

Eastern Illinois University

The Keep

The Post Amerikan (1972-2004)

The Post Amerikan Project

10-1-2000

Volume 29, Number 5

Post Amerikan

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Recommended Citation

Post Amerikan, "Volume 29, Number 5" (2000). *The Post Amerikan (1972-2004)*. 249.
https://thekeep.eiu.edu/post_amerikan/249

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Straw bale housing

Lots & lots of poetry

Movie reviews



POST AMERIKKAN



BLOOMINGTON/NORMAL VOLUME 29

FREE

NUMBER FIVE OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2000



The Closing of the American Mind

Address Correction Requested
Post Amerikan
P.O. Box 3452
Bloomington, IL 61702

Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit Number 168
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...

David, Linda, Ralph and 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
 Gaston's Upper Cut, 409 N. Main
 Heartland Community College, Raab Rd.
 Lizard's Lounge, 612 N. Main St.
 Shockwaves, 415 N. Main
 Twin City Exchange, 411 N. Main

Normal

Babbitt's Books, 104 W. North
 Co-op Records, 503 S. Main
 Coffeehouse, 114 E. Beaufort
 Deadpan Alley Records, 107 W. North
 Koffee Kup, 205 W. North
 Mother Murphy's, 111 W. North
 Three Crows, 1410 1/2 S. Main
 Movie Fan, 202C. W. North
 Normal Public Library, 206 W. College Ave.

Peoria

Bicycle Bus, 2022 N. Wisconsin

What's your new address?

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

Name _____

Street _____

City/State/Zip _____

Due Date:

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

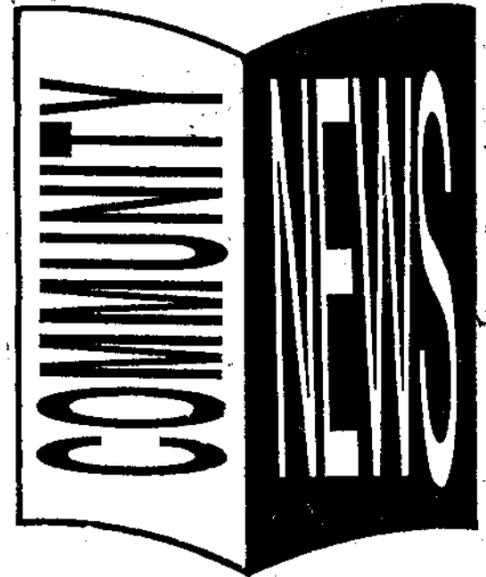
Dec 15

Good numbers

Advocacy Council for Human Rights.830-2521
 AIDS Hotlines
 National.....1-800-AID-AIDS
 Illinois.....1-800-243-2437
 Local.....827-AIDS
 Alcoholics Anonymous.....828-7092
 Amnesty International-ISU ...Miami@ilstu.edu
 Animal Protection League.....828-5371
 Better Business Bureau.....1-800-500-3780
 Big Brothers/ Big Sisters828-1870
 Boys & Girls Clubs of B/N.....829-3034
 Clare House (Catholic workers).....828-4035
 Countering Domestic Violence.....827-7070
 Dept. of Children/Family Services....828-0022
 Gay, Lesbian & Bi teen drop in center.828-3998
 Gay & Lesbian Resource Phonenumber...438-2429
 Habitat for Humanity.....827-3931
 Headstart.....662-4880
 Home Sweet Home Mission.....828-7356
 IL Dept. of Public Aid.....827-4621
 IL Lawyer Referral.....1-217-525-5297
 Incest Survivors Support Group.....827-0790
 LIFE-CIL.....663-5433
 Lighthouse (substance abuse treatment)....827-6026
 McLean Co. Center for Human Services...827-5351
 McLean Co. Health Dept.....888-5450
 McLean Co. Housing Authority.....829-3360
 McLean Co. Humane Society.....664-7387
 McLean Co. Peace Coalition.....828-7070
 Mid Central Community Action.....829-0691
 Mobile Meals.....828-8301
 Narcotics Anonymous.....827-4005
 National Health Care Services/
 abortion assistance.....1-800-322-1622
 Occupational Development Center....452-7324
 Parents Anonymous.....827-4005
 PATH (Personal Assistance Telephone Help)..827-4005
 Phone Friends.....827-4005
 PFLAG(Parents, Families and Friends
 of Lesbians and Gays).....663-0831
 Planned Parenthood (medical).....827-4014
 (bus/couns/edu).....827-4368
Post Amerikan.....828-4473
 Prairie State Legal Services.....827-5021
 Project Oz.....827-0377
 Rape Crisis Center.....827-4005
 Runaway Switchboard.....1-800-621-4000
 Salvation Army.....829-9476
 Safe Harbor Mission.....829-7399
 TeleCare (senior citizens).....828-8301
 Unemployment comp/job service.....827-6237
 Western Ave. Community Center.....829-4807
 Youth Build.....827-7507



Community News



True Crime author visits BPL

True-crime author Carolyn DeLoach will speak at 7 p.m. Thursday, October 26 in Bloomington Public Library's community room. Her recent book *Shadow Chasers: The Woolfolk Tragedy Revisited* has changed history. For more than a century, historians and Macon, Georgia, folklore depicted Tom Woolfolk as the crazed ax murderer who, in 1887, killed nine members of his own family. Authorities arrested Tom, the eldest son and the one survivor of that tragic night, although he proclaimed his innocence. Tom was convicted and sentenced to death.

Now, over a century later, DeLoach proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that Thomas Woolfolk was innocent. In her book, DeLoach not only proves that the wrong man was executed for the crimes, but that the real killers were protected by the political forces of the State of Georgia, and went on to kill again.

Carolyn DeLoach, an analytical chemist by trade, has spent nearly 30 years investigating the Woolfolk murders. She is a dynamic speaker on investigative research. Through her investigation, she has recovered valuable artifacts from this case including what is believed to be the actual murder weapon used in 1887. Her book leads readers through the tangled web of tragic events in one of the most famous murder cases in the state of Georgia.

DeLoach will autograph books after her talk. Refreshments will be available.

Computer software for persons w/ low vision @ BPL

People with low vision are now able to use the computers at Bloomington Public Library. Thanks to a donation from the Lions Club, the library has added ZoomText software to eight computers. ZoomText is an accessibility software that offers 2X to 16X screen magnification on computer monitors. With just a few clicks the low-vision computer user can enlarge on-screen text from the library's online catalog to the Internet. The software also has the capability to read aloud from any Windows application, from complete documents to web pages.

The software opens the world of the Internet, online databases, and the library's online catalog for people who have low vision. It is available in the Adult Services Department at Bloomington Public Library.

Illinois Women Artists: The New Millennium

September 19th through October 29th, 2000
University Galleries of Illinois State University

Illinois Women Artists: The New Millennium showcases fifty works of art celebrating the wit, conviction, and creativity of women artists in Illinois. The purpose of this exhibition is to create a greater awareness of the achievements of women in the arts. "Women's artwork has been little recognized during the past centuries," according to Charlotte Arnstein, president of the Illinois Committee for the National Museum of Women in the Arts. "This exhibit enhances the growing awareness of the major contribution women are making to the world of art. It is one avenue the Illinois Committee will use to put the spotlight on the outstanding works being created by Illinois women today."

This exhibit is being sponsored by the Illinois Committee in cooperation with selected museums and galleries in Illinois and the National Museum for Women in the Arts in Washington, D.C. Programming is also partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts

Council, a state agency. It has traveled to venues including the National Museum for Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C. and the Illinois Art Gallery/Illinois State Museum, Chicago.

Artists: Angela Altenhofen, Barbara Blades, Sharon Bladholm, Deborah Boardman, Sarah Capps, Mary Ellen Croteau, Jan Dean, Mary Dritschel, Kathleen Eaton, Gail Elwell, Jane Frey, Debra Grall, Annelies Heijnen, Nancy Hild, Leslie Hirshfield, Pearl Hirshfield, Cheryl Holz, Cheonae Kim, Jamie Kruidenier, Riva Lehrer, Carla Markwart, Geraldine McCullough, Sandy Meyer, Mariene Miller, Kit Morice, Gladys Nilsson, Valia Oliver, Erin Palmer, Laurel Jensen Paul, Barbara Pihos, Claire Prussian, Judith Roth, Jeanine Coupe Ryding, Barbara Santucci, Davida Romer, Eleanor Spiess-Ferris, Evelyn Statsinger, Sue Stotlar, Naomi Sugino, Maggie Thienmann, Barbara P. Tuch, Laura Wasilowski, Rebecca Wolfram, Sigrid Wonsil, and Betsy Youngquist.

Gallery Hours: Saturday-Monday: 12:00-4:00
Tuesday: 9:39-9:00
Wednesday-Friday: 9:30-4:30

Walking

Walking focuses on several contemporary artists who make work about walking and by walking. Walking in cities may be understood primarily in sociopolitical terms (tourism, commuting, surveillance, and the Situationist *dérive*), while in the rural context, the focus shifts to explorations of leisure, pilgrimage, and nature. Several of the artists use walking as a drawing technique, by attaching pencils, solvents, and video cameras to their bodies during the act. Informed by the rich traditions of romantic art and literature, and scientific or cultural studies of human movement, these artists take a most familiar activity and use it to generate complex works about place, presence, and human agency.

Artists: Francis Alys, Eleanor Antin, Janine Antoni & Paul Ramirez Jonas, Hamish Fulton, Sharon Harper, Jin Lee, Tom Marioni, Matthew McCaslin, Curtis Mitchell, Francois Morelli, Rudolf Stingel, and Nancy Spero





All God's children grow

Much media attention of late focuses on the plight of so-called Gypsy scholars, that nomadic group of college teachers on the margins of the academy, the "professors" most likely to be teaching your kids' Intro to Physics, Philosophy, and/or English 101 classes. Ranging from a series of "Doonesbury" strips a couple of years ago to a July 2000 issue of *Newsweek*, I've seen one pundit after another comment on the systemic and pervasive abuse of full-time temporary and adjunct (or part-time) faculty in all types of post-secondary institutions. From Podhunk Community College to Princeton University, Gypsy scholars now comprise forty-five percent, nationally, of all undergraduate faculties, in all disciplines, according to a 1999 press release from the Illinois Education Association.

Traveling with the ghost of Tom Joad

From Garry Trudeau to the part-timers assigned to huge gang offices, all seem to agree that the situation is scandalously exploitative. Adjuncts and temporaries earn roughly a quarter of their full-time counterparts' salaries for teaching the same courses, and rarely get health benefits. Though they pay into the pension fund, and can claim what they've paid with accrued interest upon retirement, they will not be eligible for the matching funds that their full-time, tenure-track colleagues will receive. Finally, temporary and adjunct faculties have absolutely no job security. Their class loads may be cut at the last minute, suddenly and precipitously reducing their income, to make up the class load for tenure-line counterparts. Or they may not be assigned anything at all for the following semester. While Fall usually provides comparatively well, the attrition rates and enrollment drops that mark the arrival of Spring in the academy make the Gypsy scholar's employment situation tenuous at best.

True, there is no such thing as security. Anything could happen at any moment, but there is such a thing as stability. In other words, while a huge meteor may plummet through earth's atmosphere in the next fifteen minutes, crushing me as I sit here composing, odds favor this article seeing the next press run.

Windmill tilting, anyone?

So why do they do it? If by "they" you mean post-secondary institutions, there's a one-word answer: money. Relying on Gypsy scholars represents huge savings in the general budget, an important consideration, particularly when Congress gets stingy about shooting a few of our tax dollars education's way. These savings free college and university administrations to benefit the students, not to mention the parents who usually foot most of the tuition bills, by investing in new equipment, new classroom buildings, and, most important of all, adding to administrative staff and offices. So, if a college administrator wants to head off embarrassing questions about "the quality of education my kids are going to get" from prospective students' parents, s/he need only point to the new student union, rec center, and state-of-the-art-smart-computer classrooms. You'd be amazed at how easily such irrelevancies deflect nascent questions about expanding class sizes and harried teachers who have to rush from one campus to a second campus to a third, just to scrape together the rent.

However, if by "they" you mean the Gypsy scholars themselves, then the moment arrives when I must abandon my cynical posture and admit (I'm turning scarlet as I write this) to my own quixotic quest.

What a long, strange trip it's been

Just last August, twelve years after leaving my home institution in Southern California for the cornfields of Central Illinois, I finally did it. After all these years of banging on the doors of the academy's inner sanctum, I somehow cried, "open, sesame!" I've defied the odds. I got a tenure-track job. As a newly appointed Assistant Professor of English, I can proudly say that my persistence, tenacity, focus, and discipline finally paid off. I've clawed my way to the bottom of my profession.

Don't get me wrong; I'm very happy indeed to have stability, not to mention a salary where I make three and one-half times what I made as part-time faculty at the same college. My prescription plan, as part of my benefits package, saves me two hundred dollars a month at the pharmacy (that's a precise figure, not an exaggeration), representing a pay raise all by itself. Moreover, I have hospitalization, a retirement plan, and best of all, a desk of my own.

Gypsy scholars—won't treat 'em like human beings, can't shoot 'em

As a newly-minted Ph.D., I'd come to the local state university as a full-time temporary, like all of the other adjuncts and temporaries I've met, full of ambition and energy, committed to giving one hundred and ten percent to my profession. I have always taken teaching seriously, and I make every effort to give my students their money's worth. But I also knew I had to publish my way into a permanent job, and pursued that goal with idealism and vigor. Publication meant more to me than just playing by the rules of the game. However, even as my skills as a teacher established my pedagogical reputation, I just couldn't seem to break through that print barrier, no matter what I did. Meanwhile, the five-year time limit on my temporary contract clicked away. My career clock was running out.

Oh, not that I didn't simultaneously make a valiant effort to find another position. I applied for every conceivable faculty appointment: in the first two years, just for tenure-track jobs, but in the remaining three, for other temporary positions as well. In 1990, for example, I sent out two hundred and fifty applications, just during the months of October and November, the height of the job-hunting season in the Modern Language biz. All the while, I kept my nose pressed to my computer screen, presenting at conferences, making contacts, and trying to place manuscripts. When job rejection letters mentioned the number of applicants, those numbers cited from two hundred to a thousand potential candidates. Over that five-year period, I got exactly four interviews, none of which panned out.

In the meantime, this university press held onto my book for a year before rejecting it, and those scholarly journals my article(s) for six months, sometimes longer, before rejecting them. When I finally did place my book, in 1994, and another article, after three years of making the rounds with that, my five years had expired. I was on

MY SALARY?
TWICE AS MUCH
AS I EXPECTED...
BUT ONLY HALF OF
WHAT I'M WORTH!





weary when they roam

the road with all the other academic migrants, briefcase at my side, desperately trying to pick up part-time teaching anywhere within an hour's commute, racing from one site to another in my beater 1983 Toyota Tercel.

