

PROCESSED WORLD 22



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COLLECTIVE: Med-o, Emily Post-it, Green Fuchsia, Louis Michaelson, R.L. Tripp, Frog, D. Hayes, Zoe Noe, Pauline Pesticide, Ana Logue, Sarkis Manouchian, Shelley Fern Diamond, Primitivo Morales, Mark Leger. Trixie T-Square.

CONTRIBUTORS: Moammar Crawdaddy, Richard Singer, Chaz Bufe, Lucius Cabins, Dorothy Hamill, Jim Daniels, T.E., William Talcott, Tom Tomorrow, D. Minkler, Paris Blazey, Rob Robertson, Caré, Marianna King, D.S. Black, Andrea Kassof, Great Red Rad Nad, Mars Mensch, Jay Blumenthal, JRS, Marce Hall, Laura Beck, I.B. Nelson, Mari Cala mari.

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Front Cover by Tom Tomorrow

Back Cover by Lucius Cabins

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Choking Heads

graphic by Zoe Noe

The ecological crisis is no longer a threat. It is here. Even if all of the ecocidal practices of the global production system were halted tomorrow, irreparable damage has already been done. Mass extinction of species, destruction of the rainforests, loss of the protective ozone layer and the "greenhouse" global warming effect all will continue to have disruptive effects through the next century. We can only work to ameliorate the situation.

Processed World has consistently sought to puncture the myth of computer production and use as "clean" and "safe." We have not been alone in criticizing electronic technology from an ecological viewpoint. What has set us apart, however, has been our focus on this technology as work — on the nature of this work, on the kinds of social relations and subjective experience it engenders, and on its goals and functions within the global economy.

From the start, *PW* has criticized most modern work as useless from the standpoint of the common social good, for damaging workers physically and psychologically, and for wasting precious resources including billions of hours of people's time that could be used in far more worthwhile ways. Our critique differs from that of the environmental movement, which adopts the viewpoint of the citizen-consumer rather than the worker. The environmentalist's perspective may be valid but by itself can lead to serious mistakes. Especially in the current anti-worker political climate, it tends to produce reformist, technocratic strategies. Either the movement engages in holding actions (e.g. lawsuits based on environmental impact reports) or it tries to persuade those in power to include ecological factors in their cost-benefit analysis.

Since the movement is composed largely of dropouts or converts from the technical-professional layers of the population, its critique of capitalist waste is too often

limited to guilt-tripping workers for doing their admittedly sometimes ecologically destructive jobs, for owning cars and for consuming too much. In its most extreme form, this kneejerk anti-consumerism leads to profascist "deep ecology" diversions into species self-hate, racism and homophobia; all disguised as "honoring ecological balance." By contrast, the Greens in Europe, particularly West Germany, have made a more cogent critique of the production system. While some Greens participate in the conventional electoral arena, others advocate direct democratic planning as a solution instead of telling the system's victims (workers) to pay through conservation and austerity. As the forests of Northern Europe wither under acid rain, alternative plans are being elaborated by tens of thousands of ordinary working people as well as techno-dropouts and marginal youth. These people realize that the forests are not just a "resource" but are precious in their own right. For the most part, however, they have not yet made the leap of recognizing that they themselves must begin taking collective responsibility for the biosystem — that the big, centralized hierarchical institutions are obsolete, dangerous and must be replaced.

If there is one conclusion to be drawn from the most recent round of eco-disasters, it is that patchwork reform of these institutions and the industrial system they control is hopeless. We cannot return to a neolithic or medieval technological level, as some of the movement's "radicals" propose. Necessary repairs to the planet will involve our most sophisticated scientific/technological knowledge, along with knowledge we haven't yet acquired.

Equally important, production for profit's sake has got to go. Much of the existing industrial base needs to be dismantled or radically converted. All technologies need to be evaluated according to the effects on their users, on the im-

mediate surroundings, and on the long-term health of the biosphere. And this evaluation can only be made by the people most affected as workers and local residents, in consultation with "experts" under no pressure to exonerate hazardous methods and materials.

Partisans of the green/ecology movement are keenly aware of the great cycles of the biosphere — the nitrogen and water cycles, the photosynthesis/respiration cycle, the food chains. They understand that the biosphere reproduces itself, not as a static entity but as an immensely complex web of living and non-living processes. Yet curiously, they fail to extend the concept of reproduction to our "second nature," the social relations we inherit. The world that generations of workers (including scientists and engineers) have created by selling their time day after day to corporations and state bureaucrats is now terminally hostile. It is hostile not only to workers — who have always experienced its "laws" through war, unemployment, poverty, boredom, and attendant miseries — but to life itself.

The most powerful reproductive cycle now is the cycle of human social reproduction which currently takes the form of the reproduction of global capital. But unlike the other great cycles, it is human beings who — collectively, not individually — control social reproduction. If we all stopped going to our jobs tomorrow, the reproduction of society, the chains of command and circulation would quickly snap. And already we would have begun to reproduce another life, another world.

Clearly, it's not as simple as that. We would have to consciously renovate both natural and political biospheres. Seizing power to collectively rearrange human values almost happened two decades ago in France. Ten million people went on strike, occupied their workplaces, and began to live their lives, for a few weeks, in a new and intoxicating way. Perhaps for the first time since childhood, the majority of people in France were on their own time, living in the instinctive way that we know, deep down, to be our natural state as creatures on the earth. Unfortunately, they did not complete their break with the daily cycle by transforming the institutions they had temporarily vacated. But that road is still open. . .

As usual, this issue presents a cornucopia of perspectives on our theme. Lucius Cabins makes a return guest appearance with **DOLLARS AND ECOLOGY**, his analysis of the ambiguous nature of the environmental movement: Does it contain the seeds of a radical break with expertise and work as we know them, or is it more likely to politically legitimize capi-

tal's attempted transition to a biologically sound form of production, leaving basic social relations intact? In this, and in other articles we explore ways the work environment effects and is reflected in the larger world environment.

Green Fuchsia's **BAD ECOTUDE EVERYWHERE!** tells of the author's odyssey from steel mill to ecology magazine. Fuchsia finds that in both places workers' perception of nature is warped by their daily workplace experience. Even in an environmentalist group, hierarchical organization leads to ecologically destruction.

Our second Tale of Environmental Toil, **MUDSHARK FOR HIRE**, by Med-o, deals with reforestation work in the denuded Northwestern U.S. This saga examines collective self-management as practiced by more than a thousand tree-planters.

AUTODESTRUCTION by Duncan Watry looks at the Demo Derby that constitutes our modern cities. The car dictates how and where we live, and its eventual demise will present us with great changes (and opportunities). The

car/city nexus is examined in the surrounding pages. **NEW UTOPIA** by Richard Singer, dwells in the urban jungle as well, investigating some of the forced living patterns found in the metropolis.

In the more-or-less fiction department, we offer Primitivo Morales' **LEARNING CURVE**, a starkly imaginative meeting of genetic research and politics set in an all too believable future. As for our other entry, **DICK'S DAY** by Dorothy Hamill, all we can say is yup-yup.

Our shorter pieces include an excerpt from an article by the now infamous Chaz Bufe, with a retort to those who would eliminate billions of people under the guise of environmentalism. In **HOT UNDER THE AQUIFER** Dennis Hayes tells how high-risk tap water gets riskier in Silicon Valley. **PLANTS BURSTING WITH ENERGY** by Mark Leger is a stroll down memory lane—both our historical memory and our genetic memory.

We've been discussing possible future themes, and thinking is centered around ab/uses of leisure time—vacations, shopping, travel, drugs... you know, what

you do when you're not working. Of course we are still interested in our usual fare (technology, work/office, perspectives on modern life, and ways of changing how we love, live, and work) and in intelligent rebuttals or extensions of previous material. We welcome your essays, fiction, poetry, letters and graphics. Please attach your name and address to everything submitted.

NOW LISTEN UP!!!

We think we had a pretty good issue last time, but our mailbox was virtually empty. Maybe you couldn't find anything to say about most of it, but surely some of the pieces (e.g. the interview with Katya Komisaruk) advanced ideas not all of you agree with. This issue will (hopefully) raise some hackles. But we are not interested in being called names or endless recriminations. We are interested in sensible ideas. So write to us. We'd hate to find out that the most radical thing you do is read this magazine.

PROCESSED WORLD

41 Sutter Street #1829

San Francisco, CA 94104

(see last page for subscription information)



—NOT a picture of a man being sick—but a picture of a man breathing in—deeply.

The following letters were received
in response to a fundraising appeal.
Thanks!

Solvency?

Dear World

In response to your financial emergency Here's ten bucks. Please send me back issues 16 and 17. I hope everything works out. This is my favourite magazine.

Just an observation, but four of the five issues of *Processed World 21* are still sitting unsold after about two months on the shelves of my local alternative bookstore. This is unfortunate for both *PW* and the patrons of this bookstore, as this issue was probably the best publication of this particular month, featuring superb graphics and the interview with Katya Komisaruk as particular highlights. Considering the financial crisis, it may be worth considering printing the titles of the featured pieces of an issue on the cover in some sort of an "Inside" banner. While this would spoil the great *PW* covers, it might be a necessary sacrifice to motivate newsstand sales, thereby enhancing the Solvency of the magazine.

Keep up the great work. The *Processed World* style of subjective writing makes me feel less alone in this insane world.

RJ—Halifax, Nova Scotia

Another VDT Vegetable

Dear *PW*,

I know my brain has lapsed, but I can't remember about my sub, so I'm renewing, at the **NEW** rate, an extra two whole dollars to inspire your creativity. If I didn't have a mobile home to support, I'd consider a lifetime sub, does that mean I've sold out? Well, best of luck from yet another VDT vegetable.

P C —Sunnyvale, CA

P.S. Is the revolution near yet?

You Can't Fold!

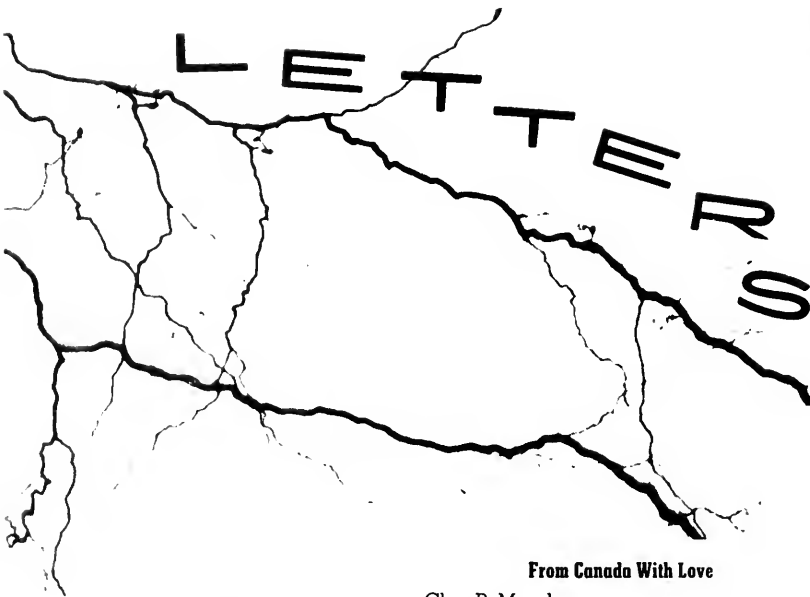
Dear Harned Friends,

You can't fold! I just subscribed! I received #21 as requested and was greatly satisfied as it was an absolutely terrific and meaningful issue I shared it around the office (it's a small mom-and-pop word-processing operation that doesn't fall under the master and slave definition [perhaps because pop is black and mom is Irish]), but we all have had experiences in the types of hells your writers have detailed). I've shared previous issues that I've managed to find and they've been loved, too. But since *PW* was hard to find I finally wised up and subscribed.

So, since I don't want you to fold and since I'm no fool, I'll send in \$10 more dollars to help out and extend my sub by 4 issues. Even if the worst happens, it will be money well spent for all the good reading you've given us.

Now, keep kicking! Your friend in New Mexico,

D.S.—Albuquerque, N M



From Canada With Love

Cher P. Morales,

I do not know what is the cause, but at the bank (3:00), it was suddenly very cheap to convert Canadian to American currency—28%. Two weeks ago, it was 38.9%. At the post office (3:30), they tell me I could buy the Great Green Stuff at 24%. 4% in thirty minutes? Que pasa, amigo? Is your economy going buns up? Damn shame and bad bloody timing, I'd say. Our Prime Minister, Brian Mulhoolley, recently sold Canada to Uncle Ron for nothing, nada, bupkes, not even a few glass beads and a trinket. At least your pilgrim fathers had to con Native Americans out of their birthright. No one has to con a Canadian. Be polite. Ask nicely. Threaten to pull out of their economy and they will do anything. Even take the cruise. So it is bend-over time again for the Average Canadian Person regardless of race, sex or creed, but how poor you are will still determine how far over you have to bend. Free Trade. Free Lunch. Free Trip. What a bucket of beaver-shit our political scene is. It is rumored that you Americans could care less about Canada until for various reasons, you suddenly have to flee north. When Pat Robertson is elected Prez, for instance. Soon. Soon. It is coming. Another mass exodus. Vancouver is lovely any time of year. I used to be an American, but during the Vietnam hostilities, I was forced to flee North. Then I was swallowed by this beached, frozen white whale of a country. Later, when I tried to come home, I discovered my entire family was dead, and there was no one left to sponsor me, a lost radical. That's the sad fucking truth for today, Feb. 15, 1988. I shall enjoy reading your magazine.

T.—Ontario, Canada

Undoubtedly! The only question is "When?"

What? No prepaid envelope? No pay-later come-on? You guys are gonna fold!

A Reader—Salem, OR

Office Ecology

PW:

Our stomachs are full. We who flow through this hell-bent artery called the best "standard of living" die the slow soul death of gluttons—one meal on top of the next. What me and you are starved of is birds and bees and that. This here is metal and concrete and it hums. My fluorescent hangover is the hum.

In this beehive we call home the big hum is made up of fluorescent light, the strain of elevator cable, autos, rivets and stop signs. After time myself.

The clock advances and we keep the machines stocked with ink, snacks, newspapers and that. And the machines short change me, no questions asked. The image up yours, most-likely-to-succeed-and-did men leave the scene of the crime like blood cells in the freeway veins. Their job never ends. Tall yellow necktie is a sufficient tombstone.

The hum of this beast will now subside for two days. My muscles relax as the hum changes frequency—and my brain, the only remaining original part on the '62 model human, it reels and sizzles in this hot grease cauldron I want out.

Let me back in. On the way up I stood next to an office woman who smiled like mint auto freshener. Five inches in front the pink veiny skull of a shipping clerk stares me down. Time to get off.

Stepping out of the car onto bouncy brown carpet polished brass letters spelling white, white and white. And I know I'm in the bowels and brain of this shaft. But this sty houses humans—the clerks and jerks and couriers and that. Somehow not snapping we exchange the knowing silent grins on that morning ride up. "I will survive if it takes coffee nicotine and marijuana." Yes, it is a nice day.

D.D.—San Francisco, CA



¡PIDO CASTIGO!

My Chilean companeros have a song by this title, and it means "I Demand Punishment." It is for the military whores who rule their country. Being a Norte Americano my hatreds seem to be more personalized, if no less intense.

I had this friend, see. He was funny and friendly and liked to have a good time. After his Berkeley days he went off to the University of Chicago and got his MBA, going to work for CitiCorpse in NYC. Both distance and politics divided us, at least to some extent, but his decency and charm counterbalanced these. I can hear him laughing and saying "Look, Primo, give the man a chance." A voice of tolerance. He bought a house in New Jersey and he and his parents moved in and they lived. But not happily ever after.

Because Navroze Mody, you see, was not a White Amerikan. He was of Indian ancestry (the sub-continent, not the U.S.) and colored a wonderful bronze. He was also an . . . alien.

Nowadays, in the cities of America the poor compete with the machines for oxygen and gnaw at each other in their despair. There are vicious packs that attack anything unusual, often race defines their hate. Hoboken has such subhumans, one assembly being known cutely as "Dot-Busters," thus reflecting both their penchant for hip slang and their taste for attacking people from India. Said one doughty warrior in this unsung war "The Hindu people should live the way we live. They shouldn't have that smell that they have, dress up in curtains, and walk around in tribes" A real credit to america.

So a gang, perhaps a dozen in number, ranging in age from maybe 11 to 17, attacked Navroze one October evening as he walked with a (white) friend. The friend was (basically) unhurt, while Navroze well, the reports mention severed eyeballs, crushed skull and feet, broken spine. He died after a few days.

Ah, but he wasn't murdered by whites, as was the case in Howard Beach. He was murdered by people described as "Hispanic." Traditionally, ghetto residents chew on the newest immigrants, reflecting the prejudice they themselves encounter. Those peoples who have been so unlucky as to be traders and merchants (the overseas chinese, the jews, the indians) are particularly despised by their neighbors, and those that value education are resented even more.

Navroze was so successful here in this consumer paradise that he was brutally murdered by a gang of scum and the police and most of the press were not particularly interested. (One police theory had it that Nav was killed because he was bald!) I guess I wouldn't be interested either, except that I knew him. And that's a shitty thing, that I have to know the victim to really feel grief, because Nav's death is not unusual, not uncommon in this great land of opportunity. So I don't expect it of any of you—that you feel this strangling sorrow and loss. But you might think about the people you know, and picture them cold in the morgue, big toe tagged . . . if there is one . . .

And the pendejos that did this . . . one of them is actually on trial, as an adult, even! He—it—had better pray that the state of New Jersey is severe, because Navroze was not killed by prejudice, or ideas or poverty. He was brutally murdered by humans. Unlike complicated socio-economic concepts, people are very convenient targets for vengeance. Even the attorneys I know think that these nazi punks should be . . . "visited." Not because they are hispanic or poor, but because they are not really human. Because all that wears a human face is alien to them.

But slaughtering them will not return Navroze. And it would be the bitterest irony, for of all the people I know he was the sweetest, most decent. For his life to be punctuated by brutal death this is not a good thing.

But it is not a good thing that rabid animals roam the street. , Pido Castigo!

Primitivo Morales

DOLLARS & ECOLOGY

different shades of green?



*"[The crisis] . . . has released forces of flexibility on the part of the 'system' which amount to overhauling and restructuring the productive apparatus and the social organization of society . . . Eco-industrialism puts a price tag on what was once upon a time free of charge. Clean air, silence, and fertile soil are being commercialized, as they have to be especially produced by particular planning and technology . . . the rising eco-industrial complex is adding a new level to the expenses incurred by industrial growth: we all have to be more productive and to consume more in order to at least maintain a given standard of living . . . environmental concern is a foremost source of legitimation for rising new industries and elites." — "The Future Changes Its Color" by Wolfgang Sachs in *Raise the Stakes* #11*

Not a day goes by anymore without another environmental disaster appearing in the news. Even while I was working on this article, a Shell Oil refinery not far from San Francisco dumped several hundred thousand gallons of oil into the S.F. Bay. Ironically, the site of this dumping was an ecologically restored wetland, an abatement project for the years of destruction wrought by Shell and other oil companies in the north bay marshes.

This incident puts in stark relief the typical relationship between environmental restoration and its destruction: token efforts are wiped out in just a few hours of careless "business as usual."

In March 1988 the news broke that atmospheric ozone loss is already much worse than was projected. Dupont Corporation, producer of over half of US chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), followed the news with the announcement that it would phase out production of the "most ozone-damaging" CFCs over a ten-year period.

This followed a U.N.-sponsored agreement last September to freeze and then cut CFC production by one-third to one-half by 1998. (This treaty, called the Montreal Protocol, has only been ratified by the US and Mexico—it needs 11 signatories of the 24 agreeing countries to take effect.) Instead of stopping CFC production right now, the Montreal Protocol amounts to an international agreement to continue depleting ozone. The Protocol tacitly acknowledges that the investments in CFC production can only *gradually* be recycled into new areas—protecting business is, after all, a higher priority than protecting the biosphere.

Behind this sordid arrangement, multinational chemi-

cal companies are scrambling to find alternatives. Dupont has already spent \$30 million on CFC replacements. Not surprisingly, one of several workable alternatives is a "green" product. A derivative of citrus rinds that works well as a solvent, it replaces CFCs in one of their prime roles.

Dupont's decision to eliminate "most" CFC production over ten years (still protecting their capital before the planet) was made primarily to avoid future liability. In spite of evidence of ozone depletion since the early seventies, Dupont has ignored the evidence until now: finally, a NASA panel had the necessary legitimacy and clarity to provide the basis for future charges of criminal negligence if Dupont failed to respond. Still, the chemical companies are going to take *ten years* to stop!

The Dupont case, cited in a *New York Times* article as "responsible corporate citizenship," is an important example of what can be expected from existing businesses when they adorn their ongoing profitable activities with ecological green. Environmentalists pressuring business and government to respond to the environmental crisis by "restoring the earth" are in trouble if they don't see capitalism as an obstacle to their aspirations.

In contrast to "deep ecology's" philosophical premise of "biocentrism," which argues against human primacy in favor of a quasi-democracy for all living things in the biosphere, a new sub-movement within the ecology camp, "Restoring the Earth" (RTE) is premised on human *planning* to create new ecological harmonies. While the biocentrists have a religious reverence for "natural" species and habitats, RTE values natural variation, but recognizes that "natural" doesn't really exist anymore. Restoring ecological niches requires human intervention and active management (stewardship).

At a January '88 "Restoring the Earth" symposium held at UC Berkeley, two of the stated objectives were to:

- Document the ways investments in environmental restoration can stimulate economic development and provide new employment opportunities.
- Contribute to a consensus on strategies for creating the educational, organizational, financial, and political structures necessary for building a major restoration movement.

Not many people would argue against restoring en-

"The environmental movement is vacillating between . . . transforming science, expertise, and work itself. . . and legitimizing a new wave of accumulation based on a state-capitalist 'greening' of the economy's infrastructure."

environmentally devastated places. But when it comes to achieving a social consensus to halt hazardous production, the issue mutates to one of survival—the economic survival of the polluting business, and the jobs it provides. To appear realistic, restorationists argue according to the twisted logic imposed by The Economy. Instead of a public discussion on the direct human and ecological benefits of various green city schemes, restoration projects for wetlands and forests, and so forth, restorationists are forced to discuss profits, wages, jobs, costs and benefits, and most significantly “growth.” By seeking strategies that allow profits to accumulate and growth to continue being measured in the bizarre way it is, restorationists obscure the more daunting—but more essential—goal of eradicating the rape of the earth’s underlying causes.

A movement of social opposition is a prerequisite for transforming society, which is exactly what environmentalism represents at first glance. Clearly, there are revolutionary implications in halting hazardous production to protect and restore the environment, and in advocating popular evaluation of the risks and benefits of different technologies and production methods. These goals imply a form of social planning which does not yet exist, and could not exist under current conditions.

Purer eco-activists prefer to avoid the dirty realities implied by planning. By posing an opposition between things “natural” and “unnatural,” and seeing the latter as the creation of humans, this type of “deep” ecologism implies that the problem is humans in general, not specific purposes decided by particular types of human organization, within a logical web also of human creation. So while they might advocate the rehabilitation of grizzly bears in wilderness areas where they have been wiped out, they tend to define such advocacy as “speaking for Mother Earth” or ecological balance, rather than as a social plan for a specific piece of land. Whatever its justification, such a plan remains in the realm of human intention and control.

Accepting human intervention and facing up to the *responsibility of managing the environment* is crucial: with a global population soaring towards 6 billion, human society cannot go on without some form of self-conscious relation to the biosphere. Even the bottom-line world of capitalism will have to adapt to the new imperative of biological sanity. This implies a new round of capitalist planning — after the last decade or so of deregulation and restructuring, which in turn followed four decades of Keynesian quasi-planning.

The last time society faced the kind of

global crisis we face now (economically, if not ecologically) was in the 1930s. A common solution to that epoch’s “anarchy of the marketplace” was massive state intervention in the economy. From Hitler to Stalin to Roosevelt to the Popular Front in France, each country found a way to stabilize the economy through guarantees backed up by the national government. The generally unspoken premise of most of these guarantees was preparation for war, in which the victors would dominate the world economy. Popular support was crucial to the state’s ability to execute these changes. In fact, the popular energy channeled by these politicians contained more radical impulses that might have led to different outcomes were it less skillfully directed at the time.

We are in a parallel situation today, where the self-serving rhetoric of politicians and large companies pitch ecological concern, regardless of their underlying contempt for environmental sanity. A case in point is the current Chevron Oil TV campaign about what they’ve done to ensure survivable habitats for foxes and birds of prey. After showing a dramatic 20-second slice on how a device the company puts in place around its oil-fields or power-lines helps an animal to lead a normal life, Chevron rhetorically asks, “Do people go to all this trouble just for this little animal?” and answer

with their logo and the big words “PEOPLE DO.” Meanwhile, Chevron has been repeatedly cited as the single largest polluter of the S.F. Bay.

Before too long we can expect elaborate marketing campaigns to “Buy Green,” as biotechnology companies begin to trot out various “healthy” (for the biosphere) products. (Remember how easily the “natural foods revolution” was co-opted by granola manufacturers and supermarkets?) More importantly, existing blocks of capital in chemicals, pharmaceuticals, agribusiness, and energy are all pouring research and development funds into the “greening” of their own products and markets. At moments like these the system shows its resilience; it can turn a radical popular impulse to its own advantage.

I can already hear a chorus of ecologists, passionately concerned with the biosphere above all else, welcoming any developments in this direction as better than more of what we have already. Of course it would be—but isn’t it more likely that biotech environmentalism will be in the same boat as the restorationists (in fact, I foresee a growing harmony of interests between the two), namely trying to avoid falling farther behind the eco-disasters waiting to happen?

Capitalism is always changing. Change represents opportunity, new needs, new products, new ways to profit.

