



Volume 6 • Issue 3

After the Rapture

"When your purpose in life is to entertain the gods, there's nothing to do but to put on a good show."

A new year has been born, and as we strip the cowl away to get a good look at its bloated blue face our inescapable march toward the Millennium continues. The impending fall of the centuries has always been a tense time for those of Christian persuasion, what with the ever present promises of the return of Jesus and His Homies. The passing of the millennium, however, is making more than the usual number of

Pascal-Christians^f a bit nervous. Seems everywhere I look, I see wild-eyed, horse-faced women feverishly clutching their rosary beads to their bosoms (ok, not everywhere, usually just the ones I'm stalking). Can you blame them? Look around you, buddy! The end is nigh! Apathy, Famine, Pestilence...all the Apocalypse Boys are loitering about, just itching for a rumble.

History's greatest prophets are even backing up John's fungus-induced Revelations^Δ; Nostradamus, Edgar Cayce, George the Goitered Garageman...they all enigmatically point to the crossover from 1999 to 2000 as a time of strife and unrest. No rest for the wicked, I guess.

With the Rapture practically huffing and puffing, and demanding to be let in (not by the hairs on *my* chinny-chin chin!), there are no delusions in my mind that when Gabriel blows his divine alto kazoo, and all the true believers (i.e. Christians) are taken up into Heaven (unless the kids from kingdom hall are correct and heaven only has space allotted for 200,000), I will be left behind to revel in the Tribulation. Unfortunately, a lot of others will be left behind, too. According to the 1993 World Almanac there are 1,783,660,000 Christians in the world. Assuming that every professed Christian leaves this mortal coil in the Rapture, that leaves just about four billion people left on the planet. With most of the Christians nestled in Europe and the Americas, the sudden disappearance of two billion people would reduce it to vast tracts of unsettled land open for Asia, African, and Middle Eastern colonialism^μ.

All in all, the Rapture and following Age of Tribulation is sounding pretty good. Unfortunately, the dregs of humanity would have to come to terms with the greatest existential crisis ever. Think Gen-Xers are apathetic? Imagine what things will be like after the leftovers learn that 1) There is a God and 2) They just missed the literal soul train.

As civilization slowly grinds to a halt, carried forward on inertia alone, there I'll be, in the vast Heartland of the now desolate North American continent, camera in hand.

Wandering from area to area, searching for those left behind, I plan on creating a photo-journal called "After the Rapture." Employing stark black and white images styled after those taken during the Great Depression, the journal will show the slow death of a people's soul, and perhaps the birth of something greater. You see, with the Great Divine Tourist having come and left us behind in the Dark, we can stop hiding our hatred for His leaving us the first time. As the newly fumigated regions are resettled, humanity will have a chance to do it right, leaving God out of the picture for the first time. No more theological arguments by design. God exists: Venerat, viderat, relinquat. He left us, not necessarily because we were bad, but because we weren't wearing the right team colors. A new Age of Reason, the Tribulation, rising from the remnants of two thousand years of Sky-Father worship, like the Phoenix of legend. If the human remnants realize that their holy ship had sailed, they could finally get on with the business of living. Humanity would be able to storm Olympus with our flaming flashlights as Zeus once feared, scattering a junk mail trail of Ed McMahon and Ames fliers behind us.

Already there are a number of publishing companies (after all, *they'll* still be here, too) interested in my proposal, and I've received some rather substantial offers. Although I can't discuss the details of the impending contract, I can tell you that the sum in question can buy more Silly-String and glow-in-the-dark chalk than even I can imagine.

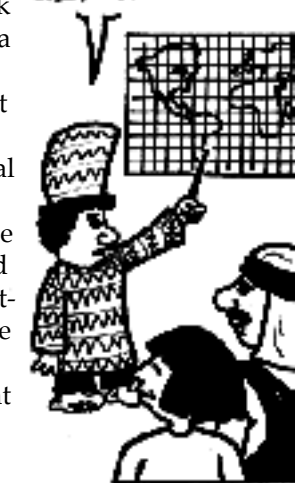
^fPascal had a wonderfully practical outlook on religion. He reasoned that if there is a God in Heaven, and you went to Church every week, you were bound to weasel your way in. If upon your death you find there's nothing to find (i.e. you no longer exist), then you had simply wasted some of your time while alive, and that it wouldn't matter to you at that point anyway.

^ΔJohn the Apostle received the visions for Revelations while shipwrecked in the Mediterranean. The only foods available were lichen, moss, and mushrooms.

^μOn the down side, the vacuum created by 2 billion people winking out of existence could level several cities, send massive tsunamis screaming across the seas, and make a parrot named Jacque quite irate.



KOREA, YOU GET
EUROPE; IRAN,
YOU GET THE
US; RWANDA, YOU
GET HOBOKEN.