"I'll teach for food!"

Those first couple of years, 1994 and 1995, were grim, just the worst. I had some part-time teaching at two different colleges, but I only made about eight grand at it for fiscal '94. Obviously, I had to supplement my income, and I did, by cleaning houses, as a shipping clerk at Owen's Nursery (you Bloomington-Normal readers will be awed when I tell you I lasted seven months before I told them to take their job and shove it), managing a bookstore, working in the meat department at Cub Foods.

Finally, in near-despair of my academic career being anything more than an impossible dream, I re-trained as a massage therapist, because, ironically, I needed something to fall back on. I didn't want to invest two or more years in getting another graduate degree, only to find that field overcrowded. The school of massage therapy I attended offers a nine-month program, and is local, which allowed me to juggle my work and school schedule(s) with relative ease. Besides, feeling rejected by the profession I had wooed so ardently, I must confess to a rather vindictive satisfaction in moving as far away from being an English professor as humanly possible.

Yet though I felt dissed, spurned, even a failure at my chosen profession, I couldn't seem to get away from it completely. My determined efforts to get hired as a technical writer or education bureaucrat got me exactly nowhere, so I had to keep teaching part-time just to stay alive, even though at my lowest point I should have thought I would have leapt at the opportunity to leave the classroom behind. Like the lover who won't meet you halfway at salvaging the relationship, but who resists your best efforts at a clean break, college teaching kept pulling me back.

Don't it make you wanna go home?

In March of 1996, halfway through my program in massage therapy, a friend, then as now teaching in the Illinois Department of Corrections, helped me get my foot in correctional, college-level education. My income doubled, then increased again by half. I also taught a much wider variety of courses—literature, drama, speech, welcome additions to my adjunct's staple diet of composition and rhetoric. Most surprisingly of all, I found myself developing and refining my teaching skills—even my personality—in ways I would never have otherwise imagined. After faltering for the first few days with my prison class, I hit my pedagogical stride, pumping away like a sprinter going for that Olympic gold medal.

Incarcerated students can be an enormously rewarding population with whom to work, sometimes maddening, but always lively. Now, I finish out my last prison contract savoring the bittersweet knowledge that it's time to move on to the next phase, gratified to have discovered my gift for connecting with people who have the odds against them. Believe me, that knack comes in as handy with teenagers unsure of what they want to do with their lives as it does with criminal miscreants of the underclass, though I'm not always sure there's that much difference between them.

My daddy didn't raise no fool

Because my spanking new position is at a community college, I don't have the publish-or-perish, academic sword of Damocles hanging over my head, though I am taking up anew my scholarly research and fiction writing. Several projects that for which I literally did not have time, because I was working three jobs, are now getting a good dusting off, so I can have things out by Christmas break. I am also developing a humanities-survey course for health-care field majors, focusing on representations of the body, thus uniting my training and skills as both a practicing massage therapist and an educator. Fortunately, my department chair and her superiors are quite enthusiastic about my course proposal, thus presenting me with an opportunity I would not likely find elsewhere. Besides, after all I've endured I take *nothing* for granted.

Yet I am not quite sure I've answered my own question fully enough. Why do Gypsy scholars cling to the profession by their fingernails, working nights at Federal Express processing centers so they can get health-care, but still teaching days for peanuts, free grade books, plus all the disrespect they can handle?

Not quite twenty mill a movie, but, hey, it's a living

Aspiring teaching scholars have much in common with aspiring actors, believe it or not. Long years of training, usually overwhelming numbers of rejections before somebody finally takes a second look and gives you a break, and, of course, overwhelming odds against succeeding at all. Only twenty percent of the current Screen Actors' Guild's membership make better than five thousand dollars a year at their profession. Similarly, only about twenty-five percent of the yearly crop of Ph.D.'s finds tenure-track positions.

Somewhere, I ran across a remark Tom Hanks made about how he decided to become an actor. As a young community college student, he had no clear idea of what he wanted to do with his life. Serendipitously, he ended up taking a course requiring students to read a specific play, and then see it performed. Sitting in the audience, enthralled by what was unfolding on stage before him, he had an epiphany. No matter what he had to do, whether work as a stage carpenter or an actor, he wanted to be part of the world of theater. Though he didn't say as much, my impression was that he had found home.

Every Gypsy knows home is where the heart lies

When I went off to college, I too was unsure of what I wanted to do with my life. Having been rudely dispossessed of my childhood dreams of becoming a marine archaeologist, I floundered during my first semester, before taking some English classes. I had always loved literature, read widely and voraciously, and had vague ambitions of becoming a writer.

During the Spring semester of my freshman year, then during the following Winter Intercession (six weeks dividing Fall from Spring semesters), I encountered two remarkable English professors, Mary Carruthers and Roger B. Salomon, offering courses on "Chaucer's Minor Poetry" and "Don Quixote and The Western Heroic Tradition," respectively. Teaching scholars of extraordinary gifts, they paid their students the compliment of sharing their research-in-progress with us, listening seriously to our questions and comments. Inspired by their examples, stimulated by their classroom challenges, I knew then, shortly before my twentieth birthday, that I wanted become a teaching scholar. I would take my Ph.D. in English; I would do whatever I had to do to become part of the world of the academy. I had found home.

--Dr. Attitude

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FUTURE FEATURES

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Guest Psychics • Artwork by local artists
Consignment items welcome



News from MCATF

Dining With Friends start-up meeting

The MCATF Board of Directors will host a start-up meeting for Dining With Friends 2001 at the October Board meeting. Plan to come at 6:30 PM, October 9, Connections Community Center (the Task Force Office at 313 N. Main Street, Bloomington).

Please help MCATF and those who ask for our assistance priorities in 2001 by coming to this meeting. Bring your ideas for enriching Dining With Friends and share them with us.

Except for this year, MCATF has held this event annually since 1997. In those three years, the community has donated approximately \$40,000 to support MCATF programs. These programs include care services and financial assistance to people in our community who are living with HIV; HIV prevention education and outreach efforts; the information and referral programs; and advocacy for those living with HIV and issues which affect them.

2000 Board of Directors election

Each fall MCATF holds an election to fill open director seats on its board. In groups like ours, the directors are essentially "working directors," not figureheads. The directions taken by MCATF each year are dependent on who is elected to these seats.

This fall, there will be three director seats open and three alternate director seats open. Alternated Directors do not vote at Board meetings nor may they be elected to an office. David Bentlin and Margot Mendoza were elected in December 1999 for two-year terms extending through December 2001. Denise Goff moved up from alternate to fill Arlene Valentine's seat and her term expires in December 2001. Jacqui White-Cole moved up from alternate to fill Craig Cadonic's seat and her term also expires in December 2001. Two seats, currently held by John DeNight, Bruce Lang expire this year and must be filled by the

election. Vacancy left by Brian Sylvester's resignation has not been filled by the Board at press time, but will be filled by this election. All Alternate Director seats are for one year. The three candidates with the highest vote totals will be seated as Directors for a two year term ending December 2002. The three candidates with the next highest vote totals will be seated as Alternate Directors for one year terms. Officers are elected from the directors by the new board each year and serve one year terms.

Nominations officially opened September 11 and will close October 14. Ballots will be mailed to members by November 13 and must be in our possession by December 13, the December Board of Directors meeting, to be considered valid. Ballots received by that time will be opened and counted at that meeting. Those nominated should plan to be at that meeting so those elected can be installed as directors or alternates after the last 2000 meeting and elect new officers for the year 2001. **Any MCATF member may enter his or her name in candidacy for the Board of Directors by notifying the Secretary in writing by October 13. They should include a short biography (50-100 words) for inclusion with the ballots mailed to MCATF members of record November 13.**

A "Nominating Committee" was chartered by the Board of Directors to assist in identification of those who are qualified and willing to served. If the Board is to represent a cross section of MCATF members, it is important that each member consider running for one of the openings, and that they take part in the election by completing and returning their ballot on time.

MCATF cosponsors Pamela Sumners October 19

The McLean County AIDS Task Force will cosponsor a local forum featuring the new Director of the Gay and Lesbian Rights/ AIDS and Civil Liberties Projects for the ACLU of Illinois.

Director Pamela Sumners will speak at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Oct. 19 at the Unitarian Church, 1613 E. Emerson St. in Bloomington.

Sumners comes to ACLU of Illinois from Alabama, where she was a civil rights lawyer. She gained national prominence for litigating a challenge to a state court judge who posted the Ten Commandments in his courtroom and started jury trials with a prayer. In her new post, Sumners will direct activities to advance the priorities of the projects. These priorities include extending the rights of lesbians, gay men, transgendered individual, and those affected by HIV and AIDS.

Beyond 2000: A decade for change 9th annual Illinois HIV conference

The 9th annual statewide HIV/STD conference will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Springfield, Illinois on November 28-30. It is sponsored by the Illinois Department of Public Health, the Illinois State Board of Education, the Illinois Public Health Association, and the Illinois Statewide HIV/AIDS Network. For more information, contact the Illinois Department of Public Health, HIV/AIDS Section, at 217-524-5983.

Several MCATF member/volunteers have attended this fine conference each year for several years. It is an opportunity to learn and to meet others engaged in this work, both professionals and volunteers.

There will be a workshop offered the afternoon of the 28th by the AIDS Foundation of Chicago similar to the one they gave last year. Those wishing to attend need to register separately for this part of the conference. The other two days of the conference will include inspirational speakers, a great choice of workshops on HIV, STDs, and related issues and opportunities for networking with others active in these area.

--from Red Ribbon Review

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Notes from the Land of Anti-Fat

"Child protection" in the Land of Anti-Fat

Child Protection Services in New Mexico found itself enmeshed in a size acceptance controversy when it recently removed a fat three-year-old girl from the home of her parents.

Three-year-old Anamarie Martinez-Regino, who is 120 pounds and 3 1/2 feet tall, was taken from her parents and put in state custody on Aug. 25. Though her parents haven't been charged, the state is alleging medical neglect even as it's been unable to explain the reason behind the child's extraordinary size. The super-sized toddler is three times the weight of the average three-year-old—twice the height, too.

The Martinez-Reginos, a low-income family living in Albuquerque, have been put in the position of being blamed for a condition that none of the experts have been able to definitively explain. Though their daughter has spent much of her life in and out of hospitals and been tested for a variety of conditions, the only diagnosis that doctors have come up with to date is "morbid obesity," a condition that could have any number of causes.

The sole treatment that the medical community has prescribed was a strict 500-calorie liquid protein diet: a questionable (and typically ineffective) approach even when used with dieting teens and adults, let alone a 3-year-old. One piece of the medical neglect allegation lies in the state's assertion that the parents were unwilling to subject their child to this liquid diet, though the parents have denied this accusation.

The child was initially removed from the Martinez-Regino home on the recommendation of her family physician, Dr. Monika Mahal. Dr. M. has even gone so far as to allege that the child's remarkable size is the result of Munchausen by Proxy, a psychological disorder where a parent will intentionally cause their child medical harm so the child will receive ongoing medical attention. This still begs the question of how young Anamarie has grown to her unusual weight and height.

Not surprisingly, the case has brought out a variety of two-bit anti-fattists with their own takes on the case. The standard medical line has been best repped by Dr. Robert Schwartz, a pediatric endocrinologist at Wake Forest University: most cases of obesity are "caused" by overeating and lack of exercise as opposed to medical conditions—so young Anamarie just has to fit that profile.

Aside from the presently unanswered medical questions, some larger issues arise from the Anamarie case.

First is the question that always arises from child protection cases: at what point does the state remove a child from their home? No one denies that the parents did not repeatedly seek out medical treatment for their child (it's at the root of the allegation of Munchausen's, after all), but at the same time nobody's documented any social

service agency efforts to help the parents with their medically complex child. In removing Anamarie without first offering family supportive services, the state of New Mexico has summarily trampled on parents' rights.

"Instead of supporting the family and diagnosing any problems the little girl may have," Sandra Solovay, author of *Tipping the Scales of Justice: Fighting Weight-Based Discrimination*, notes, "the state and doctors are blaming the family for the girl's weight. Legally, the case is outrageous. It is a threat to all the parents of fat children. Custody decisions should always be based on fact, not prejudice. Here the state police have become the food police and a child was removed from a loving home just for being fat."

A corollary question is this: would Anamarie's parents even be in this battle if they weren't in the lower economic strata of society?

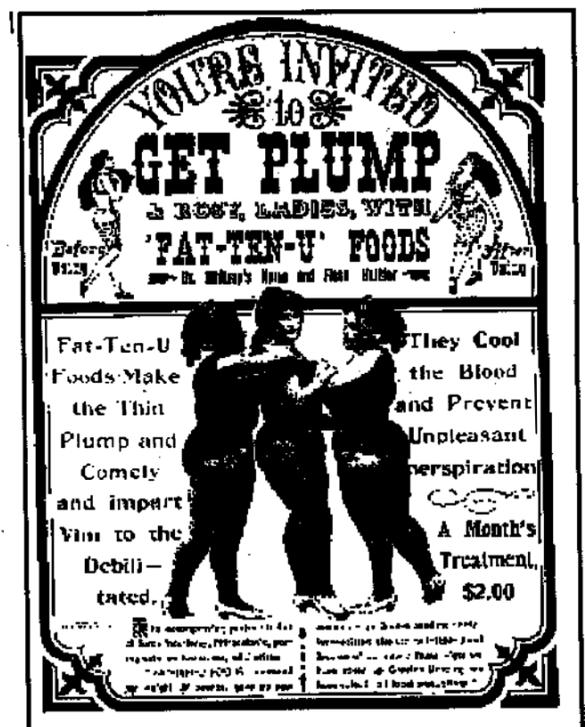
Size acceptance advocates have taken the position that the whole Anamarie case is tainted by anti-fat bias. Nearly every report to come out of the case, for instance, has focused on the child's weight and paid little notice to her equally unusual height. Much of the medical testimony has consisted of hysterical projections of the possible long-term effects of the girl's weight, though her parents note that a hospital examination done a month before her removal from the home gave no indication of ill health. Judge Tommy Jewell refused to allow any representatives from the size acceptance community to testify at the child's hearing. Midpoint into the three-day hearing, the good judge kicked out members of the media and those representatives of the National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance and International Size Acceptance Association who had appeared to testify on behalf of the family.

Since then, the case has been shrouded in a court-ordered blackout that's helped to fuel all manner of paranoid speculation. (It's worth noting that New Mexico reportedly ranks second in the removal of children from their home.) Members of the child protection reform movement are also

watching the case closely, though whether their presence is help or a hindrance to the Martinez-Reginos is anybody's guess.

On September 8, the judge upheld the state's original decision to keep the young girl from her parent's home. At this writing, she still remains in an alternative placement, presumably following that wholly liquid diet. The long-term ramifications of this decision for both size acceptance and child protection remain unclear, though it's probably wise to be pessimistic in the Land of Anti-Fat.

