

Eastern Illinois University

The Keep

The Post Amerikan (1972-2004)

The Post Amerikan Project

6-1-1999

Volume 28, Number 3

Post Amerikan

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Recommended Citation

Post Amerikan, "Volume 28, Number 3" (1999). *The Post Amerikan (1972-2004)*. 242.
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Local music and benefit reviews; Normal NORML opposes Higher Ed. Act; Lots of poetry



POST AMERIKAN



BLOOMINGTON/NORMAL

VOLUME 28

FREE

NUMBER 3

JUNE/JULY 1999



fighting

crime

with

crime

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Bloomington, IL 61702

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About us

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

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

Most of our material and inspiration for material comes from the community. The *Post Amerikan* welcomes stories, graphics, photos, letters, and new tips from our readers. If you'd like to join us, call 828-4473 and leave a message on our answering machine. We will get back to you as soon as we can. Don't worry if it takes a while--we don't meet every week.

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

Subscriptions

Subscriptions to the *Post Amerikan* are available for the low price of \$6.00 per year for six complete issues.

Please send a check (made payable to the *Post Amerikan*) to: *Post Amerikan*, P.O. Box 3452 Bloomington, IL 61702.

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

Barbie, David, Gregg, Linda, Ralph & Sherrin

Pick up a copy

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

Bloomington

AIDS Task Force, 313 N. Main
 About Books, 221 E. Front
 Barnes & Noble, Veterans & Rt. 9
 Bloomington Public Library, 205 E. Olive
 Common Ground, 516 N. Main
 CoffeeWorks, 608 N. Main
 Gaston's Upper Cut, 409 N. Main
 Heartland Community College Academic Support Center, 1226 Towanda Ave.
 Last Chance Newstand, 404 N. Main
 Lizard's Lounge, 612 N. Main St.
 Medusa's, 420 N. Madison
 the Movie Fan, 401 N. Veterans (Cub Food Plaza)
 Mystic Link, 1206 Towanda Ave. Su.4
 Shockwaves, 415 N. Main
 Twin City Exchange, 411 N. Main

Normal

Acme Comics, 115 W. North
 Babbitt's Books, 104 W. North
 Co-op Records, 503 S. Main
 the Coffeehouse, 114 E. Beaufort
 Deadpan Alley Records, 107 W. North
 Koffee Kup, 205 W. North
 Mother Murphy's, 111 W. North
 Normal Public Library, 206 W. College Ave.

What's your new address?

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

Name _____
 Street _____
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Due Date:

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

Good numbers

Advocacy Council for Human Rights.830-2521
 AIDS Hotlines
 National.....1-800-AID-AIDS
 Illinois.....1-800-243-2437
 Local.....827-AIDS
 Alcoholics Anonymous.....828-7092
 Amnesty International-ISU ...Miami@ilstu.edu
 Animal Protection League.....828-5371
 Better Business Bureau.....1-800-500-3780
 Big Brothers/ Big Sisters828-1870
 Boys & Girls Clubs of B/N.....829-3034
 Clare House (Catholic workers).....828-4035
 Countering Domestic Violence.....827-7070
 Dept. of Children/Family Services....828-0022
 Gay, Lesbian & Bi teen drop in center.828-3998
 Gay & Lesbian Resource Phoneline..438-2429
 Habitat for Humanity.....827-3931
 Headstart.....662-4880
 Home Sweet Home Mission.....828-7356
 IL Dept. of Public Aid.....827-4621
 IL Lawyer Referral.....1-217-525-5297
 Incest Survivors Support Group.....827-0790
 LIFE-CIL.....663-5433
 Lighthouse (substance abuse treatment)....827-6026
 McLean Co. Center for Human Services...827-5351
 McLean Co. Health Dept.....888-5450
 McLean Co. Housing Authority.....829-3360
 McLean Co. Humane Society.....664-7387
 McLean Co. Peace Coalition.....828-7070
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 Mobile Meals.....828-8301
 Narcotics Anonymous.....827-4005
 National Health Care Services/
 abortion assistance.....1-800-322-1622
 Occupational Development Center....452-7324
 Parents Anonymous.....827-4005
 PATH (Personal Assistance Telephone Help).827-4005
 Phone Friends.....827-4005
 PFLAG(Parents, Families and Friends
 of Lesbians and Gays).....663-0831
 Planned Parenthood (medical).....827-4014
 (bus/couns/edu).....827-4368
Post Amerikan.....828-4473
 Prairie State Legal Services.....827-5021
 Project Oz.....827-0377
 Rape Crisis Center.....827-4005
 Runaway Switchboard.....1-800-621-4000
 Salvation Army.....829-9476
 Safe Harbor Mission.....829-7399
 TeleCare (senior citizens).....828-8301
 Unemployment comp/job service....827-6237
 Western Ave. Community Center.....829-4807
 Youth Build.....827-7507



Letters to the Editor

It is quite difficult to understand why so many liberals advocate strong gun control laws.

It is no secret that many liberals want to move eventually (ever so slowly, but ever so surely) toward the banning of ALL gun ownership by ordinary American citizens.

Incredibly, these same people usually say that "of course, the police and military should be allowed to keep their weapons."

Liberals historically have been extremely wary of the power of the police and military. They have, with good reason, opposed excessive power in the hands of police and military forces.

But now we see many liberals advocating positions which eventually would lead to the confiscation of guns from the hands of ordinary people, giving the police and military a weapons monopoly.

But the police and military would, of course, not have a total monopoly on possession of weapons. Hard-core criminals would certainly keep their guns no matter what the law says.

A basic human right is the right of self-defense. Let us understand that the police, hard as they might try, have never been in a position (or had sufficient numbers) to actually protect the public. Nearly always the police come on a scene after a crime has been committed. There will never be enough police to actually be able to prevent most crimes.

For many reasons, liberals should support the right of gun ownership by ordinary American citizens.

--by Alan H. Keith
Box 882
Mattoon, IL 61938

Dear friend,

"The NATO bombing has helped the Serbian government to carry out ethnic cleansing in Kosova," said Shpendi Malaj in a Kosovar refugee camp in Albania. This is just one of many working people who speak in the new issue of SeeingRed posted at the site several days ago. We're featuring the best on-the-scene reporting of any that's been written, the work of Arigris Malapanis and a team of European workers writing for the U.S. socialist newsweekly The Militant. They present the voices of many working people from Albania, Kosova, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Serbia--along with their own first-rate analysis. It's required reading if you want to understand--and explain-- events there.

The new issue also offers Noam Chomsky, Mumia Abu-Jamal and a rarely-read 1959 speech by Fidel -- plus lots more.

It's important to note we'll be regularly adding new material to the current issue, just as with the last one (that issue ended up three times the size it was when first released).

A couple of favors, please: first, does anyone know who linked to Fidel's 40th anniversary speech (at SeeingRed)? We've been getting nearly 100 people a day going straight to that speech; we'd really like to know who linked to us.

Second, we're trying to get a better read on what people are thinking about the war. Drop us a line telling us what you're hearing and seeing.

Third, as always we're starving for publicity. Anything you can do, from telling a friend to putting some of our leaflets at a local coffeehouse or two (we'll either send them to you or tell your where to download them) would be a big help.

The war now is at its most critical point -- ominously, coverage in the big-business media has dropped off significantly ... just as a 50,000-strong military occupation force is begun to be seriously assembled, and more and more appalling targets are struck (Thursday a maternity ward and an intensive care unit of a

hospital -- oops).

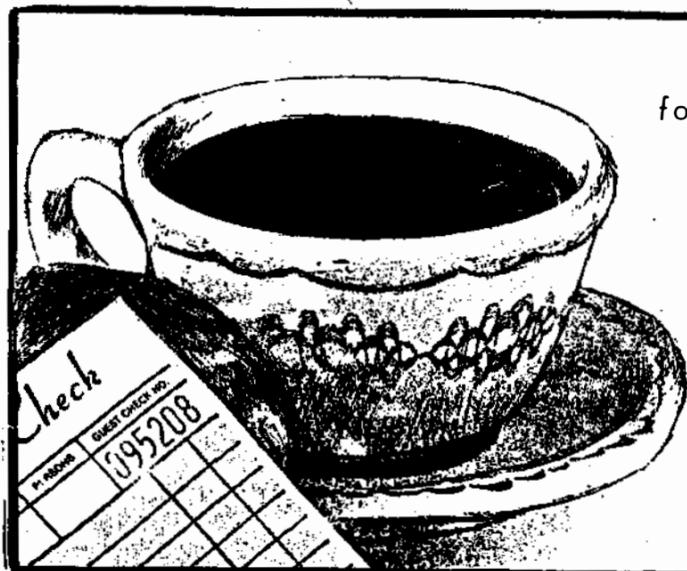
Friday, U.S./NATO repeatedly (no oops here) bombed a prison for crissakes (incidentally narrowly missing some Western journalists who'd gone to survey the damage). This speaks volumes about both the immorality and the goal of this war. Civilians ARE the targets, first and foremost the people of Kosova; secondly the factories, bridges, transportation facilities and utilities of the Yugoslavian working class

It would be height of folly to dream that this massive airwar--the first sustained bombing of civilians since World War #2--and the military occupation sure to follow it will not powerful repercussions on you and yours, wherever you are.

Circulating accurate information -- and especially establishing communications between workers in "enemy" countries -- has never been more important.

Solidarity,
steve eckardt
for SeeingRed.com

PS. Our correspondent in Belgrade, Goran, has had to leave the city; but his new location should produce some very interesting material as well.



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Community News



Harold Gregor and Kenneth Holder: - From the Sky From the Road - From the River

May 28th through August 23rd, 1999

University Galleries is pleased to announce the opening of its summer exhibition: Harold Gregor and Kenneth Holder: From the Road - From the River - From the Sky, curated by Bill Conger.

From the Road - From the River - From the Sky features paintings and watercolors by two artists who are not only innovators in the genre of contemporary landscape, but are also thirty year-long friends and Illinois State University emeritus faculty. This exhibition is a selection of recent works, many of which have not been previously exhibited.

The landscape of the American Midwest has been the subject of Harold Gregor's paintings since 1971. With mathematical precision, Gregor has consistently taken images of the plains and the working farm, creating rock-solid color statements that capture the rich texture of nature, all the while investing these traditionally cliched images with "wonder and revived meaning." The paintings in this show are the result of the many years of

Gregor's survey of the heartland, and also of his recent experimentations in subject and media.

Having focused on the landscape of the Southwest as his subject for years, Ken Holder shifted his direction in 1996 to the vistas along the two thousand miles of the Lewis and Clark Trail. Anticipating the expedition's bicentennial in 2004, Holder has been avidly compiling research material through books and many trips along this territory, documenting and interpreting the current conditions of the terrain. The exhibited works are selected from the resulting body of work that includes over four hundred preparatory drawings and watercolors and over thirty large and small-scale paintings.

Summer hours:
Monday-Saturday 12:00-4:00
Tuesday 12:00-7:00
Closed Sunday

110 Center for the Visual Arts
Normal, Illinois 61790-5620

WGLT/IP Summer Concert

GLT 89 FM and Illinois Power are sponsoring a free outdoor jazz and blues concert to be held on Saturday, June 26 from 4-9 p.m. The concert will be held on the grounds of the McLean County Law & Justice Center in downtown Bloomington.

GLT/IP Summer Concert '99 will kick off with Deanna Bogar's sassy blues, followed by the Duke Robillard Band's unique mix of jazz & blues. Finally, the night's headliner, the Freddy Cole Quartet, will present their smooth and sophisticated brand of jazz. Freddy Cole is the younger brother of Nat King Cole and the uncle of Natalie Cole.



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The Peoria 1691 Foundation and
Peoria Park District Present

Return to Pimiteoui



An Intertribal Pow Wow Peoria, Illinois June 12 & 13, 1999

Schedule of Events

Saturday, June 12

- 10:00 - Grounds Open to Public
- 11:00 - Pipe Ceremony
- 1:30 & 7:00 - Grand Entry

Sunday, June 13

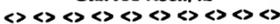
- 10:00 - Grounds Open to Public
- 10:30 - Interfaith Worship Service
- 1:30 - Grand Entry

Host Drum - Eagle Ridge
Head singer Chip Roberts - Trivoli, IL

Head Female Dancer - Susan Snow, Seneca
Peoria, IL

Head Male Dancer - Don Hamilton, Lakota tradition
Princeton, IL

Master of Ceremonies - Hayna Sine, Ho Chunk -
Starved Rock, IL



Limited bleacher style seating is provided. You
may wish to bring a blanket or lawn chair.



