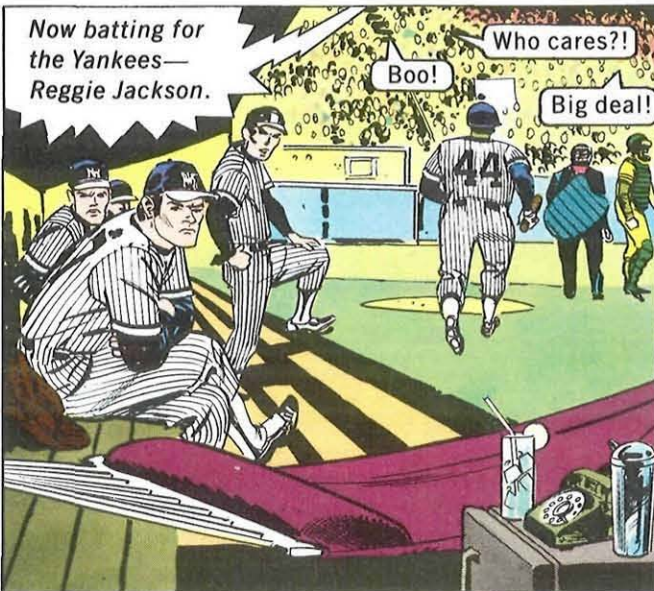


Now batting for the Yankees—Reggie Jackson.

Boo!

Who cares?!

Big deal!



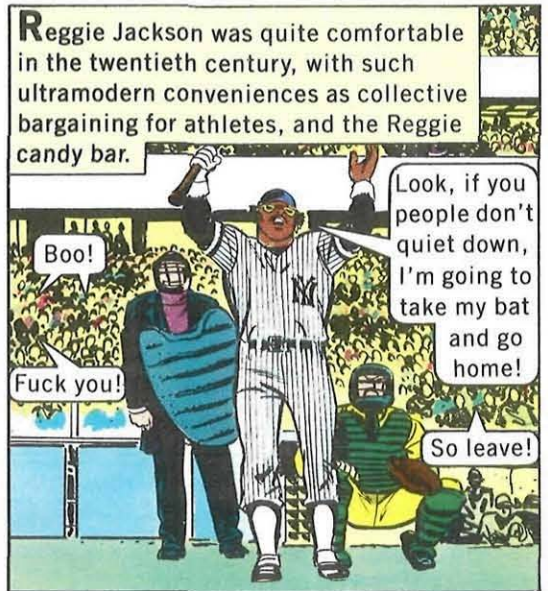
Reggie Jackson was quite comfortable in the twentieth century, with such ultramodern conveniences as collective bargaining for athletes, and the Reggie candy bar.

Look, if you people don't quiet down, I'm going to take my bat and go home!

Boo!

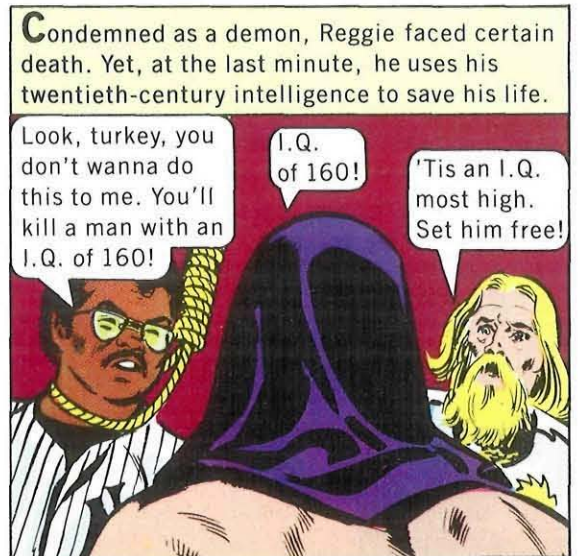
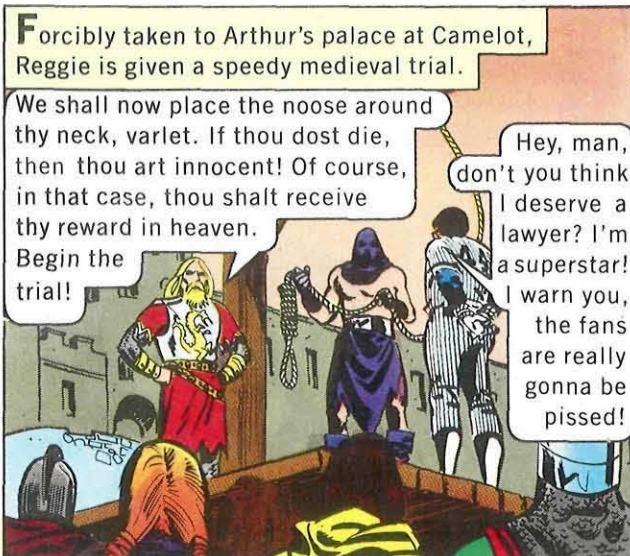
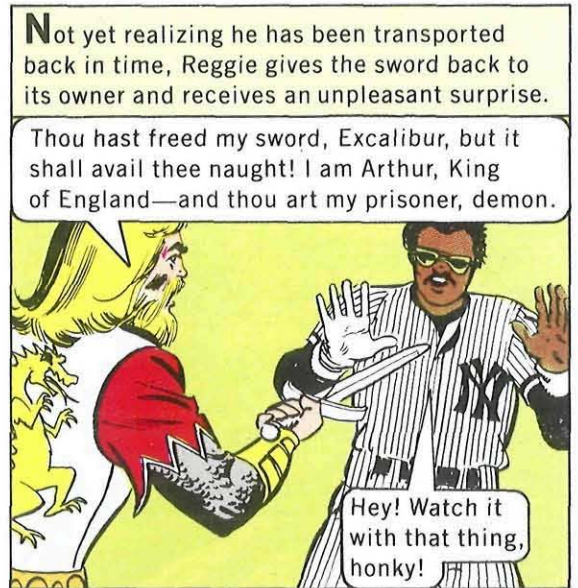
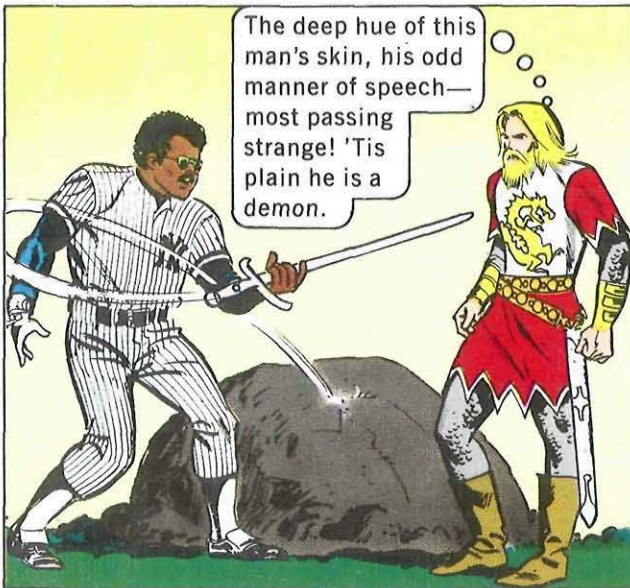
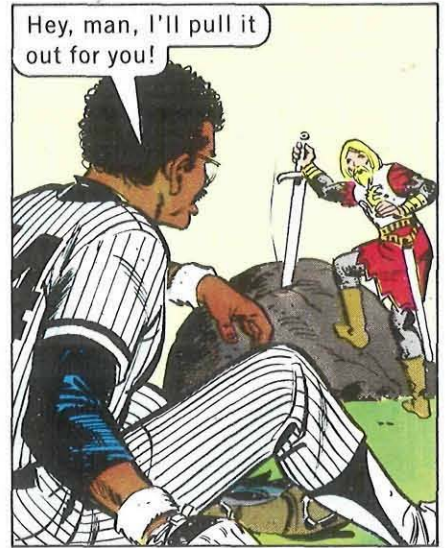
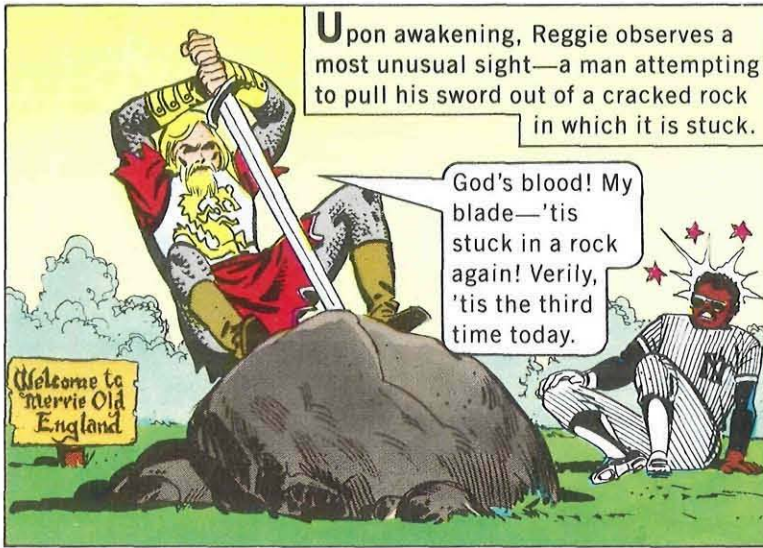
Fuck you!

So leave!



But suddenly an empty whiskey bottle, hurled by an angry fan, forever alters the superstar's life.



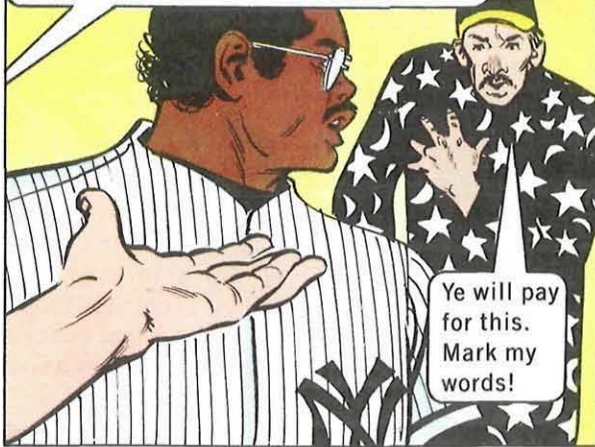


Awed by Reggie's wisdom, Arthur decides to introduce the slugger to his court. The all-star outfielder meets the heroes of the Round Table, including the beautiful Queen Guinevere, whose sexual wantonness would eventually cause the downfall of Camelot.



Here we have Sir Lancelot; next to him is my lovely wife, the Queen...

...And this is Billy Merlin, formerly the chief wizard of my realm. Unfortunately for him, his I.Q. is not as high as thine. From now on, Reggie, thou will take over Merlin's job.



Ye will pay for this. Mark my words!

As the new chief wizard of England, Reggie brings twentieth-century know-how to the backward land. His initial act: to create Camelot's first newspapers, using modern methods of sports reporting.



Reggie also introduces up-to-date labor relations to Camelot, replacing the feudal system with the free-agent system.



Milords, a dragon hath besieged the palace. Shall we sally forth to slay him?

What's in it for me?

Fuck off!

I'm on the disabled list.

Enough talk! Dealer taketh two.

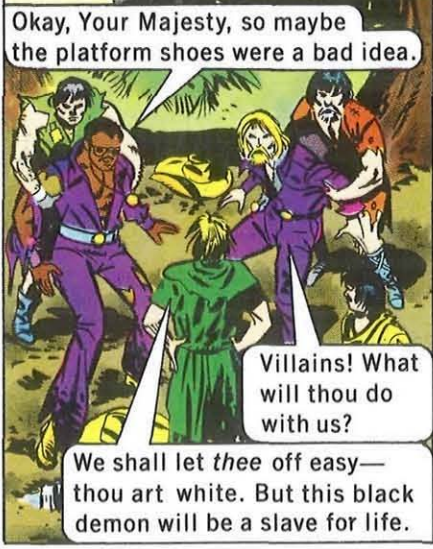


Yet Reggie soon wearies of court life. Finally, he and the king decide to trade their finery for the clothing of the common folk, in order that they may mingle incognito with Camelot's ordinary townspeople, to see what they are like..

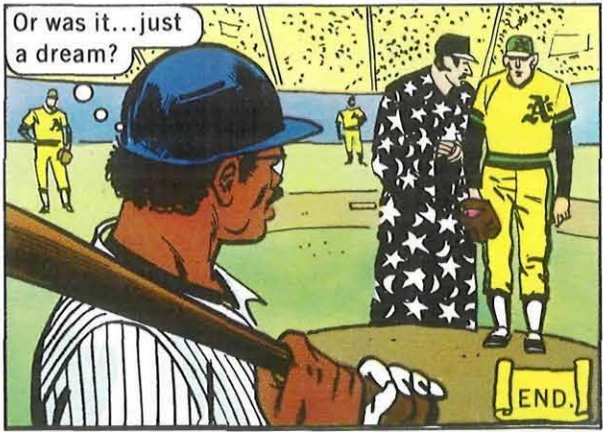
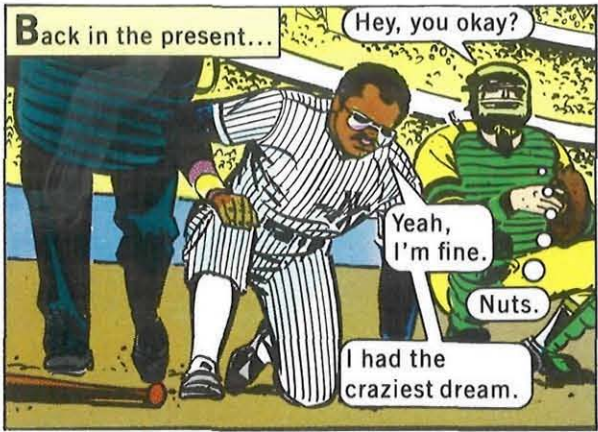
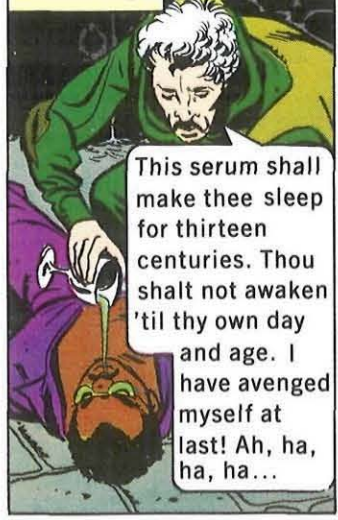
Sir Reggie, thou sayest the common city folk always wear these outlandish "platform shoes" and "pimp hats"? Mayhap in thy era, but I don't know...



But, unfortunately, Reggie and the king do not quite blend in with Camelot's poor. Discovered to be fake commoners, they are seized by ruffians and are unable to send for help.



Yet Reggie is not fated to die a slave. Merlin, disguised as an old woman, manages to sneak into the dungeon where the slugger is imprisoned, and exacts his revenge.



COHEN THE BOYBARIAN

continued from page 36

daily flocked in thoughtless pursuit of its humdrum routine in historical London's world-famous Trafalgar Square, where immobile lions coldly stared with unflinching defiance as germey pigeons hideously danced foul tarantellas on the lions' unstirring backs and full-maned heads.

Heedless of his own safety, Cohen strode without hesitation on the tips of his toes in to the violent sea. A shard of seashell pricked his foot, wringing a curse from the lips of the near-naked boybarian. Bending to examine the wound, Cohen saw that no hot gush of blood flowed, and he grunted in satisfaction. He waded further out into the seething deep until he stood in proximity to the supple girl, who frisked in careless, supple pleasure with a sun-burnished young lout whom Cohen had hitherto not seen. The lad was one of the many examples of the fair-haired, blue-eyed race that populated Miamitos and its neighboring city-resorts, the Fort of Lauderdale and Daytonum. He was, to Cohen's appraising eye, handsome in a stupid, nonsophisticated way. And, while he evinced physical strength in excess of Cohen's, nonetheless the boybarian knew that this rude bumpkin's mind could be crushed as though it were a soft grape in the titantic vise of Cohen's intellect.

Cohen was within a hairsbreadth of deciding to take a forthright, swaggering step toward the supplely laughing maiden, when suddenly her companion surfaced from some underwater stunt directly into Cohen's path. The blond youth's momentum bowled over the startled boybarian, knocking him near senseless in the surging, blue green, hip-deep deep.

"Hey!" Cohen spat, red rage contorting his massive features. Steel embracements glinted on his teeth in the dazzling sun.

"Sorry, man," answered the oaf, who with a laugh rejoined the supple girl. Cohen knew a moment's blood lust, and his powerful frame swelled with the urge to rend and tear human flesh. But in a moment the blond fool and the girl had quit the wave-tossed surf and run off up the beachy strand, hailing a group of the boy's comrades, who were engaged in the sport of slapping the inflated bladder of an animal to and fro over a raised net.

Exhausted by the encounter, Cohen returned to his watching place on the beach. With the second-nature deftness bequeathed him by generations of boybarians, he seized the fantasy-adventure

novel. On its papery, inky surface he read how Zelata, the witch, rent the veil in order to vouchsafe the king of the Aquilonians a glimpse of the Nemedian conquest of Tarantia.

"What's wrong, dear?" the Mother inquired diabolically.

"Nothing," spat Cohen, who silently raged.

3.

COHEN DRINKS THE OLD MAN'S POTION

The sun had set in fiery orange over the high-rise towers of Miamitos. The last of the humble party boats were making their way to port, their holds brim full of unconsumed Miller and Bud, their sun-burnished passengers weary from a day's toil at rod and reel and delicatessen sandwich. Around the city, clubs of the night threw open their doors, as Caterina of Valente and Jack the Carter made ready to entertain those with money and reservations enough to command a candle-lit table in the smoky cabarets. There, after first acts who were always unknowns, magicians hurled knives at women girt in green-sequined bodices as audiences gasped and drums rolled and the women, unharmed, held their white-gloved hands aloft in triumph.

In the poorer quarters of the city, dark-skinned Cubanians pounded their *bongos* and *congas* of animal skin and wood, while secretive men in the employ of government agencies hundreds of miles to the north plotted the overthrow of the bearded one called Fidel. These were the denizens of Little Havanum, the forbidden city within the city, and they looked in angry resentment to the day when Cubania might again be theirs, and her rich bounty of sugar, cigars, and gambling might once more swell the coffers of the ruthless sons of the island of Sicilios known as the Mufiosi.

Yet Cohen, a boybarian of the verdant lawns of suburban Marylandia, knew naught of this. Still prisoner of the Mother and the Old Man, he could but submit to their implacable will. Thus it was that he sat at a table in the eating establishment known to native and traveler alike as Wolfie's, staring sullenly at a likeness of that roving beast of the plains imprinted on the bill of fare at which the Old Man now squinted.

"I think I'll have the brisket," the elder murmured to the serving maid at his elbow, who nodded and inscribed the order on an empapered pad. "How about you, hon?"

continued

*There's a race of men that don't fit in,
A race that can't stay still;
So they break the hearts of kith and kin,
And they roam the world at will.*

Robert Service
The Men That Don't Fit In



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COHEN THE BOYBARIAN

continued

"I'll have the veal parmigiana," quoth the Mother, who to the girl Marcie demanded, "How about you, sweetie?"

"A ham burger," came the tyke's reply.

"Well done," said the Mother to the server. "Stewie?"

Cohen scowled at the hated nickname. "Fried shrimp," he muttered.

"Mommy, Stuart's being a grouch again," the girl Marcie observed.