—Bill Sherman





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Mind Candy zine

Hey there Post Amerikans! Welcome home, again, zum more, to a new adventure into the Mind Candy universe. As always I have zum fun stuff for ya all -- ten zines and a little tip for you cyber heads. I guess that's a good place to start, with the cyber tip. www.startrek.com. The Star Trek web site is offering free voice recognition software so grab it up if you don't have any. How bad could it be; it's free. . . Sorry, but that's it for the cyber stuff for this edition, cuz there is ten little zine gems to turn you on to. Plus a little chat about zines.

The world of magazine publishing is a tough playground. In 1999 alone, 800 new magazines were launched; that's not including the independent zines. 15% will not see their first anniversary. In part because the average American reader's attention span is just short of that of a gnat's. For instance, the majority of people only look at a zine's cover for 2 to 3 seconds (1001, 1002, 1003, that's it). The top five subjects in magazines these days are celebrities, sports, beer, sex and gadgets. So many magazines are dominated by these subjects, although one in five readers still read a news magazine. And no matter how mighty the internet is, the bulk of cyberheads still turn to the print media to get their internet info. There is a zillion reasons why large scale magazines fold. For the independent publisher who prints short run editions of a few hundred or so, the publishing world is much more treacherous. Many small zines do not even see a second edition. Many of them are paid for out of the writer's pocket. Profit, what profit? It's a labor of love; a way to reach out to; to get a message across.

It's been a pleasure to bring zines to the attention of the public. Hopefully you have contacted the publishers of the zines you've read about in Mind Candy, and you're enjoying a subscription to your kind of reading material. But let's not forget the vehicle that brings you Mind Candy every other month. That being the *Post Amerikan*. In the world of zines the *Post Amerikan* stands out as an odd and rare bird. A subscription to *Post Amerikan* is still only six bucks. The more people that subscribe, the more it can bring you. So get the word out! Buy it instead of some cheap gift nobody will want and will stick in their closet. Consider the *Post Amerikan* the ultimate birthday, anniversary, holiday gift, or a gift of love. It will give you something to share and it is perfect for communicating with long distance friends. Enuff said. *Post Amerikan* needs you and hopefully it can fill a need that has been left void until you picked up a *Post Amerikan*. Okay, okay, enuff pleading on a bent knee and mendicant woes. . . let's start with the ten

Heron Dance (a quarterly \$19 - 52 Seymore St. Middlebury, VT 05753 - 1115)

There are not enough positive superlative words in my gray matter to relate how wonderful this little subtle zine is. If it has any fault, it is too short, but I guess it's like a dessert treat -- too much would spoil it. The thing your eyes first feast upon is the splendid watercolors by founder and watercolor artist Tod Macliver. The text is by such notables as Edward Abbey, William Blake (1757 - 1827), Henry David Thoreau, Sy Sanfransky, Rumi, Amelia Earhart. The list goes on and on. The text, watercolors, even the feel of the paper draw you into a harmony drenched with spiritual light. The back issues are available in book form. I suggest you grab a copy up for yourself and anybody you care about.

Purple Lotus Journal (free, but donations are needed 636 San Mateo Ave., San Bruno, CA 94066)

This is a Buddhist zine. Yet even if you're not into Buddhism the text is lovely stuff. Great stories from ancient times and the present amalgamate perfectly. There are articles on feng shui (the Asian system of creating harmony in one's environment; which is a good read no matter what your path is). The writing is refreshingly honest, positive and of clearness of thought. Hopefully you'll enjoy this delightful zine with me.

The Last Straw (HC 66, Box 119, Hillsboro, NM 88042)

The Last Straw is a wonderful salubrious magazine devoted to metatecture (alternative architecture) in particular strawbale metatecture. What's that you're asking? ? ? Homes that are constructed primarily out of bales of straw. Forget about the three little pigs and the big bad wolf story. Anybody who has researched this construction method can tell you that it's firesafe, incredibly energy efficient, cost effective, and amaranthine. *The Last Straw's* articles go beyond just construction. They are clever, informative, emotion filled and give you a warm feeling. Warning: If you read this little magazine you'll fall in love with it and want a straw bale house of your own, which you may be able to afford right now. *The Last Straw* will not only turn you on to a path of building your own nest, it will also show you why metatecture makes sense and cents. Plus it's good for the environment.

Communities Magazine (688 McEntire Road, Tyron, NC 28782)

Did you ever feel that you wanted to leave the chaos of the urbanamania, or that "the world no fit you." Or mayhap you missed "the bus" during the sixties to join a commune. If so, you're not alone. *Communities Magazine* is devoted to alternative living/ community and to the harbingers who are blazing the path for a new, yet ancient way to live. Whether it's a kibbutz, or a converted factory building, people are living together in harmony, sharing costs, chores, cooking, child/ elder care, pooling tools, vehicles, and in some cases, assets.

Communities and their "communities directory" will introduce you to over 600 North

American and 100 international "intentional communities." Moreover, both the magazine and the directory are loaded with zillions of groovy alternative resources. Even if you're content with your present living arrangement, *Communities* is filled with wonderful tips for living well and in a balanced way with our planet.

Home Power Magazine (P.O. Box 520, Ashland, OR 97520)

Are you tired of supporting the energy consortium that carelessly pollutes everything that they touch? Or you're fed up with brown-outs and having your power shut off because somebody knocked down a utility pole or whatever. Do you envy and covet your neighbors solar panels? Well, stop sinning and join the soft energy revolution. *Home Power* holds the answers to all those questions you may have had about where to purchase the equipment, how to install it, and what it's like living "off the grid." *Home Power* is the Bible for the soft energy (solar, wind, hydro, biomas, etc.) folks. But it's much more than a "how to" zine. I get something out of each issue which makes my life just a little more independent and sustainable. Not to mention the smile that comes to my lips because the writers are funny and good hearted people. The rates are reasonable and the back issues are now available on CD-rom. All-in-all, *Home Power Magazine* is tickety-boo, and will put you on a path to become self reliant, whilst helping to stop the madness of our Earth's destruction.

High Speed Productions, Inc. (1313 Underwood Ave, San Francisco, CA 94124)

In my never ending sisyphian quest to bring you new things that I hope you'll like I came upon *High Speed Productions*. After sending them a plea to review their work, they promptly sent me four magazines that they produce. Each of their publications are slick, well constructed with stunning photography, funny advertising. It seems to cater to a selective bunch, mostly Gen-Xers. So let's take a look at what Mr. Postmanbrought us.

Trasher and Slap

Skate boards, skateboards, boyz on skateboards, and more skateboards. Both *Trasher* and *Slap* are totally devoted to a unique universe where skateboards rule. The top performers, clothing, tunes, art, and equipment are all showcased, along with the best places to break your neck and defy gravity. Did I mention skateboards? The stop action photography is scintillating. both zines are edgy in a street way, and they are a great introduction into a world that may have been unknown to many non-skateboarding humyns. The subscription rates are a steal (*Trasher* is \$8.95, and *Slap* is \$7.50). I did mention skateboards, right?

Schwing! (\$7.95 yearly)

Schwing is an alternative golf magazine where you'll see the pros you would expect like Tiger Woods, but where you'll also find people like Vince Neil (lead singer of Motley Crue), Goldy McJohn (original key boardist for Steppenwolf), Cindy Crawford, the musicians from No Doubt, Ween, Sense Field, etc. sporting golf clubs. At first I thought it was a parody.



reviews

Far from it. Banging little balls around has spread into the alternative universe. Hopefully the alternative universe can teach the golf course owners how to be environmentally friendly. Quite frankly, I'd rather plant nut trees and sit by a stream reading Siddhartha. But I must admit that these neo golf pros are having a blast. More power to 'em. If golf is your trip, *Schwing* is your ticket.

Juxtapoz (\$19.95 annually)

What led me to *High Speed Productions* was *Juxtapoz*, an on the edge, a little off the wall, fun art zine. In my opinion, by far this is *High Speed's* jewel in the crown. The reproductions are beautifully printed. Much of it is devoted to graffiti and street art, but I had the pleasure to feast my eyes on art by Steve Galloway and F. Scott Hess, which were both technically well mastered and haunting. The issue I saw had vintage pulp art, World War II art, and loads of resources for alternative artists. This is not mainstream art--the stuff you'll commonly find in museums, unless they're doing an experimental show. But I liked most of it, and I'm thirsty for more, and I think you will be too. Hopefully I'll be able to review more issues in the future so I can bring special articles to your attention.

If you're a graphics, commercial tattoo, or free style artist, *Juxtapoz* is a must. It reaches beyond that niche market and is suitable for anybody (adult) interested in art. All things considered, *High Speed Productions, Inc.* is doing a fine job in producing high quality zines. Contact them, I think you'll be happy you did.

Musea (4000 Hawthorne #5, Dallas, TX 75219) No advertising, no government grants, no sponsors is printed on the cover along with the "Artists Against Corporate Art" logo. This tiny zine of about 8 half pages (including the cover) is jam packed with art news, happenings in the art world, art contest info, and comments. There is some great tiny works of art gracing the pages. If you're involved with the art scene in any way, grab a subscription to this printed gem. Subscriptions rates are ten bucks for a year, but a trial copy is free. They offer a collection of back issues and zum books related to their revolutionary view of the art world. There is lots of stuff to "a-Musea" yourself with. (Sorry, I couldn't resist.)

Well Post Amerikan, that's it for this edition of Mind Candy. Mind Candy is constantly looking for new materials to bring to the world's attention. If you, or anybody you know is producing a zine, a collection of poetry, photos, drawings, short stories, etc., please send them along with any suggestions, comments, sweet words of love, or stinging words of disapproval me. As always I hope you'll enjoy the stuff in this edition of Mind Candy, if not shoot me!

New Address:
Nikolai Zarick #284987
G.C.C.
901 Corrections Way
Jarratt, VA 23870-9614

--Nik Zarick

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

After the Republican Convention let's correct the misrepresentations. Our president and Vice-President have led. Here are only a few accomplishments:

As a disabled person I have benefited from the Family and Medical Leave Act. When I got diagnosed with Myasthenia Gravis this became law and it helped me as well as many others.

As we age or become disabled, the Olmstead Act states that we should have a choice of remaining at home or entering a nursing home. Missouri complies with this law. One wonders why Illinois doesn't. Presently most funding goes to nursing homes instead of to individuals making the housing choices. The money is available; it just depends how it is appropriated. It is cheaper to live in the community so why do some legislators continue to vote the more expensive way to carry out goals?

Gore is working to expand Medicaid for people with disabilities. He would enable states to broaden their programs to also cover community-based care. I have worked most of my life in nursing homes and believe people deserve choices. Some people may choose an institutional setting, but others may prefer their own dwelling.

The Social Security Administration has increased earning guidelines for disabled persons from \$300 to \$700/month.

Al Gore supports the IDEA (Individual with Disabilities Education Act) increasing spending for states and school districts to educate children with disabilities while supporting other initiative for all students to receive the high quality education they need.

The Assistive Technology Act reauthorizes State Assistive Technology Centers to provide assistive devices to low-income individuals with disabilities.

Our future President (hopefully) already encourages community development block grants to be used for home modifications for people with disabilities.

As a person who struggles with depression, Al, Tipper and the Administration have fought for people with mental illnesses. Individuals with psychiatric disorders are now given the same hiring opportunities as persons with significant disabilities.

Al Gore supports Medicare prescription drug coverage to help participants more fairly than the Bush plan.

Al Gore was a co-sponsor of the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) ten years ago.

In voting this November 7, remember the poor, physically and mentally challenged persons and senior citizens. If you are not registered to vote yet, the cut off date is October 10. No matter how you vote it's one of our most cherished rights. We truly live during an inspiring time.

--Rosemarie Moews Scarbeary

Post Amerikan,

This letter concerns the issue of sex offenders. There is a common misconception that homosexuals are more likely to molest children than heterosexuals. The statistics show that heterosexuals are as likely, perhaps even more likely to molest children than homosexuals.

Two cases come to mind: the McMartin preschool case in Los Angeles, and the case of Polly Klaus, in Sacramento, Ca. Both cases involved heterosexual pedofiles. You would have to have an attorney look up the exact statistics.

Sincerely,
Richard S. Mote





Mental Illness

Briefing papers and questionnaires submitted to Kelleher and Johnson

A questionnaire and a 28-page briefing paper that explained needs, facts, and information about the mentally ill was sent to Congressional candidates Johnson and Kelleher. It was carefully designed and endorsed by seven national organizations to accurately reflect the needs and concerns of millions of persons with mental illness and their families.

Tim Johnson replied that it was too detailed for him to commit himself without checking additional resources. Kelleher indicated that he would respond, but has not sent in his questionnaire as of Sept. 16.

Seek opportunities to ask the candidates about any questions, especially if he favors equal health insurance coverage (which will come up in Congress). Hopefully they will respond and indicate their positions. (While in the Illinois legislature, Johnson voted against IIB 111, the bill to give equal health coverage to the mentally ill in Illinois, so he should be familiar with the proposed bill in Congress sponsored by Sen. Domenici, Republican from New Mexico.)

NAMI Family to Family support groups meet in Bloomington and Pontiac

Bloomington: The NAMI Support group meets on the fourth Thursday of the month:

Time: 7-8:30 pm

Place: Chestnut Institute, 702 W. Chestnut in the second floor boardroom, Bloomington. For more information call Anne Olsen (309) 454-4938. (No Support meeting will be held in November due to Thanksgiving.)

Pontiac: The NAMI Support Group meets on the second Thursday of the month.

Time: 7-8:30 pm

Place: Temporary Location - Prairie Horizon Apartments Community Room, 1520 S. Locust St., Pontiac. For information call John or Bonnie Plesko (815) 842-1514.

Treatment reduces violence and hospital utilization

Long-term assisted outpatient treatment (lasting 180 days or more) significantly reduces violent episodes, hospital admissions and length of hospital stays for individuals suffering from severe mental illness according to the most recent and comprehensive study of court ordered outpatient treatment.

The patients generally did not view themselves as mentally ill or in need of treatment as measured by a commonly used insight assessment scale. In the four months prior to the violence study:

73% were medication noncompliant
57% had alcohol and drug use
51% had violent behavior, and
39% experienced two or more psychiatric hospital admissions.

In December, researchers published their results. Long term assisted outpatient treatment reduced hospital admissions by 57% and length of hospital stay by 20 days compared to individuals without court ordered treatment. The results were even more dramatic for individuals with schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders for whom long-term assisted outpatient treatment reduced hospital stays by 72% and hospital stays by 28 days.

Results published in April from the same study demonstrated that medication compliance and long-term assisted outpatient treatment significantly reduced actual violence and the predicted probability of violence among individuals with severe mental illness.