Cultural Arts & Activity Center

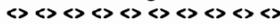
...a special place where people of all
ages can experience a glimpse of the
past and use it to protect the future
through...

Hands-On Activities

- corn grinding
- tool making
- hide scraping
- pottery making
- painting
- beading
- pump drilling
- Native games and toys

Special Events

- time with Wisdom Keepers
- storytelling
- educational exhibits
- demonstrations of dance
- Native American flute music
- fiber arts
- canoe building
- Native garden



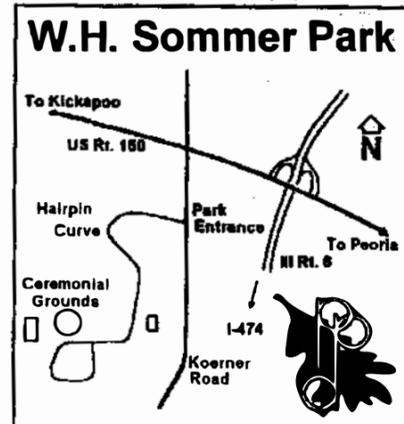
Hours Vary

Please Check At Center For
Activity Schedule

Admission
\$3.00 - Adults
\$1.00 - Children (under 12)

Location

W.H. Sommer Park is located 4 miles N.W. of
Peoria's Northwoods Mall. Taking U.S. Route 150
(War Memorial Drive) northwest to Weaver
Farms, turn left onto Koerner Road. Park
entrance is 7/10 mile from Route 150 on the
right.



For Information Contact:

Return to Pimiteoui
P.O. Box 3874
Peoria, IL 61614-3874
Phone: (309) 697-8187
<http://www.powwow.org>

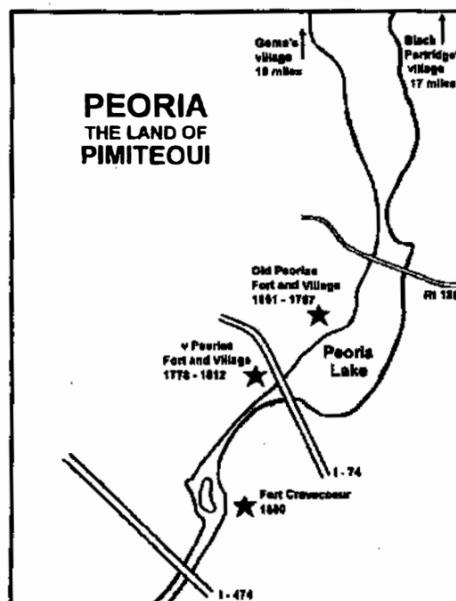
An interpreter will be provided

This program is partially supported by a grant
from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency

An Intertribal Pow Wow in the land named Pimiteoui

During a period of more than 160 years following
the arrival of the first French explorers in 1673, a
large number of tribes are known to have either
inhabited or passed through the part of the Illinois
River Valley that is now Peoria. Once called
Pimiteoui, this land of abundance included the
Peoria Lakes and the immediate surrounding area.
We welcome the many descendants of these peoples
and all who will join us as we...

Return to Pimiteoui.



Thorpe Sine - Peaceful Bear - Winnebago
drawn by Hayna Sine

Come and Experience

- Native Singers and Dancers in Full Regalia
- Teepees and a Woodland Village
- Traditional Ceremonials
- Primitive Encampment
- Environmental Displays
- Traders of Native American Goods
- Demonstrations of Native American Arts

Come - Return to Pimiteoui



Normal NORML opposes Higher Education Act

It would be shocking to hear President Clinton say something like, "Penalties against possession of a drug should not be more damaging to an individual than the use of the drug itself." More than 20 years after former President Jimmy Carter uttered these words, though, the political climate is much different, especially when it comes to the War on Drugs. Today, politicians who speak out against drug policy fear that they will be viewed as not 'tough enough' on crime.

So, it wasn't too shocking when the revamp of the Higher Education Act passed last fall. The HEA established federal financial aid programs such as Perkins Loans, Pell Grants, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants and Work-Study programs. Last October, the Congress ratified the improved Higher Education Act of 1998.

A provision in the new Act denies or delays federal financial aid to any student convicted of any drug offense, no matter how minor. "The HEA cannot in any way help the problem of youth drug abuse," says Kasey Kaehlert. "Denying or delaying an education will simply set a young ex-offender onto a downward spiral toward failure." Kaehlert is the co-vice president of Normal NORML, the local chapter of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws. Normal NORML has been involved in a nationwide movement to repeal the drug provision from the HEA.

"First, this law is a band-aid. It does nothing to solve the problem of youth drug abuse. Second, judges already have the ability to remove financial aid if they believe it is a reasonable consequence. This law establishes a blanket provision that takes discretion away from the judge." Kaehlert also argues that the law targets people in a racially biased manner.

"African-Americans make up 12 percent of the population and 13 percent of drug offenders, but represent 55 percent of drug convictions and more than 70 percent of incarcerations," a fact that Kaehlert attributes to the nature of the drug war. "It's sad to say, but the War on Drugs is a racist war."

Normal NORML has been very active in the reform movement. "With the help of some great volunteers, we presented over 1100 signatures to our student government asking them to pass a reform resolution." On Tuesday, April 20, the Student Government Association of Illinois was one vote away from unanimously passing a resolution calling for the elimination of the drug proposal from the Higher Education Act. The Illinois State SGA joined the ranks of dozens of organizations, including the NAACP, ACLU, United States Students' Association, American Public Health Association and Unitarian Universalists, who have called for HEA reform.

Representative Barney Frank (D-MA) has introduced a bill to amend the Higher Education Act of 1998 to repeal the HEA drug provision. H.R. 1053 now has eleven co-sponsors. "There are clearly many cases in which students convicted of drug offenses should receive tough penalties, such as withholding for a period of time the disbursement of financial aid to them," Congressman Frank said. "There are also cases, however, where individuals are convicted of minor drug offenses and are trying to get their lives back together through education. In these cases, it seems to me to be unreasonable for us to impose an excessively rigid prohibition on an individual's ability to receive Federal financial aid. That is why my bill calls for repealing this strict ban on financial aid and returning discretion to the courts."

Over the course of the last semester, students at more than 200 colleges and universities across the nation have come together via the Internet in opposition to the legislation. Students are working to overturn the provision in a campaign organized by the Drug Reform Coordination Network (DRCNet), a Washington DC-based non-profit drug information clearinghouse.

"The Internet has made it easier than ever for students to be heard in the national political arena," said DRCNet's Campus Coordinator Kris Lotlikar. "College students make up one of the largest constituencies in cyberspace. Organizing online allows us to use this new medium to achieve the greatest impact." Normal NORML co-vice president John Urbance agrees. "The Internet has been invaluable to us. Ten years ago, students could never communicate in the fashion that we are. Email discussion groups and web pages give us, and any social action organization, exactly what they need--a good kick in the pants."

But offline, there is still a lot of leg work to be done. "What we need now is for people to get in contact with their congress people," said Urbance. "If you have access to the Internet, you can send them an email or fax online at www.RaiseYourVoice.com. If not, call or write them--today."

Also, Urbance stressed that writing a letter to the editor of your local newspaper couldn't hurt. "Letters to Editors are a great way to speak to the public. Write a letter to the editor, and make sure to direct readers to RaiseYourVoice.com." The web site has generated over 11,000 messages to Congress in its first month of operation.

Maybe Congress will realize that removing financial aid only creates barriers to the possibility of a successful life. One thing is certain: when students get active, things happen.

---Normal NORML holds meetings while Illinois State is in session. For a meeting calendar, or more information on Normal NORML, please view the group's website at www.normalnorml.org. DRCNet is also online at www.drcnet.org.

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Notes from the land of anti-fat

Adventures in Paradise

American culture once more rears its ugly head: after centuries of maintaining a robust lifestyle around food and body image, young girls on the island of Fiji are beginning to develop eating disorders. This increase appears to be correlated with the introduction of television to the Pacific island nation four years ago.

The year TV was widely introduced in Fiji in 1995, only 3 percent of girls reported they vomited to control their weight, according to the study by Harvard researcher Anne Becker. Three years later, 15 percent have reported this behavior.

"They look to television characters as role models," says Becker, who presented her findings recently at the American Psychiatric Association annual meeting in Washington. "While it's an everyday concept to Americans, reshaping the body is a new concept to Fijians."

Though Becker cautioned that the study does not establish a definitive link between television and eating disorders, she noted that the increases were especially dramatic in a culture that traditionally has focused on the importance of eating well and looking robust. Questioned in 1998, 74 percent of the Fijian girls reported feeling "too big or fat" at least sometimes and 62 percent reported dieting in the past month.

In the past, Fijians called noticeable weight loss "going thin" and saw it as an alarming sign of illness or lack of resources. But with Fiji teevee beaming such stellar entertainments as "Melrose Place" and "Xena: Warrior Princess" over its one channel, teen-aged girls in particular are getting the message that their old body type is no longer okay. How can it be when none of the male or female lust objects living at Melrose are fat?

One girl in the study said the teenagers on television are "slim and very tall" and that,

"We want our bodies to become like that... so we try to lose a lot of weight."

By Western standards 84 percent of village women in the study's sample were overweight or obese, though how much of this is a health problem remains unclear. New Zealand's National Heart Foundation has said more than 70 percent of Pacific Islanders suffer from health problems, but they include fatness as a health problem by itself.

While it's clear that television is only part of the package of changes that the once-isolated island is experiencing, it's equally clear that many Fijian viewers are using it a means of gauging global values. And while some of those values may be questionable and unhealthily restrictive (so what happens when that one channel starts broadcasting "Ally McBeal"?), there's no seeming way of turning it off.

Cultural imperialism from the Land of Anti-Fat: while Americans worry about the images of physical violence in our entertainment industry, a subtler form of violence is being broadcast around the clock.

Wanna take any bets on which franchise will be the first to open in the South Pacific? I'm going with Jenny Craig.

Kudos to Camryn

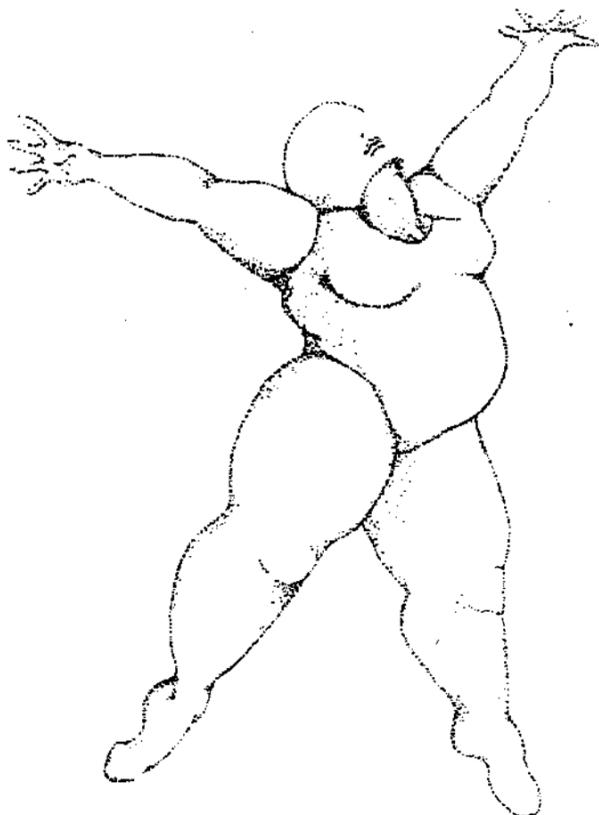
One positive blip on the entertainment scene has been the sudden ubiquitousness of teevee actress Camryn Manheim, the attractive plus-size dynamo on the Sunday night lawyer series, "The Practice." The Divine Miz M. - who capped her win for Best Actress at this year's Emmy ceremonies with a joyous, "This is for all the fat girls!" - has been everywhere plugging her new book, *Wake Up, I'm Fat!* on tube talk shows and (the ultimate sign of arrival in my house) NPR's "Fresh Air." More to the point, the onetime Peorian has repeatedly included a plug for basic size acceptance in almost every one of her appearances.

