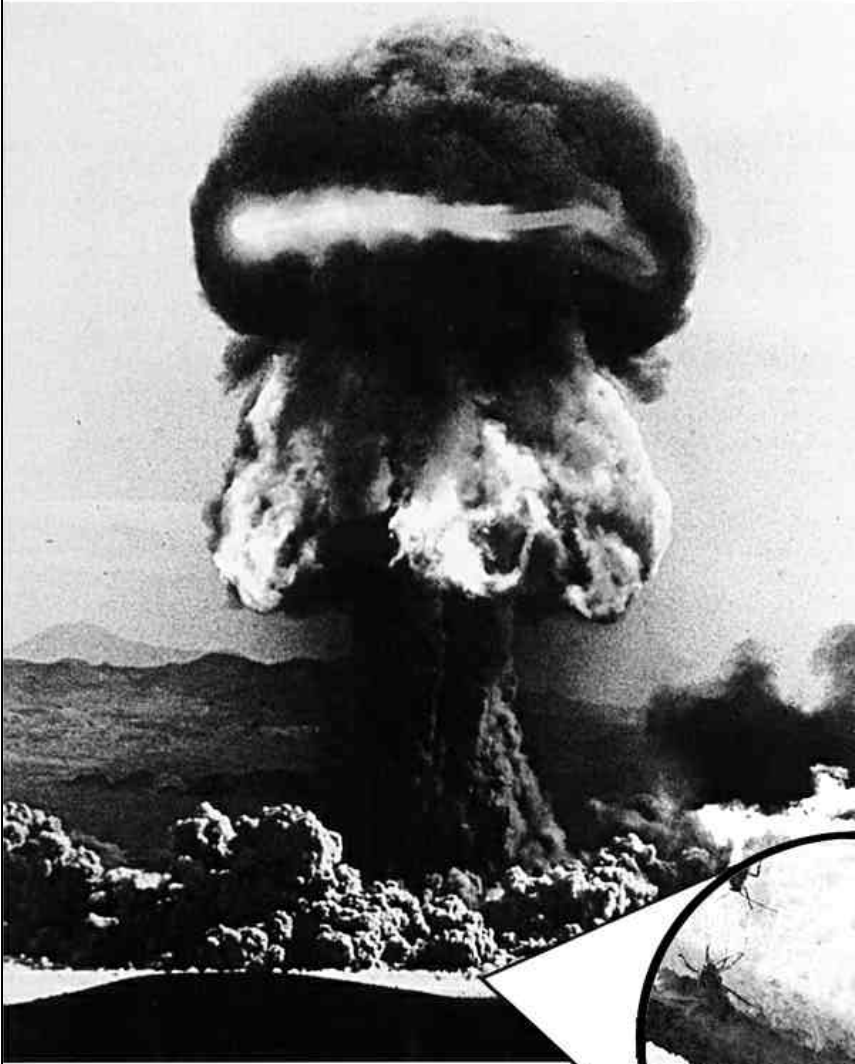


Critters

SUPPORT NUCLEAR TESTING...



...AND MAKE
THE WORLD SAFE
FOR BLIND, SCREWING COCK-
ROACHES.

Lemme Pigs

We, the writers of GDT, have been thinking about how it might be possible to make guinea pigs more interesting. You know the little buggers; eat, sleep, walk, and if you're really lucky it might stop screaming long enough for you to find enough foam and ducttape to make that suckers cage airtight (then the real fun starts. We suggest Saran Wrap. That allows the best seal-to-view ratio). First we thought of crossing it through the magic of genetic engineering with a howler monkey, but then we realized that that might just exacerbate the problem.

Then it hit us. Lemmings! Lemmings are interesting. Hell, a couple thousand of those little gits, a fjord or two, some popcorn, and maybe few lawnchairs. It's better than watching a football game on a Sunday afternoon, but it's strictly a spectator sport (though I can name at least seven people I'd like to see swept up in the heat of the moment).

Just think of all the possibilities. Instead of having one of those annoying running wheels, you could have a cliff so it can hurl itself off of. If it's overweight and lazy (as most American pets seem to be) it could be like an escalator, the lemme pig wouldn't have to do anything. They're worse than dogs at dinner, though. They won't beg for food, but they want you to pick them up and put them on the table. I beseech you: DON'T DO IT! As soon as they know they can manipulate you, you'll be nothing but a glorified airlift. They'll expect it to be done over, and over, and over again.

The up side of owning a lemme pig is that kids enjoy watching them more than television. Slinkies aren't seen as often with a lemme pig in the home.

Not only do kids love to watch those stupid little fur balls roll ass-over-end down a flight of stairs, their little legs flung out, tiny squeals of bliss escaping their muzzles upon each impact (kid tested, mother approved (oh, yes)), the lemme pigs are in rodent heaven; consecutive cliffs! Amazing. Of course there will be the bleeding hearts asking, "isn't that cruel?" Hell, no. If you want to be cruel to a lemme pig, take them to the Great Plains.

Picture it: rolling grass as far as the eye can see, with only the wind making noise. But wait, what's that low rumble. Good God! a whole herd of wild lemme pigs (a product of Cerberus™, a subsidiary of Hell Inc.) The land is suddenly black with their little bodies as they desperately search for anything to fling themselves off of. If you ever get caught in a lemme-pig stampede... RUN! Those tenacious freaks will all try to shimmy up your pant legs and jump off your head! You'll be crushed under the weight of thousands of furry bodies (say...)!

If they can't find anything, an amazing display of cooperation is shown. Let's go to our man in the field, and get a report:

"The massive airship is just now pulling up to the gantry and—OH MY GOD! It's burst into flame! Oh, the humanity—"

Sorry, wrong man in the field. We're still having problems with this whole linear time/single probability concept. Here's our other man in the field:

(Voice of any nature show): "The vast herds of mighty Lemme Pigs™, here in America's heartland, recreate the impression of undulating ocean waves as they hurl themselves off of one another in an attempt to appease their instincts.

"It really is beautiful to watch— OH MY GOD! They've burst into flames! Oh the lemmenty!"

Order yours today!

by Sean Hammond and Kelly Gunter

Illustrated by Mark Trezepla

Vol.1, Iss.5



Ask BFG

DEAR BARE FOOT GIRL,

WHAT DO ANTS DO WHEN IT RAINS? I TRIED TO FIND OUT WITH MY ANT FARM, BUT THEY JUST ALL DROWNED.

DELUGINGLY YOURS,
HYMEN OPTERA

Dear Hymen,

Actually, ants in the wild have a much more complex social system than those in ant farms. Most wild ants actually regard the ants in ant-farms as imitations. Ant civilizations have the most advanced meteorological equipment in the world (second only to turkeys, which are, contrary to popular belief, highly intelligent, though very depressed). As soon as the ants spot a rainstorm coming they all rush to their designated rain shelters (buried ten feet in the ground and reinforced with 5 gauge steel). They usually use this opportunity to get rid of those ants whom they deem undesirable (it's the ant version Hitler's "Final Solution". It's also where most ant-farm ants come from). I hope you found this illuminating.

—BFG

by Kelly Gunter, Vol. 1, Iss. 17



by Brian Revoir, Vol. 2, Iss. 1

GDT Ecology

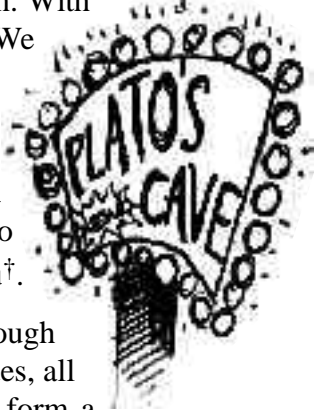
by Kelly Gunter and Sean Hammond, illustrated by Mark Trezepla, Vol. 2, Iss. 1

“GDT—Because you don't have to be a eunuch in order to sing soprano.”

In these ecologically conscious times GDT would like to jump on the band wagon though keeping in mind some basic tendencies of human nature. As long as ecology is “in” we'd like to milk its popularity for all it's worth. It's just our little way of trying to do our part.

Humans are in general a lazy kind of beast; we like to maintain the lowest state of energy. The trick is trying to achieve maximum output with minimum effort. More often than not the desired output is to maintain the lowest state of energy, and thus we have seen the invention of such things as television. With television we're allowed to sit and drool for hours and live others lives vicariously. We don't have to live our lives when TV provides ready made lives (no assembly necessary). Don't even try to use your imagination. The most exercise you get here is moving your finger to the channel button, because not only does it leave nothing to the imagination, it also gives you a short attention span (or the stupid impression that you are indeed capable of watching four different programs simultaneously). How better to maintain this lowest energy state than by allowing someone else to do the work for you[†].

Take mowing the lawn, for instance. I don't think I could ever seriously care enough about my lawn to mow it. What's the point—it's only going to grow back again? Besides, all I'd be doing is subjugating the various monocots on my lawn (maybe grass should form a union. Monocots unite! Our grass goes on strike, pickets our driveway. Then We'd have to call in scabs to cross the lines and cover our dirt). I think when I finally get my own house I'll just watch the weeds grow up to the windowsills. I'll wave to my kids on their way to school, and pray to god (whichever is handy), only halfheart-



[†] The next generation of televisions will not only come equipped to receive the fabled 500 channels on the “Information Superhighway” (Just think, it will take you 45 minutes just to surf through the channels once.) but also intravenous feeding tubes and bedpans capable of maintaining its viewers for days on end. For more information, write to Plato's Cave (a subsidiary of Hell Inc.), care of GDT.

edly (because I am trying to maintain the lowest state of energy), that they're able to find the house again before it gets dark.

My solution: get some sheep to decimate your lawn. It is the time honored solution used by the English aristocracy. You have grass. You don't want it. Sheep eat grass. Problem solved. This way you don't waste any of this country's precious energy resources and you limit emissions down to those emissions given off by most living things (sure, methane is a green house gas... but haven't you been enjoying the radical changes in climate these past few years?). And best of all, you don't have to do any work. You could hire some voluptuous wench to tend your flock, or put one of those invisible fence wires around the yard and put collars on each of your sheep to keep them inside (go to far and ZAP!). As a bonus, when one of your lawn mowers breaks down just make him into dinner. You could seed different areas of your lawn with various kinds of grass herbs and weeds, then see which makes for the tastiest mutton.



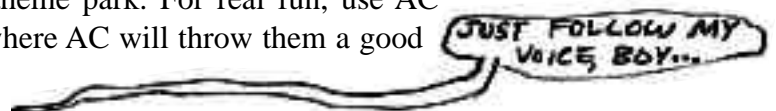
Then there's waste disposal; what to do with all of your unused food scraps? While compost heaps remain a viable means of reusing food scraps, they have to be turned... and then you have to figure out what you're going to do with all that fertile soil. All in all, compost heaps are just a bother. There have got to be better methods. Granted, you could try to send your scraps over to all those starving kids in Africa your mother always mentioned, but it might spoil on the way over, and even starving kids might not enjoy eating cheese rind and egg shells. To avoid the spoilage problems you could invite all the kids over to your house, but then you have air fare problems. Alternatively you could feed it to the one you already have duct-taped to your wall (see Vol. 1, Iss. 1). There are however other possible solutions.



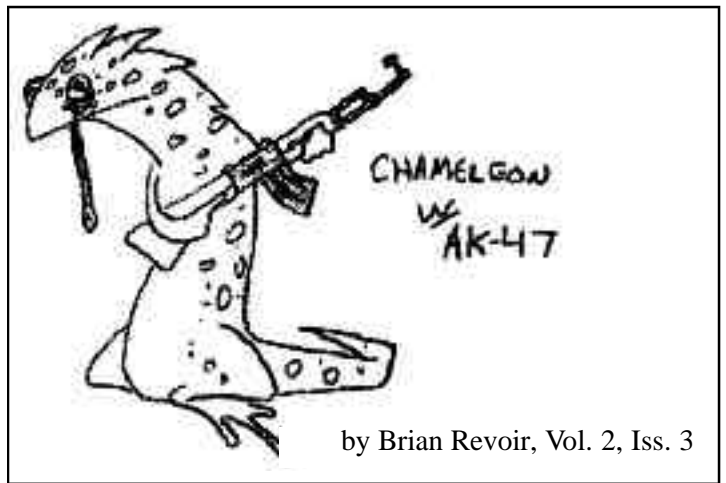
Those dirty Europeans living in mud huts back in the Middle Ages had the right idea. Garbage disposals were referred to as pigs and had the side benefit of being edible (today, only edible underwear have such versatility). They used to throw their refuse into the street and let pigs run around the townships and devour it. Granted, Medieval sanitation is usually not something people might want to aspire to, but it works. If you were to build a pig sty outside of your kitchen, all you would have to do is throw it out the window. This way the refuse build up is only restricted to one area. And sure it will stink, but you're lazy, and the longer you stay around an unpleasant aroma the less you smell it. So it'll stink, you'll probably stink too, but what will you care? You won't be able to smell it anymore because your olfactory receptors will have already contacted their next of kin. And even if the sanitation level in your household does reach that of the middle ages, what's a little Bubonic Plague between friends?



