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POST AMERIKKAN

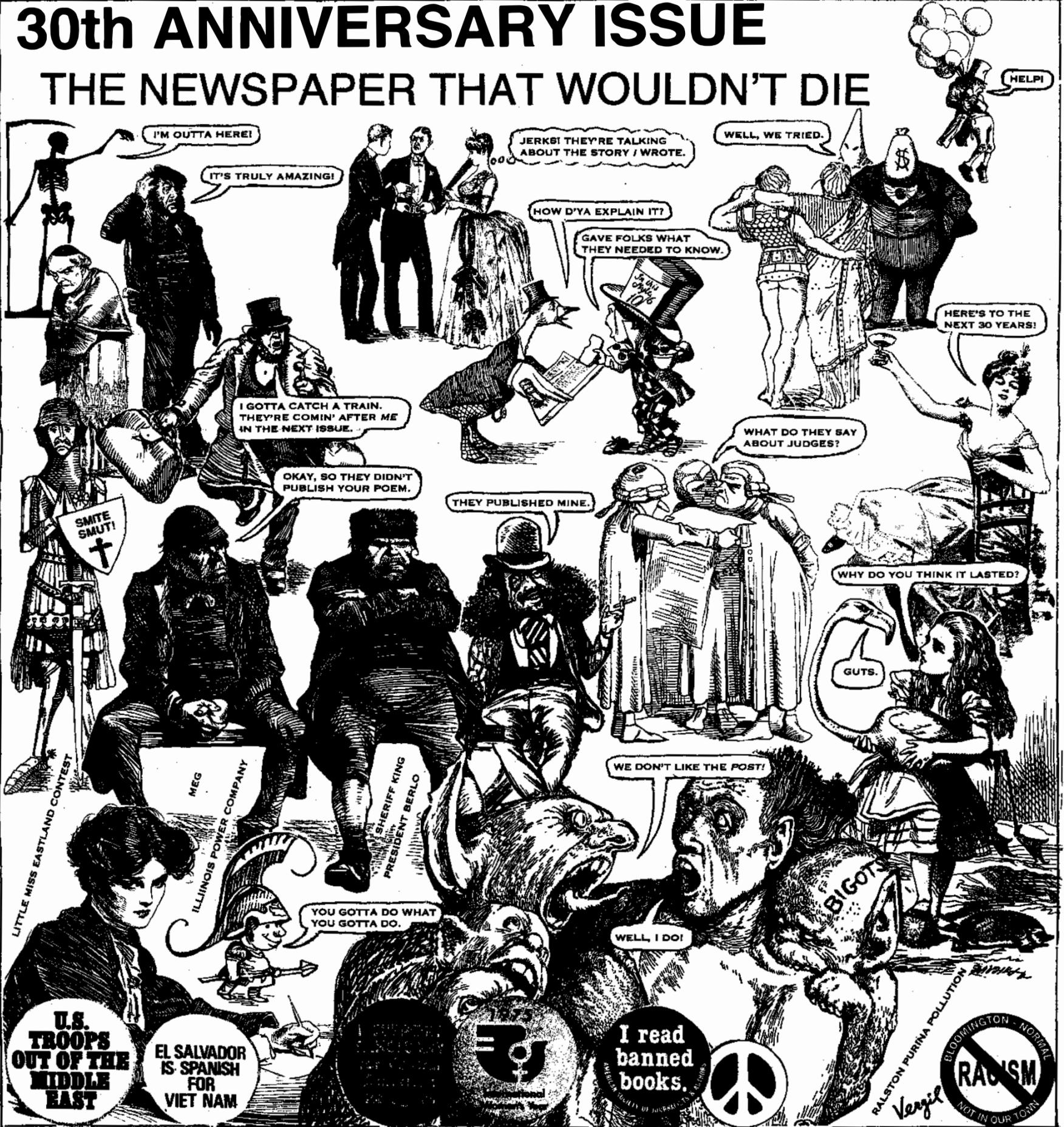


BLOOMINGTON/NORMAL VOLUME 31

FREE

NUMBER TWO APRIL/MAY 2002

30th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE THE NEWSPAPER THAT WOULDN'T DIE



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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, Deborah, Ralph, Sherrin & X

Good numbers

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 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
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 abortion assistance.....1-800-322-1622
 Occupational Development Center...452-7324
 Parents Anonymous.....827-4005
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 of Lesbians & Gays).....862-1844
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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
 Burwells, 908 N. Main
 Common Ground, 516 N. Main
 Crazy Planet Kitchen, 414 N. Main
 Gaston's Upper Cut, 409 N. Main
 Heartland Community College, Raab Rd.
 Lizards Lounge, 612 N. Main
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 To Your Health, 1214 N. Towanda, #2
 Twin City Exchange, 411 N. Main

Normal

Acme Comics, 115 W. North
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 Campus Town, 121 W. North
 Centennial Hall, ISU
 Coffeehouse, 14 E. Beaufort
 Deadpan Alley Records, 107 W. North
 Ecology Action Center, 208 W. College
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Community News

Family violence collection donated to library

The Family Violence Coordinating Council has donated a collection of materials on domestic violence to Bloomington Public Library. The gift begins a partnership to develop and maintain a special collection of materials on domestic violence education.

In recent years, awareness of family violence has increased. This collection will be of interest to health care, legal, educational and other helping professionals as well as the general public. It offers resources on intervention, prevention and the impact of violence on children.

The collection consists of books and videos for all ages. Items address all aspects of family violence. Sample titles for adults include: *Ending Domestic Violence* by Ethel Klein; *Domestic Violence and Health Care: What Every Professional Needs to Know* by Sherri L. Schornstein; *Partner Violence: How to Recognize and Treat Victims of Abuse*; and *The Violence Stops Here* by Charles Reynard. Items, like *Secrets that Hurt*, are specifically for children.

A complete list of the resources is available free of charge at the Bloomington Public Library Adult Services Department. The list will be available at the BPL web site www.bloomingtonlibrary.org. These materials are available for interlibrary loan. For more information contact Jane Chamberlain at 828-6091.

AIDS Candlelight Memorial

On April 21, 2002, McLean County will observe the 19th International AIDS Candlelight Memorial. This event will be observed this spring in over 1000 communities in 85 countries making it the largest grassroots AIDS event ever.

The annual event, coordinated worldwide by the Global Health Council, commemorates the lives lost to AIDS, demonstrates support for people living with HIV/AIDS, and mobilizes community-based responses to AIDS.

The local observance is being organized by the McLean County AIDS Task Force. It will take place Sunday, April 21, 2002, at 3:00 PM and will be held at the Campus Religious Center, 210 W Mulberry St., Normal.

The theme of this year's International AIDS Candlelight Memorial is "Share your vision for a brighter tomorrow." According to Bruce Lang and Mark Robertson, co-coordinators for the local observance of this event, "The International AIDS Candlelight Memorial is an opportunity for each of us to dedicate ourselves--for the first time or once again--to the fight against AIDS. We will join together in our commitment to continue our fight against AIDS until the pandemic is over for all people everywhere."

"To the millions of families in McLean County, in the United States and around the world who have been touched by the HIV/AIDS epidemic, we call on you to offer your support and solidarity as you join us in observing the 19th International Candlelight Memorial. We call on everyone to share our vision for a brighter tomorrow, free of the ravages of AIDS, and to renew their commitment to turning the tide of this tragedy and to keeping alive the memories of those who have passed before," said Denise Goff, the Chairperson for the McLean County AIDS Task Force.

Around the world, Local Coordinating Organizations, which are often community-based organizations, religious groups or coalitions of people living with HIV/AIDS, have already begun planning Candlelight events in

their areas. Anticipated observances include a variety of events, from the lighting of candles and oil lamps in over 200 rural villages in Southeast India to candle light processions in Latin America to interfaith memorial services and other events held in towns all over the United States.

Please join us for this year's event. We want to remember those we've lost by a reading of their names. We want to provide the opportunity for readings and performances given in their memory and invite you to contact us immediately if you can share one with us. Time permitting, we will make the same invitation to those attending the event. We ask that you turn on your porch light or light a candle in your home on Sunday evening to show your support, even if you are unable to attend.

For further information about the local event, or to volunteer to help with the event, leave a message for Bruce Lang at the McLean County AIDS Task Force at 309-827-2437.



Five fast ways to end sweatshops

1. **Shift your spending habits.** Shift your spending habits away from problem companies to responsible companies. Choose one product that you buy often (coffee, clothes, gifts) and commit to purchasing it only from a green business or Fair Trade organization, where you can count on good labor and environmental practices.
2. **Raise awareness at the retail level.** Ask one retail store if its products were manufactured without sweatshop or child labor--and how they know.
3. **Raise awareness at the manufacturing level.** Contact one major corporation that you purchase from often. Ask it to demonstrate that it is meeting all the conditions of a fair labor company.
4. **Join the Wal-Mart campaign.** Join the campaign to convince Wal-Mart, the company that controls five percent of U.S. retail sales, to clean up the labor problems in its supply chain.
5. **Get others involved.** Call Co-Op America for a copy of their *Guide to Ending Sweatshops* and pass it along to someone else. (800)58-GREEN.

--Co-Op America's *Guide to Ending Sweatshops*



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Off the beaten path

Hello again all movie fans! My name is David, and I'd like to offer some movie suggestions for watching on video/DVD. Take some chances. Catching a movie theatrically in town can be somewhat challenging . . . sooooo . . . picking up a video/DVD is a great way to see some knock-out films. You have to love discovering a cool flick.

Okay, so you walk into a video store and your mind takes a speeding rocket south . . . total blank . . . you have no idea what to watch . . . MMMMM! Take your *Post Amerikan* along; flip to the movie review page, and then you have at least a half a dozen choices. Just a slight warning: my movie tastes do run a tad off-the-beaten-path. With that in mind, enjoy the picks and write me if you catch any films that are that are must-sees. Remember to take chances with your movie choices . . . you'll be surprised by how many cool movies hardly get any play.

The Deep End

Golden Globe nominee Tilda Swinton (of *Orlando*) gives an intensely driven performance in this twisted thriller. The movie is an ode to Alfred Hitchcock with plenty of wicked turns plus some top-notch acting.

The viewer is asked to question: How far would you go to protect a loved one? Swinton plays a mother who believes her 17 year old son could be a murderer after she finds evidence and quickly hides it. Acting on maternal instinct and immediate impulse does not serve her well.

She does a poor job of disposing of the body. Swinton's hastiness blooms into a full-blown cover-up as a blackmailer seeps his way into her formerly idyllic life. Goran Visnjic (of *Welcome to Sarajevo* and TV's *ER*) is fantastic as the at-first malevolent blackmailer/chess pawn. Drowning the viewer into murky waters of misguided reaction, *The Deep End* delivers. ****

Lisboa

In the past couple of years I've seen several incredible Spanish language suspense films

(*Open Your Eyes/Lovers of the Arctic Circle*), and *Lisboa* is another great addition to the growing list. Echoes of Hitchcock ripple through the film. The always amazing Sergi Lopez (*With a Friend Like Harry*) plays a tacky Portuguese traveling salesman who gives a ride to a woman who is mysterious, sexy, and quite possibly insane.

With every passing mile the story gets increasingly disturbing. A confused Lopez has to deal with his rider's maliciously psychotic family fast closing in on them. Things take an extremely nasty turn.

Chillingly unpleasant *Lisboa* delivers a raw nerve energy that's very seductive. Director Antonio may be conquering America in the near future. Highly recommended. ***1/2

Lisa Picard is Famous

Director Griffin Dunne (*Addicted to Love*) gives us a very funny mockumentary about an aspiring actress who is supposedly verging on stardom. If you watched *Best in Show* or *Waiting for Guffman* and laughed along, you will definitely appreciate *Lisa Picard*.

We follow Lisa as she tries to nail a variety of parts, including a TV movie-of-the-week, or an all important aspirin commercial. Our heroine is at best a marginally talented actress who is facing a business that can chew up and spit out even the most accomplished talent.

With no room for error, Lisa makes her way along with a clinging boyfriend, a delusional (but more talented) friend, and a documentarian who is getting a little too personally involved.

Newcomer Laura Kirk is perfect in the lead as we sympathize with her but also laugh out loud at her ineptness. Entertaining and fun. ***

Everything Put Together

A haunting story of a young mother who is emotionally crippled and spiraling downward after the death of her first born child. Radha Mitchell (of *Welcome to Woop Woop*) gives a knock-out performance as a mother unable to deal with the hand life has dealt her. Director Marc Foster (*Monster's Ball*) uses a disarming

visual style and weaves some unnerving themes throughout this character study.