"What's wrong, Stewie?" asked the Mother. "You've been kvetchy all day?"

"Nothing," Cohen grunted.

"Here, Stu," said the Old Man, sliding across the formica'd table toward Cohen an oddly shaped glass. Within its crystal depths Cohen saw a clear liquid, limpid as mountain water. Cubelets of icy ice floated also therein, and a strange tiny sphere, opaque, the color of ivory, about the size of a pearl, drifted in the potion. "This'll snap you out of it."

"Marvin..." chided the Mother.

"Oh, we're on vacation," retorted the Old Man dismissively. "He's almost fifteen. He can taste that."

"Me too, Daddy!" cried the girl Marcie.

"You're too young."

"That's not fair!"

"You can taste it when you're older, Marcie," soothed the Mother.

Cohen regarded the potion warily. A careful sniff disclosed that this was no mere ice-watery draught. Cohen's keen nose discerned unfamiliar spices, and a trace of vinegar, causing the short hairs at the base of his scalp to stir and prickle. Yet his inborn courage did not fail him, and with a rapid gulp he swallowed a portion of the brew.

A foul medicinal flavor assailed his reeling buds of taste; his throat burned as if all the fires of Hell had been awakened therein. The liquid scorched as an icy flame, and fired his entrails as it went down. Cohen gasped, choked, and heaved a mighty cough, his face a grimace of black disgust and vile distaste.

"What is that?" he cried, hot salt tears welling uncontrollably in his volcanic blue eyes, which usually smoldered as if with some inner fire.

"A vodka Gibson with a pickled onion," came the deceptively offhand reply.

"It's horrible!" cried the boybarian, who shoved the repellent potion away as the Old Man chuckled in fiendish amusement.

Straining every fiber of his powerful being, Cohen regained mastery of his normal breathing and overcame the

abysmal agony wrought by the hellish liquid in his vitals. Summoning his native cunning, he directed to the Old Man a pointed challenge. "Can I go to the movies tonight, Dad?" quoth the boybarian.

"Your father and I are going to a show tonight," the Mother hissed. "You stay with Marcie in the room and watch television."

"But you said I could!" cried Cohen in savage outrage.

"Don't raise your voice to me, young man," snapped the woman. "We said maybe. But your father got reservations for Rich Little, so you kids will have to wait for us in the room. We can all go to the movies tomorrow night."

In ferocious fury, Cohen groped for a reply. Yet the vodka Gibson mixture, in addition to inflicting its diabolical burning on his body, had worked another spell—on his mind! Strange vapors had arisen from the drink to cloud his normally crystalline consciousness, and a sickly sweet giddiness made clear thought impossible. Tricked! Cohen withdrew into himself in silent anger, and in that mute rage he conceived a plan that, if the gods smiled, would offer escape from his intolerable captivity. He ate his meal with the wordless intensity of a man whose every faculty is bent upon the execution of some secret strategy that his parents must never discover.

When at last back in the room, Cohen ignored the girl and her childish television mummery. After first checking to assure that he had two green dollar bills in his wallet—the unspent portion of his weekly five-dollar allowance—he retired to the bathroom with his fantasy-adventure novel and, thus shielded from the television's terrible noise, read of how the Cimmerian entered the Stygian city of Khemi, in search of the wizard Thutothmes.

4.

"THEY CALLING FO' MY ASS"

"Wha's happenin', bro'?"

To the shadowy bellboy Willie, who uttered this mystic greeting, Cohen had no immediate reply. He stood confronting the uniformed servitor in the lobby of the Hotel of the Blue Fountain, his skin alive with gooseflesh in the building's unnatural deathly chill. He fingered the wadded paper money in the pocket of his terrycloth *beach jacket*. It was morning of the following day. Cohen had escaped the incessantly watchful eye of the Mother and the Old Man with an adroit "I forgot my book!" and had run with feline ease up from the

beach to the building, there to seek the carrier of bags whose muttered offer the day before had so jolted and intrigued him.

"I want to buy...one of those...a loose joint," Cohen said with canny shrewdness, the legacy of a thousand purchases in a thousand marketplaces over centuries. "You said two dollars?"

"Yeah, man, two dollar. You wait for me in the min's room over there." And without another word the stealthy Moor was gone.

Savage triumph surged through Cohen. He strode briskly to the facility indicated by the dark-visaged porter. In his nylonen *bathing trunks*, his *beach jacket*, and *zori*, the boybarian was poorly clad to endure the icy breath of the tiled room's air ducts, yet Cohen stood indomitable, shivering only imperceptibly. After ten minutes' wait the door opened and Willie entered. From his blue uniform-jacket pocket he produced a thin white stick, paper rolled about a crumbly greenish substance and twisted closed at both ends.

"They calling fo' my ass," he said, shoving the object toward the staring boybarian. "Gimme the money, 'cause I got to go."

Cohen proffered the folded currency, which the other took and tucked into a pocket. "Be cool, now," Willie said, then turned and withdrew.

Cohen wrapped the sacred wand in gossamer tissue paper and placed it in the bottom of the pocket of his *beach jacket*. Then he went up to his lodging room, retrieved the book he had deliberately and cannily left behind, and a packet of matches, and rejoined the others on the beach.

The girl was nowhere to be seen. Cohen resumed his wary posture, his eyes glittering with blue balefire as he scanned the fantasy-adventure novel and read how the wretch Tiberias, together with the priests of Asura, deceived the Nemedian Valerius with a magical fog and a distant, muttering drum. A sullen primordial rage had begun to consume the boybarian when, all at once, a sound reached his keen ears that made the short hairs under his *swim trunks* prickle.

It was the poignant plaint of a young woman. Seizing and donning his *beach jacket* in one swift motion, Cohen dropped into the stalking crouch of a hunting panther and crept on sand-singed feet around the blankets and beach chairs that dotted the Atlantic shore until he found what he knew he must find, else go mad: the girl herself, in

continued on page 51

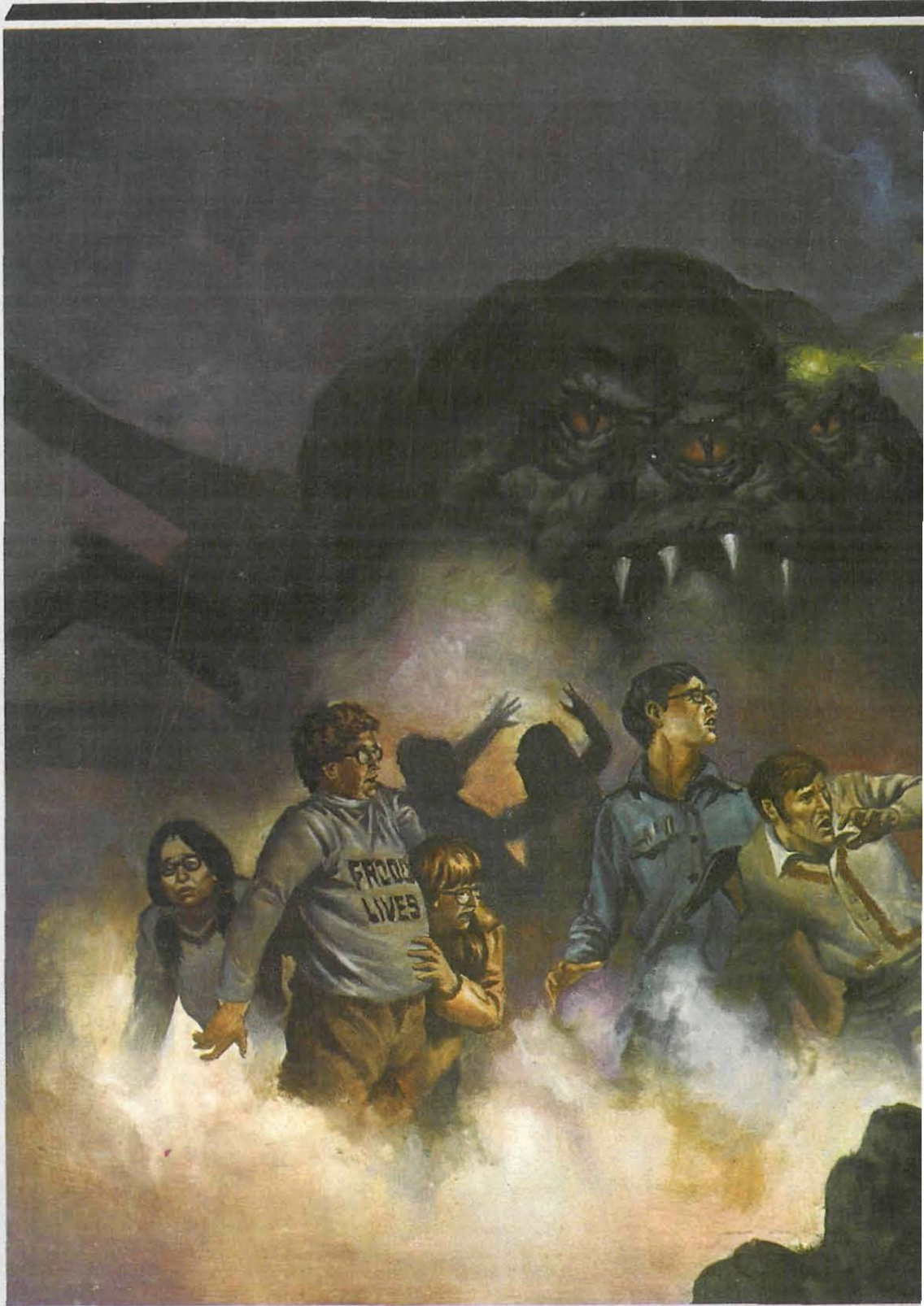
SEMI MENTAL

Fantasy illustration: an art as old as the brilliantly illuminated manuscripts of the Middle Ages—and as modern as the cover painting for *Savage Battle Ax of Karbanzo the Berserk* (Ace Books, \$1.95).

Yet, strangely, not until the publication of *Semi Mental* magazine was an attempt made to commercially exploit this art form on a truly crass, mass-market basis.

Though the magazine was first dismissed as “a comic book for people too stupid to read comic books,” there was no denying its success on the newsstands, as first dozens and then hundreds of copies were bought or otherwise acquired by fantasy fans. Now, since the movie, the Broadway musical, the TV special, the T-shirts, and the lunch-bucket decals, it is safe to say that the rest is not only history, but accounting. And here, at last, is a portfolio of the finest art that has graced *Semi Mental's* pages. Behold. Enjoy.

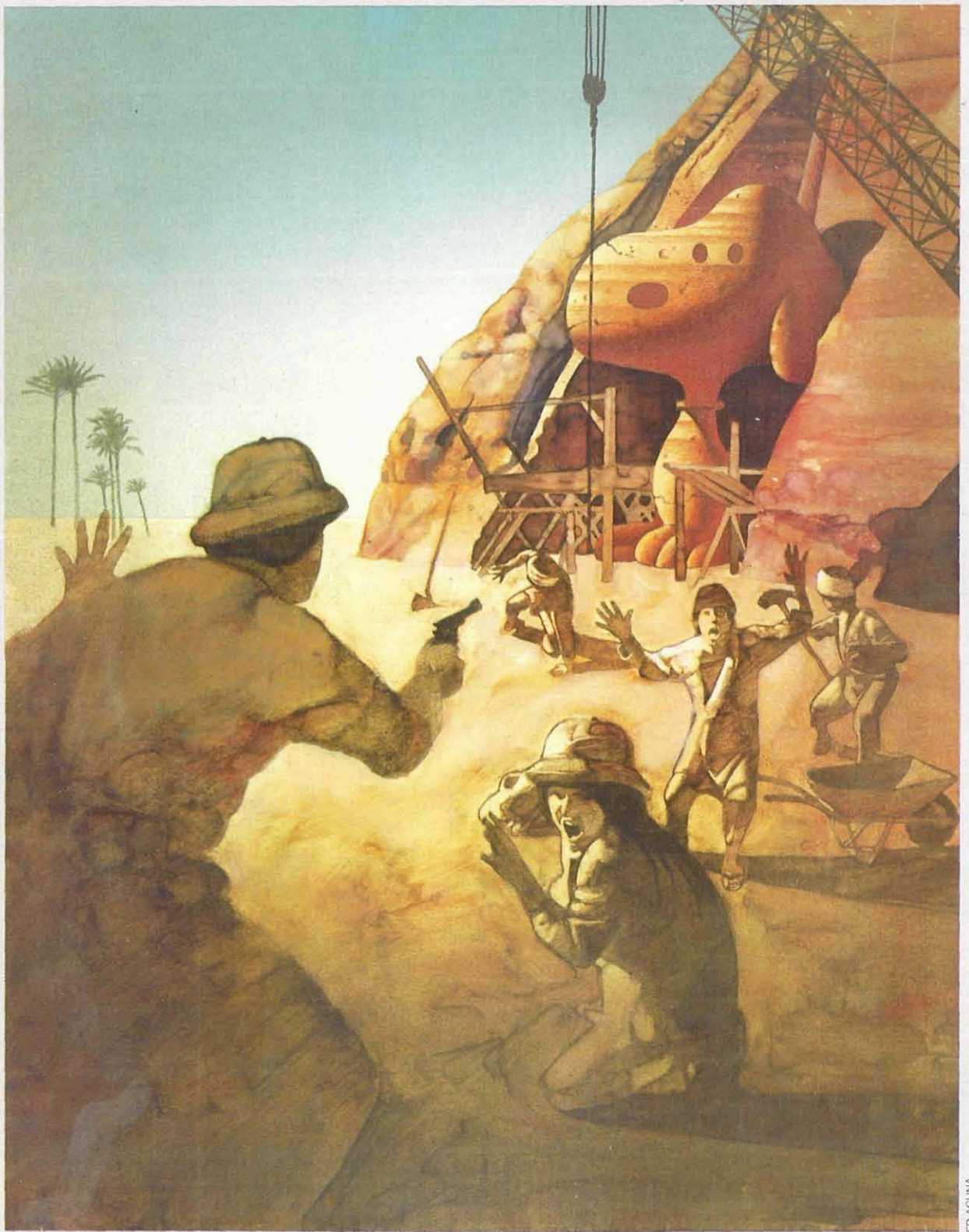




In the hour of Middle Earth's direst need, Gandalf the Gray summons to the aid of the Fellowship the members of the J.R.R. Tolkien Fan Club.



DOUG BEEKMAN



ED ACUNA

As any *Semi Mental* reader knows, real Evil really exists. Really. Through the mists of time, behind the veil of time, beneath the sands of time, something wicked lurks, something dreadful lies in wait; the horrible, ghastly, disgusting, terrible, hideous awfulness that was in the beginning is now, and ever shall be...



JOYCE BALLANTINE

The art of the pinup, neglected in a publishing world of explicit sex and vulgarity, is still alive and well in *Semi Mental*, appealing as it does to a preadolescent audience of all ages.



JAMES SHERMAN

***Semi Mental* does not neglect lovers of technology, those hard-core science-fiction fans. Only those deeply into psychology can grasp the secret symbolic meaning of this illustration: the promise of a future world where, freed from the demands of womankind, mankind will be able to watch "Star Trek" reruns forever.**

COHEN THE BOYBARIAN

continued from page 44

grousing dispute with her parents.

She sat up on the towel of the singing cat, a sullen look of unfeigned aggrievedness contorting her features. Cohen recognized that she was a Princess of the Jewish Americans, those descendants of the twelve wandering tribes of Israel whose dark-eyed daughters were known throughout the land for their haughty demeanor, their wanton imperiousness, their extensive and skilled use of the paints and powders of Revlon and Clinique.

"But *why?*" the girl protested, and with a fetching pout she kicked her naked foot upon the sand.

"Because I don't want you running off with strange boys every ten minutes, that's why," came the even reply from an older, heavier woman who could only be the beauty's mother. "Morton, tell her."

"Shelley, listen to your mother and don't give us a hard time," murmured a balding, pale-skinned man with the haggard, bland aspect of a keeper of accounts, or perhaps an attorney skilled in circumventing the laws of income taxing.

Cohen stepped forward and roared in a voice that would sunder the heavens themselves, "By Crom! It is Shelley! Stand, girl, and greet your comrade from English class, Stuart Cohen, which is me!"

The girl looked up as though the greeting had come from some grisly horror not known to the rational minds of men. "Huh?" quoth she, shading her brown eyes with a slim hand, to gaze at the advancing boybarian.

"Do you know this young man?" inquired the girl's mother, directing a smile of unconvincing geniality toward Cohen.

"...Yeah," replied the Princess, having recovered her wits after the initial shock of Cohen's sudden startling appearance. "He's Stuart Cohen from...uh...English class. Hi...Stuart..."

"How do you do, Stuart," said the woman.

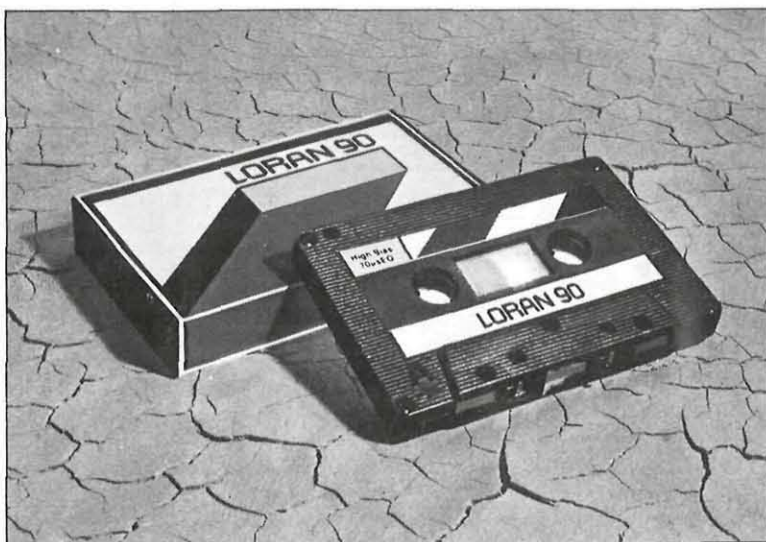
"I do well!" shouted Cohen in a mammoth voice that brought stares from those adjacent to the scene, stares of puzzlement, or of awe. "And what about how you do?"

"Fine, thank you," answered the woman, who to her daughter then suggested, "Why don't you go for a walk with Stuart, dear? Isn't it nice that you bumped into him down here?"

"Yeah, great," muttered the girl, and with a smirk of undisguised disgust she came to her feet. She and Cohen set off

continued on page 64

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LESSER-KNOWN
QUESTS
 OF THE
**ROUND
 TABLE**

by Jon Pelzer



Long ago, Arthurian scholars and fagged-out English majors believed the Round Table's quest to be a sacred display of knightly heroism and loyalty, one worthy of the Hollywood treatment. With the discovery of the so-called Eddie's Quests, we now know this view to be loose-boweled droppings.

Following the IRA bombing of London Eddie's Pub last month, an iron box marked QUESTS: FALL '57 was unearthed. This trove contained the complete logs of three lesser-known quests that prove questing was far more than a hallowed occasion to serve one's king. For the Knights of the Round Table, questing was a job, like waiting on tables or installing tapestries.