There are still other lazy alternatives. There is one creature who can not only rid you of your unwanted food matter, but everything else you don't care for as well. Have a kid sister or old sofa you don't really need any more? This beast may be the answer to all your refuse problems. The tiger shark is a sea faring creature with a most voracious appetite. Some tiger sharks have been opened up to find such things as old tires, mufflers, and eight tracks. Granted, the tiger sharks are not actually able to digest this material, but what do you care? Out of site is out of mind. As long as you can maintain a nice salt water pond in your back yard, all your refuse problems are solved. To avoid the hassles of law suits from angry parents, we would suggest that you keep a fence around this pond, electric if you can get it... 20,000 volts if you're really ambitious (who needs fireworks when you can watch birds, squirrels and chipmunks literally explode as their little bodies encounter more electricity than it takes to run a theme park. For real fun, use AC instead of DC current; DC will make them stick, where AC will throw them a good 50 yards).



If you still have problems getting a hold of a tiger shark to do the job, contact the Cerebus Corp. (a subsidiary of Hell Inc.) and I'm sure they can fix you up with a genetically re-engineered version of the tiger shark who not only has the voracious appetite of its more natural relatives, but a veritable chemical arsenal at hand with witch to digest anything from your old sneakers to your neighbor's carburetor. You probably wouldn't want to touch the by products of this animal, but don't worry—it'll eat them too.



Weird Laments

And then it happened again.

It was about the dozenth time or so it had happened in the past two hours. I scratched my chin musingly, thinking it over. Then I reached in my pocket, pulled out a cigarette, sparked it up and puffed away thoughtfully.

From my perch on the brick wall I was sitting on I had a pretty good view of the comings and goings of the campus around me. My last class was over about two hours ago, and I was in no hurry to get back to my dorm room. A few months after moving onto campus I had learned that my roommate was a chronic masturbator, and because I was always forgetting his name I simply dubbed him 'The Jerkoff King'. A dozen times in the past two months I have walked into the room to catch him with his pants around his ankles, face broken out in a sweat while his fist furiously pumped up and down. It's really gross.

Anyway I was sitting on the brick wall, thinking about nothing in general, just watching the general riff raff pass by me. You know the people I'm talking about, all the strange little American sub cultures that spring up whenever you have more than a couple hundred people under the age of thirty. You have the those jocks with the Greek-god bodies and vacant eyes, you have the fraternity brothers avidly declaring their house is the best (I can't tell the damn difference), the people on skateboards whizzing by, falling on their ass more times than actually doing a stunt, the loners who hurry by with their eyes fixed on the ground before them, afraid to make eye contact with anyone they passed. I could go on forever.

It first happened out of the corner of my eye. This one guy was ambling along, minding his own business. I sort of subconsciously picked him out in the back of my mind because I noticed his socks were a dullish pink and I mildly wondered how long ago he had had his little laundry catastrophe. Anyhow the guy was walking along, sort of bobbing his head to a little musical beat only he could hear, when the big green tentacle whizzed out of a nearby sewer grating and yanked him in.

I froze. I had heard the term 'my heart skipped a beat' before, but this was the first time I had ever actually experienced it. I stared at the sewer grating on the ground, but there was no evidence that anything vastly weird had happened. The sun was shining brightly, the air had a nice little gentle breeze to it, and there was about three dozen people around me who must have seen the same thing. But there was nobody screaming, no shouting or yelling or even a curious glance towards the sewer grating.

I thought about screaming. I thought about laughing out loud. I thought about hopping off my little comfy wall perch and leaving. Finally I decided to pretend that it didn't happen. Hell, no one else around me was doing anything, then why should I?

A few years ago I had tried acid. It was the usual peer pressure 'everyone does it' type situation. It did some funky things to me, making me see little purple trails and causing me to giggle at inappropriate moments, but that

was about it. No pink elephants or visions of the Wizard of Oz or anything of the sort. But the word ‘flashback’ had always hung over my head like some dark cloud. I began to think that perhaps the unsightly little thing I had just witnessed was perhaps caused by the proverbial flashback.

Nonetheless, I peered at the sewer grating suspiciously for a few moments longer. Just one of those anonymous sewer gratings that are dotted across the roads and sidewalks of America like some sort of steel acne. Nothing real special about it, certainly not something you would point out to a buddy and say ‘Gee, isn’t that a rather NICE sewer grating?’. Most people probably walk over it a dozen times a day and never even know it’s there.

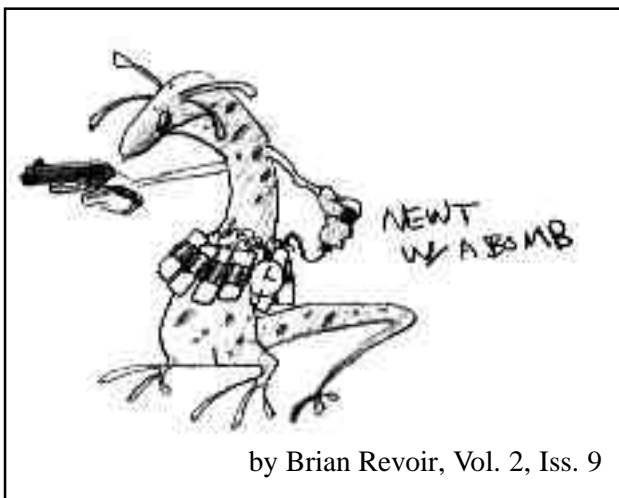
The next one was a girl. This time I watched very carefully, eyes absorbing every speck of information. The girl was medium height, wearing a pair of denim shorts so tight they could have been painted on, fake blonde hair piled up on top of her head, books clutched protectively to her chest in that odd, almost insecure way girls carry them. A half-healed hickie on the side of her neck winked at the world as she flounced by.

This time I was waiting.

This time I was watching.

And this time I saw it.

The big green tentacle snaked out from the sewer with sickening speed. It was sort of splotchy green and covered with little suckers that seemed to be gasping for air. It was dirty, quivering, and at places and splotches along its length there seemed to be coarse hair growing from it. It also appeared to be slimy. Of course, I thought. We couldn’t have a big nasty tentacle without



by Brian Revoir, Vol. 2, Iss. 9

it being slimy, can we? Mustn’t break the cliché.

It lurched about six feet away to where the girl was. It coiled around her waist in a rather sickening way. She looked down, eyes widening like saucers, her mouth opening up. I could just hear what she was about to say, “Oh! grody to the max, I’m sure!” or something along those lines. But it never got out of her mouth, because the moment the thing had a tight grip, it whisked her off her feet and sucked her down the dark dank opening of the sewer faster than you could say ‘corn pops’.

Its funny the way the human brain can rationalize just about anything. In a split instant I decided I wasn’t crazy, I wasn’t having a flashback, I was just seeing something very, very weird. I glanced around me. Once again, although the place was modestly scattered with people, no one seemed to have noticed a thing. Everyone was simply going their merry way, totally oblivious that there was something very nasty right beneath their feet snatching up people the way you or I would snatch up a stray dollar bill.

I watched it happen several more times to several more people. It didn’t seem to be a very choosy whatever it was. So far it had equally snatched up men, women, all races and ages. After a while I began to see a pattern develop. Although there were people around whenever the thing scooped up a homo-sapiens goody, no one actually seemed to be LOOKING at it when it happened. In the brief instant it slithered out from the sewer the people in the general vicinity had their eyes somewhere else. In a book. Looking and talking to a friend. Sneezing. Looking up at the sky to see if any rain clouds were around. Searching in a purse. And so on. No one ever had their attention on that particular area of the ground... except me.

An old joke came to my mind... it went “if you were in the woods, and you watched a tree fall and it didn’t make a sound, does that mean you’re a nobody?” I was actually starting to get offended that this thing was letting me watch this. The nerve of it!

Of course, by now you are probably wondering why I haven’t rushed out and tried to make what I’ve seen known. But even though I’m no Stephen Hawking, I’m no moron, either. If some guy came up to me and asked me if I had seen any large tentacles snatching up people from nasty little sewer gratings in the ground, I would more than likely smile, nod, pat the guy on the

shoulder, and walk straight ahead. I wouldn't expect any less from another person.

I was lost in thought for a moment when a sudden familiar voice pulled me back to the present.

"Dave, yo, hey, Dave!" A whiny little voice that made the hairs on the back of my neck stand on end floated over my shoulder.

I turned around and The Jerkoff King was standing there, slack mouth, milking a pimple on the end of his nose.

"Can I bum a cigarette off of you?" he asked. His eyes holding the reflection of hopefulness.

I thought for a second and than said "Sure, you can have one, but first, do you see that sewer opening over there?"

He peered beyond me, squinted, saw the opening, and nodded his head enthusiastically. "Sure, what about it?"

"Just watch it for a moment"

And so we sat there watching it, as the minutes ticked by. One. And then two. Several people have passed over the hole that was the fix of our attention several times now. The Jerkoff King next to me began to get a little fidgety.

Webster—God of the Universe By Sean Hammond, *et al*, illustrated by Scott Peterson, Vol. 3, Iss. 4

"Drink up, Socrates, it's all natural."

The staff (well, most of them. Everyone except Damn) of *Gracies Dinnertime Theatre* are horrible spellers. With such outstandingly miserable spellers, we all have a psychopathic hatred of one particularly loathsome human being. A smeggy lexicographer from the early eighteen hundreds, who has plagued stenographers since the dawn of his era. Do you know how infuriating it is to spend your entire childhood caught up in circular logic?

"How do you spell quadragenarian?"

"Go look it up."

"How do I look it up if I can't spell it."

The horror... the horror! Anyone who has gone through this can understand exactly what I mean. The impact upon all our childhoods was made even more nightmarish when They™ made us sit idly by while They™ mocked us with that stupid, oh so cute, midget on TV. Ohhhhh how I yearned to squash that 40 year old under my size 4 sneakers (Come on, I was young...).

I pine for the age of Chaucer. I'd trade my thesaurus for those days. Well, maybe not. I mean, the Thesaurus is after all a top predator (favorite prey: *Stenonychosaurus*. Of course the various Thesaurus species have decreased in stature since the late Cretaceous period when they could get to be

"Er, just what are we watching for?" he asked.

"Just watch!" I hissed warningly back.

Another handful of seconds slid by. Finally I sighed and gave up. "Never mind," I said.

He just stood there for a moment longer, and it took me a second to remember that I had offered to give him a cigarette, so I pulled one out of my pocket and gave it to him (being quite careful not to touch his hands) and gave him a bored wave as he lit up and walked away.

I should have seen it coming, of course. I could just feel the gods up in the heavens laughing at me. The Jerkoff King got thirty paces away, near the sewer hole, and the big green thing again erupted out and plucked him clean off the face of the earth as if he had never existed.

I sighed.

I had about all I thought I could handle in one day. Besides I had some homework to do, and it would be nice to finally go into my room without making a big show of stomping up to the door and making loud exaggerated noises with my keys so my roommate would get the idea that someone was walking in. I hopped off the wall, and wandered away. Whistling a little and avoiding sewer holes.

by Ed Heffernan, Vol. 2, sp. iss. 2



over 20,000 pages in length. Arguments still rage as to whether these ancient predators were hard or soft bound, however). It's so handy to have around when I just have to get rid of old, horribly written books. Especially the ones that tend to inhabit the Best Sellers List ecosystem. Let's face it folks, 90% of the population thinks that top ten lists (a la Letterman) and fart noises are the apex of humor. This means that any book that makes it the best sellers lists is probably of no value at all.

