

The Realist

- Ken Kesey on Timothy Leary
- Alan Abel on Euthanasia Boat Cruises
- Lyle Stuart on His 1st Amendment Case
- Peter McWilliams on Medical Marijuana
- Trina Robbins on the Popular Culture Convention

Number 142
Editor: Paul Krassner



Kalynn Campbell

The Satanic Simpsons

From Howard Rosenberg's TV column in the Los Angeles Times:

Trying to give his kids some fatherly advice on how to live their lives some years ago, that endearing doofus Homer Simpson could not remember the word "Christianity." So he sought help from his precocious daughter, Lisa. "What's the name of that religion," he asked, "with all the well-meaning rules that don't work in real life?" Big laugh. Yet speaking of rules that don't work:

"I'm really angry," said Mike Scully, who has been with *The Simpsons* for six years and executive producer for three. He is angry at the Fox network. Scully learned recently that Fox wants Catholics treated differently than other religious faiths when designated as punch lines by the show's writers. And learned that all Fox series are not equal when it comes to the network imposing standards of taste. Given its famous flaunting of sleaze and death-defying motorcycle leaps, the big news here is that Fox has standards. Yet *The Simpsons* has been slapped down

by the network for benignly deploying Catholicism in its funny parody of Super Bowl commercials during an episode that ran immediately after the actual Super Bowl telecast by Fox. The episode in question was repeated last week with a small, but crucial edit imposed by the network in panicky response to criticism generated by the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights.

Inspired by an old ZZ Top video, the commercial spoof showed a dusty service station where a car pulled up to the pumps and the nerdy driver got out, looked around and hit

(Continued on Page 9)

COURT JESTER

Ah Sordid Announcements

• Countdown: There are now four more issues before *The Realist* ceases publication. To subscribe, send \$8 — or \$10 for a gift sub to begin with this issue — to Box 1230, Venice, CA 90294.

• Also available: my unauthorized autobiography, *Confessions of a Raving, Unconfined Nut: Misadventures in the Counter-Culture*, \$25; *The Winner of the Slow Bicycle Race: The Satirical Writings of Paul Krassner*, with a foreword by Kurt Vonnegut, \$24; and a collection of columns, bits and pieces, *The (Almost) Unpublished Lenny Bruce*, \$10.

• Credits: My article in the previous issue of *The Realist*, "Anita and the Blow-Up Doll," was published in *Tikkun* magazine. My piece in this issue, "The Tabloidization of America," was published in *In These Times*.

How I Came to Name My Penis

When my autobiography was published, out of loyalty I named my testicles Simon & Schuster, which I now regret, having switched publishers, but at least those names weren't tattooed on my scrotum.

In September, Seven Stories Press will publish *Impolite Interviews*, which is dedicated "To Lyle Stuart — my first friend, my first mentor, my first publisher." From errand boy to managing editor of his anticensorship paper, *The Independent*, I treasured my apprenticeship. *The Realist* would never have been launched in 1958 without him convincing me I was neurotic enough to do it. He has a long, courageous history of exercising the 1st Amendment, and currently runs Barricade Books, publisher of *Giuliani, Nasty Man* by former New York City mayor Ed Koch. I'm delighted to publish Lyle's article in this issue of *The Realist*, which brings our relationship full circle.

Also in September, High Times Books will publish *Pot Stories For the Soul* (dedicated to Peter McWilliams, whose piece also appears in this issue), in conjunction with the 25th anniversary of *High Times* magazine. *Pot Stories* has a foreword by Harlan Ellison. Actually, it's an anti-foreword, since Ellison has never smoked marijuana, and indeed begins his foreword, "Fuck dope . . ." However, Amazon.com listed *Pot Stories* as being co-authored by both Ellison and me.

Neither of us was aware of that until the day he was delivering a lecture at a campus in Charlotte, North Carolina, and a student challenged his assertion that he was a non-user, citing the Amazon.com reference. Ellison was "hopping mad." He requested a cell phone from the audience and called me right then and there, direct from the stage. I promised to contact Amazon.com, which now lists him as having written the foreword along with two other individuals I never heard of.