**Gracies
Dinnertime
Theatre™**

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Editorial: Connections too

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Once upon a time... a few upperclassmen got together and decided that the *Reporter* needed some definite spiffing up. And how better to do it than add their own peculiar column. The Great Big Student and the Itty-Bitty Student thought it was a capital idea, whereas the Fuzzy-Headed Medium Height One thought they were off their rockers. Regardless, the three wrote their very first column and sent it off to the *Reporter* to be scrutinized. Looked at, that is. Examined. Jello Journalism.

Their column was denied on the grounds that the content was reprehensible, even if it was funny. The three students moped about for a couple of weeks until one day the Fuzzy-Headed One pointed out that they could print it themselves. A publication was born.

Initially the whole thing was merely a diversion with a circulation of sixty. They didn't really figure that they would be doing it for very long until the fateful day when they received their first hate mail. Ah, Volume 4 issue 4. How I doth love thee. Ironically enough this was their fourth issue, then they stopped fucking about with the designations and made everything into Volume 1. By the end of the year they had gathered so much support from the faculty and students at the school that they were able to get a grant to do this stuff; they even managed to pick up a few more staff members.

As their first issue anniversary fast approached, the Great Big Student had already said his fond farewells, the Little Publication that Could realized that as the Itty-Bitty Student and the Fuzzy-Headed Student would eventually be graduating, they couldn't possibly continue doing this sort of thing from beyond the grave, could they? The publication's biological clock was ticking, it was time to have a child.

By now you must realize that this little fairy tale story is about the birth of *Gracies Dinnertime Theatre*. Well, three children and a first-cousin (and let me tell you, she makes me wish I were more like Poe. Ohhhh, the recessive mutations...) later, GDT is still around and hasn't

lost her girlish figure. With the birth of *Melancholy Predator*, *10:1 Cereal Delusions*, *Cereal*, and coming soon to a publication near you, the *Iconoclast*, I guess you could say with so many offspring that GDT is a mommy...and not a one of them really suckled her dugs.

As part of our constant attempt to stay in shape, all the publications of Hell's Kitchen will be undergoing a tuck here, a nip there. We'd love to hear what you think of our (soon to appear) new publications and any changes to your old favorites so we can live...



Happily Ever After



Gracies Dinnertime Theatre Demands Tribute!

Send all your wenches ("It's good to be the Santa"), money, taxes, submissions, hate/fan mail, or suggestions to diablo@csh.rit.edu or

Gracies Dinnertime Theatre c/o 472 French Rd, Rochester, New York, 14618

Literary Scavenger Hunt

GDT's second, and possibly last contest (though probably not). For the next few weeks we will be printing a series of quotations from various literary sources. Some will be very well known, others less so. Each quote will have a point value associated with it, based on the difficulty of the question, in addition to periodic "Bonus Questions." The winner of the contest will be the person who gets the most points. The prize will be \$75 dollars, and if the winner chooses, they may also become privy to the secrets of "Cafe Diablo," the most diabolical coffee in the world (and the official drink of Hell Inc.). The winner's name will be posted in the first issue of volume 7. All answers must be sent to GDT by February 25th, 1997. GDT bids you good luck.

This Week's Hunt:

7. (1 point) What was Winnie-the-Pooh's original name and where did he get his current name?

8. (2 points) "Get your facts first, and then you can distort 'em as much as you please."

Name the author

9. (3 points) "Is it an inspiring sight to see a man commit a heroic gesture, and then learn that he goes to the vaudeville shows for relaxation? Or see a man who's painted a magnificent canvas- and learn that he spends his time sleeping with every slut he meets?"

Name the author and character speaking.

Bonus: (1/2 point) What is another name for the author who said the quote for question number eight?



Martyr Logue

-Troy Liston

Welcome to the *Martyrlogue*, a travel guide of sorts to shrines, relic sites, and places of general morbid religious interest throughout Europe and the Americas.

This week we look at **St Thomas Beckett (Feast Day: December 29)**: the patron invoked against blindness.

Thomas Becket was the Archdeacon of Canterbury when he became good friends with King Henry II. When the King arranged for his buddy to become the Archbishop of Canterbury, Henry's plans backfired on him. Instead of being a pushover, Thomas took his position very seriously and began opposing his former friend on many issues concerning the separation of Church and State.

Some soldiers overheard the King complaining of his problems with our saint, and they took it upon themselves to rid their monarch of this thorn in his side (is that crown?). They brutally murdered Thomas in Canterbury cathedral in 1170. The Pope was appalled at the kind of message that this sent and ensured that Thomas was canonized within three years. The shrine built to him in Canterbury cathedral was for centuries one of the premier pilgrimage sites in England (It's the destination of the travelers in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*).

TRAVEL: TO CANTERBURY, ENGLAND. CANTERBURY IS LOCATED IN SOUTHEASTERN ENGLAND IN KENT. IT IS EASILY ACCESSIBLE FROM LONDON.

GDT Literary Scavenger Hunt Rules and Regulations:

This contest is open to everyone, with the exception of the two head editors of *Gracies Dinnertime Theatre*.

Additional...