Sure, there are books on those horrid lists written by incredible authors, but chances are they made it there on word of mouth based on their past books. All in all, you're talking about a bunch of literary epicack. Case in point: *The Celestine Prophecy*. Holy Christ. I read it, and it had some interesting ideas (though not very original) but the style was abhorrent. It read like a long dialogue. Maybe Mr. Redfield intended to mimic the style of Plato. My advice to Mr. Redfield would be to actually have some superlative original philosophical ideas and then to act like the Plato/Socrates communal being (feel free to try the hemlock tea), otherwise get some nail polish remover and unglue your pinky from the quotation key.



You'd probably be better off if you didn't read any book in the top ten. Actually, you should be careful of any book you read. It's commonly said that people hunger after knowledge, but what is not known (or maybe it is known but is hushed up) is that knowledge hungers after people. (This is actually where black mass gets its power from. They don't



really worship Lucifer, they worship the books[†]) Books want people to read them; need people to read them. The more a book is read, the happier it is. But old books, those dry and crumbly manuscripts, clay cuneiform tablets, fragments found in caves near the Dead Sea...all these are so starved to be read they can induce literary addictions in those who are foolish enough to begin reading them. Many a poor researcher has gone into an antiquated library and never returned.

The ancient, starved grimoires got them[¥].

Libraries, because of their very nature, are some of the most dangerous places on earth. The ancients knew this; that is the real reason that the libraries at Alexandria, and later at Tripoli were burned flat ("Every book burned enlightens the world."—Ralph Waldo Emerson). To wander about in a library is to take your life into your own hands. Librarians know this. That's why they are stereotyped as being single (because of the constant threat on their lives) and are always insisting on silence. Maintain your silence when wandering the labyrinthian corridors of libraries, lest you attract the attention of the starved texts.

When night falls and the shadows grow long, that is when rogue packs of books, loosely organized into what we would call shelves, hunt for unsuspecting readers. They home in on sound, and when your back is turned, they sneak up behind you and...CRACK! They present their most luscious spines to you.

Ahhhhhhh, what the hell. Succumb to their siren song. It can be fun.

[†] This actually applies to most groups with any sort of holy text. Christians, Jews, Muslims, lawyers, bla, bla, bla. Of all the groups, it is the Christians that have the greatest weight to bear; there are more Bibles in the world than any other book (so the propaganda goes). If everyone were to just stop reading the Bible, can you imagine the devastation? The earth dark with frenzied packs of roving Bibles hunting for readers ^ð.

The Bible is a terrible predator, sapping your will and judgment. Thank you, Christians, for making the world safe for the rest of us sinners.

^ðIf this footnote doesn't make much sense, try reading the rest of the article, and then visit here again.

[¥]Many of these old texts don't intend to kill their readers (it's self defeating, isn't it? I mean, the best adapted parasites don't kill their hosts). They are so out of practice that they have forgotten how to be parasites and have adapted to a predatory life style.

Ask The Bare-Foot Girl

DEAR BFG—

WHAT HAPPENS TO A TURTLE'S SPINE WHEN IT PULLS ITS HEAD INTO ITS SHELL?

—SEAN HAMMOND

SEAN—

A turtle's neck is actually much longer than most nature programs let on. They can go for thirty-five or even one hundred feet, and are usually mistaken for snakes in the undergrowth. People generally make cracks about the comparative slowness of the turtle, but would you move around hastily if everything within a one hundred foot radius was at arm's (or neck's) reach?

Back in the Middle Ages when men still measured various distances by the lengths of their respective king's body parts, turtles took a decisive role in the invention of the modern tape measure. They used to divvy up turtle's neck into lengths of the current monarch's measurements and then go and use them much as we use tape measures today. They were even better than modern tape measures to some extent because you could clamp their little mouths onto something and then just walk along unreeling the rest of

their spine. When you got to the end of whatever you were measuring, all you had to do was just pull on the little bugger's tail until the shock unclamped his head and it would come screaming back towards his little body. Often times these procedures rendered the turtle unconscious, but he'd get over it. The obvious problem with using turtles as tape measures was that whenever they managed to escape into a pond, when you finally retrieved them again, all of their markings were washed off and you had to make another appointment to measure the king.

Eventually the turtles got fed up with their horrendous treatment and we had what the history books don't mention as the "Snapper Rebellion". In the turtle rebellion, the snappers were the fiercest of all of the turtle warriors and led towards an easily decisive victory over mankind. Since this time most of the turtles settled down to relative obscurity and keep the vast expanses of their necks hidden in the wind up mechanism within their shells. All that is except the snapping turtles, who, by the way, do not let it wander to far, but farther than many of their modern counterparts; it's just cocky. Most snapping turtles are still very bitter about the annexation of their post war land settlements and this is why they have the reputation of being the cruelest of turtles, they're still trying to get revenge.

—BFG

By Kelly Gunter, Vol. 2, Iss. 14

Tang

By Michelle Amoruso, Sean Hammond, Kelly Gunter, *et. al.* illustrated by Scott Peterson, Vol. 5, Iss. 9

“I think you guys are beating ‘Midgets’ to death.”
 “Yeah, but what isn't funny about beating Midgets?”

Picture, if you will, the Oompa Loompa's wild state. Huge tribes of Oompa Loompas turning the ground orange with their presence.[†] Eventually, Watusi hunters discovered the Oompa Loompa hidden valley of bliss during the Watusi Age of Discovery (52 BT). After decades of cooperation, the two dissimilar tribes had reached a symbiosis that few other human populations have enjoyed^f. The Watusi would thatch the roofs of the Oompa Loompa homes, while the Oompas put in duty as pest control, provided the spit for building homes (like a wasp, dummy), and were the unit of measure.² In hindsight, the Watusi actually were the ones getting the better deal, but if you were 2.5 meters tall and had to deal with a bunch of orange guys that were 1 meter, who would get the bet-

[†] Prior to the arrival of Europeans, Oompa Loompa herds could cover whole countries of what is now Africa. Given, they were small countries, but it's still pretty impressive.

^f Except for the Christians and Romans. You see, without the Christians, the Romans would have been shit out of luck when it came to entertainment. As for the Christians...well, where would they have gotten their concept of persecution and learned all the nasty things to do to Mother God worshippers of the Middle Ages?

² Ironically, the Watusi unit of measure, the Loompa, is equal to one meter. Funny old world, isn't it.



ter deal?

As with all Golden Ages, this euphoric life of rodent catching and roof thatching couldn't last. It ended quite innocently: two Watusi walking side by side ran into a Oompa Loompa, the short little guy got caught up in their knees, and

POP!

Suddenly the air was filled with orange dust. The Watusi, instinctively knowing that Something Had Happened, stood their ground as the fines filled the air. Almost against their will, the towering tribesmen began licking the air, savoring the sweet, orange ambrosia. All activity in the village stopped as the Oompa Loompas present saw what had happened, and the two Watusi eyed each other knowingly (Nudge, nudge. Wink, wink).

In one of those memorable moments when simple $1+1=2$, $a^2+b^2=c^2$, Oompa loompa + mauling speed = yum, the larger of the two giants calmly walked up to a cowering Oompa Loompa and clobbered him over the head.

POP!

“Tang!”[§] shouted the excited Tribesmen inbetween excited licks.

Tang. You remember it: the astronauts drink it. High in vitamins, all your essential nutrients, the damn stuff is like a Schmoo, or more specifically, like a discorporated Oompa Loompa. (On the downside, you have to deal with the toxic orange dye. Warning: Not to be used by children under 6 years of age unless recommended by a dentist or physician. If more than 3 metered doses (1 oz.) are actually swallowed, give several glasses of milk and contact a physician for further advice. Do not get on carpets, clothing, or counters.).

Thus began the genocide of the Oompa Loompas. After all, they didn't make really good units of measure, and they are pretty tasty.

If it wasn't for the imperialism of the Europeans, filling every crack and crevice with their need to Christianize, homogenize, and pulverize everyone, the Oompa Loompa would be as lost as most of those tribes of Israel. The grandfather of the infamous Willy Wonka first happened upon the diminished tribe in the 1870s; offering to relocate them to the United States in return for their assistance in a factory he wanted to build, they eagerly accepted.

Just another bunch of slaves, bound for the new world.

Now, generations after being rescued from powdered oblivion, the luckless orange ones reside in Willy Wonka's Concentration Camp: the world of Dairy Queen gone horribly wrong. Where's the ACLU when you need them? Orange midgets forced to work and live in a windowless factory for a tyrannical, yet lovable, loon. Forced to sing and work, probably under the influence of random hallucinogens (What other boss do you know of that encourages workers to lick the wallpaper? I guess it's better than licking the air.) without compensation. Talk about a civil rights violation! It's not hard to figure out that the

§ “Tang,” in the native language of the Watusi, means : “sweet tasting, squashed orange midget, which we can all stand around and taste by simply licking the air.” Just another example of words that don't translate well...kind of like the Japanese Computer company, Wang. Someone should have warned them....



Oompa Loompa songs are in reality a sizable repetoir of spirituals, possibly with coded messages revealing the whereabouts of the Secret Oompa Loompa Underground Railroad.

Thanks to our resident anthropologist, we have obtained a copy of one of the Oompa Loompa spirituals and analyzed it.

Oompa Loompa, doompadee doo

We have a perfect puzzle for you. —————→ THE SONG IS A RIDDLE

Oompa Loompa, doompadee dee

If you are wise you will listen me. —————→ LOOK, BUDDY! YOU WANT TO
GET THE HELL OUT OF THIS
PLACE? LISTEN UP!

What do you get when you guzzle down
sweets,

Eating as much as an elephant eats?

What are you at getting terribly fat? —————→ ONLY ONE WHO IS SKINNY CAN
What do you think will come of that? ESCAPE

I don't like the look of it.

Oompa Loompa, doompadee dah

If you're not greedy you will go far. —————→ IT IS POSSIBLE TO ESCAPE

You will live in happiness too —————→ AND LIVE AWAY FROM THESE
Like the Oompa Loompa doompadee do. FREAKISH GIANTS

Doompadee do.

The escape route from Willy Wonka's Sweat Shop is only through the chocolate river and up the outlet tube! Anyone too fat would end up getting stuck and burst into powder from the buildup in pressure. Bad for the Oompa Loompa, good for the chocolate. All those who have seen the documentary, think back to when that young boy fell into the river and got lodged in one of the outflow pipes. The looks on the faces of the Oompa Loompas was that of fear. "What if the Massa finds out about our escape route?" Luckily, he sent only Oompa Loompas to retrieve the luckless child.

At the chocolate factory, however, the horror never stops: when the Oompa Loompas reach such an age that they can no longer withstand the backbreaking labor forced upon them, they are "retired." It is said that the Oompa Loompas who have worked hard their whole life spend the end of their days in a rest home within the factory.



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But.

No one has ever seen seen this fabled home. Those poor souls are herded into the extensive Tang works like horses to a glue factory. Employing the descendants of the Watusi that immigrated to the United States to mash the elderly into uncut Tang, Willy Wonka continues traditions of hatred and regulated genocide.

Please, write your local Congressman. Help Sally Struthers save the poor Oompa.... Oh, fuck 'em. Kill all the orange freaks! Great heaps of Tang for everyone!

After Dinner Mints

—Sean Hammond, Vol. 6, Iss. 4

Ahhh... James Burke. If anyone deserves to be elevated to the level of False Idol, it's Him. Those who regularly watch The Learning Channel (all five of us) or read Scientific American probably know who I'm talking about. The man is a wealth of historical, scientific, and cultural minute. In the various series created by Him that run on TLC and in His columns that periodically appear in Scientific American, he excels at connecting apparently isolated, absurd events:

- How grapefruit directly led to WWII
- How an obscure inventor's "wheelbarrow on a tightrope" trick lets battle ships shoot down jets in stormy seas.
- How thermometers were spared the embarrassment of being heretical because Galileo insisted, "But it does move."