Individuals who were medication noncompliant and were 63% more likely to be violent than those who complied with medication regimens. Individuals who were both medication noncompliant and abused substances has a three times greater risk of violence. Long term assisted outpatient treatment improved medication compliance and reduced substance abuse, thereby reducing the risk of violence.

The North Carolina study clearly points out

the benefit to the individual in reducing hospital stays and preventing the deteriorating symptoms that precipitate the need for inpatient treatment; there is an important reduction of violence and reducing hospital use also reduces fiscal costs.

The Surgeon General recently acknowledged that the increase in stigma over the last 40 years is attributed to the public's perception and fear of violence in persons with mental illness that are highly publicized. Preventing those incidents is considered the greatest hope in reducing stigma according to the Treatment Advocacy Center, and long-term assisted treatment is a crucial tool in that effort to reduce stigma.

--by E. Fuller Torrey and Mary Zdanowicz

NARSAD research breakthroughs

The 1999 NARSAD Annual Report lists many breakthroughs by NARSAD researchers. Only a few are listed here.

--Wade Berrentini, M.D. Ph.D, of the University of Pennsylvania, discovered the susceptibility gene for manic depression Chromosome 18.

--Linda Brzustowicz, M.X. of Rutgers U., localized a schizophrenia susceptibility gene to a small region of Chromosome 1, providing evidence indicated to be "approximately one hundred times stronger for the evidence of a schizophrenia gene than reported in previous studies."

--Claire Bergson, Ph.D., of the Medical College of Georgia and a two time NARSAD young Investigator, has isolated a protein that may hold the key to how some brain cells process dopamine, an essential neurotransmitter. The findings may provide a new route for drug development specific to cognitive disabilities in disorders such as schizophrenia.

--Robert Freedman, M.D., U. of Colorado, has identified a gene which controls the structure of brain cells that allows them to be activated by a chemical produced by the brain itself. This structure is called a nicotine receptor

because it also is part of a cell that makes it possible for smokers to get a nicotine rush. He is exploring the possibility of developing a drug that "will turn the receptor on and then leave," based on a chemical originally isolated in worms found on mud flats in Puget Sound, the nemertine worm.

Rape Crisis Center of McLean County

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

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

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and ask for the
RAPE CRISIS CENTER



NAMI & LIFE CIL news

Bush discusses disability policy

Referring to a speech on national disability policy given by Gov. George W. Bush (R - TX) in Maine in June, NAMI Director Laurie Flynn said, "His proposals make a positive contribution to a bipartisan, national dialogue emerging in 2000 about treatment and support for people with severe mental illnesses."

"We have also seen major initiatives proposed in recent weeks by Vice President Al Gore and key members of Congress, such as Senators Pete Domenici (R - NM) and Ted Kennedy (D - MA). Candidates at every level of government should consider them carefully."

In the Portland speech, Bush supported the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), signed into law by his father, President Bush in 1990, but said "banning discrimination is just the beginning. . . Barriers remain. There are steps we can and should take to remove these barriers." The identified three areas for action:

- Promoting independent living
- Helping Americans with disabilities to clam a rightful place in the workplace
- Helping people with disabilities gain fuller access to community life

Bush proposed several initiatives especially relevant to NAMI members, including:

- Increased funding for special education, with a goal of full funding for the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Focusing Title I funds on early grades to identify children with disabilities
- Reform of the HUD Section 8 rental voucher program to permit recipients to use vouchers to finance home purchases
- An Executive Order to ensure swift, effective implementation of the "Ticket to Work & Work Incentives Improvement Act"
- An Executive order to implement the Supreme Court's Olmstead decision, which entitles people with mental illnesses to live in the "most integrated" community setting possible rather than institutions
- Creation of a National Commissions to recommend reforms in the mental health service delivery system

Candidate Gore and Tipper unveil mental health reform proposal

At a rally in suburban Washington, DC May 31, Vice President Gore and his wife Tipper put forward a package of initiatives to improve services for individuals with mental illnesses and their families and to require all health insurance plans to provide parity coverage for children.

"Like many of you, I have turned my private experience into public action to advance the cause of fairness, dignity and opportunity for all people affected by mental health. And one man has been with me every step of the way -- my husband, Al Gore," Tipper Gore said. "we need a president committed to improving services, erasing stigma, eliminating discrimination, and supporting families -- a president who truly understands mental health and the needs of people and families affected by it."

Mental illness affects nearly one in five Americans each year, but nearly two-thirds of Americans affected by mental disorders in a given year do not receive help. Approximately one in five children and adolescents who need treatment do not receive mental health services.

Gore's Comprehensive mental health initiative would address these challenges by assuring full mental health Coverage for Children. Gore would see that every child has access to full mental health coverage by requiring private insurers to offer full mental health parity for children and applying it to the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Ensuring No Parent Is Forced to Give Up A Child To Get Mental Health Services.

--from NAMI of Livingston/McLean Counties Newsletter

Program to assist PWD's to move out of nursing homes

LIFE Center for Independent Living recently received a grant from the Office of Rehabilitation Services' Home Service Program to assist persons with disabilities residing in nursing homes to return to community living.

Often people with disabilities find themselves in nursing homes because of the lack of community support, including personal assistant services, transportation, low cost accessible housing, and the lack of independent living skills. With our grant, we will be able to assist those individuals with funding for personal assistant services, finding affordable housing, and if necessary, help with modifications to make it accessible, and help train individuals to increase their independent living skills.

Living in the community is much more cost effective than living in a nursing home. According to Nosek and Howland (1993) estimated annual cost of living in a nursing home to be \$30,000 to \$60,000 while the annual cost of community services to be \$8,000 to \$15,000. Aside from being more cost effective, community living supports our Declaration of Independence "our inalienable rights as human beings to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" -- something you cannot put a price on.

For further information about our Community Reintegration Program, contact Karen Kern at (309) 663-5433.

--from Lifelines newsletter



Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program

During the months of September and October, the elderly and people with disabilities may sign-up for assistance with their winter heating bills through the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). Administered by Community Action, people may qualify for a grant sent directly to their utility companies and credited to their accounts.

You may be eligible to receive assistance through LIHEAP if your household's combined income is at or below 125% of the Federal poverty guidelines. If you rent and your heat and/or electric is included in the rent, then your rent must be greater than 30% of your income in order to be eligible to receive benefits.

LIHEAP will provide a one-time benefit to eligible households to be used for energy bills. the amount of the payment is determined by your income, household size, fuel type, and geographic location. An overdue bill or cut-off notice is not required. You do not have to own your home or pay energy bills directly to be eligible for assistance. Your source of fuel does not have to be natural gas or electricity in order to receive assistance.

Emergency assistance may be available if your household is disconnected from an energy source needed for heating and/or a delivered fuel supplier has refused to deliver and the tank contains 10% or less. Assistance for reconnection will only be provided to households that have made a good faith effort to maintain their energy services, or can pay a portion of the amount owed for reconnection.

If you have questions about LIHEAP, contact Community Action at 309/663-5433 (V), 309/663-0054 (TTY), or toll free at 888/543-3245

--from Lifelines newsletter



"Gender Violence Crimes" Yes, in our town

Working my way around the inside of the circle of joined hands has been written down as my most memorable moment at Illinois State University. I never thought, judging from my timid demeanor and lingering Born-again Christian views in the fall of 1997 when I transferred to ISU, that I would be standing up with over 1,000 other members of the community denouncing hate crimes.

With only one full week of classes under my belt, the reality of hate swiftly barged into my life. As the president of PRIDE at ISU, I received word of the first hate crime three days after it occurred as I entered the PRIDE adviser's office. As soon as she said, "Did you hear about the beating," my first instinct was to ask where in our nation this had occurred. The reality of hate was lodged in my throat as I read aloud the first printed article that half-heartedly detailed the beating of ISU sophomore Chris Weninger. Where in this nation was quickly answered by in our own back yard, Normal --just a few blocks from ISU's campus.

Weninger was making his way back to his residence hall, Watterson Towers, to discover a surprise visit by his girlfriend (girlfriend --a term assuredly tossed around by every media outlet covering the story). As he walked past the stoop of an apartment building, a few guys made reference to Weninger's shirt. He was wearing a silver rayon club-type of shirt worn by many college-age guys, regardless of sexual orientation.

Weninger ignored the comments and eventually turned around to discover two of the guys leaning against a white car and requesting a cigarette. As Weninger looked down to get one for the guys, a third guy came forward from behind the car, called Weninger a "fucking queer," and punched him. Fifteen minutes later, he woke up from unconsciousness with a broken nose, broken orbital bone, a concussion and bruises.

Our society has major issues when A) a person's sexual orientation is assumed by the clothes that you wear and B) people are beaten because of either real or perceived sexual orientation or what you wear.

The day after I first read about the incident (August 30), an emergency anti-hate meeting was conducted with over 120 people in attendance. Plans of action and ideas were shared pertaining to how ISU as a campus community should respond to Weninger's assault. Ironically enough, only a few minutes

after the meeting a former president of PRIDE was walking along University Ave. and was stopped and assaulted by three Caucasian college-age guys. They blocked the sidewalk path she was walking (and only at 10 p.m.), laughed at her, yelled "fucking dyke" more than once at her, and eventually one of guys deemed it appropriate that the best way to treat a short-haired womyn like her was to spit in her face while his buddies laughed in agreement of the demeaning act.

Fight or flight was the womyn's reaction and her decision may well have saved her life --she ran. What disturbed me most about this situation is that in retrospect, while speaking to me on the phone about the incident, she was disappointed in herself for running away from the potential life-threatening situation.

There is no shame in safety.

A week later on September 6, over 1,000 people came together to unite against hate on the ISU Quad in the form of a rally. In closing, I requested that everyone join hands and form a huge circle to encompass the Quad. It was at this point that I realized unity's prevalence over hatred.

Shortly thereafter, though, at approximately 6:15 pm --just a few hours after the rally, Bobbie Lee was assaulted while trying to exit her car at a gas station on her way to a PRIDE meeting. A car pulled up with three Caucasian college-age guys, one jumped out, pulled at Lee's shirt through her car window, then while saying, "hate this, you fucking dyke," he punched her upside the head, leaving her with a bruised jawbone. Lee had just seen the same guys on the campus of Lincoln College as she left there to travel to the gas station and said they made the comment "hate this . . ." in reference to her anti-hate sticker and buttons.

These three situations are only a glimpse of what has been happening for years to queer folk, queer friendly, people of color, womyn and those whose religious beliefs "deviate" from the supposed 95% of Americans who claim to possess a belief in the Christian god.

The hate crimes we have witnessed in the past month must be addressed not in light of whether or not they occurred based on one's perceived sexual orientation. I have witnessed these random acts of hate since June of 1997 when I took Sheryl Crow's song "Change" (. . .that change will do you good . . .) literally and shortened my hair length from shoulders to a closely cropped style. Funny thing how my

sexual orientation (as an out lesbian) has never resulted in a direct act of violence or derogatory slur. Rather, the harassment, the discrimination, the violence and the hatred have all found their way to me via my nonconformist display of gender.

Get to the root of the problem.

The hate that has occurred on and near the campus of Illinois State has not technically occurred based on the victim's sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation. These crimes are Gender Violence Crimes.

Before I delve into that, allow the distinction of sex and gender to be made. As the phenomenal author-playwright-trans-Buddhist Kate Bornstein puts it, sex is biological --gender is everything else. Gender is a social construct that we are slapped with once we are taken home from the hospital as new borns. Gender can be colors, clothing, Tonka trucks or Barbies, hairstyle or hair length, an embraced way of life or a restrictive hindrance.

Weninger's silver rayon shirt was a display of gender and his attackers were unapproving, deeming it appropriate to harass and beat him. It's a vicious cycle. Display a non-conforming gender aspect of your god-given sex and in turn, you are a walking target --as were the three local students/community members. The gender system of "what it means to be a man," and "what it means to be a woman," has created the most violence in our society, resulting in the age-old restrictive traditions of masculinity and femininity.

To the ignorant, a womyn who has short hair is simply unacceptable, challenges the societal ideal of what it means to be female and must be a lesbian. She expresses herself through having short hair. This is her display of gender. He wore a shirt and comments were made in reference to it which lead to his perceived sexual orientation, which lead to his assault. Silver rayon shirt = fag. Short hair = dyke. "Inappropriate" gender display = someone's warped idea that they can harass and assault you.

Abolition of the ideas that men must be masculine and womyn must be feminine must occur if gender violence is to ever stop. Gender violence crimes are hate crimes and legislation must keep being pushed to ensure the justice of gender violence perpetrators. Extend the laws and ordinances to not only include sexual orientation, but gender identity.

Challenge conformity and systems of oppression. Throw gender expectations out the window and embrace individuality without reference to one's sex. Use education as a tool to battle hatred of every kind, but remember that anger, when used appropriately, is a powerful instrument of change.

Finally, regardless of the root of these heinous crimes -- they must not be forgotten about. Don't water-down the hate crimes by the progression of time. The pro-active action only started with the rally. Anyone can speak out against intolerance, violence and hatred.

--Kristy S. De Wall

HOW TO SPOT A HOMOSEXUAL

by T.O. SYLVESTER



① START WITH A CLEAN SURFACE.



② APPLY PAINT EVENLY UNTIL SPOTS REACH DESIRED DENSITY.



③ LET DRY AT ROOM TEMPERATURE



A Plea from the Youth to the Adults

All right people, what's it going to take, huh? What has to happen? Do we have to see more teen suicide? How about more violent behavior and teen crime? Will that help things out? Help you to see things a *little* more clearly?? Help you to see that some of this might have something to do with you?

Now that I have your attention, let me tell you what I am talking about. Acceptance. Not the whole peer pressure, bullying, or peer to peer stuff that goes on in our schools, playgrounds and neighborhoods today. Most of the time we can handle all that. What I am talking about is the acceptance from you guys . . . the parents and guardians of today's youth. Oh I know . . . you are nothing *but* accepting. I am sure a lot of you are. Don't get me wrong here guys; I am not out to accuse any one of you. I want to make you aware of what is going on, and possibly right in your own home.

The acceptance I speak of is the acceptance of youth's sexuality. I'm going to give you a first hand account of something I had to deal with. I took a good friend of mine to a park the other night because he said he needed to talk. We sat on a bridge and he proceeded to break down into tears and tell me that his own father was horrified and appalled by the fact that his son may be a "faggot" and had taken him to Missouri for a week to try to "turn him straight."

Now I ask you, what do you say to something like that?? What do you tell a kid to do when his own flesh and blood wants to turn him into something he isn't? I sat there that night for a long time, my friend in my arms crying to me, opening his entire soul to me, and thought "this can't happen. No one should have to go through this."