Do people write advertisements about endangered species protection for multinational oil companies, who are among the worst polluters on the planet?



PEOPLE DO.



graphic by Lucius Cobins

One could even say that no force in world history has depended on change so much, or used it as effectively, as has the globalization of capitalist social relations. Through nearly two centuries of economic and political crises, the day-to-day logic of buying and selling has consolidated itself so thoroughly that it is considered hopelessly romantic and utopian to propose a world not based on market rationality. Supposedly "socialist" countries share with the rest of the "free" world similar enslaving social relations, and the twisted logic of wages, profits, and accumulation, even though capital there accumulates directly under state control.

How will global capitalism mutate its way through the myriad late 20th century crises of debt, starvation, war, eco-collapse? How can it reform itself and rationalize production to serve the twin goals of social stability and continued growth in accumulation?

It's hard to imagine how the existing social-economic system could "naturally" or peacefully evolve into a thoroughly "green-ified" post-industrialism. The most likely and unappealing way would be through depression. If enough existing US capital were written off after a crash, and wages were lowered sufficiently to make "green" production competitive on the world market, investment in biotechnology would be massive. At that point a new biologically-sound infrastructure would not seem such a pipe-dream. Another possibility is for a new round of aggressive state intervention in the economy, which would pump billions into new forms of biotechnological production; but this, too, is unlikely in the absence of a dire economic emergency.

More plausible is a scenario wherein restoration projects become sources of civic pride (much like the revitalized downtowns throughout the U.S.), but remain cosmetic. As such, they would be jobs programs foremost for the scientists and technicians specializing in restoration. There are a number of talented and well-intentioned people occupying this niche already.

EXPERTISE AND SOCIAL POWER

The environmental movement has always depended on the information and advice of "counter-experts," usually scientists with a social conscience. People in this role are in an odd position. Either they look for a relatively low-paying job with an "oppositional" organization, or else they work in corporate or academic slots, and provide expert services to ecological campaigns as concerned citizens. In either case they depend on their expertise to make a living, and hence have a hard time seeing the outside of the box

GET ME SEWAGE-RECYCLING! OUR WILD-LIFE RESTORATION PROJECT HAS SPRUNG A LEAK!



graphic by Lucius Cabins

they're in. Rarely do such experts find time or inclination to develop a thoroughgoing critique of the logic of social life that produces environmental abuse and then as a stop-gap, people with skills like theirs. Moreover, the enormity of the ecological abuse and the relative insignificance of the brakes on it make it difficult to imagine life without eco-disasters.

The increase in environmental awareness represents a growth *industry* and has been quite dependent on the expansion and wide availability of scientific knowledge. Its dissemination depends on new technologies: sensing, testing, and information processing. Environmental technicians, involved with hi-tech gadgetry and a culture of expertise, often present technological fixes as solutions, and frequently ignore the social side to environmental problems.

Deep ecologists and greens put grassroots democracy squarely on their agenda as a solution to the environmental crisis. But grassroots democracy implies more than just town meetings. Such a social transformation would involve a logical break with the *social power of expertise*, which while conceivable, is at best a complicated process.

Unequal distribution of technical knowledge represents one of the thorniest obstacles for any radical change in social systems. People will never be equally capable, but there must be a way for all us non-experts to evaluate technological and scientific choices, given their social results. Advocating the stopping of science or technology does not address the problem. Expertise is a form of social power. From craft guilds to industrial unions, workers have used their own expertise to control labor processes and thus to better their own economic conditions. It is precisely this power which many new technologies have been deployed to break. As Marx pointed out, the history of industrial innovation since the end of the eighteenth century has been a history of capital's attempts to establish a more complete domination over the worker.

But before technologies could erode workers' skills, workers largely lost their voice in consciously deciding "what's worth doing." By generally acceding to the logic of the wage contract (and, one might argue, because of the difficulty of democratic planning as an alternative mode of social organization), workers have lost all say over the purpose of their

work. From military contracting to banking to toothpaste production, workers don't decide what to do, they just go to work and get paid. To imagine a social movement concerned with the purposes of arcane scientific research seems far-fetched if people aren't even particularly concerned with the purpose of what they do themselves day in and day out.

A movement restricted to calling for democratic participation in science fails to recognize the larger, more fundamental social relation of which scientific expertise is only a small, though powerful, branch. Wage labor and the logic of the marketplace impose a dualism on all human endeavor between what is useful or pleasurable and what makes money. As long as an activity generates money, its social results are of little consequence.

The environmental movement is vacillating now between two contradictory pulls: On one side are certain radical impulses implied by really *restoring the earth* (and transforming science, expertise and work itself). On the other side, mere reformism is insufficient. In this instance, it legitimates a new wave of accumulation based on a state-capitalist "greening" of the economy's infrastructure, and a vibrant biotechnology sector which could invade large areas of the economy, from agriculture to energy to pharmaceuticals with new, cheaper ways of producing. If we reject the notion that intervention in the ecosphere is inherently wrong, the problem becomes one of good management and planning. Accepting this basic premise means that another, much larger issue is ignored, namely all the work involved in implementing any social plan. The Restoring the Earth campaign fits in nicely with the continuing social pressure to create more jobs, no matter what kind.

Instead of stepping back to analyze how the wage-labor relation crucially *disengages* people from the consequences of their own work, eco-activists seem to prefer the role of capitalist planners, setting up new companies and government programs that will ostensibly provide meaningful, well-paid work. Rather than freeing the subjective sensibilities and knowledge of average people, urging a new form of radical direct democracy in social and economic life, large parts of the still-evolving eco-program treat people as passive cogs to be fitted into the new Green Machine. The uncommitted citizen is confronted by the contending programs of incipient elites and existing elites. But as long as the logic of the market remains unchallenged, the business and propaganda organizations in power now will remain there, as will their methods of production/destruction.

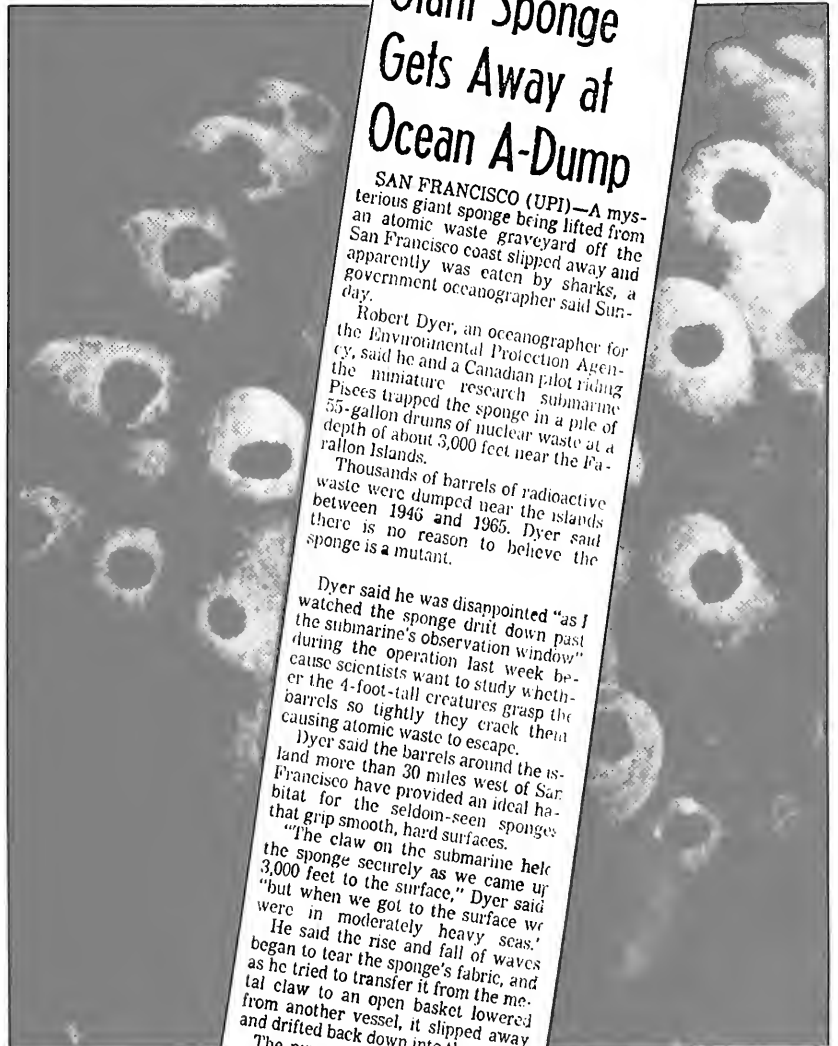
GREEN CITIES & BIOREGIONALISM

The ecology movement is at the forefront of imagining and sketching out alternative urban and rural arrangements. At first sight, it is exciting to find concrete visions of alternatives. One example is Richard Register's *Ecocity Berkeley*, which is a primer on the greening of cities. He is quite explicit about the principles around which life should be organized, the shape urban landscape should take (denser, more three-dimensional—up rather than out—less sprawl, new transit systems, solar energy, and so on), and goes on to offer a 150-year conversion plan for Berkeley, California. He shares other eco-activists' abhorrence of con-

sumerism, though he tempers his moral impulse with a certain pragmatism:

"If cities are built for maximum profit for the powerful and financially clever, or to confer maximum material wealth on all citizens equally, or to find some midpoint on the materialistic continuum between those extremes, the ecocity will wither at its inception. Nonetheless, making a living and seeking personal material security are major motivations to all of us who live in and help to build and run cities. So both kinds of reasons—those that provide a healthy, adventuresome, beautiful environment, and those that support the needs and desires of the individual, singly and collectively—must be accommodated." [emphasis added]

Much later, under "Notes on Strategy," he encourages ecocity activists to "appeal to people's interests, all kinds, both selfish and generous," to forge political con-



Giant Sponge Gets Away at Ocean A-Dump

SAN FRANCISCO (UPI)—A mysterious giant sponge being lifted from an atomic waste graveyard off the San Francisco coast slipped away and apparently was eaten by sharks, a government oceanographer said Sunday.

Robert Dyer, an oceanographer for the Environmental Protection Agency, said he and a Canadian pilot riding the miniature research submarine Pisees trapped the sponge in a pile of 55-gallon drums of nuclear waste at a depth of about 3,000 feet near the Farallon Islands.

Thousands of barrels of radioactive waste were dumped near the islands between 1946 and 1965. Dyer said there is no reason to believe the sponge is a mutant.

Dyer said he was disappointed "as I watched the sponge drift down past the submarine's observation window" during the operation last week because scientists want to study whether the 4-foot-tall creatures grasp the barrels so tightly they crack them, causing atomic waste to escape.

Dyer said the barrels around the island more than 30 miles west of San Francisco have provided an ideal habitat for the seldom-seen sponges that grip smooth, hard surfaces.

"The claw on the submarine held the sponge securely as we came up 3,000 feet to the surface," Dyer said "but when we got to the surface we were in moderately heavy seas."

He said the rise and fall of waves began to tear the sponge's fabric, and as he tried to transfer it from the metal claw to an open basket lowered from another vessel, it slipped away and drifted back down into the water.

The purpose of the expedition was to check the security of the dumped radioactive waste.

graphic by Pauline P.

stituencies for green city programs. But his earlier principles have already provided the crucial argument against most people's selfish interests and for perpetual austerity:

"Given the climate and soils of an environment, the resident plants, and animals can extract only so much water, minerals, and energy in creating their bodies: the collective 'biomass.' Another limit to carrying capacity is the rate at which the total population can reprocess that biological material into usable biological resources through decomposition and soil building."

At first, this sounds like a pretty irrefutable scientific statement. But "carrying capacity" is full of assumptions about human needs and capabilities, including prospects for more scientific and technological breakthroughs. Used this way it's a moralistic argument, and one typical of a large part of the green movement: we've had it too good; we've been living on borrowed time; we must give up a lot of what we have.

Green moralism is actually a potent force among the grassroots of the movement, where "green-ism" takes on the qualities of a religion. A good example, not particularly extreme in the subculture, is San Francisco's Planet Drum Foundation founder, Peter Berg. Berg's article "Growing A Life-Place Politics" in *Raise the Stakes* #11 lays out his views on the bioregional social movement. His vision is strikingly similar to the anarcho-syndicalist system of bottom-up workers' assemblies, but he replaces "workers" with "bioregionalists," a new political subject organized more on the basis of *where one lives* rather than *what one does*. Berg's argument, broadly stated, is that political power can devolve to new "watershed councils," and up through a "naturally-scaled" system of larger coordinating councils, to encompass all of North America and perhaps even the globe! The key to this transformation is a "paradigm shift" in people's views toward natural processes, and a concomitant adoption of a new purpose to life: sustainability.

Although sustainability is a helpful criterion, it is *not* a goal. As a means of defining whether our activities are *worthwhile*, it could challenge The Economy. Bioregionalists are on to something important with the concept of planning cities within the natural systems of the locale, but such a public works program is hardly worthy of being the *primary purpose* of human existence. Such a purpose sounds suspiciously like the monk's commitment to live life to serve God, in this case God being the local bioregion. . . Moreover, this very idea of "natural processes" is a socially constructed concept; to *reconstruct* natural processes now requires work, which in turn requires a specific human design for the natural process.

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LOYFREDDY



JR Swanson, whose wild graphic art has appeared regularly inside and on the covers (#16 & #20) of *Processed World*, has produced this surreal tale of bike messenger life in San Francisco, with a cast of thousands (of pigeons!). Originally shot in 16mm and edited on scavenged equipment, *LOYFREDDY* is a testament to suppressed creativity and hidden desires.

18 MINUTES — VHS — \$16.95

STRIPPED BARE: A Look at Erotic Dancers

Longtime *Processed World* readers will remember the themes plumbd in the Special Sex Issues (#7 & #18). *PW* co-founder Caitlin Manning breaks into video with this hour-long documentary, exploring the world of erotic entertainment. *"The image emerging from the film is dialectical in the truest sense. . . these testimonials challenge pre-conceived notions of female workers as victims."*—*S.F. Sentinel*



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Bioregionalism traps itself in a narrow subculture by defining sustainability as the *goal* of life. Placing its hope in a mass "paradigm shift" (this could be read uncharitably as a "religious conversion") to transform people's activities, the movement restricts its participants to those who not only intellectually perceive the merits of the bioregional arguments, but who also proselytize for them with a passionate fervor. A casual glance at the literature of bioregionalism and deep ecology reveals a profoundly spiritual bent centered around Gaia the Mother, and various goddess ideologies.

The merging of political movements with religious or spiritual conviction is common at this point in history. Green politics is no exception. Rather than depend solely on Christian or Islamic myths and icons, however, green spiritualism prefers pagan, animistic forms of mysticism. Hence, Planet Drum's symbol is Same Shaman, an incarnation from Nordic mythology, while eco-activists in myriad affinity groups practice rituals around solstices, adopt the trappings of

Native American rituals, argue from "biocentric" philosophical premises that every living thing deserves to be treated with reverence, and so on. These are at best harmless pastimes, but in positions of social power might take on intolerant qualities, leading to a new social hierarchy with Ecology perched at the top instead of the Dollar (*Ecoeracy*). (Imagine being labeled non- or anti-Green spiritualist in a green-dominant society — not being Mormon in Utah comes to mind!)

FOR FREEDOM, NOT AUSTERITY

The idea of alternate living scenarios is very appealing. Certainly, we need to imagine how else to live, how to better resolve the classic dichotomy between city and country. But why circumscribe such visions with less-is-more ideology? If life were really transformed along eco-city lines, which could only be accomplished by a movement of *workers* bent on transforming their work, I think we would live a *much wealthier* life than we do now. Eco-activists shouldn't be in such a rush to argue for the lower living standards

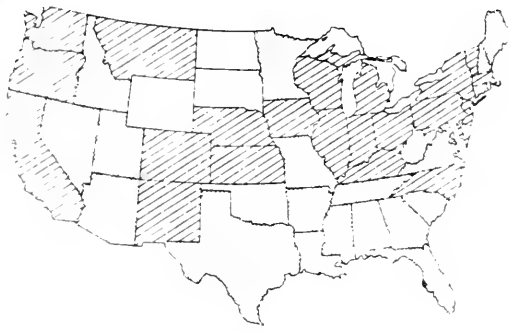
that they all seem sure (and a little glad) will accompany their visions. Why not debate the *nature of wealth* and how to organize its acquisition in a society freed from the distorting imperatives of The Economy?

One of the first steps toward a wealthy life would be the abolition of a great deal of the work done in this society. Eliminating banking, insurance, and similar "services" would free hundreds of thousands of human hours to contribute to a richer life texture, both physically and socially. Taking resources away from the military and insane industrial projects like automobiles would make them available for people's actual needs and desires. Everyone would then be more likely to have all the *things* they want. The new constraints would be based on what we can coax safely from the environment, how much work is needed, and whether anyone is willing to do that work. Instead of a consumer culture, imagine an enriching culture where the obsession with material goods diminishes in direct proportion to the lack of scarcity—where people are more concerned with *living* than with merely *surviving*. The constraints imposed by concerns for "growth," "economic health," "business survival," or even "job creation," all militate against radical breaks with polluting forms of production. Those who are passionately concerned with the health of the planet must reject the underlying logic of The Economy as much as they reject its products. A sustainable, enjoyable, healthy environment requires *free* human beings no less than non-polluting ones.

— by Lucius Cabins

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDED READING
RAISE THE STAKES (a bi-annual magazine full of information, debate, analysis on bioregionalism and green city programs.) From Planet Drum Foundation, P.O. Box 31251, San Francisco, CA 94131
SYNTHESIS (a newsletter and journal for social ecology, deep ecology, and bioregionalism) P.O. Box 1858, San Pedro, CA 90733
GREEN PERSPECTIVES (the newsletter of Vermont Greens and social ecologists like Murray Bookchin.) P.O. Box 111, Burlington VT 05402 \$1

THE GREEN ALTERNATIVE by Brian Tokar, R&E Miles, POB 1916, San Pedro, CA 90733
ECOLOGICAL IMPERIALISM The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900 by Alfred W. Crosby, Cambridge University Press (New York: 1986)
TO GOVERN EVOLUTION by Walter Truett Anderson, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich (San Diego: 1987)
THE GENE BUSINESS by Edward Yoxen, Harper & Row (New York: 1983)
THE GREEN MACHINES by Nigel Calder G.P. Putnam's & Sons (New York: 1986)
ECOCITY BERKELEY by Richard Register North Atlantic Books (Berkeley: 1987)



- States where fondling a groundhog is punishable by death
- States where peeing on a urine tester's shoes is a felony
- States where children are required by law to be born fully clothed.

It's later than you think.

Stolen from issue #4 of **SMURFS IN HELL**, a genuinely strange mag. wanted for wholesale violations of zerox machines' natural state. They are at 2210 North 9th St., Boise, Idaho, 83702. Single copy \$3, 2 = \$5, 3 = \$7, 4+ = \$2 each. ★★★★★

Diversions Peril Mono Lake, Study Finds
Rancho Seco valve spills radioactive water

tion Urged to Save Atmosphere

Reactor Material Has Vanished

Bhopal Cases

Foam Containers

Feeling the Heat

6 billionth human due in 10 years

Radioactive waste may be in Mono Lake

Killer pesticides in toxic border war

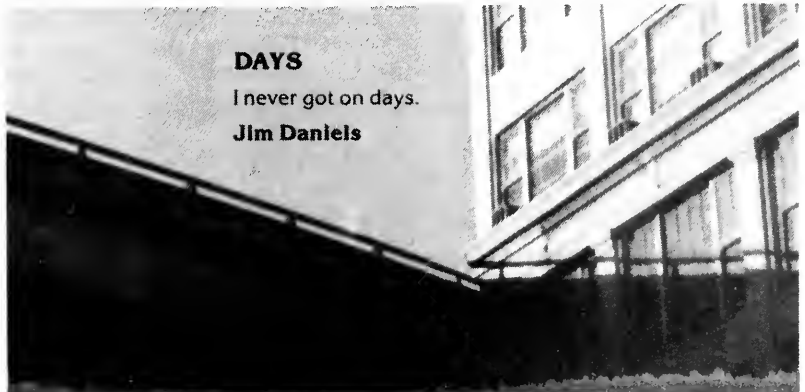
Canada, U.S. face off

How emissions contribute to brew called acid rain

Yosemite in Peril

Disastrous fire season feared
Private Research Report
Oil Spill
World Population Rising Faster Than Predicted
Acid Rain Could Mean End To Maple Syrup Industry
Berkeley Wants Ban
Unreported worldwide nuclear accidents
Marshland
Biowarefare research in university laboratories
Yosemite in Peril
Representatives from Chevron Oil and Stroh's Brewery were also on Shuttle to carry lethal plutonium
Swedish Seals Dying
How emissions contribute to brew called acid rain

graphic by Zoe



BAD ECOTUDE EVERYWHERE

It couldn't be just a nightmare. The memory is too clear. I used to work at that steel mill six days a week, and I can still see the view I had of it driving to work on the Buffalo Skyway. The mill stretched before me for five miles along Lake Erie. From the fuming block-long coke ovens at one end to the clanging manufacturing shops at the other, all life had been scraped from the land and replaced by a network of furnaces, processing shops, railroads, and, of course, fences, lots of high fences. The plant seemed a mechanical nether world in which blackened behemoths chugged on within a fetid haze.

A bleak and fearsome sight, yes, but not entirely ugly. The mill, and the three million tons of steel it cranked out per year, represented an awe-inspiring industrial might. Standing in contrast to the lake's limitless gray monotony by day or piercing the night sky with its reddish glow, the steel mill had a certain redeeming beauty for me as an expression of human power.

With 18,000 people working there, living human power certainly was at the heart of this industrial colossus. Human labor was required to supervise the activities of the mechanical beings down to the last detail—and supervising the humans down to the least detail were other humans in a hierarchical chain of command.

The higher-ups spelled out their underlings' assignments in a job description book that contained the work responsibilities of some 40,000 positions throughout the steel industry. All authority was moved up the supervisory line, and production personnel had only to worry about the particular machinery they operated. In this manner, workers were incorporated into the very industrial processes that they were supposed to control. They were confined to serving as the machines' ultimate regulatory mechanisms. Management, too, took on a rote mechanical quality. Supervisors were isolated in little circles of competence and insulated from the mill's reality by a layer of paperwork. Each strived mainly to maintain the good appearances that protected his privileged situation.

Every day, I witnessed the full extent of the environmental catastrophe that evolved in this deadening atmosphere. It began right on the shop floor with the frustration and stress that results from living out restricted lives in filthy, dangerous surroundings. The first day I worked at the mill, one of my shopmates was

on the job for sixteen hours straight. He went home and died of a heart attack, leaving two young daughters. My long-time partner as a mechanic had been an aspiring artist in his youth. Now, alcoholism made his hands shake so much that he couldn't draw at all. Drugs and alcohol were a common way to make life easier at the mill ("If you don't smoke, you croak!"), but they also increased the danger as we tried to maneuver multi-ton pieces of steel through grease-caked machines two stories high. The absence of responsibility for the work environment sometimes yielded vicious ironies. One department I worked in, a worn-out automated marvel, was constantly filled with a suffocating mixture of red paint spray and welding fumes. The government had forced the company to stop venting the stuff outside, where it polluted the air! An old Italian mechanic fixing the machines there had a hole in his throat where doctors had removed his cancerous larynx. He couldn't speak, although he was pretty expressive with his hands. He insisted on working anyway, so the company took him back rather than put him on permanent disability.

If the unseen higher management was indifferent to the internal environment of its mill, the external environment counted for less than zero in its estimation. What didn't represent usable natural resources was just space for dumping waste products. The air in the surrounding community was so dirty, for example, that laundry hung out on a line would be soiled again by the time it was dry. The mill's sewers poured untold quantities of organic solvent and grime into a lake that was already near death from other pollutants. Who cared that that body was also the area's water supply?

Farther afield, I once visited northern Minnesota's Mesabi Iron Range, where the mill's ore came from. There, around the open pit mines that pock-marked the region, I found the same blasted landscape as at the mill. Here too, no plants grew, and nothing moved except enormous machines.

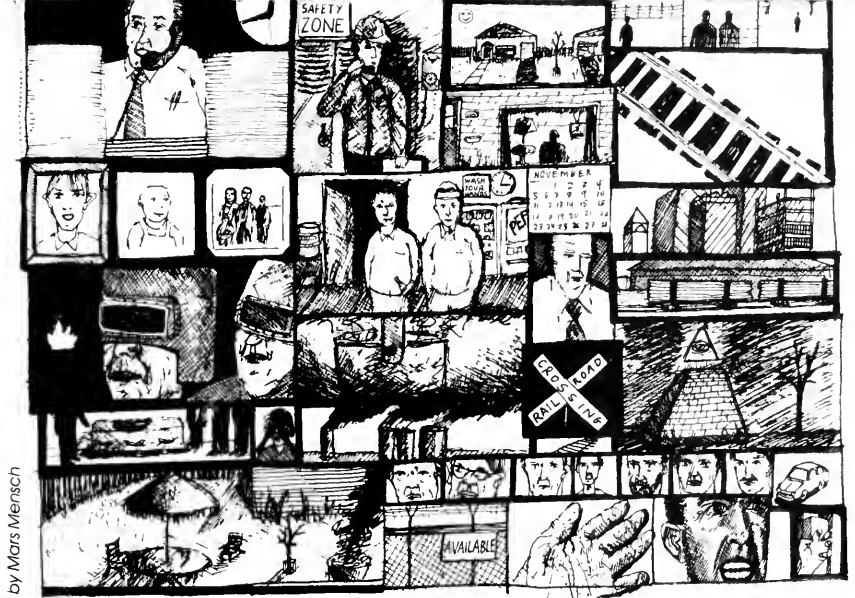
More generally, the mill was tied to environmental devastation throughout the world by the consumerist values encouraged in its workforce. Materialism was the glue that held the whole organization together. It kept us toiling away for our paychecks, with individual promotion, not collective revolt, our supposed avenue to freedom. The resulting urban sprawl and conspicuous

Even environmental activists become trapped into manipulating nature for their bosses' greater glory.

consumption, the cars and shopping malls and golf courses, adversely affected more than just the district around the steel mill. They embodied the destruction wrought by thousands of other industries far beyond the mill employees' usual haunts.