Often I've lamented that I lack His sheer width and breadth of knowledge. Don't get me wrong: I know a lot of useless crap, but I'd be embarrassed to even look at the guy.

What I do want is to have Him on a leash. Oh, happy day! While women are walking Great Danes that are used for more than protection (wink, wink, nudge, nudge), I'd have grey-haired, balding-on-top James Burke on the end of one of those retractable leashes.

The best part is that when other dogs harass my Burke, I could cry the dreaded, "Connect!" Woe onto they who are subjected to the endless diatribe that would, eventually, connect all the things in the Universe and answer The Ultimate Question (No. The answer is not 42. You're one of those people who can quote the entire Holy Grail, aren't you? Aren't you?!) and drive any moderately sentient being mad.

Thank all that is good, i.e. James Burke, that He understands, "Heel!"

Ask The Bare-Foot Girl

—Kelly Gunter, Vol. 6, Iss. 9

WHILE DRIVING MICHELLE AMORUSO TO ONE OF OUR WEEKLY GDT MEETINGS, THIS WEEK'S ASK THE BARE-FOOT GIRL QUESTION WAS PROPOSED. MICHELLE WAS, AS USUAL, TALKING ABOUT HER FAVORITE SUBJECT: MIDGETS. SHE WAS EXPRESSING HER CONCERN AS TO THE PROPAGATION OF THESE LITTLE PEOPLE. SHE WAS CERTAIN THAT MIDGETS COULD GIVE BIRTH, BUT HOW DOES A FOUR-FOOT TALL WOMAN GO ABOUT GIVING BIRTH TO A NORMAL SIZED CHILD? IT'S GOT TO HAPPEN SOME TIME, BUT ISN'T IT DANGEROUS?

Michelle,

I already gave you your answer, but I have to have something to write down for this week. So here it is...

Not wanting to seem ungrateful to modern methods, a caesarean section would work. Some people, even developmentally stunted ones, want to give birth in a more natural way, though.

Actually, many midgets are sterile. I believe the correct terminology for this group is "dwarf." These are the ones with either big heads or big torsos, just something that doesn't proportionally work out quite right. However, the perfectly proportioned ones are still fertile...just tiny. Everything is smaller, but they can still give birth to nor-

mally sized children, which can be hell on a woman whose pelvis may be five or six inches smaller than the average. Come to think of it, it's usually not a party for a woman of average size, so it's got to be worse on those little women.

The solution is simple: crack. You know, that all-pervasive drug of the inner cities. Merely administer crack to pregnant midgets as you would calcium or other vitamins, internally stunting the growth of the soon to be crack-fetus. This way midget women can give birth the natural way to children with abnormally low birth weights. Sure they'll be born addicted to crack and they probably won't live past the first three months, but don't we all have quirky physical traits? Hey, if I can overcome freckles and thin hair, they can certainly overcome a debilitating physical addiction. It's called growing up.

It just goes to prove that there really are some socially redeeming qualities to crack. Crack... uh, natural way... uh, yeah. Whatever. I just have to go see about getting hair implants....

—BFG

Dwarf Farm

by Michelle Amaruso, Kelly Gunter, Sean Hammond, *et al.*, Vol. 7, Iss. 8

“Sleep deprivation is fun—you see such pretty colours.”

Imagine the joy of having a Dwarf Ranch (or if you want to drop the extra money, you could get the Dwarf Resort, or aim for the stars and save up for the Dwarf City). Of course, you would have to be willing to invest an entire wall of a room to your newest hobby. Well, even if you don't think that watching little buggers burrowing around through

layers of dirt is entertaining....

(catchy theme music here)

Back at home

in the Kitchen of Hell,

we are just thrilled,

especially Michelle.

We just got our Dwarf Ranch™ sent through the mail, and the walls are just scuttling with the pitter-patter of tiny feet. While looking through the instruction manual we found it so informative and helpful that we just had to share excerpts of it with our reading public...with the express written permission of Andvari (a subsidiary of Hell, Inc.), of course.

Dwarves are the most fascinating freaks of nature because of their complex social behavior. There are many varieties of dwarves, each with their own peculiar habits and colorations, and they are very interesting creatures to watch as they go about their activities. Your set provides an excellent way of keeping and observing the dwarves. They might make one part of the colony an eating area, make the cemetery in a different area, store relatives in a third area, etc.

Dwarves are fun to watch and care for. Your set will be a busy, bustling observatory. All you have to do is take care of your dwarves properly. This booklet will tell you how to feed and care for the dwarves. Read this booklet carefully and you will have much fun for a long time, reader-san.

What is a dwarf? Dwarves belongs to the class of creatures known as Freaks of Nature. They are invertebrate animals, meaning they have no backbone, i.e., they swagger away from fights.[†] ³Dwarves have permanently bent legs, or are “bow-legged,” from hiding too many hedgehogs. Even their minds are bandy, and they often suffer from alien hand disorder,[¥] providing hours of amusement. The dwarf has a head and a two sectioned body; only close inspection with a magnifying glass can verify this, however, because when you're that short, it really doesn't matter.^ð

There are over one million different freaks of nature known to science and P.T. Barnum, and many more are not discovered yet. In fact, there might be 6,000 different species of dwarves alone. Dwarves belong to the pariah class known as Libidule, which translates as “little freak” or “military power.” With dwarves, only the males and young females have vestigial tails. This class, Libidule, is the most advanced of the frightening humans, living in

[†] It's hard to run when you're packin' a hedgehog up your ass.³

[¥] Alien-hand syndrome results from severe brain trauma, either planned or unintentional, that allows one's hand to act independently of one's will, sometimes in a violent, destructive manner. Think *Evil Dead Two*.

^ðBe careful not to accidentally burn your dwarves upon inspection with the magnifying glass. WARNING: Dwarves are composed of highly combustible material. Do not ingest after lighting. In case of accidental flaming ingestion, do not induce vomiting. Call Wanda at Rochester Telephone for further instructions.

communities, such as dwarf colonies, rather than alone. They are often heavily armed militants, taking their giant neighbors hostage and demanding the creation of dwarf homelands.

Metamorphosis of the dwarf—Metamorphosis, meaning literally, “before a body of water,” refers to the different stages of development of the adult dwarf from the egg. Dwarf eggs are laid by the queen dwarf in geometric clusters looking like bowling pins, and are quickly moved to nursery rooms in the colony’s west wing, where nursemaid worker dwarves look after them. The eggs are laid in the spring and summer and within a period of a few weeks they hatch into creatures looking remarkably like Tonka trucks. These small, durable, yellow, truck-like creatures are totally dependent upon children, requiring them for their movement. They (the dwarfs...not the children) are always hungry and the worker dwarves are kept busy for weeks feeding the larvae by the cover of darkness. Then the larvae suddenly stop eating and are ready for the next stage: the pupal stage.

Using their insidious mind control, the dwarf pupae force children to cover them in a mud chrysalis. It is at this time that the various parts of the adult dwarf begin to take shape. After a gestation that can vary from several hours to several years, the pupa begins to move her tiny, tiny legs and tail. The dwarves in the nest gather around and will help the birth by tearing away the pupal mud if necessary. The young dwarf emerges, releasing a cloud of noxious fumes, and stands on wobbly legs. Because it takes a few days for their chitinous (meaning “novelty condom shaped”) bodies to harden, newly hatched dwarfs are easy prey. The sulfurous clouds released at birth are a natural defense, used to keep Predators and circus recruiters away from the young dwarf, and allows it to skitter under a rock or eat its own leg, depending on how bad the smell is. If she survives this perilous time, the young adult is ready to begin a lifetime of work. She needs no learning period— she quickly follows her instinct and starts performing her complicated tasks.

The Queen—The Queen is the most important dwarf in the colony. She is the mother of all the others. In active colonies, wench dwarves wash the queen, feed her the best Mandarin Oranges, polish the silver, and take care of her fresh ovulations. The queen is much larger than the worker dwarves, and she spends most of her life getting laid.

Each Queen begins life as a young, tailed, female; that is to say, “Baby’s Got Back.” She does not help build the nest or worry about gathering food. Instead, she sits around and watches *All Ricki, All The Time*. The menial labor is done entirely by the worker dwarves, all number^f than a hake. In every colony there are a few tailed males, or breeders, who do not work either. On a special day, in spring or summer, the tailed dwarves take to the bars in swarms. The males mate with the females in the corner pockets of the pool tables. The males die quickly, usually lodged between barstools and wrapped around overhead fans, but for each fertile female a new life is beginning. She drops to the floor and seeks shelter from the onslaught and seals herself off underground, making herself a prisoner. After her breathing eventually slows, she settles down and rubs off her vestigial tail.

She will never wag again. She has become a true queen.

Though she may live for 105 years, she will never go above ground again. Instead, she ovulates like mad and starts her own colony. A few of her eggs will turn into tailed males, and a smaller number into tailed females, but the largest number will be of tailless females or workers. This is the form we see most often in local circuses.

Harvester Dwarves—These are the dwarves that come with your set, known by the name of Agricule. They are one of the most interesting and best known dwarf species in the US. These dwarves are grain harvesters in the Bible Belt, and they move along tiny highways in the grain fields. These highways meet at the entrance to Methodist Churches. Worker dwarves collect grains and grass seeds and carry them along the highways to the mouth of the church/bomb shelter, where they then scurry religiously underground to store their food for the impending apocalypse. “Chewers” masticate the seeds until it becomes a sticky, dough-like material. This Dwarf Bread[†] is placed in bins for use later on as the Holy Host. Because there are usually patches of grass around the church entrances of the harvester dwarves, it was thought that the dwarves planted their own seeds to have a convenient source of food.

^fNumber – pronounced “numb-er.” This is an isoschitzomer.

This is incorrect, however. They are too stupid; it is more likely that the grass seeds were dropped around the entrance by dwarves scurrying to salvation.

To have the healthiest dwarf ranch it would be best to find your own dwarves in your backyard or garden.

A DWARF CATCHER IS PART OF THE

DWARF RESORT SET.

PLEASE TREAT HER NICELY.

1. Bait the bottom of the Dwarf Catcher with a pinch of vinegar.³ Cider vinegar is best. Ferment the vinegar with a drop or two of saliva so that it is semi-alcoholic. Also place a very small piece of raw or cooked hamburger meat into the catcher's hand. Dog meat can be used if hamburger is inaccessible.

2. Locate an active dwarf colony by turning over flat rocks, old pieces of wood, or suspiciously small shanty towns. Dwarves use these to shelter themselves from rain and sunlight.^δ at start of article Vacant lots, fields, or gardens are likely places where a colony might be located. Prop up the rock or wood by placing a small stone under it. Lay the Dwarf Catcher on her side next to the area where dwarves have been seen. Check at intervals to see if the Dwarf Catcher has caught any dwarfs. If possible, leave them overnight. Dwarf scouts are always looking for food sources for the colony. When a single dwarf finds the food it likes, it signals other members by pissing in the bushes and screaming obscenities, thus directing them to the food source. They will attack the Dwarf Catcher in large numbers, but this will pose no significant threat to the Catcher, as most dwarves are laughingly ineffective in combat situations.

WARNING: NEVER TOUCH DWARVES AS SOME CAN BITE AND PINCH.

The Dwarf Catcher may be placed wherever dwarves are observed moving about in vast herds. Dwarves may be more inclined to attack the dwarf catcher in black light.

3. If you cannot find dwarves in your area, you are shit out of luck. But, you may use the enclosed coupon for obtaining a supply of Harvest/Worker dwarves directly from us. Please fill out the coupon carefully in ink. Shipment will be made within four to six weeks. Dwarves are difficult to ship in the months of December, January, and February, so if there is a delay, be assured the postal workers are cleaning up the mess. In cases of extreme cold weather, they will die, but we will ship them anyway. Though some dwarves may die during shipment, don't worry about it; by instinct, the other dwarves will actually remove them to a separate section which they will use as a burial ground. This is perfectly natural and there should be enough dwarves to stock your Dwarf Resort. It is best not to have too many dwarves. The fewer the dwarves, the harder their struggle.