I'm pulling for Camryn, but still recognize the tremendous ongoing pressure on actresses today to conform to the Hollywood mold. Remember when Roseanne was making statements about

how threatening a large woman was to male dominated culture? These days, she's advocating potentially fatal weight loss surgery in the apparent belief that it's better to be dead than fat n' threatening.

From her recent appearances and those snatches of book that I've so far read, Camryn comes across much more level-headed than Roseanne ever could on her best days, so perhaps there's hope. In the meantime, perhaps they could start broadcasting episodes of "The Practice" on Fiji television?

--Bill Sherman



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FRIDAY 4pm - 2 am | SATURDAY 8pm - 2 am
SUNDAY 6pm - 1 am



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The Poetry Page

THE LITTLE UNDERGROUND NEWSPAPER

Thank God for the little
underground newspaper, that will
put their first amendment where
their mouth is, that will never
kiss the ring finger of the king,
that will pull up big rocks, an
talk with the slime below, thank
God for the little underground newspaper,
whose machines for distribution are
broken an in disrepair, whose employees
say the hell with it, an hand out those papers
here an there, the little train that could,
that old samurai warrior in that Akira
Kurosawa film who said, we have never
won a battle yet, before the
beginning of the big celluloid
clash, said it in Japanese, but,
I know what he meant, thank
God for the little underground
newspaper.

--John Firefly

The Shoebox

When we were born,
my brother and I,
merged.

Heart to heart, like two makeshift enchiladas,
siamesed in a package the world will never see.

This one velvet space with its Houdini demand
transient as a fold-a-way bed.
At night, the giants' guided our course,
we studied the length of their tears
until the dark
rivers bathed us,
in a cradle of tears that
drip like clouds of kisses
onto our onion-paper skin.

Half-girl, half-boy,
we are dauntless whispers of larvae
encased in a shell of see-through veins.
Incomplete flesh
to arouse the story of how such delicate moths
occupy the world of living things.

--Lorraine Harrell

The Habit of Breath

She resisted the urge to cry or sit in a corner
where only light lay between the edges
of a painter's pebble,
and the swift glide of her mother's robe.

She was four - a big girl. Everyone told her so.
Her hand reached for the brown marble of a
pecan; a gift she wanted to share with Bonnie.
The corridor of Bonnie's mouth was too small and rude, it
reminded her of the goldfish that once swooped through her
fingers like a sly ballerina, when she tried to give it a kiss.
And the bone-white, silly stubs, don't they do
anything besides look weird?
Oh Bonnie, please push it up.
Be a big girl.

She sucks her thumb and waits for a sign
as Bonnie's face butterflies into a royal blue,
then Crayola purple, the mouth
caught tight in a Bozo grin.

A wing-beat of breath lingers
between the shapely haunt of closet monsters
and the sweet lollipop of tooth fairies.

She squeezes the blue and purple coloring book
that Bonnie has become,
she rocks and rocks the muted stonebruise
until the two exist only at parallels.
Rocking and waiting for mommie to come home,
singing against Bonnie's silent scream.
Bring back, bring back my Bonnie to me, to me.

--Lorraine Harrell

SICK PUPPY

To the sick puppy
ray-ciss, who thinks
he's comin' out like a
famous lesbian movie
star, who thinks Archie
Bunker is Buddha,
who wants ta lick Hitler's
boots so bad, this xenophobic
idiot, he cannot relate,
Harriet Tubman said Om
Gunna follow the stars
ta freedom, you can't
get anymore far out
than that, she's in the
famuhlee of the most elite
explorers, you poor
little white ray-ciss, you
can shut it all out,
but, Om in your newspaper,
Om on your radio,
Om on your teevee,
and you throw away your
only power, bing unseen,
you uh Ronald McDonald
for the KKK, an the 5
per cent who run the world,
are laughing as they wink,
nudge, an elbow each other,
an say the words, just another
nigger.

--John Firefly

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What to do, What to do

Let our blood flow with the sap of thousands of clearcut trees that screamed for mercy.

Our flesh no more valuable than their gentle bark

Hear the silent cacophony of bagpipes that sound for the ecoheros that chain themselves to the instruments of Gaia's rape.

Cry not for the multinational corporation's profit losses, but for the billions of pounds of non-recycled lumber that lay in land fills.

Build our castles with noble straw rescued from the bonfire of the calamities.

Set free our forgotten citizens, incarcerated and homeless alike, to plant nut and fruit forest from coast to coast.

Walk never again where the wolf saunters. Turn out the lights, let the stars be seen by the youth that know only dim skies.

Clear our waterways clogged from good neighborly dreck.

Work until we cry, for tears flow sweet when cast by ecowarriors

--Nikolai Alexanderovich Zarick

I am

I am a woman. I am confident. I am independent. I am beautiful. I am brave. I am strong. I am happy with who I am. I am natural. I am a musician. I am an actor. I am a performer, but I am still me.

I am a woman. I am a woman who likes women. Does that bother you? If it does, what if I told you, I am the woman who sat next to you at the movies? Or, I am the woman who took your order at the restaurant? Or, the woman who gave you directions? Or, the woman who you enjoyed watching dance? Or, the woman who helped your little brother find the way home? Or even, the woman who your boyfriend looked at and thought I was attractive? Would all that change your mind?

I am a woman who enjoys the same music as you and I sing along at the top of my lungs. I am a woman who watches T.V. and laughs at the same things you do. I am a woman who could be your neighbor, your friend, your daughter or just someone you see on your commute. But, if I told you I am a woman who likes women, would that change the way you see me?

Robin Greenwood
Whitewater, WI

Hope Springs Eternal

In times like these you become hypersensitive to your surroundings.
the sound of a bird,
the scent of the rich black soil.

Everyday I check the size of the buds on the trees.
I feel as if I could notice half a millimeter's change.
I walk home with shoes and socks hanging from two fingers of my right hand,
on the first warm afternoon.

Living and dying are essentially the same process,
though the connotation is important,
it's a matter of what side of the bed you wake upon,
a matter of which way the wind is blowing,
a matter of thousands of seemingly trivial factors.

If only I could live more than die.

Call me naive,
call me impressionable,
treat me like a child if you like,
but times like these make me feel as if I could.
Hope springs eternal.

--James Bohn

Cynic

You are a cynic Robert Yahweh
You were a familiar face among many unfamiliar
You slid into this world from the "beard between your mother's legs"
A nervous embarrassed infant
And this is how you have remained
A bitter old man of 19
Too nervous and embarrassed to change this world you criticize
Unchanged, ungrown and ignorant
The only thing that has passed through your heart is time
If you have nothing good to say
Robert Yahweh
Then shut the fuck up
You have assumed the role of Empty-headed inquisitor
For the naive yet it is you who are naive
Questioner of all things pure
Joyful in the confusion of your presentation
You are the grand pubah of a reality all your own
A bubble in which you prevail always
A utopian dream where all live to your liking
And all believe your unenlightened dribbling
A critic of a world you can not change
An epic failure
your legacy will be depressed, downfallen
Lonely, tiresome and unclear
This is the future I see for you
Living secluded gone far away from the anxiety of life
Poor and ragged alone and inconvenienced
Thrusting your Eurocentric mind and
Apocalyptic visions on the trees and shrubs
Where you will play king of the hill in your mind by yourself
Preaching to the animals about oil production and the environment
Play your guitar for them for it is only them who will listen
And it will be all you have left

--Holden Cross



We Were

We were angelic thugs who played naked
 And fought with all our hearts
 We grew into more than the sum of our parts
 None of us would ever be the same
 Underdogs who wore scrappy like a badge on their chests
 Each one of which I would die for
 We exposed our souls to the game
 Through pain, anguish and defeat
 We arose victorious as one
 On that cold November night
 Where we played bare and noble
 And became gods
 Flowing and formless
 A deviant band of fearless heroes
 Who formed a collective conciseness, I cannot describe
 That pulled us where it wanted
 Through silent meditation and foaming rage

--Holden Cross

"i like your body when
 it's with my body"
 relaxed in place
 you feel like
 home to me
 peeling back slowly
 softly smoothly
 intertwined but one
 two fitting puzzle pieces
 your hypnotic sensuality
 haunts my mind
 your lips against mine
 breathe pleasure
 into me
 warming me
 with every stroke
 pulling you closer
 between us
 the climactic release of me into you
 grasping me
 becoming
 me
 we
 you
 us
 one

--Holden Cross

Biography of the Artist

The fire
 The need
 The patience
 Patience for decision.
 Decision for Love.

Love.
 What a way
 to live:
 The need to
 wait for the
 heat:
 to be warm.
 To feel warm.
 To feel the blanket
 of love
 warm
 on your skin.
 Only
 to feel.

And the hourly
 wait
 for perfection;
 for love:
 The truest perfection
 anyone can see.
 Anyone can feel.
 Everyone needs.

The fire.
 The need.
 The patience.
 Patience for decision.
 Decision for Love.
 What a way to live.

--David Hall

But, patience gives you
 the power
 to see
 original,
 beautiful:
 love:
 Sort of like
 an afghan
 that gramma made
 especially for you;
 The arrangement of stuff
 on the coffee table
 that screams definition:
 "Me, mine!"

Women Should Stop All War Right Now

right now B-52 cruising the runway
 so heavy, so slow with only 8 engines
 spumy volcanoes, dumping ash everywhere
 B-52 don't lift off, just sort of elevate gear
 blast away real slow
 B-53 mission
 B-52 stop
 one ton bombs wiggle all over
 wings sagging like old whore titties
 B-52 won't stop systematic villager genocide
 Belgrade is schizophrenically raving
 Belgrade is Schizophrenically howling
 Belgrade's sirens wail

**wake up now angel
 angel wake up
 wake up angel
 big bombs falling
 everywhere**

--Stephen Zimmerly



Call to positive action

It is nearly impossible to watch TV or pick up a magazine without being solicited for funds for an overseas agency that helps underprivileged children in some developing country.

We can assume that the charity is honest and that a good portion of the funds go directly to those in need. Yet sometimes we hear of charities that consume a vast portion of the money in administrative costs, advertising, staff salaries etc. These agencies do need your help and I urge you to do what you can. But let me offer one option, and tell you about one amazing person, Anna Hill, in northern India.

Hill is a Mongolian/Welsh teacher who runs a children's nursery in the city of Shillong. The work she does there is truly incredible considering that she has so little to work with and "makes do" with the simplest of things.

The children she takes under her wing are brilliant and thirsty for knowledge. Hill teaches them performing arts, metaculture (alternative agriculture), and a myriad of extra curricular activities.

What she needs is children's books, toys, educational aids, school supplies, art supplies and whatever you think a toddler needs to prepare for life in our universe. Even second hand items are welcomed, but please make sure cloth items etc. are clean and germfree. Of course actual money is welcomed, but the school needs American goods.

The catch is that air mail postage can be costly, so choose things that weigh less so you don't get clobbered at the post office.

In life we get chances to do good, just for the sake of doing good. It is easy to ignore those in need when they are not in your daily path. Yet now I place this cause in your path. Please open your heart and share what you can, as much as you can, when you can. The reward will be not only the smiles of the children, but your smile as you lay down to go to sleep.

--Nikolai A Zarick

Send what you can to:

A.R. Z. Hill
c/o Tiny Tots Nursery
Laitumkhrach
Shillong 793003
Meghalaya, India



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NATO war in Yugoslavia:

Myth #1: U.S./NATO had to attack "the Serbs" because the Yugoslav government and president Slobodan Milosevic refused to negotiate on Kosovo, a region of Yugoslavia where ethnic Albanians are the majority.

Reality: U.S./NATO bombs are falling on all Yugoslavs: Serbs, Montenegrins, Albanians, Hungarians, Romanis (called Gypsies) and other peoples who make up the multiethnic Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. There were no "negotiations." U.S. officials like Secretary of State Madeline Albright went out of their way to make this point when "peace talks" were held in France in February. Instead, the U.S. government presented an ultimatum to the Yugoslav government that had three points: 1) Kosovo must be granted autonomy; 2) NATO must be allowed to station 30,000 ground troops in Yugoslavia to ensure this autonomy; and 3) A NATO-conducted referendum for Kosovo's independence from Yugoslavia would take place within three years.