This is a story not often told and not overly commercial, but if you enjoy a smart script with a genuinely creepy tone then this movie should be near the top of a must see list. Mitchell is fast becoming a noted actress and should get a more mainstream role that will make her a bona-fide star. Foster's star is also rising since writing *Monster's Ball* which was Oscar nominated for Best Original Screenplay. Catch some rising stars and a great movie. *** 1/2

Paragraph 175

Fantastic Holocaust documentary chronicles the Nazis' persecution of gays. Oscar winning filmmakers Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman (*Stories From the Quilt/Celluloid Closet*) interview six survivors of the era.

The movie shows us the cultural background against which the Holocaust horrors unfolded. One of Hitler's initial right-hand men, Ernst Roehm, was widely known to be homosexual.

The film is filled with troubling images of the past, and the interviews are simultaneously riveting and gut-wrenching. The elderly subjects often come off as cranky and strong-willed, which makes their testimonials of abuse go straight to the heart.

Family life, relationships and society are all laid out for us to examine. Give *Paragraph 175* a chance if you are interested in history or human nature. The film deserves all the praise it's receiving. ****

Here are 24-count them-24 more prime movie suggestions—Oh yeah baby.

1. *Mulholland Drive*
2. *Donnie Darko*
3. *Criminal Minds*
4. *Waking Life*
5. *Tortilla Soup*
6. *Novocaine*
7. *Focus*
8. *New Waterford Girl*
9. *Idiot Box*
10. *Adventures of Felix*
11. *Brigham City*
12. *Metropolis*
13. *Our Lady of the Assassins*
14. *L.I.E.*
15. *Aberdeen*
16. *Tart*
17. *Innocents*
18. *Gleaners & I*
19. *Big Eden*
20. *Asoka*
21. *Come Undone*
22. *No Man's Land*
23. *Heart*
24. *Bangkok Dangerous*

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ENAMEL (Illin Noise)
Cleaner Than Ever

Local boys hailing from Bloomington-Normal will rock America soon. I originally was going to include a short interview I had with bass player Micah Hattaway and decided to stick with my review, sorry guys.

This band is tailor made for "alternative radio" with its catchy melodies and crunching guitars. I know a lot of people would love this record if they only had a chance to hear it.

The problem I have with this recording is it is simply not my type of music-hell I'm just giving my opinion. The album was produced and recorded by the band and for that I give 'em big props however they must come up with songs that grab people's emotions and put them in a place they can feel or a situation that means something.

The songs are catchy as hell but they leave me with nothing and for the general population that is all it takes. I need more depth in my music - I'm not saying this to be an asshole. I'm saying this for the band to get better.

A lot of bands today have forgotten why they are playing rock n roll in the first place, some can't even tell you. The guys in **Enamel** seem to be good guys and playing music for the right reasons but I challenge **Enamel** to stick by a lyric from the song "I'm Always Right." "Place before my cocky grin a thousand dollar bill but I probably won't give in."

Get ready guys because your heading down the Q101/KRock style path and dollars will be flying.

Shane MacGowan's Popes (Eagle Records)
Across The Broad Atlantic

Shane MacGowan formerly of The Pogues and his first band The Nipple Erectors is without a doubt one of the top five living songwriters of all-time and this latest offering is a collection of live recordings from St Paddy's Day taken from shows in NYC and Dublin, Ireland.

Shane shows are always something special but each year on Paddy's Day the shows are extra special and this collection puts you in the front row of the rowdiest place on earth. You can almost smell the beer and whiskey coming from your speakers with classics like "A Rainy Night In Soho," "Streams of Whiskey" & "A Pair of Brown Eyes."

Thanks to an outbreak of foot and mouth disease, the official Paddy's Day in Dublin, Ireland had to be moved from March 17th to May so Shane became the first Irish rocker to celebrate St. Paddy's Day on stage in both New York and Dublin in the same year.

Shane has the magical power to make you laugh one second and cry the next. This album mixes some of Shane's material with The Pogues' as well as some of the most underrated rockers of Shane's solo career. A lot is said about the state of Shane Macgowans' health and his addictions and not enough is said about his uncanny ability to pour his heart and soul into every word that comes from his mouth.

I highly recommend this record and all of Shane's records. Where else can you hear a rendition of a "Fairytale Of New York" sang with Shane and his Mother? Shane is an Irishman through and through - he makes no apologies for being Irish and actually embraces his culture unlike those phony sods U2 and that crap they create. Cheers !!!!!!!

Lee SCRATCH Perry (Trojan Records)
Jamaican e.t.

Here he comes again with another batch of tripped out rastafarian dub tracks that will make you scratch your head wonder what the fuck is going on in his head.

Scratch has put out a huge collection of music over his career and has had his share of flops

but he did it right this time and has released his best collection of songs in several years.

What is really cool about this record is the way Lee's vocals are recorded in layers upon layers and offset in timing and in tempo. I am a huge fan of dub style reggae and the difference between traditional dub and this new record is the fact most dub is simply an echo effect and this album is recorded with some echo effect but mainly comes from the layered smoke-out style of recording the vocals almost as if a rock band would record layers of guitar over a track.

The end result is something special. What are you doing right now? Go buy the CD.

--Mark Neace



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These are the

Talk given introducing Oscar Redondo and Jose Luis Noa, respectively First and Third Secretaries of the Cuban Interests Section--what would be the Cuban Embassy in the U.S. if Washington had normal diplomatic relations with the country. The event was held at the University of Pennsylvania on 13 February 2002, and was sponsored by La Unidad Latina in association with the Philadelphia Cuba Support Coalition.

I wonder how many people would like to go to Cuba someday --or already have. Could I see a show of hands?

That's a lot of us ... and probably get everybody if we included friends and family members.

OK, hold the thought of traveling to Cuba. We'll get back to it.

The rulers of the United States are at war. According to their president, "This is a two-front war. Overseas we're fighting and at home we're fighting."

What they're fighting at home is a war on democratic rights. Hundreds of people have been disappeared. The Fourth Amendment has been essentially repealed by the USA Patriot Act authorizing warrantless searches and 'detentions' without trials.

And --as the music journalist Dave Marsh puts it-- "for any of the millions of non-citizens residing legally in the U.S., the Patriot Act

allows the government to merely allege "terrorism" in order to try suspects without an attorney by a military tribunal anywhere in the world, including on ships at sea. The Act also allows defendants to be convicted--hell, executed--without the presentation of any evidence, 'even if a third of the officers disagree.' The bill defines terrorism by anyone--citizen or not--as 'activities that appear to be intended to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion.' By this definition, the sit-ins, boycotts, and marches that characterized the civil rights and anti-war movements are terrorism.

The FBI can now search your home or business without a warrant --and jail you if you tell anyone they did it."

These and many other things were in process prior to September 11th, an event of course seized as an opportunity to accelerate their implementation.

But while much of these wholesale attacks on democratic rights had remained on the drawing board, for the last three years they have been used with a vengeance against Cubans and Cuban-Americans in this country --in particular Rene Gonzalez, Ramon Labanino, Fernando Gonzalez, Antonio Guerrero and Gerardo Hernandez --the Miami Five.

Now, back to our earlier show of hands.

The reason why you were and will be safe in Cuba is that people like these five men have made it their job to protect you. To prevent attacks on the places you would visit or stay -- attacks by U.S.-based terrorists with a long and bloody record, terrorists who have focused on places popular with tourists.

Brave and heroic people like Rene, Ramon, Fernando, Antonio and Gerardo have dedicated themselves to the dangerous work of infiltrating these terrorist organizations to uncover their plans, and share that information with the government of Cuba --and even the U.S. government-- to prevent them from happening.

The response of Washington --whose relentless 43 year war against Cuba has used every painful tactic and weapon known to humanity, including the threat of nuclear war-- the response of Washington to the efforts to stop terrorist attacks on Cuba was to pillory these five men as "spies" and sentence them to life in prison.

Meanwhile the terrorists walk free on the streets of the United States.

This includes one Orlando Bosch, who blew up a Cuban passenger plane killing 73 people, escaped from a Venezuelan jail, and was allowed into this country through the efforts of one Otto Reich, now the U.S. government's top official in charge of Latin American relations. And then given a pardon by the president of the United States, which to this day refuses to extradite him.

The methods used against the five anti-terrorist heroes opened the current "war at home" three years ago. Their houses and computers were

repeatedly searched without warrants. They were denied access to attorneys and to their relatives, including their children. And they neither possessed nor transmitted military secrets, a fact admitted even by the prosecution. We should join in demanding their release.

I'm very happy to welcome representatives of Cuba here tonight to share their ideas and hear ours. Listening to other people and having a civil public meeting is a vital democratic right, one which we must refuse to give up.

But Washington bends all its power to prevent people from hearing Cubans or visiting Cuba to see for it themselves.

That's why it's properly called a blockade, rather than an embargo. It's a Berlin Wall erected by the United States to block interchange between the U.S. people and Cuba -- anything that would allow a clear view of the country.

But it does more than block seeing Cuba's accomplishments and ideas -- it blocks seeing the killing fields of US operations against that country. Terrorist attacks on Cuba --armed, trained, and financed from the United States-- have killed more than 3,400 Cubans since 1959. This is the equivalent of nearly 100,000 Americans.

Meanwhile the crushing economic embargo and sanctions have cost the people of Cuba more than 40 billion dollars -- in U.S. terms, tens of trillions of dollars --an impact greater than the Great Depression.

What's more, despite the appearance of periodic small cracks--welcome as they are-- this blockade hasn't been weakening, but is steadily strengthening year by year. Here's a quick and partial list:

- the Helms-Burton law of 1996 making it illegal for the entire world to trade with Cuba;
- last year's seizure and disbursement of 167 million dollars of Cuba's funds to relatives of terrorists shot down while invading Cuban airspace;
- increased prosecutions of US citizens traveling to Cuba without a license, up by a factor of six in the last year;
- this October's restriction of Cuban diplomats to the borders of Washington DC, unless granted permission by the State Department;
- last month's appointment of Reich;
- and of course the sentencing and treatment of the Miami Five.

Why? Why won't the U.S. government normalize relations with Cuba?

You can only make sense of that if you begin with a picture of the world different from what we are fed.

"Savage inequality" describes it. The island of Manhattan has more phone lines than the continent of Africa. Nearly 70% of the world's population has never made a phone call.

The 10 richest men in the world own more than the annual income of well over two billion human beings.



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good guys

Take it from the Washington Post: "20% of the world's 6bn people live on less than a dollar a day, almost half on less than \$2 a day;"

In fact, according to the UN, every single day approximately 35,600 children die from conditions of destitution.

Thank the normal operations of the current world order for all this. Third World countries are bled white by the wealthiest institutions, first and foremost U.S. banks, through usurious loansharking operations --the type of loan' that only gets bigger. For example, the so-called Third World debt stood at some 800 million dollars in 1990.

Today --despite paying out over one trillion dollars-- the debt stands at over 2 trillion dollars.

This plundering by the wealthy leaves poor nations unable to supply the most basic needs to many of their citizens.

Capitalist globalization is nothing less but the world Enronization--ruinous collapses of currencies and economies while the wealthy abscond. As Fidel Castro put it, "The current world order is morally indefensible, and environmentally and economically unsustainable."

There are worldwide protests against it, from the revolts of Mexico's indigenous to the truly mass movement now going on in Argentina, where the people face ruin. And one country, one people stand at the forefront of such protests. One people revolted and took matters into their own hands, creating a society where health care, education, culture, housing, and children are the top priorities.

Cuba is a living example of how to free yourself from life without a future.

The U.S. empire can't abide such an example. That's why the 43 years of relentless hostility and blockade.

The blockade is a warning to the world not to do as Cuba did.

And that's what's behind the latest outrage --the nightmarish incarceration of the prisoners of the Afghan war at the U.S. military base hostility occupying Cuban territory at Guantanamo. This is a giant thumb in the eye to Cuba, the only country in the world to oppose Washington's war against Afghanistan.

Under the guns of what Washington's leaders declare to be "world war ... lasting longer than our lifetimes," Cuba is not about to fall for this provocation.

Here we're not under such constraints. We should loudly and clearly demand that the U.S. military evacuate its base at Guantanamo and return the land to Cuba.

Likewise we should bend our efforts towards the normalization of relations with Cuba, including our right to listen and speak to Cubans whether in the United States or in Cuba. In doing so we are defending not only our rights, but Cuba's right to live and the sovereignty of have-not countries. The Cuban revolution stands up for and shows the way toward, equality and peace, The Cuban revolution humanity's revolution.