NOTE: IT IS AGAINST FEDERAL LAW TO SHIP QUEEN DWARVES. THE DWARVES SHIPPED TO YOU WITH THE ENCLOSED CERTIFICATE WILL BE WORKER DWARVES, WHO WILL BE QUITE INTERESTING TO OBSERVE. IF YOU GATHER YOUR OWN DWARVES, YOU MAY BE ABLE TO FIND A QUEEN. DWARVES CAN ONLY BE SHIPPED IN THE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES. SORRY, GUAM.

Stocking your Dwarf Resort

Take our tube of dwarves, or your Dwarf Catcher with dwarves, and place in the refrigerator (not freezer) for about thirty minutes. This will numb them and render them motionless. They naturally slow down in cold temperatures. When the dwarves are not moving, open hatch on side of Dwarf Resort. If you have the dwarves we supply in the tube, give them to the Dwarf Catcher or directly into the dwarf Resort.

[†] Read *Witches Abroad*, by Pterry Pratchett

³ You can catch more bees with honey, but you can catch more dwarves with vinegar, go figure.

Supermarket Carts

By Sean Hammond, Kelly Gunter, *et. al.*, illustrated by Matt Mesner, Vol. 10, Iss. 1

“I’ve learned that every time I go to the store I get the cart with cum on the wheel.”

—Live Learn and Pass it on... well, sort of.

Night is a pensive time for me. Surrounded by the anonymous darkness, with the cold, uncaring light of ancient stars shining mercilessly down upon me, it is sometimes easy to imagine stepping through a long forgotten and unknown portal and disappearing. In supermarkets late at night the feeling can, ironically, become stronger. It’s no coincidence that many people in our age have dreams of flying in supermarkets. There is something magikal about passing down isles filled with sustenance from across the world; a jar of spaghetti sauce from Italy; a beer from the Emerald Isle; blessed fish paste from the cradle of several major religions—most dead, but others thriving, waiting for their brethren’s demise. The artificial lights and insistent Muzak don’t detract from the feeling, but in the strange way that only plastic jewelry can add to the regalness of a seven year old girl, it includes another mystery all its own.

For all of our advancement in knowledge and understanding of the world we perceive, we are snobby hunter-gatherers and some racial memory takes us back to the tales of the Sampo, bottomless cups, and cornucopia. Standing in the cash only aisle is the closest we may come to the fountainhead of myth. There, gods are born and dragons defeated.

Recently, on such a rare, mystical night, when my blood was more copper than iron, as I exited the doors to the super market without even so much as an “Open Sesame” to activate them and ambulated through the parking lot toward my mode of vehicular transport, I spotted a particularly sad oxidized member of the Taberna plaustrum family. With one wheel busted, mostly crippled, I looked on the old timer with understanding eyes.

You’ll never roll in a straight line again. You’ve lost your will to shop. Pretty soon they’ll be hauling your ass off to the 15-item-or-less-basket factory. That’s it. That’s the end of your free-wheeling, care-free days. Gone are the last shreds of your dignity.

My heart ached.

With one swift swat to the rump I rose to the occasion.

“Go on little fella! No one’s watching! Roll. Roll like the wind! You’re free now, don’t you understand? Go on, get out of here!”

But the old cart just sat there, unmoved. It was too late for it now. It just sat there motionless with its faulty child safety belt rocking gently in the breeze. What did it know of freedom? What did it know of the feel of weeds slapping at its axles, or the song of the wind through its frame as it raced down empty lots with a strong breeze at its back? It was never born a free-range cart. It had lost its will and dignity eons earlier. Between mishandling by disenchanting homemakers and rushed wage-slaves, its life had been one of regulation and neglect. It was only a matter of time until the basket factory. And then, who knew what became of such loathsome creatures?

This was not always the way. There was a time when carts ran free, aluminum paint glistening in the sunshine, calculator pads fresh with untapped keys...unfettered wills all. There were days when not a child in the parish could ride such fiendishly clever beasts. Days when mighty herds roamed the massive plains of the new world and old, unburdened by human consumption or bags of cold ice cream. Days of glory.



The stories of cyborgs told in ancient Greece—half man, half machine creatures with the torso of a man and the body of a cart—were probably nothing more than the half remembered early encounters with the cart riders of the open Asian steppe. Further evidence for this can be seen in the fairly recent cave drawings by native Americans upon their encounter with astride Spanish Conquistadors. As though familiar with the ancient cyborgs of the old world, the Americans saw the invading Spaniards as great pale men with the bodies of carts and the breath of the great black panthers (there was a very good reason these beasts were solitary hunters).

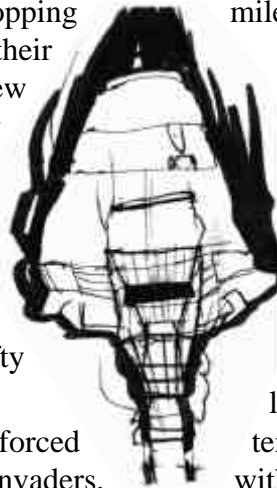
Bringing with them God, Righteousness, and Civilization in the guise of the Inquisition, the Spanish inadvertently introduced the shopping cart into North and Central America. On their own in the harsh environment of the New World, ideas later to be popularized by Darwin began their steady assault on these metallic interlopers. As generations fell before the blade of Evolution these creatures adapted: larger wheels, more, lighter weight wire mesh, and that place for really heavy items became sturdy enough for a fifty pound bag of cat litter.

In time the natives, many of them forced from their ancestral home in the east by invaders, created the mythic Cart Cultures of the American Midwest. In less than two centuries, the Americans had become masters of creatures which had been unknown to them for thousands of years, making their survival on the Great Plains possible.

Just as their way of life, so dependent upon the cart, was created by the Europeans, so it was destroyed: Manifest Destiny swept the numerous Cart Cultures aside as the Europeans held sway over the land. As the natives found their lives suitable for little other than the sale of snake oil and the consumption of vast quantities of alcohol, their great wheeled friends suffered. Without the proper supplies to keep the cart healthy, many died of starvation and lack of rustoleum treatments. But still the shopping cart was a necessary resource. In the heady days of the Cart Express, where brave men and boys risked their lives to get the mail through the sometimes hostile lands of the plains, these metal creatures, filled to the bursting with news from families, businesses, Santa, and the government,

could be seen for miles, their sides glinting in the bright sun as their riders, pushing along with one leg would place both onto the riding bar and shout with pure abandon.

The Industrial Age—and later the Age of Invention—filled with all of its wonders and shiny things, was in fact the death knoll for the cart way of life. First the train, with its mighty rails disappearing into the distance, and later the cartless carriages driving hither and yon, gave the population greater freedom of movement. Today, with the nation crisscrossed with black arteries, clogged to the point of cardiac arrest with automobiles, we have become a culture of movers. Drive thirty miles to get to work ever day, visit a friend 800 miles away, and casually move 1000 miles from the place of your birth.



In the dust of our progress, the cart has remained. Man never abandons something once discovered. No matter how advanced we become, there will always be men turning the soil to plant a seed, Gods, pottery, and carts...until their extinction. But even when the entity we call a cart has joined the mammoth, passenger pigeon, and dodo bird, the idea will remain. Today, these noble creatures, left with only the most menial labor in the new temples, carry our foodstuff without a nicker, without a whinny, without a complaint. We are their masters.

But neglect is showing. Bred only for numbers now, their gene pool is weakening them. The loopy wheels, Pentium calculators, and seat belts with two female clips are all evidence that this once great line may never be able to return to its former glory. Still, one occasionally finds the unexpected: a cart pure in line and form, rolling straight and true.

Knowing that the poor cart before me could never make it on its own, I resolved to set it free in the absolute sense. Getting into my car, I slowly pulled up behind the forlorn, rickety cart and gently nudged it with my front bumper. Slightly startled by the jolt, it rolled forward, but quickly stopped, as though sensing what was coming next. With a tear in my eye, I whispered, “Hi ho Silver, away!”

Starting slowly, the cart was hesitant. Five, ten, fifteen miles per hour, the cart tripped, unaccustomed to the speed that its ancestors once took for granted.

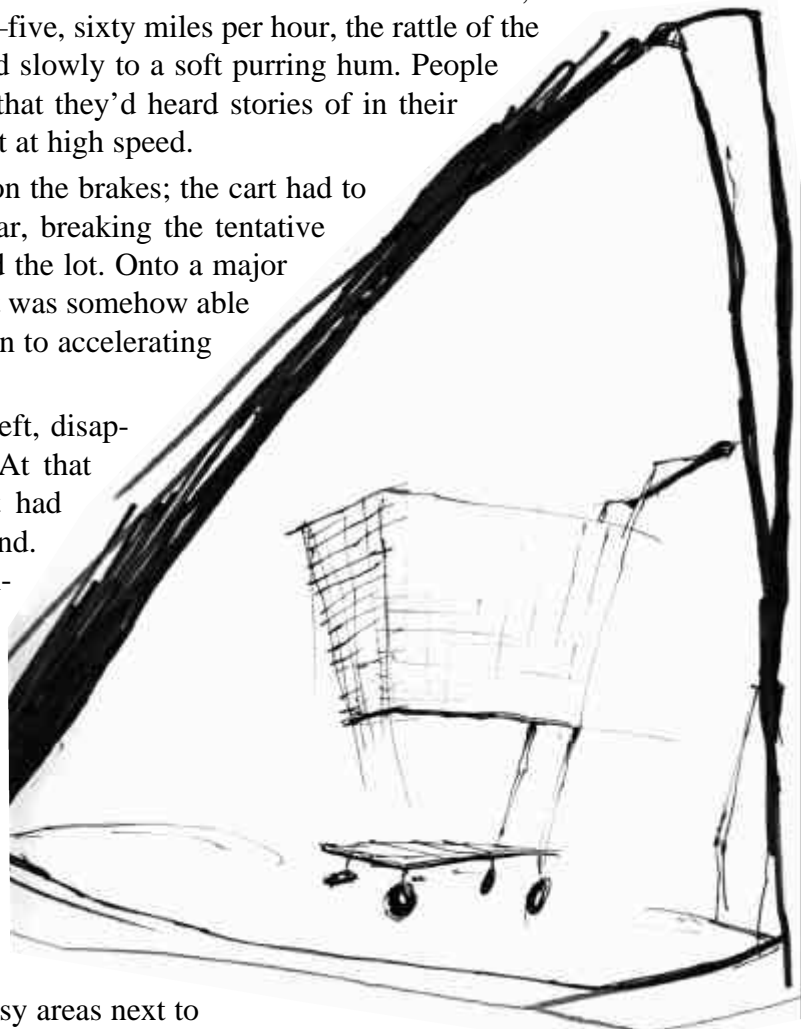
Suddenly, something changed. The motion smoothed and the cart was happily rolling along at twenty, twenty-five, thirty. Sparks flying from the bottom, both the cart and I knew it was time; we neared the end of the lot and a decision needed to be made.

Flooring the accelerator, the cart rocked back onto its hind wheels for a moment, but quickly righted itself in anticipation. Fifty, fifty-five, sixty miles per hour, the rattle of the cart could be heard all over the lot and changed slowly to a soft purring hum. People exiting stores stopped and starred at the sight that they'd heard stories of in their youth, but never thought to see: an Arabian Cart at high speed.

Just before the end of the lot I slammed on the brakes; the cart had to go this last bit alone. It shot away from my car, breaking the tentative umbilical, rocked up a slight incline, and exited the lot. Onto a major road, the lack of traffic in the night is best, for it was somehow able to make a gentle turn without slowing and began to accelerating away.

Suddenly, it wobbled and veered to the left, disappearing into the shrubbery and dense brush. At that instant, I noticed that several carts in the lot had slowly rolled near me, driven on by the wind. Gently they stopped at the curb, as though watching what had happened to their friend. In the distance, I could hear the shouts of the acne scarred cart wranglers coming to collect their way-ward wards. Without a word to the voice-cracking teens banging on my hood, I slowly drove away.

What happened to the cart that I helped escape, I'll never know. Maybe it was simply the last act of kindness to a dying creature to let it know its power prior to its self-destruction. I like to think that it is still in the woods and grassy areas next to highways where I sometimes see wild carts drinking from small ponds, or bathing in the mid-day heat.