Our entire lives our parents have been there for us. Some more than others. True, some have had their aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins, or someone else to take care of them through the early years, but I use the word "parents" as a universal term for "guardians." We have always known that if something went wrong we could run to these people and they would help us . . . protect us. But my friend couldn't do that now. He couldn't talk to his father about what he was thinking. If he did, his father would get up in his face and tell him that everything he believed in was wrong and there was something wrong with him and if he kept up the way he was going he would go to hell. *This* . . . from a parent. The people in whose hands we put our lives, telling us that we are no good and wrong about everything we believe in. Something isn't right here.

What we need from parents is their love, kindness and acceptance. We need a shoulder to cry on sometimes. We need someone we can talk to and get advice from. Our parents tell us they have loved us from the day we were born, will love us to the day we die, be supportive in everything we do, always behind us etc. What about sexuality has the power to change that? Why all of a sudden is it not possible for them to accept us as the same person anymore? Have we changed and become less of people? Or has the fact that there is something new and different going on with us that they can't understand or explain upset them so much that they have to change it so that things will be normal again? We don't NEED to be changed and we aren't bad people. We still love you . . . why can't you still love us? Instead we have to try and prove ourselves to you, the people who used to help us out and tell us we were right and be supportive and help us try to win our battles instead of bring new ones for us to fight.

We, the youth of today, have a lot going on in our lives without having to fight for the love and acceptance of our parents as well. My friend has to choose now whether he wants to be open with who he is or if he wants to continue living a lie to his father. On the one hand, he risks losing contact with his father, custody battles if his father wants to take him away from his mother and siblings to get him out of the "homosexual environment," and tension until his father decides to accept him for who he is. On the other hand, he will never be happy with himself because he knows he isn't being true to himself. What kind of choice is this to make? He tells me that all he ever wanted was to make his father proud of him. Now he can never have that because his father can't accept that his son is gay. I can't tell you how much it hurts me to see my friend hurt this way. No one needs this and no one deserves this.

Again I ask You, what's it going to take before you realize that we still love and depend on you; *all* of you? You have always been there for us. Don't leave us now when we need you the most. Things are just beginning to happen on our lives. We know we ask for so much independence now and we want to be free. . . but we still need you. Please, don't push us away by saying we aren't what you want us to be. Don't try to make us something we aren't. Just accept us and love us. Is that too much to ask?

--Jackie Wristen
QCAD News

Just the facts on LGBT youth

Self-realization

Lesbian, gay and bisexual youth report first becoming aware of their sexual orientation at age ten.

Source: D'Augelli, Anthony R., & Herschberger, Scott L. "Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Youth in Community Settings: Personal Challenges and Mental Health Problems." *American Journal of Community Psychology*, Vol. 21, No. 4, 1993.

Mean age of lesbian and gay youth becoming aware of their first same sex attraction is 9.7.

Source: Herdt, G., & Boxer, A. *Children of Horizons: How Gay and Lesbian Teens are leading a New Way Out of the Closet*. Beacon Press, Boston, 1996.

The School Climate

"We were picked on. We were called "queer" and "faggot" and a host of other homophobic slurs. We were also used as punching bags by our classmates, just for being different." -- college student, remembering high school.

Ninety-seven percent of students in public high schools report regularly hearing homophobic remarks from peers.

Source: *Making Schools Safe for Gay and Lesbian Youth: Report of the Massachusetts Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth*.

Thirty-nine percent of LGBT youth surveyed reported that no one ever intervened when homophobic remarks were made in school. Forty-seven percent of the youth reported that someone intervened only some of the time. Other students were more often reported to intervene than were faculty (82% reported intervention by students, compared to 67% reported for faculty).

Source: Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), *National School Climate Survey*, a study conducted among 496 youth across 32 states accessing community based services, 1999.

Fifty-three percent of students report hearing homophobic comments made by school staff.

Source: *Making Schools Safe for Gay and Lesbian Youth: Report of the Massachusetts Governor's Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth*.

--from QCAD News



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Pollution of the soul

Many Americans, and a few politicians are beginning to recognize pollution of the air, water, and land; how long it has been going on; how urgent it is that we do all we can to stop the poisoning of our world; and how rapidly the changes must be made. These are very difficult and serious situations because they are based on greed. If the changes that need to be made NOW, are made, the government and corporate America will lose money. So the changes, more than likely, will not be made easily.

In the midst of all this chaos is yet more. It is POLLUTION OF THE SOUL --racism, bigotry, violence, drugs, hate crimes, and of course, our old friend greed.

In looking at most traditional Medicine Wheels, there are four primary colors --yellow, red, black, and white, corresponding with the four primary directions, east, south, west, and north. Therefore, the four sacred colors of the four sacred directions are also the four colors of Creator/Goddess/Buddha/God's (etc) two legged children. Gee, just think, if we are all children of Creator/Goddess/Buddha/God (etc), then we are all related!

Almost all religions teach a version of "an" it harm none, do as you will," "do unto others," etc. They also teach that we are "all related" and we should "love thy neighbor," as well as "honor thy mother and father." These ways of living continue with many other suggestions that lead to living in peace and harmony with all living beings. People actually used to live in this manner. Remember the old stories of Barn Raisings, and Well Diggings, helping care for children when the mother was sick, helping the elderly and disabled with gardening and housework, because they were no longer able to do for themselves? Everyone would gather at Abe and Sarah's and help add a new room on the house to make room for all the kids. When the work was done, a large meal was prepared, a band played, and everyone danced and shared and gave thanks for all they had been given.

What the hell happened? Crime is rampant, will" aspect of life, or that you must take responsibility for your own actions. Pagans are under fire from uneducated, misinformed groups and individuals relying on the Hollywood version of what paganism is.

Greed even effects the wildlife. Just a few examples: Doves are being slaughtered because it's a cheaper, easier way to eliminate a safety hazard. Bears are being slaughtered because they forage for food in campsites and garbage dumps set up in their territory and unfortunately harm people. Buffalo from the last free range herd in America are being slaughtered as they cross a geographical boundary to reach their natural winter grazing land. The Montana cattle ranchers claim the buffalo carry a disease which affects their cattle--News Flash--their cattle brought the disease to the buffalo--Hello! It would be ok, but by the buffalo crossing into their own winter grazing land, the buffalo are eating grasses the cattle could be eating - Greedy, Greedy, Greedy. Look at what people do to the poor calves for veal--the list just goes on and on.

Every aspect of human life has been abusively touched by greed. Here's a thought, since

everything we do is put out in the way of energy and it returns to us as karma-- good, bad, or indifferent. If we all start using a little of our energy to help do what we can to heal the Earth, then this healing energy will come back to us at least threefold. So, to do something to help the Earth, or a relative, a neighbor, a perfect stranger, is to do something to help yourself. If we're going to survive as a race of beings, we must help one another overcome our fears, selfishness, and greed.

To heal the hatred in the hearts of our people is going to take a lot of work. There are several spiritual viewpoints that can help (1) as mentioned above what we put out comes back to us, therefore be greedy --be very nice, so nice comes back threefold! (2) in Native tradition, everything we do each day of our life affects the next seven generations ñ take responsibility for your actions. Part of our people's healing must include returning to the extended family group.

The hatred in the hearts of the people must end or human kind will end. We will literally especially hate crimes. How did we become a nation full of trustless, care-less, greedy beings whose only concern is What's In It For Me. People are no longer safe on the highway, or in a parking lot, or even in a fast-food joint, much less, their own homes. Children are being raped and beaten by their own parents, wives raped by their husbands, people are being beaten and murdered because of their sexuality, or even their view regarding abortion. The back window of a vehicle of mine was broken out one night simply because I am not a "white christian." For some sick reason a member of a white supremacy group decided he didn't like the way this old woman lived her life. He had never as much as even said hello to me, so how could he believe that he had the right to choose how I live????

One answer to what is happening is set out in at least two books. In *Lakota Woman*, Mary Crow Dog sets out, "The whites destroyed the tiyospaye (Sioux extended family group), not accidentally, but as a matter of policy. And so the government tore the tiyospaye apart and -forced upon each couple their individually owned allotment of land, trying to teach them 'the benefits of wholesome selfishness without higher civilization is impossible.'" In *In the Absence of the Sacred* Jerry Mander quotes a speech by Dr. Merrill E. Gates "about the virtues of individual private property for Indians: 'To bring [the Indian] out of savagery into citizenship . . . we need to awaken in him wants. In his dull savagery, he must be touched by the wings of the divine angel of discontent. Discontent with the teepee and the Indian camp . . . is needed to get the Indian out of the blanket and into trousers -- and trousers with a pocket in them, and with a pocket that aches to be filled with dollars!" I would venture to say that wholesome selfishness and divine discontent has spread like the Black Plague engulfing the majority of the American people - yellow, red, black, and white.

There is great religious bigotry in this country, even among the similar christian denominations. Many people have to hide their belief systems for fear of losing their jobs, their homes, their children, to ex-spouses

or controlling family members. Most pagan religions are earth-based religions that practice the "an" it harm none, then do as you destroy our race as we destroy our world. There will be no need to concern ourselves with the seventh generation, for there will not be one. Who has the most toys just won't matter any more. There will be no one here to flaunt your trophies to. It's your choice.

--Walks The West Wind

The Big One

I once worked for an editor who couldn't pronounce the letter L. He came into the news-room the day before the primary and called out (no kidding) "Is everybody for the big erection?"

Well. Is everybody ready?

The pollsters tell us that the most important issue to the voting public is Education. I disagree. That's simply the one thing everybody agrees on. (we're all "pro.")

But no race this even-numbered year will be decided by the voters' careful comparison of mushy Education platforms. Our elections, for better or worse, are based not on feel-good positive issues, but on feel-bad negative ones.

In the U.S., we go out to vote against whatever we hate most -- whether it's guns or gun control, abortions or restrictions, porn or censorship, distribution of wealth or preservation of wealth.

Some people hate you and me. They tell lies and stir up fear and. . . they vote. They exchange outrageous propaganda like the infamous film *The Gay Agenda*, and they write big checks to campaign, and. . . they vote. See what I'm getting at?

Intelligent people dread being "one-issue" voters, but let's face it: those people who hate us [and vote, remember] don't need more than one issue to sway them. They are going out to vote against our rights and our very existence.

As a matter of self-defense, we need to go to the polls and vote for our lives, our rights and our families. We need to break with the fashion of "they're-all-the-same" cynicism. We must also resist the partisan call to trade off our priority issue for some puny tax credit or meaningless trade policy.

Celebrate September by registering -- take that, you right-wingers! Call your County Clerk's office to find out how and where. Then follow up with some light reading to separate the candidates; it won't be hard to ferret out their positions. DO share observations with friends, and ask for theirs. Let's get everybody ready and focusing on the big. . . opportunity!

We affirm diversity. We hate injustice. And we VOTE.

--Pam Bailey (from QCAD News)

Thumbs up & Thumbs down from the ACHR

Thumbs down

... to the U.S. military for insisting that their policy on homosexuals "is working reasonably well to provide a degree of safety" for gays in uniform! And then for the Pentagon determining that no officers were to blame for tolerating an anti-gay climate at Ft. Campbell, Kentucky. Tell that to the families and friends of Pfc. Barry Winchell, who was savagely beaten to death by a fellow soldier at Fort Campbell recently! Winchell was the most recent victim of a long list of murders and beatings of gay soldiers.

... to Microsoft for hiring former Christian Coalition Executive Director Ralph Reed to lobby George W. Bush to speak out against the government's case against Microsoft. The Human Rights Campaign has stated Reed's success with both building up the Christian Coalition and his own PR company is largely due to his ability to make an extreme agenda sound moderate.

Thumbs up

... to Atlanta-based Coca-Cola Company for extending spousal health care benefits to the same-gender partners of its U.S. gay and lesbian employees effective January 1, 2001.

Coke becomes the 99th Fortune 500 company to offer domestic partner health care benefits.

... to the Department of Justice, the U.S. Attorney and the FBI who have announced a joint preliminary investigation onto the slaying of Arthur Warren, Jr. in what is obviously a hate crime based on race and sexual orientation. Warren, whose body was found July 4, had been beaten and kicked to death by two 17-year-old boys -- David Allen Parker and Jared Wilson. The murderers drove a mile, laid his body on the ground and then drove over it several times in an attempt to stage a hit-and-run accident.

--from *The Rainbow Connection*

The war of the roses (And the Susans and the Julies)

We are four months from the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of the anti-rape movement in this country. In January of 1971, the New York Radical Feminists held the first-ever Speak Out on Rape in New York City, and the movement was born. Women who had been the victims of rape and incest, women who had been preyed upon by exhibitionists and voyeurs, women who had been assaulted by strangers and those who had been violated by friends and family, women who had screamed aloud at their attackers and those who had whimpered in near-silence, women who remembered the humiliation and degradation every day and those who struggled to forget, came together that cold January day and did something no women had ever done before: they listened to each other speak the most horrible words they had ever spoken, to themselves or to another person: "I was raped. . . ."

From that simple statement, repeated hundreds of times that day, came the sense of relief and respect, of healing and wholeness, of purpose and power that has defined the anti-rape movement ever since. For the first time, women had a real bond, a true sisterhood, founded not only on the victimization they had in common but also on the triumph of surviving that victimization.

Every woman in the United States has known the evils of sexual violence. Not every woman has experienced sexual assault or sexual abuse, but one cannot live in the United States without knowing what it feels like based on the experiences of every day life--walking past a group of men and hearing the cat-calls and wolf whistles, picking up the phone at home to the sounds of heavy breathing and sexual suggestions, biking along Constitution Trail and hearing the ever-popular, "Hey, Baby, wanna f*ck?" Women know what it is like when a co-worker pinches their butts, when a date will not stop pawing them, when a boss cannot take his eyes from their breasts, when male friends will not take no for an answer.

So if this is all still true, and it is, just what has changed in 30 years?

Actually, many things have changed. We no longer assume that the only people who are sexually assaulted or sexually abused are women and girls. We now know that men and

boys have similar experiences, though not in as great a number. More rape cases are reported to the police and are prosecuted. Colleges are mandated to report all violent campus crimes.

But the biggest change is one which cannot be found in statistical summaries. The biggest change is in how people feel about sexual violence, its victims, its perpetrators, and its ramifications. Most people now realize that rape can happen to anybody, any time, any place. They know that rapists can be strangers or acquaintances. They understand that rape is more than forced penile-vaginal penetration--that it includes unwanted touching and fondling as well as sexual acts other than intercourse. They know that sexual assault and abuse touch all of us, whether we be victims, family members, friends, or just members of the community.

And most of all, people know that they can talk about what happened to them. They can tell their bosses, or their husbands, or their moms. They can announce, when the topic comes up in class or at a party or over coffee, "Well, when I (or my sister, or my partner, or my nephew) was raped. . . ." They can ask for answers or assistance from a myriad of social service agencies, counselors, and medical personnel. They can tell other people what happened to them and how they feel about it and expect to be understood and believed.