Since this is the age of notoriety — from G. Gordon Liddy to Oliver North to Joey Buttafuoco to Monica Lewinsky — part of me was hoping that Harlan would sue, because it would help sales. No such luck. Desperately needing a promotional scandal, I even considered smoking a joint in an airplane bathroom, but realized that the consequences wouldn't be worth the publicity. However, a seed I inadvertently planted three decades ago — which I had forgotten about — will, to my surprise, soon be blossoming.

In 1969, Richard Avedon was taking photos of countercultural and political radicals for a book. At first I self-righteously refused, not wishing to be co-opted by the Establishment. Then I changed my mind, on condition that I could choose the pose. It would be a takeoff on the album cover of *Two Virgins*, where John Lennon and Yoko Ono stood naked, holding hands. My friend, Jada Rowland — an actress in the soap opera, *Secret Storm* — and I would both be naked, but she would be holding an American flag and have arrows on her body, pointing to her breasts and her crotch, and I would have a full-fledged erection, pointing at Jada. Avedon agreed to this.

Although I signed a release, I assumed that the photo would never

be seen. Even though human anatomy was gradually becoming more acceptable, human physiology was still a deeply ingrained taboo. Well, 30 years later, my bluff is being called. Yes, in September, Avedon's book, *The Sixties*, will be published after all. My parents must be turning over in their urns. I'm slightly embarrassed but highly amused.

I remember when I was a 12-year-old kid at a co-ed summer camp, and a few male counselors were swimming naked in the pool, their genitals flapping in the air each time they sailed off the diving board. I warned one of them that the female counselors could see them. He replied, "So what?" This simple question was an epiphany. Who knew then that my own innocent hard-on might some day serve to increase recognition of my author's byline?

And so I've decided to name my penis Buzz, because that's what I hope it will create — a nice, healthy buzz. But I'll be happy if it does nothing more than bring a smile to your face. Don't buy the book, though. Just thumb through the pages in any bookstore. You can't miss the Buzz.

Fuck Sunscreen

On April 3rd, ten days after NATO began dropping bombs on Yugoslavia, I spoke at MIT. My role was to provide comic relief as the culmination of their week-long *Democracy Teach-In*. A CD of my performance, titled "Sex, Drugs and the Antichrist," will be released in October by Danny Goldberg's Artemis Records. The following is an excerpt from that evening.

Inside every adult, there lurks a little child who once said, with great pride, "When I grow up, I want to be a pundit." Now, for me, that dream has at last become a reality. And so I would like to take this opportunity to pass along whatever wisdom I've gained during my lifetime.

Ladies and gentlemen of the class of 1999. Fuck sunscreen. Global warming is actually a cruel hoax, a conspiracy. There is no such thing as global warming. It's all propaganda from the monopolistic sunscreen industry.

Take a sacred vow never to floss again. Explain that you're trying to avoid wax build-up between your teeth. Or, if you must, try using floss imbedded with tiny pieces of food in case you have to skip a meal between flossings.

Do one thing every day that scares you. Eat bikini wax. Admit publicly that you were extremely bored by *Shakespeare in Love*. Try masturbating with sandpaper.

Practice safe sex. Practice, practice, practice. And when you've practiced enough to reach perfection, then throw away those annoying condoms. Or at least put some pinhole pricks in the reservoir tip. Give those spermatozoa a fighting chance.

Remember, the personal is political. If you find yourself in an unsatisfactory relationship, develop an exit strategy.

What this civilization really needs is an answering machine for your online communication so that people will stop calling you on the telephone to find out if you got their e-mail.

In this age of low sodium and high tech, you can still make a difference. You can still make your individual voice heard. Don't hang up on pollsters. Infiltrate a focus group. Steal ideas from a think tank. Transcend your own demographic.