Ask the Bare-Foot Girl

by Kelly Gunter

DEAR BFG,

WHEN A CHILD IS BORN, HOW DO YOU KNOW IF IT'S A MIDGET?

—FASCINATED BY LITTLES

Dear Fascinated by Littles,

In the past similar question have arose such as, how can I tell if my child is a changeling? There were some simple and interesting tests to determine this (these tests were effective in the same way that testing whether a woman was a witch was effective). It went something like this...

Throw your child into a freshly stoked fire. If the child screams and runs up the chimney, the little fiend was a changeling. If, however, your beloved babe screams and writhes in agony, he is either your true born, a Jew in the flames of Nazi hell, or both, and now he is either maimed for life or dying a hideously painful death, depending on how quickly you come to his fiery aid.

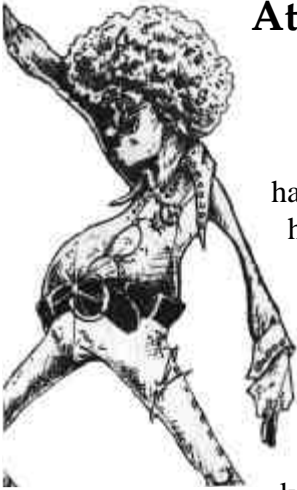
Testing for midgets is similar, but not quite as messy. The testing runs in stages or levels of midgetry which must be passed successively.

Test 1: Put the questionable babe in front of the TV and pop in *The Court Jester* if he does not scream during the "Black Fox" song, check his hearing and vision. If his hearing and vision seem unimpaired go

on to the next test, otherwise stop here secure in the knowledge that your child is not a freakshow.

Test 2: Welcome to the next level. Introduce your child to Barney. If you ever catch your child singing, “I love you, you love me...” bludgeon the tot immediately. This is not so much a test of midgitivity as it is just a good idea. Continue to the next level.

Test 3: Do they have an unnatural love of the color green and an unnaturally sounding Irish baby gurgle? If yes, they may be a midget, continue on.



Attic Inferno

—Alex Whitman, Vol. 8, iss. 4

All right, so like yesterday I had to move my car because we have alternating parking. But I didn't really have to move my car, I parked in the driveway. I had to go to work early. So I had to make sure my car was on the street, because I didn't want to get parked in. You know, because no one really wants to be woken up at five in the morning to move their car if I could have moved my car, like, last night.

So I went to move my car, and there I see Priscilla Cat of Trailer (proper name) at the door. So I'm like, “Wow, she wants to go outside.” So I said, “Trailer Cat”—Trailer Cat for short. Priscilla Cat, Queen of the Trailer is a lot to say all of the time. So we go out to move the car. She's all excited because you know we're going outside. She never gets to go outside. She's an indoor cat. Hence, you know, not...going...outside (Come on people. Keep up with me here). So, okay, we get in the car and she's a little nervous. She's only been in her cat carrier with side-kick Arnold. But I turn on the car, she's looking out the window, and her tail is a little poofed. That's not that bad. Reversing—she's in control, She's not under the brake pedals or any other pedal. There are three of them—if you're wondering. And okay, we're in the car, whatever, whatever. Tchoo, tchoo tchoo. Okay we get to the parking spot, and everything is good. But you know, the car has a short, so I have to disconnect the battery before I turn it off so I don't have the lights staying on. So that's a big problem.

So I have to leave her in the car. And she thinks

Test 4: The deciding test. Do they scream (or laugh maliciously), saying something like, “Uncle Louie!” every time you open up a container of Tang. If your answer is yes, congratulations. You are the proud parent of a freak.

If your little tyke passes all tests (excluding #2), I suggest testing whether he is a changeling after taking a healthy dose of Valium.

Have a nice day.

—The Bare-foot Girl

I'm leaving her behind, she's like, “Merow(Impatient). Don't leave me.” And she's all upset, because I have to like close the door and she's in the car, and I'm not in the car. And we're not in the house. This is very unfamiliar to her. So I'm out there disconnecting the battery, and then I decide it needs a little oil. Because as usual we're (royal we) low on oil. So I'm putting some oil in. And she's at the window meowing. And these kids across the street are like, “Wow, look there's a cat. She's leaving her in the car.” I'm like, “No I'm not leaving her in the car, I have to check the oil.”

And they're like, “Oh, she's fat. Wow, look at that fat cat.” And I'm like, “It's not a fat cat, she's big boned.” They didn't actually call her fat, they said she was big. But I knew what they meant. She sort of has a big belly. So...you know, then I picked her up and we went back inside. And she wasn't very happy, she was like all squiggly, ready to get to the ground. But I couldn't put her down because it was outside. And then we went inside and she was all happy. And, umm, now she doesn't want to go outside anymore.

And I'm thinking outside would have been a good experience, you know broaden her horizons, they're very small, she's has three floors plus the Inferno to run around on. That's not such a big amount of territory. But, you know, we'll take little baby steps.

So I'm thinking next time maybe we can take Arnold, but he doesn't really like being in the car. Because, you know, when we go to the vet, he's in the cat carrier with Trailer Cat. And he sticks his paw out, then we have to hold paws. And it's really hard to shift when you're holding paws. But he meows if you don't hold paws, because he's all nervous. Because, you know, he was a stray when he was found. And he was on Lyell Avenue and the little kids were shooting BBs at him. So he had a big time of adjustment, because Trailer

Cat beat the shit out of him for so long. She didn't like him, I didn't think she would be so territorial. It was in this four hundred square foot trailer. You know, she's lonely, she doesn't go anywhere. My neighbors live in each and she doesn't go anywhere else. So, you know, he had this rough adjustment period. He just sat on my trail...tra.. trail...er's hard to say. I'm talking to myself here.

So he sat in my chair, and he didn't move. He didn't play, he didn't eat, he didn't clean himself. She slept in the cat box, so he couldn't use the cat box. That's

pretty territorial. I was very worried, then one day they started to play. Which was lucky, because I was about to give him away the next day. So, I'm thinking that, you know, the car ride would be really traumatic for him. He's a wuss. He's very non-confrontational. He doesn't even fight with Alley. She hisses at him, he runs away. Alley is another cat. Not a person. 'nuther story.

So, you know, the car ride probably wouldn't be so good for Arnold. But he might enjoy it, you might see a new side of him. You never know. Yeah, that would be good.



Buckminsterfullerene— The Meat-Ass cat Story

by Sean Hammond, Kelly Gunter, *et. al.*, Illustrated by John Golden, Vol. 12, iss. 1

Through the night the tires hummed on the highway and the sickly illumination from the headlights disappeared in the distance. Alternating between elation and exhaustion, Kelly and I were traveling north to Maine in a car that had somehow become Dr. Who's TARDIS, packed beyond its capacity with all manner of bric-a-brac, books, and baubles. I feared that one of the bumps in the highway might upset the delicate balance and set into motion a chain-reaction. Starting with a low, subsonic flutter—like the flapping of thousands of butterfly wings underwater—everything would unfold like an exploding clown car: balloon animals fleeing with elephantine noises to the four winds and red noses popping through chinks and arcing through the air as if on a mission until the car's capacity is met with a slight onrushing sound of air and the poor occupants, crushed against windows the thick-

ness of diving bell ports, burst like so many beautiful roses.^β

Amongst the maze of material threatening our lives was a cat. Not much over two feet long and crawling in and about my feet, this creature of fur and purr thought it was a very good, a very good idea indeed, to hunker down between the clutch and the brake, and occasionally rest his large posterior against the gas pedal to help us along in our journey. Like the Kraken rising from unknown depths, the cat made his way onto my lap somewhere between Albany and the border of New York and Vermont (not that the Kraken gets onto my lap often while going to Maine, although you never can be sure just what will pop into existence in my car. What I meant was to compare the emergence of the cat from under my seat to the Kraken surfacing from the... oh, just forget it). Convinced that the hands on the wheel of the car were there for his (the cat, not a cephalopod) benefit, he began to force them to lavish attention upon him. Facing the on-rushing road and his destiny, his fundament was subsequently aimed more or less toward my face.

Sniff—

“Jesus, Bucket! What did you do under my chair? Kelly, get this fucking meat-ass cat outta my face. He smells like old ham!”

<musical interlude>

*Come ‘n listen to my story ‘bout a cat with a head
Such a stinky butt it smelled like he was dead.*

*Found it out one day when we were going for a
ride,*

Stuck his ass in my face, I very nearly died.

From the smell, you see. Bologna! Old hamburger!

Ah, Bucket. A loud, purring cat when things went feline-wise. Bucket, but he was rarely called that to his mug.^β Depending on the situation, his more technologically oriented groupies (hereafter referred to as monkeys) referred to him as Buckminsterfullerene, Buckminster, and Bucky Ball. Others, ironically, tend towards the more obscure, such as Bucket from

Pawtucket and, more recently, Meat-ass.

His original *nom de plume*, Bucket, came from his tenure under the questionable protection of a Miss Heather Danielson, a one time GDT member and all time Eeyore. With Heather, Bucket’s life can best be described as surreal. Imagine yourself as a four footed, fuzzy-as-all-get-out creature whose protector moves fairly often and every change of address means another serious visit to “Trip-Out-City”. At some point in the dim past, a vet had wisely counseled Heather that every time she had to transport her kitties, they should be drugged first. Of course, if you’ve got a degree, you know what you’re talking about, so Heather would set old Bucky Boy up.

Imagine, if you will, that you are a large, gray, long-haired feline, just enjoying your day. You find yourself enthralled by shafts of light playing along the hardwood floor, the sound of running water in the distance, and—oh yes—the sensation of your protector shoving what appears to be a very small wind-up mouse up your prat. Highly delusional and lacking motor control, you’re whisked to a new home. When that happens to us, we call it alien abduction and have a tendency to freak out to a greater or lesser degree. Bucket tended toward the “greater” end of the spectrum.

The most infamous wig-out story that Bucket tells his buddies, after particularly long nights involving dubious quantities of catnip, old socks, and purple Manic Panic™, deals with the time he woke up in a new apartment after a pleasant day and a half in “La-La-Land” and...well, Bucket tells it better.

“So like you know how it feels when you first wake up after being drugged for a long trip, right? You know, your ass kind of feels all screwed up and it feels groovy just to move your head back and forth and back and forth.... Anyways, I’m thinking to myself that like all in all life is pretty cool, right? When all of a sudden I realize that like nothing around me is mine. So I’m sitting around wondering where the hell all my stuff went, I mean I couldn’t even smell myself *anywhere!* I was still under the influence of the drugs so I couldn’t like claim anything, and on top of all that, the bitch was nowhere to be found. I mean you can’t find good Feeders these days, am I right? And then like these lumbering

^β Come on, you know you’ve imagined this kind of disaster occurring, probably some sort of wishful thinking involving Snuff-TV. Well, we’ll visit this idea again. I promise.

^β Harlan Ellison kicks ASS!

clouds came up to me. You want more story Monkey-boy, make with the head-scratching, and how's about another sock of catnip over here?

“Now, not only were these jerks not mine, but they were like acting like a pair of dolts, sayin’ ‘Hey there, kitty. Here kitty, kitty, kitty.’ Does anyone ever really buy that crap? Damn it! We were Gods to the Egyptians for chrissake. We don’t have to take that. I’m done talking to you. Go away, I’m going to ignore you now.”

Well, to finish the story, Bucket found a hole in the wall of the bathroom of the apartment and promptly deposited himself into it for a month. In the end, a desperate Heather had firemen tear the wall a second ass and set Bucket, desperately trying to void his own colon,^μ free.

He was scared when he went in there. Imagine how he felt when big men in yellow rain slickers wielding fire axes whispering, “Here kitty, kitty, kitty,” came for him.

Without food or water, Bucket wasted away to resemble a Jewish kitty circa WWII, or a feline Gandhi. Apparently, this starvation diet damaged his nervous system; to this day Bucket can’t quite keep his balance and tends to fall over backward in confusion while beg—I mean demanding—treats. He’s also been known to run headlong into faucets when he jumps up to drink from running water.

All in all, Bucket has special needs.