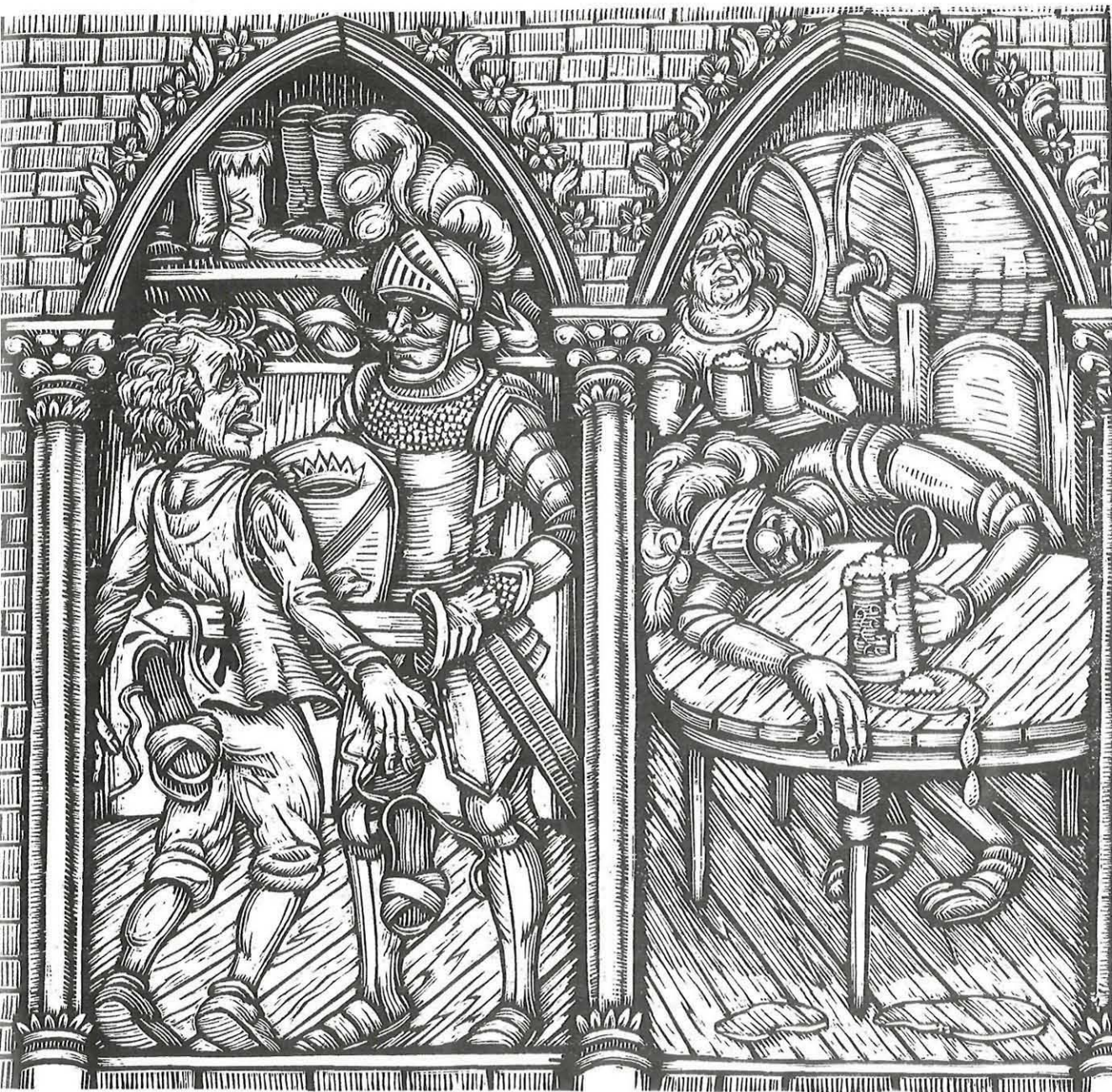
THE QUEST OF
 SIR THOMAS
 THE CAUTIOUS

Up till now, Sir Thomas had been lucky. First he was sent to find a morning town crier, and then for ice. How long would it be before he was commanded to bring back the head of a griffin or the testicles of a Saxon?

As he donned his sweat-producing armor, he wondered how long it would be before everyone saw him as he saw himself: as a spineless, sniveling, ever-urinating coward.

"Sir Thomas!" belched the bulbous sergeant at arms, causing a wet sensation down the knight's entire right leg. "Our liege lord, King Arthur, commands you to find and bring back two

continued on page 54



THE QUEST OF ✦ SIR JAMES ✦ THE ENTHUSIASTIC

The blood on his horse was still moist when Sir James galloped into Camelot to learn of his new quest. It was the blood of a young and fair maiden he encountered taking firewood illegally within the castle perimeters.

Though she was in clear violation of the law, trampling her was difficult for the knight. She reminded him of Alice, a buxom barmaid he'd been raping of late. "Women," he mused. "You can't live with them and you can't live without them."

Within one turn of the hourglass, Sir James was in his formal armor, beaming at his mirrored reflection. "God, I love
continued on page 54

THE QUEST OF ✦ SIR ALFRED ✦ THE INEBRIATED

Sir Alfred had not raided the royal wine cellar in an hour. As much as his trembling hands longed to toast Bacchus, he knew this was his last chance to prove himself to be something all knew he could never be: a worthy knight of the Round Table!

In a rare moment of lucidity, he wondered about the origin of his weakness for spirits. Was he simply coping with the pressures of his work? Or did he just enjoy a good buzz?

Whatever the cause, if it had not been for Queen Guinevere, his third cousin, Sir Alfred would have received the kingly boot
continued on page 56



SIR THOMAS continued from page 52

pints of a delicacy consisting of water ices treated with a fruit syrup, preferably raspberry, but under no circumstances lime."

Relief came to the diminutive knight like flies to the royal stable. "Surely this will be a piece of ox shank," he thought.

"You will find it," continued the sergeant, as he ripped the leg off a live chicken, "at the shop of Giuseppe Confectione, in Venice. They call it 'granita.'"

"God, no! Sea travel!" moaned the yellow knight, a bit too loudly. "Surely I will vomit day and night!"

It was time to speak with Sir William, a veteran knight who recently retired after a titling mishap. He was a gentle and wise man, who taught Sir Thomas to avoid the use of poison ivy when "on the road."

After hearing of Sir Thomas's quest, Sir William somberly asked, "Have you ever heard of Sir Frederick?"

"No," Sir Thomas answered, with growing concern.

"Two years ago, he was sent to search Italy for a concoction of cheese and tomato baked on a round piece of dough. According to the information we had, you could put anchovies on its entirety, or have it only half anchovies and the other half sausage..."

"Sir William!" blurted the now hysterical knight. "I beseech thee! What happened to Sir Frederick?!"

"A year after he left," continued Sir William, holding the younger man by the shoulders, "we received one of his carrier pigeons with a message. It said, No takeout. That was the last we heard from him."

Sir Thomas fell speechless. The prospect of an encounter with a potentially hostile Italian merchant was surely more than he could bear!

"Be brave, young knight," Sir William said, noticing the puddle at his disciple's feet. "And beware the gondola driver."

Back in his private chambers, Sir Thomas prepared to spew forth his dinner, having just learned that budget cutbacks for European quests would force him to go squireless.

He wondered why he had ever become a knight. Surely there were easier ways to make a living. "But few so lucrative," the financially plagued knight reminded himself.

Ever since his father was executed for looting during the Black Death, Sir Thomas supported his mother and brother, the latter a simpleton incapable of holding a cage-cleaning job. Sir Thomas just never could seem to get ahead of himself.

It did not please the petrified knight that his vessel was the *Sir Frederick*, or that the captain's estimation of the voyage's length was "about seven weeks, spirits and monsters permitting."

By the fifth month at sea, the food supply had dwindled, and only three Normans remained alive. Only the thought of burial at sea kept the queasy knight alive.

"Land ho!" were the last words of the starved lookout as he crashed through the deck.

Venice was truly a frightening place, even for a knight of the Round Table. Everywhere Sir Thomas looked were mustached women and men with monkeys on their backs. With the exception of the city scholar's, their knowledge of English was appalling.

As Sir Thomas reeled from the blow of a gondola oar to the forehead, he was reminded of Sir William's prophetic warning.

The skittish knight found the door to Giuseppe Confectione's shop locked tighter than a noble virgin's chastity belt. He knocked lightly and a slat in the door slid open.

"What-a you want?" asked a man with the breath of a dragon.

"I am Sir Thomas, of King Arthur's Round Table. I have been sent on a quest for two pints of raspberry granita."

"What-a you? *Pazzo!* That season over three month now!"

Amid taunts of "stupido Inglese," Sir Thomas began his lonely search of Venice for black-market granita, only to find a young couple on the outskirts of the city making parfaits.

Sir Thomas knew his moment of truth had come. He thought of his jousting exam, wherein his loss of control resulted in hours of sanding the rust out of his armor. After a quick change of undertunic, he returned to the shop of Giuseppe Confectione.

"You again?" asked the man with hellfire lungs.

"I demand to speak with Master Confectione!" the knight said, mustering all his courage.

"At's-a me. Now *fungoo!*" came the reply.

With a quickness that surprised himself, Sir Thomas decided on an alternate strategy.

Getting on his knees, he began pounding on the door with both his fists. "Please! I beg of you!" he whimpered. "If you don't allow me to complete my quest, surely I will lose my job, and my mother and brother will starve to death!"

When there was no response, he sobbed, "You *must* assist me! I mean, it's *only* two pints!"

After an hour of this, the door opened wide enough for a two-pint container to be slipped out.

"Bless you, Master Confectione!" cried the knight. "If you ever need the assistance of King Arthur, do not hesitate to ask."

"Just-a get out-a here!" Master Confectione pleaded. "You-a pathetic!"

Granita in hand, Sir Thomas felt, for the first time in his frightened little life, that he could take on any water-ice merchant who crossed his path.

As he crossed the street to avoid a ranting, light-skinned beggar, he heard the beggar shout something about "pizza" and "off-premises consumption."

"Be gone with you, beggar!" commanded the rejuvenated knight. "I have not the time for thy foolishness. I am a knight of the Round Table successfully completing yet another quest for my liege lord, King Arthur!" □



SIR JAMES continued from page 53

being a knight!" he told himself. "There is nothing else like it in the world. All other men are by comparison bubonic-ridden church mice!"

As others in the Sacred Brotherhood had been assigned filing and inventory quests, Sir James knew the truly dangerous mission was being saved for him.

After all, had he not just killed forty-three people in his latest quest, for a royal maypole? And had not the investigation of his conduct yielded nothing?

"Sir James!" the rotund sergeant at arms coughed, dislodging a kipper bone. "Our liege lord, King Arthur, commands you to seek out Olaf the Cobbler and retrieve his repaired summer sandals."

Sir James's seven-foot frame welled up with anger. If it hadn't been for the discipline he acquired during his service in the Crusades, surely he would have exploded.

Calmly biting his upper lip clear through, he took this as yet another test of what a knight must endure.

"Could not an apprentice gnome handle this quest?" rea-

soned Toad, Sir James's loyal squire.

"Ours is not to question why," his master said. "Besides, for a knight and his squire in the service of our king, there is *always* the possibility of death and destruction."

Seeing his squire still disappointed, Sir James asked, "How many Saxons does it take to sharpen a spear?"

"I am not at all certain," replied the downcast squire.

"Five. One to hold the sanding stone and four to turn the spear."

"Oh, master! You are truly the most clever of knights!" snorted Toad between guffaws. "Now let us be on to Olaf the Cobbler!" he shouted, pleasing the knight.

Olaf lived only a three-day ride from Camelot, in the Castle of Odor, named for the architect who erroneously fed the sewer into the moat.

On the first day of their quest, thorny undergrowth lacerated their ankles, exciting Sir James. Admiring the misty calm of the pastures around him, he thought, "What a perfect day for a painful death. On a still day like today, one bloodcurdling scream could horrify peasants for miles!"

Suddenly there appeared an old man, slumped under a pine. "Identify yourself!" commanded the knight, secure in the belief that divine providence had interceded.

"Got any spare coins?" drooled the drunken lowlife.

"Looks like unbecoming conduct to me," said a bloodthirsty Sir James to Toad, who nodded in agreement as his master dismounted.

"Old swine," said the zealous knight, "prepare to meet your butcher!"

Before the vagabond could seek counsel, Sir James successfully drove a lance through his lower abdomen, pinning him to a nearby birch.

"Bastard!" spat the knight. "Not even a yelp!"

On the third day, when Toad remarked, "My lord, what a villainous smell," they knew they were near.

The Castle of Odor proved to be truly repulsive. It reminded Sir James of the night he got wildly drunk and took a leper to bed. With tearing eyes and burning throats, they made their way to the shop of Olaf the Cobbler.

"Oh my God!" shrieked Olaf, as he recognized the seal of King Arthur on Sir James's chest plate. "I didn't expect you till Thursday!"

"Surely you don't mean to tell us that the sandals of our liege lord are not ready," the ruthless knight said in measured tones as he approached the cowering cobbler.

"Just give me an hour!" Olaf pleaded, clutching his rosary.

Should Sir James kill the old shoemaker now for failing to have the sandals ready? Or should he let him repair them first?

These were the kind of quick life-and-death decisions a knight had to make all the time. Sir James had grown weary of his nonknight friends for their inability to do the same. "They can barely choose between meat pies," he often remarked.

The homicidal knight delighted as Olaf's face registered the fact that his throat had just been cut, ear to ear.

As Olaf lay bleeding, he began to gurgle. "Shhh," said Sir James as he inserted his sword into the cobbler's chest for good measure. "A little respect for the dying."

What concerned the knight more than the unrepaired sandals was the prospect of having only two killings under his belt before heading back to Camelot.

He couldn't count on running into a nun outing or an outdoor festival. He had to act now!

"Master?" asked Toad. "Would it be possible for us to rest a spell before returning? I'm dead tired."

"That's an idea," Sir James thought. □

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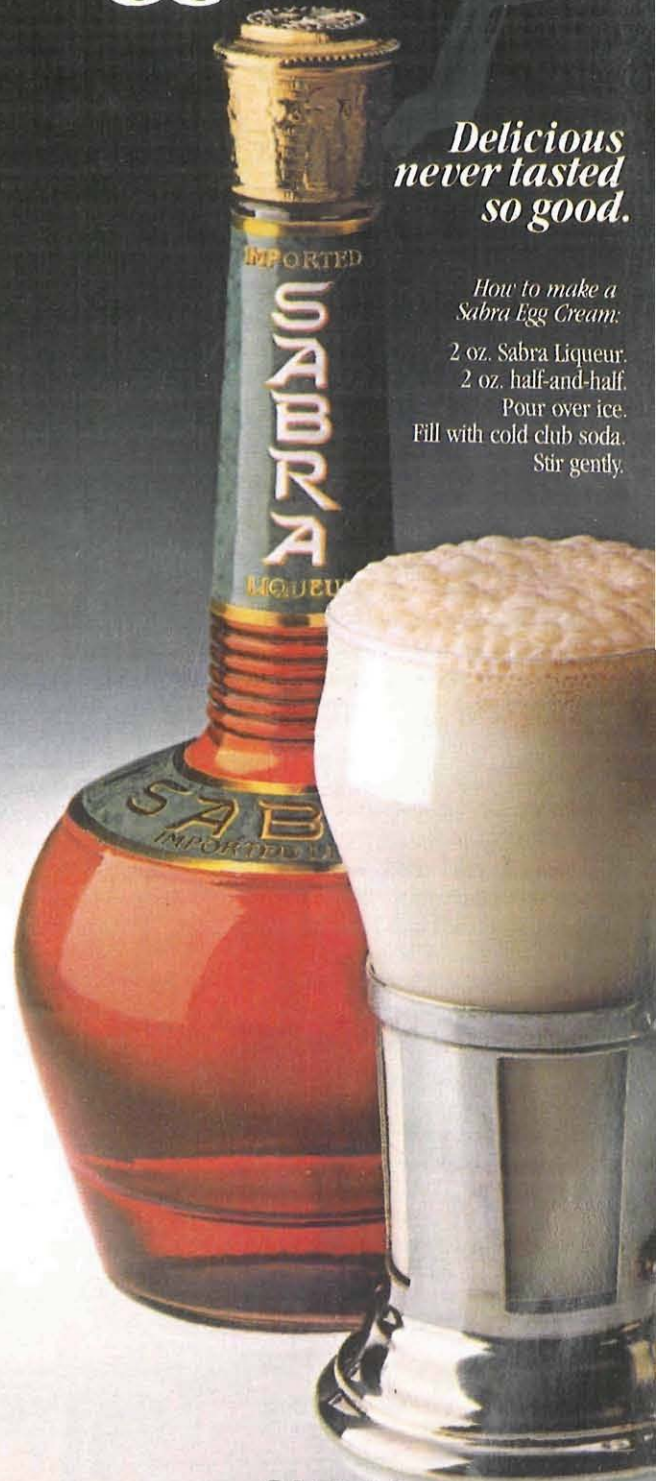
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Pour over ice.

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SIR ALFRED

continued from page 53

long ago. Instead, the string-pulling queen arranged for the fermented knight to spend six months in a nonquesting capacity, so he could "get his dung together."

First, Sir Alfred was assigned to Criminal Statistics, where he lasted long enough to file sodden reports on increased sodomy and decreased salad dressings at the Round Table.

The remainder of his sabbatical was spent in a discreet outpost near Wales, where the legendary elbow bender perfected the art of drinking oneself into a stupor.

Now the six months were up. It was time to resume his questing duties or be dismissed in drunken disgrace, never again to have access to the royal kegs.

After trying to remember where he hid a flask years ago, Sir Alfred shoe-horned his alcohol-bloated body into his musty armor and waddled into the Great Hall Where Quests Are Assigned, taking his seat among his stunned colleagues.

"Well, well, well. Look who's here," said one. "If it ain't the royal hooch hound himself!"

"I'll be a still in a nunnery!" cackled another. "Do you remember the time he was sent for a concubine and brought back a porcupine?"

As the clanking of laughing knights died down, the gluttonous sergeant at arms turned to Sir Alfred and yelled, "Sir Sponge! Our liege lord, King Arthur, commands you to bring back from the royal shopping center in Pay-on-Tyne one boar for the king's birthday party!"

Failing to find the flask in his chambers, the twitching knight began mapping his journey to Pay-on-Tyne, discovering that his route led him through Swillbelly Township.

He had visited this malt mecca reli-

giously for years, often adding months to his quests. He knew the terrible temptations that awaited him there.

As cramps wracked his liverless insides, Octet, the squire who accompanied Sir Alfred on his last quest, cautiously entered.

It was during that ill-fated mission for quill pens that a drunken Sir Alfred tried to impress a young maiden by throwing a dagger at a tree with eyes closed. The result was the squire's loss of his left pinky and ring finger and his gaining a new moniker.

"You don't still do that dagger trick, do you?" asked the understandably concerned squire of his brain-damaged master.

Following a sleepless night of dry heaves and cold flashes, Sir Alfred headed for the stables, experiencing the brightness of morning for the first time in years.

After a few hours of travel under the hot summer sun, the withdrawal-plagued knight found his left hand searching his saddle pouches for that elusive flask of yesteryear.

"I don't really need it," he lied to himself. "But it would be nice to have a little drink right now."

As the thatched breweries of Swillbelly Township came into view, the smell of crushed malt caused the bug-eyed knight to break into a gallop.

Once Sir Alfred was inside the drunk-lined town square, a red-nosed brewmaster staggered toward him with a pitcher of beer and drooled, "We'd be honored if a knight of the Round Table would taste our new brew."

"Here we go," lamented Octet, convinced it was only a matter of minutes before his remaining digits were placed in jeopardy.

"Don't be silly," Sir Alfred slurred after chugalugging the entire offering. "This is part of a knight's work. I'm just trying to

be diplomatic. You wouldn't want me to offend this old fart, would you?"