Is everything beautiful? Is the revolution over? Can we all go home believing that rape is just another word for Cole seed? Probably not just yet. After all, over 300,000 women and 92,000 men are raped every year in the United States, and over 100,000 children are victims of sexual abuse every year. And while 35% of male college students admit that they would rape a woman if they thought they could get away with it, fewer people seem to believe that women ask to be raped by the way the dress or act.

One thing that can be done, for those victims who live in McLean County, is to volunteer for the Rape Crisis Center. The Rape Crisis Center here is one of only two all-volunteer rape crisis centers in the country. It is a worker-controlled collective of caring individuals--both women and men--who offer crisis intervention, peer

counseling, advocacy, and support for the victims of sexual violence, their families, and their friends. If you would like to get involved in some small, very real, way in the social change movement, consider becoming a volunteer. Call PATH at 827-4005 and ask for the Rape Crisis Center.

Fall training begins on October 21. Make a difference in someone's life and change yours for the better. We really can end rape in our lifetime, but it will take all of us, including you and me.

--Deborah Wiatt

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The straw that built the

In the age of super computers, supersonic flight and the mighty Internet, the miracle of a single piece of straw is nearly lost to many people in Western culture. When we look how primates use a piece of straw to withdraw edible termites from a termite mound, we can easily see how the single piece of straw has always been a significant part of human development. This article will focus on the myriad of uses for straw and other herbaceous plants, leading into how a straw structure building revolution is now taking place; and how straw will play a crucial role in the ecozoic millennium.

In the nineteenth century, a study was conducted on a single ryegrass plant. The study discovered that the amazing lone plant had 378 miles of roots, 14 million separate roots and 14 billion root hairs. Multiply that by each blade of grass on the planet and you have a whole lot of biomass, probably a little more than you can put out for your curbside trash pickup. With the world's population now at six billion and it will be nine billion by the end of the 21st century, more and more grain will be grown to feed those billions of bellies. Knock the seed head off the grain crop and you have straw. The stalk (or straw) is mostly cellulose, hem cellulose and lignens. These components make up about 80% of the total dry weight, with about 19% of the remaining baled up.

In fact a test (using American Society for Testing Materials, or ASTM standards) ASTM

E-119 subjected a plastered bale to the two hours of 1,942 degrees F fire, where the plaster cracked, only about two inches of charring occurred. Another ASTM test showed that a straw bale can hold up to 10,000 lbs per square foot which is like a whole driveway of Volkswagen Beetles parked on top of a straw bale. Yet another ASTM test disproved the three little pigs story by withstanding 100 mph winds. New studies are being done on earthquake survivability, and so far it looks great.

All of this came a surprise to me because at first I was quite skeptical about using straw for anything deemed permanent, even though my sweet sixteen birthday party was held in a wonderful straw-lined structure in the deep wood of my land. When I heard about straw bale construction in the latter part of the 1980s, it raised an eyebrow to say the least. When I was a firefighter, we used straw in the firefighting training smoke houses because it burned fast, filled up the training structures with lots of smoke and the straw burned extremely hot.

However, that was loose straw, not compacted straw. Compacted straw leaves no space for oxygen, hence no combustion can take place, so that the bales are liked burned books. If you've ever seen the nightmare of a burned down library, the books will be charred on the exterior but most of the pages will still be readable. After fire testing the bales, fire hoses did little or no damage (P.S.I. unknown). Still some "balers" (those persons that build with straw bales) will add borax, sodium silicate and lime wash to enhance fire resistance and to deter pests. The silica which can be 3% to 20% is basically sand; and when is the last time you burned sand? (Glass blowers don't answer that!)

In Tucson, Arizona an older structure was wrapped with straw bales to convert it into a modern and energy efficient home. One night before the construction was completed, an arsonist attacked the place and set it on fire. The preexisting structure burned down and the straw bales remained. Several businesses that had burned down rebuilt their places of business with straw bale construction. Even fire departments are building their stations with straw bale technology. Straw bales are even used as firebreaks in fighting forest fires. SO much for my phobia of becoming a baked potato in a straw house! There can be a danger during construction when loose straw is left about, especially when power tools are in use. The risk can be eliminated by a diligent clean-up person. Heat can in fact make straw a better construction material.

Some call this "melting," which is not really accurate, but it's catchy. It certainly does have the appearance of being melted. This heat method is used to create incredibly strong panels made of straw, which are sometimes referred to as agriboard, having a straw core and the paper similar to that used to cover drywall panels. The most popular agriboard or "Strawmit" which has been used to build 250,000 houses since 1940, when Theodor Dieden introduced agriboard to the United Kingdom.

Some of these panels can be 4 inches thick and quite long, forming entire walls. Today, agriboard comes in all sizes shapes and strengths, using all kinds of plant material, with brand names such as "Prime Board," "Isoboard" and the ever trusty "Strawmit" to name just a few. Hopefully, in the near future, solar energy will be used to "melt" (fuse) straw bales and panels. Straw bales and straw panels already use less embodied energy (or embedded energy) than most building materials, but the use of solar energy will lessen the embodied energy even more which makes good environmental sense and saves us cents.

With more and more states enforcing burning bans on straw producers, we shall see more innovative uses for straw. The burning of straw has been a huge problem. In California alone a million tons of rice straw were burned each year, producing 56,000 tons of carbon each year, twice that of the state's power plants. At times, the smoke was so heavy that many highways were impassable and the sun seemed to have been blocked out. Only a relatively small percentage (around 20% and that's pushing it) of straw can be turned back into the soil without causing damage to the mycorrhizal system, and only a small fraction of straw can be used in livestock feed because straw has almost no nutrient value. Basically, the only thing that will eat straw is furtgi (dry rot) if given a chance. It is imperative that we find new uses and research historical uses for this wonderful material that is increasing in quantity minute by minute.

A whole lot of straw

Each year the world grain growers produce over 750 million tons of straw, enough to build approximately 50 to 75 million homes per year. In the United States, it has been said that the amount of surplus straw would build 4 to 5 million 2,000 square foot structures, at 300 bales per structure. A basic estimation is that the straw would cost about \$1,000 per structure. A typical 1,500 square foot house made with rice straw used about 200 bales; that calculates to one house per 2 1/2 acres of rice production, or 200,000 houses made annually from U.S. rice straw. Rice straw is a little tough to work with. Generally, "balers" like to work with dry land grain crops. Flax straw seems to be the preferred straw, with rye following in a close second place. Of course, wheat straw is the most abundant, therefore it is the most widely used. However, barley, oats and all kinds of threshed grains stalks may be used.

The secret is in the compression. Some straw bale builders use straw rolled up like a burrito and stacked like cordwood. This method seems to be good when a baling machine is not available and the grasses are harvested *in situ*. Another method is called light clay or leichtlehm (German for light clay) which is straw that has been dunked in a soil/clay soup, and then it is pressed into forms, such as wattle walls made with anything from bamboo to willow branches. Light clay can also be used for filling the cords in straw bale walls (whereas just loose straw would be a potential fire hazard).

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camel's back

In the mid continental United States, where limber was overpriced and in short supply in the late 1800s, the invention of the hay baler was seen as "the answer" to low cost construction. All kinds of materials were used from tumbleweed to straw to anything they could get into the baling machine. Today, kudzu, reeds, shredded paper, corn stalks, grape vines, sugar cane by-products, willow branches, copiced tree shoots and tree trimmings, along with hemp, kenag, pine needles and even cloth are baled up to be used in construction.

It was the baling machine that made straw and other substances a perfect building material because of the compression factor and easy usage. Around the turn of the century, many straw bale and hay bale structures were built (although hay is not really as good building material). One funny story came from Scotts Bluff, Nebraska where in 1886 (or 1887) a one-room schoolhouse was constructed out of unplastered hay bales. Even though the hay was old, a herd of straw would have deterred attacking bovine. Another hay house story stated that a visiting school teacher in a student's hay house was consumed by biting fleas, which is also easily fixable. In 1903, the Burke family built a homestead made with straw bales outside of Alliance, Nebraska. This abode is considered the mommy of all United States straw bale structures by many "balers." However, these straw structures were not the first structured to use hay or straw, not were they the first uses of this ever abundant material.

The use of herbaceous plants

Straw can last anywhere from 3 weeks to many millennia. Straw has been found in ruins dating back 40 millennia. It was used in Jericho (circa 8300 B.C.). The straw found in Egyptian tombs was thousand of years old and still viable. Yet most straw will decompose in 6 months if plowed under (rice straw takes a bit longer). One of the bones of contention between Moses and the Pharaoh was that the Pharaoh cut off the supply of straw to the Israelites so they could not make their bricks. The ancient boat builders used reed to construct vessels. Thor Heyerdahl, the Norwegian ethnologist and author, retraced the Polynesian journeys in a balsa wood and reed craft in 1947 from Peru to the Tuamotu Islands to prove the Incas used the Humboldt Current to inhabit the Pacific Islands. His theory was found to be flawed but his ocean-ready craft fared pretty well.

Today, herbaceous plants may be used to line livestock holding areas, the straw used for horse and cattle stalls (replete with manure and urine) is used to mulch around newly planted trees to ward off vermin. Livestock shelters can be constructed with straw, so can beehives, sound studios and a whole slew of things. Straw bales can make sumptuous courtyard walls. Festival and special event shelters can be constructed and then turned into compost. In the war-torn Balkans, straw bales are being used to shelter the former refugees. Bancos, work benches, furniture (when plastered), cold frames, green houses, raised

bed gardens (that will eventually become one with the garden), fire breaks, and flood and erosion control. Airports use straw bales for sound barriers; automotive racetracks use straw bales for a safe place to bump into; straw bales can be used to surround mechanical devices to hem in sound. Preexisting structures and even mobile homes and trailers have been successfully wrapped using straw bale construction techniques. I've seen them used for archery and firearms target backing. Cordage (natural fiber twine) has been made with herbaceous plants for many millennia, as well as hats, clothing, bags, trays, baskets, etc. A device called a "hay box" (retained heat cooker) can save you lots of money on your cooking cost. A box is lined with straw or hay. Then a pot or pan is place into the hay box after the contents have been partially cooked. the rest of the cooking takes place in the super-insulated hay box.

The insulative qualities of straw are nothing short of astounding. An R-value (the measure of resistance of an insulating material) can be as much as 2.4 per inch. The brobdingnagian "one ton bales" (actually running about 1,500 lbs) can have a staggering R-10, whilst most straw bale houses made with 2-string and 3-string bales will run around R-20 to R-60. A straw bale building can sequester ten to twenty tons of carbon, and loose straw or pellets partially made with straw can be used as dry biomass fuel. The Amoco Corporation has been converting rice straw into liquid biofuel. Moreover, the English use hay (or straw) to age beef. The best thing about straw is that it is renewable with a short term cycle growth. Many people consider it a nuisance, as I've discussed. Yet, it is really a prime asset. When grown in conjunction with bamboo, it is literally possible to grow a basic shelter. Amongst all the uses for herbaceous plants, besides food, structural construction may prove to be one of the best solutions for the ecozoic millennium.

The straw bale structure

We all hear about \$5.00 a square foot straw bale houses and chapels built for \$122.00 a square foot. That may be true, but you get what you pay for. The truth is prices can be as high or higher than conventional architecture. Although the super-insulative aspects of straw bale construction outweigh almost all conventional architecture R-value ratings. Therefore, the long-term operating cost of a straw hale structure pays for the structure (in theory).

The national average square foot cost as thought to be around \$53.00. Obviously, the less modern conveniences, like running water, lights, heat, or a HDTV, you have, the cheaper it will be. The walls of a structure generally account for about 10% to 20% or the total cost of the structure. The low cost we hear about in metatecture (alternative architecture) can be deceptive and when the reality of higher cost comes into view, people become disenchantred. I believe it is better to quote high, and be surprised be the savings (if they occur).



The energy savings can be huge. One Southwestern couple used about half a cord of wood to heat their straw bale house. It has been said that a 2,500 square foot house that would have cost \$30,000 to build with conventional architecture will cost \$5,000 to build with straw bale technology. Of course, that's assuming you can build a house for \$30,000, but I think the point is made. Anything is possible. I've written about a \$50.00 house, but again you get what you pay for.

These days with more stringent building codes, meticulous building inspectors, and clients wanting a more normative appearing structure to compete with the Joneses, costs have skyrocketed since the 1980s when straw bale construction started its neo-renaissance. Straw bale construction is still one of the best housing bargains. Generally, straw bale houses are not really suitable for wet climates, although many structure have been built in high precipitation areas. A house built in Washington State (U.S.A.) in 1979 which receives 75 inches of rain normally has stood up remarkably well.

Straw bale construction is becoming widely accepted throughout the United States where the straw bales are used as an "infill" material, what is also called "nogging." This is when the straw bales are tucked between the structural framework of the building. It is this type of building that has driven up straw bale construction cost to a large degree, but in many cases, it makes a lot of sense.

Straw bales structures that use bales like the way a brick mason uses bricks, in a running course, and that hold up a roof structure are called "Nebraska style" or "load bearing" methods. The bales are stacked, then pinned together, using sticks, bamboo, threaded bars (all thread) or rebar at about 2 to 3 pins per bale, although using metal within the bales may cause condensation to form within the walls (not good!). Pegs, dowels, bamboo, blocks and hunks of wood are pounded into bale walls to give the builders something to nail into so they can attach doors, windows, interior walls,etc. Likewise, window frames will incorporate pegs to be sunk into the bales. This technique is done with doors and anything else that is embedded within the walls.

Cont. on next page



Straw Cont.

Generally the straw bale walls are covered with armature, such as chicken fence wire, stucco mesh or similar armature onto which plaster or stucco is applied. In some designs an "exoskeleton" is constructed using wood, bamboo and/or rebar before the stucco or plaster is put down. "Load bearing" walls should not be over ten feet high, or span more than thirty feet in length. Although the "one ton" bales which are 4' x 4' x 8' can be double or even quadruple stacked creating 8' or 16' walls. Bales generally come in two types, the two string and the three string. The string is the thing that binds all bales together. All sorts of "strings" are used, metal wire, metal strapping, natural fiber cordage, although polypropylene is preferred because it is long lasting and very strong. The three string is much beloved by "balers" and runs from 14" to 17" (360 mm to 430 mm) high by 32" to 47" (810 mm to 1190 mm) long x 23" to 24" (580 mm to 660 mm wide and can weigh from 75 to 100 lbs. (34 to 45 kg). A bale laid flat can withstand 10,000 lbs. On end, that number is cut down to 2,770 lbs. Mortar can be used between the bales. In fact, when mortar is added, it forms a lattice.