That was all so many years ago. Where once 18,000 struggled to keep the mill going, only 200 labor now. The mill may have been stilled, but my mind continues to work on the memories left behind. I remain struck by how the mill's alienating hierarchy, and the materialistic culture that supported it, undermined both human and natural ecologies. In a world composed of interdependent social and biological webs, distortions in one area contort the entire scheme.

Now I work under more civilized conditions with an environmentalist organization, whose magazine I help edit. Here, my steel mill experience is central to my attempt to heal rather than plunder. Yet when it came time to issue official biographies for fundraising purposes, I noticed that my history as a steel worker was omitted. It was considered irrelevant, or even besmirching. How could it be viewed otherwise? Look at the way we work: We are divided into individual offices, each concentrating on its own distinct issue—ozone, rainforests, etc. Group directors head up each office, and on top of them is the general director, with a chairman and board of directors above him. Plus, there is a separate administrative staff to cover joint clerical



by Mars Mensch

tasks. Everyone has a pigeonhole; no one gets a crack at the integrative analysis needed to discover how humanity and nature can live together in peace.

Perhaps my magazine could contribute the needed synthesis. Unfortunately it, too, is imprisoned by the dynamics of its stratified sponsor. The chief editor is a man who got his job through cronyism; he used his long-time friendship with the general director to convince the organization that it had to put out a prestigious-looking magazine. This fellow actually is unsuited to be a chief editor, never having worked as one before. He has no idea how to coordinate the people working on the project and is mainly concerned with

using the magazine as a means of promoting his own reputation as an intellectual. His light, monotonous writing keeps popping up all over the publication as a result. Such pretense also extends to our overall choice of articles. We tend to concentrate on impressive-looking stories by or about major personalities that usually turn out to be mundane hand-me-downs. Other common items include specious reports presented as scoops.

The male conceit at play here is symptomatic of the sexist mentality central to office proceedings. I hadn't been working for more than twenty minutes on my first day when one of the more compliant women grumbled to me, "This place is really male dominated. The guys at the top, they decide everything." It is worse than she knew. Behind the female staff's backs, the male management consistently favors those women who embody its version of femininity—attractive, accomplished, and agreeable. Typically, when we were running a speech by an award-winning female filmmaker in the magazine, the chief editor couldn't mention her name, it seemed, without exclaiming, "What a beauty!... She's a good friend of mine, too."

Of course, with ecofeminism a widely discussed topic these days, it has become practically a cliché to connect male domination with human domination of nature and the ensuing environmental destruction. Accepting this idea is one thing, applying it quite another. In a situation in which everybody is compartmentalized, the authorities are free to adapt feminist principles to their own uses. One male philosopher with whom I have dealt is renowned for expounding on the necessity of smashing patriarchy in order to live in harmony with nature—but I notice



by J.F. Barrelier

to Deliber

that he uses his wife as his secretary. His close confederate where I work is notorious for the way he manipulates his all-female staff to keep them underpaid while he gets the credit for their work.

The conception of the environment engendered by this traditional hierarchical structure is an elitist, romanticized one that sets a natural, wild ecology apart from sordid human society. Utopian, pristine nature is something to be protected by the enlightened few against the despoiling masses. The concept that ecological renaissance is attendant on human liberation is not on the agenda. The steel mill? Male-female relations? Forget it. These issues are outside the managerial paradigm.

In its extreme, elitist environmentalism regards humans as interlopers who should go back to stone-age lifestyles so as not to interfere with the natural world, as if it were ever possible for humans to have no influence. More frequently, an interspecies egalitarianism is advocated while an *intraspecies* one gives way to a desperate and coercive, if not racist, outlook on population control. When researching the AIDS epidemic in Africa, I was not at all surprised to hear jokes about "AIDS as population control" despite the fact that Africa is a diverse, but mostly sparsely populated land that is richly endowed with natural resources.

Even more humanitarian environmental positions, which actually are well represented where I work, frequently betray antidemocratic managerial attitudes. Contending that the "resources necessary for generalizing Western industrial consumption levels are simply unavailable," one of my coworkers argues for basing Third World economies on a neo-Maoist self-sufficient mix of small-scale farming and low-tech industry. Whatever this model's desirability, its impetus cannot come from technocrats who themselves live at Western consumption levels. The point is to extirpate materialist value systems, not establish a new ruling class.

* * * * *

These elitist versions of environmentalism are unlikely to inspire a mass movement, but they do provide environmental officialdom with a justification for its existence since a group of heroic leaders is deemed necessary to prevent catastrophe. They also provide office staff with a cause to devote itself to so that its members work on the cheap, in substandard working conditions.

For \$12,000 per year (or less for those designated as part-time or "outside contractors") and no benefits, we work cheek by jowl in dark, stuffy rooms for many more than 40 hours a week. Considering

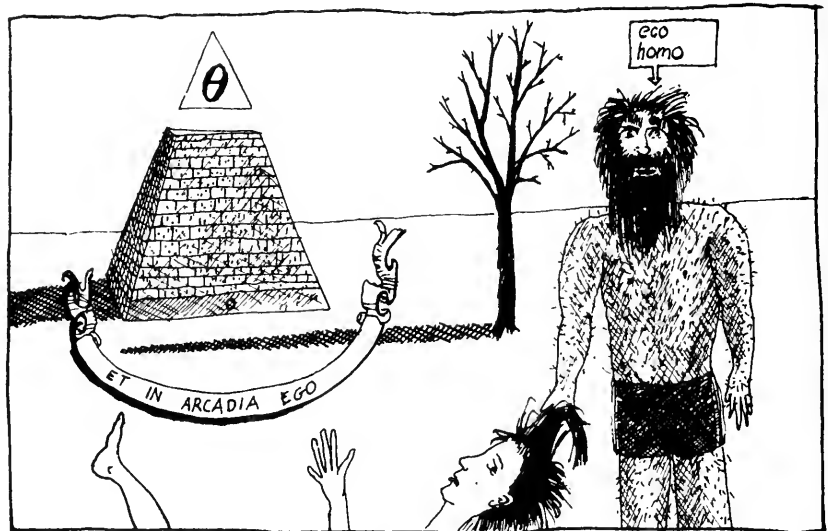
that we're supposed to be nature lovers, it's strange that there's nary a plant to be found. Indeed, our vacations are so meager that we have little contact with nature at all unless we manage to get funding for work-related trips.

With all the crowding and noise, it is difficult to get anything done. Even finding a place to have private conversation is a chore. Recently, I made a major *faux pas* when I was overheard talking to myself, complaining about what someone else had done.

One wouldn't think that occupational hazards would be a problem, but they do occur. To cite one case, our ratty desktop copier, which was located in the narrow main hallway, suddenly started leaking noxious fumes every time it was in operation. I refused to use it, and after a few weeks, another staffer learned from an occupational safety group that

constitutes a major staff nuisance. Computers are the one thing we have in abundance because their flashy aura makes them easily fundable. Describing these pc's as "cutting edge" is accurate in more ways than one. After working on them for hours at a stretch, I suffer from eye strain, headaches, and back pain. If I type a lot on the keyboard, my wrists feel like they are about to break off.

Then there is the information glut I have to put up with. It comes by mail and modem from other environmentalists' word processors. The computers' enormous data shuffling capabilities have tended to proletarianize us, making our jobs more like those of file clerks than political activists. Their usefulness in mass mail campaigns has reduced our time for critical thinking still further by channeling our creativity into public relations. One of my Washington acquaint-



by Mars Mensch

the fumes were xylene, a potent carcinogen. (Ah yes, xylene. I remember xylene from the steel mill, where we kept a bin of it in our combined lunch and tool room to clean machine parts—and our hands.)

Still nothing was done for months. The director, whose personal life was in an uproar, felt overwhelmed by all the decisions he had to make daily. He couldn't choose between getting the old copier overhauled or buying a new super-duper \$8000 model. Finally, he chose the deluxe route. The place still stinks, though. With the fancy copier now doing the bulk jobs that we formerly sent out, and a new laserwriter going full blast next to it, the hallway continues to get its share of fumes. God help us when the machines get old!

The new laserwriter is part of an elaborate stock of computer equipment that

stances rages, "We've become direct mail advertising agencies. I used to send out twenty million pieces of mail a year, but what did it have to do with fighting for the environment?"

Computers aside, unquestioning subservience to the money-raising imperative subverts the whole environmentalist project. To my mind, the people in the office working on the environmental effects of Third World military buildup constitute the most innovative group we have. I was once shocked, therefore, to hear them belittled by a member of the more marketable, richer dolphins and whales group as "a drag on the organization... We're the important ones who keep things afloat by raising all the money..."

Maybe I shouldn't have been so shocked. After all, the officers of the organization attained their positions in the

hierarchy through their reputations as successful fundraisers. This oh-so-typical link between money and power finds its validation in the materialist ethos expressed in the above put-down. And because of that ethos I'm editing a magazine for readers who were largely attracted on a sentimental "save the whales" basis. I do not have the opportunity to garner the radical ecologist readership for whom I would prefer to publish because such an effort would restrict our overall audience.

The man who wrote several times castigating us for killing trees to put out our biased rag of a magazine may have been a crank, but he did have a point. He saw the relationship between workplace and nature in a way our organizational form does not allow, even though such recognition is the starting point for a broad ecological consciousness that connects the way we work with environmental disruption.

* * * * *

Of course, there are many people in the organization who sense the connection anyway. The small gang of upstarts I was part of did for a while attack the heart of the matter. Our temporary rebellion demanded workers' control in the form of a staff-elected board of directors. The point was precisely that a conventional management structure is incompatible with environmentalism, but we never could formulate this idea in a clear manner. Since the required conceptual tools were beyond our grasp, we substituted general democratic principles for a more specific critique. The lack of official personnel policies became a major issue, and staff committees to draw them up were formed.

To call our campaign a "revolt" is really an exaggeration. People who are committed to their work are not militant. They do not strike or engage in sabotage. The liberal atmosphere in which we operate does provide plenty of opportunity to talk, though. So that's what we did—we went to meeting after meeting to air our proposals.

The response we received from the powers-that-be had nothing liberal about it. They handed out the same capitalist, Reaganite arguments that you could get at any company. First there was the efficiency argument. Workers' democracy leads to endless committee meetings in which nothing ever gets decided, it was claimed. We need the skilled, assertive leadership that hierarchical management provides so that we can act vigorously in these times of environmental crisis. (*Sure, buddy. When you gonna get the copier fixed, huh?*)

Then there were the usual financial

arguments. Suddenly, the organization was running out of money and was just too poor to make any improvements now. (Actually, close examination of the figures revealed that we were in a temporary cash flow crisis, which was more a reflection of the administrators' abilities than of any long-term poverty.) It was further alleged that democratic management specifically stood in the way of fundraising because donors would only give money to groups watched over by independent boards of directors. *You can't beat the system.*

Finally, there were the personal attacks. After a snide exchange with a board member, one of my colleagues suddenly announced to me, "I'm going to have to pull back. I'm getting labeled as a troublemaker." I was regarded as an immature whiner, but I knew that would happen from the steel mill. Bosses blandly give out their commands as part of the natural order of things. Objecting subordinates have to engage in aggressive, "nasty" behavior to have an impact.

Sometimes one incident becomes emblematic of a whole affair. For me, that moment came at the end of an especially acrimonious meeting, when the general director growled at one of the clerical people, "I know what's wrong with you. You don't really want to answer the phones, and you're bored by doing the books. The problem is you want to be an environmental activist. The next time, we'll get somebody who isn't as educated and just wants to do their job and go home." *Talk about nasty!* (But anyway, what's going to happen when there's an emergency, and the alienated employee is expected to work overtime in a frenzy—for the "cause.")

None of the dissidents were fired, but they did get worn out. Several left for greener pastures and were replaced by

more accommodating individuals. The ripple of dissent gradually petered out.

We did manage to win one staff representative on the board of directors, which changes nothing. We also won some improvements in working conditions and benefits. Eventually, management promises to provide health insurance and regularize the status of the underpaid "outside contractors." These economic measures also are accomplishable without altering the current power structure.

That power structure is apparently a stable one. Its particular combination of hierarchy, self-serving ideology, and tactical resources for overcoming dissent mean that change is unlikely to come from within, at least for the foreseeable future.

* * * * *

Working under deleterious conditions, manipulating people's perception of nature to enhance the prestige of the leadership above me, and with only limited economic change possible, am I really that far from the steel mill? The difference is that formerly I worked with the actual physical resources nature provides whereas now I work with the ideas that it suggests. Doing the latter is more benign in the immediate sense. I do contribute to enhancing the widespread environmental awareness existing in this country.

My long-term contribution is still deadly, however. If the discussion needed to constructively integrate human society with the natural world is precluded by the hierarchy I prop up, then we environmentalists are condemned to fight an endless series of defensive battles. As usual, we are losing so much because of the vanity of a few.

by Green Fuchsia



PRIMITIVE

THOUGHT

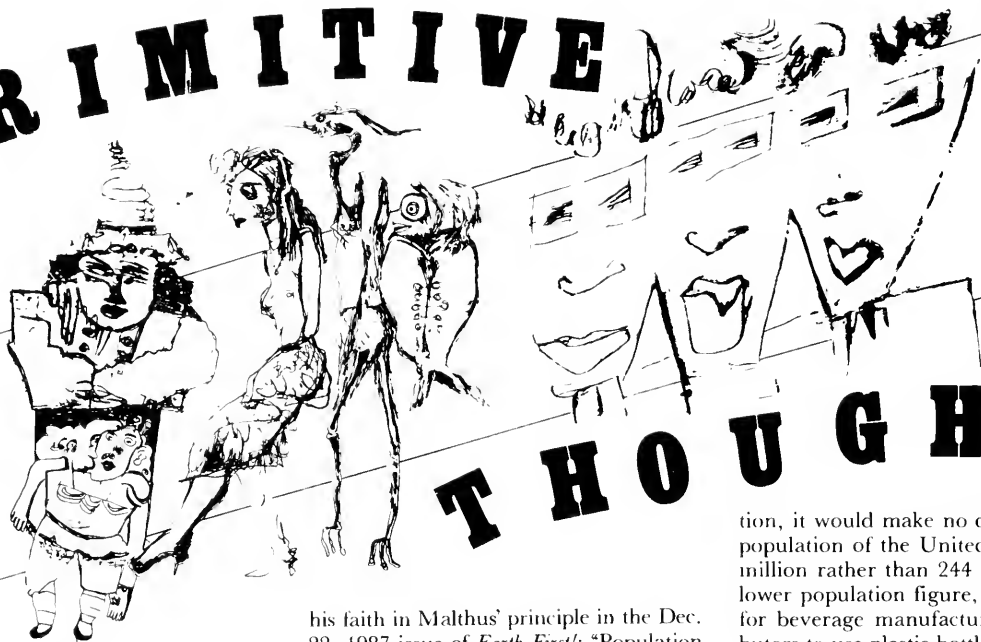


Illustration by Mari Calamari

One of the hottest topics in "progressive" circles these days is the Earth First! controversy. Prominent members of Earth First!, such as Dave Foreman, the organization's founder and the editor of its newspaper, have recently undertaken polemics in favor of famine and AIDS.

In the Australian magazine *Simply Living*, Foreman stated that, "the best thing would be to just let the people there [Ethiopia] starve..." He has made similar statements to the local media in Tucson, where *Earth First!* (the organ of Earth First!) is published.

In a similar vein, "Miss Ann Thropy," a regular contributor to *Earth First!*, has argued that AIDS is a "good" thing, because it will reduce population. In the May 1, 1987 issue of that paper, "Throp" stated: "...if the AIDS epidemic didn't exist, radical environmentalists would have to invent one [an epidemic]." In the Dec. 22, 1987 issue of *Earth First!*, she adds that "...the AIDS epidemic, rather than being a scourge, is a welcome development in the inevitable reduction of human population."

The connecting thread between the arguments in favor of AIDS and starvation is a crude Malthusianism. (The 19th-century British parson Thomas Malthus argued in his *Essay on the Principle of Population*, that unlimited population growth was the primary danger to humanity; that population increased geometrically while food supply increased arithmetically.) A latter day disciple of the good parson, Daniel Conner, a "deep ecologist," self-aggrandizingly expressed

his faith in Malthus' principle in the Dec. 22, 1987 issue of *Earth First!*: "Population pressure, they [thoughtful environmentalists] claim, lies at the root of every environmental problem we face."

Contrary to what Conner would have us believe, there is nothing "thoughtful" in the belief that population "lies at the root of every environmental problem." That idea is on a par with the simplistic belief that "technology" is the sole cause of environmental destruction. It ignores the key element in environmental destruction: Making a profit. For example, coal-burning power plants are a primary cause of acid rain, yet utilities have invariably put up resistance to installing scrubbers, which would greatly reduce the amount of pollutants emitted by their plants. The reason? Installing scrubbers would reduce their profits. Another example: Plastic beverage containers become non-recyclable trash, are a visual blight, take hundreds, if not thousands of years to break down, and a particularly toxic type of plastic, polyvinyl chloride (PVC), is often used in their manufacture. (PVCs leach into beverages.) Why are they used? The answer is what you'd expect: It's cheaper and involves less hassle for beverage manufacturers and distributors to use plastic bottles rather than recyclable glass. Still another example is the toxic waste problem. One reads almost daily reports of companies dumping dangerous wastes into streams and rivers rather than going to the expense of treating and properly disposing of them.

This tendency of the capitalist, profit-based system toward environmental destruction exists *regardless of the size of the population*. In terms of the profit-motive tendency toward environmental destruc-

tion, it would make no difference if the population of the United States was 24 million rather than 244 million. At the lower population figure, the motivation for beverage manufacturers and distributors to use plastic bottles, for example, would be the same as it is now. A large population magnifies the damage rooted in the profit motive, but population size itself is *not "at the root of every environmental problem we face."*

The conclusions the misanthropic "deep ecologists" draw from their faulty premises are breathtaking. They want us to return to our "natural role" as hunter-gatherers, because according to their faulty reasoning, "Earth simply cannot support five billion large mammals of the species 'Homo sapiens.'" This argument has been demolished elsewhere; the best work on the subject is Frances Moore Lappe's and Joseph Collins' *Food First*. For our purposes, suffice it to say that there is actually a huge surplus of food at present. According to Lappe, approximately 3600 calories of grain alone is produced on a daily per capita basis.² That doesn't even take into account fruits, vegetables and grass-fed meat. This is enough food that, if the grain alone were equally distributed and all—or even two-thirds—of it consumed, most of us would be as fat as pigs. It should also be emphasized that production of this amount of food does not "necessarily" involve environmental degradation: Non-environmentally harmful, organic methods of agriculture can produce at least as much food as destructive, chemically-based methods in the short run; and in the long run, increase the "value" of land and preserve high levels of production.

In some of the European countries, notably Germany, population "decline" through lowering of the birth rate has already begun. In his article "Fertility in Transition," in the Spring 1986 issue of

Focus (journal of the American Geographical Society), James L. Newman traces the causes of the decline in fertility in the European countries. He concludes that there were three reasons for a decline in the birth rate. One was industrialization: "Out of it came the public health discoveries that reduced mortality, followed by a new lifestyle which no longer necessitated large families. . . . Whereas on farms and in cottage industries children contributed their labor to the family enterprise, in the city they became consumers. Only a few offspring could be afforded if the family was to maintain or . . . improve its standard of living." The second reason for the decline in fertility was birth control. It "was the answer to these new social and economic realities."³

The third element in lowering the birth rate is the relative emancipation of women. In the developed countries, birth rates tend to be high only among economically deprived groups with little hope and relatively little access to birth control devices and information, and among patriarchal religious groups whose members believe that it is a woman's "duty" to have a large number of children. (A case in point is the Mormon Church; among active Mormons, nuclear families with "at least" four children are the norm.)

If there were a more equal distribution of wealth and income, and if misogynistic, patriarchal religions declined, the birth rate in the developed countries would almost certainly be lower than it already is; and if there were relatively rapid development in the "underdeveloped" countries,⁴ accompanied by redistribution of wealth and abandonment of misogynist religions and attitudes, fertility there would certainly decrease, probably quite rapidly.

The primitivists at least have the honesty to accept some of the conclusions of their Malthusian arguments. They acknowledge that reversion to our "natural role" of hunter-gatherers will require a massive depopulation of the Earth. For Miss Ann Thropy, "Ecotopia would be a planet with about 50 million people who are hunting and gathering for subsistence."⁵ Other primitivists have postulated a population of only five to ten million as the maximum, and in *Atlas of World Population History*, Colin McEvedy and Richard Jones state that the prehistoric population of hunter-gatherers was probably in the neighborhood of four million.

Other "neo-primitivists" (it sounds classier with the prefix) have advocated an agrarian society using no technology beyond that of simple hand tools. Reaching a "no-tech" agricultural society would involve almost as many deaths as reaching a hunter-gatherer society. The last period in which a large majority of the

population lived a pastoral existence, using for the most part nothing beyond hand tools, was the Middle Ages, when the world population was about 300 million. Let's assume a technological level of the year 1500 (perhaps acceptable to no- or low-tech advocates), and that due to improved agricultural techniques, enough food could be grown and distributed to support five times the population that lived then. That would leave us with a population of 2 billion people (which would require a modest 60 percent reduction in population to achieve). Whether even this population figure could be maintained at that level of technology is highly questionable.

Historically, the ability to grow food has *not* been the limiting factor in population growth. The limiting factors have been *disease* and the related problem of infant mortality. Returning to the pre-industrial technological level of 500 years ago would not only eliminate the "means" of combatting disease but also (relatively) safe, effective means of birth control. The birth rate would soar, and many women would die at an early age, worn out from childbearing. But not to worry — population balance would be maintained the way it was in the good old days: Most of the children would die from disease before adulthood; and if "enough" of them didn't die, population would increase to the point where famine would stabilize the population.

Still another question never addressed by neo-primitive romantics is whether a majority of the population (let alone the entire population) would ever *want* to renounce the many benefits of technological civilization. I for one would not, whether we speak of music, food, medicine, or books. I doubt that my feelings are atypical. Returning to a low-tech or no-tech society would necessarily involve the use of coercion against large numbers of people, probably against a large majority of the population.

These are the implications which the primitivists and "neo-primitivists" have dodged until now, usually by insisting upon "natural" checks on population growth, such as the AIDS epidemic and famine, to achieve their desired hunter-gatherer society. They haven't dared advocate what would really be required to achieve their vision: Wholesale coercion and mass murder.

If any good is to come from this controversy it will be that it has provoked many people to take a closer look at the questions of technology and population growth, and their relation to the prevailing politico-economic systems. One hopes that environmentalists will go beyond the crude theories and intellectual posturing of "deep ecologists" and those who

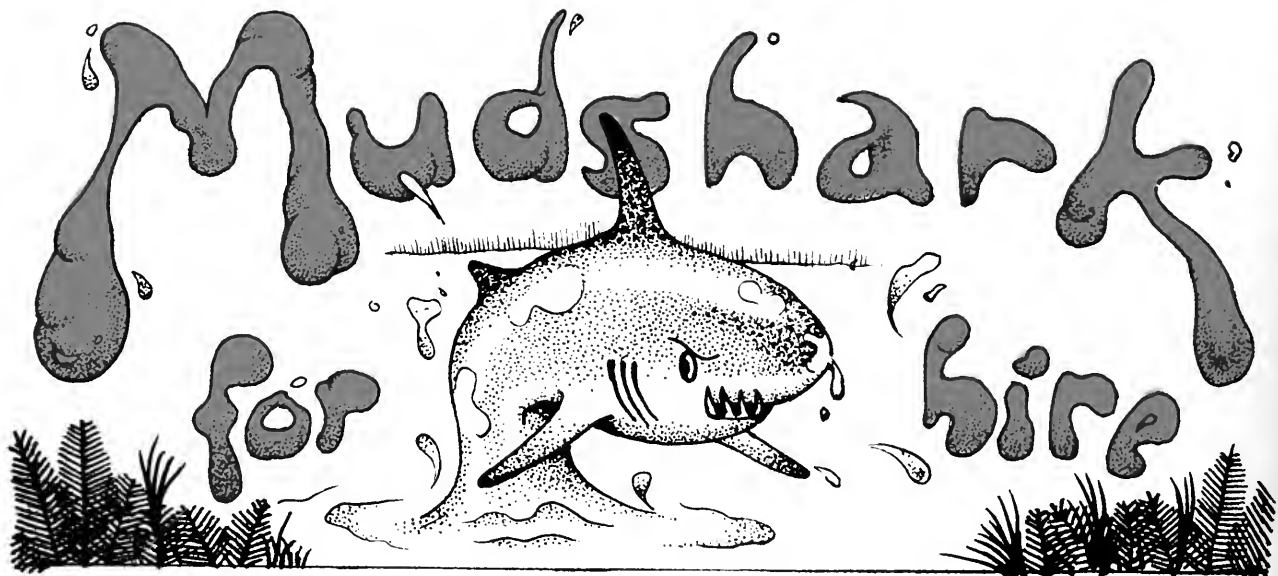
blindly hate "technology" — the questions of population and technology require a more sophisticated approach than primitivism.