When election time comes, do not familiarize yourself with the issues. More importantly, *do not vote*. Even if you prefer one candidate over another, don't even *think* about casting your ballot. I mean look what happened in Minneapolis. Young people who said they would not have voted otherwise, elected as governor a wrestler who favors decriminalization of marijuana. Let us stick to the lesser of two evils.

Always strive to have empathy. Understand that from a policeman's point of view, a police state is a good thing. Dedicate yourself to the security of working for a multinational corporation. Show your support of the war on drugs by voluntarily bringing a cup of urine to your first interview.

Be discriminating in your life. And be especially discriminating in the field of education. Discriminate against women even if you are one.

Remember, the economic system affects everybody. Build more prisons. Assure inmates that they will never have to suffer from overcrowded conditions again.

Learn the fine art of snitching. Snitch on your friends and your enemies with equal venom. Snitch on your classmates and professors, even if you have to make stuff up.

Of course, there are times when it becomes inappropriate to snitch. If you ever see a crime taking place, don't be a tattletale. Do not call 911 unless your cat has climbed up a tree.

On an international scale, if you are witness to a horrible injustice taking place, an utterly evil crime against humanity, simply bomb the perpetrator's city back to the stone age—I mean the peace table. If they resort to anti-aircraft missiles, accuse them of escalating the war. Above all, be sure to ignore every tenet of conflict resolution in order not to appear wimpy.

And finally, allow me to reiterate: Fuck sunscreen. Sunscreen will not serve to ease your transition into the 21st century. For that you need Y2KY Jelly. Trust me on this. Thank you.

The Tabloidization of America

In an interview for *On Campus*, a weekly entertainment guide distributed at colleges and universities, Bill Maher of ABC's *Politically Incorrect* states: "People always say to me, 'I get my news from your show.' And I say, 'You shouldn't.' It's frightening. You know how they have those polls, like a *Time* magazine/CBS poll? I've actually seen, like, an NBC/*National Enquirer* poll. That's how close tabloid life has encroached upon the so-called legitimate news-source life. We joke in the office that we're going to see 'An NBC News/*Hustler* poll has revealed . . .'"

In the aftermath of reporting on so much scandal and horror with equal fervor, the respectable journalistic community has—inevitably, it seems—surrendered its professional standards and is now bringing total tabloidization to the newspapers of America. Here are a few recent examples.

In Bed With the Fed

TV news junkies and Wall Street insiders alike may have been surprised when NBC correspondent Andrea Mitchell, the wife of Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan, told Barbara Walters that Viagra had saved their marriage. But they were in total shock when the veteran reporter revealed how their private sex life had inadvertently affected the stock market.

When Greenspan began having problems with arousal, Andrea persuaded him to get a prescription for those little blue pills. "What a difference that made," she confessed to Barbara. "Alan and I made love all through the night. It was just fantastic."

But the next day, as shareholders in Pfizer Pharmaceuticals watched the value of their stocks almost double, the market in general slumped after Greenspan was overheard warning a friend: "There are imbalances in our expansion that, unless redressed, will bring this long run of strong growth and low inflation to a close."

Word spread quickly, and investors interpreted his statement as a sign that inflation was resurgent, and that the stock and bond markets could take a deep plunge as a result.

Andrea was flabbergasted. "But my husband was not referring to the state of the economy," she insisted. "He was talking about erectile dysfunction."

Tragedy Has Happy Ending

There exists no map for the road to a career in show business, and nobody knows that better than Gretchen Miller. She thought she would remain a popular history teacher at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado until the day she retired. But then came that

bloody massacre by two students, armed with deadly weapons and a deranged attitude.

As the frightening sounds of bullets and bombs reverberated through the halls, she barricaded the door to her classroom with a desk and several chairs, turned out the lights, then huddled in a corner with her twenty-three students, leading them in prayer. "Oh, Lord," she pleaded, "help us survive this nightmare, and protect all those in this building from this horrible evil."