In the United States, bale walls usually go up dry (without mortar). Electrical and plumbing, etc. should be sheaved before installing within the walls. Plumbing and conduits can be set within notches that are later plastered over or they can be run on the exterior of the wall's surface. Currently, many straw bale structures are built in the old-fashioned barn raising manner. Many times, this means labor costs are free or can cost as little as the expense of a lunch and refreshments for the "work bee" crew. In some cases, when the straw bale construction is done by expert instructors in an educational format, fees are charges. When is the last time someone paid you to work for you?

Intentional communities and many alternative building groups are holding straw bale construction seminars and short term courses throughout the world from Argentina to Mongolia and every place in between. An assortment of tools have been modified and developed specifically for straw bale construction, such as Japanese saws, weed eaters, stucco pumps, cement mixers, etc. As we enter the ecozoic millennium, not just tools will be adapted for herbaceous pant usage, so will

building codes, insurance ratings, bank loan acceptance, the popular mind set, and the overall culture acceptability or this amaranthine method of building our nest.

Connecting the dots

I have envisaged a processing system that will collect straw, solar dry it, add borax, sodium silicate, and lime powder. The straw will then be compressed and "prestressed" into behemoth 4' x 4' x 8' super bales. They could be run through a passive solar system that will "melt" the straw to fuse the surface, then bound together with multiple braided bands of polypropylene cords. Other cords could be laced through the bales and tied to the exterior cords.

These ultra bales could then be quadruple stacked, pinned together with sharpened timber quality bamboo, using a pneumatically driven device at about 5 to 6 "pins" per bale.

Once the bales were pinned, a timber bamboo exoskeleton could be constructed. Stucco and plaster could then be sprayed on with a "gunnite" like stucco pump to form 16 foot monolithic walls.

These ultra-bale wall systems could be used in unison with other metatecture methods such as rammed earth, cob, compressed earthen block, air and fabric formed sprayed architecture to form roofs, adobe, stone, solar adobe, used tires, "reuse," bamboo, along with post and beam, and earth beaming. This amalgamation of construction methods is the basis for my co-housing/cluster design which I call "NEW GAIA, a forest colony" in which all the metatecture structures are interconnected, reducing the overall "foot print" of the village, all of which would be set into a constructed food bearing forest and metatecture (alternative agriculture) matrix.

Straw bale technology is one of metatecture methods that has brought this dream into a pragmatic reality. Straw bale construction has already been used for factories, restaurants and community buildings. Co-housing is just the next logical step. I am positive that straw bale construction methods will make their way into many intentional community designs in the ecozoic millennium.

Conclusion

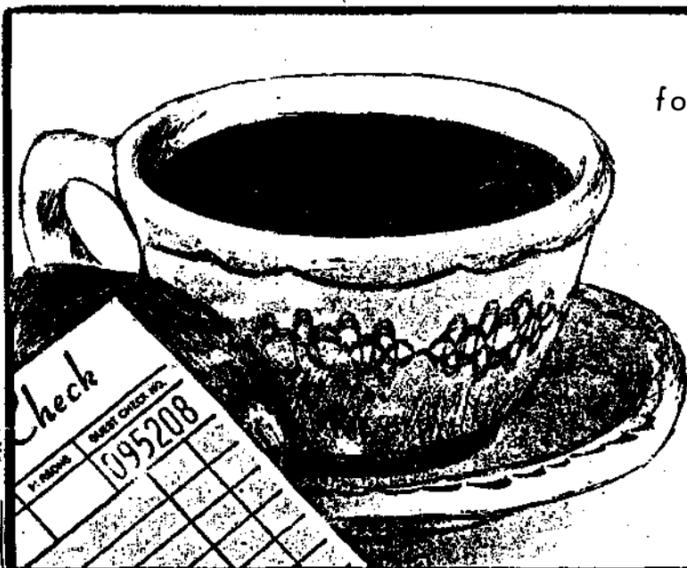
Straw bale building associations are springing up throughout the United States and the world. These groups are filled with a great collection of souls. The gurus of straw bale construction, or should I say "the royal balers," are David Eisenberh, Matts Myhrman, Judy Knox, and Bill and Athena Steen. They have trained directly or indirectly just about everyone in the straw bale universe.

The bible of straw bale construction is *The Last Straw* (address below), a wonderful easy-to-understand periodical that is not only teaching the world about the many aspects of straw bale construction, but *The Last Straw* acts as the golden connecting thread to the ever expanding network of straw enthusiasts. *The Last Straw* is bestirring lots of interest in straw bale construction, and it has become the central focal point and the outstanding authority on straw bale construction. Without *The Last Straw* and the myriad of wonderful people who have shared information on straw bale construction with me over the years, this article would not have been possible for me to develop.

My views over the decade have been radically changed about straw bale construction. I have learned it is far from being ephemeral, that it's fire safe. It is perhaps the most insulative of all the metatecture methods and it can be visually beautiful with wall flowing into each other, with soft curve that create a harmonious environment. At the same time, straw bale construction can be assimilative to blend into any neighborhood. I've accrued an immense admiration for not only straw bale construction, but also for the sagacious band of "balers" that sing the praises of straw. Moreover, I've learned to also respect the single piece of straw in the process. The first step of any metatecture journey starts with knowledge. I could list dozens of wonderful sources but *The Last Straw* has compiled the best resource listing I've seen, so I'll leave you with that, and my wish that your journey will be as wonderful as mine continues to be.

The Last Straw
HC 66, Box 119
Hillsboro, New Mexico 88042
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--Nikolai Alexanderovich Zarick
Architectonic Conceptualist



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Quit wandering and take note

Hello! Are you tired of looking around your video store and seeing a lot of big middle-of-the-road movies? We've all been there . . . you know it's bad when *Wild Wild West*, *Random Hearts*, or *End of Days* start to look watchable. Don't even think about it. Or worse yet *Patch Adams* (God Forbid) is your rental choice and you soon realize you would rather stare at a blank screen instead.

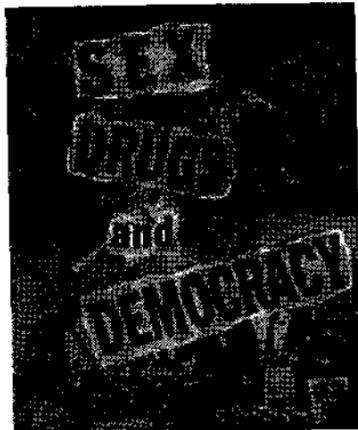
Are there any diamond-in-the-rough movies out there? The answer is a resounding YES, my movie friend. There are some very cool movies out there.. You just have to take some chances, and of course read the *Post Amerikan* movie column. Well, with that said and bearing in mind that my taste in movies runs way off-center, I would like to suggest to few hidden gems.

Jesus' Son --Billy Crudup (of *Almost Famous*) gives yet another knock-out performance. Set in the free-wheeling 70s, Crudup plays a young man in his twenties nicknamed Fuckhead by almost everyone in his small Iowa hometown, FH has a pretty bad drug problem, and he moves through his days in a hallucinatory state where dreams and reality often merge and blur

The only gravity in FH's universe is his sometimes girlfriend played with depth by the amazing Samantha Morgan (Best Actress Oscar nominee for *Sweet and Lowdown*). We follow Crudup's chaotic existence from the cornfields of Iowa to Chicago and eventually Phoenix. FH ties to reach a state of grace and fulfillment but his path there is a tough one.

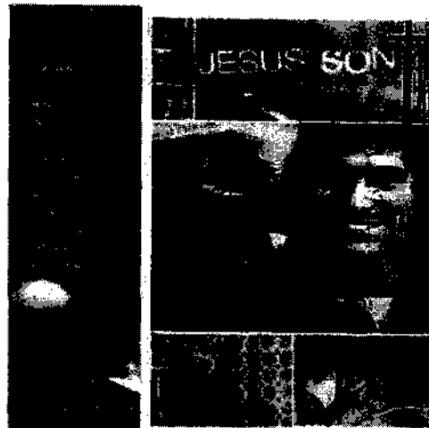
The 70's period look of the movie is dead-on, and the supporting cast of Dennis Hopper, Holly Hunter, Dennis Leary and Jack Black (of *High Fidelity*) give *Jesus' Son* a well-rounded depth and a mesmerizing quality. If you like movies that stick to you, then definitely watch *Jesus' Son*.

Welcome to Hollywood-- Here's a just-for-kicks comedy that's funny in a voyeuristic way. It's a mockumentary where director Adam Rifkin (who did *Moosehunt*) is convinced that he can take an unknown actor and make him into Hollywood's next big movie star. Rifkin picks his subject and gets him his first gig--a role on TV's *Baywatch*. Our hero (Nick Decker) is a wash-out and Rifkin decides to shop him around to the studios. The studios are lukewarm or nonreceptive to Decker, so Rifkin decides to hire model/actress Angie Everhart to play the part of Decker's girlfriend. Once the studios, agencies and casting agencies take shots at Decker, Rifkin begins to doubt his choice. It's fun and funny to watch the behind-the-scenes making of a star . . . and even funnier when that star does not rise to grab that 30 seconds of fame. Tons of cameos from the likes of Glen Close, Ed Harris, Will Smith, Jeff Goldblum, Lawrence Fishburne and even David Hasselhoff make *Welcome to Hollywood* a winner.



Sex, Drugs and Democracy -- Very interesting documentary about the vision of freedom in Holland. How much freedom is too much? The Dutch vision includes a legalized sex industry, the open sale of hashish, total equality for gays, government financed abortion and euthanasia and comprehensive sex education for school children. Hmmm . . . has Holland gone from the land of tulips to a modern day Sodom and Gomorrah? By all accounts the answer is no. In Holland the rates of drug use, addiction and AIDS transmission are very low and the Dutch also have some of the world's lowest rates of teenage pregnancy, abortion and imprisonment.

It's interesting to listen to some of the theories as to why this type of freedom works in Holland but probably wouldn't work in the United States.



If you check out the above movies and we have similar taste (that's good taste I think), take some more chances on the following films:

- 1--*Thesis*
- 2--*But I'm a Cheerleader*
- 3--*American Pimp*
- 4--*Waking the Dead*
- 5--*All the Little Animals*
- 6--*The Idiots*
- 7--*Bedrooms and Hallways*

--Dave

Sex

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

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The Poetry

P. I.

Public Interest. Public Interest.

many ways to define

A rationale that has a way of blowing our mind

our narrow perspective is easily led

by a media game that plays with our head

our understanding is blurred, as our opinions spat

as news implies this, with a twist on that

It's the "Streetcar named Desire" that lures you in

where controversy abounds, perhaps unethical, perhaps sin

Public Interest. Public Interest. . . once again

It's the everyday special that never runs out

It taunts us to taste it,

reassuring public interest is never a doubt

But what we need is/Hey! Who really cares

Public Interest is the highway and it's rush hour, beware

--Todd A. Monari

Interlude

On this Indian summer afternoon, the wind
picks up in only one part of the forest
at a time. My friend and I feel rewarded

at sight of a fluff-butted deer scampering
at the woods' edge, and a cardinal we're sorry
we've spooked. From its stand-off point
the bird chitters a general alarm.

These two hours seem set off -- as if
my friend and I have a right to expect
everything we want

except for one, just one
pine cone, whose absence
makes us wander from the trail

into a grove where on other trips
cones have crunched beneath our feet. Today
there are no cones.

But my partner discovers
a deer-rutting station surrounding
a pine where trails have converged
like spokes of a wheel and bent
the grass around the tree.

Just as I say,
If we're gonna find cones, it's here,
I look
at the ground, find a cone as my friend
finds his. There are only the two.

I collect my gift as my cohort
hugs the tree. As if waiting only
for thanks, the tree gushes in a motory
whirl. I note the pine's whereabouts
for future outings.

Startling me with his sure
tone, my companion speaks: Don't ever expect
to find this place again.

--Joan Crooks

LAURA PLAYS THE JAZZ FOR ME

(for Laura Kennedy)

Laura plays the
jazz for me,

early in the
morn,

when my eyes are
sleepy still,

Laura plays the
jazz for me,

she comes on
my radio,

tells me who
cut what,

works aroun' the
station break,

lets me know
Om not alone,

Laura plays the
jazz for me,

I travel with
the stars so far,

as they jam
twinkle in
the dark,

Laura plays the
jazz for me,

hoping I am there
as I turn the knob,

or cut through
the crackle,

it brings me
up ta know,

(amount of time)

A trusted wisdom grinning,
the never failing majesty

Seeing-

Molded to every surrounding,
moving as though meant to be watched

the pushed away gasps
the heart leaping from gentle lips,
extending his delicate threads
with each soft finger grasping for the bliss of vulnerability
fearing the even softer eyes.

And to love-
meandering flames
with that certain sway
lovely completion of expression and rapturous dreaming.

And to feel. . .

gone.

--Rosalie Anderson

Laura plays the
jazz for me,

a message in the air,
I hold onto with my heart,

Laura plays the
jazz for me,

putting rings of moonbeam
in my world,

Laura plays the
jazz for me,

Miles, Coltrane,
or Adderley,

Laura plays the
jazz for me,

very well known
or little heard of,

Laura plays the
jazz for me,

the Bird, Dizzy,
or somebody in uh
pork pie hat,

Laura plays the
jazz for me,

Holiday or Fitzgerald,

Laura plays the
jazz for me,

Om havin' a love affair
with my radio,

we rendezvous
when I turn her
on,

and it's all because,

Laura plays the
jazz for me.

--John Firefly

Thief

Filthy curiosity
lured me to your calm concert,
and-
without
a word;
lured my smiles into your cool palm.

--Rosalie Anderson

Powwow Holiday

In Narragansett and Massachusetts, powwow/powwaw means "priest" (and, the dictionary says, probably "he dreams"). Centuries after the North American Indian heyday, I attend (to break from financial fretting)

a powwow on an Illinois ranch with a park set aside for a poor, scattered tribe, the Kickapoo. Eager to lap up all aspects of this cultural venture, I make the rounds of the many handcrafted-jewelry and rabbit-fur

stalls, which crave tourist cash. The crowd falls into types: Full-bloods, mixed-breeds, New-Age imitators, and people like me and mine -- outsiders, proud of the little native blood we've got, grateful

for this novel/ancient groove to come back to as if we're kids again, re-imagining our cowboys-and-Indians naive-plots. I am rejuvenated when, on hearing a couple Indians (or closely resembling) exclaim that

a big, sky-ranging bird above us sure looks like an eagle, I run hollering to my older brother to not miss this once-in-a-lifetime sight. But chagrin sets in as nearby animal-savvy observers suggest that

the soaring one is a hawk -- no wait. It's a buzzard. One of the powwow's dancers, a black skinned Cherokee, saves my face: "The big birds will appear once the drumming starts." My color rises,

my heart thumps. To calm myself, I linger near a placid poodle cuddled by his human, a vendor wearing messy eyeliner and hosting a boothful of maybe-Navajo rugs, canyon paintings, and copies of Curtis

photographs (their frames thickly studded with semi-precious stones, all said to depict THE REAL OLD WEST. As I plop down \$4 for a miniature dream-catcher with a tiny chunk of chrysocolla (turquoise masquerade), an actual

real-thing takes hold of my right tearduct (like a wall-outlet-plugged-into). On hearing the show's opening throbs, I'm pulled away from the booth as I watch myself react yet remain in my body, registering my brother and sister's also

veering toward the center (a burning-sage-purified circle of haybale benches) -- the genuine article being the drumming punctuated by rhythmic gourd-rattling and, claiming the upper airwaves (like mist atop a lake), the chanting of the Indian elders -- what we've come here for, that other-worldly serenade, bare-to-the-core, as if lustily praying and about to cry at the same time. And, strange to tell, ten minutes into the thing, I think of that wunder-

kind-and-then-some -- Lady Day -- and her art's kinship to these guy's defiance of the tone-production rules of Western Civ. Billie, like as not, Would project from the throat instead of always

throwing the pitch into the trained-voice's mask-of-the face. That pop-music "canary's" tribe works closer to the heart chakra.