After three hours of intense diplomacy, Sir Alfred mounted Hops, his horse, with an ease he never experienced in his entire life.

"Enough dillydally!" the knight burped. "'Tis time to fulfill our royal quest, whatever it is!" With that, Sir Alfred raced off in the wrong direction.

When they finally entered Pay-on-Tyne, the soused knight stopped by a beautiful maiden with long blond hair and asked, "Have you ever seen the closed-eyes dagger trick?"

Before she could answer, or Octet protest, Sir Alfred closed his eyes and threw his dagger in the direction of an oak, severing his squire's right thumb.

"That's it!" the squire in need of a name change yelled as he galloped off. "I don't care if they never make me a knight. I'm never going questing with you again!"

Upon conquering the latch to the Chamber of Commerce cottage, the bottle-nosed knight leaned against the thatched wall, which gave way.

Regaining his balance, Sir Alfred slobbered, "I am a table of the Round Knight. I am on a quest for one bore."

"Well, you've certainly come to the right place," said a man Sir Alfred thought twins. "We've got this Saxon philosopher who's the biggest bore you could ever hope to encounter. He's probably inducing sleep over at the Academy right now."

As he was carried to the Academy, the knight, whose head pounded like a crazed anvil, heard a man saying, "But now they serve in turn as images, while the student is seeking to behold those realities which only thought can apprehend."

Recognizing the man to be the Saxon philosopher, Sir Alfred thought, "Surely I could not find a bigger bore if I searched all Europe."

As with most of the events in his life, Sir Alfred had absolutely no recollection of his return to Camelot with the ever-jabbering philosopher pig-tied over Hops's hindquarters.

At first, his fellow knights were convinced that Sir Alfred had enjoyed his last royal binge. Then it was discovered that King Arthur favored Saxon philosopher over all other meats.

After his Round Table colleagues offered their bewildered congratulations, the redeemed knight seized the opportunity to finally get something out of his system that had been building for days. He puked. □



FOLK AND FAIRY TALES, MYTHS AND LEGENDS OF CENTRAL EUROPE

VOLUME 50

by Sean Kelly, illustrated by Rick Meyerowitz

IN PRECEDING VOLUMES, WE HAVE EXPLORED the fascinatingly rich and diverse ethnic lore of the Albanians, Armenians, Bavarians, Belorussians, Bessarabians, Bohemians, Bosnians, Bukovinians, Bulgars, Carinthians, Circassians, Croatians, Czechs, Dacians, Dalmatians, Dobrujans, Estonians, Frisians, Galicians, Hungarians, Illyrians, Ingrians, Istrians, Karelians, Kashubians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Livonians, Lusatians, Macedonians, Mazovians, Moldavians, Montenegrins, Moravians, Pomeranians, Rumanians, Ruthenians, Serbians, Silesians, Slavonians, Slovaks, Slovincians, Styrians, Thuringians, Transylvanians, Ukrainians, Vojvodinians, Volhynians, and Walachians.

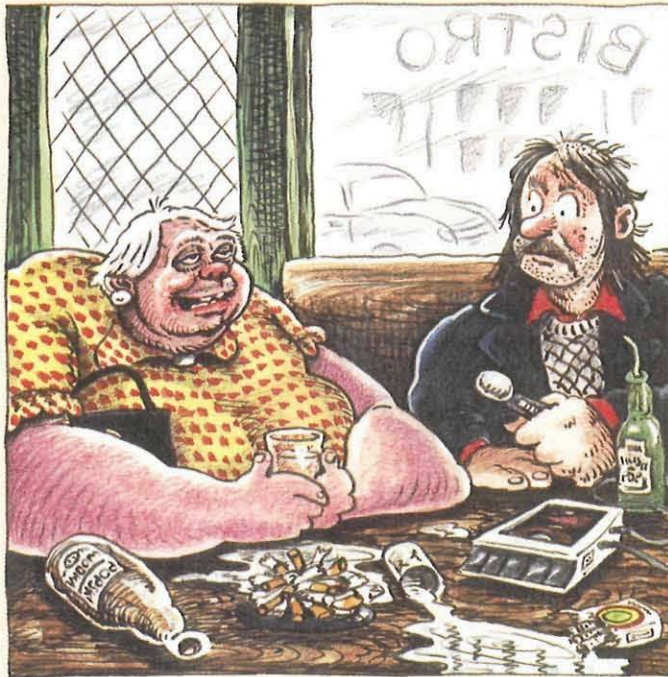
And so we come, at last, to the Poles.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

THERE wasn't a Poland until the year 990, at which time the Principality of Poland was unilaterally declared by King Mieszko I, a recent convert to Christianity. The nascent nation was instantly recognized by the pope. These events were understood by the rest of Europe to be proof that the world was indeed (as was commonly believed) coming to an end in the year 1000.

Within thirty years, Mieszko's son, Boleslaw the Brave, had annexed substantial portions of neighboring Hungary, Germany, and Russia, for which impudence those three countries have been wreaking revenge on Poland ever since.

By the time the sixteenth century had rolled around,



ORAL TRADITION

little Poland had picked fights with Mongol, Tartar, and Cossack hordes, insane degenerate Teutonic crusaders, barbaric Muscovites, warlike Moldavians, enraged Lithuanians, Bohemian heretics, savage Turks, even—believe it or not—Swedes.

These and other nations, tribes, and cultures had called down upon themselves the wrath of the Poles by demonstrating a lack of respect for the pope.

By 1800, the various states of Europe were fed up to here*, and declared, in a rare display of unanimity, that Poland did not exist, after all.

Today, however, the name Poland is still applied to a large prairie off the Baltic coast, an area well suited to military maneuvers, and from which may be exported grains, tubers, and popes.

*an anatomical locale, above the clavicle, below the eyes.

...and therein was an
enchanted Sauce of deepest vermilion,
which was yclept Ketchup...

A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

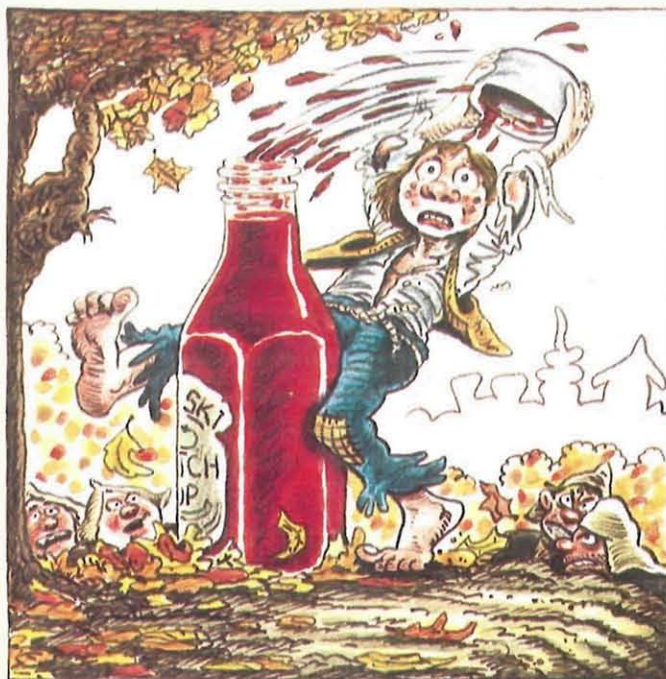
LITTLE is known about the origins or development of the Polish tongue, since literacy was not a feature of Polish culture until the late fourteenth century. Polish, as it is now spoken, is said to differ from the other Slavic dialects in its repeated use of hissing sounds, its unpleasantly nasal vowels, and its slurred consonants.

A CURIOUS GAP

ALTHOUGH in recent years much major research has been done by ethnologists and cultural anthropologists into such aspects of Polish folklore as peasant fertility motifs in the polkas of Lawrence Welk, pagan ritual decoration of undervests at Eastertide in Krakow, and the oedipal significance of kielbasa-eating orgies in Chicago, as yet the folktales and heroic legends of Poland have gone unrecorded. In vain does a student scour the ancient manuscripts, in vain peruse the modern monographs, for so much as an echo of a nursery rhyme, a fragment of a fable, or a clue to the hint of a trace of a tale.

The respected German folklorist Dr. Heinrich Fleischkopf has gone so far as to maintain: "While the other Aryan peoples were singing their children to sleep with lullabies magical and melodious, transmitting to them, albeit unconsciously, the archetypes of Indo-European civilization, the Poles hit their kids on the head with beer bottles, and went out bowling."

The obvious explanation for this absence of Polish fairy tales is that when literacy came to Poland, in the fourteenth century, the national consciousness was dragged directly out of the Cro-Magnon period into the Renaissance, skipping the Medieval (feudal) era, from which most of the conventional "folk-" or "fairy"-tale images (castles, knights, wizards, dragons, etc.) are derived. The Polish language was first written not in the form of epic poems celebrating ancient kings, high



THE COMING OF CASIMIR

deeds, and peasant customs, but in diplomatic notes to the pope, at first justifying and later protesting various invasions.

And so, to discover the epics and sagas of either the Vistulans (little Polacks) or the Polans (Great Polacks), we must turn not to written or printed sources but to the Polish-speaking people of today, the living repositories of an age-old heritage.

THE ORAL TRADITION

IN the success of any undertaking, even one so trivial and academic

as the gathering of folktales, chance plays a part. I was nearly in despair of never discovering the legends of the Poles, when it happened "by chance" that the realty company that owns the building where I live was obliged, by fiat of some "equal opportunity" federal agency, to promote our allegedly overqualified alcoholic Haitian elevator operator and replace him with Stanislaw Grabski, an apprentice of Polish descent. This "action" turned out to be very "affirmative" indeed for my project.

Hesitantly, but eagerly, I approached "Stan." No, he said, he didn't know any stories (or any storeys either, I used to joke, for he invariably let me off on the wrong floor). Yet his mother, he assured me, was full of them.

A meeting was arranged, and I was struck by the thought that if it was indeed stories Mrs. Grabski was full of, there existed a great many indeed. It was in the lobby of my building that our first encounter took place, and we all agreed on the impossibility of fitting "Mrs. G." into the conveyance piloted by her son.

We adjourned to a nearby saloon, and once the substantial Mrs. G. was helped over her shyness by several tumblers of "wodka" (a tippie, I am assured, the ancient Poles invented) she proved to be a veritable treasure trove of tales—I dare say, the ethnological equivalent of King Tut's tomb!

...now Vizard mad with anger,
taking Prince Zbigniew's wife and mother
and making rape with them...

THE COMING OF CASIMIR

KING Casimir, according to Mrs. Grabski, is the Polish King Arthur (or Charlemagne); that is to say, the mythical leader who it is believed will one day return to rule again. There have been, indeed, many historical Polish kings Casimir; but during the reign of each, Poland suffered the usual humiliating military and diplomatic defeats; it seems likely, therefore, that the "once and future Casimir" refers not to any of them but rather to some prehistoric tribal chieftain, perhaps a Pomeranian, perhaps a Dalmatian, or maybe a simple Beagle.

The story "The Coming of Casimir," as told by Mrs. Grabski, is similar in many symbolic details to most other Slavic, and indeed European, legends. I have taken the liberty, therefore, of putting it into the language in which such hero tales are conventionally told:

"It befell in days of yore that a sore famine lay upon all the realm, and the people waxed hungry. For though the tuberous harvest of the earth was passing plentiful, yet when the ladies of the realm took and delved the tubers, and ground them likewise into cakes, and heated them over the hearth fires until they were cooked, yet could they not eat of them, nor neither could the noble knights of the realm; for the cakes were dry, even as the dust of wood that has been sawed is dry.

"And the spell that lay on the realm was of this wise: that though there stood in the midst of the town a great Bottle wrought all of Glass, and therein was an enchanted Sauce of deepest vermilion, which was yclept Ketchup, yet could no knight of the realm, be he ever so mighty, remove therefrom the Top, that the Ketchup might be released. So the people were sad, and passing ravenous.

"Anon it came to pass that a Feast was declared, and



THE WISDOM OF ZBIGNIEW

he was hight Casimir. His duty it was to fetch a caldron of boiling water, in which the tubers were cooked for meager feasting; and likewise the ladies of the realm there present might from time to time wash themselves therein, if such was their desire.

"Now as this Casimir was scurrying with his caldron, he was caused to trip, for the lace of his shoe was all untied, nor had he the art or craft to tie it; and in his stumbling, he suffered the water which was boiling to drench all the Bottle of Ketchup, even unto the Top.

"At which he waxed full shamed, and was wroth, and did smite the same Top with a stick. And in his anger seized he the Top in his two hands, as if he would fling it from him. And lo! the Top was off, as if by Magic, and the people straightaway cheered him, and made Casimir their king, and poured forth the Ketchup full lavishly upon their cakes and did eat and grow fat. And so we do today, and if we do not, may we yet."

There are numberless other stories of Casimir. One tells how he tamed and united a barbaric people. In those days, there were giants prowling the Caspian Mountains, and Pirates sailing the Baltic Sea. Crafty Casimir formed an alliance with some powerful churchmen, the Cardinals, and then brought them

all the knights of the realm summoned thereto; and the people swore with a great swearing that whosoever should remove the Top from the Ketchup Bottle, he would be their liege lord and rightful king.

"Now answered there this challenge full many a champion, all come hither to try their hands and the strength of their sinews; and great was the straining and moaning thereat, and right many were the hernias gat thereby; yet failed they all in their quest.

"There chanced to be, in all that gathering, a scullery boy, and

...the Catholic Polish pope,
the Protestant Polish pope, and the
Jewish Polish pope looked amazed...

all—Pirates, Giants,
and Cardinals—into a
National League.

But Casimir, for all
his bravery, is not the
only hero-king of Pol-
ish lore. Here, told in
Mrs. Grabski's own in-
imitable style, is a story
of the cleverest Polack
of them all.

THE WISDOM OF ZBIGNIEW

"ONE time was
Prince Zbigniew had
enemy who was Vizard.
Prince turning around,
there is Vizard. Vizard
waving Vand, speak-
ing. 'Ha! Here is magi-
cal circle!' And on
floor around Prince's
feet, look, for sure is a circle!

"Now is saying Vizard, 'You leave this circle, my
magic turning you to kasha! You die!'

"Then next Vizard is taking all of Prince Zbigniew's
rich things, clothes and rugs and bedspreads made of
real wool, and setting them on fire. But Zbigniew is
only laughing.

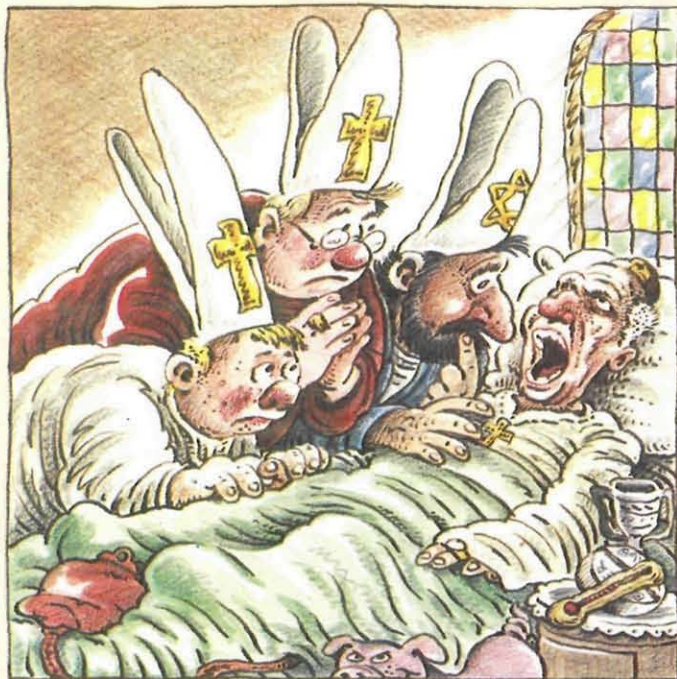
"So next Vizard is taking all Prince's best sacred
things, his crown and his signed icon of the pope, and
Vizard is making pee-pee on them. But Zbigniew is
only laughing louder.

"So now Vizard mad with anger, taking Prince's wife
and mother and making rape with them right there.
Zbigniew laughing louder yet.

"Vizard saying, 'Why laughing, Zbigniew? Why?
Why?' Zbigniew saying back, laughing still, 'While you
are burning clothes and pee-pee on pope and making
rape my woman, I am stepping three times already out
of your stupid circle!'"

THE POPE'S TALE

FROM internal evidence, we can clearly place the
origins of the following tale in the early fifteenth cen-
tury. The multiple popes are a reflection of the so-
called Avignon Captivity, which lasted until 1378.
Jewish migration to Poland on a large scale took place



THE POPE'S TALE

only after the mid four-
teenth century; the
"Protestant" reforma-
tion of Huss was at its
fervid height just at
century's end (at which
time Polish king Sigis-
mund was leading the
last and most cata-
strophic of all the
Crusades, into the
neighboring Balkans).
In 1398 Tamerlane cap-
tured Moscow.

Once upon a time,
there were three Polish
popes: a Catholic pope,
a Protestant pope, and a
Jewish pope. They
were all three the sons
of a very old pope, who
was dying. "My child-
ren," the old man
said, "it is my wish that
you take up the Holy

War upon the Infidel. Against the Muslim Turk and
pagan Mongol you must defend Western civilization,
with fire and with the sword. But it is also my wish that
you show mercy to your defeated enemies, because they
are your brothers!"

At this the Catholic Polish pope, the Protestant
Polish pope, and the Jewish Polish pope looked upon
each other, amazed. But the dying old pope continued.

"Yes, my sons," he whispered. "For I have a secret, a
great and wonderful truth that I have never told you.
You know, before you were born, I fought beside the
emperor against the Golden Horde, and was taken
prisoner after our terrible defeat.

"I was held in captivity for many years," he con-
tinued, "and I came to know very well the manners and
customs of those heathens, before my escape. That is
why I bid you be merciful to them, my sons, for here is
my secret..."

The old man's voice grew faint, and all three leaned
closer yet, to hear his dying words. "My children," he
gasped, "I am not your father..."

Once more, the three popes exchanged looks of
amazement, until the dying man spoke his last words:
"I am your mother. Tamerlane the Great is your
father!"

And so saying, he died and went to heaven, as I pray
we may all do. □

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A KID'S GUIDE TO

Home Sorcery

BY RON BARRETT

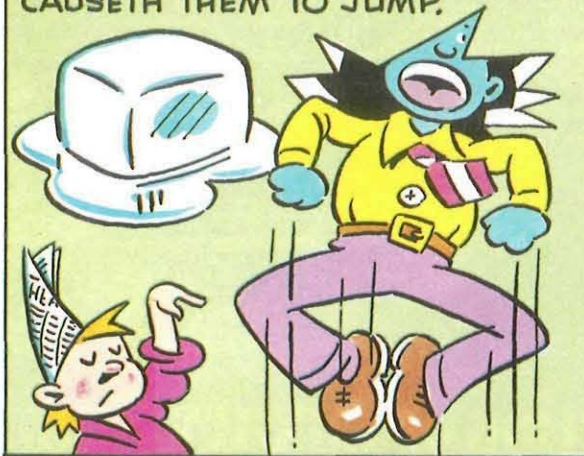


O YE KIDS WHO ARE DESIROUS OF MAKING MAGICKAL OBJECTS AND SORCERY, LOOK NO FURTHER THAN THE PLACE OF THY ABODE, FOR THEREIN THOU SHALT FIND ALL YE STUFFS NECESSARY THERE-UNTO WHATSOEVER.

FOR YE INSTANCE:

The Cube of Frost

THIS MAGICKAL CUBE, WHEN PLACED DOWN THE BACK OF HUMANOIDS, CAUSETH THEM TO JUMP.