The Yugoslav government agreed to the first condition, and rejected the second and third, saying they were a gross violation of their sovereignty and the independence of their country. The one breaking point that Yugoslavia refused to negotiate is that they will not allow a foreign occupying army. The only constant U.S. demand was that NATO

troops must be based in Yugoslav territory. The U.S. refused to allow the Yugoslav delegation to meet with the Albanian delegation, or even to see 56 pages of the 80-page agreement.

Myth #2: Yugoslavia is the aggressor in this conflict and Milosevic is a "new Hitler."

Reality: No Yugoslav soldiers, planes or ships are attacking another country. The conflict in Kosovo is an internal issue. Yugoslavia is a small developing country of 11 million people, being attacked by 19 countries, including the biggest military powers in the world, which have a combined population of more than half a billion people. Milosevic has been demonized much like Saddam Hussein was during the war against Iraq. A State Department official admitted: "The demonization of Milosevic is necessary to maintain the air attacks." (*San Francisco Chronicle*, March 30, 1999)

Myth #3: Clinton, Albright and the Pentagon generals were moved to action by their concerns about "ethnic cleansing" and human suffering.

Reality: The U.S., Germany and other NATO powers played a key role in breaking up Yugoslavia in 1991-92, arming and supporting secessionist movements. It was the International Monetary Fund that demanded an end to "special privileges" for Kosovo in the 1980s. For 45 years after World War II, the many nationalities that made up Yugoslavia lived together in peace. In the civil wars, which followed the break-up of Yugoslavia, there was much bloodshed and human rights violations on all sides. The biggest single act of "ethnic cleansing" was the forced removal of 600,000 Serbs from the Krajina region of the former Yugoslav Republic Croatia by the U.S.-trained and armed Croatian military in 1995. More than 55,000 of these Serbs, who were resettled in Kosovo, are among the hundreds of thousands of people made refugees by NATO bombing and the conflict in Kosovo. (Julia Taft, Asst. Secretary of State on C-SPAN, March 29, 1999) The U.S. "concern" about removal of people from their homeland is very selective. This is not surprising: Virtually the entire continent of North America was "ethnically cleansed" of Native people to make way for the U.S. and Canada, two NATO powers. U.S. policy has supported, with arms and money, the removal of Kurdish people in Turkey and of Palestinians, East Timorese, Guatemalan indigenous people -- the list goes on.

Myth #4: The U.S./NATO goal is to protest the rights of the predominantly Muslim Albanians in Kosovo.

Reality: U.S. officials pretend to care about the rights of Muslim people in Yugoslavia, while their policy of sanctions and war kills 300 mostly Muslim Iraqis every day -- half children under 5 years old.

The Pentagon is not a humanitarian relief agency and the corporate-owned politicians don't really care about any people -- Albanians, Serbs, Kurds, Iraqis, or the poor and working people of this country.

This war is killing people of all nationalities in Yugoslavia, and poisoning their land with radioactive depleted uranium (DU) weapons. Hundreds of thousands of Iraqis, U.S. veterans and their families are suffering from Gulf War Syndrome as a result of depleted uranium poisoning. The Clinton administration and the Pentagon talk about "supporting our troops" before they go into battle, but then deny medical benefits to veterans who suffer from the after-effects of Agent Orange from Vietnam or DU from Iraq. This war will cost many billions of dollars, money stolen from housing, health care, education and other social programs. Each cruise missile costs \$1 million. The only ones who will benefit from this war will be the military-industrial complex and big business.

The real U.S./NATO goal is to break Yugoslavia into ever-smaller pieces and bomb its people into submission. The Balkans is a strategic region, a crossroads between Western Europe and the oil-rich Middle East and Caspian Basin. The U.S. has established, in only five years, military domination of the former Yugoslav republics of Croatia, Bosnia and Macedonia as well as Hungary and Albania. The only hold-out has been what is today the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. This is the real reason why Yugoslavia has become the target in the Balkans, just as it is the real reason that Iraq has become the target in the Persian/Arabian Gulf region.

Myth #5: U.S. news reports are balanced and impartial, giving us the true story.

Reality: What we see today is a gross distortion of the facts. The media is dominated by big business interests, and functions as a Pentagon propaganda machine. For political purposes, the suffering of only one group, the refugees leaving Kosovo, is shown, while the other Yugoslav victims of the NATO bombing are virtually ignored. *The New York Times*, CNN, ABC, CBS, NBC, *The Chronicle Examiner*, and others have given a very slanted view of events in Yugoslavia, to justify the massive bombing. General Electric, one of the countries largest military contractors which supplies engines for NATO jet fighters, owns NBC and co-owns MS/NBC.

Myth #6: The U.S. is trying to defend the rights of the people of Kosovo because they have no rights.

Reality: All minorities in Yugoslavia have much greater rights than national minorities have in the United States or in Europe. While bilingual education is under attack from California to New York, Albanians in Kosovo have schools and tuition-free universities in the Albanian language. Medical care is free for all citizens in Yugoslavia. Albanian separatists boycotted the government school system and health care system. To refuse to use what exists is very different from being denied these rights.

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Myth and fact

The population information commonly given out is also misleading. For example saying that 90 percent of the population is Albanian is not accurate. This figure actually includes all non-Serbs in Kosovo -- Romanis, Turks, Egyptians, Goramacs (Serb Muslims from Kosovo) and others. At the Rambouillet talks, the Yugoslav delegation represented not only Serbs, but all of the nationalities in Kosovo, including two Albanians, while the Albanian separatist delegation consisted only of Albanians.

The religious differences are also exaggerated. While many Albanians are Muslim, 10 percent of the Serb population is also Muslim. In addition, 25 percent of the Albanian population is Roman Catholic such as Mother Teresa, who was a Kosovo Albanian.

Myth #7: The KLA (Kosovo Liberation Army) is a genuine army.

Reality: The KLA is a terrorist force similar to CIA-funded Contras used by the U.S. in Nicaragua in an effort to overthrow the government. NATO uses the KLA to justify sending U.S. troops to occupy and further break up Yugoslavia. The KLA did not exist one year ago. Suddenly, it has the latest high tech weapons.

What kind of liberation struggle calls for the bombing of its own people and for a foreign army of occupation on its soil? This is the KLA demand. The Society of Albanian American Students released a call for a demonstration on Wednesday, March 31 "organized with the invitation of the U.S. State Department to support NATO strikes, and above all, will focus pressure for Ground Troops in Kosova and Arms for KLA." Al Gore addressed the crowd. The signs of KLA supporters at rallies organized by the U.S. State Department -- "NATO Bombing, Just Do It," "KLA is NATO" -- express the real relationship between the KLA and the U.S. government.

Myth #8: The NATO bombing is not the cause of the refugee crisis.

Reality: There were no waves of refugees until the beginning of the NATO bombing on March 24. The U.S. government used similar scripts of defending civilians and stopping massacres to justify massive bombing campaigns in both the Vietnam and Iraq wars. Again and again it was the massive bombing that created refugee crises. The London Sunday Times interviewed refugees and found: "Nor was there much fodder for NATO propagandists among the 200 or so refugees waiting to register at a Skopje district police station early on Friday [March 26]. Mirvei, a tall Albanian woman clutching her four-month-old baby, looked bewildered when asked if Serbian troops had driven her out. 'There were no Serbs,' she said. 'We were frightened of the bombs.'"

--from *Clare House News*

Stop the bombing ! !

Modern high tech warfare is perfectly capable of killing this planet.

That is not a small matter. It is a matter of absolute life or death concern.

There was a photograph on the cover of the *Chicago Tribune* on May 7, that I consider to be instructive.

The caption of the photo reads "Smoke billows from a burning oil refinery in Novi Sad, Yugoslavia, a frequent target of NATO strikes. Serb officials say the bombing is causing air pollution and contamination of the Danube River."

The photo proves that claim to be true. The smoke is billowing up from the fire and it is thick and ugly and threatening. And the river Danube looks like a river out of a nightmare. The banks of the river are lined with dead fish and the water itself looks oily and brown.

We have, after all, been bombing oil refineries, chemical plants, military bases and who knows what else. Imagine the toxins that have been released. You don't help a people by killing their river.

What we have to understand is that if we keep this up, it won't matter about our war. It won't matter about our politics. It won't matter about our economies. It won't matter about our history or our culture or anything else that we generate out of our busy little brains.

Remember: that river flows into our common ocean. And according to its very nature, water

circulates. This poisoning will already affect every man, woman and child on earth.

Each day the bombing continues, more harm is inflicted on the natural world. And it is the natural world which is the only source of the air, water, and food we depend on to maintain our continued existence on this physical plane.

So the fate of the natural world is not entirely unimportant to human beings.

And then of course there is the potential of the war to spread and worsen. We did, after all, bomb the Chinese Embassy. We said it was an accident. I've read American columnists who don't believe it was accidental.

And from what I've seen reported, the Chinese sure as hell don't believe the bombing was accidental.

There is a concept from the doctor's oath that says that in any given medical situation, a necessary precaution is to do no harm. In other words, don't make the situation worse.

I think that is a useful criteria.

It is obvious to me that we have made a bad situation immeasurably worse.

I'm not saying that our side is completely morally responsible for what is occurring. But the fact remains that it is our bombs and our missiles that are inflicting such great harm on our Earth Mother.

High tech military activity, no matter what its human rational or excuse, is, at its base, an assault on the natural world.

As such it threatens us all.

And as to our claim of moral superiority, which we use to justify our actions, it's just got to be understood that the American nation is a very accomplished ethnic cleanser. We ethnically cleansed this continent from sea to shining sea.

Ask the Cherokee people about the Trail of Tears. Ask the Lakota people about Wounded Knee.

You could ask the people of hundreds of other tribes about their experience, except that there isn't a single person left to speak.

You may remember from your U.S. history courses the high sounding phrase "manifest destiny." We thought it was our manifest destiny to expand westward.

Manifest destiny is ethnic cleansing.

Like it or not.

A little humility would be appropriate here. We are not better than other people.

And the damage that we are inflicting on the natural world puts all of humanity and all of its future at risk.

We must come to our senses.

We must find a better way.

For all our sakes, please stop the bombing !

--Gregg Brown



SEEING*RED

Show Biz, Bloody Show Biz

by Steve Eckardt

It was a theatrical disaster, a director's nightmare: there was the U.S. President delivering a major war address, using refugees to pluck heartstrings, appealing to history and human decency, and then delivering the emotionally-climactic soundbite "this is America at its best."

What a time for news of two American atrocities--oops, two cases of "collateral damage"--to stage an appearance. But there it was.

Yes, there was one U.S. war plane rocketing a passenger train, incinerating its occupants. And there were others dropping anti-personnel bombs on a village, shredding several families and their animals, the scythe of explosion-driven razors actually cutting off trees at their trunks.

Of course the orchestra and chorus sprang into action, trying to cover over the moment. There was a grand rendition of the favorite tune

"Whatever it is, blame Milosevic." Meanwhile script doctors scrambled to rewrite. "How's this sound," one of them no doubt said: "we say the pilot was targeting a bridge when--to his horror--a train suddenly appeared in the picture, too late to stop the missile."

Sounds great. Sounds even better when the critics writing reviews for the next day's papers are also invested in the show. (One, the unbelievably callow and gaggingly cheerleaderish New York Times foreign policy expert Thomas Friedman, calls the United States "the Michael Jordan of nations.")

Making sure

Too bad a military spokesman had to go and casually mention the pilot's *second* [italics] pass and launch of *another* [italics] missile that also struck the train. [13 April, MacNeil-Lehrer News Hour (PBS).] Yes, you read that right: the pilot went back and rocketed the train again.

Funny how that little piece of information didn't appear in the next day's papers.

But then the President's punchline shared the same fate, even though it was certainly destined to be the top headline on hundreds of U.S. newspapers. "This is America at its Best," they would trumpet -- the line not only inspiring, but the tag-line for the whole show.

But the script writers realized it wouldn't look good above pictures of the skeletal, half-melted passenger train--even highly-sanitized--in the next day's papers.