These [gesturing towards the Cuban diplomats] are the good guys.

Steve Eckardt <seckardt@aol.com>, a long-time Chicago railroad worker, currently produce the websites CubaSolidarity.com and SeeingRed.com. The talk above was given on behalf of the Philadelphia Cuba Support Coalition <PhilCubaCo@aol.com>.

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The Poetry Page

Almost A Knockout

I was on the trail of a cat
 Feet barely touching the ground
 If the trees had moved back
 Ten feet
 you'd heard the sound

Of lunch
 as I grabbed him in my mouth
 But from a tree he stared
 Then suddenly
 that cat head south
 About fifteen feet
 and then we shared

The same tree
 But he was at the top
 All I could see
 Was stars
 with a sudden stop

As that seven-pound cat
 almost knocked me out
 One hundred thirty pound of dog
 a wobblin'
 Didn't see that tree
 was about
 To end the chase
 angels were a callin'

Me
 but this ol' hound
 Wouldn't give in a lick
 Off in the fields
 I'm bound
 To chase more than a stick

And as night time falls
 I've had a little nap
 Recall that when
 Your run into a beam of sap

It's still worth the chase
 Though I let the cat be
 Soon this pain will erase
 I love running free.

--Lin Frog Simmons

Untitled

The last vestiges of my former persona
 Continue to persist, prevailing against all I have learned,
 Fighting for survival in the recesses of my mind,
 Creeping out in the most annoyingly unexpected times
 And places.
 Grades?
 Who cares, my intelligence will seize the day.
 It will save me from that 3-headed dragon
 Of education.
 It will come riding over the hill on a horse of pure silver, glimmering metallic in the sun.
 DREAMS I say.
 Reality will squelch this insignificant daydream of life.

--Zach Petrea

Twilight Animation

Luna has stood me up tonight,
 but the air is warm and the breeze refreshing.
 Although Luna is absent this twilight,
 I decide to cruise.
 I cruise slowly in cars made of leather and rubber,
 and my engine is voiceless.
 Looking up, I note that Luna is still missing,
 but her children have awoken.
 They sparkle and wink at me as I silently cruise the chip and seal roads.
 Large wooden monsters wave their arms high above me,
 as the soft breeze blows through their hair.
 Luna's children begin to tire.
 I can tell by the manner of their gradual fading.
 I wish them pleasurable dreams and fade away,
 only to reappear at nightfall.
 Just as Luna and her children.

--Joe Deurmier

Exhibit

I had a dream
 that a white clay
 cast of my dick
 was on display,
 at the McLean County
 Art Museum, and
 that some art critic
 said it was a relic
 of the Black Art
 Movement, and that
 when he held it,
 his hands turned
 into a vaging,
 but, he was just
 another asshole.

--John Firefly
 2-11-02

YOUR POEM HERE.

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

If interested, please mail your poem to:
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We have the right to reject any poem.

I Want to be That Girl

I want to be that girl
who leans on her boyfriend's shoulder in the middle of a class lecture,
who makes homemade fortune cookies for a loved one 'just because,'
whose friends can lean on and enjoy her company,
who is easy to approach and create a friendship.

I want to be that girl
who can visit with family and be respected on the same level as she respects them,
who plans a gorgeous wedding with loved ones, in nothing but harmony,
who doesn't give up hope and stays strong throughout life's challenges,
who stands out on a crowd without needing to wear bright colors.

I want to be that girl
who everyone gets along with,
who makes the family proud,
who marries for love and creates a warm and secure environment for her own family,
who makes someone smile while tears of sadness run down their face.

I want to be that girl
who shares her strength and wisdom with others
who doesn't need makeup, jewelry, nail polish, or expensive clothes to show her inner beauty
who blinds the darkness with sunshine
who focuses on the best that life has to offer-and intimately seeks it

I want to be that girl
who believes in her dreams,
who is proud of who she has become,
I want to be that girl-
...who doesn't want to be
-the other girl.

-Gena Marie Meyer

Corporate Soldiers

Corporate soldiers
Defenders for the rich
Exploiters of the poor
Indoctrinated into war
rallying to the battle cry
For democratic freedom
Drafted by the woovers
of patriotism
Off they go
Like pawns
In a game
Pushed into a
Subterfuge
Of death and deceit
Never to discover
The truth
For which
They fight or die
A shameful travesty
Based
On a Patriotic lie

-James Belcher

A Whisper Is Enough

Here I am
Listening to your heartbeat,
Saying something I don't understand.
I hear you talking.
I see you walking away from me.
Walking
Away
From Me.
I don't want to hear you talk anymore,
It doesn't mean that much to me.
If you feel like striking up a conversation,
Don't.
Don't.
A whisper is enough.
I hear you talking,
And I don't mind you walking away from me,
Because I'm ok. free.
I
Am
Free.
I see you talking.
I don't mind you gawking.
Please don't worry.
A whisper is enough.
A
Whisper
Is
Enough.
You can cry in front of me.
I could fall down.
I
Am
Falling
Down.
You could be the weakest man I have ever found.
If you just understand that I don't need conversation,
A whisper is enough.
A
Whisper
Is
Enough.

-Nicole B. Buehrer

Fields of Clover

I see you
I see me
sitting under the willow tree
like a man
and his wife
lovers now and friends for life

seeing through this city and into my dream
lovely fields of clover, colors lavender and green
caterpillars below, butterflies above
and a spot over there is where we two make love

if I could live my life over
I'd spend it rolling in the clover

I see me
I see you
underneath a sky of blue
like a king
and his queen
running through a field of clover

laying in each others arms looking at the stars
a moment of perfection has come to this world of ours
as we, in that sweet light, share a clover-scented kiss
there is nothing in the universe more beautiful than this

if I could live my life over
I'd spend it rolling in the clover

once life has ended, peace takes over
bury me beneath the clover

--Peter Elvidge

Perfectly Normal

well i can't believe what i just did
what i just pulled off ohhh
it was perfectly normal

didn't share it out
can't even scream & shout shit
it was perfectly normal

fight all my life to resist
found it all a great big test
yea it was perfectly normal

that didn't come thru is still
comin' through
the lettin' you down still
kickin' me around
oh & it was perfectly normal

another opportunity
for smile unity
right in the toilet
wrong to destroy it
man, it was perfectly normal

sure it was just a moment
they'll be many more
still i love'em all
even when they're just normal

--matt

Continued on page 17



The ecology of community

Ecology is the study of interdependency among the innumerable elements of a beautifully interwoven whole. Impacting any single part will have unforeseeable effects on the rest, and one cannot understand any of the constituent parts outside of their greater context. Similarly, an ecology of communities looks at the ways in which human societies interact with, are influenced by and dependent on nature.

Nature serves as the context for any sustainable community whether a grouping of people, or of other species. A spiritually, emotionally, and physically healthy human society is impossible without an awareness of, and a reciprocal relationship with the larger, more than human tribe.

You're likely familiar with those wooden Russian dolls that nest one inside the other. Take the top off one, and you reveal yet another doll inside, again and again until uncovering the final, tiny seed doll. We can think of the smallest doll as the self: the community of one's cooperative parts: organs, skills, experiences, needs, and desires. Each part interacts with the rest according to its evolved purpose. This self-doll is nested in the larger human community, which resides in and is linked to the fate of greater Nature. Nature exists within a community of planets and stars, all of which are contained by the forms and intentions of inclusive Spirit.

The process of remaking human society will require attention to the diverse interests of our authentic inner selves. Both self and culture depend on the sustenance and example provided by the natural world, and this natural world requires our active protection. None of this is possible without the inspiration and spark of life that is the gift of the sacred.

We have only to turn to our natural surroundings, our watershed and the wild animals that inhabit it, in order to come up with examples of balance and right living. We have only to turn outward, away from our preoccupation with emotional and material baggage, to tap the energy for an inspired reformation of our community soul.

At their best, our various social constructs both reflect and respond to the needs and patterns of the watersheds where they're situated. Traditionally, terrain, weather, and available natural materials dictate the type of structures characterizing a given community such as the peaked roofs of Alaskan log cabins, and the flat roofs and thick insulating walls of Southwestern adobe casas. For a glaring example of community indifference to the land it exists on and with/in, consider the bluegrass lawns and constantly evaporating swimming pools of desert suburbia. Little could be more obvious than the simple fact that arid regions require dry-land gardening strategies, and call for conscientious cactus and gravel landscaping.

Terrestrial and climactic influences also affect activities, our schedules, and even our very characters. There's more at play than an easy reotype when we speak about the "stoic" qualities of Midwestern farmers, their

determination tempered by storm and crisis, their perspective shaped by flat lands and distant horizons, their patience a product of the empty miles between.

Even a modern city, filled with generic high-rises whose windows look out on nothing but other duplicate high-rises, demonstrates a palpable sense of character that's partially an effect of the rivers coursing through it, the ocean lapping at its beaches, or the mountains rising just out of sight. To some degree even the most insular and self-absorbed of societies must still feel it, and reel from it: the power of a blazing sun, the Midwest Winter, the effect of long months of Northwest cloud cover, the muffled imploring of the earth beneath the pavement. Tactile rock, beating wing, and exploring, subterranean roots all touch its populace at the subconscious level. The angst and hope and inspiration that result surface in yearning arts, musical laments, and the primarily unanswered desire for us to feel at home.

On the other hand, a balanced, vibrant society consciously takes its cues from the natural world around it, responds to the needs of that world as it provides for its own. It takes on the elements of local Nature as co-members of an intentional community, as pledged allies, and as lovers contributing to the well being of the whole, sensitive to matters that threaten its integrity or dilute its intensity of being. Such a society can be said to be ritually and fundamentally bedded in the adjoining natural world, as much as plants are bedded in the living soil. It is this essential, comprehensible grounding that affords us the wisdom of stewardship, and the grace for redemption.

The root of the word "community" is the Latin *communis*, meaning "common." Other words growing out of the same root include: "commune," the most deliberately sharing of contemporary social experiments; "communiqué," which can include interspecies messages; and "communicate," which means literally: "to make common." A healthy society is bound together by what its residents and participants share in common: shared intentions, shared needs, a body of ideas affecting the ways that we live and the quality of that life.

Certainly this is no longer the case for most American urban centers. Financial opportunity has become the primary and often sole reason for people picking a particular place to live. The second most important criterion is usually a comfortable home, followed by a "comfortable" neighborhood and available recreational opportunities. All too seldom is the reason a desire to live near relatives or to die in the habitat of our personal family history. Or to be in the company of like minded folks, engaged in that hard day-to-day work called "utopia." Or to answer a soul deep call from the lap of the redwoods, the bosom of the Rockies, the heart of the Midwestern grasslands.

I speak not as a successful communitarian, but as one who has slipped through the fine cracks of the social screen, proposing a harmonic social body from which I myself have opted out. Even if I stumbled upon the functioning, Earth-centered tribe I've always dreamed of, I'd likely find myself making camp at the farthest edge. Like a Seeker, or a shaman, or a leper taking advantage of the stillness and the silence in order to apprehend the movement of power and the voices of the land!

I've been disgorged from the impersonal maw of one this country's largest metropolises. I've even found it difficult to function happily in the cooperative folds of alternative community. I understand the essential value of consensus, while finding it outside my nature. I appreciate the highest expressions of culture, but was born looking at them as if from afar. I've been too easily wounded by the back-fence gossip that helps sustain the fabric of even the most radical of alternative social experiments. In later years I prayed for, and did everything I could to orchestrate the forming of clan and tribe around the protection and celebration of this bioregion, only to find that the land spit out all but the most die-hard, and that the folks we enlisted didn't always have the best effect on the land they came to live on.

While we need natural places for our survival, as well as for our deepest fulfillment and realization, if everyone spread out from the towns and villages there wouldn't be any undeveloped places left. No room for the plants and animals, nor space for quiet, no arena for evolving wildness. No matter what my personal inclinations or failures, I know that the answer for our kind (in our times) is to cluster with like minded folks in places we love, near those places we need. And to enter into communication with the non-human world as well as with one another, using what we learn in this cycle of touching and sharing to create a society we can be glad to belong to.

Whether a small clan gathering around issues of social activism or an entire neighborhood or bioregion, meaningful success will hinge on the cultivated ability to make common: recognizing the commonalities linking us to one another, linking our alliances and our fates to the cooperative association of the more than human realm.