Five weeks later, Gretchen was fired. "I was absolutely stunned," she says. "Because I prayed with the children in a public school, I was accused of violating the separation of church and state." A spokesperson for the school explained that they didn't want any trouble from the American Civil Liberties Union.

However, the resulting publicity landed the talented schoolteacher an opportunity to try her hand as a talk show host. And, indeed, her pilot show received high ratings. "I'm very excited," she admits. "I only wish that the program wasn't being sponsored by Gap. I cringe every time I hear their commercial for black trench coats."

Rapture, Shmapture

The Second Coming is history. Now it seems like it was just another publicity stunt. You may recall how Billy Graham and Larry King were discussing Jesus Christ, and Billy mentioned that there are four hundred individuals in Los Angeles alone who all claim to be Jesus. Then Larry asked him if he thought the *real* Second Coming would occur in his lifetime. Without a moment's hesitation, he said, "Yes." And, as if Jesus Christ simply wanted to reward the aging evangelist's faith, he decided to return to earth.

Of course, the great event was covered by CNN. Then Don King immediately signed him up to do the media circuit. Jesus wanted to reach all kinds of people, and that's exactly what Don would accomplish. Everything he had done for Mike Tyson was just a dress rehearsal for this.

"Christ," he said, "you're gonna charm everybody's ass off."

Jesus went on *Good Morning, America*. Diane Sawyer said, "Wow, you're a real celebrity, huh?" And Jesus replied, "Fan is short for fanatic, hype is short for hyperbole, and Mel Gibson is short for a leading man."

Jesus went on the Howard Stern show. Howard said, "Hey, c'mon, you banged Mary Magdalene, right? You can tell me. Nobody's listening to this." And Jesus replied, "Bang not lest ye be banged."

Jesus went on the Oprah Winfrey Show. Oprah said, "How do you feel about posting the Ten Commandments in schools?" And Jesus replied, "I have believed *passionately* in the separation of church and state before there ever was a First Amendment. I think they should post the Bill of Rights in schools."

Jesus went on *Late Show*. David Letterman said, "Why don't you tell us about one of your Stupid Lord Tricks?" And Jesus replied, "Whenever the president has a press conference — no matter what political party he belongs to — they always stand in front of the banner that says THE WHITE HOUSE and underneath it says WASHINGTON, D.C. Well, I know when he's telling a lie, and if he is, by sheer will power I can make him move to his left so that behind him it says, THE WHITE WASHINGTON."

Jesus had a healing competition with Pat Robertson. Jesus did a product endorsement for Birkenstock sandals. Jesus appeared on the cover of *Vanity Fair*, "nailed" to a crucifix. When you looked closely, you could see that he had a bellybutton ring, and on his arm a tattoo of an arrow going through a heart with the word *Mom*.

Jesus finally got his own weekly series on CBS, called *Savior Time*. He devoted the entire first program to the Nielsen families, and earned 100% of the audience share. His popularity continued until the night that the Fox network premiered co-ed nude mud wrestling, and the ratings plummeted after that. Ultimately the show was cancelled. The headline in *Variety* read: "J.C. Dies — Overexposure."

And so now there are four hundred and one individuals in Los Angeles alone who claim to be Jesus.

The Trial of Patty Hearst

[Editor's Note: I covered Patty Hearst's trial for the *Berkeley Barb* and *Playboy*. After the recent arrest of Kathleen Soliah, the *San Francisco Bay Guardian* invited me to write a piece reviewing the case. It's reprinted here.]

Prologue:

One thing about the 1970s, it became difficult to tell the difference between reality and paranoia. When it came to solutions, everybody became their own spin doctor. Even Groucho Marx, who said in 1971, "I think the only hope this country has is Nixon's assassination." Since Black Panther leader David Hilliard was under indictment for threatening the life of a president, I wrote to the Justice Department to find out the status of their case against Groucho. U.S. Attorney James Browning explained that the statute "prohibits only true threats." He said the Panthers advocated "killing and overthrowing the Government," whereas Marx was merely "an alleged comedian."