Too bad -- what a waste. Can you imagine a more eloquent--and accurate--catch-phrase for the air war against Yugoslavs and Kosovars? "This is America at its best."

Less than 48 hours later U.S. planes made four separate attacks on columns of Kosovar refugees, killing more than 60 of them.

"This is America at its best" -- it's perfect.

* * * *

Of course accidents will happen. And there's no disputing that hundreds of thousands of Kosovars have been reduced to refugees and that hundreds of them have been killed by Serbian death and terror squads, thanks to an unspeakable program of "ethnic cleansing" carried out by the forces under the control of Slobodan Milosevic.

There's also no disputing that this is just what Washington wants.

After all, U.S. pretensions of humanitarian concern are more than a little suspect given Washington's behavior during the Holocaust, during the Rwandan genocide, or during previous murderous "ethnic cleansing" in Yugoslavia.

But beyond lack of credibility, there's Washington's public description of independence-minded Kosovars as "terrorists" - a declaration which green-lighted Milosevic's previous (unopposed) assault on Kosova.

And to this day Washington remains a staunch opponent of independence for Kosova. (A small, but telling, reflection of this is its [and its news media's] use of the Serbian spelling "Kosovo.")

Removing a roadblock

In fact the first obstacle to Western plans for Yugoslavia is Kosova. Consider the scene: Yugoslavia is shattered. Stalinist-led nationalism created "ethnic cleansing," killed over 200,000 Yugoslavs, and tuned over two million into refugees -- all of which allowed 60,000 NATO troops to (thank you very much) occupy large swaths of the country.

But there were two uncleansed places where people were not yet atomized -- first and foremost Kosova where Kosovars hit back at oppressive Serbian nationalism with strikes and demonstrations, where people defiantly built (first) alternative schools and other institutions and (second) a popular revolutionary army to defend themselves. (It didn't hurt that two years ago one of the great revolutions in modern European history erupted in neighboring Albania [however inadequate its immediate outcome], in which people armed themselves, the army and the police, and even created some revolutionary forms of self-government.)

"Terrorists!" cried Washington and then sat smugly back while Milosevic's butchers were sicced on the Kosovars. "An internal matter," Washington and Belgrade agreed, although Washington began a cynical show of "concern" over "human rights abuses" as the news of atrocities began to get out.

But last year's offensive failed. Instead, some 90% of Kosovars turned to embrace the insurrectionary perspective of the Kosova Liberation Army, which was over-run with volunteers in a matter of weeks.

Washington issued an ultimatum to the KLA and its supporters: disarm and let us occupy Kosova with 28,000 Western troops. And one to Milosevic: get your troops out and let ours handle this.

Both essentially refused, perhaps foolishly not realizing they were dealing with the Michael Jordan of nations

Success

And so Washington has been bombing Kosova for over a month -- rather a strange "humanitarian" measure, to say the least. Last night alone (25 April) over 50 missiles fell on Pristina, Kosova's capital.

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And Milosevic's butchers handle the work on the ground.

But (ironically) Serbia itself was the other place where people still stood up against tyranny. Don't forget that little over a year ago tens of thousands of opponents of Milosevic demonstrated against the government for a record 76 straight days. Or that an alternative trade union that opposes the government and backs autonomy for Kosova now claims a membership representing 20% of the working class.

And so Washington's forces pound Serbia too -- the bombardment gone to 24 hours now, like a convenience store. The Serbian working class is the target -- factories, bridges, oil supplies, municipal heating and electrical plants are bombed -- hurting primarily working people and strengthening Milosevic at the expense of his popular opponents

Troops

Could the Western objective be any clearer? It's nothing less than the military occupation of all of Yugoslavia. But that's possible only once the insurgent Kosovars--and secondarily the domestic opponents of Milosevic--are shattered.

Already some 60,000 troops occupy Bosnian and other wastelands.

Yet fools and propagandists debate whether ground troops are needed, forgetting (or pretending to) the original ultimatum: 28,000 Western troops and a Kosova cleansed of the KLA -- or else war. That was the content of the "peace agreement" which, left unsigned, was the immediate cause of the NATO air assault.

In other words, the choice has always been between troops or . . . troops.

And so we have war, war progressing exactly according to plan. Kosova is bombed and burned, more than half its people in flight. Serbia is militarily softened up, defenses wrecked. I

Next, Imperial troops will take Kosova, as Washington and Belgrade arrive at a partition agreement. Yugoslavian war criminals will retain power, at least until the Empire is ready for the next bite.

So if there's an occasional embarrassing slip on the stage, if body parts land while a misty-eyed President emotes "This is America at its best," so what? Until new actors seize the stage with a script of their own it's the only show in town.

America --and the world-- at its best.

This article first appeared in the online magazine <SeeingRed.com> which currently features dispatches from Yugoslavia, reports from Kosova, discussion among readers, plus history and analysis from a range of views. Reprint rights freely granted as long as the source is given.

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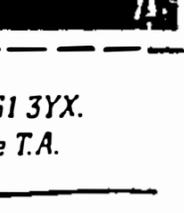



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The Death Penalty

by Steve Eckardt

May 21st was a Friday, a day for deeds that would be too stale for Sunday's papers.

It was also the day U.S./NATO warplanes bombed a prison in northwestern Kosova. Bombed it long enough for Western reporters to travel from Belgrade to view the damage ... and then flee for their lives as the warplanes struck it again.

Count 19 dead and scores mangled -- until Sunday, when another attack killed at least another 80.

What kind of people deliberately order the bombing of captives? Captives held by a dictatorship, no less, people likely to be oppositionists. (Indeed, according to the 23 May New York Times, "many of [the 1,000 inmates] were in for 'terrorist' offenses, meaning association with the Kovos[a] Liberation Army.")

What kind of people, waging what kind of war?

Target: Kosova

Washington rains explosives on Kosova--blowing up far more Kosovar civilians than Serbian tanks--and sending up to 900,000 fleeing for their lives. "NATO has destroyed our struggle [for independence]" bitterly said one farmer now in a refugee camp, aptly describing the obvious consequences of the war.

And in fact, Washington remains an implacable opponent of independence for Kosova even as Milosevic's ethnic cleansing plainly demonstrating the justness of this demand. (One small reflection of this is their repeated use of the Serbian name "Kosovo" instead of the Albanian one, "Kosova.")

Indeed, NATO spokesmen admit that nearly 70 days of relentless and massive bombardment "has taken out only 2.5 percent [i.e. 1,000] of the 40,000 Serbian soldiers and special police operating in Koso[a]," according to the 26 May

Chicago Tribune. (By the way, this is a rather extraordinary claim: military casualty figures have been astonishingly absent in the ocean of statements and news coverage--for reasons that speak for themselves. Then there's the striking--and utterly amorphous--use of the slang euphemism "taking out.")

Lest the real targets out this assault somehow be unclear, two separate attacks left at least 155 Kosovar civilians dead in the town of Korisa. And now new light--thanks to taped conversations between the bomber and his commander --has been shed on the first, the infamous attack on a refugee caravan: a written transcript of radio communications shows the U.S. pilot objecting to his orders, declaring "these are just tractors and cars" before being ordered to proceed with bombing.

Shades of the attack on the passenger train that "happened" to be passing over a bridge when it was rocketed -- supposedly a tragic accident except for the (widely unreported) second rocket attack.

Meanwhile its Stalinist cat's paw, Milosevic, unleashes his paramilitary terror squads (not, by the way, the balking draftee Yugoslav army) to a wage yet another unspeakable campaign of ethnic cleansing, a campaign enabled by NATO's bombing.

Yet--with profound cynicism--the refugees themselves are used to justify the U.S./NATO war. This despite the blatant refusal of Western forces to act against the actual ethnic cleansers, the trumpeted--but unused--super-weapon Apache helicopters being the most telling and absurd example.

Target: civilians

May 21st was a Friday, a day for deeds that wouldn't get play in Sunday's papers.

It was also the day that U.S./NATO bombers began blowing up Yugoslavia's power stations -- an act that leaves Milosevic's forces untouched, but which cuts off water, power, refrigeration--and communication with the outside world--for nearly all of Belgrade and its surroundings.

But Yugoslavia's infrastructure has been targeted from the beginning of the war, especially factories -- which in Yugoslavia provide not only jobs, but also house medical clinics and child care facilities. The importance assigned to military value was shown by the leveling of the main cigarette factory in the first days of the war.

And if all factories, roads, bridges and utilities potentially aid the military, when can we expect strikes against high schools--containing, of course, future members of the army?

Meanwhile blown-up columns of refugees, passenger trains, hospitals, and neighborhoods are brushed aside as "collateral damage."

But can bombing a city produce anything but "collateral damage?" The best "military target" in Chicago, for instance, would be O'Hare, the country's busiest airport. Next might be the University of Chicago where a nuclear chain reaction was first achieved. And then, maybe --if CIA map readers were picking targets-- the lakefront entertainment center going by the unfortunate name of "Navy Pier."

Target: Eastern Europe

So what kind of people bomb captives, factories, utilities and victims of ethnic cleansing? Take it from Walter J. Rockler, a prosecutor at the Nuremberg trials, now courageously opposing his own government: *war criminals* Says Rockler, "the murderously destructive bombing campaign in Yugoslavia ...constitutes a continuing war crime," an accusation he carefully substantiated by international law in the Sunday 23 May Chicago Tribune (as well as in other venues).

He's the best of a significant minority of Establishment figures that has variously attacked the war's conduct as "excessively brutal" (ex-President Carter), "immoral" (syndicated columnist Stephen Chapman), "blundering" or "a failure" (scores of daily newspaper editorials). Even the war criminal Henry Kissinger has weighed in with this gem: "What kind of humanism expresses its reluctance to sacrifice military casualties by devastating the civilian economy of its adversary for decades to come?"

But while Kissinger aches for humanism of military body bags and Carter demands appropriate brutality, the editorialists stating the obvious--that the war to save Kosova has been a disaster for Kosovars--are either liars or cretins ... or (most likely) both.

U.S. policy has *always* been to foment and deepen civil war and ethnic cleansing in Yugoslavia, beginning with Bosnia, through the Krajina, to Kosova -- part of the eternal goal of shattering of the "Communist" countries of eastern Europe. And so the war--with its hundreds of thousands of refugees, the terror squads and mass rapes--has been a great *success*, not a failure.



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In fact the openly-stated goal of the current war at its beginning was the military occupation of Kosova by 28,000 Western troops - that, plus withdrawal of Serb/Yugoslav forces and disarming of Kosovar independence fighters. U.S./NATO began bombing only because Milosevic refused to accept *that*, not because of his oppression of Kosova.

Why military occupation, like the nearly 60,000 troops already occupying Bosnian and Macedonian remnants of Yugoslavia?

Seems the workers and farmers of Eastern Europe--and yes, Russia and China--still stupidly believe in as free medical care, affordable housing, secure retirements, nearly free public transportation and unemployment payments that don't expire until you have a new job -- notions obscenely offensive to ostensibly-triumphant free marketeers.

Seems that Western tools like Milosevic and Yeltsin -- pro-capitalist gangsters and murderers -- are doing inadequate jobs in reducing their populations to abject beggary. Only war--and direct military rule by the West--can do the job.

Target: working class

Meanwhile the same Western governments are carrying out the same war against rights and living standards on their own populations, if less violently at the moment.

So what kind of people--waging what kind of war--bomb captive Kosova independence fighters? The same kind of people--waging the same kind of war--that impose an embargo that has killed over 450,000 Iraqi children?

And what kind of people--waging what kind of war--put oppositionists like Mumia Abu-Jamal (and scores of proven innocents) on Death Row?

Capitalists--waging class war--whose answer for those who don't to bow before the diktats of their Empire is ... the death penalty.

Read eyewitness reports from Yugoslavia and a dozens of other articles and background material at the online magazine [SeeingRed](http://SeeingRed.com), found at <www.SeeingRed.com>. Send comments or questions to <seckardt@aol.com> or <red@SeeingRed.com>.

Target: KLA

May 21st was a Friday, a day for deeds that wouldn't make Sunday's papers.

It was also the day U.S./NATO war planes bombed a key base of the Kosova Liberation Army (KLA). "[We acted] on the assumption that it was still in the hands of the Yugoslav Army," claimed NATO spokesman Jamie Shea.