—Jesse Wolf Hardin

Jesse Wolf Hardin is an acclaimed environmental activist and teacher of Earth-centered spirituality. His most recent book is *Kindred Spirits: Sacred Earth Wisdom* (800-366-0264). Wolf offers intuitive counsel, wilderness quests, retreats, and resident

internships at their riverside sanctuary.... while his partner Loba welcomes women for re-wilding quests, wildfoods gathering, apprenticing and celebration. Contact: The Earthen Spirituality Project, Box 516, Reserve, NM 87830, or check out <www.concentric.net/~earthway>.



Wild commitment

One full moon each Summer a small group of women come together from all over the country to explore and celebrate their connection— to their real selves, the living Earth, and each other. The value of our experience is not just in the emotions and insights that arise, but in our commitment to implement them in our lives. The following is from my introduction to day six of "The Wild Women's Gathering," held in an enchanted river canyon in Southwest New Mexico.

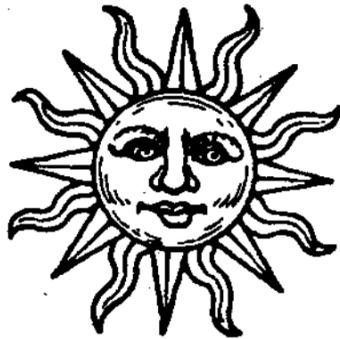
The wild woman is born anew, and remakes her world one promise at a time. She knows how important it is to keep one's promises, so she's careful what pledges she makes. And she knows that it's better to fulfill commitments to a very few things, than to commit to many and fully honor none.

The wild woman never says "whatever," because everything matters to her— and everything is worthy of an opinion and investment. She knows that she is responsible not only for what she does, but also for what she fails to do. She sees every moment as a "decisive moment." Because of this, she might feel tired or beaten at times, but she never feels like a victim. Her life is her canvas, and she holds every available color in her hand. She knows that destiny is an opening she has to voluntarily pass through, and an assignment to step up and fulfill.

The wild woman is freely promised to her authentic self— and committed to its growth, expression and purpose. She may be promised to a child or family, a lover or a cause— and be committed to seeing them manifest and realized. She is hopefully promised to the land, to a particular place— and committed to its protection, and care, and sacrament. Promised to Spirit— and committed to the difficult path of heat.

She knows that commitment is the basis for any successful effort, for a healthy relationship or a restored environment. She understands that commitment requires her regular attendance and focused presence.... her full-on effort, and faithful follow-through. She does what she knows must be done, and finishes what is important to complete. She promises herself to what she loves— and commits because she cares. She expects new challenges with every new promise, and stays committed regardless of the difficulties or results.

We're wilder now, and there's really no going back.... no closing our eyes or looking away.... no pretending we're the same women that we were before. The world out there might seem different, because we've come to see it with different eyes: opened wider, noticing more. We feel things a little deeper now, hear truth too clearly to ignore it. We know the kinds of things we need to do, and the high price we'll likely have to pay.



Loba teaches, cooks, plays and celebrates on a wilderness sanctuary and ancient place of power that she helps care for. She hosts women for quests, wildfoods gathering and preparation, and special resident apprenticeships.

Loba's next Wild Women's Gathering in the Gila will be July 20-27. Contact: The Earthen Spirituality Project, Box 516, Reserve, NM 87830 <earthway@concentric.net> <www.concentric.net/~earthway>.

We can feel Mother Earth with us wherever we go— and how she's committed to our connection, to our spirits and hearts. We show our gratitude by remaining acutely aware of every gift. By making the most of any inspiration and instruction. And by making commitments in return.

--Loba

-What's the difference between a commitment, a response-ability, and an obligation?

-Imagine that you have no unbreakable schedules or plans, and no existing obligations. What kind of life could you commit to? And to what purpose?

-What and who contributes to this commitment, and what and who weakens it, or distracts you from it?

-What possible reason or excuse could there be, to keep us from remaking our lives, and living our dream?

-What promises and commitments can you make to yourself.... for yourself?

-What commitments can you make to your family or your community, your culture or your kind?

-What commitments can you make to the Earth? To the land? To Spirit?



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- We affirm the moral responsibility of individuals, and that we make our own happiness or unhappiness as we obey or disobey Nature's physical and spiritual laws.
- We affirm that the doorway to reformation is never closed against any human soul here or hereafter.
- We affirm that the Precepts of Prophecy and Healing are divine attributes proven through Mediumship.



Readers & Post toasties--past & present--

To the Post American community

Congratulations on an incredible thirty years of sustained struggle, art and community. This is no experiment, but absolute proof that a meaningful publication can be sustained in the face of increasing repression and misinformation... and that a publication can help sustain in every way its family of editors, contributors, supporters and readers. A journal like this one serves a special role, connecting the most conscious and feeling people not only to each other and to purpose... but also to the natural and inspired world that informs, sustains and inspires us all. It's been a pleasure and honor to feel a part of this effort— with our watershed, our cause, connected to yours through these dedicated pages.

Jesse Wolf Hardin

Love letter to the Mothership

To worship the past dishonors the present. Don't you think the actual hardly stands a chance against the former, since it's so much easier to criticize the faults of the living than the dead? It's like the guy who ignores his long-suffering wife and openly cherishes the memory of his sainted mother. She never raised a hand to us; we always knew she loved us no matter what we did; she never complained about being a wife and mother, and, boy, could she make pie.

Although it may seem too florid to put it so, I'd even venture to say that nostalgia is death to creativity, because creativity is a response to the presence of the present, and nostalgia is inert captivation before an ideal illusion. I have to start off like this to keep this thought firmly in my mind because I'm actually so susceptible to the pull of the past — so susceptible that I chose to become a historian, of all things. Where living in the past is concerned, I'm like the street corner evangelist with the porno stash in his basement.

A segment of my personal past, say 1978 to 1990, unfolded with that of the *Post Amerikan*, and it turned out to be instrumental for me. I became involved when I first arrived at college, fresh from nineteen years of malforming by my family. Working on the *Post* with a bunch of talented people, putting together that funky product for public consumption every month, working with sincerity and irreverence for a constellation of painfully worthy causes, taking turns being the leader (the Coordinator) of the operation each time, this added up to an education that beat anything I ever had in college or graduate school. And it beats anything I've done since, which you can see is a problem; I have come to look back at that particular past like the guy who fetishizes the memory of his mother.

I wrote an article for the paper right before I left for good to go to graduate school. I can't quite remember what it was about, but I think it was some kind of self-indulgent reflection about working on the *Post*, a sort of insular article that was more of a conversation pitched to my

co-*Post*-toastie (sorry--insider jargon) Phoebe Caulfield than it was an article for a real public.

There were, in fact, times when it seemed there was no one reading the paper anyway, which may sometimes have led me to think of the readership as just my fellow 'toasties. Imagine my surprise when someone wrote in to say that reading that article was like plunging his arm up to the elbow in a vat of warm snot. But apart from that, Mrs. Lincoln, how did you like the play? Say what you will about the imagery, it was a point well taken. He was correctly criticizing me for solipsism. So I'll keep that in mind as I go along, just as I'll try remember that the present is where I actually go for my meals.

In looking for something in my current life that might give me that satisfaction that working on the *Post* did, I've often tried to articulate what it was about that experience that was so fine. It comes down to two things. First, there's no getting around the fact that the people working on the paper were the most interesting, funniest, smartest and ethically coolest people I had (have) ever met.

And it was organic: people came and went, all of them wonderful and adding something different to the mix, although there was quite a substantial and stable heart to the paper for a long time. To get eight or ten people together to run a business and not have individual egos cause the thing to implode in the first year (let alone keep it going), I mean, isn't that just astounding? The thought now seems about as likely to me as time travel.

Theoretically it's possible, but just try it. It's true that sometimes people got involved who didn't fit, and they drifted away when their views or behaviors were politely not reinforced. This contributed to a view of the paper as a clique, but that was only nominally true. It was never, ever cold to outsiders (and many times we were desperate for new folks), although not everyone found the collective attitude a good match with their own. One thing was sure: you had to have a sense of humor. People didn't always get that, and you know how serious people can be about issues like nuclear disarmament, AIDS, ecological

disaster, women's right to choose, blah-biddy-blah-blah.

The other thing about the paper was its actively constructive nature. It was so much more than just hang-out time with your friends; it was coming together with mutual political views and collectively making something real from abstract ideas. The cooperation and collaboration involved in putting the paper together from scratch each month was a thrill, that's the only way I can describe it.

There was also something beautiful about the range of political and social interest the volunteers represented; being located in a small town kind of city, there wasn't really room for specialization. Vegetarians, gay and lesbian people, feminists, ecologists, lefties, freaky musicians, animal activists — anybody outside of the normal demographic could find comfort together under the *Post-Amerikan's* umbrella.

Ostensibly we were trying to "make a difference," to raise a few voices in opposition to the menacing or idiotic policies of local, state, and national government, but whether and how that difference was felt outside of the *Post-Amerikan* basement office, beyond the way it made us feel, kicking up the dust in the middle of one of the most conservative, conformist, republican strongholds of the state, I don't really know. We knew we were a marginal presence for most of Bloomington-Normal's citizenry, but that feeling was assuaged by the great personal satisfaction of the doing.

Three years ago I was on ski-trip in Pennsylvania and I happened to mention to a fellow vacationer that I was from Illinois. He said, wistfully, "I don't suppose you've ever heard of it, but the best newspaper I ever read was this little paper put out in Bloomington-Normal, Illinois, called the *Post-Amerikan*." It seems he had worked on *The Advocate* in Boston, with whom we had a paper exchange. He went on to recall the pen-names of several 'toasties. Now that was a thrill. If you want to compare it to lolling around in a vat of warm snot, okay.

As it turns out, cutting our activist teeth on the *Post-Amerikan* galvanized the political

commitment each of us felt, but it had a price where the paper was concerned. Working on the *Post*, hashing over issues together in meetings every few weeks, learning to do community outreach or investigative reporting, writing political or cultural commentary, fundraising for grassroots causes, and so forth ultimately brought about the end of the paper as I knew it, by leading so many of us to pursue activism on a larger scale in other places. Some of us took law degrees and are now lawyers on the left; some of us run community organizations and do political and social outreach of all kinds; some of us are educators; some of us are even city council persons. No names because I don't want to get any further into that whole solipsistic self-congratulatory thing, but I can't avoid at least paying tribute here to our Deborah Wiatt, who was one of those at the heart of the paper, perhaps the most generous of us. From her and the other 'toasties I learned so much that I ultimately felt I had to move on, too.

So that brings me back to the present, the tatty, not as good-as-the-past present, the place where I go for my meals. Writing this, I must face the fact that I have to work harder to make myself useful to my here/now, and stop mooning about the past, about that thing that nurtured me most and best: the mothership, the *Post-Amerikan*. But you local readers, I envy you. Your *Post* is in the now, NOW. That inexpressibly wonderful experience is waiting for you.

---LVD



comment on *Post* turning 30

Loved those narc photos

Yo Posties!
Congrats on yer 30th.

My favorite feature from yesteryear was the publishing of narc photos.

That always cracked me up. I'll bet it really burned their biscuits. OWWWWWW!

Here's some new stuff[poems]. Hope ya like it.

Best of luck in the future (if any) whatever that means.

Peter

"It was 30 years ago today"

Thirty years old – just speaking the words aloud is boggling. (Insert: "Don't Trust Anyone Over Thirty" joke here.) To think that this funky li'l independent underground paper would last this long is pretty damn amazing.

As one who was there at the start, I can attest to the fact that none of its founders believed the *P-A* would last – or *need* to last – this long. Surely, we naively thought, The Revolution (be it political or cultural) would have rendered the need for a paper like this redundant long ago. But history loves to laugh at such presumptions, and so it is with the *Post-Amerikan*: we can feel both encouraged and discouraged by its longevity.

In the end, the continued existence of a paper like the *Post* testifies to the stubborn need for people of conscience to write the stories that have gotten short shrift everywhere else. In an era where the specter of homeland security looms over many writers and artists – when a libertarian loony like Alan Keyes can call to have a cartoonist *hung* for drawing a caustic strip – the need for outlets like the *P-A* is even stronger.

Those of us who've worked on this paper have great stories to tell – if we can remember 'em – so I'll leave that task to those with better working engrams than mine. Instead, I'll simply note that working on this, one of the longest lasting underground papers to come out of the early seventies, is still a kick (even when Sherrin keeps bugging me about deadlines) and a thing to feel good about at the end of the day.