The only way in which population growth can be checked in a humane manner is through social justice — through abolition of (private and state) capitalism with its inherent tendencies toward environmental degradation, through fairer distribution of resources, through the emancipation of women and the abandonment of patriarchal religions, and through the utilization of appropriate technologies to provide cheap, easy access to birth control and to provide a comfortable level of material wealth for everyone.^{6,7}

by Chaz Bufe

Notes

1. How presumptuous! How does Throp know what our "natural role" is? She treats the exercise of human intelligence, our power to shape our environment, which is a direct result of evolution, as if it were somehow "un"natural, as if using the attributes we've received from nature is somehow "un"natural.
2. "The Politics of Food," TV documentary.
3. Newman, of course, is not implying that "all" aspects of European industrialization were beneficial. He's merely noting that a rising standard of living was instrumental in lowering the birth rate.
4. The question of how development strategies in the Third World can and should differ from the models provided by the already developed capitalist and "communist" states is complex. But in general, one can say that adoption of the following measures would help developing societies to avoid the hideous environmental problems plaguing the industrialized nations: a) Abolition of the profit motive, with its inherent tendency toward environmental destruction; b) Abolition of coercive authority, with its tendency toward bureaucratization and industrial monument building; c) Self-management of agriculture and industry by those working in them. Workers generally live near to their workplaces, are likely to be aware of work-related environmental problems, and are very likely to do something to remedy them when they are aware of problems — workers are smart enough not to foul their own nests.
5. "Miss Ann Thropy," *Earth First!* Dec. 22, 1987.
6. Of course I am not implying that "all" technologies are desirable — far from it. "Technology" is not a monolith. It is composed of a great number of separate technologies, all with different environmental and social effects. Some are beneficial, such as medical and sewage disposal technologies; some are neutral (they lend themselves to both socially useful and socially damaging uses), an example being radio communications technology, which can be used to dispatch ambulances or for political surveillance; and some technologies, such as nuclear technology, are inherently destructive. Even these classifications are gross simplifications, though, as even the most useful technology will have some negative effects; and even the worst technology might have some beneficial aspects. Blind rejection of "technology" is idiotic.
7. For a closer look at the "deep ecology" ideology underlying the authoritarian, inhumane proposals advanced by Foreman, Abbey, *et al*, I would highly recommend Murray Bookchin's article, "Social Ecology Versus 'Deep Ecology,'" in the Summer 1987 issue of *Green Perspectives*. (\$2 should cover it) from *Green Perspectives*, POB 111, Burlington, VT 05402.



I wallow on my knees in thick mud, *hoedag* in hand slogging up a near vertical hillside, napalmed bare. . . rain whistling sideways so hard it bores through my hermetic, vulcanized head-to-toe rainsuit. I look like an astronaut traversing across an eerie, silent moon crater rhythmically bending over to scrape the ground every 6-9 steps. . . I'm cruising over "gravy ground"—soil with no vegetation, no rocks, nothing but good clean dirt. I plunge the hoedag, much like swinging an axe to split wood, slitting the earth with its narrow, tapered blade. I reach into my 40 lb. hip bag, grab a 12-inch tall tree seedling and in one belly-over-torso-ripple-shoulder-arm-flip-of-the-wrist motion plant a baby tree. The flip of the wrist is the quintessential movement. It determines whether the roots settle straight down or form an **L** or **J** shape—sacrilege to the holy treeplanter. Like a human pack mule, I repeat this action hundreds of times, sometimes over a thousand times a day. It is the most arduous physically demanding work I've ever done.

That was 1978 when I was a migrant treeplanter; a job the Oregon State Employment Service lists as "the hardest physical work known to this office. . . one person in fifty succeeds the three week training period." Like thousands of other college grads that year, I was the product of a liberal education promising an exciting, 'good' job as reward for four years of costly training. So what the hell was I doing planting trees and eating mud for a living? Well I'll tell ya, being a rowdy forest worker in a self-managed collective of modern gypsies traveling the beautiful hinterlands of Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Alaska, and northern California made career pursuits or 'regular' employment look awfully dull.

In the late '70s a developed network of worker-owned reforestation businesses flourished in the Pacific Northwest. There were roughly 30 independent 'crews' each containing 10-40 members: The Natural Wonders, the Culls, PF Flyers, the Marmots, Full Moon Rising, the Thumbs, and of course, the Mudsharks, to name a few. Like our crew names we were a very unconventional

lot: refugees from New Jersey, recalcitrant hippies, radical workplace autonomists, and all manner of academic fallout. Here was a real existing alternative, self-organized and apart from "the system." I could work outdoors and outside of a hierarchy, help regenerate the dwindling forests, and be in association with hundreds of others who shared my values. Not only were we doing something good for the natural environment; we were hip enough to organize our work and lives as free, equal individuals. At the time it felt like we could change it all: live and work together communally, avoid the witless, humiliating relations of working *under* bosses *for* owners, *and* stop the abusive forestry practices plied by timber multinationals and the Forest Service.

It took me two years to fully plumb the downside of what on the surface appeared so wholesome and radical. Serious contradictions emerged: from the widespread use of toxic herbicides to kill vegetation "competing" with the young trees to a corporate domination of the Forest Service that made trees more important than workers. But that all comes later. . .

Talk to me. . . Please, Talk to me. . .

In the midst of brutal, stoop labor we developed a very empowering culture of resistance. Unlike the rest of the industry, we made quite hospitable camps in the forest. Besides the desired contact with nature, we could live "on the cheap," always a problem for migrant workers. We also avoided what was an idiotic, standard practice for regular treeplanters; an agonizing 1-2 hour commute each way on treacherous logging roads from the nearest town where they lodged. Our camps were a truly motley cornucopia of tents, trailers, teepees, and yurts in a clearing next to the woods. The yurt—a Mongolian invention easy to assemble, disassemble, and transport—was the mainstay of the camp.

The way we organized the work proces, however, was what really set us apart from the dominant practices of regular contractors. For starters, everyone was both

owner and worker. Instead of one macho foreman, we took turns as "crew leaders," sometimes daily, sometimes until a specific worksite was completed. We all freely debated the pros and cons of a particular work procedure, occasionally stopped work to make democratic crew decisions — which tended to drive Forest Service inspectors crazy.

One of the most challenging, sometimes beautiful, often times unwieldy aspects of treeplanting was visualizing and carrying out a maneuver to "cover a site." In a word, figuring out the most efficient planting movement for the 10-30 person crew over a given area or time. It is actually a lot more complicated than

start up without access to big money or having to mortgage your life away. Thus, they could be easily dropped if it became apparent they weren't worth continuing. Secondly, reforestation is inherently labor intensive and requires large numbers of relatively unskilled workers. For workplace organizing this seemed fertile ground. Then too, restorative work is intrinsically worthwhile even after this ridiculous capitalist system is superceded. Finally, the fact that as migrant workers we were compelled to collectively organize our lives beyond the workplace provided a structural basis for avoiding both the narrowness of unions and the absurd separation of work, leisure time, culture.

among themselves how to divide the income. The debate began something like this:

"I move that the Co-op establish a single, hourly pay scale for all members at a \$10/hr. base rate."

A few people gasp, those sitting in chairs squirm and murmur, others milling on the sides and in the back shuffle nervously, and about 50 people raise their hands to be placed on the speakers' list (I think, "Shit! Here goes another one of those endless discussion!") Debbie from the High Rollers crew is the first speaker:

"I'm a member of High Rollers and we already pay by the share (equalized wages)... I like the idea of a standard pay scale; it makes it fairer when your crew gets allocated a lousy contract... But High Rollers have been together longer than most crews. We have worked long and hard to get our production up and we want to reap the benefits. The same wage for everyone wouldn't be fair. So I'm against the motion."

Someone yells out from the back: "Of course the High Rollers are against the motion. The bidding committee always allocates them the sweetheart jobs!!!"

There is a general uproar. The rotating chair speaks through a microphone and speaker to overpower the shouting: "Quiet please! Quiet! Everyone will have a chance to speak. Now Dave, you know you can't just blur out. Get on the speakers' list and you'll get your turn. OK Let's See, Jason, you're next on the list."

Jason is a tall, quiet, bearded man, basically a hippie pacifist. He talks eloquently about the difference between a co-op as a business and as a new way to live. He concludes his three minute account with: "I'm in favor of the motion because in the long run all the contracts even out. We all get our share of winners and losers. More important though, in the long run our health as a co-op isn't based on individuals being able to make more money but on our real community with each other."

Unlike a legal contract the forest is not linear; it is very wiggly.

you might expect. Foremost, there is an inherent contradiction between objective contract specifications and the subjective terrain of forestlands. Most contracts called for the trees to be spaced 8 or 10 feet apart unless conditions dictate otherwise. But the forest is not like a flat, cleared farmland to be planted in a uniform grid. There are steep slopes, ridgelines, rocks, ravines, creeks, and a whole slew of shifting indentations and perturbations. Unlike a legal contract the forest is not linear; it is *very wiggly*. To make planting more efficient we devised specific crew "maneuvers." The three most common were line planting, floating, and bumping. There was also the Swarm which meant the entire crew descended upon a certain area of ground. Mostly it was used as a fun way to 'kick out' the final portion of a planting unit.

The (e)Motion Before The Floor...

The internal democracy of the reforestation collectives was most developed in a group called the "Hoedads" based in Eugene, Oregon. At its height it had 300+ members distributed among 15 autonomous crews. Each crew had their own decision-making process, usually some form of consensus with a majority rule back-up when consensus was blocked. While that functioned well for a 20-person crew, the 200-300 person General Meetings (GM's) were an entirely different beast. Straight majority rule using parliamentary procedure was practiced. Despite a keen interest in more libertarian processes, I really don't know how these meetings could have been conducted otherwise.

As it was, the quarterly GM's were wild 2-3 day affairs. I'll never forget when a motion was made to create an across-the-board, flat hourly wage for all co-op members. This contradicted the philosophy of autonomy in which each crew would "independently contract" a specific job, give Hoedads a standard 20% administrative rake-off, and then decide

Communication was the key of course. We talked a lot, sometimes probably too much, but you weren't disciplined for excessive discourse. A treeplanter with a regular contractor would be long gone for the verbose outbursts we generated. Even though it sometimes slowed down an individual's production, communicating a planting strategy and the continuous adaptations required by the changing terrain definitely increased the crew's overall efficiency.

This emphasis on communication in the work process (constantly conversing literally "down the line") attracted many self-management idealists to the reforestation collectives. There were other features which also made the collectives a uniquely worthwhile enterprise for many. First, treeplanting businesses require little capital; you need only a few tools and vehicles. Such small companies could

INKY-PINKY

The need to talk a lot to do the work safely and quickly also cultivated mind games to transcend the intense physical tedium. One of my favorites was called inky-pinky. You give clues for a two word answer in which each contains the same number of syllables and rhymes. If the answer pair contains only one syllable each the clue is called an ink-pink —with three syllables, an ink-i-ty/pink-i-

ty, etc. For instance someone at the top of the slope might yell out, "What is an inky-pinkity for an evil preacher?" The answer: a sinister minister. While many answers were this facile, others were truly quixotic or sublime. How about an inky-pinkity for a caustic wino? If you can't grock it, the answer can be found in the graphic on the next page.

Jane, a hard-core "Amazon planter" speaks next: "All right, let's cut through the shit!!! It's simple. If high production crews and workers don't make more money they will leave the co-op (perhaps the greatest success of the Hoedads was the spin-off of about 30 smaller co-ops, many with start-up money from the Hoedads). If this happens the whole co-op will suffer . . ."

On and on it went for hours. Eventually the motion was defeated, although several years later, as the industry slumped and the co-op contracted, a similar version was passed.

Woodswoman Spare That Tree

It was exciting to challenge the established canons of forest practices. Women treeplanters were perhaps the most daunting feature we introduced to a very backwoods, exclusively male province for the last few centuries. One of my fondest memories is how three women totally overwhelmed an all-too-typical Forest Service inspector pregnant with petty rules. Some inspectors were cool, found our alternative bent refreshing, and helped us make tons of money during a contract. Most were a pain in the ass. An inspector could make or break your contract depending on how strictly they enforced contract specifications. A tough inspector was like a hard-ass cop, if s/he had "an attitude," no matter how perfectly you did the work, they could make sure you got the shaft.

Regular contractors usually had one foreman who dealt with the inspector. We had the advantage of ganging up on the poor sod with two or three rotating 'fore-persons.' It didn't always work but it sure did this day. How? Well, Hannah, Ginger, and Cathy did what they normally do during a hot day "on the slope;" they planted with their shirts off. When they saw the inspector was giving us a hard time they marched up to confront him on it. Now here was a guy who *liked* ironing his underwear. A real prick who desperately needed to be in command:

facing

six
thrashing
breasts
telling
him
his
authority
isn't . . .

A vitriolic alcoholic

"All around me men are working
but I am stubborn and take no part
The main difference is this
I prize the breasts of the Mother"
— Tao Te Ching

It was hilarious. Imagine three, strapping, bare-breasted women, all sweaty, dappled with earth, and dripping eros striding up to this inspector/imposter . . . he turns all red and shy and hot and confused. They didn't have to say a word: six healthy breasts stare down a repressed stiff. He lasted about 30 seconds, turned, and bolted for his life. Totally forgot he was supposed to be an asshole, even forgot his underwear *and* iron in getting the hell out of Dodge before it was too late.

The attempt to develop gender balanced crews, while successful in some groups, never shook up the industry to the degree we hoped it would. It did, however, make night life infinitely more interesting if not ribald. I mean we're talking young (almost exclusively 20-30 year old), high-powered, *very* fit bodies isolated in some remote forest with not a whole helluva lot to do after dark. Well . . . you get the idea. It sure was a lot of fun but the ever-changing love liaisons and resulting power dynamics also had a nasty habit of screwing up our egalitarian group decision-making processes.

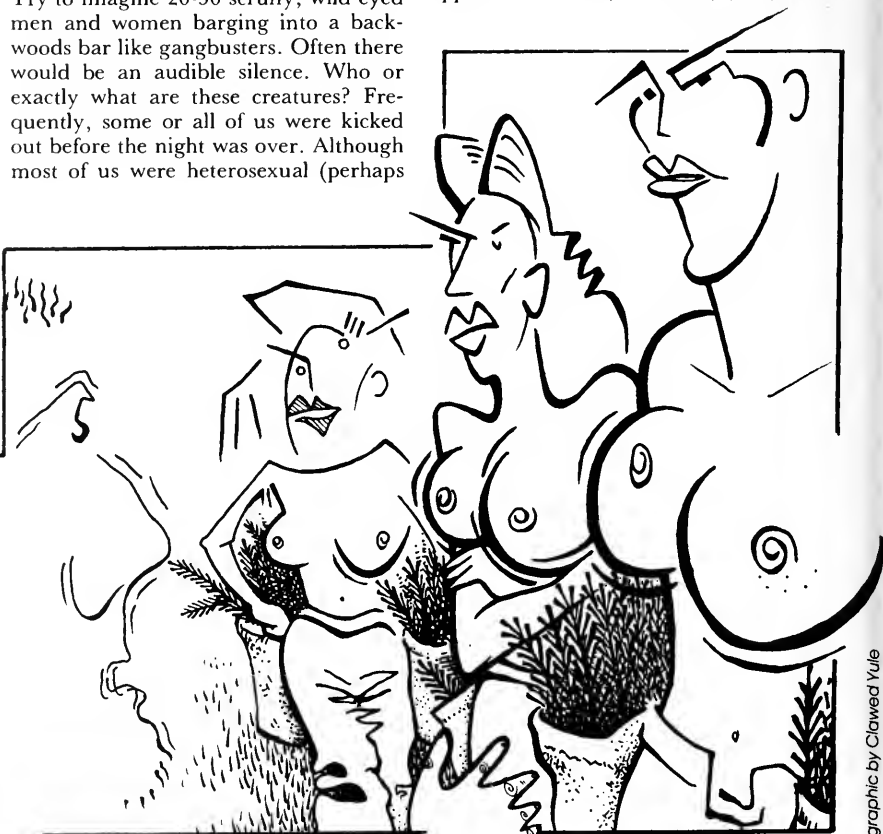
While we never created the broad systemic changes dreamed about, we did realize many small, localized changes. One of the funnest and funniest was the invasion of small town, "cowboy" taverns. It is difficult to fathom how dramatic our impact could be in these sleepy towns. Try to imagine 20-30 scruffy, wild-eyed men and women barging into a backwoods bar like gangbusters. Often there would be an audible silence. Who or exactly what are these creatures? Frequently, some or all of us were kicked out before the night was over. Although most of us were heterosexual (perhaps

20% lesbian and 5% gay men) often we would freak out the locals with same-sex dancing. Despite the rough and tumble, "macho" character of the work and subculture, there was a lot of chummy, very direct physical affection. The tiny towns we visited saw us like a circus. Few townsfolk had ever seen such a weird group or heard the strange, radical, and esoteric conversations we might spill.

2, 4-D Is Such A Beautiful Thing . . .

We often talked to locals and other treeplanters about a very curious problem. Perhaps for many it seemed anti-America. "Did ya know they're droppin' tons of poison up in them there hills. We're talking known cancer causing chemicals. Yes, it's likely they're polluting your drinking water . . . Yes, these chemicals cause cancer, miscarriages, death . . . Yes, your friendly Forest Service or timber company is spraying this shit like a firehose on a burning house."

Most herbicides were applied through aerial spraying from helicopters—just like in Vietnam. As I became more savvy to what was coming down, I learned the widespread use of these poisons sprang from the huge inventories leftover from the Vietnam war. Public-minded manufacturers like Dow Chemical were leaders in the efforts to pass reforestation legislation with teeth. The most common applications were 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T, both



active carcinogens in Agent Orange. Besides poisoning the worksite, aerial spraying also made 'drift' possible as mountain breezes carried the noxious material to surrounding environs including watersheds.

Thiram-coated tree seedlings were another hazard. This pesticide was supposed to repel animals such as deer that love eating tender new trees. Too bad it made lowly treeplanters sick. At least precious trees were protected. By the time I became a planter Thiram was no longer being used, mostly because of concerted agitation by collectives in the previous five years.

Another sordid reality of the back-to-nature reforestation biz was the transformation of forests into mono-species plantations. When gushing treeplanters told me they loved working in a forestry collective because "you didn't have to work for the man" I always retorted, "Yeah, but you're still workin' on the plantation." What had often been a diverse mix of coniferous and deciduous trees was usually re-planted in a grid of Douglas Fir or Pine clones. They were the most profitable since they grew quickly and were more lucrative as forest products.

The overall paradigm that held all this together was what I called the "myth of sustained yield." Corporate interests successfully instilled an ideology inside the Forest Service that through their management forest lands could be harvested and reproduced in perpetuity—a sustainable, ongoing practice through the administration of scientific management. It was a nice theory. The problem was that the logging industry knew only one way: cut,

crew who spruced up an otherwise stark scalping of a fragile, essential natural habitat. Most of our planting sites were 20-100 acres that had been clear-cut; in other words, every single tree had been mowed down.

Once all logs were removed from the clearcut, piles of slash were burned, and the ground was chemically dosed and torched. Since the application of hazardous toxics occurred months before the planters arrived most contractors carefully kept it a secret from their workers. Collective crew were more fortunate; since they knew the risks they could choose not to work on such sites. Yet many crews did anyway, especially when the market was tight.



microcosm, it is useful to look at a more widespread example such as the energy conservation programs of the '70s and early '80's. There is no question that these retrofitting and weatherizing programs were a prudent public policy. Indeed, the U.S. has undergone a significant drop in energy consumption because of them and this is a healthy change. Little attention, however, was given to how or who carried out this work. Mostly, inner-city youth (primarily 18-25 year old Blacks and Hispanics) were paid minimum wage to expose themselves to serious health hazards. Installing fiberglass insulation in ceilings 40 hours a week is something no one (except a robot) should ever do. Removing and being exposed to old asbestos particles is even worse. Such workplace hazards were sub-

No one ever mentioned the *qualitative* character of the jobs or that full employment might be an obsolete, undesirable notion to base *any* social policy on.

cut, and cut. If the regeneration process couldn't keep up then that was a technical problem. Genetic engineering, or some damn technique, could be developed to make those stupid trees catch up with the logging program.

Self-Management: A Double-Edged Dagger

Despite the integrity of our internal democracy we were still pitted against a monstrous economic combine that just wouldn't quit. The reforestation business is the humane arm of a sprawling forest products industry which has nearly devastated our nation's woodlands. We were the good looking, visible front designed to make the slaughter okay; the mop-up

Despite our Herculean efforts, we were still victims of a global forestry machine over which we had no control. This is the decisive problem of self-management; as with all enterprises under capitalism, worker/owners tend to *manage* their own exploitation. The overall nature of the work (or even if it should be done at all) was completely swamped by the day-to-day bullshit of being a business. This takes on even more insidious mutations when you self-manage "good works" like restoring the earth, providing health care, or conserving energy. Here capitalist logic has bred an ideology that readily sacrifices the lowly worker before the altar of public good.

Before examining the treeplanting

sumed in a national program to become energy independent, to save precious natural resources, and provide GOOD JOBS for the chronically unemployed. What a perfect marriage: saving the planet (or the nation, for the less liberal) and creating full employment all at the same time. No one ever mentioned the *qualitative* character of the jobs or that full employment might be an obsolete, undesirable notion to base *any* social policy on. You can be sure, however, this twisted ideology will be increasingly proselytized as the west's economy and/or ecology self-destruct.

Within reforestation, rarely was the treeplanting drone valued equally (much less above) the cherished tree seedling.

Most Forest Service inspectors rigidly adhered to a program intent on maximizing tree, as opposed to the planter's, life. For instance, the ideal weather conditions for planting trees was determined to be 38 degrees and raining—hardly ideal for humans. But to successfully compete in the market, we had to work 8-10 hours a day in the most wretched, wintry conditions.

Science was the alchemy inspectors looked to when confronted with the absurdity, if not downright cruelty, of many forestry practices. Scientific studies had proven herbicides increased tree growth.

This business about miscarriages and worker disabilities, well, more research was needed. There was not yet any conclusive long-term studies.

Forest Service paranoia about tree survival reached preposterous heights. At higher elevations where the snowpack might not melt until April or May. The idea was to get the trees into the ground as soon as possible after the snow melted to insure the ground was still moist. True, occasionally a heat spell could bake the soil to a crisp but this slight possibility by no means justified the incredible workload oppression we endured. Con-

tracts specified a limited number of days for completion and F.S. inspectors would crack the whip to meet this totally arbitrary schedule. . . or else you didn't get paid.

One of the more bizarre instances of this senseless productivism occurred when the Mt. St. Helens volcano blew up. We were working about 40 miles northeast as the crow flies—or in this case as the ash falls. What a terrifying experience. We had no idea what exactly happened. Since I was the crew coordinator that day I noticed an incredibly dark cloud to the west and told everyone: "Better get your raingear, there is one helluva rain storm moving in and fast!" Stiff gusts started peppering the exposed hillside and—how strange! Instead of raindrops, large, black snowflakes floated down. Even stranger was how dark, truly pitch black it suddenly became. It was noon and darker than the darkest night; you couldn't see 2 feet in front of you. As the ash piled up 2-3 inches deep, it became impossible to move without kicking up the bone dry, nearly weightless, irritating dust. These re-airborne particulates obscured the already microscopic visibility so much that headlights from our vehicles failed to illuminate the road.

Yet, despite this very tense, uncertain, and potentially catastrophic situation, Forest Service honchos still wanted us to keep working. After all, the trees were ready, waiting a few days to evaluate the circumstances might endanger their health. We refused (workers with a regular contractor wouldn't have had that choice) and later I learned some of the ash contained silica particles that cause silicosis, a fatal lung disease. It took us a year of legal proceedings to get paid since we stopped work without an F.S. sanctioned "stop work order."

The whole St. Helens Fiasco, as we called it, also unraveled how easy collective democracy can elude groups. Previously, I'd never had problems with our directly democratic, self-managed process. But this disaster created a very different situation. Never have I seen so many good-intentioned, principled people act so stupidly. People were yelling and crying, running madly in all directions, jumping into trucks and crashing them (since they couldn't see), withdrawing to their tents to await the inevitable. A half hour of pure chaos followed by a total breakdown of collective thinking and action. You have to realize it was pretty damn scary. We had no idea how long the ash would keep falling, if it would ever get light again, if that noxious dust would keep swirling up and choke off our oxygen supply. A sick, heavy

THIRAM



WARNING:
THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
HAS FOUND THAT PLANTING
THIRAM TREES
MAY BE HAZARDOUS TO
YOUR HEALTH Henri

For the easily bored there is homonymal inky-pinky. What is an inky-pinky for a gnarly, twisted taboo behavior?

A hallucination elucidation

A knotty naughtly.

from BIRTH OF A COLLECTIVE by Hal Hartzell, Jr.

sensation that this was the preview of the nuclear holocaust hung like a moldy blanket over everyone. With it came conflicting, very emotional opinions about what exactly was happening, what should be done, and how to do it.

Outside of such extreme circumstances, our collectivity was an important source of strength. In addition to empowering our personal and political life, the positive side of self-management is that we were much more informed and able to fight stupid, unhealthy working conditions like planting in St. Helens ash. Perhaps the broadest expression of this was our opposition to the chemical spraying of tree seedlings and forestlands. It took several years of concerted research and activism to stop this insane practice. It never would have happened without “those damned treeplanting collectives”



photo by Tom Erickson

This is the decisive problem of self-management; as with all enterprises under capitalism; worker/owners tend to *manage* their own exploitation.

as one corporate chemical lobbyist put it. Eventually we helped develop two important organizations through this battle: the National Coalition Against Pesticides and the Northwest Forest Workers Association.

A Bit Of Nostalgia . . .