But the base "was seized by the rebel [KLA] six weeks ago ...[and] has often been featured in reports by the international press, including television broadcasts and still photographs," as the 23 May [New York Times](http://www.nytimes.com) carefully described the fact that even couch potatoes knew the base was KLA.

But then the KLA has suffered far worse than bombing at the hands of Washington and its NATO vassal allies. After all, it was the U.S. ambassador's pointed public description of the KLA as "terrorists" which green-lighted Milosevic's first ethnic cleansing campaign last fall, a vicious campaign aimed at destroying the KLA's popular base, a war which left hundreds dead and some 200,000 Kosovars homeless in the brutal mountain winter.

Then there was the full force of Washington's power -- blackmail, threats of mass violence, pay-offs, and psychological operations -- brought against the KLA during the Rambouillet "peace" negotiations to surrender their arms and their aims ... and accept occupation by 28,000 NATO soldiers.

And the fearsome result -- the removal of the pioneer independence fighter Adem Demaqi who (as Australian journalist Michael Karadjis put it) "led the KLA politically until its leaders signed the Rambouillet agreement ... who had long proposed that an independent Kosova could, on the basis of self-determination, join with Serbia and Montenegro in a new, equal federation ...ideas [which] gained wide support from Serbian opposition elements in a wide-ranging "Serbian-Albanian" dialogue held in 1997...."

Here was someone--a popular leader advocating a new society of tolerance, equality and socialism--who stood as the key obstacle to U.S. plans for ethnic cleansing, war, and Western military occupation.

On his way out Demaqi warned that the new KLA leadership imposed by Washington would try to "convince Albanians to accept capitulation by launching illusions and empty promises." In other words the fantasy that Washington was an ally here to help ... and probably make some people very, very rich. Illusions which pave the way for Washington's intentions: national catastrophe for the Kosovars.



Whether the U.S. can succeed in subverting the entire KLA to becoming a tool is still up in the air, although reports from the region regarding KLA cheerleading for NATO bombing--and Demaqi's utter disappearance--are not promising.

In any case, analyzing this process has nothing to do with the repulsive slanders currently being circulated (especially on the Internet) by Stalinists bent on portraying the armed popular movement as nothing but "a heroin mafia ...organized and armed by the CIA."

The veracity of these claims--long on historical examples on CIA/drug dealing/contra operations elsewhere, but entirely lacking any current evidence against the KLA (except the guilt-by-association smear that drug smuggling occurs in the region)--should be judged by the attendant claim that there are no hordes of refugees from Kosova, just some people hired to live in camps and pretend. --S. Eckardt



Reviews, reviews, reviews

A glimmer of industrial strength light

Recently there has been a severe absence of industrial bands on the scene. Many bands are coming forward wearing the label of industrial, but fall short of delivering and soon go to the place that houses the one hit wonders. Luckily there is a light that surpasses just that of a glimmer and is instead a full blown torch. Razed in Black, a Hawaii based industrial band just released a third album, and it looks like they are about to get the credit that has been a long time coming.

Razed in Black is a guitar and synth oriented band with intricate rhythm expressions that comes off as a bucket of shattered ballistic

plastic and rusted steel. The sound is one that is truly unique. Behind all of its complex simplicity Razed in Black is one man. Romell Regulacion does all of the music, lyrics and mixing. He has also worked under the name of Transmutator doing mixing for bands like Switchblade Symphony and an album or two.

Razed in Black first hit the club scenes with the single "Cyberium" in 1996. It was followed by a remix EP in 1997 and a sophomore album by the name of *Sacrificed* in March of 1999. Razed in Black and Transmutator were also featured in the movie *Carrie 2: The Rage*.

Currently Romell is taking Razed in Black on the road with some carefully chosen live musicians including Ivan from STOMP on drums. Transmutator just finished a Japanese tour, and now Razed in Black is touring the west coast with the hopes of showing up in the Midwest and east coast over the summer. As recognition grows through touring Razed in Black will prove to be a musical force to be reckoned with.

--by Catherine Hohenzy

Red Cross/Kosovo Refugee Benefit at Gallery

On May 28 The Gallery in Downtown Normal hosted a Red Cross benefit for the Kosovo refugees. Five local bands donated their time to the worthy cause.

Stumpwhoopt was the first to play a simple and organized set, musically sound yet rather lackluster. The Marinated Brains put on an entertaining show. The band describes themselves as "Patsy Cline on acid" but country twang was not one of the things they seemed to be full of, but nevertheless they put on a good show.

The Moonlight Stranglers was the third band. A trio of crossdressers that played an extended set of Tex-Mex rockabilly with a bit of metal thrown in, put on the best stage show of the night. Between the bad '80's prom dresses, wigs and beer fight, there was little left for the audience to desire.

Blue Bonnet Plague was a favorite of clubgoers, but the set was comprised of little other than a drunk lead singer screaming about America and his thoughts. Still, the audience stayed, and

loved every minute of the show despite the ramblings of a drunk person.

The night was impressively closed by Elevator Shoe. A group that played acid jazz was appreciated by anyone who likes jazz or appreciates good music. They were forced to cut their set a bit short because of time restraints, but still made an impact.

All in all the benefit was a success. The fact that each band donated time for such a worthy cause made the show well worth the time.

--Catherine Hohenzy

Zine of the month

This time around I want to tell you about a marvelous magazine, *Conscious Choice*.

Conscious Choice (920 North Franklin #202 Chicago, IL 60610-3179) is mayhap one of the most self-empowering zines in America today. Month after month *Conscious Choice* doesn't just report on alternative health, the green movement, counter culture, food, the global environment, women's health issues, and a myriad of holistic subjects--they get people involved. They cause positive change, create solutions and give logical answers to hard questions. There is a warm and friendly feel to *Conscious Choice*. Receiving this gem is like a pile of letters from good friends.

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Reviews of all sorts of odd things

You may be wondering, "That towanda isn't reviewing as many books as she used to—what's up with that?" We'll, you're right. My past employment gave me the opportunity to peruse all sorts of literature—but now that I'm free of that hell hole... I don't get to read as much now, but it's still a hell of a trade off. I still get to the library, though and Amazon.com rules.

The following is a sample of things I have picked up and devoured over the past two months.

The Bad Girl's Guide to the Open Road by Cameron Tuttle

I ordered this through Amazon.com and I was so happy when I came home for lunch and saw the package on my porch. I was having a particularly stressed-filled day, and to top it off, I heard that my office would be moved to the basement. Yuck. After I tore open the package, I was delighted to find that the book was covered in hot pink plastic! I spent the next 40 or so minutes laughing out loud to its content. It put me in such a good that when I got back to work, I found that my office would now be on the main floor. It'll be huge to boot. Coincidence, I *don't think so*.

So, if you've been following my writings for the *Post* the last few years, you know that I love to road trip. Packthecooler,grabsomecd'sandgetinthecarandgo,girl. There's nothing like leaving your old life behind to discover new towns and the culture that surrounds it.

The book is part travel practicalities and travel humor. Tuttle explains how to change a flat tire, then later throws in "things to do with a pantyliner." (Keep that one pair of underwear smelling fresh for days: wet it, stick it to your hand, and clean the inside of your windshield.) Hey, that's practical advice too.

The four sections included in *Bad Girls'* are: Start your engine, with tips on what to bring, what to wear, and where to go; On the Road, which includes rules, extra-car-ricular activities, safety, and speeding tips; Off the Road tells of fun on the road, the power of peeing, joy of eating and the necessity of sleeping; the End of the Road wraps up why one should go on a road trip in the first place.

Blurbs from the book.

rearview mirror perspective n. a mood-altering shift in perspective when you realize that problems in your life are smaller than they appear.

Rush'n Roulette v. speeding when you already have two points on your driving record.

Gohemian n. one who lives an unconventional life on the go; adj nomadic; v to go wild.

Ms. Tuttle is indeed a bad girl. This book will help you to be one as well.

S.C.U.M. Manifesto

Valerie Solanas

I recently re-watched the film "I Shot Andy Warhol" (which is excellent, by the way) and became interested in reading the book that inspired the film, *S.C.U.M.* (the Society for Cutting Up Men) *Manifesto*. Not the lightest reading material, as you might imagine. And let me clear up one thing before you all say that towanda is a manhater. Not true. It's not that I hate men, it's just that most of the people that I have a deep hatred for – are men. I also hate some women, you know, so I don't discriminate.

Valerie Solanas was an incredibly gifted writer and revolutionary at a time when feminist thought was on the verge of erupting. She also suffered from paranoia. She had a great sense of humor though, for one of my favorite lines in the movie went something like this: "this book is dedicated to: all men, married women and other degenerates."

Strangely, I found myself reading and nodding to some of her thoughts. Could it be true, do I believe men are the weaker sex in every sense? Do I, like Valerie, wish all men would be violently wiped off the end of the earth? Hmm... She states, "*The male is a biological accident: the Y (male) gene is an incomplete X (female) gene, that is, has an incomplete set of chromosomes. In other words, the male is an incomplete female, a walking abortion, aborted at the gene stage.*" Woah. Solarias goes on to also state that "*because of his obsession to compensate for not being female combined with his inability to relate and to feel compassion has made of the world a shitpile.*"

S.C.U.M. is an angst filled manifesto of Solanas' views on males and how women can band together to abolish everything that is male. Her reasoning? "*The male is nonetheless, obsessed with screwing; he'll swim a river of snot, wade nostril deep through a mile of vomit, if he thinks there'll be a friendly pussy awaiting him.*" Okay, that I kinda agree with, but how about, "*Every man, deep down, knows he's a worthless piece of shit.*" I found myself hearing a female comedian, like Margaret Cho or Janeane Garofalo saying those same words, but in a comedic sense. Is that because we secretly wish it were true? Laughing at something, but thinking, "Yeah!" underneath? Or, is it because we find the writings ludicrous? Maybe it's a mixture of both.

After Valerie shot Andy Warhol, she spent some time in mental hospitals. She died in San Francisco in 1988 at the age of 52 from emphysema and pneumonia.

Oh, Valerie, we could really use you today.

Death to the Pixies the Pixies

Oh, the good old Bloomington Library. Where else can I find a copy of a kick ass c.d. for free? (plus they have PJ Harvey, Ani, Patti Smith, Iggy...!)

I was instantly a fan when of the Pixies when I heard Doolittle – specifically the video for "Here comes your man" on MTV's pre-120 minutes (remember when it used to be on every night at 10:00 or 10:30 p.m. for a half hour). During was sophomore year, my roommate and I would watch the 30 minute segment then switched to Letterman. In the video, though, the band just stood there motionless as they sang this campy song. Well, needless to say, I was instantly hooked and they were one of my favorite bands while I was in college. Although, I wandered away from the Pixies in the last few years, I recently rediscovered them– they have two new albums (old stuff) "Live at the BBC" and "Death to the Pixies". "Death to the Pixies" is a double cd that has all the old favorites, both live and studio versions. You'll find such faves as "Debaser," "Tame," "Gigantic," "Gouge Away," and "Crackity Jones." It costs \$24.00, but it's worth every penny.

The Hot Rock Sleater-Kinney

A few years ago, when Spin was still kinda cool, they had a half page interview with a new "girl" punk band. They reviews for the self-titled album were stellar, so I bought it. I loved it. Two albums (and four years later) I'm still a fan of this three piece band. Sleater-Kinney consists of Corin, Carrie and Janet. Corin has a hell of a set of lungs – and Carrie's softer voice backs them up perfectly. The Hot Rock is more polished than the two previous albums released by the group, and it's more ambitious – both in songwriting and vocals. Anything by Sleater-Kinney is highly recommended.

Ani DiFranco Concert Redbird Arena, May 1999

The first time I saw Ani play it was at IWU's Student Union. There were only 200 or so people in the room. The next few years, Ani moved to the bigger arena of the Shirk Center. Not able to hold her fans, Ani now plays at the huge Redbird Arena across town at ISU. This past concert welcomed 4,000 fans. Although Ani's performance was awesome, I miss the smaller settings of the student union and the Shirk Center and the intimacy that the performance rendered. It kinda sucks when a lot of people like the same bands/artists as you do, because this is what generally happens. Oh well, maybe more people will listen to her music and take it to heart. Ani still sings with raw emotion, though, and I'll always find myself at her concerts.