Deciding that Heather was...well, bored with him, Bucket came to be a ward of ours. Despite his needy nature (a side benefit of having grown up under the watchful eye of an emotionally crippled woman) and tendency to try to sleep on your face, Bucket and his

special needs were a joy to have around. For a time this was fine, but as summer wound down and the grass settled into a healthy brown, the times they were a-changing. I was moving down to Baltimore to continue my education, and Kelly lived in a house full of birds.^œ We thought through our options and decided that sending the little bugger to live with my family in Maine was the best one.

So there we found ourselves, sealed in an automobile with a cat whose ass smelled like, for lack of a better descriptor, meat. The imagination can only begin to fathom the true horror one feels when one is stuck in a vehicle with an emotionally needy cat whose ass smells, um, well, delicious.

Hollering at Bucket for the state of his hinder, all I could think was that I had left an all beef patty with special sauce, lettuce, cheese, pickles, and onions on a sesame-seed bun under my car seat and that Bucket, investigating with his investigating feet, had found it and decided that there could not be a finer thing in the whole world to perfume his posterior with. Bucket, the poor soul, was so embarrassed by the whole thing that he banished himself into the mysteries of the back of the car, much to my relief.

Soon we arrived in Maine, dropped off the contents of the car, and introduced my family (Henry Byron, Susan Francis, Matthew Casey, Oscar Meyer, and Lady Valen-tine; a father, mother, brother, cat, and dog, respectively) to Bucket. Still smelling of meat, Bucket hid himself in my mother’s closet (thereafter referred to as Pawtucket by my mother for reasons best understood only by her) and we didn’t see him for the rest of our stay.[‡]



^μ But he couldn’t because he had no food or water in his system with which to void said colon.

^œ Three of the winged kind and two of the thumbled kind.

[‡] The boy is not entirely truthful when he states this last bit, for there were a couple of occasions that I was fortunate to see Bucket again before we left. Every night Buckminster would enter my sleeping quarters and lie upon my head until I couldn’t breath anymore and would wake up screaming. Next night he would be back for more. No wonder They™ say that cats steal children’s breath.

The smell of his tochus bothered us for some time, however. So, upon our return to Rochester, we fired up the Hell's Kitchen super computer (a VIC-20 networked to an Amiga through a 9600 baud modem. We're state of the art, I tell ya) and contacted Hell, Inc. After dealing with the customary signs and countersigns, we were finally able to enter all the available information. Enigmatically, our contact at Cronos Corp would only say, "It was that pound and a half of ham he ate."

For weeks this meant absolutely nothing to us. We thought that, for the first time, Hell Inc. had failed us. After that weird post card they sent us in October, we didn't know what to think. But in the end they came through in what has been known as the SHI[§] among temporal mechanics (Okay try it now! Now! Okay Now! Oh, it was one of the Johnson brats, try it now.) and researchers: Subsequent Ham In-cident. What we forgot to consider when interpreting the answer from Cronos Corp. was that their time is not ours. They're busy flitting in and out of time, sending squirrels into the past and rats into the future. All in all it's a very busy

§ Kelly: SHEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!

Sean [concerned]: What?

Kelly: SHEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!

Sean: Oh. Well, that's a footnote.

Cartwranglers

by Sean Hammond, Kelly Gunter, *et. al.*, illustrated by Gil Merritt, Vol. 14, Iss. 3

Rollin', rollin', rollin'
 Keep those cart wheels rollin'
 Keep those cart wheels rollin'
 Inside!

As I drove into the parking lot of a local Übermart, something in my peripheral vision made me stop in awe. There, delicately tending a herd of young carts, were those proud and romanticized figures from urban mythology: the cart wranglers.

They were dressed just as Hollywood films have always portrayed them: in electric orange vests, ball caps to keep off the rays of the merciless sun during those long rides through the parking lot, spurs clinking across the blacktop, and a newly polished Remington worn protectively over the shoulder to deter the occasional rustler or wino. These noble fellows of old were guiding a herd of what looked to be 30 or 40 carts back to the store from their corrals in the lot. One strapping young lad at the front led the way. Another, older and more seasoned in the ways of wheels and gritted chrome followed behind to make sure no malingers were allowed to wander from the herd. These men held their heads high as they made their way between the rows of neatly parked cars, eschew-

lifestyle. Not taking into account our lack of craftiness, the answer to our question dealt with what was going to happen and failed to consider that we had not read ahead in the syllabus.

Suffice it to say that, once he recovered from his embarrassment and began to journey out from Pawtucket, Bucket ate a pound and a half of ham, under questionable circumstances. Somehow, the effects of eating that massive amount of meat made its effect felt backward in time. Thus his ass smelled of ham BEFORE he actually ate it. I could lie and say we understand the intricacies of non-linear time mechanics, but I won't. Anyway, our Hell Inc. contacts assure us that the trauma produced on the digestive tract by a pound and a half of ham could surely produce the same effect on anyone, let alone a 15 pound cat.

Warning: Gracies Dinnertime Theatre does not endorse eating a pound and a half of ham under any circumstances. If accidental ingestion occurs, flush repeatedly with water and contact a physician immediately.



ing the blind backing of soccer moms in SUVs, their silhouettes dramatically backlit by the hot red of hastily illuminated brake lights.

Suddenly, amidst a pair of brightly coloured Beetles emerged a young lad of no more than seven or eight. Clutching the harness of a rapidly accelerating cart that was obviously from Arabian stock, the boy raced behind and in one final devil-may-care-flourish, leapt into the stirrups with a cry of pure exulted joy, letting the cart carry him where it may.

“Yeee-HAW!”

The young cart wrangler at the front of the herd, remembering his months of training, broke off from his duties. In one smooth motion he turned and accelerated on a perfectly gauged intercept course for the eager child. Speeding alongside the big metal beast, he gently slowed its break-neck pace to a safe canter, and eventually to a stop. The young wrangler was obviously being trained in the “Old Ways”; with his gazelle-like grace and powerful athleticism, one could hardly come to another conclusion. His wizened teacher nodded curtly in approval of a job expertly executed.

“Whhhhoa, there son! You want to careful `round this here breed,” said the man in a slow drawl as the boy looked up in awe. “He ain’t been `pletely broken and is likely t’ cause some problems. I’ll take him from `ere, wot? Bob’s yer uncle.”

As the wrangler led the cart toward the rest of the herd, it was clear there were going to be problems. The two front wheels wobbled from side to side, causing the cart to move in an erratic fashion; it was obviously spooked. Just as they neared the docile herd, a strong wind came up and the spirited Arabian collided with the line of chrome creatures.

This extra incentive separated a number of the more spirited youngsters from the front, and they began recklessly racing away with the wind.

“Stampede!”

Forgetting the Arabian cart that had started this unfortunate line of dominoes, the two wranglers raced after the fleeing shapes, a virtual ballet of sound and motion. It was a race against time now, as several of the carts were headed for parked cars. Their handle bars glinted malevolently in the sun at the thought of that imminent question, “Hey...where’d that dent come from?” At the last moment, it seemed disaster was unavoidable. Time stood still as the old wrangler came to a halt. Grasping a length of coiled rope in his strong, calloused hands, he lassoed the lead cart, just as it was about to greedily thrust its angry chrome into the supple side of a newly waxed Freudian Lexus. As *The Man*TM dug in, the cart’s forward momentum caused it to flip onto its side just

before the unsuspecting automobile. The other miscreants, following close behind, found little other recourse than to crash into their downed leader and come to an ignoble end.

After righting downed carts here and tightening wobbly wheels there, the wranglers were about to head back toward the rest of the herd when they noticed something was amiss. Cart rustlers from a neighboring plaza were prowling among the submissive carts they had left behind. Expertly overwriting brands with cans of spray paint, it was obvious that these boys had been around a parking lot or two. They had already gotten three carts, including the Arabian, by the time our two protagonists returned, Remingtons a-blazing. A couple of beefy bag-boys¹ emerged from the front entrance of the store and joined in the chase.

“Send’um back to Radio Shack, boys! Yeeeeeha!” one cried out.

Fleeing before the onslaught, the rustlers escaped with only three carts as their prize.



¹ The triple-Bs as we call them in the bidness.

² “You want to pay in cash? Hey!? When did they change the twenty dollar bill?”

“Hold up, men. No use followin’ them now, it’ll be dark soon. We’ll get ‘um in time.”

As I entered the store to make my purchases, those gallant, minimum wage walkers of the great blackened tar fields were still making their way toward the store.

Hours later, after having survived the trials and travails of shopping without a credit card, debit card,

shoppers club card, or checkbook,² I saw the peaceful cart wranglers sitting around their campfire. Strains of music from harmonicas and Jew’s harps floated across the sodium-vapour lit landscape, and between mouthfuls of chewing tobacco and 100 proof, yarns were being spun about “the one that got away.” My heart ached at the sight as I recalled my childhood dreams. Oh well...I’m too old for that line of work now.

Socio–Political Themes in *The Smurfs*

by J. Marc Schmidt, Vol. 15, Iss. 3

1.) Introduction:

This is a discursive analysis of the television programme *The Smurfs*, created by Peyo, and first aired during the greater part of the eighties. In other words, it is an analysis of some of the socio–political themes I have noticed in the show.

The Smurfs is a unique programme. It is, first and foremost, a cartoon, and as such it is aimed at children. The discussion could end there, however, unlike many other cartoons, or indeed other television programmes, *The Smurfs* is about an entire society and its interactions with itself and with outsiders, rather than the adventures of just a few characters. Hence I believe it is, in short, a political fable, in much the same way that *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* was a fable about Christianity. Rather than Christianity, however, *The Smurfs* is about Marxism.

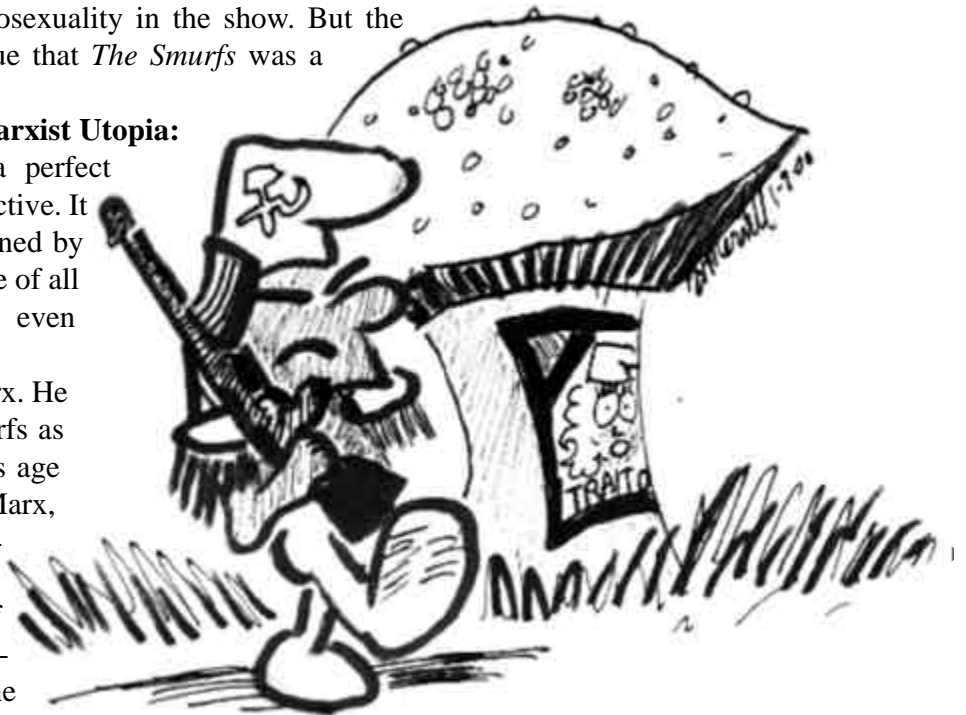
I am not accusing *The Smurfs* of being some kind of subversive kiddie propaganda—although if it was, would it really be that much worse than the spate of ‘toyetic’ cartoons of the same decade that only existed to sell plastic toys? In any case, this essay should be seen as the highest kind of praise. What other childrens’ shows would address the issue of Marxism in such a way, and at such a pivotal point in the history of the Cold War? The Smurfs should be praised for using metaphor and the device of the fairy tale to introduce children to political themes. If Peyo was a socialist, however, he was obviously not the sort who had much time for the version of it practiced by the Soviet Union and other Eastern bloc police states. He was a utopian. There is a distinct lack of any kind of army or police in the Smurf Village. On rare occasions when it is necessary, they form their own civilian militia to fight off threats. Otherwise, it is the absolute opposite of the police state.