* * *

In February 1974, Patty Hearst was kidnapped by the Symbionese Liberation Army, led by Donald "Cinque" DeFreeze. One of their demands was a free food program. Patty's father, Randolph Hearst, publisher of the *San Francisco Examiner*, arranged for such a project in Oakland. Governor Ronald Reagan commented on the long line of people waiting for free food: "I hope they all get botulism." Patty was kept in a closet, became a member of the SLA, changed her name to Tania, adopted radical rhetoric, robbed a bank and went on the lam, becoming a vehicle for repressive action on the right and wishful thinking on the left.

She was captured after 18 months. She was so surprised that she peed in her pants, but only for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, not the *Examiner*. She was permitted to change in the bathroom. The FBI inventory did not include "pants, wet, one pair," but there was on their list a two-foot marijuana plant (as compared with almost a pound of pot not reported that the FBI found at the apartment from which she had been kidnapped). There was also a bottle of Gallo wine in the SLA safe-house, not exactly a loyal gesture to the United Farm Workers they purported to support. And there was an unidentified "rock" found in Patty's purse.

Originally, she was to be defended by the radical team of Vincent Hallinan and his son, Terence [now district attorney], who visited her in jail. Although as Tania she had called Vincent a "clown" in a taped communique, now as Patty she said of Terence, "He's good. Like, I really trust him politically and personally, and I can tell him just about anything I want and he's cool." It was, however, a relationship that would not be permitted to mature.

When Patty described her physical reaction to having her blindfold removed in captivity, Terence recognized a similarity to reactions to LSD. Patty agreed there had been something reminiscent of her acid trips with her boyfriend, Steven Weed, in the old Hearst mansion. Her defense was going to be involuntary intoxication, a side effect of which is amnesia. So Patty would neither have to snitch on others nor invoke the 5th Amendment for her own protection. In response to any questions about that missing chunk of her life, she would assert, "I have no recollection."

The Hallinans instructed her not to talk to anybody — especially psychiatrists — about that period. But her uncle, William Randolph Hearst, Jr., editor-in-chief of the Hearst newspaper chain, flew in from the East Coast to warn his family that the entire corporate image of the Hearst empire was at stake and they'd better hire an establishment attorney, fast. Enter F. Lee Bailey. He had defended a serial killer, the Boston Strangler, and a war criminal, Captain Harold Medina of My Lai massacre infamy, but he would not defend Patty if she were a revolutionary. You gotta have standards.

Bailey encouraged her to tell the psychiatrists everything and *not* say, "I have no recollection." She could trust these doctors, he assured her, and nothing she said could be used against her in any way. Now

her defense would be based on the Stockholm Hostage Syndrome. Patty had been kidnapped again.

* * *

At her trial in 1976, the philosophical paradox which has plagued the history of human consciousness — *Is there is or is there ain't free will?* — was finally going to be decided by a jury. In court, Patty's parents had to listen again to a taped communique: "Mom, Dad, I would like to comment on your efforts to supposedly secure my safety. The [food] giveaway was a sham. . . . You were playing games — stalling for time — which the FBI was using in their attempts to assassinate me and the SLA elements which guarded me. . . ."

At the end of the tape, DeFreeze came on with a triple death threat, especially to Colston Westbrook, whom he accused of being "a government agent now working for military intelligence while giving assistance to the FBI." From 1962 to '69, Westbrook was first a CIA advisor to the South Korean CIA and then supplied logistical support in Vietnam for the CIA's Phoenix program. His job was the indoctrination of assassination and terrorist cadres.

He returned to the U.S. in 1970 and was assigned to run the Black Cultural Association at Vacaville Prison, where he became the control officer for DeFreeze, who had worked as an informer from 1967 to '69 for the Public Disorder Intelligence Unit of the Los Angeles Police Department. If DeFreeze was a double agent, then the SLA was a Frankenstein monster, turning against its creator by becoming in reality what had been orchestrated only as a media image.