Self-managed collectives certainly have their problems especially under the economic and psychological pressures of global capitalism. I suspect some dynamics like sexual jealousies or uneven power relations based on differences in personal animation, intellectual, and social capacities would remain under even the most libertarian culture. But the overarching problem we faced was the crazy financial competition that pitted us against other enterprises and ourselves to always INCREASE PRODUCTION or perish. This was exacerbated in the '80s with the decline of the forest industry in general and reforestation in particular. The Reagan administration's deregulation mania also had a wicked impact on reforestation. Since it was a money loser—even though miniscule in comparison to the revenues acquired from logging—it was one of the first to get the axe in the Forest Service's budget slashing. The industry's decline was the kiss of death for the treeplanting collectives, as it was for all forestry businesses and workers in the Pacific Northwest.

I can't say I miss slogging like a mudshark up a steep slope on a frigid January day. but there are two things I really miss. Most important was our support for one another and the community of

resistance to the dominant culture. The sharing of life and love including our alienated labor was so different from my present life in San Francisco. There are certainly more diverse, interesting people and activities here. But with modern urbanism comes a specialization I abhor. Most of my income-producing work is as an electrician by myself or with one or two others. The money is great, the work is easy to organize so I'm freed to do a lot of other more interesting activities. The problem is that my job takes me away from any group engagement in how to organize and *change* work. Instead of any widespread feeling that groups of people could collectively change their plight, the pervasive attitude even among many of my libertarian friends locally, is that the “work problem” requires an individual solution. If you are in a bad job then get your act together and place yourself in a better situation, the mainstay of careerist ideology.

Similarly, what to do with my wages is totally my decision. This is certainly easier and guarantees I use it the way I want. The problem is that it isolates you from what surely must happen if we are to ever change the capitalist Leviathan. Even in a utopia where money was eliminated, like Peter Berg's Bioregional Councils (see “Dollars & Ecology” in this issue), worker or community groups, or even eco-councils, still have to decide how resources will be developed, distributed, and used. In the more probable future in which money remains, I certainly hope we can develop new forms of financial collectivity beyond the nuclear family

or state administration.

The other thing I yearn for is working outdoors on a daily basis. I'm very anti-workerist—believe 90% of modern work could be eliminated and we would be better off for it—but I really loved the intense physical nature of treeplanting. This physicality was not just located in the body but in the immediate surroundings as well. The work and the fitness generated by it enhanced my sensitivities for the simple pleasures of breathing fresh mountain air or appreciating the delicate, intoxicating forest smells. I could never base my life *just* on that. Collective treeplanting was attractive precisely because such a simple nature-based life was integrated with more complex intellectual, political, and artistic concerns.

One of the cruelest aspects of this modern processed world is our separation from that kind of experience. Except for the rich, we face an untenable and schizophrenic choice. We can either accept ecological impoverishment in the urban fray, where all the cultural and political action is, or escape to the countryside and become isolated in wholesome living. The need to change that social double-bind is perhaps the greatest lesson I learned from treeplanting. Developing a new culture that coalesces “naturalness” and human creation is essential. It begins with an ecology of mind, body politic, and earth.

by Med-03

OUR FRIEND THE VDT

Shhh! At many companies, phone operators' headsets transmit conversations with customers and with co-workers.¹

According to a 1986 Data Entry Management Association study, 66% of data-entry operators suffered neck and shoulder pain; 47% had burning eyes; 44% experienced blurred vision.¹

A just-released 1981-82 Kaiser Permanente study found "a significantly elevated risk of miscarriage for working women who reported using VDTs for more than 20 hours per week during the first trimester of pregnancy compared to other working women who reported not using VDTs."³ In a separate, four-year study of 871 computer operators, 45% reported pregnancies ending in miscarriage, stillbirth, early infant death, premature delivery or major birth defects. Recent European studies suggest that computers' low level radiation, which has been linked to genetic damage in chick embryos, is a likely cause.⁴

An EPA study found indoor air carrying pollutants at levels as much as 1,000 times higher than out of doors. There are no federal standards for office air.¹

Public employees beware: a new General Services Administration space-consolidation plan embraces the modular office cubicle as a means to shrink employee office space "significantly." At one government branch, office workers watched their space shrink from 135 square feet each to 40—well below the 48 square feet federal guidelines specify for a 200-pound laboratory pig.¹

Stress-related occupational-disease claims have tripled since 1980; in California they have increased fivefold.^{1 2}



From Profit Technology comes Breakthrough! software that managers can configure to flash pre-programmed displays on an employee's screen for periods as brief as $\frac{1}{100}$ th of a second.¹

Management uses computers and keystroke software to monitor and/or "pace" the work of between 20 and 35% of American office workers according to a new Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) report. Another OTA survey found that $\frac{2}{3}$'s of 110 organizations (surveyed between 1982 and 1986) engaged in computerized employee surveillance, monitoring, standardized-pace or quota systems.¹

A six year study concluded that 35% of office buildings had no fresh air at all; 64% had an insufficient supply, and 40% had recirculation systems that are "grossly contaminated" with all manner of glop and rot: mold, fungi, fiberglass, asbestos, pollen, carbon dioxides, benzene, tobacco smoke, formaldehyde, copier fumes, toluene from cleaning fluids, and TCE and TCA from office supplies.¹

"Call accounting," a euphemism for auditing or monitoring employee phone calls, is "the fastest growing segment of the telecommunications industry" according to a spokesperson for the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment. A Citicorp executive is more to the point: "Call-accounting systems help us police productivity." Over 63,000 companies use it to track nearly 10 million employees, up from an estimated 25,000 companies in 1985. Most office phone system manufacturers offer call-monitoring software as an option with their equipment. Observed *BUSINESS WEEK*: "Call auditing—and eavesdropping on employee's phone conversations—are both acceptable under federal privacy laws as long as they're part of an established [sic] job performance evaluation program."⁵

Mind Communication Inc. of Grand Rapids, Michigan, purveyor of subliminal cassette tapes, offers "Q-System" to embed messages "behind" the office background music system, AM/FM, or TV signal.¹

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OUR NEGLECTED CITIES

In many ways our cities are our most neglected environments. Australians are not renowned for being the most avid city dwellers. Some authors have shown that the suburban house in fact evolved from a desire to escape city life, and stems from rural ideals.

Despite being a highly urbanised nation, Australia is steeped in the tradition of “the bush”—the birthplace of the Australian character and home of the essential Australian spirit. Perhaps this strong anti-city bias derives from early European settlers who left crowded prisons or poverty behind them to make a new life in a vast continent.

In any case, the arrival of the motor car, both here and in the U.S., accentuated this flight from the city. Consequently in both countries we find a public environment which can be hostile and uninviting.

This negative attitude to the city and dependence on car travel hampers the search for creative urban alternatives. G. Ashworth, an author on city planning, describes Los Angeles as a “nightmarish sprawling anti-city peopled by a rootless and lonely crowd, in which all the rich, multi-farious and interdependent functions of the traditional city have been eliminated by the means of transport.” Another writer, K.R. Schneider warns: “People escape to suburbs and abandon the city. ‘Los Angelization’ of the earth turns it into a mass habitat of defensive privacy and incessant movement.”

Learning From Europe

Rather than despair at such trends we can look to Europe for guidance and inspiration. European cities provide some general principles on how Australian and American cities might balance their transport systems and restore a much-needed human dimension to their urban environments.

Europe’s pro-urban tradition is seen in the vibrant “living centres” of cities such as Munich, Vienna and Stockholm. They cater extensively to pedestrians and are places where people enjoy being—for eating outdoors, entertainment or relaxation. Can we create a similar human dimension to our own cities—producing a day and night carnival atmosphere with markets, festivals and concerts?

Compact Planning For Better Cities

European cities are much more compact than ours. They have a balance between cars, public transport, walking and bicycling. Residential areas, usually mixed with shops and other attractions, are knitted together with walkways, cycleways, subways and tram systems.

Europeans accept a higher density environment because they gain in terms of convenience, diversity and character. Car ownership is not essential. The result is a more sustainable city in energy terms, consuming about 60% less petrol per person than in Australia and therefore producing less pollution.

High density living then, seems to be synonymous with the essence of what a city should be. Schneider says that “The city is inherently a concentration of people, structures and activities. . . low density contradicts the very nature of a city.”

Open Spaces

Many Australians might be wary of higher density living because of a perceived threat to their open spaces. Experience in Europe however, suggests that this concern is unwarranted. In fact European cities are generally richly endowed with magnificent public open spaces giving a sense of nature right in their midst.

Well-known examples are: Munich’s Englischer Garten and International Garden Expo and Copenhagen’s Jaegersborg Deer Park. Ironically, it is partly because of compact planning that such large, accessible open spaces remain.

The European countryside is also readily accessible—25 minutes on an electric train will generally get you into farms and forests. Australian cities by contrast consume their natural hinterlands with urban sprawl and the countryside gets further away each day.

Our Cities—The Future

So where does this leave us? I believe that the best direction for our city planning is to aim at developing several types of city in one—in an effort to expand diversity and choice.

The walking city—For those who wish to live within walking distance of most things. The central city and

sub-centres on railway lines could be developed with housing and other attractions mixed together at high density. Such housing would service people who don't want a car and desire a really urban lifestyle. Communal activities and shared public spaces would provide a more human environment creating a sense of vitality, diversity and involvement. Extensive planning for pedestrians and emphasis on bicycles would also characterize these areas.

The public transport city—The old public transport spines, especially the railways, can be rejuvenated with medium density housing to allow people to be within walking or riding distance of a fast, efficient public transport service. Such a lifestyle could provide the majority of activities without use of a car. It would be essential to have an attractive mix of urban activities clustered around the stations, which themselves would become

diverse mini-urban centres. Innovative types of cluster housing could provide acceptable living space standards for young families and good separation of pedestrian and road traffic. Sydney and Melbourne already have elements of this type of development.

The automobile city—Between the walking and public transport cities there would be the typical Australian suburb with its low density and high car ownership. This type of development would remain a major part of the city, but not completely dominate the urban scene as it does now.

A Natural Model

The idea of introducing diversity into our cities is rather like what happens in nature as communities mature—the plants and animals become more varied and their relationships more complex. Such complex communities become more

stable and able to cope with changing pressures, unlike an agricultural monoculture which is inherently unstable and dependent on large inputs of external resources (energy, pesticides, etc.).

As a nation of city dwellers, we need a creative urban vision of the future. Reductions in suburban sprawl, more compact and dense development and a reduced dependence on cars seem to be both logical and achievable. Such steps need not be seen as negative or restrictive. On the contrary they can be positive and expansive with the potential to enrich and enliven the quality of urban life by planning cities as if people mattered.

by Jeffrey R. Kenworthy

(Excerpted from an article entitled "Australian Cities: Beyond the Suburban Dream" from *Habitat Australia*, vol. 15, #6, Dec. 1987. Magazine of the Australian Conversion Foundation. 672-B Glenferrie Rd., Hawthorn, Victoria 3122, Australia.)



AUTO DESTRUCTION

The automobile connects many disparate elements in the worldwide process of environmental destruction. Yet, the saying, "What's good for General Motors is good for the country" has truly been taken to heart by all quarters of the political spectrum. The society that we have shaped revolves around the requirements of the automobile, and we have surrendered many of the decisions about the quality of our lives to those requirements. We ignore the implications for the environment and for our society in general of large-scale use of the automobile, all for the sake of a philosophy of convenience and mobility sold to us by corporations that make billions of dollars in profits from our participation in the idea of auto-mobility.

Automobiles destroy. They have voracious appetites for a wide range of things that we choose not to recognize as consequences. Automobiles destroy human lives. They destroy air quality. They destroy agricultural land as they encourage

suburbanization. Automobiles destroy cities with their land requirements for parking. They destroy the quality of our lives as we spend more and more time behind the wheel chasing down the increasingly distant parts of our daily existence.

Auto-destruction. The face of the earth is being paved, developed, drilled, littered, trivialized and homogenized to accommodate the spread of auto-society in the name of consumer convenience. It is a worldwide phenomenon that has gone largely unremarked throughout the evolution of the automobile society, except in *Repo Man* and by rabid, foaming urban planners.

* * * * *

Auto-society had its beginning in the policies of the federal and state governments in the 1920s that encouraged roadbuilding and the construction of housing in low density suburbs. Zoning laws were initiated to keep densities low and prices high, which would keep out the poor and the minorities.

During World War II, the railroads and public transit systems were used intensively and emerged from the war in poor physical condition. Instead of helping to rebuild the railroads that they had relied on so heavily for the war effort, the federal government began to pour money into the road system. Massive roadbuilding campaigns, begun in the 1930s, were intensified in the post-World War II period with the beginning of work on the Interstate and *Defense* Highway Network.

In the postwar period of nuclear hysteria, the federal government embarked on a concerted policy of decentralization, with the aim of making the United States less vulnerable to nuclear attack. Part of the aim was to get away from dependence on railroads, which were seen as too vulnerable to attack. The Interstate network was seen as a way to encourage non-railroad intercity travel and decentralization of the industrial base. And just incidentally, the freeways would be built to the dimensions of a tank on a flatbed

truck so that the military could use the system in the event of a war.

Another aspect of the decentralization policy was the Veterans Administration (VA) Housing Loan Program, which the federal government commenced after the war. This program gave loans to veterans for housing purchases, but required them to buy new houses, which were all located in dispersed suburbs, reachable only by automobile.

The process of building auto-society has not been solely the result of the

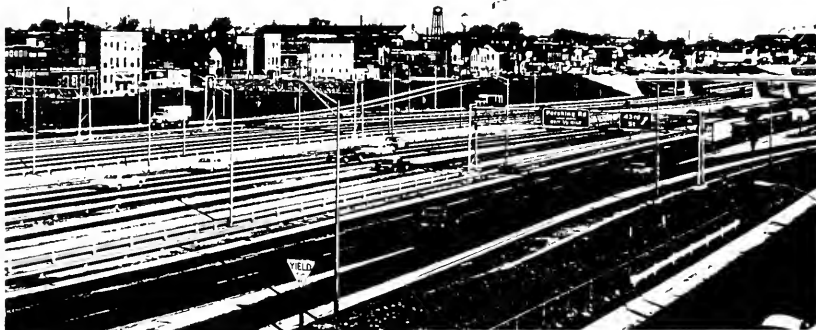
to destroy public transit so that people would buy automobiles. The companies that made up this trust understood that more money could be made by making Americans into individual automobile drivers than by providing transit services.

A transportation system based on automobility enriches the corporate coffers as no other consumer industry does. A public transit vehicle can be used by hundreds of people daily, and does not spend much time idle. The high utilization of one public transit vehicle decreases the

cooperatively-run groups; dependent on each other for food, shelter, protection, survival, and assistance to get started when they got to where they were going. The myth has been reinforced by fifty years of John Wayne and Ronald Reagan movies, which confirm that completely independent loners somehow forged a new society out of solid rock.

This philosophy has come to mean that all *real* Americans naturally *prefer* to do everything for themselves, and by themselves if possible. The flip side of the philosophy is that activities that bring too many people together or are too public are somehow suspect. We have been so conditioned to think of transportation as an individual activity, that to many people, public transportation looks like a socialist activity, and something to be avoided at all costs.

In transportation, this philosophy has been translated into widespread agreement at the politicians' level that government really has no place in the public transit business. However, the same people who wring their hands and view public transportation as creeping socialism see nothing wrong with the government spending billions to build freeways and other roads to enable the automakers, oil companies and trucking companies to turn a tidy profit at the taxpayers' expense. Similarly, the financing of the airline industry by the federal government is substantial, yet this is viewed as a reasonable expense, whereas Amtrak and urban public transit are not. You only need to take a look at which systems the decisionmakers use and where their



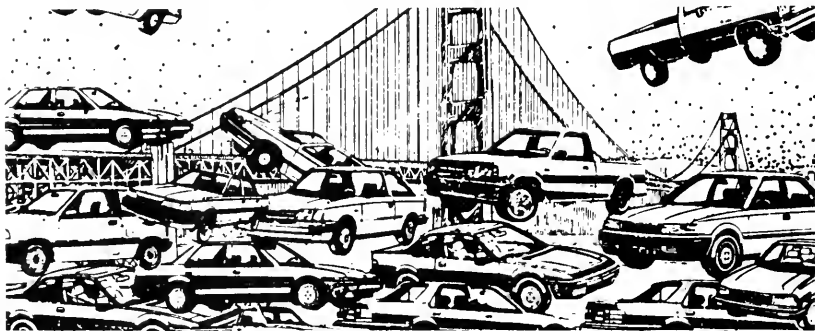
"market forces" of individual consumers expressing preferences for private automobiles. The automakers, construction industry, tire manufacturers, and the oil industry were all strong lobbyists for the conversion of the transportation system to an auto-system, due to their obvious interests in the profits to be made by such a system. These industries took a more active role than simply lobbying, however. Their role took the form of a trust that was set up to systematically destroy streetcar and bus companies throughout the country from the 1930s to the early 1960s. This effort was known as National City Lines, and its role in this conspiracy was confirmed by a federal court decision in 1949 that resulted in nominal \$1000 fines for each of the companies that participated.

National City Lines was a holding company formed by General Motors, Standard Oil, Phillips Petroleum, Firestone, and Mack Truck that was set up to purchase financially ailing privately owned streetcar systems, with the aim of abandoning them as quickly as possible. National City Lines strove to drive away as many passengers as possible by making the service inconvenient through lack of maintenance, cutting service and substituting buses for faster and more direct rail vehicles.

The streetcar systems that were reconstituted as bus systems bought GM and Mack buses, burned Standard and Phillips fuel, and ran on Firestone tires. The real aim of the trust, however, was

number of automobiles that the vehicle manufacturers can sell.

In the auto-economy, volunteer labor is substituted for paid union labor. The automobile transforms everyone into their own volunteer driver and mechanic. A public transportation system creates jobs for people to do the work to allow the rest of us to move around an urban area without the need for absolutely everyone to pay attention to traffic. In public



transportation, labor costs are 60-75% of the cost of running the system. Obviously, our political economy likes to have you do the labor.

* * * * *

The idea of Americans as freedom-loving auto-owners appeals to those who cherish the myth of the rugged Emersonian individual, who won the West all by himself on his own individual horse. Never mind that the vast majority of people who moved west did so in large,

campaign contributions come from to see that there is a little more than selfless public spirit at work here.

* * * * *

Auto-mobility promotes a dispersed style of living that increases energy use by reducing walking, encouraging auto trip making, and emphasizing a pattern of low density residential construction.

The inevitable result of more automobility for everyone is a homogenous pattern of land use in which the require-

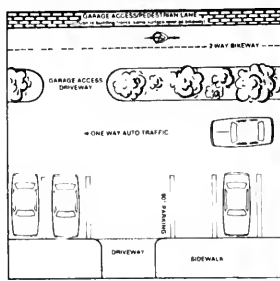
ments of the auto become the dominant factor in the design of the areas we live and work in. In order to accommodate an individual two-ton steel travel unit for each person, our urban areas become isolated buildings surrounded by a vast sea of parking lots. Each activity center requires enough parking to accommodate all the people who could conceivably want to come there simultaneously in their individual autos. This spreads out activities all over the map, making it necessary to travel ever-longer distances to pursue daily life.

As more and more land is needed for parking and ever-wider roads, our destinations become more and more spread out, which precludes the possibilities for most people to walk or bicycle for their daily journeys. It also makes it hard for public transit to be effective, due to the low density of potential riders and the wide dispersion of destinations. This becomes a self-reinforcing cycle that continuously encourages more driving and requires more parking and roads. (Transportation engineers estimate that it takes 12 to 20 lanes of road to move the same number of people per hour as a double-track rail transit line. Consequently, urban roads require extremely wide right-of-ways through areas that become increasingly unattractive no-man's-lands.)

Every year, between 2 and 3 million acres of farmland are converted from agricultural use to urban use or are idled for development speculation. This is often land that formerly provided fresh fruit and vegetables. Up to one-half of that land is considered "prime farmland." Removing this land from agricultural production requires that other, less productive land be brought into production to make up for the loss. These lands are often on steeper slopes, increasing soil erosion. As less productive land is farmed, it generally requires more land area to produce the same yield.

* * * * *

Massive urban renewal and urban freeway projects in many East Coast cities in the 1960s devastated what were previously livable downtowns and neighborhoods. San Francisco managed to stop much of this type of activity in the late 1950s with the Freeway Revolt, led by well-to-do homeowners in St. Francis Wood. In other cities, the threatened neighborhoods were more often working class and minority neighborhoods, with less of a voice in City Hall. Boston, in particular, underwent massive surgery as freeways were cut through the Irish and Italian working class neighborhoods close to downtown, essentially cutting them off from communication with the rest of the city.



BICYCLISTS!

When was the last time someone opened their car door in your face? Or made a left turn right in front of you, as if you weren't even there? Or decided to double-park, nearly causing you to ride into the back of their car?

Whether you commute regularly by bicycle, work as a bike messenger, or simply enjoy riding your bike recreationally, these are just a few of the numerous hazards we bicyclists face *as normal conditions* on the streets of San Francisco. Extreme alertness can avoid most accidents, but let's face it—bicycles need their own right of way. Painting a stripe on a street and putting up a few signs saying "Bike Lane" do nothing to address the fundamental inadequacy of existing conditions for bicyclists.

Bicycling is currently an invisible form of transportation in San Francisco. In spite of the ridiculously unsafe routes, hundreds, maybe thousands, of San Franciscans use their bikes regularly. Imagine how many more people might bicycle if it were safe and more convenient!

The city of San Francisco can take a big stride into the future by creating a series of criss-crossing panhandles, three each going North-South and East-West, plus two going diagonally. These could be created by using apx. 40% of a given residential street, converting one side into 90° parking, making one lane of one-way traffic, then building an island filled with beautiful-looking and smelling trees, shrubs, and flowers. Then, between the island and the pedestrian/garage-access lane there would be a two-way bikeway. Like Copenhagen and Amsterdam, bicyclists would have their own traffic signals at large intersections and at smaller ones, cars would yield to bike cross traffic.

The advantages of building such a system would be numerous:

- Bicyclists would be physically protected from auto traffic, and also from auto exhaust by the horticultural barrier.
- Bicycle use would increase dramatically, lowering the frequency of car use, thereby improving air quality and traffic congestion, and public transit would also become less over-crowded.
- The general health of the city's population would improve as more people bicycled, and had better air to breathe.

- San Francisco would become more beautiful and livable as even a relatively small percentage of its total land area is reclaimed from asphalt and automobiles.

- Owning a car would become less necessary (especially if bikeways were developed across the bridges and throughout the Bay Area) and this will lead to an easing of the parking crunch in many neighborhoods.

Economic benefits would arise too:

- Unemployed teenagers, low-income residents, and building trade workers would all benefit as the public works program to build the new bikeways puts thousands to work. The resulting personal income generates a spending boom, lifting retail sales and improving the overall economy and standard-of-living.

- Tourism will get a shot in the arm, as the City's ad campaign to "Come and Ride in the Most Beautiful City in North America" attracts thousands of new visitors.

- Hundreds of new permanent jobs are created in bicycle manufacturing, sales and repair, and bikeway maintenance. The City hires several hundred additional gardeners to maintain bikeway gardens.

- The City sets up a system where for \$2/month residents can "check out" bicycles (like the library) from way-stations along the bikeways—everyone's cost of living would thus go down. (If a stereo retailer can give bicycles away, why can't S.F. acquire a fleet of 5000 for its prospective bicycling residents??)

The entire plan could be financed through a 1¢-a-gallon gas tax and a progressive annual tax on S.F.-registered cars: e.g. 1st car at an address, \$5; 2nd, \$25; 3rd, \$50; and so on. Car insurance companies could also be taxed. Autos can no longer be the backbone of transportation—they never should have been in San Francisco. S.F. can be in the forefront by adopting the *City of Panhandles* Plan. Interested in working to make this a reality? Contact **Bicyclists for a Right of Way!** c/o PW, 41 Sutter St. #1829 San Francisco, CA 94104.

—A Frustrated S.F. Bicyclist

However smug the Bay Area may have been in the late 1950s and early 1960s, it is currently undergoing one of the largest development booms in the country. This boom is occurring in the formerly rural outer reaches of several counties, and the level of roadway construction and auto-mobility is rapidly obliterating much of the open space that formerly gave the illusion that the Bay Area might escape the fate of a sea of suburbs.

The health effects of auto-culture go beyond the more obvious aspects of the air pollution visible in most urban areas worldwide. The effects of particulates and chemicals from auto exhaust have been widely acknowledged, although the government and the automakers have routinely relaxed standards for minimizing these effects. Toxic chemical pollution from the petroleum products needed to operate automobiles is a widespread phenomenon. These toxic petroleum products cover the streets we cross daily, and wash off the streets into the earth's

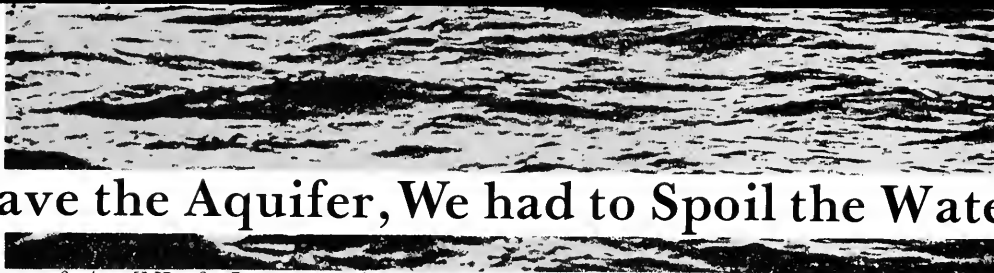
water system every time it rains. Gas station sites are usually so saturated with toxic residue from petroleum products that if the site is converted to any other use, it is necessary to perform a thorough toxic cleanup before building anything else.