After my brief analysis of Marxism in *The Smurfs*, I will also be addressing the issues of feminism and homosexuality in the show. But the main concern of this essay is to argue that *The Smurfs* was a Marxist fable.

2.) The Smurf Village as a Marxist Utopia:

The Smurf Village itself is a perfect model of a socialist commune or collective. It is self–reliant, and the land is not owned by individuals, but by the entire collective of all the Smurfs, if the word ‘owned’ is even appropriate.

Papa Smurf represents Karl Marx. He is not so much the leader of the Smurfs as an equal revered by the others for his age and wisdom. He has a beard, as did Marx, and thus could conceivably be a caricature as well. And lastly, he wears red, which is the traditional color of socialism. Brainy Smurf could represent Trotsky. He is the only one in the



village who comes close to matching Papa's intellect—he is a thinker. With his round spectacles, he could also be a caricature of Trotsky. He is often isolated, ridiculed or even ejected from the commune of the village for his ideas. And of course, Trotsky was banished from the USSR.

Despite their different professions/distinctions, the Smurfs are all completely equal. Thus, while the occupations of certain Smurfs, such as Farmer, Handy and Greedy, are more important than others, such as Clumsy, Grouchy, or Lazy, there is no feeling that certain Smurfs are superior or inferior to others because of their work, or level of skill, because ultimately, everyone is a Smurf first.

Economically, the Smurf Village is a closed-market. There is no money, and all possessions are communal property of the collective. Everyone is equally a worker and an owner. The Smurfs reject the idea of a free-market economy, with its greed and inequities, and the collective is more important and valuable than the individual. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. John Lennon asked us to 'imagine no possessions.' The Smurf Village achieves that goal. In fact, many of the ideas expressed in that song are reality in the Village. There is one large piece of capital or produced means of production, in the Smurf Village: the dam. It is owned, operated and repaired by the entire collective.

The Smurfs all refer to one another by the same title: 'Smurf.' E.g., Brainy Smurf, Handy Smurf, Jokey Smurf, Lazy Smurf, Papa Smurf. This is highly reminiscent of socialist states' use of the word 'comrade' when referring to others, instead of more elitist titles.

Adding to the idea of complete equality in the Village, most of the Smurfs wear the same kind and color of clothes. It is a general work uniform, and with the distinctive caps and blue skin, is highly reminiscent of the so-called Mao Suit, common in Maoist China.

In the tradition of pure Marxism, the Smurf Village is atheist.

There is no god, and there is no Priest Smurf. There are only the 'real' forces of nature and physics, and these are rep-

resented metaphorically by the characters of Mother Nature and Father Time. Of course, there is also magic, as practiced by Papa, Gargamel, Balthazar and others, but it is simply another tool, something that occurs in nature, that has physical properties and can be tapped into, with the right know-how. It is not, as many religions are, a way of understanding the universe in a supernatural context.

The episode "The King Smurf" was the ultimate illustration of the Marxian conflict between the bad, oppressive kind of government, where greedy kings (and capitalists) exploited the population for their own ends; and the good, egalitarian political model Marx had formulated. In the episode, a militia is formed to overthrow Brainy, who has become King in Papa Smurf's absence, and utopian order is restored when Papa Smurf returns. In this instance, Papa Smurf, as Marx himself, represents the ideal form of Marxism. The evil wizard Gargamel represents capitalism. He embodies everything bad about capitalism. He is greedy, ruthless, and his only concern is with his own personal gratification. He is what happens when the individual makes himself more important than the society he lives in. Not coincidentally, he is also a crazy old hermit with no real friends.

What does Gargamel want to do with the Smurfs? He has two ideas. The first is to eat them. This is unusual, because the Smurfs are small and rare, and would not make as good eating as, say, a deer. It is similar to Sylvester's obsession with eating the golf ball sized meal that is Tweety Bird. There are two explanations. The first is that metaphorically; he wants to devour socialism, as the West wanted to do to the USSR and its satellites during the Cold War through its tactic of encirclement.

The second is that as a pure capitalist, he wishes to turn everything into a commodity—including people. The second thing Gargamel plans to do to the Smurfs once he catches them is to turn them into gold. As the ultimate super-capitalist, he is more concerned with his own wealth than with equality and fairness. Like any Adam Smith style capitalist, it is his 'natural' state to want as much money as he can get.



Gargamel is a cold, bitter and ultimately empty man. This is because he has nothing else in his life but a soulless quest for wealth and possessions. A definite statement about the anti-social effects of economic rationalism.

Gargamel's ginger cat, Azrael, represents the worker in the ruthless, free-market state that is Gargamel's house. He is uncomplaining, or, since he has no voice (i.e. Trade Unions), is metaphorically unable to complain. He cannot negotiate his wage—he eats whatever he is given by his master. He is smaller and less well off than Gargamel, and metaphorically, he represents the proletariat, while Gargamel represents the bourgeoisie. Azrael is exploited and oppressed. He risks his life fighting and hunting for his master, and does not have the intellectual capacity to question this state of affairs, just as the worker suffered his fate for centuries because education was off limits to him, and he had no other option but to work for his bosses.

Gargamel owns his house and everything in it, including the capital of his alchemical equipment, in nothing like the way that the Smurfs own their village. If the same political structure existed at Gargamel's house, both he and Azrael would be equal owners, regardless of Gargamel's superior size, knowledge and skill. But Azrael owns nothing.

The incursion of the new characters later in the series/eighties, such as the Smurflings, with their colors and different clothes and looks, can be viewed in the real world as an incursion by commercial interests to increase the popularity and salability of the show. In the show, metaphorically, they represent Western intrusion to the utopian harmony of the Smurf Village, just as Gorbachev's glasnost and perestroika reforms in the mid to late eighties heralded the ultimate demise of the Soviet Union.

3.) Feminism and *The Smurfs*:

Monique Wittig wrote that women are defined as women, while men are defined by their occupation, the idea being that men have occupations but women do not. For example, if an accident was being reported, the victims might be described as 'a teacher, a plumber and a woman'. Smurfette is unique in the village in that she is not defined by an occupation or a personality trait like the male, or real Smurfs, but by her sex. She is not a real member of society because of her sex, and this is represented metaphorically in the show by the fact that she was created by Gargamel.

The diminutive suffix of 'ette', common in our society, also identifies Smurfette as being not the equal of the males. She is the second sex.

Above I asserted that everyone in the Village was equal. In a sense, this is still true. In the beginning, it was all male, and Smurfette's introduction did not disrupt the patriarchal order. Thus, Smurfette is equal to the others politically, but not socially.

In an ideal, sexist, patriarchal state, women are not a part of the community. They do not occupy the 'public sphere' of work and the outside world, and they certainly do not work. Smurfette's main occupation seems to be standing around looking pretty, i.e. 'being the woman', although when it comes to problem solving, the producers have not, thankfully, made her a brainless bimbo. She is quite a bit sharper than the rest of the Smurfs, except of course, for Papa.

Smurfette is definitely the 'object' of the male gaze. Since she is the object, the males are the subjects. They are active, she is passive.

Smurfette has no breasts. I believe this is significant when we consider how Smurfette was created. She began life as the almost Frankensteinian creation of Gargamel. As a capitalist, he naturally is treating her as a commodity, something which can be made, used and disposed of, all ultimately to make him money. The idea that a woman can be made by a man denies women's key role in procreation. The fact that she does not possess breasts goes further to this denial of nature, an attempt to control women, to make them conform to the societal norm imposed by the patriarchal order.

Smurfette is a secondary creation, in that she was made after the males. She has a heart of stone, and technically, she is unnatural. Physically and metaphorically, she is not a 'real' Smurf. She is, in short, bad and wrong, as patriarchal cultures have viewed women for centuries.

How do you make a better woman? In other words how do you make a woman who is acceptable by society (i.e. the Village or our own society)? One, you take all the fight out of her. Make her compliant, make her toe the line created and maintained by the male-dominated social structure. One visual example of this is her transformation from a brunette to a blonde. Western society traditionally stereotypes dark-haired women as brainy, but blondes as dumber, but more beautiful and desirable. And that is another way to make a better woman. You make her beautiful. Essentially, when Papa Smurf casts his spell to make Smurfette a

‘real’ Smurf, the visible difference was that she was more ‘beautiful’ as well. Thus it follows that before, she was ugly. So when it comes to women, ugly equals wrong, and beautiful equals right, and in a sense, real. But why is one thing beautiful and another thing not? Who says? Ultimately, the patriarchal order. And the Smurf Village, with its 99:1 ratio of males to females, is definitely a patriarchy. This adds to the idea of woman as commodity—she is changed and made by men, and is beautiful by their standards. And at the end of it she is thankful.

Gloria Steinem once wrote that ‘women were history’s first drag queens,’ meaning that ideals of beauty are all imposed by the patriarchal order, and there is no reason for women to look ‘like women’ other than a need for distinction between the sexes, and to reinforce the idea of women as mere objects, as the focus of male gaze. Smurfette is no exception.

In an ideal patriarchal society, there are no women. Can you imagine what the Smurf village would be like if the ratio of males to females were 50:50? One thing is certain, it would not be the same utopia it is presented as in the show. Perhaps this means that the ideal Marxist State can only truly operate when everyone is equal, including sexually, although it is almost impossible to imagine an all-female Smurf Village. This is probably more due to deep, intrinsic sexism in our own society than any other reason. If female was the ‘natural’ sex for Smurfs, I cannot see why they would all look like Smurfette. The concept of beauty, if it existed at all, would have no basis, no frame of reference in which to be equated with ‘blonde and cute.’

4.) The Smurf Village as Homotopia:

The Smurf Village was always all male, until Smurfette came along, when it was still overwhelmingly male. This means that they did not procreate by traditional means, and thus, ‘heterosexuality’ would not be the norm.

Much like ancient Greek city-states such as Athens, which many believe is the closest to a pure democracy the world will ever come, government was by all the people, and by ‘all the people’ they meant males only. Women are not invited to participate in public affairs. In Athens, homosexuality was not uncommon, nor was it particularly frowned upon.

No Smurf ever forms a relationship with Smurfette. Although she is the focus of some childish heterosexual rivalries, especially between Hefty and Handy, there is never any real heterosexual tension in the Village. The tension is more between Hefty and Handy themselves, who seem to be more interested in impressing each other than Smurfette. If the Smurf Village existed for ages without any females, how would the Smurfs have been able to understand what the Smurfette was? Certainly, nature would provide examples of male-female bonding that the Smurfs would have been able to observe, but in their own sphere, there were never any women, and never any heterosexuality. Thus, how could Smurfette have been able to seduce anyone? Are the creators trying to say that heterosexuality is the natural state, even if it never existed in society and there was never any frame of reference for understanding what heterosexual attraction was? On this point, I’m prepared to let the creators off. They probably weren’t even thinking about it, because in our society, heterosexuality is very much seen as the norm. Lastly, I believe the characters of Hefty, Handy, and Vanity are gay archetypes. Vanity is the kind of gay archetype commonly presented by the straight entertainment industry, for example in the UK sitcom *Are You Being Served?* while Hefty and Handy are gay archetypes in the same vein as the Village People, with their extremely iconic masculinity, exaggerated to the point of camp. Meanwhile,

I believe Clumsy and Brainy represent a stereotypical gay couple.

5.) Conclusion:

I believe that at the very least, Peyo was attempting to present certain Marxist theories in the form of an allegorical fairy tale. *The Smurfs*, then, succeeds in the way the best kind of fantasy literature does—by shining a light on the real world we all live in. There is much evidence to suggest that *The Smurfs*, as a narrative, is a utopian socialist fable. And ultimately, I think a large part of the appeal of the show comes from this utopian ideal, because even if it is unlikely to ever occur in the real world, with all its complexities, we can still imagine.

Send comments to: j_marc_s@hotmail.com

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