–towanda!



Welcome to the Addiverse, man

Oh, the seventies—I *loved* the 70's! And, despite the loss of many brain cells towards the end of that fabulous decade, I can still fondly remember KC & the Sunshine Band, tight T-shirts, disco jeans and the original sightings of mood rings and pet rocks. Remember life before MTV? Before the Space Shuttle? Before Compact Discs? Before Prince and Madonna? Before Chrysler Neons? Before the "Simpsons"? Shoot, before VCRs? Before sanitary napkins WITHOUT belts? Before Ellen, Melissa and Martina? Before SUVs? Back when Elton John was straight? In the 70s, my classmates & I had never heard of Stonewall or gay rights or gay *anything*...well, besides the gay character on "Soap," but we didn't get what that meant back then. There were no gay heroes or gay mentors, not at least any I knew...there weren't any gay people in the 1970s, were there??? Hey, man, it's time to go back to the land of 8-tracks, smock tops and Farrah-feathered hair...to a land filled with Gremlins, Pintos and Pacers...to a time when station wagons were cool and satin clothing was hip.

The decade for me started with a passion for music. The first 45 (that's a record, not a revolver) I ever purchased was a diddy by the Monkeys. Davy Jones-groovy! My favorite TV show was "American Bandstand" with Dick Clark. I can still clearly recall seeing the Village People on AB. "Macho Man", "YMCA", "In the Navy"! My sister owned all the Village People albums (hmm, and I'm the one that turned out to be gay-go figure) and we would dance around the bedroom as the Village People albums went round and round on the turntable. (Turntable, albums...remember

those??) Then, there was Bobby Sherman. "Julie, Julie, Julie, do you love me?" Bobby was *dreamy*! My sister chose Chad Everett over Bobby—what did she know? David Cassidy was far out. David—er, Keith Partridge was the man of my dreams; I wanted to *BE* David Cassidy, (Uh, let me clarify—I didn't want to be a man, per se—I wanted to be David Cassidy/Keith Partridge and he just happened to be a man. Don't want anyone out there thinking "a-ha!" See, lesbians really DO want to be men!") Keith Partridge got to wear groovy clothes and have long hair and have all sorts of girls chasing after him...who wouldn't want that? Friday nights in the early 70s were spent watching "The Brady Bunch" and the "Partridge Family" on TV (the original episodes—not the ones on "Nick at Night"). During the daytime, Susie, Em, my sister and I would "play" the "Partridge Family" instead of playing "house." I always had to be Keith, while my sister and Susie would argue about who would be Laurie—so we'd always end up with two Lauries. Em would be the Mom, Shirley. No one wanted to be Danny. I had my guitar and my Partridge Family 8-track. Who needed anything more?

The decade started out with Blood, Sweat and Tears. Shaft. The Bee Gees. Bread. Simon & Garfunkel. The Jackson Five. As time progressed, I moved on to Bruce Springstein. Saturday Night Fever. Donna Summer— why did someone leave her cake out in the rain? Barry Manilow. Chicago. Boston. The Steve Miller Band. Wings. Andy Gibb—Andy and his white satin shirt and pants. We celebrated the Bi-centennial, watched Skylab fall out of the sky. We watched intellectual shows such as

"Welcome Back, Kotter", "Starsky and Hutch", and "Emergency!" I voted for George McGovern in a school mock election. Funny—I don't remember the war. It truly was an innocent time for me...at least until I got to high school!

My true idol of the 1970s was Karen—I'm-on-the-top-of-the-world-Carpenter, 'cause she played the drums and so did I. Karen and I were cool, man. We were girl drummers. There was nothing more far out than *girl drummers*. I wore out that Carpenters album—you know, the one with the brown cover. If you are over 30 years old, don't even *pretend* to not know which album cover I'm talking about. I was in love with Karen Carpenter. I was going to BE Karen Carpenter (guess I was done trying to be David Cassidy by this point). I'd play my drum pad while Karen played on the album. I had the beat, man! Sing, sing a song...

Most importantly in the 1970s, there was "Cahrlie's Angels." Ask any REAL lesbian which angel she liked best and I'll bet you my salary that she'll say Kate Jackson. What lesbian didn't pine over Kate Jackson? Sure. Farrah had the poster (THE poster of the 1970s) and Jackyln Smith was beautiful, but Kate was the REAL angel. She was better than buddy on "Family," although Buddy sure had a lot more "lesbo potential" than Kate did.

In the fourth grade, I had this fabulous pair of pants, man—red and blue stars on white bell bottoms. I'd wear 'em with a red, white and blue striped shirt and crocheted vest. A fashion statement, indeed. Elephant pants were the best, if your teacher didn't make you go home and take them off (they were dangerous on the playground or something). My friend, Em, had a great pair of red elephant pants and she got sent home in fifth grade, right in the middle of a "jump sticks" game.

My first memory of anything "gay" doesn't surface until 1974. That's when a bunch of eighth graders surrounded me and started asking—interrogating—me, "Are you a lesbian?" Hey, these really were innocent times—I didn't even know what a lesbian was, let alone if I was or wasn't this thing they were calling me. The group of girls pressed closer and closer. "ARE YOU A LESBIAN?" I could not escape the circle of girls around me. I started crying not because they thought I was a lesbian but because I was so afraid of them. My favorite teacher came and broke it up. I cried all through homeroom that day. Not a very nice introduction to homosexuality. My, my, my how things have changed since then, eh? How many 7th graders do you know today that don't know what a lesbian is??!

It all turned out fine. The war ended, disco died. Skylab didn't fall on anything too important, Nixon was not a crook, streaking went out of style, sanitary napkins got little sticky things on them, the original Angels were replaced by others, T-shirts weren't so tight, John Travolta went on to make other hit movies, and Michael Jackson moved on to plastic surgery and Elton came out as gay.

—written for Diversity of Rockford
Volume 1, issue 5, May/June 1999
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Eternal refugeeism

The night was overcast but the roar of the tanks could be clearly heard. As dawn broke their barrels were visible through the mist. When the sun broke the horizon the village was herded up. The papas and big brothers were taken to a ditch and shot. The beautiful women simply disappeared.

Every valuable, document, and family photo were thrown into bags. Into buses they were crammed. Hour upon hour was the journey. By late afternoon the guard stole the bags at the check point. Off the bus, now was the forced march to nowhere. The hum of suffering shook the leaves.

As they crested the hill the sea of people was visible, thousands, thousands, thousands of mothers with trembling hands holding babies with "the thousand year stare." Puddles of tears, and a cacophony of growing hungry stomachs.

Strange food was thrown at them by chefs with guns. More buses arrive, sheets of plastic shield the falling rain. Fear put to sleep for the moment.

New busses arrive, off to the airport that was surrounded by soldiers with many uniforms and young faces. To a far off land they go, to a beautiful sounding place called Guantanamo Bay, (you remember Guantanamo Bay, from the opening scenes from the movie "Scarface"). The only thing that they still hold onto was that they would return to their burned out homes where the cycle would repeat.

The cycle repeats, and repeats and repeats. Why is it that we seem to be surprised when these crises pop up? It has always been like this. As when the Jews fled Egypt; as when the Druids fled the Romans; as when the Native Americans were pushed away by the European invasion. The millions who took flight from the Nazis, the South Vietnamese who bolted from the rapidly encroaching North. Or the Cambodians who sought safety from the Khmer Rouge. The cycle repeats and repeats and repeats.

War is not the only source of refugeeism, the tribes the many rain forest vanish as the forests are clear cut and burned. In Pakistan there are female "sexual refugees" whose only crime was being sexual beings for which they are scalded with boiling water, set on fire, stoned to death, splashed with acid, before or after their throats are cut. Throughout Asia there are (female) "gender refugees" if they survive infanticide, they may be lucky enough to flee their misogynist oppressors.

As the natural disasters hit the lower Americas, those that reached the U.S. borders were turned back with nothing to return to. When the Rwandan refugees screamed for help, nobody listened until the carnage was passe.

In the U.S. there is a new human underground that mirrors the one the fleeing African American slaves used. Only this time it is being utilized for abused children hiding from their abusers. Ironically these penultimate victims have turned the tables and now Meghan's Law has created a refugee population of abusers that nobody wants in their neighborhood. Likewise eventually most of the 1.8 million incarcerated humans will be set free with few places that will welcome them. Sadly, 7 to 10% of these humans were wrongly imprisoned, yet they too go into "the criminal refugee" mix, forever stigmatized by their conviction and the press.

The cycle repeats and repeats.... Being a refugee seems to be a part of the human condition, nor do you have to be traumatized to qualify as a refugee. We have "cultural refugees" who run from the boredom and creative void of their hometowns, so they go find a hometown that fits their mind set. We have "lifestyle refugees" who seek like-mindedness elsewhere. If you're a Mormon, you go to Salt Lake City; if you're Hindu you go to the Ganges River; if you're gay you'll certainly find free expression in San Francisco. If you're perpetually hip you hang in Amsterdam. But this is not the human crisis that we must deal with now. I'm not making light banter of Kosovo by comparing "cultural refugees" with the terror that besets those poor people, but these meccas have much to teach us. The intentional communities (communes, retreats, kibbutz, etc.) have created pockets of like-mindedness for centuries and they may provide long term solutions to this ugly side of the human condition, like all of the afore mentioned social niches. Intentional communities build themselves to suit lifestyle similarities and a common mind set of their citizens. But how do you link up refugees with a place where they belong?

The answer may be, in part, technology, which can chip away at this problem like no other time in history. The internet could be used to create a database of safe havens and "landing pads" for when a situation calls to secure displaced persons. By matching like minded people, languages, life styles and mind sets, the "culture shock" of being relocated could be lessened.

The lessons learned from places like battered women's shelters, crisis centers, and disaster relief organizations could be applied on a grand scale. Former military bases throughout the world could be converted into "soft" permanent refugee centers where relief agencies could be centralized, food stuffs could be stored on a massive scale, mental health treatment and the particular medical symptoms could be effectively dealt with.

Since many of the refugees have little or nothing to return to, instruction could be given in metatecture (alternative architecture) so they can build inexpensive, yet sound structures. They could be likewise instructed in

metaculture (alternative agriculture) so they can sustain themselves, and so on. For the millions of individual problems of refugeeism we must create specialized solutions that deal with these reoccurring crises as a "constant state of existence" rather than treating these flash ups of unspeakable tragedy with a knee-jerk response.

We must all work on this human catastrophe with whatever means possible; by writing letters to our government representatives, donating time and assets to those best prepared to pragmatically deal with crisis and most importantly to pray and stop this madness.

--Nikolai Alexanderovich Zarick
Architectonic conceptualist

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News from Voice for Choice

Nation earns low marks on a woman's right to choose

Women in 1999 have fewer reproductive rights than their mothers had in 1973, according to a new report issued by the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (NARAL) in January. The eighth edition of "Who Decides? A State-by-State Review of Abortion and Reproductive Rights" documents the continuing threat to the right to choose posed by the anti choice majorities that swept into power across the country with the 1994 elections. Among the key findings are these disturbing facts:

-- In 1998, states enacted a total of 62 new anti-choice laws, a 13 percent increase from 1997.

-- Only 22 pro-choice laws were enacted, making anti-choice legislation almost three times more likely to be enacted in 1998 than pro-choice legislation.

-- In 16 states, the governor and majorities of the House and Senate are firmly anti-choice.

"There is a disturbing disconnect in our nation between the legal right to choose abortion and access abortion services," said NARAL

President Kate Michelman. Michelman and NARAL Legal Director Elizabeth Cavendish released the report at a Washington, D.C., press conference in January.

The widespread introduction of legislation requiring health insurance plans to provide equitable coverage for contraception represented a bright counterpoint to the otherwise bleak findings. Thirty-one such bills were introduced in 19 states, compared with 14 bills in eight states in 1997.

This year's "Who Decides?" includes many new features, including a state grading system based on the research compiled for the report. Analysis of the states' abortion restriction showed that 25 states earned an F or D, indicating they gravely imperil the right to choose:

-- Eighteen F's and seven D's contributed to the nations overall score of 69 percent, a grade of D+.

-- As the state which most fully protects the right to choose, Washington scored 100 percent. Only four other states and the District of Columbia earned A's: CA, CT, OR and VT.