While part of me continues to hope it won't be necessary, here's wishing that the next thirty years are even more fruitful for the *Post Amerikan*.

Bill Sherman

Post makes doing time easier

I wish to inform you that my address has changed to the address below. However, your newspaper makes serving time go a little easier, thank you for sending me the issues you have sent me.

Respectfully,
Jessica E Wolfe

Still alive & kickin'

The United States is in desperate need of alternative media and the *Post Amerikan* for the past 30 years has played at least a small role in trying to fill that need.

Giant newspaper, TV and radio monopolies are grabbing control of media all over the nation. Sadly, this phenomenon is not limited to the big cities. Even many small town newspapers are now controlled by the big chains.

For example, the Mattoon and Charleston newspapers were just purchased by Lee Enterprises, which already controls the papers in Decatur and Carbondale, as well a host of others throughout the nation.

Today, a great many papers in small cities of 1,000 to 10,000 population are also owned by chains.

Most monopoly-controlled papers throughout the nation tend to be quite bland and report much the same material. Investigative reporting is becoming a rarity.

Of course, there is an enormous need for alternative media of the "progressive" or "underground" variety. However, things have become so bad that even a bit of competition by so-called "mainstream" media would be refreshing.

Thank goodness the *Post Amerikan* has survived, and has survived longer than most of the "underground" type of papers that typically have small, unpaid staffs and relatively little advertising.

It is truly the "The paper that would not die."

It has come to a point in American society where it is quite difficult for average people to even gain access to a leftist, or democratic

socialist, perspective or to similar opinions or ideas.

In terms of "getting the message out" the Internet offers some promise. On-line publications have helped to fill the void. But there are so many e-newsletters and publications that it has created something of a cacophony in cyberspace.

Therefore, Internet publications alone do not necessarily fill the media void.

My experiences with "underground" newspapers began back in the late 1960s. Friends of mine put out the *Prospectus for Social Change* at Eastern Illinois University in 1967.

Then, as a graduate student at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, I had a very small role at the *Big Muddy Gazette*, founded in 1969. The paper got a lot of publicity when it was banned (from being sold on campus) by the SIUC administration. The ban was later lifted.

The Big Muddy Gazette was the first publication to make an issue of the formation of a Center for Vietnamese Studies and Programs at SIUC. This was to be funded by a big grant from the Agency for International Development (AID), which at the time had very close ties to the CIA.

Many people, including some Asian scholars from throughout the nation, objected to this on the grounds that SIUC's academic integrity would be threatened by the funding of the center. The controversy was publicized in articles in the *New York Times* and *Newsweek*.

(By the way, the center was not closed down right away, but it operated on a small scale for awhile and then later was closed down. Essentially what happened, as I recall, is that SIUC "used up" the big AID grant and then closed the center not too long afterward.)

I was not directly involved with the *Post Amerikan*, but I did write a few letters to the editor in the late 1970s and into the 1980s.

Incidentally, one excellent feature of the paper at that time was its occasional articles critiquing the Bloomington *Pantagraph*. These stories would point out both the *Pantagraph's* sins of omission and commission.

The Post Amerikan today is not "radical" enough for my tastes. However, it is refreshing to have an alternative media still alive and kicking after 30 years!

Keep Up the Good Work.

--Allan H. Keith

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More congrats on *Post's* 30th 30 years of walking the talk

When I thought about the *Post Amerikan's* 30th anniversary, my mind was spinning with thoughts of how our culture has so radically changed in three decades.

We have seen the Soviet Block become a whole new society; America has had a baker's dozen of military conflicts; space shuttles take off so oft that nobody really looks up anymore; few can fathom a time without the Internet; medical miracles are common place even though that mystery disease in 1972, "AIDS," is still with us.

CDs replaced vinyl; satellite TV has given us culturally enhancing options; 1984 is our permanent date now. Cell phones, PDAs, fuel cells. PC (both personal computer and political correctness), camcorders, digital photography, DNA identification, the Concord SST jet, genetically modified crops on and on.

If you had gone to another planet, or just come out of prison, and returned to this third millennium universe, it would seem an entirely different world in many ways.

Scientists are saying that time travel may not be a fantasy, but has the potential to be a real and doable thing. Yet, let us not use a time machine now, but our own memories and especially our conscious to look back and forward about how we could, or will, not only talk the talk, but walk the walk or walk the talk...

Who did hold up idealism as the path of their life and who let their plans to change the world and make a difference fall by the way side? Who sold out, and who sacrificed some of their income and time to do the greater good for one or more niches of our global community? Who remembered the hungry babies next door or in some distant land?

Who stood up for some kid being taunted by bullies for not being a conformist, or who said "Stop it"? Who went through the drive through window and who grew their own organic food? Who forgot to turn off the lights when they left a room and who invested in solar panels on their roof? Who emptied their rubbish on the side of the road and who has made recycling a way of life? Who lives for themselves and who donates money to good cause?

Who complains about social issues and who gets out there and proactively fixes social wrongs? Who thinks they are alone in this world and who knows God is always with each and everyone of us? Who is an enemy of society and who has a moral and ethical code of honor? Who are selfish and who contribute? Who plays music and who plays people? Who watches *Frontline* and *Nova* and who watches the *WWF* belittle gays and women? Who is walking the talk?

We are faced with little tests like this each moment of our life. Likening life to a hallway with endless doors, on one side of the hall the doors are marked "me;" on the other side they are marked "us." When we choose the "us" doors we make the choice to live a symbiotic existence with all forms of life and sacrifice a bit of our comfort zone and give up a little of our individual harvest, yet we actually all come out ahead by doing this.

We are brainwashed to think that we must "win" and compete to reach some goal, yet in reality, in this me-ism mindset, we all lose in fractional ways. We can't truly build a harmonious society (whether that is your home, town, state, country or the whole earth) without considering the whole "big" picture.

On the other hand, we can't let the big picture overwhelm us into non-action. It is the moment by moment decisions we make and what cause we bond with at "this" moment that makes a difference. How many times have we put off something because we thought we were ill-equipped to handle it, or that we needed assistance from some professional or super agency? How many tomes did we remain silent when it was our voice at that precise moment that could have caused a positive action or change? Again, it is that hallway in life, and what door we choose to enter or leave closed.

We may never see that time machine, to go back into that one moment when we should have done this or that, instead of what we actually did or didn't do. But we can, through introspection and retrospection, make choices that leave us with a smile on our lips before we fall asleep at night.

We must give a hug to those who towed the line when we let it go slack. People like those fine and dedicated folk at the *Post Amerikan*, who for 30 years went without so they could scrape up the funds to pump out one more issue. Who wrote and rewrote drafts of articles until the pen dug into their fingertips, leaving bruises and cramps. Who took it on the chin, for being a voice in the wilderness, far from the madding crowd. To all the people who kept supporting the *Post* when it seemed futile. To all those who believe in the this tiny paper lectern, we all owe an eternal plethora of kudos.

Most people who are not writers or editors, don't have any concept of what each turn of a phrase, each written concept, each protest of a wrong, bit of wit, or poesy, deeply means to the person who births it, and dresses it up like preparing a child to go to their first day of kindergarten, putting it on the bus and watching it disappear over the horizon. But that's what it is like to pump out each page of a zine like the *Post Amerikan*.

It is hard to calculate how zines like the *Post* have changed our day to day existence, because they meld into society. But, that past issue that may now be lining your cat's litter box planted a little seed in your head that made your life in one minutia better. It made you better as an "us" humyn being. The *Post Amerikan* for 30m years has pointed the way like a crossing guard in that hallway of life.

One of the choices you can make in life is to find ways you can help the *Post* thrive for another wonder-filled 30 years. By giving subscriptions instead of that very ugly knickknack from the mall, and contributing your own thoughts, time and effort, to giving some feedback, and instead of throwing away *Post Amerikan* back issues, sending them to a friends in a far off region.

Zines like the *Post Amerikan* are your voice, a collectivism of free thought, a shield against injustice and a podium for the mostly forgotten, and those who are otherwise muted by the conventional media. In this time when the onslaught off e-publications have sucked in-print publications dry, we (you) need to support this truly wonderful vehicle of free expression.

--Nikolai Alexanderovich Zarick

The *Post Amerikan* is turning 30? Somebody check the weather report. I think hell just froze over

Man, talk about your hard acts to follow. LVD's article just blew me out of my shoes. That woman can *write*.

As far as my *Post* memories go, I can only recall more kicks than kudos for working on the *Post*. Sure, people occasionally tell me they like my articles, or really appreciate a story somebody else wrote, but more often than not, I get grief. From people I like and respect, no less. My friends for, God's sake. Okay, okay, so we all have twangers, and occasionally something twangs 'em, then we lash out. Unfortunately, the person on the receiving end ends up sucker-punched. Are you listening... no, I'll restrain myself and avoid naming names. The guilty know who they are, don't you, grrrrls?

A chief offender, who shall remain nameless (if she's reading this, I admonish her to recall in what high esteem I hold her), asks me, periodically, "Why do you waste your talents on that rag?"

Waste my talents, Madame Boss Lady? I don't think so. Thanks to "that rag," the corrupt McLean County Sheriff King was driven from office; we were one of the first (according to the late, lamented Deborah Wiatt, AKA Marshall Law, the first) papers to feature stories on this weird new "gay cancer" (later known as GRID, then AIDS) afflicting men in New York and San Francisco, ca. 1978 (thankfully, Ferdydurke, the reporter of said articles, is still with us, hale and hardy); a sleazy apartment "rental" agency left town in a hurry; Kevin Rittenhouse, one of Mal Chaplin's rapists and murderers, got a nicely uncomfortable glare of scrutiny; as did the BPD's so-called Gangbusters-related harassment of young African-American men; we have an unusually visible and vibrant gay/lesbian/bisexual community; Judge Witte's racist opinions got such an airing that the *Pantagraph* and local wire services finally had to pick up the story. I could go on for a few more paragraphs, but I'm running out of space.

To the reader who told LVD that she (and we) were lolling in "warm snot," if you want to see a navel-gazing solipsist, pal, I suggest you take a look in the mirror and ask yourself what you have done that's so all-fired special.

As for you, Madame Boss Lady, I am proud to have contributed whatever talent I may have to this sophomoric, solipsistic, PC, too-smart-for-its-own damn-good, so-hip-that-it-hurts, "rag."

--Dr. Attitude



Protests against genetically engineered corn

Recently hundreds of US consumers have reported allergic reactions to the FDA after eating Kraft and other brand name products likely containing genetically engineered corn. In Mexico researchers have detected widespread contamination of traditional varieties of corn, caused by surreptitious imports of genetically engineered corn into Mexico by grain export giants such as Archer Daniels Midland and Cargill.

On April 10-17, activists in North and South America will dump corn and organize picket lines, protests, and press conferences. Key demands will include:

- (1) Stop dumping Genetically Engineered corn on Mexico and other centers of biodiversity;
- (2) Stop dumping GE corn on consumers; and
- (3) guarantee a fair price to all corn producers, North and South.

Protesters will target US Embassies, Mexican Consulate offices, grain ports, corporate offices

Farmer, environmental, indigenous, and consumer groups will stage protests and hold press conferences across North and South America the week of April 10-17th --launching a Continental Campaign Against Genetically Engineered Corn (Campaña Continental Contra El Maíz Transgénico).

Rural and urban activists throughout the Americas will call on grain exporters, the biotech industry, and the US and Canadian governments to stop dumping untested and unlabeled genetically engineered corn on Mexico and other nations, where irreplaceable corn varieties are being damaged by "genetic pollution."

Campaign activists are also demanding that corporations and governments heed the concerns of consumers, North and South, and remove genetically engineered corn and other foods and crops from the market, unless they can be proven to be safe for human health and the environment.

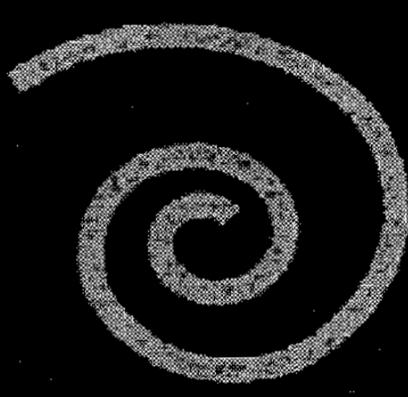
(Kraft, Archer Daniels Midland, Cargill, Monsanto) as well as major grain exchanges in Winnipeg, Minneapolis, and Chicago.