The Wand of Water

PREPARE THYSELF FOR THE USE OF THIS WAND BY QUAFFING FLUIDS IN GREAT QUANTITY.

IF THOU ART A MANKID, THOU WILT FIND THY WAND AT THE COMING TOGETHER OF TORSO AND LEGS.

Wear thy Robe of Bath

IF THOU PASSETH WATER ON YE FLOOR, HAVE READY A ROD OF ABSORPTION.

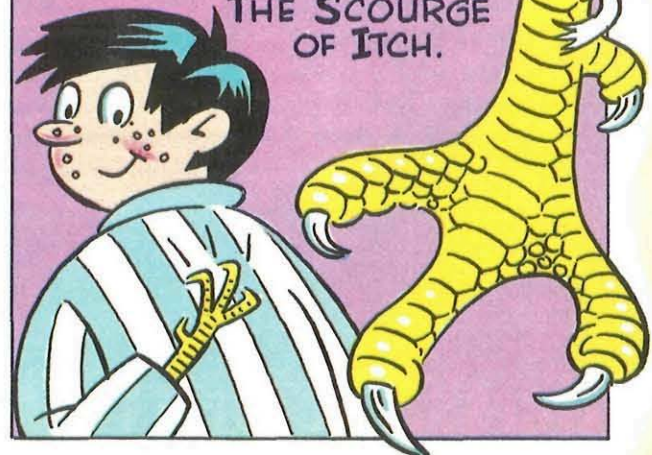


The Talisman of Chiquita

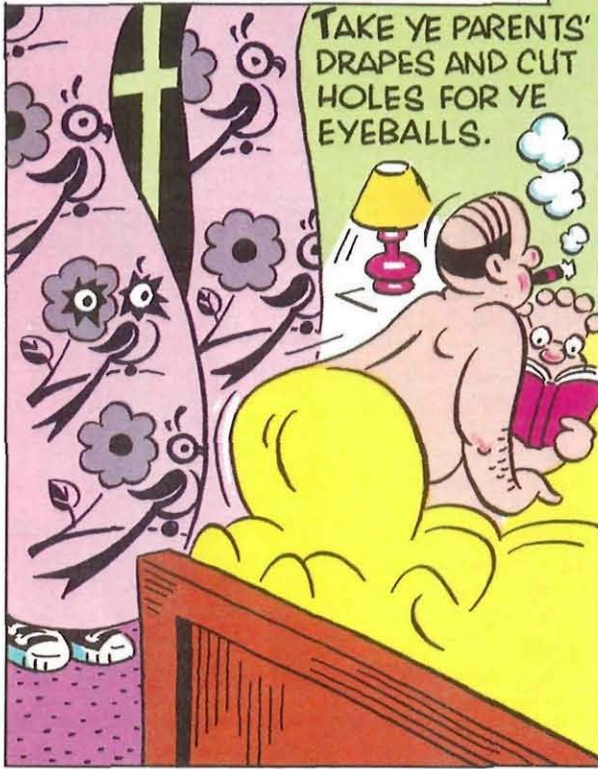
TAKE A FIGURINE LIKE UNTO HARRY BELAFONTE AND SING UNTO IT, "HEY, MISTER TALISMAN, TALI ME BANANA!"

The Severed hand of Saint Pollo

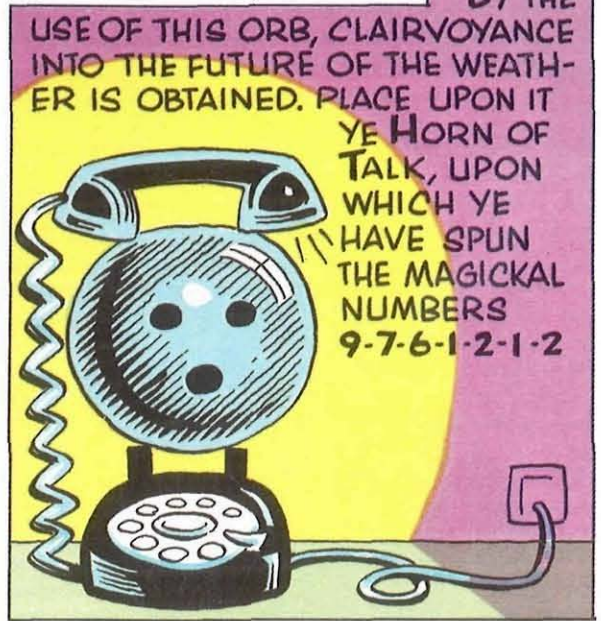
THIS RELIC WAS ONCE ATTACHED TO CHICKENDOM'S FIRST MARTYR. IT IS GREATLY USEFUL IN THE RELIEF OF THE SCOURGE OF ITCH.



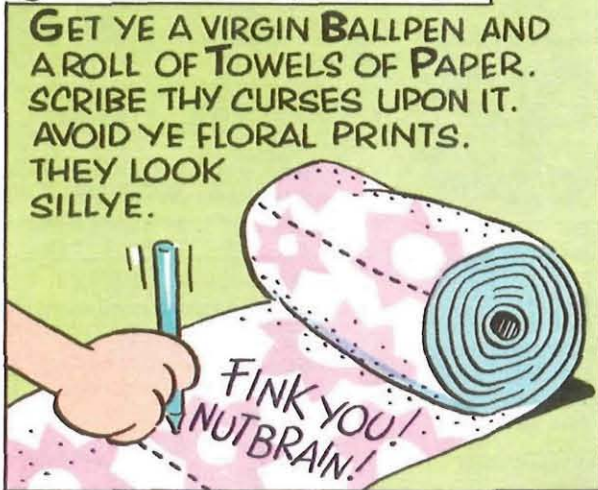
The Drape of Invisibility



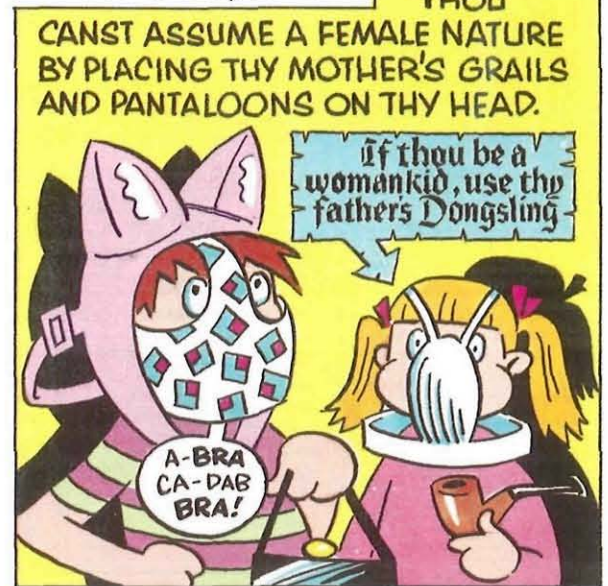
The Orb of Bowls



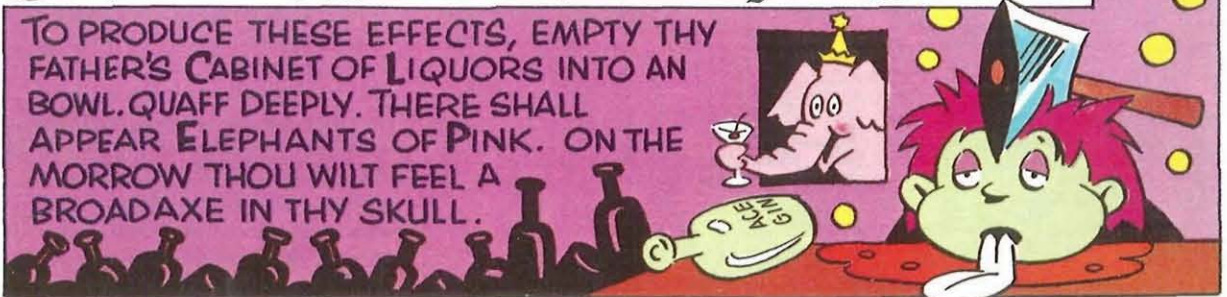
The Scroll of Curses



The Underraiments of Metamorphosis



The Potion of Dizziness, Vomiting and Delusion



COHEN THE BOYBARIAN

continued from page 51

down the beach as white gulls wheeled overhead and mocked everything with taunting, inhuman laughter.

5.

FIRE AND SMOKE

"Who the hell are you?" demanded the firebrand as they moved out of earshot of her forebears. "I don't know you. Do you go to Cheltenham High?"

"Nay," laughed Cohen, near drunk on the success of his last desperate ploy, "I go not to your accursed school. I be from Pikesville, in the state of Marylandia."

"Well, thanks for getting me away from my parents, and all, but I don't really want to—"

"By Mitra!" swore Cohen, staring at her with frank admiration. "You are a magnificent creature!"

"Are you, like, mentally ill, or something?"

Producing the contraband cigarette from his pocket, Cohen brought it into her sight and murmured, "Come, lass! Let us have at this loose joint!"

But her eyes shifted from the white stick to a place further down the beach. "No, thanks," she said, and she began to trot away from the dismayed boybarian. "Thanks for rescuing me. Bye!"

Then Cohen stood alone on the searing wasteland, his massive frame shud-

dering with the suspicion that he had been, in the expression used by the men of Miamitos, played for a *schmuck*. Grasping the loose joint, he moved with the silence of the wind itself toward the rear of a striped cabana. His crafty intent was to smoke the soporific inhalant himself once he was shielded from the public's view. Thus intoxicated, he might find strategy and fortitude enough to pursue the Princess and make her his.

Extracting from his pocket the booklet of phosphors, he struck a flame and touched it to the tip of the loose joint. He inhaled deeply and with savage gusto. Like a sentient ghost from Hell, the smoke flew into his lungs in a stinging cloud of terrible harshness, and he was rent with a mighty coughing. Veins stood out on his corded neck; his eyes, usually glittering as with some secret inner fire, bulged and lost focus. Yet Cohen persisted, inhaling a second time and a third. His every nerve was alive with anticipation of the ensorcered euphoria that the narcotic would bring. Presently he thought he felt the drug's effects commence and, looking furtively about, felt wild triumph surge within his boy's-size-medium breast as his more intelligent than average mind expanded and was blown.

Suddenly Cohen froze, every sinew poised for reasonable combat or judicious retreat. The sound of a girl shout-

ing reached his shell-like ears. Wheeling in savage haste, Cohen fell over onto the sand. Then he rose, thrust into his pocket the remaining portion of the loose joint, and with the speed of a jungle cheetah set off in the direction of the sound.

6.

CONFRONTATION AND REALIZATION

"Stop! Dave, stop it!"

The cry chilled Cohen's blood. A few yards into the southing surf, where the lapping water reached up to her ivory ankles, stood the princess Shelley. She squirmed and writhed in torment as the young blond boy from the day before kicked a salty spume at her un-*bikini*-covered flesh. Her shouts of protest had about them some devilish aspect of breathless laughter, as though the torture inflicted upon her had been of the most maddening, hideous sort.

Without hesitation Cohen engaged her tormentor. With a snarl he charged up to the Adonis-like boy-god and cried, "Halt!"

The lout, named Dave, ceased his kicking and stared in awe at the rampant boybarian. "Huh?" he queried.

"Leave the girl, and come meet your death, dog!" commanded Cohen.

"Oh, shit, it's the guy I told you about," said Shelley to Dave.

"Are you nuts, man?" Dave challenged Cohen with a look of insidious disingenuousness. "We're just messing around."

After glancing at Dave with unspoken bemusement, the Princess turned to Cohen and said, "Thank you for saving me. I'm all right now. Really."

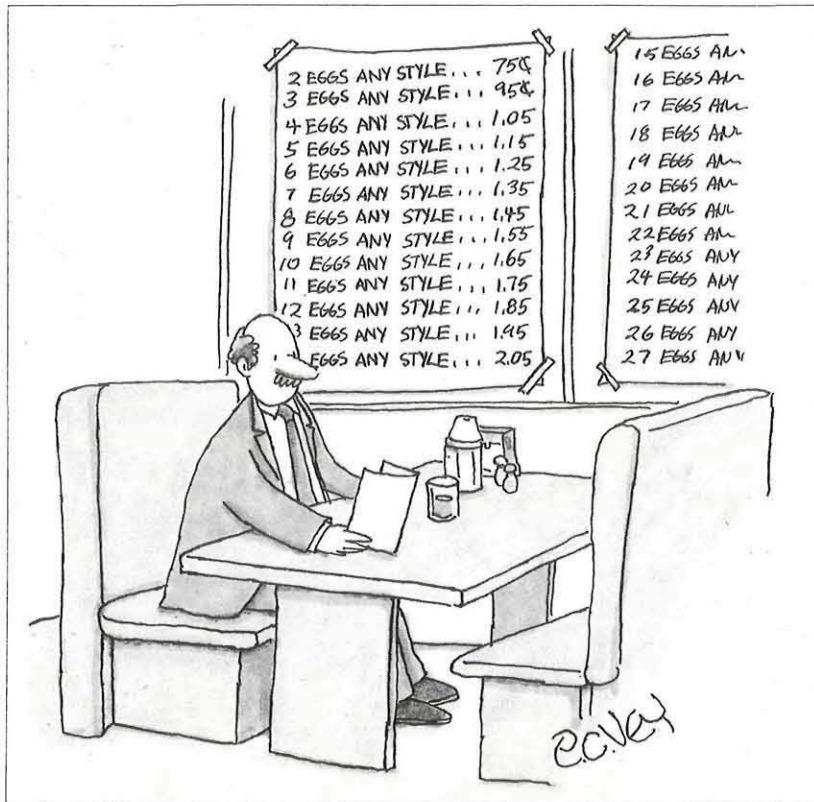
Some vague whisper of warning in the back of Cohen's concepty mind must have hinted to him that aught was amiss, for he stopped, and looked at the two others, and muttered with abashment, "I guess I got a little stoned..."

"Yeah?" replied the fair-haired youth eagerly. "Got any left?"

"Dave," protested the girl. "Come on, I don't want to—"

"Wait a sec," insisted the lout, and to Cohen he repeated, "Got anything?"

From his jacket pocket Cohen produced the remains of the loose joint, now little more than a tiny butt-end, a tar-soaked remnant named, with rough irony, after the lowliest of household insects by those folk for whom the inhalation of soft narcotics was a daily affair. "I bought this from the black-amoor Willie," Cohen said, regaining



continued on page 89

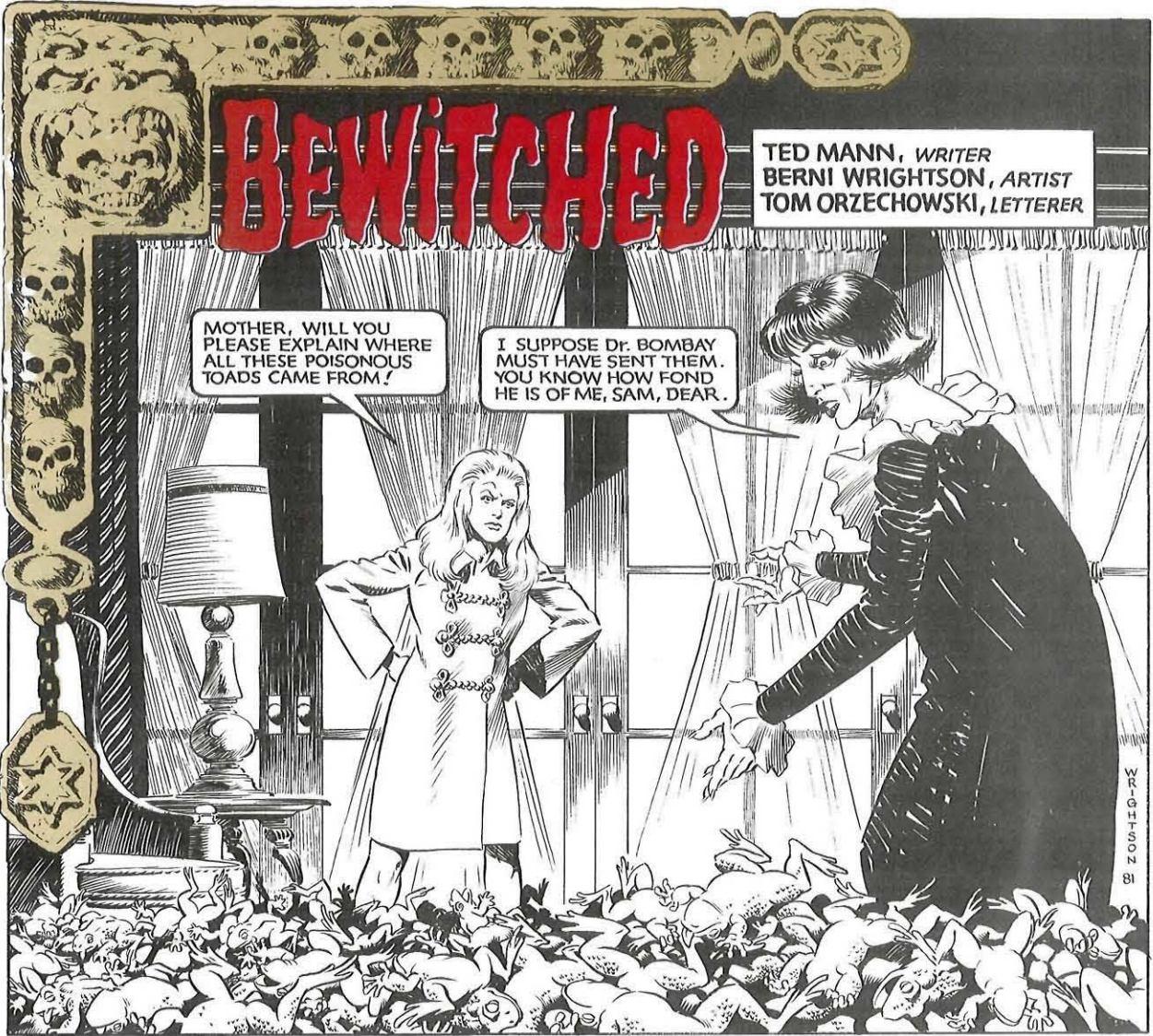
BEWITCHED

TED MANN, WRITER
BERNI WRIGHTSON, ARTIST
TOM ORZECOWSKI, LETTERER

MOTHER, WILL YOU PLEASE EXPLAIN WHERE ALL THESE POISONOUS TOADS CAME FROM?

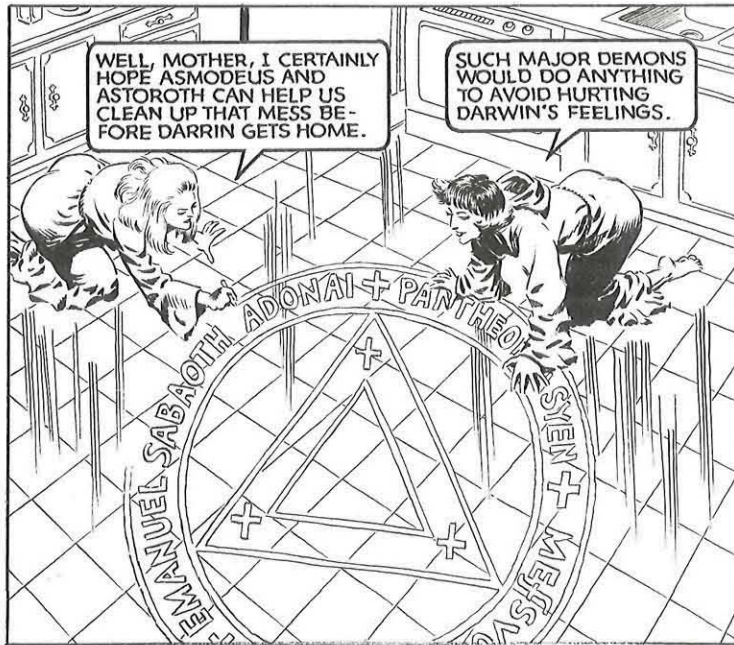
I SUPPOSE DR. BOMBAY MUST HAVE SENT THEM. YOU KNOW HOW FOND HE IS OF ME, SAM, DEAR.