-- Louisiana was the lowest scoring, with restrictions of 10 of 13 anti-abortion categories. Seventeen other states received F's: AL, GA, IN, KN, KY, MI, MS, MO, NB, ND, OH, PN, SC, SD, TN, UT and VA.

The findings of "Who Decides?" should serve as a reminder that, 26 years after Roe v. Wade, the right to choose is in jeopardy and that pro-choice Americans must mobilize to defend and protect this freedom.

--from Pro Choice Voice
(Spring '99 NARAL News)

More contraceptive choices in pipeline for Americans

(Pantagraph - AP) - In Germany, women can use a handheld computer to determine when sex most risks pregnancy: It flashes red if the woman should avoid intercourse, green if there's little chance she's fertile that day.

Canadian women can slip in a little contraceptive sponge before sex. European women have access to a hormone-releasing IUD that prevents pregnancy for five years, dramatically lowers menstrual blood loss and is even touted to shrink fibroids.

Don't look for such options in the U.S. yet, but they may be coming in a few years. Critics say the U.S. has been left behind as other countries embrace new contraceptives that provide women more choices in birth control. More than half a dozen new options deemed important by family planning experts sell abroad but not here.

"The idea that the U.S. could be so many years behind other countries is pretty astonishing," said Dr. Felicia Stewart, a contraception expert at the Kaiser Family Foundation. But "the long, long drought" is easing, said Dr. Micheal Burnhill of Planned Parenthood.

First, the Today sponge is making a comeback. Although various contraceptive sponges sell abroad, Americans have had none since Today quit selling in 1995 because its maker broke U.S. manufacturing rules. New Jersey's Allendale Pharmaceuticals has bought Today from the previous maker and plans to begin selling by fall.

Also on the horizon:

-- Unipath Diagnostics Co. has begun U.S. trials of the Personal handheld computer, which calculates pregnancy risks depending on the day of a woman's menstrual cycle. Studies in Europe suggested that with strict use, it's about 94 percent effective.

Unipath recently won U.S. approval for a different computer, the ClearPlan Easy, to help women trying to have babies discover their most fertile days. It costs about \$200.

-- IUDs, which sit in the uterus to block conception, are the world's most popular birth control device. But Americans were largely scared off by the Dalkon Shield, which was banned in 1975. Modern IUDs, including two U.S.-sold versions, have proven safe, but scientists hope new versions sold in Europe, the Mirena and the Flexi-T, will attract more Americans.

Mirena releases tiny amounts of the hormone levonogestrel into the uterus. Providing five-year contraception, it dramatically decreases menstrual blood loss and may reduce life-threatening ectopic pregnancies and uterine cancer.

The Flexi-T was created by a German doctor who determined that older IUDs are too big for many women. The tinier IUD "would fit better into the average size uterus," said Dr. Freedolph Anderson.



-- The Population Council is testing a vaginal ring, a flexible plastic ring that steadily emits low levels of hormones.

-- The FDA in 1996 approved "Norplant II," a two-capsule version easier to insert and remove, but Wyeth-Ayerst has yet to market it.

The council is also beginning to develop an implant for men that would use a chemical to suppress sperm production.

Birth control options in the U.S.

(AP) -- Sterilization, birth control pills, and the male condom are the most widely used forms of U.S. birth control. Also available:

-- The Reality female condom. sold without a prescription, it is a lubricated polyurethane sheath that is slipped, closed-end first, into the vagina. The open end remains outside, partially covering the labia.

-- Diaphragms, available by prescription and sized by a health professional for proper fit. Women apply a spermicide before inserting it until the dome-shaped disk covers the cervix

-- Cervical cap, available by prescription and sized and used similarly to a diaphragm.

-- Depo-Provera, a contraceptive hormone injection given by a health professional every three months.

-- Norplant, six matchstick-sized capsules surgically implanted under the arm's skin to steadily release a contraceptive hormone for up to five years.

-- Intrauterine devices (IUD's), T-shaped devices inserted into the uterus by a health professional. Two are sold in the U.S.--the Paragard that works for up to 10 years, and the Progestasert, replaced yearly.

-- Vaginal spermicides, available without prescription in foam, cream, jelly, film, suppository or tablet forms.

Also, Preven kits are a collection of "morning after pills" and a pregnancy test. This emergency contraception may prevent pregnancy up to three days after unprotected sex.



ISU prof infiltrates electronics plant

High Tech Betrayal
by Victor G. Devinatz
Michigan State University Press
ISBN 0-87013-493-0

It's almost standard political pabulum these days—"We'll build a high-tech economy with high tech jobs." But are those "high tech" jobs any better than the old-fashioned, hands-on, sweat of your brow kind?

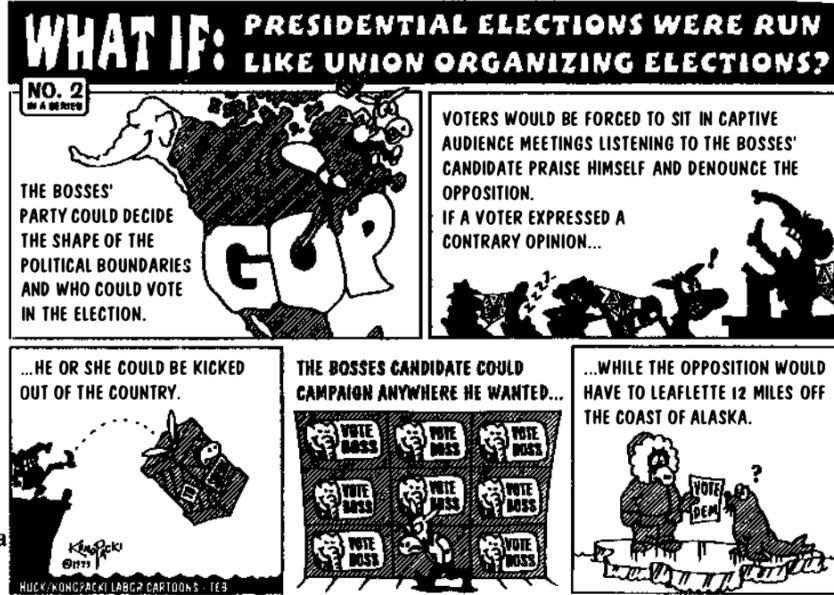
There was no promised land in the high-tech factory for current Illinois State University professor Victor Devinatz, who went "undercover" in a Chicago medical technology firm while a graduate student. Without a union, Devinatz found a minimum wage, degrading job, describing the ordeal in his new book, "High-Tech Betrayal."

Devinatz went to work at a firm he's labeled "Biomed." He found the job during the 1980s recession, when numerous factories were closing their doors and labor was ready and willing to accept any offering.

Having heard the political promises about how high-tech was different than traditional workplaces, Devinatz was curious. Would the same rigor of traditional factory work be present? Would there be opportunities for advancement and learning new technology?

The young graduate student found the future full of the familiar same-old, same-old. The work was monotonous, brain-numbing and exhausting. Minority and immigrant workers filled the most onerous tasks. Raises and relief were promised, but workers still labored at minimum rates with no benefits, under constant pressure for more production.

While some high-tech workers, because of their education and skill, might enjoy more control over their work, production of electronic equipment is still an assembly-line process. Workers, whether here in the U.S. or in developing nations, have their jobs reduced to its simplest facet. Soldering components and assembling computer boards is a tenuous



connection to the modern age, as the factory's production rigor would be familiar to a sweatshop hand.

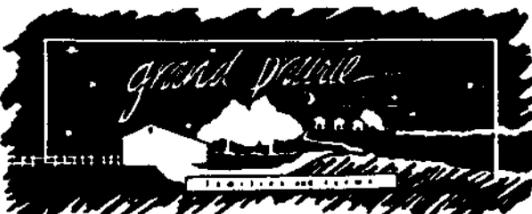
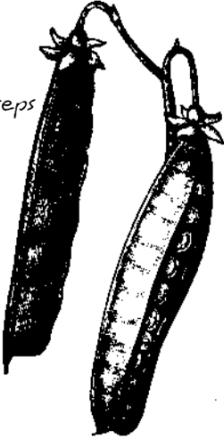
Unionization is difficult in this industry because of its easy mobility. Workers organizing in one nation can easily be replaced by those in another. Unlike factories of old, with their drop presses and lathes, a high-tech factory can uproot and move rather quickly. And because the jobs are low paid and deskilled, traditional union methods don't always apply.

Devinatz does an admirable job of charting his own path from graduate school to factory line. Even though he was not handling heavy items, the work pace and poor ergonomics made for an exhausting day. The constant pressure by supervisors for faster production was a recurring mantra. He found his fellow workers "toughing" it out, not willing to challenge the system, instead hoping for better opportunities down the road.

During his final months on the job, Devinatz attempted to organize a union; he was quickly found out and fired, although supposedly for another offense. He found his fellow workers divided by age-old lines of race and gender, unable to see a common opportunity for self-improvement. Like many, Devinatz became a statistic, fired for attempting to union organize. Although illegal to fire someone for union efforts, weak U.S. labor laws allowed his firm, and many others since, to triumph.

If you want to go behind the scenes in a modern, high-tech factory, check out Devinatz' volume. He does an excellent job balancing his own personal experience on the job with a solid, scholarly analysis of the high-tech industry and the challenge of organizing it. And he raises hard questions about our economic future, glimmering with a electronic future, that still treats workers in a 19th century manner.

reviewed by Mike Matejka
for the Union News
May 1999

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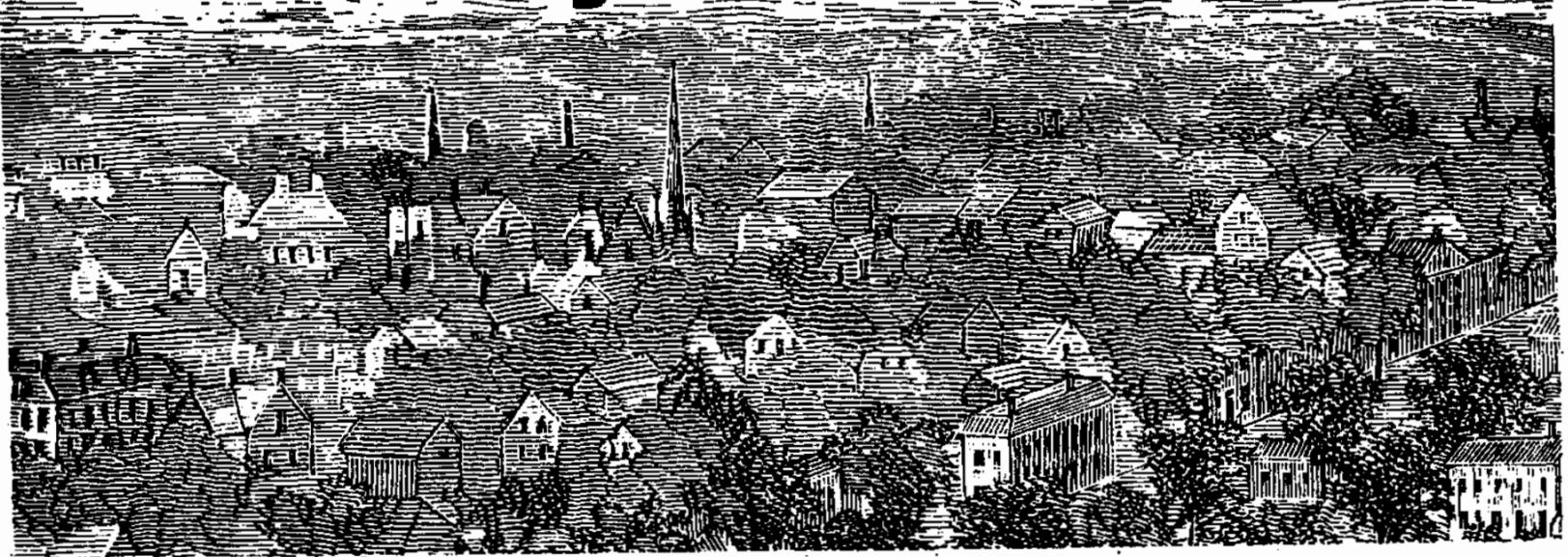
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