* * * * *

Our transportation system has become one in which the object is to move vehicles around, not people. The logic of the highway engineer is that more highway construction is needed to solve the congestion problems on the roadways that result from too many people driving. The result is that new and wider highways encourage more trip-making and more development in the areas where the highways have been "improved." In the last 20 years, every new urban freeway that California has built has been filled to near-capacity as soon as it has been opened. This pattern ensures that highway engineers will have guaranteed jobs for the foreseeable future.

The issue of environmental problems created by the automobile has never been a popular topic. The concept of an integrated vision of the world's ecology has not yet fully recognized the automobile as the environmental disaster that it is. To be sure, certain elements of auto-destruction have been addressed in limited ways, such as questioning the effects of auto exhaust on air quality, resulting in carefully limited efforts by the automobile corporations and the government to reduce auto exhaust emissions. Unaddressed, however, are the more basic questions of the environmental and social effects of basing a worldwide transportation policy on the automobile. Even most elements of the environmental movement do not address the overall effects of creating an auto-society. Could it be that a culture subservient to the demands of auto-mobility has lost its perspective on the subject?

by Duncan Watry



To Save the Aquifer, We had to Spoil the Water . . .

aquifer /ak-woe-fer/ *n.* [NL, fr, L *aqua* + *-fer*] (1901): a water-bearing stratum of permeable rock, sand or gravel.

SILICON VALLEY—The onset of a drought in California has made unlikely conservationists out of the greasiest groundwater polluters in Silicon Valley. Citing an imminent water shortage, authorities allowed IBM and Fairchild Semiconductor to scale back an extensive pollution containment operation because it involved pumping water from an already low aquifer. No one disputes the results. IBM and Fairchild will save millions of dollars, and San Jose may once again draw tap water containing solvents whose grim effects as recently as 1982 included a rash of birth defects. This latest desertion of common sense illustrates what happens when technology experts define pollution problems so narrowly that one ill-advised solution after another appears adequate, even as each entails more pollution.

Pump 'n Dump

Since chemicals began leaking from the IBM and Fairchild facilities into groundwater and soil in the early '80s, the companies and compliant authorities maintained an elaborate and expensive charade, going through

the motions of a "cleanup" but in fact barely containing a deadly underground chemical plume. The leaking chemicals include solvents dangerous at the level of parts per billion: DCE, an acknowledged carcinogen, and TCA, a suspected carcinogen whose correlation with fetal disorders became notorious in 1982. That year saw an alarming increase in birth defects in a south San Jose neighborhood near the leaking Fairchild TCA tanks. Denying the correlation, despite animal research and a special state study that corroborated it, Fairchild, IBM, and other culpables finally settled the neighborhood's class action suit out of court and *in camera* in 1986. But not before IBM's policy of disavowal visited IBM employees. According to an IBM-San Jose production worker, IBM reacted to news of the 1982 miscarriages by *removing bottled water dispensers from some facilities in the contaminated zone*, leaving employees no choice but to "back IBM" by drinking tap water, or bring in their own bottled water.

Where the trail of their chemicals led, IBM and Fairchild eventually followed, drilling shafts and pumping up tainted water. But rather than cleaning the water and making it available to communities, IBM and Fairchild dumped the swill into creeks that drained into the San Francisco Bay wetlands. This strategy received the

blessing of experts who said the solvents would evaporate in the creeks before reaching the S.F. Bay. The experts were wrong. From the underground plume and the creeks TCA spread to over two dozen public and private drinking wells on which over 100,000 San Jose residents depend. In 1985, prodded by the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition and Citizens for a Better Environment, the Regional Water Quality Control Board ordered IBM and Fairchild to treat or filter the water. Instead it appears that the creek-dumping was merely re-routed.

As it was the "pump and dump" strategy accelerated the depletion of a geologically old aquifer at rates in excess of 12 million gallons *per day*. Thus, in 1988, well into its second rain-sparse year, did California authorities allow IBM and Fairchild to reduce their pumping. Among the officially acknowledged casualties are patrons of the Great Oaks Water Company which operates a drinking well less than 2,000 feet from a soon-to-be inactive Fairchild pump site. To its credit, the water company refuses to supply customers water with any detectable levels of industrial chemicals, and announced it would shut down the well if it becomes contaminated, which is a virtual certainty. This may not be to the liking of water authorities in a drought year. If the well remains open, Fairchild and IBM will likely elude litigation from any subsequent public contamination since water officials ordered the scale back. Less discriminating private and public well overseers will simply pass on the solvent-laced water to customers.

"Acceptable Risk" in Disarray?

Throughout the containment operation, IBM boasted of the millions of dollars it was spending on the "clean-up," as if the spending of money secured the correctness of the method. The technology to purify tainted water and to monitor it at the level of parts per billion was readily available. A fair accounting might, in fact, show that the whole "pump and dump" strategy proved more expensive to IBM and Fairchild than actually treating the water. But treating the water would have been an admission of guilt as well as a precedent IBM, Fairchild, and the entire electronics industry deemed unwise.

What sustained the madness of the "pump and dump" corrective all these years? The doctrine of "acceptable risk" that has compromised virtually every clean-up and preventive effort in Silicon Valley. Acceptable risk embraces the premise that investments in current manufacturing processes, no matter how menacing, are non-negotiable social facts. Acceptable risk assigns to human beings and the biosphere a limitless capacity to absorb "low-level" contamination. The rationale, akin to that of "light" brands of cigarettes and beer, is that TCA and DCE in small amounts are not unhealthful. As Betty Roeder of the Great Oaks Water Company put it: "People in our area don't like this idea of light contamination."

Still, acceptable risk retains its currency among pollution officials, industrial interests, and accommodating natural resource authorities almost everywhere. In the IBM and Fairchild episode, the doctrine exhibited a fresh resiliency, since there is recent and tragic evidence of the limits to absorbing "low-level" TCA: the birth defects that visited a San Jose neighborhood just six years ago. Are these, in 1988, reckoned "acceptable risks"? If so, who among the community of experts has the stomach to say so?

It would be a little comforting if this latest debacle weakened the expert's resolve to accept risks on our behalf. The incident, however, occurs in a state where the quality of water increasingly reflects the politics that have always governed its use, a politics so grimy that in 1986, the usually accommodating federal government stripped California of its authority to manage most of its toxic waste programs. In Silicon Valley, where shopping and the elimination of slow word processing software leave barely enough time for aerobics, most people prefer the expedient of bottled water over defense of their aquifer. In such a culture a ridiculous water policy finds quiet acceptance, reflecting the trickle-down of "acceptable risk" into daily life.

by Dennis Hayes

For the latest conditions—and advisories—on Silicon Valley water, write or phone the Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition, 760 North First Street, 2nd Floor, San Jose, CA 95112 (408) 287-6707.

AS WE GO TO PRESS! A three-year California Department of Health Services study found that pregnant women who drank tap water in Silicon Valley and environs (Santa Clara, Alameda and San Mateo Counties) had significantly higher rates of miscarriages and birth defects than those who drank no tap water during their pregnancies. Up to twice as many miscarriages and nearly four times as many birth defects occurred. The study represented a follow-up to the Fairchild-IBM neighborhood study cited above. Once again, health officials let us down: "We have enough evidence to warrant further study by not enough to warrant a health advisory."

THIS MODERN WORLD © 1988 TOM TOMORROW



by Tom Tomorrow

PLANTS BURSTING WITH ENERGY

Tillie — “In front of my eyes one part of the world was becoming another. Atoms exploding, flinging off tiny bullets that caused the fountain, atom after atom breaking down into something new.”

— Paul Zindel, *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds*

Photo plate 7. Muriel Howorth is wearing a white — is it fluffy, or is the photograph blurred? — bejeweled turban. She conceals a sagging neck beneath a high collar, but maintains a forceful femininity with a glittering string of ball-bearing beads. Muriel cocks her head coyly and lovingly fingers the nuts.

The peanuts.

Muriel was an early propagandist of the “peaceful uses of the atom,” a campaign to sweeten the advent of the bitter bomb with promises of nickel-a-month electric bills and cars that ran and ran with nary a trip to the service station. Her works included *The Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy*, *Atomic Transmutation: the Greatest Discovery Ever Made*, and *Atom in Wonderland*.

To secure her position as British Empress of the Atom, Muriel Howorth in 1960 dreamed up a project to foster genetic diversity in seed stock. The traditional way to get new plant varieties had been to send a botanical expedition out to the colonies to “discover” what might be there. This method had worked very well in the past. But the colonies were no longer as dependable: 1947 India, 1956 Sudan, 1957 Ghana, 1957 Malaya, 1960 Nigeria . . . gone, all gone. Britain would have to find ways to make do by itself.

Muriel’s decree, exhortation and chronicle was a book entitled *Atomic Gardening*. She started her tale by describing one of her dinner parties in the Great Dining Hall of the Royal Commonwealth Society. Passed around were dishes of roasted, salted nuts produced from “NC 4x” stock — North Carolina 4th generation X-rayed. This was a line of peanuts that had been developed from stock that had been irradiated to induce mutation and then stabilized over four generations to preserve a set of desired characteristics — sturdiness, pest resistance, high yield.

Muriel had buckets of leftover ingredients. As she recounts:

. . . I began inspecting my uncooked nuts wondering what I would do with them all. One day I was engaged in tidying up

some begonia plants when I had the idea to throw one away, re-soil the pot and pop an irradiated peanut in the sandy loam to see how this mutant grew . . . This ‘Muriel Howorth’ peanut as it came to be called, germinated in four days. That was indeed something unusual, and as it grew with uncanny speed from day to day, closing its leaves tightly together at night, like a child’s hands clasped in prayer, stems leaning over as though to lay their heads on a pillow, I became fascinated with . . . a most unusual growth development.

The atomic peanut hit the media. A couple of newspapers ran articles about the peanut, but the best forum seems to have been television. The peanut had an aura that its audience wanted to witness in a more sustained form than was possible in a newspaper photograph. Besides there was something about an atomic peanut that suited the banal jocularity of the medium. Wally Effner from Southern TV interviewed Muriel at the Wannock Show Garden, where the half-lived atomic peanut had gone to reside under the ministrations of a professional horticulturalist. Wally demanded to be shown the “goods,” and the “horrified” Muriel held herself back as the plant was pulled out of its pot, with the roots and baby peanuts displayed in their “nakedness.” As Wally said, that was “showing ‘em something for their money.” A week later, Joe Hill, television gardener, had her on his show, live. Joe Hill asked if the more than 300 correspondents who had written to Muriel about membership in the Atomic Garden Society had addressed their letters “Muriel Howorth, ‘Peanuts’, Eastbourne.”

Finally, an American press agency wrote a story and took her picture, transforming proper authoress Muriel into “a glamorous film vamp, the double of Marlene Dietrich.” What the heck, it was publicity. The article was printed throughout the world.

It was good the world knew what to expect. Muriel’s ultimate project was to feed it.

In 600 years time, at the present rate, there will be one human being on every square yard of land . . . It becomes imperative for each one of us to help feed these people.

Muriel was such a holdover from the British imperial era. She could not think of the starving masses as anything but “these people,” — that is, the others. But still, Muriel felt a patrician duty to provide. A telling detail: Muriel had a beloved black cat she called “Nigger.”

Muriel founded the Atomic Gardening Society to dis-





encouraged to file a card on every plant that germinated.

The project wasn't viable, to use a horticultural term. By 1967, marigolds were the only irradiated seed still available to amateurs and this was solely because Burpee Seed Company was offering a prize of \$10,000 for the first white marigold (peroxide didn't count). As it turned out, the first white marigold popped up from seed treated with nothing more than rain water.

Mr. Green Genes

Even so partisan a group as the International Atomic Energy Agency would report by 1971 that radiation induced mutations were no substitute for the conservation of naturally-occurring germ plasm. That germ plasm has been collected by hundreds of generations of Third World farmers who have searched out the genetic strains upon which our agriculture is based. Generally, these strains come from tropical and subtropical regions that escaped the genetic devastation of the grand glaciers and have a long history of thoughtful agriculture. Ethiopia/Asia Minor gave us wheat and onions (and we pay them back with schmaltzy pop songs—Feed the...). Tomatoes and potatoes, both of the Solanaceae botanic family, came down from

tribute irradiated seeds to thousands of British gardeners. These gardeners turned their home garden into experimental stations, sowing and raising the seeds and taking careful notes of the behavior of even the most bizarre, seemingly useless mutant. Muriel claimed that plants would eventually appear that would produce astounding yields and resistances—the potato that ate caterpillars, the green bean that required a chain saw to julienne.

The point of the North Carolina peanut project seems to have been not so much to create artificial mutations, but to develop a method of genetic research. A letter, from the School of Agriculture, Raleigh, that Muriel published makes this clear:

We agree this is a fine achievement but consider the genetic studies made possible by the artificial mutation process and its products to be, in the long run, a much greater contribution to world welfare.

The NC 4x plant came out of an original sowing of 500,000 seeds. The Atomic Garden Society sent out six seeds at a time. At that rate, it would have taken more than 80,000 gardeners to duplicate the North Carolina effort. Other varieties of atom-blasted seeds were available in greater quantities from a Dutch importer—but still, that's an awful lot of window boxes. It is painful to think of the effort it would have taken to monitor the jottings on the hundreds of thousands of notecards. Each amateur gardener was



the Andes for a visit and decided to stay — before the sojourn, Deadly Nightshade was their only relative that Europeans had any use for. Without the contributions of Central Asia and Asia Minor, there would be no Baroque still lifes, which are catalogs of Western genetic shopping sprees in those regions — almonds, apples, apricots, cherries, dates, figs, grapes, melons, pomegranates, watermelons all come from there. Muriel Howarth's beloved peanut started out in Brazil/Uruguay — which also gave us tapioca pudding with canned pineapple, indirectly. Outside the Mediterranean region, only sugar beets originated in Europe.

Each year, farmers would plant several venerable strains of their important crops. Particular strains would be resistant to different unforeseen occurrences — drought, infestation, wind storms, late frosts. These strains are known as "land races." Collecting land races for the genetic enrichment of the fields back home has been an important western colonial project.

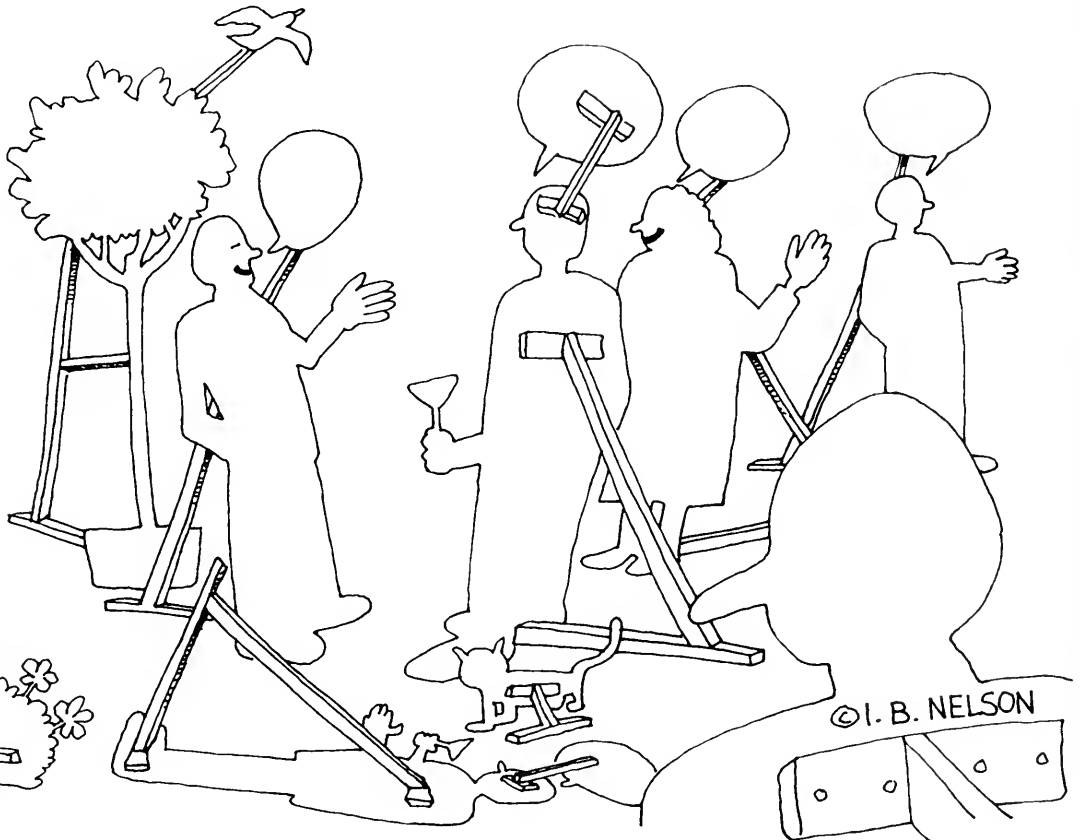
Instead of harboring land races, western agricultural scientists now run relay races. When it becomes clear that the latest monocropped super-strain is running

into problems, they go to the gene bank and withdraw the capital to tinker out a new variety that they hope will succeed — for a couple years at least.

But the bank is collapsing. The alarming destruction of rain forests is grossly shrinking the globe's genetic diversity. And the bank's small savers — the peasants — are becoming borrowers as western agribusiness eradicates their multicropping practices in the name of the "Green Revolution."

The First World owes more to the Third than we have been led to believe. Blasting seeds with radiation is no substitute for preserving the germ plasm that already exists. This is partly a matter of preserving natural environments like the rain forests. It is also a matter of attending to social systems. The peasant who tends and stores a wide range of seeds is an invaluable resource. The president of Standard Oil should be shoveling her manure.

— by Mark Leger



by I.B. Nelson

ATM #666:

A TRUE STORY

“May I help you?”

“Yes. A couple of weekends ago one of the ATM machines ripped me off for \$140.00. I went in the next day and filled out forms and the promised to correct it soon, and it looks like they did try, because I received in the mail yesterday this pink piece of paper saying I’m to be reimbursed for the \$140 but it hasn’t shown up yet on my account balance, and I wonder if you could correct that.”

In reality, it was the third time I’d gone complaining to get my money back, the third different branch in fact, and I came in armed with every piece of paper that I thought might help: my October bank statement, my account passbook, a sheet of yellow legal paper on which the woman at my neighborhood branch wrote down a list of figures from my last three weeks’ transactions, and another long list next to it of my own careful calculations based on her list of figures which didn’t come out anywhere near what the computer said my balance was, a whole \$100 off in fact; and of course that all-important pink sheet that I didn’t dare relinquish for fear it might be my only such record. People were certainly nice enough when they tried to assist me, but their efforts seemed strangely ineffectual.



by Trine T-Square

NEW UTOPIA

The biggest contributor to long-term monogamy in New York is not AIDS: it is gentrification. I know of three couples who stay together just to keep affordable apartments. The standard joke here is that couples used to endure for the sake of the children, but now they do it for the apartment. Some joke.

I know of two women who endured months of blatant molestation in order to have a place to sleep. Consider the facts: Women generally earn less than men; real estate brokers, concerned only about money, are extremely reluctant to help a single woman; women therefore subjugate themselves to the men who can afford the leases.

Even sexless pairings are unpleasant, although they might seem more amusing. A friend of mine, an even-tempered artist, began taking valium nightly to calm herself during the rowdy parties that her manic roommate threw until six in the morning. By taking a semi-respectable teaching job my friend was able to afford an apartment in one of the city’s fading artists’ havens. Yet she did not have much of a chance to go to galleries or work on art: her teaching left her drained and her drug habit left her three-quarters unconscious.

A man, desperate to get away from his roommate, would up spending his life’s savings to stay in a hotel until he could find another arrangement. To pay the rent when he finally found a place, he switched from working as a 30-hour-a-week proofreader to a 60-hour-a-week paralegal. Like so many residents in New York, he was forced to forsake a lot of free time and accept a more mainstream existence.

It used to be that only college students had roommates. Forced pairing didn’t seem like a great ordeal; and if the student can’t adapt, he could console himself with the knowledge that the term will end in a few months. It seems fitting for a society to inflict this on students as a process of socialization: by forcing students to live with strangers, the system teaches them to live within a group and compromise individual needs. The students “adjust” to living in the adult world.

Now everyone, regardless of age, is subject to such conditions—everyone that is who has not adopted a careerist lifestyle replete with high wages. The adult world has become much more strict and the pressures to conform are severe.

The city itself has been forced to conform: Through pain, upheaval and deprivation, it has lost most of the eccentric character that once defined it. The myth is that yuppies are drawn here by the city’s art and culture, nightlife and variety—things that offer an entertaining break from the pressures of the business world.

"Well, first of all I need a new passbook; this one was filled up weeks ago."

"Anything else?"

"Yes, I need a computer printout of all my transactions that have taken place since my last statement in October."

If there's anything good about this situation it's that I no longer throw away my monthly bank statements and receipts without looking at them. They always seemed like the ultimate junk mail.

"I'm sorry, I can't give you a printout. You'll have to go around to Customer Service and they'll take care of you."

And she starts typing numbers into my new passbook. She's nice enough. In certain contexts you could even call her my friend. Once, when one of the other tellers was hassling me for ID that I didn't have with me, this one piped up and said, "Oh, I know him!" I usually try to arrive at her window when I'm at this downtown branch.

"Now, my account is fine through October 16th when I filled this last book up. It's only sometime after that that it starts getting all screwed up. See there, on November 8th, that's when the ATM machine ripped me off. . ."

"What happened on November 8th?"

"I went to make a \$200 withdrawal, I punched it in, and the machine deducted \$200 from my account and gave me a receipt for it and then only gave me three \$20s and shut off completely."

"Which ATM was that?"

"The one at Fremont and Mission. ATM number 666."

"Isn't that odd!"

"Actually it's even. But, fact is, that was almost two weeks ago, and I still haven't gotten all of it back."

It was the technological nightmare being ripped off blind by this cold machine without a witness around anywhere. For the first time in my life I wished for one of those cameras on the wall. I screamed and pounded the machine with my fists, which did a lot of good, as if it was one of those old-fashioned Coke machines that sometimes works right if you pound it hard enough, but I just hurt my hand. I should know better.

"When did you fill out the ATM Dispute form?"

"On November 9th."

"I'm having trouble accessing your account. . .oh, I see, on your passbook I typed in a 6 instead of a 5. I'll have to change that!"

(Just one more thing. . .) "It says here that you were credited on November 13th with \$100. I wonder why you were only credited \$100 when it should have been \$140. You'll have to contact your neighborhood branch and get them to change that."

"But how come my calculations are still \$100 off from those that my neighborhood branch gave me, when I used the same figures? See?"

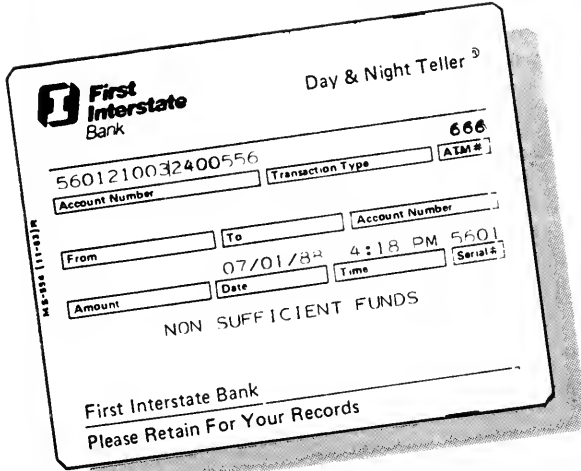
"Hmmm. . ."

This is starting to resemble Richard Brautigan's surreal story

But it was clear five years ago, when the developers first took over, that gentrification would impoverish the culture. The nightclub scene has died, mostly because clubs (8BC, Danceteria, etc.) can't pay the rent. High rents have also claimed a string of galleries, movie houses (most notably the Thalia and the Saint Marks Cinema), and even legendary restaurants such as Mama Leone's. Most of these sites are now marked for construction of high-priced coöps and condominiums.

Change is most apparent on the streets. Less than five years ago, the East Village managed to maintain the appearance of bohemia. You could stroll down lower Broadway and encounter unemployed punks, die-hard hippies, street corner poets and sidewalk expressionists; even better, you caught a glimpse of the city's ethnic diversity: Ukrainians, Yugoslavians, Indians, Cubans, Puerto Ricans and old-time East European Jews would all cross this thoroughfare because their neighborhoods





"Complicated Banking Problems," where he's stuck forever in a bank line behind men with absurdly elaborate transactions.

"Here's the problem. On November 2nd, she wrote down a \$200 credit and the computer only shows a \$100 credit on November 2nd."

"Well, which one is correct?"

"The computer, of course."

"Then why did she write \$200?"

"She just made a mistake, that's all."

So I trudge around past vast rows of desks and find the one marked "Customer Service." There's a guy there, but he's on the phone. He'll be with me in a long moment.

I realize that I've spent a total of about an hour and a half so far at the different branches trying to get my money back, and I still haven't gotten all of it back.

The "Customer Service" man is off the phone now. "May I help you?"

"Yes, I'd like a printout of all my transactions since October."

"That will be three dollars please."

"Three dollars?! She didn't say anything about having to fork over three dollars! What kind of 'customer service' is this?"

I decide I can wait to see the official record of my transactions, but I do remember that in all this craziness, I'd completely forgotten to make a simple deposit that I was there to make in the first place. So I go back to my "friend."

"You never told me there was any charge to receive a printout."

"Oh yes, that's bank policy."

"It's starting to not seem such a bad idea to just keep my money under my mattress."

"Well, we're doing the best we can."

This is hardly an amazing story. What's amazing about it, though, is that I still keep my bank account there, and I still use the automatic teller machines. I just don't go back to ATM number 666.

by Zoe Noe

were just around the corner. Now it seems that they have been driven out of town. The streets at night are louder than ever, but with the cries of young attorneys and bankers drunkenly hopping the trendy bars. They all wear the same suit jackets and neat-look haircuts as they try to relive the frat parties they enjoyed at their suburban colleges.