WRIGHTSON 18



WELL, MOTHER, I CERTAINLY HOPE ASMODEUS AND ASTOROTH CAN HELP US CLEAN UP THAT MESS BEFORE DARRIN GETS HOME.

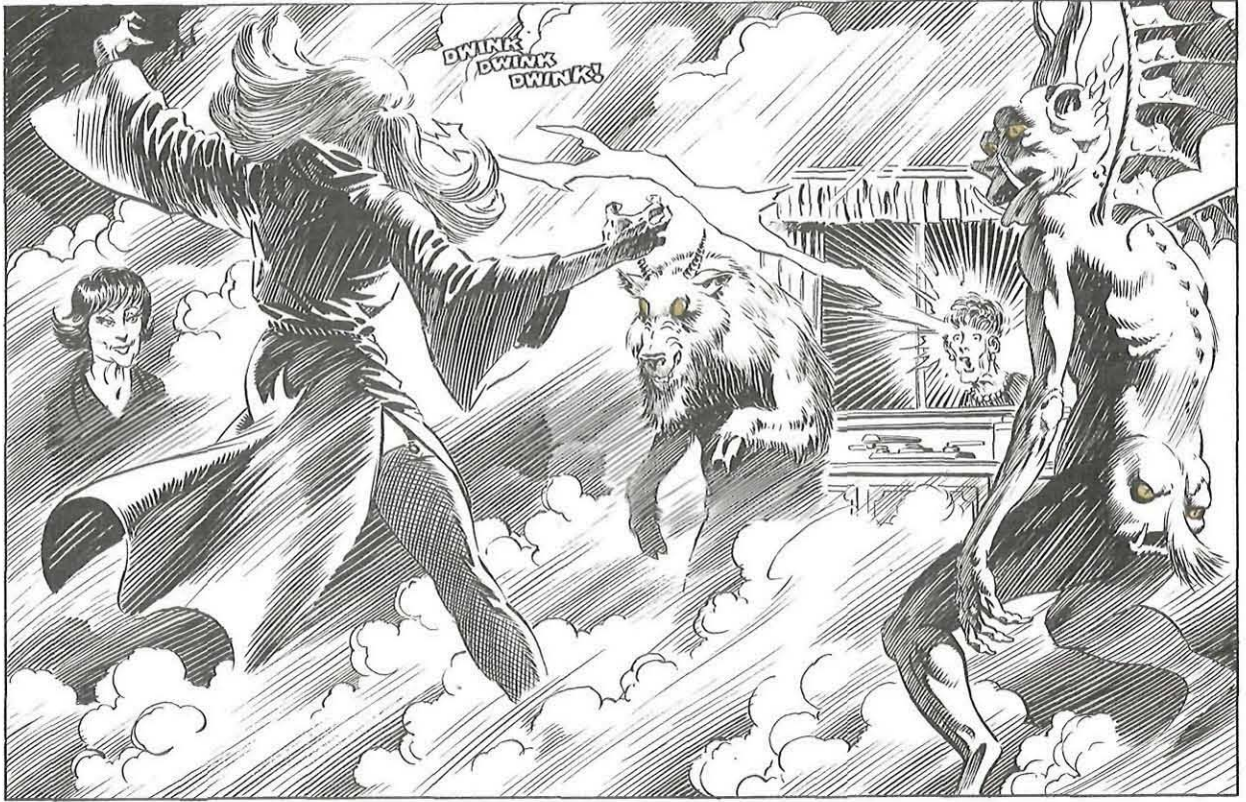
SUCH MAJOR DEMONS WOULD DO ANYTHING TO AVOID HURTING DARWIN'S FEELINGS.



UH-OH, IT'S NOSY NEIGHBOR GLADYS KRAVITZ!

I'LL JUST PEEK INTO SAMANTHA'S KITCHEN WINDOW AND SEE IF SHE'S NAKED!







AMEN EVER AND EVER FOR THE GLORY AND THE POWER AND THE KINGDOM IS THINE FOR US AGAINST TRESPASS WHO THEM FORGIVE WE AS TRESPASS...



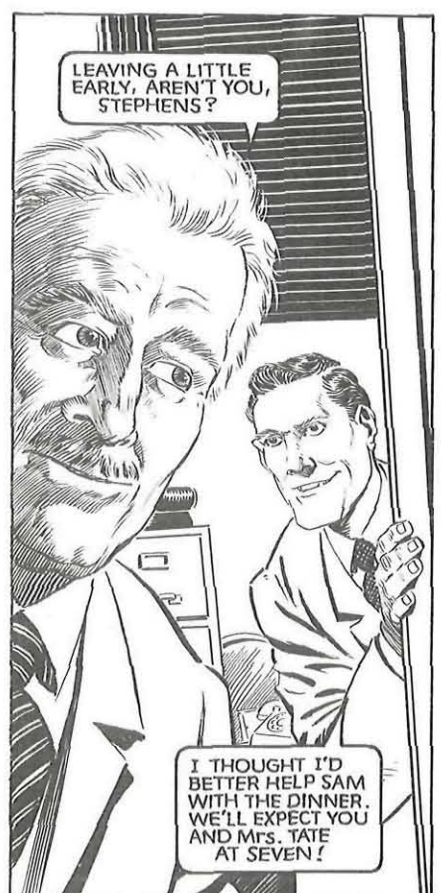
THESE STUBBORN TOADS JUST WON'T GO AWAY!

BLOOD... WE NEED BLOOD...

SAM, DEAR, SHOULDN'T WE SWITCH PARTNERS AND TRY AGAIN?



A NEED IS ANSWERED...



LEAVING A LITTLE EARLY, AREN'T YOU, STEPHENS?

I THOUGHT I'D BETTER HELP SAM WITH THE DINNER. WE'LL EXPECT YOU AND Mrs. TATE AT SEVEN!



I SAY THEY'RE WITCHES AND I SAY BURN THEM!

YEAH! ABNER'S RIGHT!

BURN THEM!



BITCHES!

POOF!
POOF!



SAM! SAMANTHA STEPHENS, WHAT ON EARTH IS GOING ON HERE?



SAAAAAM! DO SOMETHING!

TOO LATE... TOO LATE...

RAT SCUM
CANCER FUCKS!
AGGGGGGGHH!

I NEVER SHOULD HAVE MARRIED YOU!

THE END?



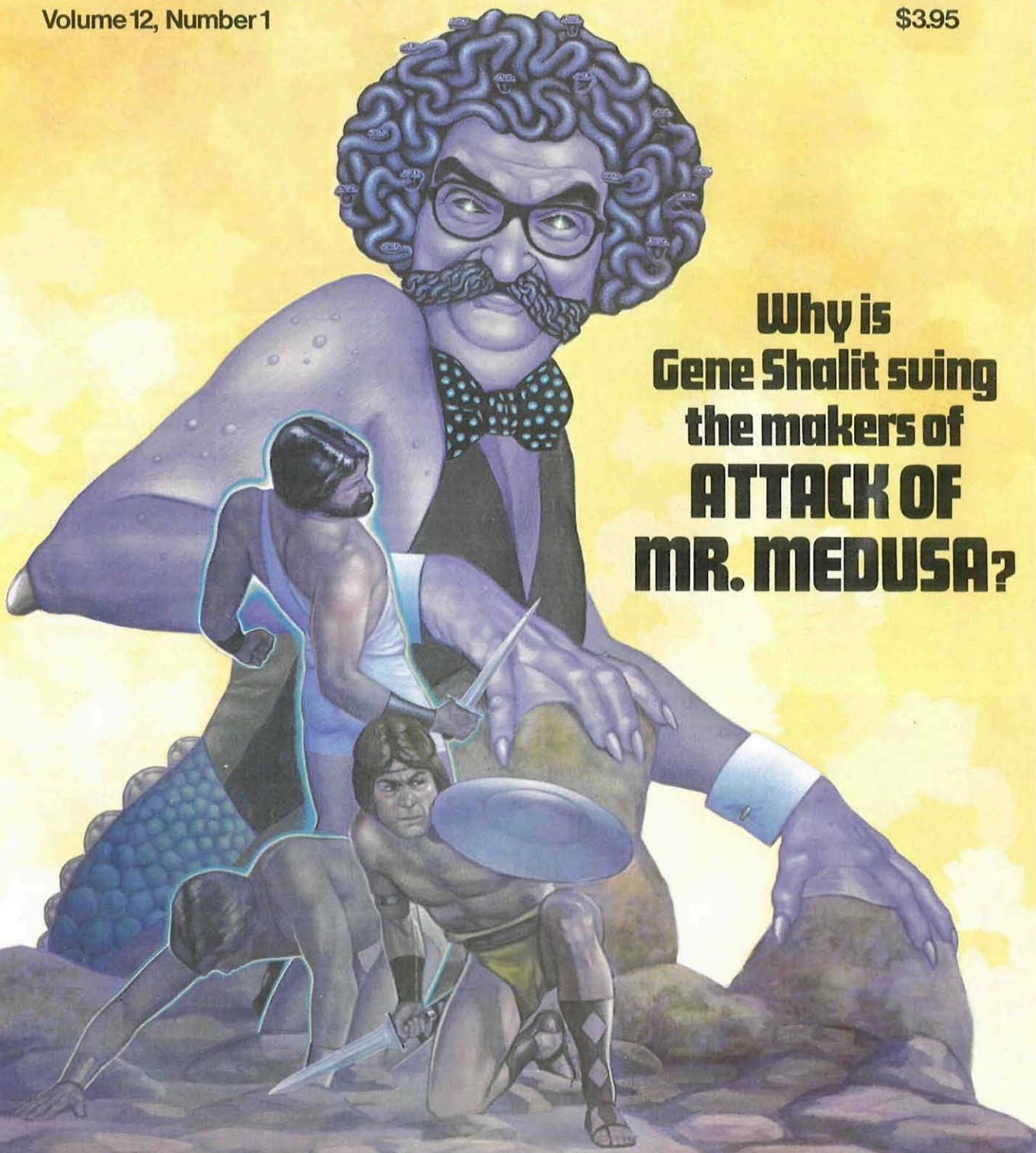
TABITHA'S REVENGE!

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Why is
Gene Shalit suing
the makers of
**ATTACK OF
MR. MEDUSA?**



THE MAKING, UNMAKING, AND MAKING AGAIN OF

Saxon Violence

Will this armored ham ever become a knight to remember?

by **Kenny VanBuren**

The working title said it all: "Dino De Laurentiis in Association with Francis Ford Coppola Productions Presents a Film by George Lucas—Steven Spielberg's SAXON VIOLENCE." The movie was guaranteed to be the biggest hit of 1982, since, having tied up all the creative talent in Hollywood for eighteen months, it would be the only film released that year. A

historical sci-fi fantasy space epic romance disaster movie, SAXON VIOLENCE would have had something for everybody. But due to budget cut-backs and various production difficulties, the film might not have had anything for anybody—it would never have been released. However, with the help of one virtually unknown, dedicated young director, the film will at last become a reality. Maybe.

Only sketchy details of the original plot of SAXON VIOLENCE had been released to the public. The film, based on historical fact, was to be the story of Lothar Martin, a medieval Saxon warrior, portrayed by Lou (TV's Mister Hulk) Ferrigno, in his first semispeaking role. Lothar's peaceful existence is abruptly disturbed when the Gates of Hell open up and spew forth the Armies of the Dead into his small village. But the brave warrior kills all the Dead and even baptizes Satan (George Burns). The grateful Saxons make Lothar Martin king, and give him chunks of the True Cross, which he uses to power a medieval rocket ship. Landing on Mars, Lothar finds the planet overrun with millions of alien Heathens, whom he slays and converts to Christianity. He returns to Earth only to find him-

Greta Garbo came out of retirement when offered \$5 million to appear in SAXON VIOLENCE. Here she tangles with Lothar in the Chain-Saw Battle in Space sequence.



HOWARD NOSTRAND



DAN NELKEN/WIDE WORLD



Lothar becomes a cabdriver in the film's low-budget conclusion. Admits Schoen, "We had him run down a few people just to liven up these scenes."

DAN NEIKEN

self in southern California in the year 1985. A plague has broken out in Los Angeles, and huge meteors have begun to rain down upon the city; but Lothar manages to eliminate both perils, armed only with the magical Sword of the Picts. As to the remaining hour of the film, producers refused to release any details except to assure viewers they would be "pulling all the stops out."

The special effects in SAXON

VIOLENCE were to be among the most spectacular ever mounted. Director Steven Spielberg had already completed filming his dazzling "meteor shower" sequence, which involved bombarding unsuspecting crowds in downtown L.A. with enormous rocks. Film had also been shot of the late John Houseman, in his last screen appearance, allowing himself to be actually blown to bits. This scene, like the footage in the Se-

quoia National Forest fire segment, was later rejected as "lacking dazzle." But there would be much more to replace it, for NASA had just okayed the stunt shots in which Lothar wrestles the runaway Space Shuttle back to Earth. This prompted producer Dino de Laurentiis to exclaim, "My SACCO VIOLEN-CIA, she's-a gonna be the biggest thing ever. Hotta damn!"

Despite the film's early promise and abundant energy, the production of SAXON VIOLENCE soon would be literally crushed beneath the weight of two women—Shelley Winters and Elizabeth Taylor. The pair of Oscar-winning actresses had been signed to play Duodenus, a living, bloodthirsty two-headed mountain, which Lothar hurls into a black hole as it brushes past Earth. Winters and Taylor, outfitted in a single, voluminous Mylar caftan, were perfect for the role of Duodenus, combining breathtaking beauty with

menacing massiveness. But maintaining the great weight of these great actresses was the most taxing problem the makers of the film had to face.

The man called in for the job was Max Wellhausen, the genius behind Fatteffex Unlimited. For half a century Wellhausen's Fatteffex studio had made a career of helping portly comedians, from Fatty Arbuckle to Dom DeLuise, keep their weight up. SAXON VIOLENCE was Wellhausen's first serious assignment, and he handled it with the utmost gravity. He developed a 60,000-calorie-a-day regimen to augment the actresses' already rigorous eating habits. Each day, before filming could begin, Winters and Taylor underwent a six-hour application of breakfast. Building off a pancake foundation, Wellhausen would then add layers of waffles and buttered toast, slabs of steak and bacon, topped off by cheese omelets the size of small tabletops. "Liz and Shelley started off like real troupers," Wellhausen recalls, "showing up for meals two, even three hours early." Their enthusiasm often took the form of high-spirited eating contests, which sometimes lasted for days. Unfortunately, these caused expensive production setbacks, the first of many difficulties with the two big stars.

Wellhausen soon noticed an alarming trend in Taylor and Winters: their high-fat diet was not only failing to fill them up, it



WIDE WORLD

A Tale of Two Sets: At left, the full-size Sistine Chapel replica used in the extravagant half of SAXON VIOLENCE. The set is on camera for thirty seconds before it crumbles in a special-effects earthquake. At right, the slot-car set used for the extensive car chase in the cheapo half of the film. The director's dog (background) later pounced on the track, producing the impromptu effect, used in the film, where the Monster Dog suddenly destroys the road and cars.



DAN NEIKEN



Max Wellhausen brings in a lasagna snack to further fatten up stars Elizabeth Taylor and Shelley Winters (see insets, then and now). Wellhausen boasts, "I can turn any bathing beauty into a big tub."

DAN NELKEN



was actually increasing their appetites. Meals had to be doubled, then tripled in size just to satisfy them. Soaring food prices depleted a once huge special-effects budget, and longer breakfasts cut into the available shooting time each day. Successively larger Duodenus caftans had to be made to accommodate the two actresses. Sound stages had to be reinforced, after a three-story stone-castle set crumbled beneath Shelley Winters's weight. Another valuable set, a Chartres-cathedral mock-up, was wrecked when Elizabeth Taylor butted a hole in one wall; apparently Taylor had flown into a rage when the jeep that was supposed to bring her a midday snack overturned on the way to the studio.

These increased design and food costs and their accompanying shooting delays sent the budget of SAXON VIOLENCE skyrocketing. Accountants calculated the projected expense of completing the picture: to turn a profit, the film would have to be seen by every man, woman, and child on earth, six times. This proved too big a gamble even for De Laurentiis, who ordered the production scrapped immediately. The Italian producer lamented, "My big movie, she's-a dead."

But SAXON VIOLENCE may not be dead, thanks to Bucky Schoen, an enterprising young filmmaker. Schoen, director of dozens of shorts, including HEADLIGHTS IN THE FOG and USE—DON'T ABUSE—THAT EMER-

GENCY BRAKE, has vowed to complete production of the epic film on the thinnest of shoestring budgets. "What they're giving me to spend wouldn't have kept Liz and Shelley in brownies for a week," admits Schoen. "But as long as I have Lou [Ferrigno] as Lothar, I've got a picture." Ferrigno, it seems, has not yet caught on that the original project was abandoned, and that he is the only member of the original cast or crew to continue working. Schoen promises to tell the "actor" about this changeover just as soon as shooting is completed.

The new director has had to modify the plot of the film somewhat to keep expenses down. Instead of having Lothar Martin save L.A. from plague and meteors, Schoen has the Saxon warrior deciding to settle down in the city and become a cab-driver. "We've already got a half hour of great documentary footage showing Lou picking up real passengers," boasts Schoen. "It may not be too exciting, but it will teach viewers about the finer points of road safety." He adds that Ferrigno was more than happy to get the cab fares, since he probably will not be paid for his work in the film.

Schoen has also made clear that his austere budget will not rob SAXON VIOLENCE of its magic. He has in fact developed a wide range of very cheap special effects to spice up the film. Most impressive is his technique of shooting footage and then playing it backward. This allows



WIDE WORLD

UPI

Lothar in one sequence to jam shaving cream back into the can, seemingly by brute force. There are also unforgettable shots of the hero uncracking an egg, unmaking coffee, and ungetting a haircut. And the director has planned a sequence in which Lothar assembles an entire pizza, bite by bite, from out of his mouth. Warns Schoen, "This will definitely *not* be for the squeamish."

Another dazzling special effect was spawned by a classic cinematic illusion: actors can be made to look bigger or smaller by being placed "close to" or "far away from" the camera. Schoen makes fine use of this technique in an interesting but unexplained subplot that has Lothar mysteriously shrinking to the size of an insect. With Ferrigno positioned a hundred yards behind his fellow actors, the hulking performer actually appears to be a tiny speck on the screen. The effect is almost perfect, marred only by the fact that even when bellowing out his lines Ferrigno can barely be heard from such a distance. His co-stars have managed to cover this up quite well by improvising dialogue, such as "You're going to have to speak up, Lothar," and "How's that again, Lothar? I

didn't hear you the first time."

Such imperfections may give Schoen's half of the film a slightly less extravagant feel than the first part. But the young director believes he will mask this unevenness with a splashy, spectacular finale, which he loves describing in great detail. "Picture this: Lothar Martin facing an enormous, highly disciplined army. They're all standing so silent and stock still, they look like G.I. Joe dolls!" exclaims Schoen, leaping from his chair. "So what does Lothar do? *Wham!* He flattens them all with a huge, bowling-ball-shaped boulder!" While Schoen will not divulge just how he shot this scene, he hints that some miniatures may have been used.