For full background information on the global GE Corn Conflict see BioDemocracy News #37 <http://www.organicconsumers.org/newsletter/BiodNews37.cfm> and the April 17 section on the Organic Consumers Association website.

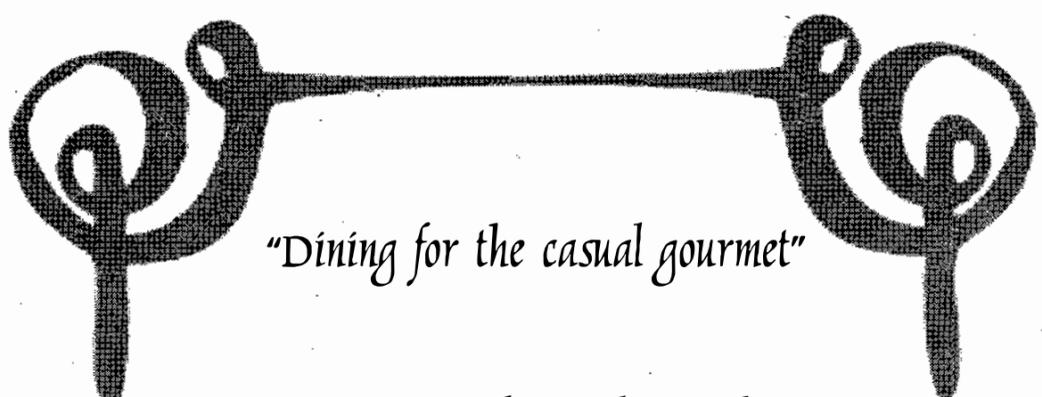
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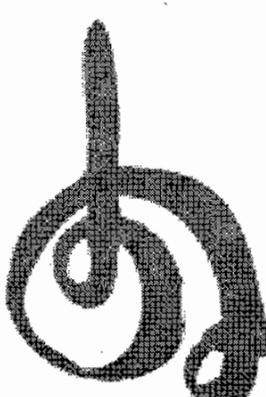


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"Mother Jones" lives in new biography

During the early twentieth century, Mother Jones was one of the most famous women in America. Today, the words "Pray for the dead, and fight like hell for the living" is her most well known phrase. Elliot Gorn's *Mother Jones: The Most Dangerous Woman in America* chronicles the life of Mary Harris Jones (1837-1930) and her creation of Mother Jones, a self proclaimed hell raiser and union organizer. Separating fact from myth, this biography does not turn a blind eye to exaggerations by Mother Jones or inaccurate stories by the press.

Mary Harris Jones came to America as an Irish Catholic immigrant with a life of unspeakable tragedy not unlike anyone else in her class. Moving from Toronto to Memphis, she raised a family and worked as a teacher and seamstress until her husband and four children died of yellow fever.

After mourning the loss of her family, Mary Jones moved to Chicago and witnessed a booming radical city at its peak. Losing her possessions in the Great Chicago Fire, Mary Jones transformed herself into Mother Jones in the same way Chicago was rebuilt from the ashes.

Mother Jones launched her ambitious career fighting against child labor and defending workers rights, especially for coal miners. Mother Jones' ability to show the desperate poverty of families and characterize businesses as

viciously exploiting labor gave her fame and strengthened the union movement.

Most coal mines were isolated from the public, allowing companies to build mining towns with unfair living conditions. It was not uncommon for mines to pay their employees in script and refuse to allow local merchants to sell their products to miners. Child labor was a necessity for mining families to keep themselves out of poverty. Ownership of coal mines was not concentrated in many states but by the beginning of the twentieth century mining had begun to consolidate in Colorado and was controlled by John D. Rockefeller.

Although Mother Jones never encouraged violence, she urged striking miners to protect their families against the military when strikes turned violent in West Virginia in 1913. While fighting for coal miners, Mother Jones was arrested and kept under house arrest for a month with a news embargo because of her leadership. Once the trial started, *The New York Times* ran a story on page one "Mother Jones Defiant" emphasizing the possibility of her death by a firing squad. Mother Jones brought a major victory to coal miners in West Virginia because of her publicity while in jail.

Guerrilla warfare grew in the coal mines of Colorado at the same time as the victory took place in West Virginia. Tactics between Mother Jones and mine workers against Colorado mine operators remained the same until national publicity brought increased scrutiny on the workers. In response to Mother Jones and the United Mine Workers attempts to organize in Colorado, Rockefeller developed entirely new industries such as advertising, public relations and opinion research that defeated Mother Jones behind the scenes.

Learning her own limitations, Mother Jones continued to use her skills to give workers in other industries the needed boost to win strikes and organize. The greatest limitation to Mother Jones was that being a woman prevented her from moving up the union hierarchy.

The history of Mother Jones is rich in detail. This comprehensive biography features the blending of Mother Jones and the labor struggles surrounding her. By embracing the inspiring stories of Mother Jones, we all become her children.

--Nick Berveiler
ISU United Student Against Sweatshops
Livingston & McLean Counties Labor News

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Poetry continued

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Is the first success
A pet to be
None the less

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What a joy
Don't can the scratching post
And all the other things
she can destroy
A second time around
let's toast

To Cloning once again
Seems we always find
Funds when
The human mind

Decides what it must achieve
Hundreds of thousands
plus the cat litter
Seems the kitty should receive
An armed guard
not just a cat sitter

When the folks go away
Oh little "cc" must be protected
What if she runs astray
And a big bad tom has selected
To take her to the alley
No, I fret too much
Little "cc" wouldn't flee
Where a tire may crush

... And children starving round the world
Can't seem to find
A human voice to be heard
With a heart felt study
... food designed.

--Lin Frog Simmons

Inspirational Cosmic Quest

tranquillity
eternity
I.C.Q.

serenity
infinity
I.C.Q.

she love me--she love me not
she love me--she love me not

tranquillity
eternity
serenity
infinity

I.C.Q.
I.C.Q.

she love me--she love me not
she love me--she love me not
she love me--she love me not
tranquillity

--Peter Elvidge

I write this poem

I write this poem
while I do shiver
and my heart does frown

with each thought I consider,
and each metaphor I deliver
I go deeper and deeper
into the darkness of my soul.

The path is dark and narrow.
A new moon in a cloudy sky.
But I take each step with faith
that the sun will someday shine.

--David Hall

The Rider

Knuckles bare white as he throttles into an ethereal plane,
Beard parted, hair flowing straight back
As he hits the desert wind at 120 mph.

His wallet's chain keeps the beat against his chaps for the engine's song.

His love's hands kiss him from behind, her chest tickles his back, doubling his pride.

Eternally wild are the tiger in his heart and the eagle in his spirit.

"Ain't no drug better than this" he thinks.

Riding through time, no limits, no boundaries, no fuel needed, this hog runs on freedom.

Suddenly the prison door slams
"Chow time" the loudspeaker screams.

He awakens to his nightmare
She is long gone to another.

His bike sold to pay off legal fees
Only the tiger and the eagle remain
Tomorrow he rides again through dreamland.

--Nik Zarick

Starry Night 1 (for Vincent Van Gogh)

Some say he started
late in life, uh failed
preacher, he thought his
life all but thrown away, until
uh few drawings he made, of
people around him, did spur him
on, obsess him, driving
him ta paint, the man of the cloth became
one of the canvas, it's been over
uh hundred years since all of that, I
went to the museum yesterday with
Cynthia, we went ta see his work, over
uh hundred years, since he did share breath
of this world, an yet, he put ah hand
through space an time an tapped me on the
shoulder, an gave me uh knowing wink, as
I did stare at his painting Starry Night,
all that energy, in the paint echo of brushstroke,
stars vibrate warmth, with the moon
shining her story also, among all the swirling,
the play of this heavenly light an shadow, is falling
down upon us all, the highest manmade peak
in this painting, is uh church steeple, the church
is white, but the door is black, a swirling, a tumbling
down, as the unknown mirrors the unknown, an
the little lonely town of desperation, that is striving
ta keep hell at bay, is sleeping, as heaven longs
ta kiss the earth completely, and I am an insomniac,
who has leff this village, holding stars with Vincent,
swirling them in brushstroke.

--John Firefly



Notes from the Land of Anti-fat

In the Workplace:

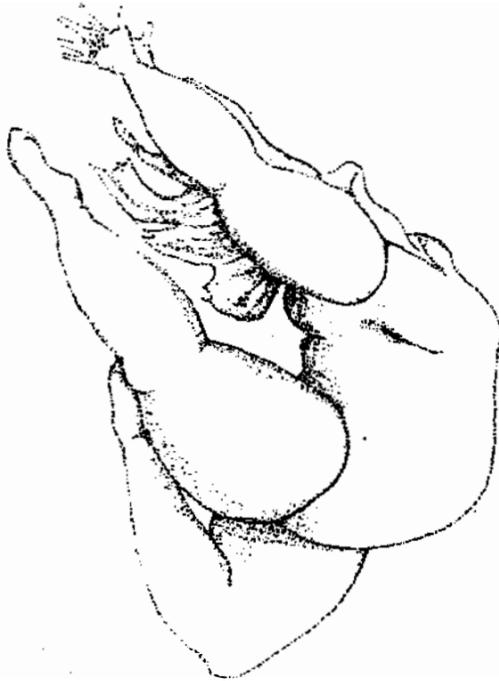
With the recent publication of the Office of the Surgeon General's latest alarmist tract about the "epidemic" of obesity in this country, businesses across the U.S. are looking into the possible financial repercussions of this newest call to arms. A recent on-line article in *HR News* ("Employers Face Weighty Issues" by Karyn-Siobhan Robinson, January 22, 2002) points the way the wind seems to be blowing. According to the OSC's report, 61 percent of adults in the U.S. are considered overweight or obese (that this stat is the result of revised standards for considering body mass index seldom gets mentioned in the press covering this report – but never mind).

"Excess weight and obesity are the second leading cause of preventable deaths in the United States," the report asserts. Can you count the number of hidden assumptions in *that* sentence? (Most germane to this column: the presumption that these so-called "preventable deaths" were irrefutably caused by obesity.) The long-standing advantages imbedded within those assumptions have allowed insurance companies to screw fat customers for years.

"The 'quality and extent of health plan benefits' that cover obesity and morbid obesity cause problems," according to Walter Lindstrom, lawyer and head of the Obesity Law & Advocacy Center in San Diego, Calif. Employers often purchase insurance plans with the best of intentions, says Lindstrom, but employees often find that when it comes to obesity and related conditions, "there is a complete absence of coverage or coverage that is so subject to 'hoop jumping' that it's almost impossible for an employee to obtain it."

Lindstrom says that when he calls insurance companies to inquire about covering medically necessary procedures for overweight or obese employees, the insurance companies "oftentimes" will say, "That's what your employer chose, if your employer weren't so cheap, we could cover you."

To Lindstrom, though, the issue isn't about questioning the blanket assumptions that obesity is de facto an illness – it's about insurance companies' slippery attempts to avoid paying for any health problems that are determined to have been "caused" by obesity. So while his efforts against insurance



companies on behalf of fat clients may be on the side of the angels, it's clearly not about size acceptance.

"Smokers are given a break that people of size are not," he notes, and the comparison to nicotine abuse is instructive. "I get every single day, 'Why will they cover smoking or drug and alcohol addiction, but they won't cover me?'"

The issue for employers and Human Resources folks, according to *HR News*, then lies in the need for businesses to "help" their fat employees. In the words of the Surgeon General: "Worksites provide many opportunities to reinforce the adoption and maintenance of healthy lifestyle behaviors."

All well and good: I don't think any but the most reactionary big business protectionist who would argue with the idea that it's a good thing to try and keep your employees healthy. But if health is only measured by size and weight, then we already know that this approach is doomed to failure. Decades of failed diets and weight loss programs attest to its non-efficacy for an overwhelming number of fat adults.

As this column has noted in the past, when the focus of the health care community (and support industries like health insurance) remains on weight loss, the ground rules for short-changing fat adults continue to be unchallenged. And when the Office of the Surgeon General continues to reinforce sloppy science and anti-fat bias, even a well-meaning employer can be sucked into pushing HR energies and resources in the wrong direction.

A Note from School:

Since fall, parents of fat students in the East Penn school system in Pennsylvania have been receiving notes from school, telling them when their children are too big. "If we have information that may have some bearing on a child's future health," George Ziolkowski, director of pupil personnel services for the school district noted when asked about this new policy, "why just put it in a drawer?" Schools regularly notify parents when the child has vision or hearing problems, he stated, so why shouldn't the system do likewise for fatness?