The only diversity you'll find now is provided by the beggars who block the sidewalks with their cardboard beds and swollen feet. Everyone knows that the homeless population is approaching the six-figure mark. But there are signs that even this eyesore will be removed. The city will have to face some messy legal hassles before it can commit them, but removing them is a first step. Mayor Ed Koch, the New York developers' most powerful ally, has the police sweep beggars off the street. More sidewalk room for yuppies.

The culture myth is false. Yuppies are not coming here to see old New York; they're here to see the new land of yuppies. By taking over the world's greatest city, yuppies are making the ultimate '80s statement: They no longer have to settle for the suburbs. This land is their land now. They no longer have to worry about the unstable types, because all those people have been driven out.

Well, almost. A few residents still don't fit in, but economic pressures will either force them to flee or drive them into the mainstream. Strict monogamy and/or

male-dominated living arrangements will help put them on the right road; the long hours of high-pressured work will take care of the rest. Those who still don't conform will be either dosed out on downers or tied up working triple-overtime at marginal jobs. Whatever the case, they will be rendered invisible. For some, New York will become a utopia.



by Marce Hall

Author's Post-script:

Fortunately, some of the numbing yuppification which I satirized has begun to recede. Unfortunately, the polarization has become more evident and dangerous. Strolling through East Harlem the other day, I saw blood seeping through the cracks in the sidewalk. (Or did it come from the crack in the street?)

I think, folks, that we're in for some crazy times. I suggest some of you stop looking back and gaze straight ahead. Just make sure you wear your crash helmets.

by Richard Singer

A Convention of the Heart

On the morning of my fiftieth birthday
I imagine myself gray and lean and on my way
to an insurance symposium when a housewife pretending
to be Grace Kelly mistakes me for Cary Grant.

We talk ephemera as the maitre d' finds
a nice table for us in the dining car. The scenery
is a wonderful pastiche of the south of France,
vintage 1955. A surly wine steward d' without thumbs

pours a full-bodied champagne. The eggs appear,
unmutilated and relaxed. The toast, stacked
in the crisp layers of memory, succumbs
to my infinite taste for benediction.

My hand reaches for hers. She smiles
as we touch, our fingers dancing in and out
of each other's warmth as if, in that one mad instant,
I have awakened from a long, terrible sleep.

Jay A. Blumenthal

WATER JUG

I take long strides
down aisle M, rushing to get to the job by 3.
My lunch bucket and water jug bang
against my thigh with every step,
ice cubes rattle like snakes—
iced tea today.

This jug I call my friend and keep
near me under my machine,
sneaking a drink when I can.
Santino asks *what you got in there?*
Go juice I tell him.
Go fuck yourself I mean.
I can tell he's trying to smell my breath.
I breathe heavy into his face.
He shoves me away. *Get back to work,*
asshole.

At lunch I suck out of the jug,
that cold breast easing my hot throat.
The ice melts, usually
before I drink it all down.
A good half gallon
and some days that's not enough—
I refill it with water.

At the end of the shift,
my long strides, just as fast,
headed to punch out,
The jug dancing
light off my leg.

Jim Daniels

On the Insufficiency of Electronic Mail

I close my eyes
to watch the patterns
dancing toward you
across the wire
black & white white & black
this static language
of two small words
how can it think
to fill the distance
when all the sounds
of shuttered English
even carried in your voice
cannot begin
to shrink the space
that like a shadow
lies still between us.

Laura G. Beck

friday [from "Work Week Variations"]

missing work
at the bus stop a blue
chevie pulls up hey
the man says I don't
know you but
if you don't mind
missing work
I'll take you to the park
& bludgeon you to death
okay I say & get in

William Talcott

A Convention of the Heart

On the morning of my fiftieth birthday
I imagine myself gray and lean and on my way
to an insurance symposium when a housewife pretending
to be Grace Kelly mistakes me for Cary Grant.

We talk ephemera as the maitre d' finds
a nice table for us in the dining car. The scenery
is a wonderful pastiche of the south of France,
vintage 1955. A surly wine steward d' without thumbs
pours a full-bodied champagne. The eggs appear,
unmutilated and relaxed. The toast, stacked
in the crisp layers of memory, succumbs
to my infinite taste for benediction.

My hand reaches for hers. She smiles
as we touch, our fingers dancing in and out
of each other's warmth as if, in that one mad instant,
I have awakened from a long, terrible sleep.

Jay A. Blumenthal

WATER JUG

I take long strides
down aisle M, rushing to get to the job by 3.
My lunch bucket and water jug bang
against my thigh with every step,
ice cubes rattle like snakes—
iced tea today.

This jug I call my friend and keep
near me under my machine,
sneaking a drink when I can.
Santino asks *what you got in there?*
Go juice I tell him.
Go fuck yourself I mean.
I can tell he's trying to smell my breath.
I breathe heavy into his face.
He shoves me away. *Get back to work,*
asshole.

At lunch I suck out of the jug,
that cold breast easing my hot throat.
The ice melts, usually
before I drink it all down.
A good half gallon
and some days that's not enough—
I refill it with water.

At the end of the shift,
my long strides, just as fast,
headed to punch out.
The jug dancing
light off my leg.

Jim Daniels

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okay I say & get in
William Talcott

Paris, Blazey.

You can only drive so far, y'know?
You can drive to L.A.
Where you'll pass a blue Skoda, swerving,
Franz Kafka is on the freeway!

Swerving in the margins— in anguish—
he cuts you off!
He's threatening you— it is still early
afternoon, you can see the air— and it's suspended—
hanging in clumps across the windshield.

The pain was real, it hurt, it's Louis Armstrong.

In the kitchen, she constructed a sandwich for herself
using two pieces of wheat bread and a slice of Kraft headcheese.

Franz Kafka is still on your tail,
he will always be on your tail.

He is passing you on the right now, waving his
grimace out the window, he tosses an old typewriter
into the back seat of your 4-door Hyundai and backfires.

Paris, Blazey

THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR

A man sat down at a cafe and noticed the checkered
tablecloth was patterned after the Franco-Prussian war. He
thought about the prisoners taken, the bullets spent and his
great Uncle Harry.

It must have been a helluva war, he remarked to the
waitress. She agreed and pointed to a spot on the
tablecloth where the last battle had been fought.

That's where Uncle Harry got it, he told her.

You must be very proud, she said.

I am, he said.

Rob Robertson

MORE THAN HIS MOTHER TO TELL

A man with a briefcase
strides down the aisle
with his three-piece suit
and shiny safety glasses.

Some government guy
somebody says at the break table.
Company vice president
somebody says in the john.

He circles the plant
staring at us like he's lost
but too proud
to ask directions.

He steps around a grease puddle
and gets the fairy wave
behind his back
from some of the men
and women.

We can't play keepaway with his briefcase
can't dirty his clean clothes.
We do what we know we must do:
look busy.

Jim Daniels

multi-tasking

I stand at the urinal
pissing in one hand

I have a coffee
in the other for the love

of a coat by andrei
codrescu I read his poem

against meaning all this time
I'm pissing the boss

walks in stands at the next
urinal what you doing

talcott recycling yourself
I sip the coffee sneeze

through my nose the boss
wipes his shoes & leaves

William Talcott

```

rk * dr AUTUMN
form d4 AUTUMN
base d4 AUTUMN
query d4 AUTUMN
7ps-a
10
1047 01402 CS
4051 01402 ANNY
4128 01402 mathlib
4154 01402 biolib
4208 01402 ps
7xch anny i-8-hby

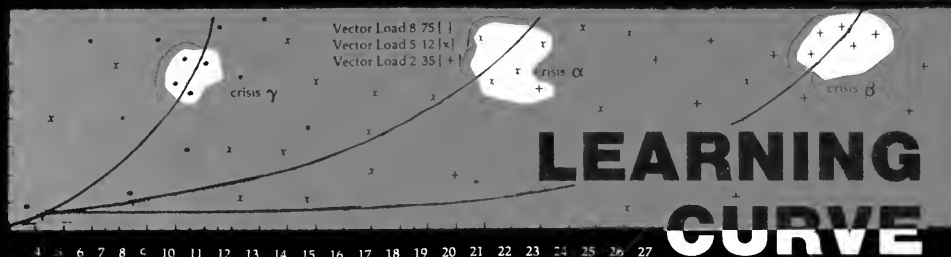
```

DENSITY LOAD Lx4

```

[Density [lb/ft^3]]
1.7 1.3 1.0 2.0 2.1 2.2

```



Δt Interval = 24.0 hrs.

SECODE 01402 ALPHA PEÑA ALTA L/W/L/MOR TIME: OCT. 19. 2004. 22:43:29:35

The faintly antiseptic aroma of the lab mingled with Morgen's fourth cigarette. A memo on the desk, stained with a solvent that had blurred its letters, was only the latest in a series of paper missiles directed to the project leader. Below the Mitsubishi-Bechtel-Bureau of Prisons letterhead was Morgen's name, yesterday's date and a red CLASSIFIED stamp covering the title of the report. Illegible now, the words were the focus of most of Morgen's waking hours: "AUTUMN CHILL: Prospects & Strategies in Biochemical Reinforcement of Belief Structures." A research project that had somehow survived the funding droughts for years, a project that had brought forth fruit. As ordered. And now the shit was really hitting the proverbial air circulation device.

Morgen got up and poured another cup of bitter, curiously tasteless commissary coffee and talked aloud. "Show me the second derivatives on the reported out-breaks, scale the time by, uh, ten day periods." The computer responded with a terse "Working."

Sitting down again, Morgen leaned towards the terminal, pushing the piles of paper to one side. The colored lines danced on the screen and a low, sexlessly cheerful voice recited the statistics. Morgen typed a brief command and then placed a finger into the side of a silver box beside the terminal. Morgen's recitation of the recognition phrase triggered the analyzer, which verified the user's identity and recorded the current physiological state. Morgen spoke again: "Give me a factor analysis for variables of crowd size, city density, time and exposure. Route it to the Warden's office."

Morgen's eyes wandered over the office. The place was filthy; the recent marathon sessions hadn't resulted in better maintenance. Through the window, mostly covered with announcements and cartoons, could be seen the other team members, engrossed in their tasks. Morgen typed for a moment, stood and walked out of the room. The computer shut off the terminal and opened the door after verifying that Morgen was on the list of prisoners allowed to pass.

The lab outside the office looked like any other airless research lab, lined with the endlessly complex machines that shuffled living strands of DNA. The prisoners who staffed the lab were mostly college graduates, grateful for the chance to avoid grimmer confinement. As their boss passed the technicians, wearing color-coded smocks

and transponder bracelets, called out quiet greetings. Morgen passed through the double-walled airlock and signed out, joking with the guard, and walked down the hall. Morgen fingered a tattered cigarette pack, decided against it. Damned meetings! Even worse, the warden and the big bosses were looking for something to offer Washington. Morgen just fucking hated it. Damn! Well, it was too late to back out now. The die, as it were, was cast.

The next guard was talking with someone about the riots as the video flashed images of wavering lines of National Guardsmen firing on crowds and then fleeing. "My sister lives over in Covina and she says that the news has got it all wrong . . . there wasn't more than five or six cases in her hospital all week, and the electricity only quit once for about an hour. But hell, look at that." The guard passed Morgen through the airlock to the administration building, and then resumed talking: "The Air Force is supposed to have grounded all its planes 'cause too many pilots were joyriding."

Morgen went through several more check-points staffed by well-armed guards. The interior passages had security cameras and finger plates, while the guards stood in sealed rooms with automatic shot-guns mounted in turrets below bay windows. After another round of metal detectors and a UV decontamination bath, Morgen was facing the warden's secretary.

"Oh, it's you, Morgen. The place has been dead this morning except for the feds. You got a smoke?"

Morgen extended the pack; "The warden said something about them. Who are they?"

"Atlanta Center for Disease Control and some team from Fort Dietrich. Apparently everybody that's field-tested a virus in the last year is being checked. Some of the big commercial companies are completely shut down."

"How are things on the outside? I mean, we hear about shortages and all . . ."

"Oh, well, maybe in some places things are bad, but I haven't had any trouble, except with like, lines for gasoline, and, uh, soda pop and junk like that. Hey, I'd better tell the Wombat that you're here." She picked up the handset and listened. "He said that he'll be a few minutes." She turned back to her terminal.

Morgen looked around the now familiar room. One office wall had an aerial photograph of the prison—the



double razor-wire fences and squat towers betrayed nothing of the real purpose of the factory-like buildings. The low mounds around the prison held anti-air and anti-tank weapons, and the wide grassy playgrounds were seeded with anti-personnel mines. The commercial loading dock had the most visible activity as unmarked trucks loaded white boxes and drove away. The sections of the prison weren't identified, but Morgen knew most of them—had, in fact, helped build the prison years before, after being interned during the war riots. The most profitable area was located near the loading docks—the organ farm, in which condemned criminals were kept alive (as long as feasible) while surgeons snipped out whatever parts were currently required. The food was good, the lighting subdued, the halls quiet, the atmosphere chilling. The huge library and white collar jobs, however, didn't change the carbines in the guard's hands into anything less lethal. The security that kept long-term prisoners "secure" also kept the corporate secrets safe.

Morgen reread the spartan announcements on another wall: "Loyalty to Team, Loyalty to Company, Loyalty to State," and another, with crossed Japanese and US flags, exhorted "For the New Co-Prosperty Sphere—Everything!" Some felon, more daring than subtle, had

scrawled "Fuck U" in what looked like blood. A third poster warned that theft was punishable by donor-hood. The fluorescent lights hummed, the air filtration ducts hummed, the secretary hummed, the phone hummed. The secretary picked it up, listened, waved Morgen in.

The warden was sitting on a large sofa with a woman that Morgen didn't recognize. They were staring out at the Peña Alta Rehabilitation Center, as the mixed venture prison was formally known. Morgen could just make out the dormitory where the researchers were housed. The swirling snow hid the grimmer barracks of the lab's experimental "animals." Morgen remained standing, as required by regulations, eyes lowered, half-relishing the familiar chest pain. On wet days the infirmary was swamped with middle-aged prisoners whose lungs had been seared by the government's gasses on those bright autumn days almost a decade before. The video was flashing images of riots and commentators.

Several minutes later Ms. Yaeger stormed into the room, trailing assistants. Pulling a chair opposite the sofa, she waved at Morgen to sit. Yaeger, in charge of all of the "Special Research Projects," was Mitsubishi's U.S. director. "The Cabinet is meeting this afternoon. All of the big cities have had serious dis-

turbances, and the regular army is being ordered in; the National Guard units aren't responding. We've lost communications with some areas. I just got off the phone with Hyodai, the chairman of MITI." The mention of the powerful Japanese government trade body visibly agitated the warden. "Peña Alta is our primary biological research station, so I've asked the government to send us their best. Mrs. Sam, here, is the head of that team."

"I'm from the Atlanta Center for Disease Control Emergency Response Team. We are still trying to get a grasp on the actual source of contamination, whether the results are inherent in whatever was released, or if it was changed by something in the wider environment. It certainly does seem to be very similar to your T-Agent.

"Your team is giving my assistants all the work notes and backups, but I would appreciate it if you could sketch your project for us." Mrs. Sam looked at Morgen.

Morgen shrugged, stood up, and started to pace. "As you know there have been tremendous advances made recently in human genetics. The map of the human genome has finally become detailed enough to be of use, and the fight against AIDS in the last decade deepened our understanding. "AUTUMN CHILL" was part of a broad effort directed at behavioral research and control." Morgen paused, lit a cigarette absently, and thought about the reality of such research. True, AIDS and many other viruses could be killed, and many genetic defects could be eliminated, but the advances in health care and longevity had been mostly for the rich, and the genetic project had proved a boon primarily to penal psychologists and bio-social engineers. The move to make prisons more productive, coinciding with the arrest or internment of large numbers of technocrats had led to several labs similar to Peña Alta.

"We proceeded from the Watson-Nkruma retrovirus, mostly because it is a very stable platform, well-tested. We were after an agent that would increase learning speed, or retention, or both. We found several mechanisms immediately, but they were highly unspecific: The experimental subjects learned very fast, permanently, but they 'learned' everything—every image, every sensation, every feeling was permanently engraved. Most of them became catatonic in a remarkably short time. It took us almost two years to find a selective trigger on a cellular level. We hit paydirt when we realized that the RNA sequences that coded for complex memories—what we

call Rhienshold Fractal images—shared a common DNA base. We were able to create a catalyst that reinforced certain behaviors. But we then hit a big problem—there was incredible individual variation; we had to find a way to tailor it for an almost infinite range. That would account for your inability to get a handle on it, but it isn't uncommon—we borrowed from the herpes cure that Chu developed. Almost nothing that we did was new—we mostly put together existing bits and pieces. We had approval for the field tests, of course. That virus is going to be very hard to attack: it's made to elude all the body's standard defenses and to continuously alter its appearance, what we call its "footprint." The thing is packed with codes—there are giga-bytes of information in there—really a miniature Turing machine, a computer."

Mrs. Sam interrupted, asking "Who were the first human subjects?"

"In accordance with Bureau of Prison's regulations on inmate research, we were—the staff of the project. Of course we also had a group of normal subjects." Morgen picked up the remote control unit, turned the video off, and called up a computer display. "We were exposed on March 11th and had a three weeks' incubation. As you can see, all measurements are nominal, until the first week of April, when we see various increases—retention, scores, etc."

"It looks to me as if you were all working increased hours—did you account for that in your analysis?" asked Ms. Yaeger.

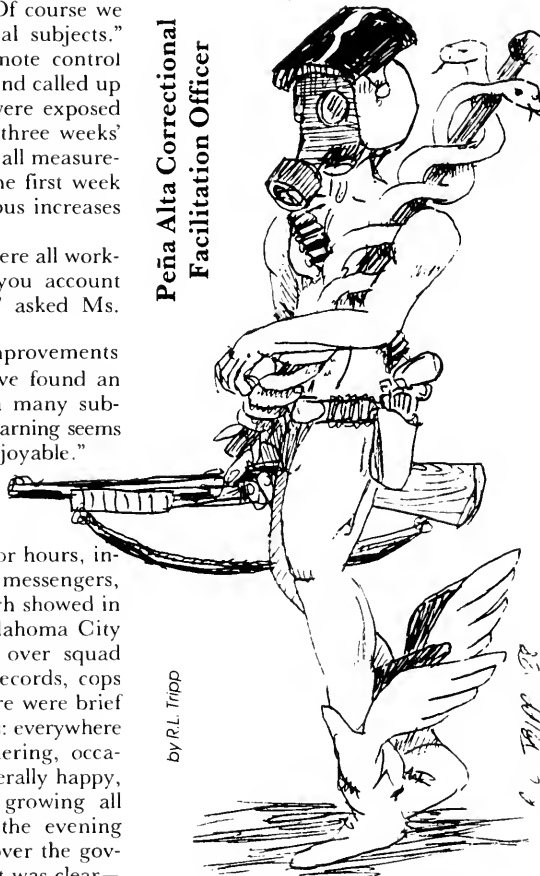
"Yes, we did, and the improvements are still significant. We have found an increase in time worked in many subjects—the increased ease of learning seems to make the process more enjoyable."

The discussion went on for hours, interrupted by phone calls, messengers, and once by the video, which showed in graphic detail a riot in Oklahoma City—farmers driving tractors over squad cars, bank clerks burning records, cops dancing in the streets. There were brief news-flashes from other cities: everywhere laughing crowds were gathering, occasionally stirred by rage, generally happy, very non-cooperative, and growing all the time. Around six in the evening there was a special report over the government's private channel. It was clear—a mass paralysis of social function was setting in, albeit unevenly. Absenteeism was soaring, whole industries were silent. Various parts of the government were collapsing.

The prison's Central Kitchen hadn't folded yet, although the supply truck hadn't shown up on schedule and nobody answered the supply company's phone. Tonight's dinner was excellent, belying the chaos outside the prison. Morgen took a bite and almost choked—the flavor of real meat was shocking after so many meals of soya paste and Roast Beef, as the Beefbeasts® were called. A product of the biogeneticists, complete with their own sinew and hair rope to hang them by, the beasts were large blobs of almost boneless flesh, with rows of truncated limbs hanging like flippers. Generically beef, pork or chicken (by segment), they grew suspended in large warehouses and provided most of the country's excess calories. Morgen almost gagged on the real thing, but covered up gracefully. The wine bottle kept coming back—courtesy of a friendly waiter—and Morgen took advantage of it.

Yaeger and Sam couldn't understand why the virus hadn't caused the carnival-like and wildly destructive behavior in

**Peña Alta Correctional
Facilitation Officer**



by R.L. Tripp

Morgen's team. The discussion was wide-ranging but inconclusive. The tentative consensus was that the outside environment had mutated the AUTUMN CHILL virus into something much more sinister than it was designed to be; perhaps some

RADIOGRAPHIE DU PHÉNOMÈNE SKINHEAD



« Le Canard enchaîné »

other artificial virus had combined with it. It was late night when Morgen was dismissed.

After being taken back to the experimental unit, Morgen went to the lab. The guard was used to late nights by Morgen's team and didn't even look up. Morgen waved the team into the back office. They crowded in, closing the door and turning on a radio while Morgen tinkered with the computer. A bottle of distilled spirits had been added to orange drink, and Morgen proposed a toast: "AUTUMN CHILL: our success!" There was a resounding cheer.

The radio in the background talked about rationing, then read a long list of units being called up from the Reserves. The prison intercom had already announced that there would be no breakfast. Morgen laughed out loud: "Just think of the irony—we starve here in our lab because of our little joke! What a punishment!"

"Hey, better than what will happen if the goons figure this all out!" called someone.

They drank more, laughing over the project's wildly successful conclusion. Amid the babble Morgen was typing an entry in a private file, protected from almost any intruder by encryption and deft tinkering with the computer system.

"This entry may well be the last before the computer system fails or the project collapses, so I am adding a few private notes to supplement the regular log of AUTUMN CHILL.

"The problem was to find a trigger for the process, something that would trigger the genetic reinforcers, something that would deeply effect the organism. We soon discovered, as has been noted, that any strong emotion would work, and that the subject would learn to repeat the process. Our team found that the best trigger, the most effective, was fun, enjoyment. The virus in turn reinforced those patterns that people found fun; movies, partying, drugs, or kicking ass."

The strident voice of the announcer was replaced by a more soothing tone: "In other news tonight, the US Weather

Service is predicting a Stage V Acid Rain alert for the San Diego-LA area. In a minute, we'll be back with an interview with Texas' new \$80 million lottery winner.

'It was necessary to make reports to the warden and the company. Those reports had to conceal as much as they revealed; had to slightly misstate the behaviors that we would reinforce. Perhaps our formally-minded bosses couldn't read between the lines; perhaps they felt that the values being reinforced were those of obedience, sacrifice and hard work. Certain project workers excelled at providing our official smoke-screen.

"The first test was required to be on ourselves—and we like our work! We worked yet harder to finish the project on schedule, on budget. Productivity soared: we explained it by phrases that our bosses would understand. We launched a project of sabotage that would avenge years of prison, banishment and pain.

"I am writing these words in the hope that some record of this project may endure, that some understanding of what has happened to the world may be preserved. It was not the result of accident or of error."

One of the workers was standing on a file cabinet, raising a glass: "Friends! Regardless of the cost: We have won!" The crowd cheered again.

The radio, almost inaudibly, was revealing the collapse of cities—shortages or disaster emptying some, others just vacated by a populace that had found something better to do. Morgen couldn't begin to imagine what was going to happen, or what the world would be like. But there would be a world, and it would just *have* to be a whole lot more fun than this one.

Smiling, Morgen signed off the computer, said goodnight and walked back to the dorms, feeling like a kid on Christmas Eve.

by Primitivo Morales

NEW! HIGH PRICE! WHY?
The last PW price hike (\$1.50 to \$2.50) was issue #14, Summer '85. Postal rates, general costs—we had to do it.
THANKS to our subscribers
— over \$1000 raised!



The hottest places in hell are reserved for those who, in time of great moral crisis, maintain their neutrality.