And so it appears that despite problems and cutbacks SAXON VIOLENCE will soon become a reality. But will the film's seams show—its flashy, expensive opening clashing embarrassingly with its cheesier, unpolished conclusion? Or will the two halves mesh perfectly, effortlessly, into an exciting, entertaining whole? "We'll just have to wait and see," says young Bucky Schoen. "The rushes come back from the Fotomat next week."

SHORT NOTICES



DAN NELKEN/UPI

SUPERSTAR WARS, MAN

Directed by Dario Ciccarelli. Giusepics Productions. 12/81. 90 minutes. With: Luciano Pavarotti, Mario Nara, Pasquale Verrone, Gianni Vitti.

Only the Italians could peddle such a low-budget, bare-faced rip-off sci-fi superhero flick. Taking generous chunks of SUPERMAN, cheesy STAR WARS effects, and a meaty Luciano Pavarotti, director Dario Ciccarelli combines them into an oily antipasto mess of a movie. In this, his first film role, Pavarotti portrays a mild-mannered opera singer who, in times of distress, turns into the invulnerable Signor Primo. Unfortunately, Pavarotti looks absolutely repulsive in his hero costume, with his pendulous belly stretching his red, white, and green leotards completely out of shape. And except for a thrilling precredit segment where Signor Primo uses himself to plug a newly erupting Mt. Etna, the first hour of the film is wholly without excitement. For most of it, we see Pavarotti making *amore* with reporter Loisa Lania, these scenes intercut with unconvincing flying sequences in which his steel support cables are clearly visible.

The movie falls apart entirely in the second hour, as Signor Primo does battle with arch-villain Lux Liquido (Mario Nara) in Cristaglia, Liquido's glass palace. When it looks like all is lost, Primo belts out an aria to summon his robot pals C3PQ (Pasquale Verrone) and R5D8 (a repainted canister vacuum cleaner). The robots arrive on earth in *La Frisbella Grande*, a flying saucer that looks suspiciously like a Frisbee covered with tin foil (because that's what it is), and help Signor Primo turn the tide. Then, in an utterly

predictable climax, Pavarotti sings a G above high C and shatters Liquido's glass fortress. The film concludes with C3PQ vacuuming up the shards with R5D8, while Pavarotti flies into the sunset, lustily singing "Vesti la giubba." Viewers will wish they had done the same.

—Benny Madison

GRANNIES

Directed by Paul Mazursky. An Orion Picture. 12/81. 105 minutes. In color. With: Bette Davis, Ethel Merman, Gloria Swanson.

Perhaps the most appealing aspect of Mazursky's chilling film GRANNIES is his coy insistence that it is not a horror movie. "It's supposed to be a touching comedy-drama about three old women," claims the talented director, and indeed the film's script is a rather pedestrian story of life in a nursing home. But the trio of aged lead actresses—Bette Davis, Ethel Merman, and Gloria Swanson—turns GRANNIES into the most bloodcurdling monster movie this side of THE EXORCIST.

It is hard to say just which actress is the scariest. Swanson, with her emaciated frame and deeply seamed face, resembles an exhumed skeleton, come to life after centuries at rest. And Ethel Merman's bansheelike voice rumbling from the depths of her dormant volcano of a body is equally haunting. However, most scary is Bette Davis, who simply by being herself sends viewers diving under their seats in terror. One particular close-up of Ms. Davis eating soup elicited screams from the audience that lasted well after the film ended.

Davis, Swanson, and Merman, with enough wrinkles to hold the rains of a monsoon season, are the most terrifying embodiment of the Undead in cinema since THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI. Still, Mazursky insists the zombielike effects were unintentional and accomplished without makeup. "I couldn't help it," he protests modestly. "That's what they look like."

—Jenny Monroe

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

Directed by Frederick Wiseman. Umachi Pictures. 9/81. 110 minutes. In color. With: Joe Anselmo, Mauro Armanno, Giamera the Great.

Poor Takeo Umachi! This Japanese investor sank \$3.5 million into the film KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS thinking it was

some mix of sword and sorcery and the discovery of America. What he got, of course, was a rather tepid documentary on the public-spirited fraternal order of American Roman Catholics. But Umachi has managed to salvage his picture with the postproduction help of the technical wizards at Nippontuk Studios. Together, they have peppered the film with enough genre special effects to produce a rousing, if somewhat uneven, entertainment. After a fairly choppy beginning—featuring footage of an armor-clad warrior beheading a dragon, intercut with shots of Knights of Columbus members reading to the blind—the film hits its stride. The jousting segments mesh perfectly with clips from the K. of C. Charity Bazaar. And with some masterly matte work, realistic-looking flying serpents and winged horses have been inserted into the film of the Annual Pot-Luck Supper. Such exciting techniques have enabled Takeo Umachi to live up to what could have been a truly dismal film. Let's hope this wily Japanese producer, who bankrolled what he thought was another Age of Chivalry epic, can work similar miracles with his forthcoming TALES FROM THE ALGONQUIN ROUND TABLE. —Denny Washington

THE HOWL OF THE MUPPETS

Directed by Ingmar Bergman. A Universal/Swedepic Release. 1/82. 194 minutes. B&W. With: Kermit, Miss Piggy, Fozzie Bear, Liv Ullmann, Max von Sydow.

Jim Henson's decision to add more character depth and drama to the Muppets might have been a good idea. His selection of Ingmar Bergman as director of their third feature film

was not. Bergman, oblivious to the warmth and wit of these adorable hand puppets, turns that delightful Muppet magic tragic in what is undoubtedly the most depressing children's film of the year.

Taking the splendid mix of expert puppetry and stop-animation, which in previous movies helped bring the Muppets to life, Bergman uses it to put them to death. As this dreary black-and-white film opens, Fozzie Bear has been rejected by his psychiatrist (Max von Sydow), so he hops on an ice floe and drifts out to sea. Kermit the Frog, shattered by the suicide of his homosexual lover-bear, throws himself in front of a car driven by his half sister Martë (Liv Ullmann). Miss Piggy, now alone, describes herself in a bitterly introspective monologue as "just a puppet—bloated, ugly, unkosher, uncared for," before she walks into the ocean and drowns. With all the Muppets killed off in the first thirty minutes of the film, Bergman uses the remaining three hours to develop an intense psychodrama featuring von Sydow and Ullmann.

Henson tries valiantly to save THE HOWL OF THE MUPPETS by tacking on a ten-minute Technicolor sequence at the end: Kermit wakes up in bed and dismisses the preceding film as "just a kooky dream," while the assembled cast launches into a musical-production number called "We're a Cuddly Bunch of Swedish Meatballs." But this was not enough to appease the audience of confused and crying preschoolers, who were unable to read the subtitles, much less grasp the deep symbolism, of what came before. —Penny Jefferson

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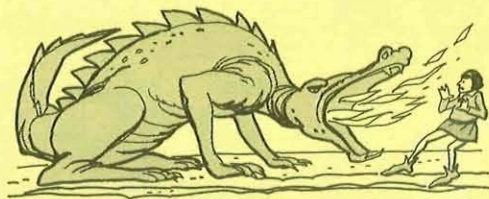
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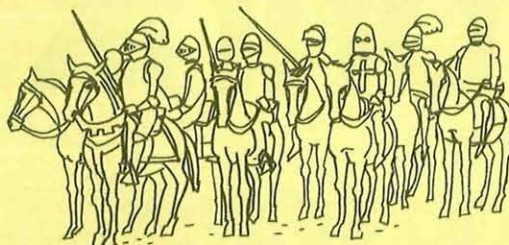
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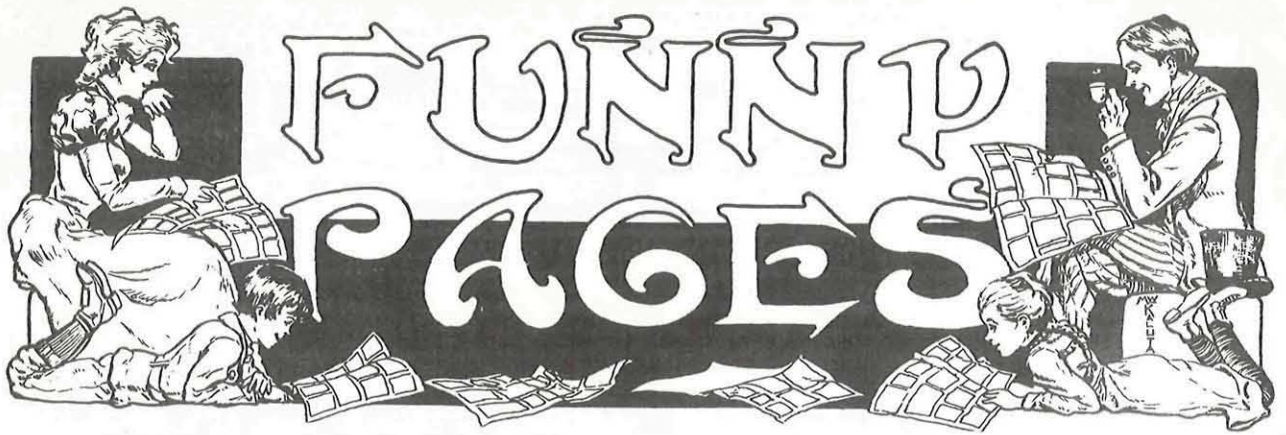
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...YES, DOCTOR...

...AND THEN ONE DAY AFTER THOUSANDS OF EXPERIMENTS...

ALVAREZ! COME QUICKLY AND BRING THE CALLAHAN CHILD WITH YOU! I BELIEVE I HAVE DEVELOPED THE VACCINE!

NOW THEN, ALVAREZ, I HAVE INJECTED MYSELF WITH THE VACCINE. YOU WILL REMOVE THE BAG FROM THE CHILD'S HEAD. IF I SHOOT MYSELF WITH THIS GUN THEN YOU WILL KNOW THAT I HAVE FAILED.

...REMOVE...THE... BAG...ALVAREZ!...

...WELL, DOCTOR P...

I AM LOOKING DIRECTLY AT HER...I-I FEEL NO DEPRESSION. MY EYES ARE - ALVAREZ, THE CHILD-SHE'S BEAUTIFUL, BUT-

TOO HIDEOUS FOR PUBLICATION

YOU, ALVAREZ, YOU UGLY BASTARD! I'LL KILL YOU, YOU UGLY SON-OF-A-BITCH!

I WANT ANOTHER CHOCOLATE THICK SHAKE!

TOO HIDEOUS FOR PUBLICATION

THE RABBIT

CHAPTER 3

BY
Len Glasser
© 1981

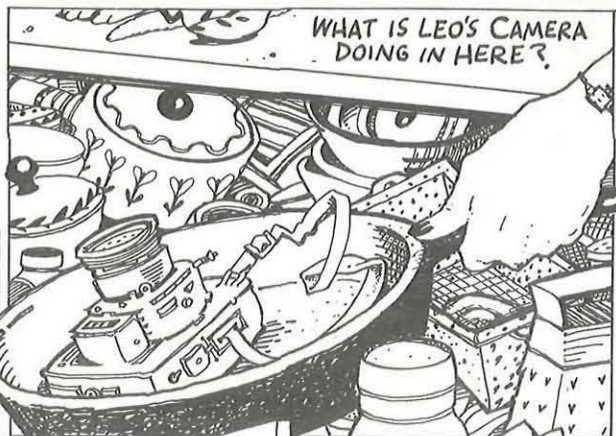
AS YOU MIGHT RECALL

WHILE BERT'S LAWYER, NEVILLE COHEN, IS SECURING HIS RELEASE FROM THE COUNTY WORKHOUSE, A RIOT HAS BROKEN OUT - THE ESCAPEES ARE TRAPPED LIKE RATS IN THE DRAINPIPE WHILE HOLDING A GUARD AS HOSTAGE.

WE'LL HAVE TO GET OUT THROUGH THE LICENSE PLATE SHOP!

YATTA YATTA

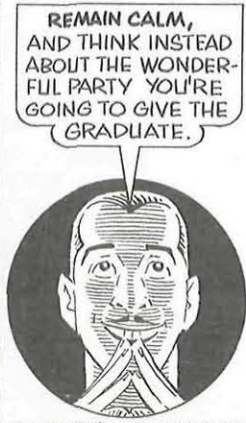
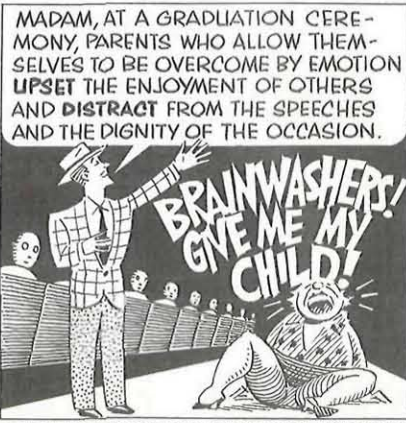
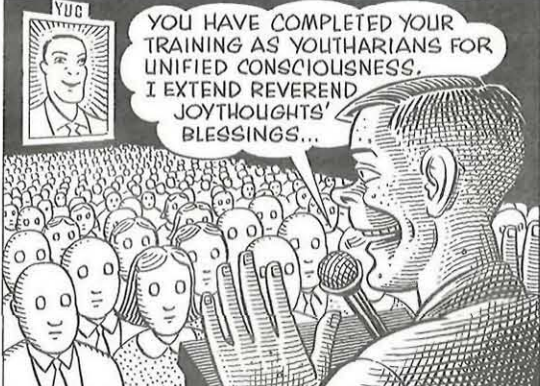




NEXT MONTH: THE MORONSONS STAY FOR DUTCH BABIES

POLITENESSMAN

by Ron Barrett

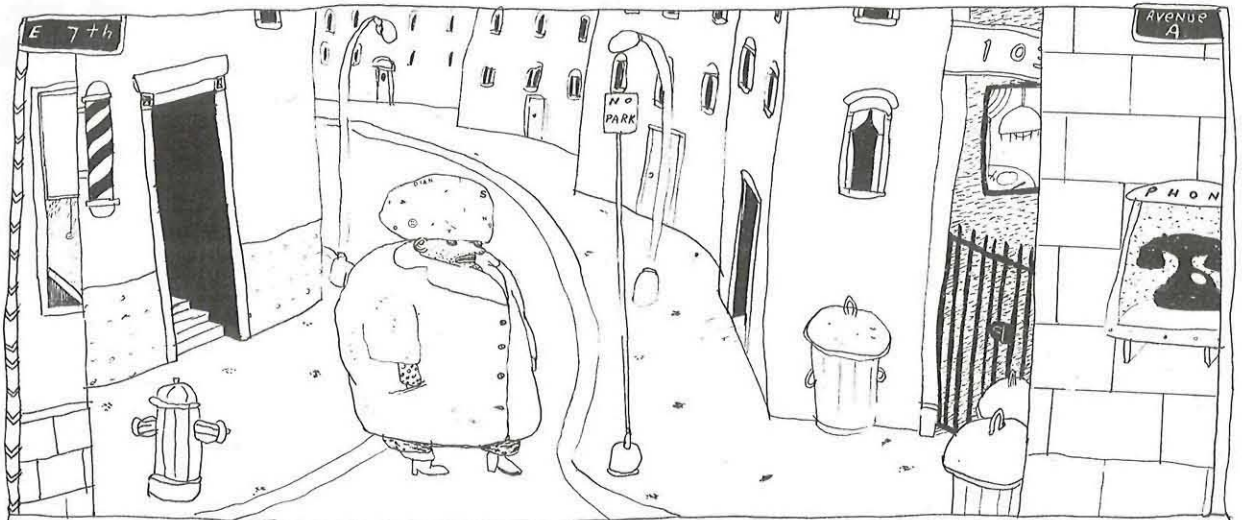


A LADY WILL COVER HER KNEES WITH HER SKIRT, LEST SOME FELLOW SHOULD PEEK AND START TO THINK DIRT!

THANK YOU.

NEW WAVE COMICS

MARK MARK

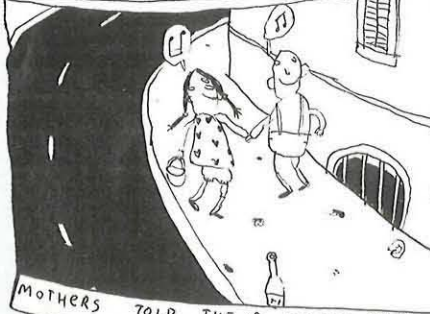


VERY LITTLE WAS KNOWN ABOUT HIM. HE COULD ONLY BE SEEN AT NIGHT... ROAMING..

SOME PEOPLE CONSIDERED HIM TO BE A RELIGIOUS LEADER. SOME CONJECTURED THAT HE WAS NOT OF THIS WORLD

BUT THE SIMPLE FACT REMAINED: NO ONE REALLY KNEW WHO HE WAS, OR CARED

FOR THE MOST PART HE WAS IGNORED



MOTHERS TOLD THEIR CHILDREN THAT HE ATE



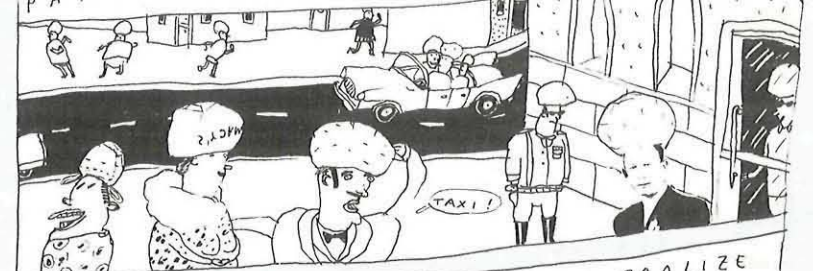
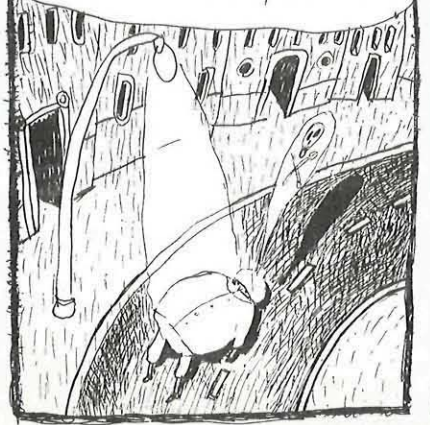
SAD LITTLE BOYS AND GIRLS



HE WAS NEVER SEEN WITHOUT AN AMAZINGLY LARGE BROWN PAPER BAG ON HIS HEAD. FOR YEARS AND YEARS... THE SAME DIRTY BAG

AND THEN, ONE NIGHT, HE DIED

TEN YEARS LATER EVERYONE WAS WEARING BROWN PAPER BAGS ON THEIR HEADS...