Elementary school frequently is the first place where vision or hearing problems become noticeable (as when the teacher catches those students who are squinting at the blackboard), but does anyone think that kids won't know they're fat if the *school* doesn't tell 'em? The average fat child is given this helpful information by their peers the first day of classes – and reminded of it regularly most days afterward. Some 380 "confidential" letters were sent to parents in the first half of the school year – with more promised in the months ahead. Who do we think is being told something new here?

Too, both vision and hearing problems are ones that impact on a student's ability to academically perform. Aside from gym class (which can be humiliating for thin students as well as fat, of course), fatness is not an academic issue. Or are we supposed to believe that the worsening literacy level in our public schools is the result of extra adiposity?

It's dubious that a letter from school, no matter how well-meaning, will actually add anything positive. If anything, it only helps to reinforce the sense of shame that many fat kids feel because of their body type. That's all we need: one more reason for kids to dread going to public schools . . .

Bill Sherman

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When those jets impacted the World Trade Center towers there was a beautiful surge in sharing. For many Americans who have made fun of flag waving Americans it was the first time that patriotism felt honestly good.

For the first time many people who had turned their back on misery which was in sight of their own life's path dipped into their wallets and contributed at least a little something to help restore order to the cruel chaos we all saw on the TV.

Yet, when the dust settled and America took revenge by dropping more bombs on the planet many people put away their wallets unless they were at McDonald's. Somehow that good feeling we get when we sacrifice that bottle of soda, cup of overpriced coffee, or that extra drink at the bar that we don't need was lost. It was as if that one momentary act of giving made up for a life time of social apathy. Well it doesn't. We are judged by not only what we do in life, but also by what we don't do, and what we should do.

I guess it is easy for the narcissistic to just flip the channel when organizations plead for economic relief for the 34,000 children who starve each day; and to make fun of Sally Struthers when she holds a gaunt child in her arms asking for less than what a candy bar costs.

Certainly we have all heard of the plight of the needy. Yet, how many of us do anything constructive to actually heal the woes of our fragile planet. Or, more importantly, to put it in your face, what do you do, or what could you be doing?

Although Sally Struthers, of *All in the Family* fame, does come off a little odd, her message is right on (literally) the money. Fifty cents a day actually does feed, clothe and help to shelter a child in many developing countries. The price of a movie ticket can make a huge difference in the whole paradigm in a child's life in India or Africa.

The Christian movement has really carried the ball in all this mess. Providing aide and assistance in remote regions that most of us never heard of. Although it must be noticed that many religions or charity organizations do not give to people in developing countries unless they fit into some secret hidden agenda. And some organizations have taken large portions of the contributed funds and poorly used them. People or organizations that don't comply with the political views of the so-called charitable organization fall to the wayside and cannot find a single cent. For instance, an organization that teaches birth control, equal justice, and equal enterprise opportunities are shunned by the Christian Right.

One such organization is the Deeper Yet Welfare and Educational Society in India who on a fraction of twelve grand, clothed, fed and sheltered 36 orphans. It also operated a women's sociocultural center that taught women, who had never before been formally educated, in the topics of organic gardening, free enterprise, economics, and family planning, etc.

Moreover, they run a school for over one hundred knowledge thirsty kids. They also teach and practice metaculture (alternative and sustainable agriculture) to local farmers and villagers. This is a place that can stretch a buck like you wouldn't think possible.

Established in 1994 by K. Vijay Kumar, a gifted a spiritual man with a B.Sc. and MA and experience in governmental horticulture projects. The Deeper Yet Welfare and Educational Society rescued 15 little boys and 21 little girls from a bleak future. The orphans now have a chance and an equal start in life. Many of the kids were deserted, living in the street or unwanted. Now their eyes have hope in them and one can even see an occasional smile. K. Vie Kaman is joined in this cause by his wife Shyamala and three young sons, along with a hand full of teachers and helpers. The Deeper Yet Society is an N.G.O. (non-governmental organization) existing on what funds they can make, limited donations, and out-of-pocket funds. Finding the funds to fill the little bellies each day is a continual challenge, not to mention clothing them and providing medical treatment, school supplies and all the things kids need.

K. Vijay Kumar's dream is to build an ecovillage where all the things they already do can be centralized in one harmonious setting. His goals are quite simple: construct a pond, provide better housing for the kids, and establish cottage industries so they have a sustainable income. The fundamental essentials are a major priority. The long term village plans are already in the design phase and the community has the natural resources that will repay investors in the long run. In the short term they need selfless donators who only wish to do what they can to share a fraction of their income.

These people and other like-minded organizations, don't need you to take a second job to sponsor them. A tiny amount on a consistent basis is what they need. Five dollars a week could, in a very real and concrete way, change a child's future from dark to light; it could give women an equal chance in life; and through improved metaculture, it could feed thousands.

If you would like to send children's clothes, toys, and especially books, etc. (via postal surface rate, air mail costs a mint), they could be put to great use. They are in need of magazine subscriptions and periodicals that can help them improve life as well. That sounds odd, but knowledge can be a wonderful gift.

Now you can dismiss this plea. You can ignore this opportunity to do good. Go out and blow your money on something you'll forget by next week, or find some other way to waste funds that could literally save a life. You could do that, but the next time you look in the mirror, who and what will you see? The world has enough paper tiger activists who talk of a better world but won't give up the cost of a video tape rental to really put their money where their mouth is.

We all need to stop sugar coating these cries for help. We need to scream from the rooftops "34,000 kids are dying a day!" We all need to say "Wake-up and put-up!" and stop thinking about some far off day when we'll eventually get around to it and send a little something. Right now take a bill out of your pocket, stick it in an envelope with 3 stamps (80 cents for 1/2 ounce, postage) and just send it. No, this isn't a cutesy way to say "help," but did you listen to those Sunday morning shows asking you to feed the children? Probably not.

When you give directly to a group like Deeper Yet, the funds go the core of the problem, not to some guy so he can go to Starbuck's and buy a \$4.00 coffee. Your money will go directly into a bowl of food, into a piece of chalk for a blackboard, or it will let some hopeless person have a glimmer of hope. Just do it!

--Nikolai Alexanderovich Zarick

Send funds and gifts to:
The Deeper Yet Welfare and Educational Society
K. Vijay Kumar/ Dept. Z
Diwancheruvu 533-103
Rahangaram Mandal
East Godavri District
Andhra Pradesh
India

Karen Schmidt Alderman ~ Ward 6

409 E. Grove St., Bloomington

home: 829-6318

work: 217-244-2070

e-mail: karans@uiuc.edu

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surrounding neighborhoods. You
need not live in my ward to call me.



Notes from behind the wall

The bliss of ignorance

Perhaps if I were a man who had no love of nature, I would not mind that the razor wire fence surrounding this prison confines more than more than my body.

It could be, that if I had a weak mind, I would be content with playing mind numbing games all day long with the majority of the prisoners. Yet my thirst grows each day for knowledge and an intelligent conversation with somebody who shares my lexicon.

If I were a cold and insensitive man, it would not hurt so cruelly to be shunned by civilization, to be shut off from an embrace, a soft kiss, and to gaze into loving eyes.

Mayhap if I had no soul, I wouldn't mind when my God is cursed and his will is ignored. But, my inner tears flow to see him so forgotten, misunderstood and spit upon.

Maybe if I did not cherish all life, I would not be consumed with painful empathy when yet another human being is thrown away by society; warehoused in mind void prisons; or legally murdered by the state.

If I were an unpatriotic person, who didn't march for civil rights and to protest the napalming of Asian babies. then why would I care when the Twin Towers were struck down and thousands died; or that the joy of receiving a letter from a friend is now something to be feared. But I love my country, and I love our global melting pot. My heart is flensed by these senseless terrors, and I beg for peace on this little blue planet.

--Nikolai Alexanderovich Zarick

Radio Free Maine, Stephen Depka & the Maine State Prison

People ask me why I have been busting my back for over 14 years to keep Radio Free Maine above water. This is one of the reasons why. I will be developing a major story about the tapes getting into the Maine State Prison since this is, as far as I know, the only time U.S.A. prisoners have been allowed to receive audio and video tapes.

The following is a statement sent to Roger Leisner by Stephen Depka, who will be released from the Maine State Prison on May 3, 2002.

The afternoon of September 17, 2001 was possibly the worst time to receive a package of materials from Radio Free Maine. While much of America sat glued to their TVs watching the tragic images of terror that were unleashed just six days earlier, mailroom censors at the Maine State Prison were busy screening incoming prisoner mail for contraband.

Ordinarily, this consists of searching for the usual, everyday items that people mail to prisoners, such as the requisite metal file, drugs, money, roadmaps of South America, blueprints for weapons of mass destruction, etc.

But after the terrorist attacks, prison censors focused more on political and intellectual material which contained "objectionable content," an intentionally vague and ambiguous label with no real definition.

When the guard delivered the mail, it was no surprise that the contents had been mauled over with meticulous care. The prison guards were all wearing red, white and blue ribbons on their uniforms, apparently to signify their patriotism as much to the prisoners as to each other, because who else gets to see them, after all? And anyone who didn't agree with their politics was deemed an enemy, or worse, a traitor.

That it required a period of two weeks for the

authorities to review the material, which was apparent from the postmark on the envelope, was unexpected and annoying. Roger Leisner had enclosed numerous flyers describing his voluminous collection of audio and video offerings, which included such names as Noam Chomsky, Howard Zinn, Angela Davis, Jim Hightower and many others. And what I didn't know at the time was that there were also a dozen cassette tapes of lectures recorded by Roger Leisner of Radio Free Maine, that were removed from the package that arrived. I was later to discover they were a most generous gift from Roger Leisner and Howard Zinn.

After noticing the 14 day old postmark moments later, I wrote to the media review committee (prison censors) and asked if anything had been removed from the packet of flyers. None of the staff seemed to know who was responsible for conducting such censorship or if they even had an office. It took an entire month of waiting and writing letters to various Department of Corrections personnel to finally learn that yes, there were items removed from the package, twelve audio tapes and two books. It took yet another month after that, an elapsed time of sixty days, to receive the two paperbacks. The books in question? *Index on Censorship for Free Expression*. And the theme boldly emblazoned on the cover read, "Intolerance in Europe & American gulags," an irony that I made sure was not lost on the prisoncrats.

I don't know if there's any real moral to this story, but I do know that I'm thankful for my friend Jeremy (who is living in the so-called free world and presumably reintegrating well) who managed to successfully smuggle shipments of anarchist zines and books to me (inside the prison laundry cart) while I was serving some segregation time. It was in one of those zines that I stumbled on Roger Leisner's Radio Free Maine address, which prompted me to write him.

I am also thankful for receiving such a wonderful and enlightening gift from Roger and Howard Zinn, whose generosity has helped nourish my insatiable thirst for alternative viewpoints on the political and social ills that plague our modern society. Their insights and dedication to what they believe are apparent and have brought a much needed source of light into the otherwise darkened imbroglio of one American gulag, and one man's life as well.

--Stephen Depka

Radio Free Maine P.O. Box 2705 Augusta, Maine 04338
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30th anniversary of SIU closing

We are nearing the 30th anniversary of the historic events of May 1970 which forced the closing of Southern Illinois University at Carbondale for the remainder of the 1969-70 school year.

The campus was one of the very few in the United States which was forced to close for the rest of the school year because of mass protests.

Many observers since that time have portrayed this era in a one-sided way and have ignored the very real and profound reasons for the protracted student and faculty protests of the time.

Serious errors of judgment had been made by officials from Washington, DC to SIUC. There were compelling reasons for the demonstrations, rallies and protests of the late 1960s and early 1970s, both nationally and at SIUC.

Of course, the focal point of the "days of dissent" was opposition to the bloody, protracted and massive U.S. military intervention in Vietnam -- an involvement many found both futile and unnecessary.

The specific events of May 1970 were precipitated by the U.S. invasion of Cambodia -- an apparent escalation of the war. On May 4, four persons were shot and killed by National Guardsmen at Kent State University in Ohio. This in turn led to protests all over the U.S. -- protests against the war and in response to the Kent State killings.

But the demonstrations at SIUC also revolved around a number of other issues. One of them was a local issue that had national implications. In 1969, SIUC formed the Center for Vietnamese Studies and Programs, funded primarily by a \$1 million grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID).

AID at that time was widely known as having close ties to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). In addition, there was no doubt that AID was directly involved in helping to carry out U.S. foreign policy in Vietnam and elsewhere.