Dante 1265-1321

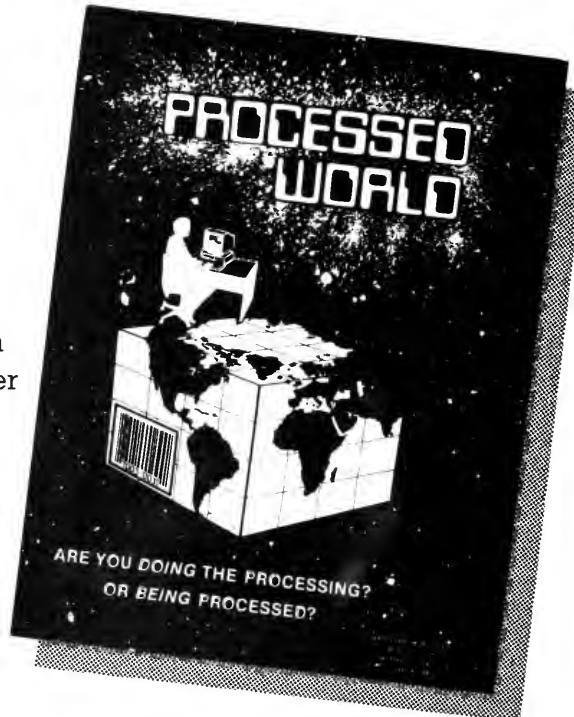
by D. Minkler

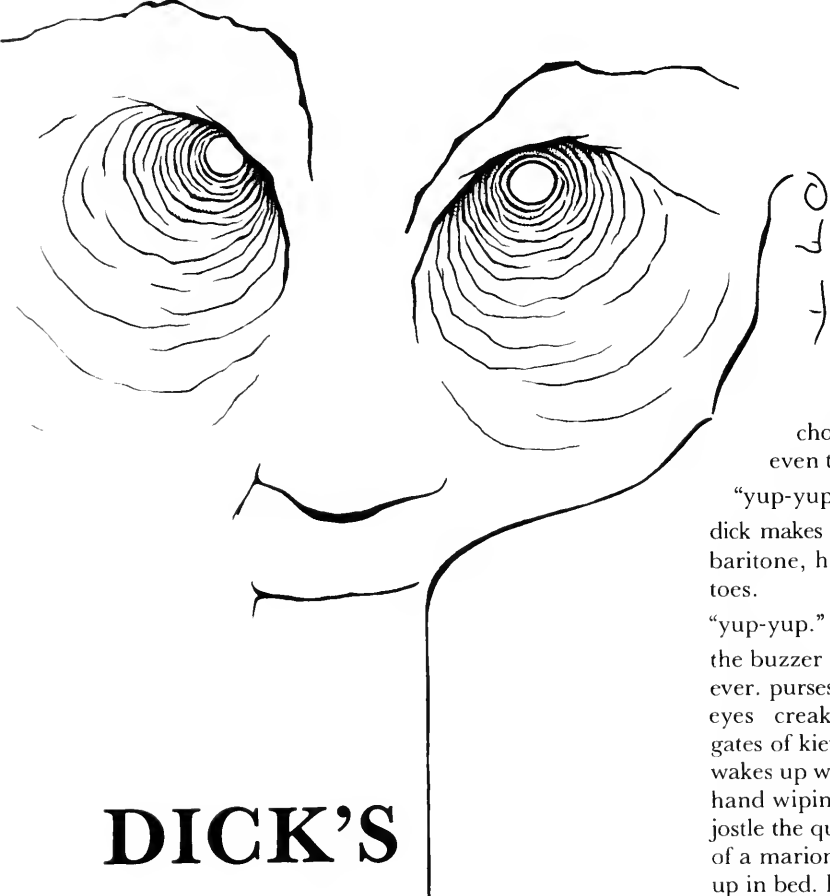
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DICK'S

DAY



1. breakfast

bacon, eggs, toast.

coffee? yes, the machine

begins its automatic brewing process in the dark kitchen. dick is on his back underneath a pennsylvania dutch quilt (wife had made). the aroma of maxwell house wafts under the bedroom door.

soon the buzzer sounds, 5:12 EST, dick had chosen this precise minute (reason undisclosed, even to him: clockhand of god or somesuch being)

“yup-yup.”

dick makes this staccato bird-sound with a half-narcotized baritone, his feet out-distance the quilt, he wiggles his toes.

“yup-yup.”

the buzzer sounds again, coffee aroma is stronger than ever. purses his lips. counterpoint. a sunrise in his head. eyes creaking apart/ great gates oh God/ great gates of kiev. the whole world shudders, mechanicsburg wakes up with dick. the marionette master has the usual. hand wiping sleep from face, stopping the buzzer. toes jostle the quilt, his wife turns over as if by the command of a marionette marine/master/marine. dick turns, sits up in bed. hand wipes sleep from face. encore. dick slips into prepositioned slippers (prepositioned: war reserve:: phrases that ricochet in his consciousness). he grabs horn-rims from night-table, follows the coffee aroma to its genesis. his slippers slide on the dimlit linoleum (oh God/ great general electric kitchen). mr. coffee is almost finished performing. it says 5:17. dick scratches his head with its carrot-top shock of hair.

“well. . . smells good. yup-yup.”

dick reaches for the large mug hanging on a rack on the counter. he lifts the pyrex pot (oh God/ technology). he pours, satisfies the hearty cup, puts pot back. slips over to the turquoise refrigerator, opens, uses milk on coffee. small slurp.

“well. . . tastes good. yup-yup.”

dick drinks it down.

bacon, eggs, toast? no, shower first. dick leaves mug on kitchen table next to the telephone, heads for bathroom. takes his 12,000th shower. he thinks of the building he'll be working at, how rectangular everything in it is. desks are exactly parallel and equidistant. dick likes this. sometimes it's difficult to tell what section one's in. dick thinks of being temporarily lost in the labyrinth. remembers finding his way by the unique configuration of vending machines at uniform intersections. . .

graphic by JRS

... already he looks forward to wearing down the requisitions, chuckling with cohorts. that's enough shower. now out, urinate golden into bowl. shave? yes, he must although he didn't on occasion and felt the worse for it, paranoiacally imagining that all eyes were turned upon him. disapproval. he didn't feel blended

... blended (echo).

"yup-yup."

dick wraps a towel around himself and moves back to the bedroom. his pants for this day are the same pants he wore in college: monotone sea-green cotton. he boasts that they still fit him, but actually it's a false boast since they are too big for him now. so he slips them on and uses the last notch on his belt so the end flops around shirt? short-sleeved sears polyester lt. brown with green rectangles. ham with green beans. dick remembers the cafeteria menu. well, no chicken pot pie this week, but ham with green beans. bacon, eggs, toast? yes, dick is dressed and ready for breakfast. he summons his wife from her sleep.

"how about a little breakfast there?"

"alright, i'll get up. alright, i'll get up. alright, i'll get up." peter's denial.

"yup-yup."

counterpoint.

dick fills his coffee mug, wife separates the bacon, eggs with spatula with an almost marionette-like motion.

toast? yes. wife gets it and serves it to dick.

dick penetrates a freshly-cooked egg yolk with his eyes closed. something in his fondest foggiest memory urges him to keep stabbing the innocent yolk with his fork until its ooze is predominant. until philosophy/jerk/philosophy is concentrated in the triumph of essence over form. but dick withdraws, shovels the remnants into his mouth.

suddenly dick is jerked from the table.

"well... off to work, bye dear."

"you stay away from that harriet, she's a ham and green beans fanatic..."

"awwww..."

"i mean it!"

"alright, dear. bye."

kiss. wife has bags under her eyes. 6:03.

2. the new pile

there's a new pile of rectangular requisitions on dick's desk.

"well... yankelovich must've brought me a present... something."

dick signs in at 6:30 and assumes his work position. besides the requisitions, his desk sports the following articles: photo of wife, boy and girl with fake gold frame (chicken with dumplings), large ceramic coffee mug (made by girl), rubber cup with pens, pencils, staple remover. the requisitions have green rectangles with alphanumeric characters in them. dick lifts the first one and examines it carefully, with an almost scientific intensity.

"morning, dick."

it's the guy with the weird beard.

"morning, dick."

it's stacy, miss proper.

"morning, dick."

it's chuck, the short fat one.

(three times/ oh god the denial)

dick scrutinizes boxes 3,5,7,11,13,29 and 37. there are variant possibilities he thinks that this requisition is a good one, ready for processing. he double checks. he takes a red felt-tip pen and makes a little check mark. he begins a new new pile. the codes on the requisitions in the new new pile are funny, somehow. dick chuckles. he tilts his head like a curious beagle. phones begin to ring in an aleatoric and microtonal fashion. somewhere behind the partition a woman with a cigarette-creaky voice says "you know they got ham and green beans at the cafeteria today."

3. reverie

after the new new pile is completed, dick time travels to his college days: wearing same sea green trousers, sitting underneath a slightly-turned shady oak. anthropology text and notebook in hand a cool september breeze blows through his carrot-top. he shudders with the breeze. *it is ominous*: dick thinks this instantaneously, as if the force of the sudden thought was the ejaculation of a shower's cold faucet on a morning face. in this first semester of his college career, most of his thoughts had come to him in this eruptive fashion: a crisp, clean attack, then a long delay trailing off like a blind and senile muttering. the thoughts like tiny ping-pong balls slowly got him into the habit of issuing a short hiccup-like affirmation of them:

"yup-yup."

the very first time, he heard it as an involuntary echo and felt his whole body gently titillated. there were millions of tiny fish hooks under the skin, attached to angelic/disciplinary/gossamer filament, extending into the heavens. at once

god(s) became attached to dick. he fondles his anthropology text, puts it between his legs, pages enclose his erection. the (tongue) (all the senses): wonderfully given by the marionette master. construction of pyramids in his heart/ slow escape down the Nile/ three times a witness. dick visualizes a giant ham on the easter table. a puppet football huddle, ready, sacrifice... 1 2 3...

:jerk, yup, jerk:

4. the intern

"morning, dick."

it's the boss.

"oh, morning, bill. we got visitors there?"

"dick, this young man is an intern from washington who will be with us for... how many days was it, three or four?"

"just today."

"i thought it was three or four... oh well, we really don't have three or four days of information to give you anyway."

"o.k."

"well. i'm going to sit you with dick for this morning and then after lunch feel free to bother each and every one of our item managers."

"o.k."

the boss goes to his cubicle, dick pulls up a chair for the intern and the lesson begins.

"well" goes dick - "what's your name there?"

"jerry lee."

"oh, that sounds like a southern name."

pause, 23 seconds.

"you from the south?"

"no"

"what's your last name there?"

"lee."

"oh... oh... oh! i thought it was like jerry lee lewis or something like that."

"no, my last name's lee."

"well" dick says, "robert e. lee, wasn't he a confederate general or something?"

"i'm not from the south."

"i guess not."

silence, 27 seconds. 8:37.

"well... what i do is check off these requisitions after i look in the right boxes and see that everything's o.k."

"what are you looking for?"

"oh... lots of things."

"like what?"

"oh, well if boxes 7, 11 and 15 don't have the same signal code and 29 and 37 don't have the right response codes and the unit price is under \$1000, then i

have to reject it unless there's a priority indicator in 11."

dick smiles at his ability to interpret the rectangles. he chuckles. the intern is speechless.

"do you bowl?" dick says.

"no."

"you don't bowl?"

"nope."

"h'mm . . . you sure you don't bowl?"

"no, not at all. i tried it once or twice, but no, i am not a current bowler."

"isn't that a little unusual . . ."

"what?"

"well, it seems to me you'd be meeting lots of pretty girls if you bowled."

"really?"

"oh yeah . . . my cousin up in duncannon met his wife in a bowling alley . . . turns out she was sterile so he divorced her six months later."

"maybe i'll try it again."

"yeh. yup-yup."

counterpoint now, cacaphonic phone symphony/ circus boss big-headed/ white hair broods over managerial documents.

"yup-yup."

dick ruffles his carrot-top, chuckles.

"so where's your home?" dick says.

"well, originally, i'm from new york."

"oh . . . york. i've got a cousin in york, works as an exterminator."

"no, new york."

"oh, way over there. boy, that's a long way from here . . . so where's your home?"

"well, i live in mechanicsburg now."

"whereabouts?"

"oxford manor."

"oh, i live in windsor park there . . . have for thirty years, then we're neighbors."

"i guess so . . ."

"yup-yup."

dick's head bobs up and down.

"so, you're an intern, where are you supposed to wind up?"

"beats me."

"oh, that doesn't sound very comforting."

"yeah, i travel a lot."

"do you have to fly?"

"sometimes."

"then what's it like on an airplane? i've never been on one, nope."

"well . . ."

"i've seen 'em in the movies, but never been on one, nope."

"well . . . they're *fast*!" the intern replies.

"matter of fact, i've never been on the other side of the mississippi. been to milwaukee on a bus trip, though . . ."

silence, 24 seconds. 9:03.

"so . . . where do these requisitions come from?"

"i don't know . . . yankelovich just puts 'em here."

"you don't know where they come from?"

"nope. sure don't. i just look at 'em and check 'em off. then yankelovich takes 'em away and that's the last i see 'em."

"then how do you know what your impact on the system is?"

"what's that there . . . impact on the system?"

"yeh."

dick tilts his head to the side, beagle-fashion. looks around the room, chuckles.

"i guess the boss knows more about it than i do . . . that's why he's the boss . . . yup-yup." (oh god(s)/vicious hands of marionette master/ a dead witness.)

dick rubs his shirt with the rectangles on it.

"can i get out of here early for lunch?" the intern asks.

"well . . . guess there's not much more for me to tell you anyway . . . yup-yup, that's all i do, is sit here and check off these requisitions . . ." dick chuckles. "i guess now you can go bother someone else."

5. lunch

xeroxed men on the nearest bulletin board. "yup-yup." ham and green beans, \$1.75. dick chuckles at 12:01. harriet is in his mind/ he is related to harriet/ harriet loves ham and green beans. three times the devil. dick bows his head while crossing the railroad tracks between the gray buildings. he is lost in a flock of silent servants, likened to the blind and ancient faithful. they travel with reverence to a greater good which devours the vociferous. harriet is exactly in the middle of the cafeteria. in the dmz between smoking and non-smoking. she weighs 300, and stuffs her cheeks with salad. dick says "hello there," but she has her mouth full of lettuce and russian salad dressing. she grunts hello. a little bit of the dressing oozes over her lower lip. dick sits down across from her. they both have ham and green beans, roll and butter and personal choice of beverage. they look at each other for a seemingly interminable period of time, as if waiting for the duel to start. dick looks at the clock and says "oh . . . hell." he stabs the ham slab with his knife and a jet of greasy juice squirts over his shirt.

"oops."

harriet chuckles, devours the ham slab in three serpentine mouthfuls. dick mashes his green beans.

"well, how about it?"

"no" replies harriet.

"are you sure?"

"yes."

harriet squeezes a roll in her sweaty palm.

"then when?"

"i don't know."

"the 19th?"

"no, chicken pot pie."

"can't miss bott bie. the 20th?"

"hershey park."

"the 21st?"

"ham and green beans."

oh god/ three times a false witness.

6. afternoon break

14:01. dick notices that an angel cake has been brought in and placed on an empty desk. he thinks of choruses of ejaculating cocks, of an inter-office sex tableau with the bosses as the instigators. under the tree/ anthropology waiting/ gold giftwatch around his cock. cold sorrowful face in the concrete bathroom. he is almost through with another pile of requisitions. impoverished people, march to the corner for inanity drill/ dick travels to the coffee mess, fills the next spot in line.

"so . . . how many cups a day of that do you drink there?" dick asks guy with the beard suggestive of a tortured russian novelist.

"i drink without counting. my marine d.i. said 'if you're gonna do something, do it all the way. if you're gonna drink beer, drink a hundred beers, if you're gonna smoke, smoke a goddamn carton of camel-nons down 'til they burn your fingers'."

"never was in the marines. was in the army for two years, peeled some potatoes" dick says.

"oh, the army." guy dismisses the army with a wave of his hand. guy pours from the pyrex pot (three times technology), first into dick's cup and then his own.

"you know something, dick? i would have as soon killed myself as go in the army . . . i wouldn't put my *dog* in the army!"

"well . . ." dick chuckles, shuffles his feet, rubs his carrot-top.

"hey guy . . . maybe we can bowl together sometime . . .?"

7. going home

dick completes his last scrutiny of the day. he rubs his rectangle shirt at the spot where the ham juice squirted.

"yup-yup. well . . . time to go home." the short fat one, chuck, approaches.

"what do you say there, dick . . . do you bowl tonight?"

"nope, nope. wife's fixin' bott bie."

"oh, bott bie. sounds like a treat to me. your wife make it from scratch?"

"yup-yup. matter of fact she goes down to konhaus farms and picks out the chicken."

"you mean . . ."

"yup. she slaughters and plucks it clean. saves a lot of money, too. once my cousin used to raise 'em but he gave that up for being an exterminator."

"oh . . . insects and that."

"all kinda bugs. even does rats and kittens there."

"that sounds a little harder, to exterminate a rat then."

"well . . . they send 'em to school for that."

"is that so?"

"yup-yup." dick's head bobs up and down.

"is that some kind of college or something . . ."

"nope. trade school. they teach you all about poisons."

"mmmm . . . maybe my boy can learn some of that."

"yeah, the slaughterhouse business isn't too good these days . . ."

"oops, past three there, i better sign out and leave."

"well, see you tomorrow then."

"o.k."

on the way out, dick meets his boss.

"what do you know, dick?"

"yup-yup."

he continues walking in the same silent horde. his head bows while crossing the railroad tracks. appropriate. sings in his head he does. likened to the blind and ancient navigators. brains are squishy says a purple oracle/ cross-indexed with future imaginations. a day creaking a little more closed. oh/ god/ great gates of dick's perceptions, of kiev, or stabbed chicken kiev oozing butter . . . of this installation, three times the devil, triplicate rumors abound, secretaries do 2-3 kick turns, juggle boss' head in perfect rhythm. dick passes the gate, weather report comes on.

monday: partly cloudy

tuesday: partly sunny

wednesday: cloudy cloudy

oh god/ the hands of that marionette master.

dick drives past the dog food plant.

15:11.

8. supper bell

chicken pot pie? yes, in three homes on this block alone. dick dreams of a chicken's scrawny neck and his cousin's new vcr. the leaves are just yellow. dick thinks of his payroll savings plan: extermination

school for the kids.

"yup-yup."

dick drives his car up to the garage. the dog runs out to meet him.

"what do you know there, dog? we're having bott bie and maybe we can give you some leftovers, put it in your rectangular dish."

dick walks into the house and greets wife, boy and girl.

"hello dear."

"hello dear."

"how was your day?"

"good, how was your day?"

"good. mow the lawn?"

"no, that's saturday, isn't it?"

"oh that's right. monday partly cloudy, bott bie."

"yup-yup."

dick hears a serenade in his head. he imagines the callouses on the hands of the marionette master. he wanders outside, looks both ways. 15:33.

"i guess the weatherman was right."

* * *

wife rings a bell.

"supper's on!"

"come on kids" dick says.

dick plays with his carrot-top.

"supper's on!"

"come on, kids!"

silence, 31 seconds.

"supper's on!"

dick says the grace. he bows his head, just like when crossing the railroad tracks. wife, boy and girl join in.

"dear lord,

please don't fry us, bake us, broil or roast us; dismember, maim or suffocate us, just because we do it to lower forms of animal life. amen."

"pass the milk" dick says.

"i see that stain" wife says.

"oh . . . i'm sorry."

"ham and green beans! ham and green beans! all over your nice sears shirt!"

"i'm sorry, dear. you know what cousin harriet can do with her eyes. she makes the food come alive like what do you call it there . . ."

"accent."

"yup-yup. she's a 300-pound container of accent."

"ham and green beans, how could you, dick?"

"i'm awful sorry . . . i would have mowed the lawn . . ."

"and after i slaughter and pluck a konhaus hen, you show up with ham stains on the rectangle shirt i gave you for your 25th anniversary of federal service! the nerve!"

the chicken pot pie is getting restless, coming to life.

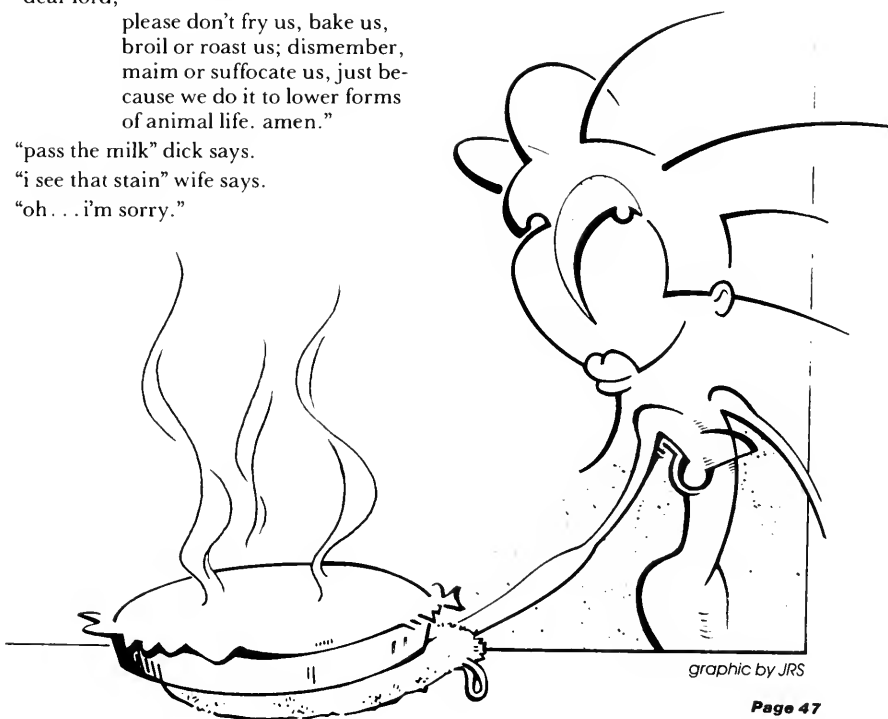
"well, it was on special at the cafeteria and i couldn't help it . . ."

"you have no self-discipline, dick. face it. that's why you're still in rectangles while all the other men in the neighborhood are working with pentagons."

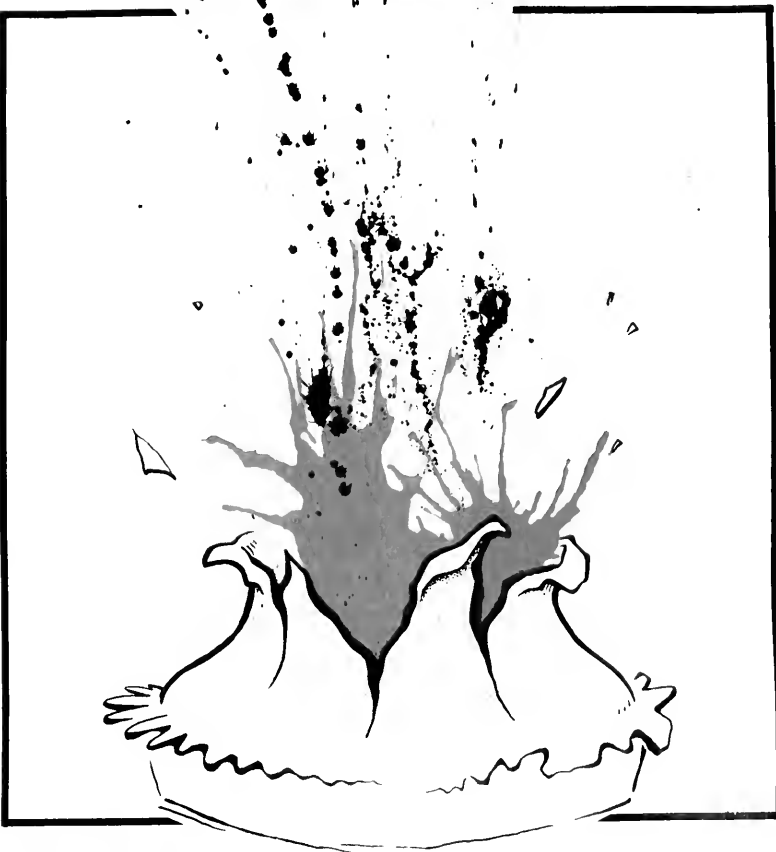
"yeah, i suppose 5 is better than 4 . . . i feel so ashamed."

"what's a pentagon, mommy and daddy" boy and girl chime.

"oh . . . it's a little too difficult for you to understand . . . maybe when you're both older."



graphic by JRS



graphic by JRS

the chicken pot pie explodes, ejaculates its contents on the entire family. dick wipes the gravy from his glasses. silence, 3,021 seconds.

9. bedtime

partly cloudy, chicken pot pie, ejaculation. dick penetrates his wife and goes off instantly.

"yup-yup. well. . . if i don't have pentagons, at least i have that."

"more, dear."

"sorry, looks like the pot's empty. . . time to sleep anyhow."

"more, dear."

"nope-nope."

"dear, how was the bott bie?"

dick snores. his pajamas smell of cling-free sheets. he dreams of geometry. anticipates bacon, eggs, toast, coffee.

later he talks in his sleep:

"by the way, do you bowl? . . . yup-yup."

22:25.

— by Dorothy Hamill

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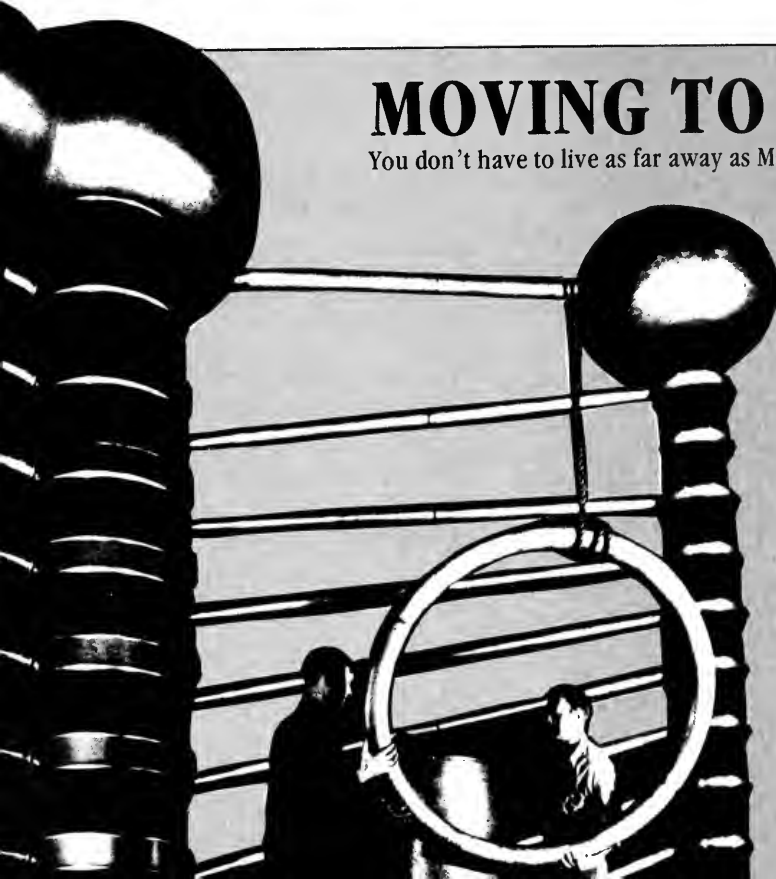
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