AND THE HISTORIANS CAME TO REALIZE THAT, LIKE MOST GREAT ARTISTS, HE HAD LIVED WELL AHEAD OF HIS TIME

WACB

by CHENEY



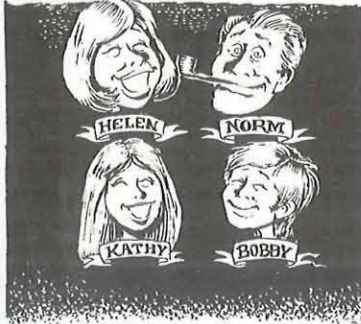
Those Fabulous Bunnies

Mark Knudsen



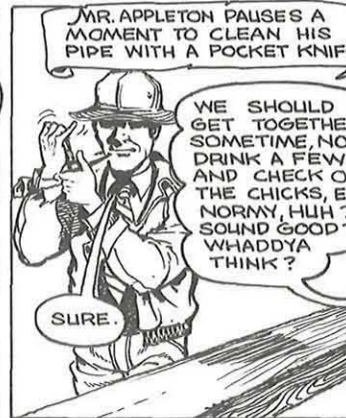
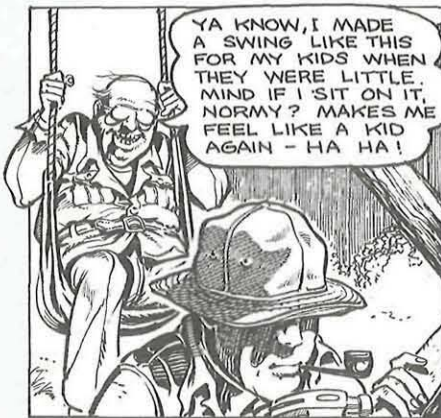
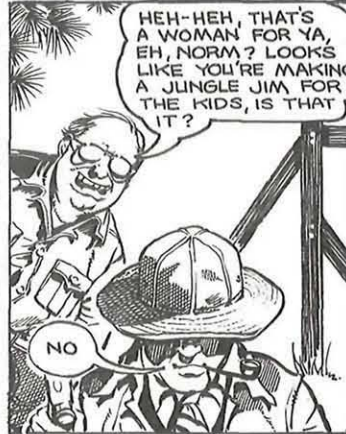
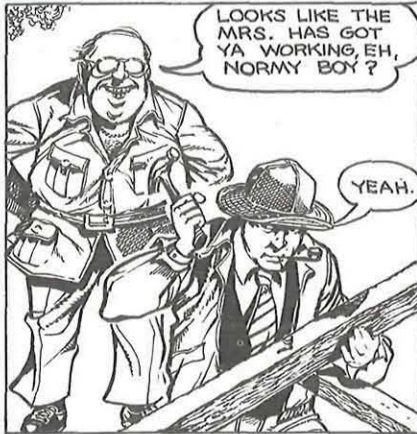
THE APPLETONS

A Saga of an American Family



by B.K. Taylor

AS WE LOOK IN ON THE HOME OF THE APPLETONS, WE FIND MR. APPLETON WORKING INTENTLY ON A PROJECT IN THE BACKYARD, WHEN...



F R O G



GEOFFREY BARIS

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FROG DRAWING BY CARTOONIST SAM GROSS

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 Please send me _____ each, plus \$1.00 for postage and handling. (WRITE National Lampoon frog shirts at \$13.95 each, plus \$1.00 for postage and handling. (YELLOW)
 small _____ medium _____ large _____

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TRUE SECTION

ON THE LEVEL



True Facts

- Twenty-two-year-old Michael Brez, bearing tattoos of swastikas and the words "White Death," was charged with driving while intoxicated, after he crashed into the back of a truck at thirty miles per hour in Lakeland, Florida. Accompanied by two teenage girls and an ice-cream cooler full of beer, Brez had been driving a Pinky Dinky Ice Cream truck. The *Lakeland Ledger* (contributed by Mike McDonald)

- Abdel Brim Talal was arrested by police in Syros, Greece, after he sodomized a male pelican. Police had to rescue the twenty-eight-year-old Moroccan from an angry mob of locals who had regarded the pelican as a mascot. The pelican, named Marcos, was found wounded in a public toilet. He died later of internal injuries, and his body was stuffed and given to the townspeople. The *Guardian* (contributed by Peter Bellamy)

- Police in North Pownal, New York, arrested a Hoosick Falls man in connection with the theft of a vehicle in which he was found sleeping. The man's name was Ralph Wideawake. *AP* (contributed by Doug Rivenburg)

- *Aviation Digest*, a publication of the U.S. Army, printed an article by Col. John W. Oswalt (Ret.) that discussed the development of vertical takeoff and landing aircraft. The planes feature wings and engines that point upward for helicopterlike takeoff; the assembly then revolves to a horizontal position for forward flight.

Referring to the midair

switch from vertical to horizontal flight, Colonel Oswalt wrote: "The safety people were concerned that should there be a power failure during this transition, the aircraft would certainly crash. To keep the pilot from being apprehensive about this situation, the engineers designed a new instrument for the instrument panel. From the front it merely looked like a black hole. However, behind the panel was mounted a .38-caliber revolver, which, when the engine failed, would shoot the pilot in the head, thus removing all apprehension." (contributed by Ed Dashman)

- A resident of Deloraine, Tasmania, complained to police that a tree growing on his neighbor's property had been trimmed into the shape of an emu, complete with eyes that looked directly into a window of his home. Police referred the matter to the town council. (*Tasmanian Advocate*) (contributed by Kim Lehman)

- According to Joseph Lurie of Adelphi University, General Motors changed the name of its Chevrolet "Nova" model to "Caribe" for export to South America. Puzzled by poor sales of the Nova south of the border, GM executives had finally learned that the name pronounced as two words—*no va*—literally means "won't go" in Spanish.

In an eighteen-page study called "America, Globally Deaf and Mute," Lurie also reports that the phrase "body by Fisher" in a GM ad actually read "corpse by Fisher" in Flemish, and an ad meant to read "Come alive with Pepsi" turned out to say "Come alive out of the grave" in German. *AP* (contributed by Dan Chure and Lorraine Ferris)

- Police arrested forty-six-year-old Edward Morris and charged him with sexually assaulting a thirteen-year-old male at the Let's Play Games store in Rockville, Maryland. The *Montgomery Journal* (contributed by Joel Pollack)

- School administrators in Omaha, Nebraska, were discussing a ban on racial epithets such as "nigger" and "honky" when a black member of the board objected. Lawrence McVoy claimed that "nigger" should be banned but "honky" should not, since it was a "complimentary term" that referred to white people's "reputed ancestry from the Huns." David Wilken, a white board member, objected. "I don't buy it," he said.

"Some honkies buy it and some honkies don't," McVoy replied. *UPI* (contributed by Cathy and Peter Ferguson)

- According to a \$3-million wrongful-death suit filed against Disney World in Orlando, Florida, Hattie Richardson had been trying to find her car when she fell into a drainage canal and drowned between the "Minnie" and "Goofy" sections of the Disney World parking lot. *Florida Times Union* (contributed by Beth Pottorf)

- Beason's Appliance Store in Lafayette, Indiana, had advertised a "Wizard of Savings" for its customers, but its "Yellow Brick Road Sale" was disrupted when a sudden tornado destroyed the store. *Indianapolis Star* (contributed by William Mick)

- Philippine government officials dismissed five members of the national police force for "acts inimical to public welfare." The five drunken troopers from an unnamed Philippine city were fired after they set up a roadblock and shaved the mustaches from male passersby. *AP* (contributed by Jim Strader)

PHOTO FOR THOUGHT



(contributed by Charles Rowe, Jr.)

T

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E

What's Your Sign? Readers' Page



D. Chure/L. Ferris, Jensen, Utah



Ray Lowry, Minneapolis, Minn.



David Bressler, Linden, N.J.



Jeffrey Meffert, San Antonio, Tex.



David Kettner, Wyncote, Pa.



Brent Adler, Southfield, Mich.



John S. Rowland, Boston, Mass.



Bart Clark, San Francisco, Cal.

UNCLASSIFIED ADS

NEW! NEW! NEW! NOT NICE T-SHIRTS

1. "PARDON ME, BUT YOU'VE OBVIOUSLY MISTAKEN ME FOR SOMEONE WHO GIVES A SHIT." 2. "WHEN I'M GOOD I'M VERY GOOD, BUT WHEN I'M BAD I'M BETTER." 3. "I USED TO BE DISGUSTED, NOW I'M JUST AMUSED." 4. "I WANT IT ALL AND I WANT IT NOW." 5. "WE'LL GET ALONG FINE AS SOON AS YOU REALIZE I'M GOD." 6. "IT'S HARD TO SOAR LIKE AN EAGLE WHEN YOU'RE SURROUNDED BY TURKEYS." 7. "LIFE IS LIKE A SHIT SANDWICH, THE MORE BREAD YOU HAVE THE LESS SHIT YOU HAVE TO EAT." 8. "IT'S IMPOLITE TO SILENCE A FOOL AND CRUEL TO LET HIM GO ON." 9. "WHEN CHOOSING BETWEEN TWO EVILS I ALWAYS LIKE TO TRY THE ONE I'VE NEVER TRIED BEFORE." 10. "WE ARE THE PEOPLE OUR PARENTS WARNED US ABOUT." 11. "THOSE OF YOU WHO THINK YOU KNOW EVERYTHING ARE VERY ANNOYING TO THOSE OF US WHO DO." 12. "I'D RATHER LAUGH WITH THE SINNERS THAN CRY WITH THE SAINTS." 13. "QUESTION AUTHORITY!" 14. "MADNESS TAKES ITS TOLL." 15. "HAVE AN ORDINARY DAY." with (Un)Smiling Face 16. "LIFE IS WHAT HAPPENS TO YOU WHILE YOU'RE BUSY MAKING OTHER PLANS." 17. "SO?" 18. "YOU DON'T NEED AN EXPERT TO KNOW WHAT YOU WANT." 19. "THE TORTURE NEVER STOPS." 20. "SEX IS DIRTY BUT ONLY IF YOU DO IT RIGHT." 21. "THEY NEVER LEARN." 22. "SOUNDS LIKE BULLSHIT TO ME." 23. "I DOUBT IT." 24. "IF YOU CAN'T DAZZLE 'EM WITH BRILLIANCE, BAFFLE 'EM WITH BULLSHIT." 25. "THE MEK SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH AFTER EVERYONE ELSE IS THROUGH WITH IT." 26. "THERE ARE NO RULES." 27. "I DON'T CARE, I DON'T HAVE TO." 28. "IF I TELL YOU YOU HAVE A BEAUTIFUL BODY WILL YOU HOLD IT AGAINST ME?" 29. "THINGS AREN'T AS BAD AS THEY SEEM, THEY'RE WORSE." 30. "I'M MAD AS HELL AND I'M NOT GOING TO TAKE IT ANY MORE!" First quality 100% cotton HANES T-shirts. Silk screened white-on-black or blue-on-tan, S,M,L,XL. SPECIFY SIZES AND COLORS (PLEASE!) \$6.95 each 6 or more \$6.50 each. 12 or more \$6.00 each. Add just \$1.00 p&h to your total order. CA residents only add 6 1/2% sales tax. U.S. Funds Only. MONEYBACK GUARANTEE. IMAGE DESIGNS, 2000 Center Street, #1141-NL1 Berkeley, CA 94704

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Nowadays, folks call these "coveralls", "overalls", or "bib overalls", but when I was a boy, we called them "hogwashers". This sturdy pair has Jack Daniel's brass buttons, and snaps, a tailored Jack Daniel's label on the front, and a handsomely embroidered monogram on the back yoke. These durable, many-pocketed, blue denim Hogwashers* are great for chores or just kicking around. Give waist size (30-42) and inseam (34-36) when ordering. My \$26.00 price includes postage and handling.

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ALL B.B. HATS
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ADJUSTABLE

PLUS OVER 40 MORE OF THE MOST RUDEST SAYINGS ON BASEBALL HATS AND T-SHIRTS

- I'M NOT WEARING ANY UNDERWEAR, FILM AT 11.
- FREE MOUSTACHE RIDES (WITH ARTWORK)
- BEND OVER, I'LL DRIVE.
- CHAMPION MOUSTACHE RIDER (WITH ARTWORK)
- RIDE THE MOUSTACHE (WITH ARTWORK)
- I DON'T HAVE A DRINKING PROBLEM, I DRINK. I GET DRUNK. I FALL DOWN. NO PROBLEM.
- PARDON ME, BUT YOU'VE OBVIOUSLY MISTAKEN ME FOR SOMEBODY WHO GIVES A SHIT.
- HEY LITTLE GIRL, WANNA PIECE OF CANDY?
- HEY LITTLE BOY, WANNA PIECE OF CANDY?
- SAVE OUR BEACHES. HARPOON A FAT CHICK!
- HAVE A NICE DAY, ASSHOLE!
- FUCK YOU IF YOU CAN'T TAKE A JOKE.
- NO FAT CHICKS.
- NO FAT DUDES.
- WE DIVE AT FIVE.
- WHY DON'T WE GET DRUNK AND SCREW 17. IN OUTERSPACE, NOBODY CAN HEAR YOU FART.
- THE MORE WE TALK, THE LESS TIME WE HAVE TO FOOL AROUND.
- NO TEENIE WENIES.
- MINI'S BIGGER.
- I'D WALK OVER YOU TO SEE "THE WHO".
- IT'S HARD TO BE HUMBLE WHEN YOU'RE AS GREAT AS I AM.
- BOY, SURE LIKE TO TOUCH THOSE!
- PARTY SIZE?
- 1980'S SLOW CARS—FAST WOMEN.
- I DO.
- BUT NOT WITH YOU.
- LOVE ME 'TILL I SCREAM.
- I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD.
- I'M FOR JUST.
- SOUNDS LIKE BULLSHIT TO ME.
- I WANT A MEAL, NOT A SNACK!
- ONE OF A KIND.
- DON'T LAUGH, COULD YOU DO BETTER IF YOU WERE BLIND?
- 60 POUND SAND!
- SCHOOL SUCKS!
- ASK ME IF I CARE.
- SNOW BLIND.
- LISTEN TO WHAT I MEAN, NOT WHAT I SAY.
- TAKE THIS JOB AND SHOVE IT!
- WHEN EVERYTHING'S RIGHT, NOTHING MATTERS.
- KART RACERS DO IT ON ALL FOUR.
- MY FACE IS LEAVING AT NINE, BE ON IT.

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Send _____ Long Sleeve T-Shirt(s) @ \$8.99 \$ _____
Send _____ Ladies' French Cut T-Shirt(s) @ \$7.99 \$ _____
Send _____ B.B. Hat(s) @ \$5.99 \$ _____
TOTAL AMOUNT \$ _____
California people add 6% sales tax \$ _____
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TOTAL AMOUNT \$ _____
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LADIES' FRENCH CUT Scoop Neck Egg Sleeves Sizes S/M/L/XL 50/50 Interlock	Style#	Size	Color	BASEBALL HAT Adjustable	Style#	Color	
LT. BLUE, YELLOW, RED, CHAMPAGNE, NAVY, WHITE, GOLD, WHITE, BROWN, GOLD, 200% COTTON, BLUE, NAVY, RED, WHITE, BROWN, GOLD, 200% COTTON							

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PIONEER KP-5500	141.90	JENSEN JE-525 (Recover)	224.90
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PIONEER KE-200	214.90	JENSEN R-210 (Recover)	139.90
PIONEER KP-8000	139.90	JENSEN R-200 (Recover)	114.90
PIONEER KE-100	209.90		
PIONEER KP-4200 (New Mfg.)	134.90		
PIONEER MP-5200 (New Mfg.)	152.90		
PIONEER MP-5200 (New Mfg.)	174.90		
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PIONEER KP-500	134.90	PIONEER TS-X6	74.90/PAIR
PIONEER KP-77G (Reo Amp.)	102.90	PIONEER TS-X9	139.90/PAIR
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AUDIOVOX TRIVOX-43	39.90/PAIR		

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TKD AD-C-30	2.45
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TKD SA-C-30 (Mitsubishi)	4.75
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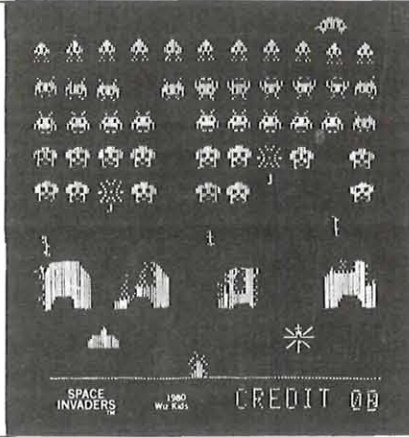
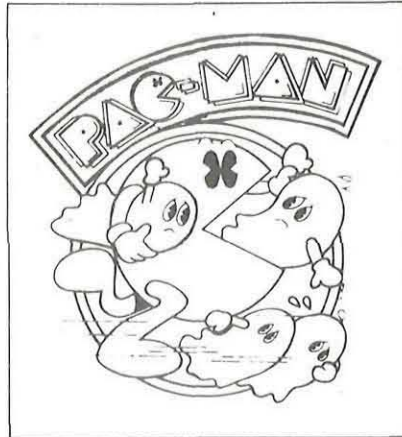
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MAGAZINE MAN

continued from page 20

major intersection in urban America.

I asked Firk if there were any other hot items he could tell us about. Well, he answered candidly, from my penthouse balcony I have noted the growing number of New Yorkers who cook out on their fire escapes and balconies. Everybody knows it's against the law, but, hell, a New Yorker is a law unto himself, if you know what I mean. I assured him I did. Firk went on: It occurred to me that a publication with a name something like *Fire Escape Barbecuer* might be just the thing to reach this growing indoor and outdoor audience. There's never been an indoor and outdoor magazine before. If you see a niche, you had better fill it, because if you don't, then a hundred other guys will try. *Fire Escape Barbecuer* would be a perfect medium for editorials on city life, food, fire extinguishing... And what an environment for advertising!

Then Firk asked me if I would buy such a publication as he had described. I told him I had hibachied some burgers on my own fire escape just the previous evening. A smile moved insensibly across his face, weathered and full of implications. □

COHEN THE BOYBARIAN

continued from page 64

some of his customary animal vitality.

"And at two dollars—a fine price, for such a diversion!"

"From Willie, huh?" Dave murmured, and, taking the proffered scrap, he picked from it a tiny bit of the dried green material rolled therein, and tasted it. He made a face of infinite melancholy and resignation. "It figures. You asshole. Taste this."

Cohen took in his fingertips the butt and tasted a crumb of the substance. A familiar tang greeted his questing tongue, and Cohen had a sudden impression of the empizza'd pies his parents would sometimes bring home for evening supping on nights especially festive or frenzied.

"You got stoned on fucking *oregano*, man," taunted the denizen of beaches. "That Willie. Fucking rip you off every time."

"Dave," pleaded the Princess. "Come on, let's go."

"Asshole," jeered Dave, and, taking the girl's hand, he ran off with her into the seething spume.

With a titanic heave Cohen tossed the remnant of the loose joint into the At-

lantic and, silent as the breeze and with feline stealth, shuffled back to his beach blanket.

"Use the cream," commanded the Mother upon his return. "You're getting all red."

Cohen directed his piercing gaze at himself. His thick, weather-entoughened skin showed an angry crimson, like the fiery red-hot coals of char on which men in aprons enstenciled "Genius at Work" grilled steaks of T-ish bone, dogs hot, and burgers of ham in outdoorsy, backyardish barbecue revelry.

"Okay, okay," replied the boybarian. He used the cream. Then, stretching out upon the blanket, he opened the fantasy-adventure novel. Therein did the chief priest of Asura reveal to Xaltotun that now he, Hadrathus, and not the foul necromancer from Acheron, possessed the blazing jewel known as the Heart of Ahriman. Then the Cimmerian-bred king of Aquilonia, a barbarian whose reputation had reached to every corner of the Hyborian world, defeated Tarascus, and demanded in return for the vanquished man's life a girl from his seraglio. Her name was Zenobia; she had been a slave in Nemedias, but the barbarian would make her queen of Aquilonia. □

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