The controversy over the center at SIUC got national publicity (Newsweek, New York Times, etc.). Many faculty members, students and Asian scholars throughout the nation considered the AID grant a major threat to academic freedom and to the academic integrity of SIUC itself.

There were also many other issues.

Women who lived in SIUC dormitories had "women's hours" and had to be in their dorms at a certain time at night. There was no such restriction on men. This led to major protests in the spring of 1969 and a sit-in on the lawn of the university president's on-campus home.

The women's hours were all but eliminated after a coalition of radicals and liberals, both black and white, easily won the student government elections in 1969.

A \$1 million mansion was being built for SIUC presidents. (Keep in mind that \$1 million was a whole lot of money back then.) This led to raised eyebrows not only on campus but by politicians and citizens in Springfield and throughout the state.

There had been delays in constructing a pedestrian overpass across the railroad tracks and U.S. 51. State funds for the project were finally released, but this was too late for a coed who was killed on U.S. 51 a few days after funds were released.

There were other issues: For example, there were allegations of racial bias in university employment. Also, students had relatively little input into university decision-making. And to some extent the same was true for the faculty.

Of course, persons under 21 years of age could not vote.

In addition, the SIUC administration had the temerity to try to ban on-campus sales of a student underground newspaper (the "Big Muddy Gazette") in 1969. The administration backed down a short time later after much criticism and talk of a lawsuit against the university.

The same year "Old Main" was destroyed in a fire started by one or more arsonists. A U.S. congressman publicly implied that the fire was started by protesters -- or as he put it "troublemakers" and "out-of-state agitators." In fact, no one was ever charged with the crime and no one seems to know for sure whether it was started by political protesters or simply by a common (nonpolitical) criminal.

--Allan H. Keith

(Allan H. Keith was a graduate student in journalism at SIUC in 1969 and 1970. He now lives in Mattoon.)

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Dear Mr. West

After our February/March 2002 issue hit the stands, we received the following letter.. We can only assume that Mr. West refers to Dr. Attitude's article, "Everybody look what's goin' down," which criticized Governor Ryan's proposal to eliminate the education programs in the Illinois Department of Correction, beyond the G.E.D. level, and cut Medicare payments to public hospitals.

Letter to the editor:

I have a question that I hope someone can answer for me, and that is why should I feel sorry for prisoners and prison conditions? I hope someone can answer this for me.

Thanks for your time.

--Ed West

Dr. Attitude Responds:

Dear Mr. West:

After the *Post Amerikan's* editors brought your letter to my attention, inviting me to respond, I re-read my article carefully. I must admit that I'm not sure as to how to answer your question, "Why should I feel sorry for prisoners and prison conditions?" Your query puzzles me, because *nowhere* in "Everybody look what's goin' down," do I ask for any body's pity for prisoners and prison conditions, much less yours.

Frankly, sir, I am insulted and indignant that you put words in my mouth, implying that I make a plea for sympathy or pity. I repudiate your inference and resent your implication.

Pistols at dawn, sabres at noon, or surface-to air missiles at dusk -- your choice

For the record, my article focused on Governor Ryan's proposed budget cuts, cuts that would have seriously affected two segments of the Illinois population least able to defend themselves, the elderly indigent and the incarcerated.

I concede that I did express outrage on behalf of the imprisoned and the elderly poor, but then I have had a troubling fault all my life. I just can't witness an outrage committed or injustice perpetrated, keep silent, and do nothing. That character defect got me into plenty of trouble in the past, and probably will plenty more times before I go to Jesus or the Devil, depending on whoever loses the dice throw, and claims my sorry soul.

The US prison population grew exponentially, during the 1980's, and continued to do so at least through the mid 1990's, mostly due to draconian drug laws that require someone convicted of purchasing a \$5 vial of crack to get 5 years of hard time. Conversely, someone who purchases quite a few grams more of powder cocaine would be far less likely to do prison time, even though the crack purchaser may be a first time offender, too.

Let me put it another way--take 250,000 prisoners, then "cube" that number

Exponentially, Mr. West. According to the 1995 National Criminal Justice Commission, the US prison population has at least tripled between 1980 and 1995. As goes the nation, so goes Illinois. 70% of the Illinois population currently incarcerated are doing time for non-violent, drug-related offenses, mostly either because of personal use, very minor-league work in the drug trade, or both. Moreover, even though African-Americans account for less than 14% of the population, they constitute 70% of the prison population as well. Hispanics are the minority population with the second highest disproportionate prison representation to their national population representation.

You don't have to be a rocket scientist to understand that if you are poor, a minority member, and involved in drugs, you are at least 8 times more likely to end up doing time for the offense than your middle-class, cocaine sniffing, ecstasy dropping counterpart, particularly if your counterpart is white. But then, perhaps I give rocket scientists too much credit. After all, Randy Yates is a rocket scientist, and yet he kept impregnating Andrea despite her two previous breakdowns, and a bout with post partum psychosis when she had her second child.

If NASA required communication skills of their employees, they'd be dangerous

As for prison conditions, an exponential explosion in the population means that new prisons are overcrowding faster than we can finish building them. Yet we're building prisons at a record clip. Cells meant to house two people frequently have quadruple or quintuple that number in them. The concomitant strain on basic sanitation, medical care, and other essential services renders what was barely adequate borderline inhumane.

For example, I am personally aware of at least 3 cases when prisoners, having been routinely denied the most basic medical care, will no doubt die excruciating deaths from cancer in an Illinois prison hospital. Had 2 of the inmates I have in mind had prompt surgical intervention for their illnesses, they would not be facing painfully premature death. In 1 case, the woman's pap smear came back positive. A straightforward hysterectomy would more than likely have provided her a complete surgical cure. Now her uterine tumor has grown to the size of a grapefruit.

Cruel, perhaps, but certainly not unusual

In the case of the 2nd woman, her cancer metastasized into her throat so that she has trouble swallowing or breathing. In the 3rd case, I cannot say positively, but I doubt the 26 year old man who had a cancerous kidney removed received the chemotherapy that would be standard follow-up medical treatment outside the wall.

Prisoners are supposed to receive adequate medical care. How can the above be adequate? Assuredly, the delays and denials originate more in bureaucratic inefficiency and limited

personnel than depraved indifference. That said, one has to ask how can one gynecologist, for instance, adequately serve 1200 women, as was the case at Logan Correctional Center in 1996? Or would you say that the prisoners in question are only "getting what they deserve"?

The Sisters of Self-righteous Sanctimony recruit a new postulant

If that is what you think, sir, then I regret to tell you that you are not alone. I had a student (outside the wall) last spring refute a *Chicago Tribune* editorial commending the court for finding on behalf of a group of female prisoners, who filed a class action suit against the Cook County Jail. The women were subjected to repeated strip searches--far more than necessary, and they were able to prove it--in the presence of and/or conducted by male guards. The women called the searches "systematic humiliation," the *Tribune* concurred, but my student thought that prisoners should be humiliated--as much as possible.

She baldly stated degradingly pointless strip searches appropriate and a deterrent to crime. Call me a bleeding heart if you like, but I am proud to say I was appalled. As a survivor of a pre-Vatican II style Catholic school, mad still recovering Roman Catholic, I can attest firsthand to the deleterious, counter-productive effects of systematic humiliation as a corrective to behavior problems or a stimulus to learning.

And we call ourselves civilized?

Mr. West, do prisoners deserve constant humiliation, and, in the case of women, sexual exploitation? According to Amnesty International's Global Report on Women in Prison, issued in 2000, in US prisons, it is quite common for female prisoners to be coerced into sexual relations with guards and other staff. Even if a female inmate can prove to the prison authorities' satisfaction that she was forcibly raped, she still faces punishment for "sexual misconduct." Excuse me, but aren't we Americans currently patting ourselves on the back for "liberating" Afghani women from the Taliban? Aren't we the people horrified by the case of the Nigerian woman who was under sentence of stoning for adultery (she had had a child out of wedlock) meted out by a regional Islamic court in that country?

Were we to treat stray cats and dogs in a shelter the way we treat our prisoners, the outcry from the public would be deafening.

Jesus wept

Overwhelmingly, the prison population in the United States seems rightly convicted--even prisoners' rights groups, such as the John Howard Foundation, not mention the ACLU and Amnesty International, estimate that the wrongfully convicted account for slightly less than 1% of the US. prison population. I would add: the remaining 99% may be there rightfully, but not necessarily justly.



How is justice served when we lock people up for drug offenses, but deny them either drug rehabilitation or an opportunity to educate themselves so they can have an opportunity to lead a productive life? How is justice served if we continue to deny people employment because they have a criminal record, even if the crime in question is completely unrelated to the job sought? One woman I know, having served her sentence on a narcotics conviction (purchasing drugs for personal use), couldn't even get hired at the local 7-11, even though she was clean, sober, and had never committed a fiduciary crime. She ended up working as a stripper, because it was the only job she could get, and she had a child to support. She started using again, to get herself through her shift, which of course led her back to prison.

Justice should be blind, not brain-dead

If you were to say she made that choice, Mr. West, you'd be right. Perhaps she should have been obliterating herself with alcohol instead. After all, liquor is legal.

No, Mr. West, no one wants your pity or your sympathy. Pity and sympathy wouldn't do Lisa, the above-named student, any good. When DCFS terminated her parental rights, *despite* her having done everything she required of her to reunite with her child--education (she was uncommonly intelligent, an excellent and perceptive writer and reader), parenting classes, drug rehab, the whole nine yards--she committed suicide. She wasn't even thirty.

Yes, I mourned her when I heard. I thought again that night of the insightful essay she wrote for me on T. S. Eliot's "Journey of The Magi," wherein she made me appreciate the narrator's anguish at having an old belief system exploded, but yet having no newly established faith to supplant the old, more fully than I ever had before. The unnamed Magi returns to his kingdom only certain that Mary and Joseph's infant son is the King of Kings. He must wait to know what to believe, but can't bring himself to reveal his Epiphany to his people. After all, a leader cannot lead without offering faith and hope. Oh yes, the irony of Lisa's insights paired with her own devastating loss, the parallel of her alienation with that of the poem's narrator's, drove hard into my consciousness. For Lisa, Life cruelly imitated art; Wilde's witticism gave me a hollow laugh.

Tears provide no monument

I'm no fool, sir. The overwhelming majority in our prisons are indeed rightfully convicted. The violent 30% minority--the assorted rapists, child molesters, and other, miscellaneous violent sociopaths who make the boys on "Oz" look like extras from *West Side Story*--belong there. For their own sake as well as ours, they should remain there, too. Rehabilitation probably would never be possible for many of them.

What, however, of the remaining non-violent 70%? They will get out, eventually, so how do we want them to return to us? Meaner and angrier than when they entered, because they have no skills, no prospects, and no hope? Because they have nothing to balance out the prejudice and rejection they'll face when looking for work? Because they've done everything we told them they were to do in order to be reunited with their children, only to have them told they can never see them again?

Those of you without sin, line up here

Every day when I walked into one of the prisons I taught at, I cringed inwardly as the heavy steel doors slammed behind me. Every day after I left, I felt a palpable sense of relief as I walked out the gate. I could have been one of those inmates. An accident, maybe, where someone else ended up dead? Reckless homicide. Had a little more to drink than you thought when you got behind the wheel? One too many drunk driving convictions? Lose your temper when provoked beyond endurance or reason? Assault and battery. In a terrible financial bind? Before you know it, embezzlement and fraud indictments get you up close and personal with David Duncan, Jeff Skilling, and Andrew Fastow, and you make a fourth for bridge for the next 15 to 30 years..

We all make mistakes, Mr. West. Some of us get caught, and some of us don't. Have you never done anything you're deeply ashamed of, that you wouldn't give five years off your life to undo? I don't know about you, but I've done a thing or two in my life that I can only describe as despicable. Not criminal, necessarily, but morally reprehensible. My life could not stand up to microscopic scrutiny. However, does that discount whatever good or decent thing I may occasionally have done, or mean I should be denied a chance to redeem myself?

Care to cast the first stone?

No, Mr. West, I am assuredly not asking you for sympathy or pity. Pity patronizes, though arguably sympathy establishes a human connection. Nonetheless, they are both pointless and purposeless. As anybody with an "X" on his or her back could tell you.

I believe it was the playwright George Bernard Shaw who said one could judge the enlightenment of a nation by the way it treats its women. I would add that how it treats its prisoners also provides a pretty accurate measure of its progress.

Don't you dare confuse my empathy with your "sympathy." Don't you *dare*.

I hope the above answers your question.

--Dr. Attitude

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