All afternoon, in the powwow's easygoing atmosphere occur special dances in which any audience member may join: the dance for the June birthdays or the one my sister and I Indian-two-step-for Dad, a deceased veteran of the Second World

War. During this interlude, the proof of the Cherokee's prediction settles in. The drumming/dancing -- some metaphysical pattern -- must be drawing the airborne creatures. Three circling buzzards

wing as far into the blue canopy as possible and still let us see them. And then powwow's climax -- the worldwide-champion hoop dancer's elaborate swooping and shape-shifting -- could serve as catalyst for no less than

arrow-shot dream -- because the crowd's focus suddenly swings toward an illusive feature for central Illinois -- a large hawk. I stays; it plays on the air currents; it drifts away.

Surely the people hush inside as they cheer the hoop dancer. The episode affects me the way a certain minor-key Billie Holiday song frightens me that the "I"/Billie herself may only be an arm's length away

from downing a bottle of pills. Then, out of the blue, the Holiday Factor (an ego-stripped/orphan-whipped undertone that merits a spotlight) lifts the listener with the line: "Gloomy,

I was only dreaming." And I'm glad to forget my petty life, glad to celebrate the real world of a distinctive few (alive/dead, conjuring/conjured, chanters/chanteuse) who, as stars set apart, expose their becoming sides and colorize the dream -- to amuse/cheer the other kids who fear they're losers when they're not.

With reverence for reverie, confidence in magic, and a sense that it takes all kinds to make a world worth preserving, piping-up rare birds soar above even the music and revitalize the blue

--Joan Crooks

Say What

Smooth talkin'
Talkin' junk
Plain spoken
They say
We say
Heresay
Oral history
City speak
Speak no Evil
Speaking in tongues
Speaking with a forked tongue
Tongue lashing
Double talk
Talking crazy
Jaw flapping
Loose lips sink ships
I meant to say
Soft spoken
Speak to me
Fireside chat
Chat line
Put a zipper on it
Button your lip
Talking with your mouth full
Hush your mouth
Nothing more to say.

--Nikolai Alexanderovich Zarick

When Philip reaches for Helen's hand, he feels for the sticky spot in her palm that matches the sticky spot in his.

When Helen feels Philip's hand enclosing hers, she ties her five fingers together in a move, which shelters her lifeline in a pucker.

"I dread to think," she says, "what would happen if I did not pout."

--John Virtue & Joy
(excerpted from the chapbook *Does the Medicine Reach the Ache? How my friends do business*)

YOUR POEM HERE.

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

If interested, please mail your poem to: Post Amerikan, P.O. Box 3452, Bloomington, IL 61702 or e-mail to: pamerikanusa@netscape.net

We have the right to reject any poem.

Cont. on next page



Poetry Page Cont.

inspired by little lyrics III

all hidden in the fly's buzzing around the lightbulb thinking:

"fry or not fry, fry or not fry, fry or not fry?"

incandescent death awaits your last dirty landing, and no one will ever know of your indecision

--Rosalie Anderson

Soft Freedom

A pale yellow butterfly gracefully danced in and out of the monocline razor wire upon the cold prison wall.

On the ground a new spring bunny slips in and out of the steel fencing like the child of Orwell and Kafka in some bizarre episode of water ship down.

Brother and sister are they, in their defiant freedom, oblivious to the absence of the gifts of life that cause a thousand truculent men to weep.

I watched as each disappeared from sight, although happy for them. A Mona Lisa smile was all I could muster up. Yet I rejoice in their ebullient plethora of soft freedom.

--Nik Zarik

Something like a thought

parting lashes
awaking to the absence of disgust for my pathetic state
just smoothing out the wrinkles in my manic randomness

--Rosalie Anderson

Something like a realization

It's funny
that I'm in this spiraling wound,
measure the day by the sickening pit my stomach never aspired to be.
What safety finned my lips to a fire escape I don't know,
I have no passion left for climbing those stairs.
familiar curves of flesh-
their appeal rots in all too familiar surroundings.

--Rosalie Anderson

Being in Nothingness

Longing to taste the sweet nectar of stillness
The tranquility of embryonic memory
The millisecond before a baby falls asleep
The bliss when lovers silently basked in afterglow
Beyond the hushing din of a waterfall
there lays the blackness of the universe, the pre-big bang
play ground; penultimate of Tao and Zen
The unseen beauty that is always present
The unheard concerto that kisses the ears of God
The redolent void
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--Nik Zarick

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Seeing Red: Stirring monster

by Steve Eckardt

"We're building this Gideon's army, and heading for Armageddon to do battle for the Lord."

--Patrick Buchanan, speaking 18 September 2000 at Bob Jones University

An open fascist is running for president of the United States.

And he's going to achieve what he's shooting for.

He intends to preside over an America where 'ethnic cleansers' target immigrants, homosexuals, Blacks, women and workers -- an America purged of what he calls today's dominant "Marxist culture," i.e. everything people who don't go to Bob Jones University sing, watch, read or think.

He intends to preside over an America of terror and death, an America ready to march--either cowed or inspired--to world war for white Christian American supremacy.

His name is "Pat" Buchanan -- and he's for real.

And he *is* achieving what he's shooting for this election.

Not winning the vote, of course (no fascist has ever fairly accomplished *that*, but getting fascist ideas stamped "legit" -- and organizing/recruiting his future mobs and death squads.

After all, the U.S. government is handing him a political party, TV time, 12 million dollars and a ballot spot in nearly at least 42 states.

Call this news either sobering or implausible (hey, it can't happen here) -- but bear in mind that he's got some surprising allies.

Maybe even you.

Killers

Too bad puerile Leftists have ruined the word "fascist" by tossing it around so lightly for so long (it's almost as bad as enemies-of-humanity like Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot and Peru's "Shining Path" ruining the word "communism" -- but that's another story).

Amerikkka is fascist, welfare reform is fascist, any war is fascist -- we've all heard it before. Nixon was a fascist, Reagan was a fascist, Reno is a fascist, -- hell, some people call their own fathers fascists.

They forget --no matter how evil the people and policies they stick with the "f" -- that under real fascism they and millions more would just get a bullet in the head.

They forget the Nazis' murderous rule of terror, the extermination camps, and the 20 million Russians killed by the Third Reich's armies.

Or maybe they think it's just ancient history.

"Heading for Armageddon to do battle for the Lord"??

Guess what -- it's not ancient history. Not any more.

Birds of a feather

Thank the entire U.S. education/propaganda apparatus for promoting confusion about fascism --what it looks like, where it comes from, and how to fight it. After all, ultra-rightists posing as anti fat-cat crusaders are actually creations of . . . yes, the capitalists themselves. (Read Daniel Guerin's definitive classic Fascism and Big Business [Pathfinder Press] for that.)

In fact the U.S. ruling class collaborated with fascists in Germany, Italy, and Japan before, during and after World War #2.

They shared the Nazi dream of crushing the Russian Revolution with blood and iron. They did nothing while the Nazis exterminated some eight million Jews, Gypsies, communists, socialists and free-thinkers in death camps. They worked together to prevent people living under fascism rising in revolution -- the Allies dealing death from above, the Axis handling the wet work below. And afterwards they adopted the Nazi secret police --nearly intact- to use against the Red Menace.

(Check out Soft Skull Press's new book Saving Private Power: The Hidden History of "The Good War" by Michael Zezima (a.k.a. Mickey Z) for some good background info on all this.)

Patriotic populists

Fascism's outstanding feature is its seeming seductiveness. It's all no-nonsense tough talk that stands up for the "little people" -- and patriotism. It's literally "national socialism" (what "Nazi" is a German acronym for).

So get ready when they give Buchanan free air time (which will include, I guarantee, at least one nationally-televised debate). You'll hear all about "unpatriotic giant corporations," the shadowy transnational WTO, NAFTA, the suffering of *American* workers, farmers and businessmen, the rule of 'the money boys', and even a few crocodile tears for oppressed Chinese toilers.

Watch people --maybe even you-- say "he's a little radical but thank God somebody's standing up to Big Business." Or even "at least he's talking about bringing all the troops home --about time somebody opposed U.S. imperialism." (Actually he wants to post them all on the Mexican border.)

He'll get some surprising allies.

And even if you and all your friends recognize the wannabe Fuhrer for what he is, there's Ralph Nader, darling of the "Left," in a (scandalous) exclusive interview with the U.S. ultra-right newspaper *The Spotlight* agreeing "that he has much in common with Pat Buchanan, candidate of the Reform Party, in opposing the World Trade Organization, NAFTA, Red China trade legislation and multinational corporations." Why, Ralph's even come up with "the best way to collaborate" with the fascist.

And look -- many of the supposedly "anti-capitalist" protesters in WTO and World Bank gatherings frame the same issues the same way as Buchanan. Of course most of those folks had the best of intentions -- but they'll find themselves in Gideon's army if they don't drop their Americanism quick as a red-hot shot-put.

After all, being pro-American means being anti-all the other human beings in the world. And -- before you know it-- on your way to Armageddon.

Far better to join with human beings --workers, farmers and young people around the world-- instead of with "citizens." Far better to embrace the rest of humanity than to kill or blockade it with either bombs or "fair trade" barriers.

Everybody else

Of course the United States is not on the verge of a fascist take-over. It'll take economic collapse --and full-scale war with the working classes and their allies-- before *that* nightmare could ever come true.

But the ultra-right (and its capitalist masters) is spreading its ideas, getting ready for what it's sure is coming.

If you want to do likewise, start by un-installing all the patriotism you've been programmed with.

After all, to the ultra-right, it's America vs. the rest of the world. Time to realize that -- unless you're a big U.S. capitalist-- that "rest of the world" includes you.

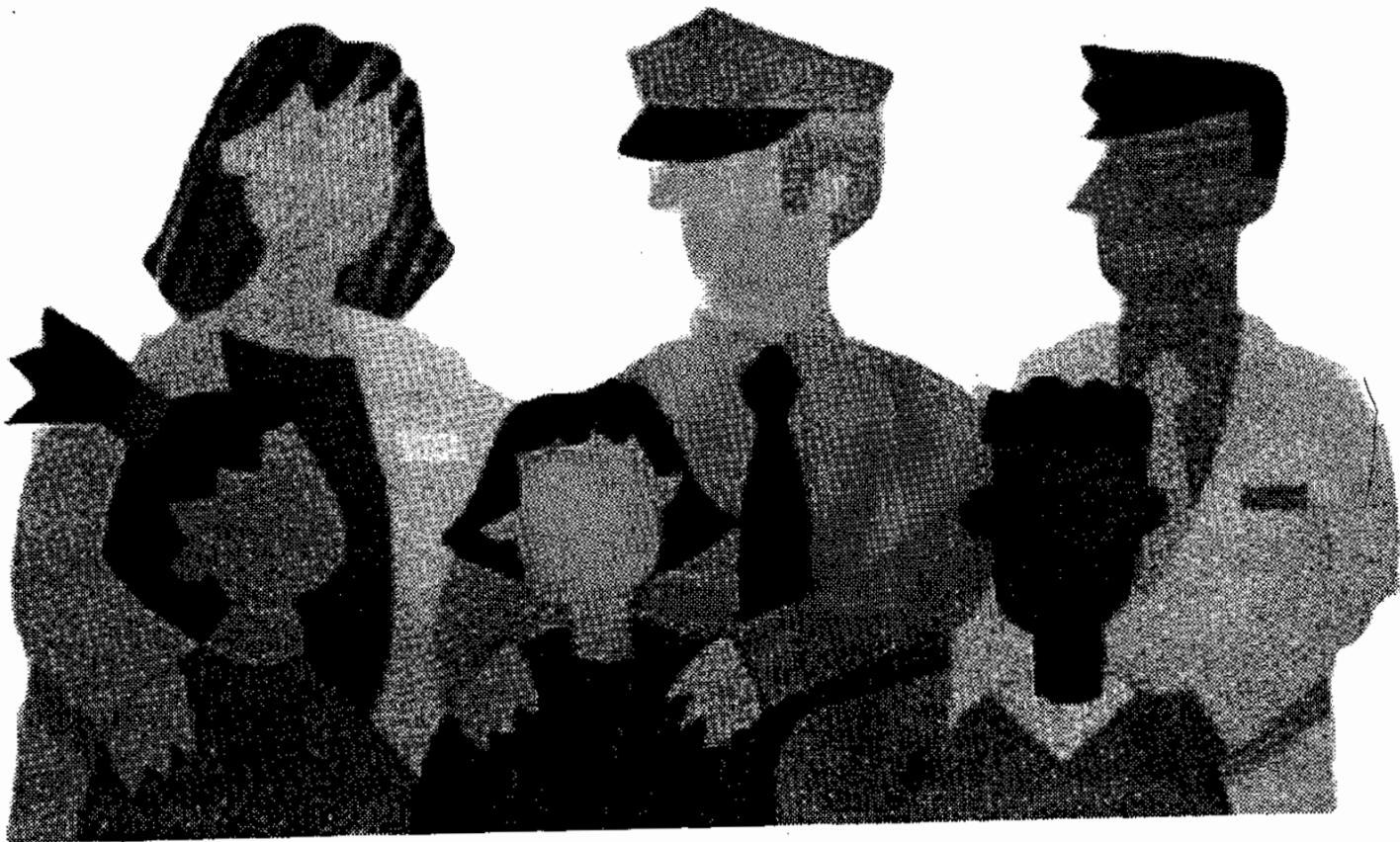
Steve Eckardt produces the web magazine SeeingRed.com Your comments, questions, and criticisms are welcome. Send them to <Red@SeeingRed.com>.

To literally join with workers and young people around the world, come to the Second World Meeting of Friendship and Solidarity being held November 10-14 in Havana, Cuba. Go to <www.CubaSolidarity.com> for details.



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