...because our readers on the University of Rochester have break while GDT continues to print issues, they will have a special insert in the 26 January, 1997 issue of GDT. That will bring you up to date with everyone else in the world and keep you competitive.

Send answers to diablo@csh.rit.edu, or send replies to: **GDT, 472 French Rd, Rochester, NY 14618**

If you should happen to miss any of the issues from volume 6, you may find them on our web site:

<http://www.rit.edu/~diablo/gdt/extras/contest.html>

(Behind the Rusty Curtain) -Christopher Lane

By some strange confluence of fate, Christopher Lane, a RIT photo student who decided to study abroad for a year, arrived on Byzantium's last shore, Bulgaria. He now studies at the American University in Bulgaria (AUBG), teaches English, broadcasts an Alternative music radio show, takes the occasional weekend adventure, and hangs out with the wrong crowd as much as possible. Feel free to email him at CPL960@JMC.AUBG.BG

On the bus to Sozopol (only a 40 min. ride) we pass more of the blighted landscape, including an aging nuclear reactor that is rumored to be the most dangerous in the world. The design is supposed to be more faulty than Chernobyl. Two soldiers and their girlfriends ham it up and laugh together a few seats away. They are beautiful in their swaggering pride, and I begin sneaking photos of them. After a while they notice and seem to enjoy it. About 15 minutes into the ride, Kara begins to itch everywhere and complains that her cotton tee-shirt feels like scratchy wool. Within another 10 min. or so, it's obvious that she is having a full blown allergy attack. Great red welts appear on her arms and legs, and her face turns puffy with large red blotches. She scratches maniacally and I try to calm her down, telling her that everything is going to be fine, and to just concentrate on not scratching herself. She clasps her hands tightly and stares straight ahead with gritting teeth.

We arrive in Sozopol, which is a far cry more beautiful than the industrial wreck of Burgas. As we stand at the bus station trying to figure out where to go to find a doctor, we fumble in our guide books and are accosted by an asiatic woman who wants to put us up in her boarding house. After much confusion she tells us that she has a woman staying with her who speaks English and can help us find a doctor for Kara. We wander up through narrow cobblestone streets bordered by beautiful old stone and wood-carved houses. I try to get as much of a look around as possible while reassuring Kara, even though she is beginning to look really bad. At the boarding house, which is set over a kitschy looking restaurant with thatched straw umbrellas, we find the English-speaking woman from Sophia. After a little explanation she suggests giving Kara some anti-histamine tablets before finding a doctor. Even though Kara is lying on a bed panting, it seems like a reasonable idea. 10 minutes after taking the pills she seems almost cured. In the meantime Christa and I check out the room, etc. and decide that it's a great find for the price (about \$7 1/2 for all three of us per night.) We take naps to recover from our journey.

Later, showered and excited, we wander down into the idyllic streets of Sozopol. The town is built on a small rocky peninsula that juts in a curved finger, about 1/2 a mile out into the Black Sea. It was originally one of the first ancient Greek settlements on the Black Sea,

in about 700 BC. Later, it was an important military and trade post for the Roman empire, the Byzantine empire, the Ottoman Empire, and finally it was one of the last Ottoman towns to fall to the Bulgarians in the Balkan Slavic wars of the 20th century. In the modern day it is populated by a mix of ethnic Greeks and Bulgarians and is known to be the beach resort for those who prefer quiet cobblestone streets to Beach-side high-rise casinos. We ate clam salads and olives in a small restaurant, then headed for the beach.

The beach was populated with hordes of beautiful, barely-clad women who made it extremely difficult to concentrate on something like, say... walking. Bulgarians are as hip to topless swimming as the French are. There were more women going topless than not. The crowd of people seemed to mostly be locals, judging by their incredible Florida-grade tans. The beach had almost-surfable waves, and the water was clear, clean and refreshingly cool. I jumped in and swam about 50 meters from the shore to realize that I was being pulled out to sea by a hideously strong undertow. I worked for a solid 10 minutes to get back in to shore. About the point where I could just touch my toes in the sand, a young boy, maybe 6, came floundering over a wave, flapping his arms and crying in Russian. He was powerless in the undertow and looked like he had already swallowed a lot of water. I swam over to him and towed him into shore. The lifeguards were too busy flirting with their girlfriends to notice me doing their job for them. Likely he would have drowned if I hadn't happened to be there at that moment.

After a long day of sunbathing and dozing, we retired to the hotel. As we were wandering out in twilight trying to decide what to do with ourselves, we ran into a guy we had talked to on the train...a Bulgarian named Loubeko. After stumbling over his name several times, we christened him "Lou". He was a quiet-faced, dark-skinned guy who studied Philosophy in Sofia. We had a great time hanging out with him. We eventually ended up in a small cafe, drinking wonderful dry Bulgarian white wine and talking with a table full of Poles. (The Bulgarian coast is still predominately toured by Eastern Europeans, although it seems to be attracting a fair amount of middle-class English and Germans these days.) After much fun, we exchanged addresses and they urged me to come visit them in Krakow.

To be continued next week...