But when DeFreeze finked on his keepers, he signed the death warrant of the SLA. They were burned alive in a fire during a shootout with police at a Los Angeles safe-house. DeFreeze's charred remains were sent to his family in Cleveland, and they couldn't help but notice that he had been decapitated. It was as if the CIA had said, "Bring me the head of Donald DeFreeze!"

* * *

Patty testified that she had been raped in a closet by the lover she had once described as "the gentlest, most beautiful man I've ever known." Now, prosecutor James Browning was cross-examining her. "Did you, in fact, have a strong feeling for [SLA member] Willie Wolfe?"

"In a way, yes."

"As a matter of fact, were you in love with him?"

"No."

A little later, Browning asked if it had been "forcible rape."

"Excuse me?"

"Did you struggle or submit?"

"I didn't resist. I was afraid."

Browning walked into her trap. "I thought you said you had strong feelings for him?"

"I did," Patty replied triumphantly. "I couldn't stand him."

Wolfe had been slain in the L.A. shootout. His family hired Lake Headley — an ex-police intelligence officer who was chief investigator at Wounded Knee — to find out what really happened. He and fellow researchers Donald Freed and Rusty Rhodes concluded that the SLA was part of the CIA's CHAOS program. In that context, they were planning to kill Black Panther leader Huey Newton and succeeded in killing black school superintendent Marcus Foster after he agreed to meet Panther demands for educational reforms.

I received a letter by registered mail from the FBI, advising me that I was on a "hit list" of the Emiliano Zapata Unit of the New World Liberation Front. But the NWLF charged that "the pigs led and organized" the Zapata Unit. Was the right wing of the FBI warning me about the left wing of the FBI? Jacques Rogiers, aboveground courier for the underground NWLF, told me that the reason I was on the hit list was because I had reported that DeFreeze was a police informer.

"But it's true," I said. "It's a matter of record. Doesn't that make any difference?"

It didn't.

"If the NWLF asked me to kill you," he admitted, "I would."

The Protagonists

by Lyle Stuart

1.

What may be the most important 1st Amendment lawsuit in America today began innocently enough.

Barricade Books, my small book-publishing company, receives a constant flow of book proposals. Many are imitative of other books on the market or in development.

These we pass on.

A few years ago, a possibility caught my interest. An agent named Frank Weimann asked if we'd be interested in publishing a biography of Las Vegas casino owner Steve Wynn.

Yes, we'd be interested.

I once published a book about Donald Trump when he was largely unknown. I'd published a successful biography of Howard Hughes, *Bashful Billionaire*, when he was no longer in the public eye. That one, written by Philadelphia attorney Albert B. Gerber, brought an offer from the Hughes camp via his spokesman, Hollywood attorney Greg Bautzer. We could have \$200,000 if we would "delay publication." Indefinitely.

I refused the offer.

Our title, *Bashful Billionaire*, became a national best-seller. When it appeared on the *New York Times* list, I kept my promise to our staff. We closed our doors and took 36 people on an all-expense-paid 22-day luxury tour of Europe.

2.

Steve Wynn? I'd been hearing stories about him for years and they weren't all favorable. The author of the proposed book was John L. Smith. I believed Smith was well qualified. He's an award-winning journalist who writes four columns a week for the *Las Vegas Review*. I liken him to the late Drew Pearson for his courage and integrity.

1st Amendment Up in Smoke

Joe "Hemp" Kidwell was arrested for illegally cultivating 14 marijuana plants. Four physicians had recommended that he use marijuana for arthritis and chronic back pain — Proposition 215 permits the use of marijuana for medical purposes with a physician's recommendation — but the jury convicted Kidwell anyway.

Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Albert Matthews ordered him to stop promoting pot or face two years in prison. As a condition of probation, he is forbidden to speak publicly or to the media on the subject of marijuana use. His attorney has filed an appeal, stating that the jury misunderstood the law and that Kidwell's 1st Amendment rights are being violated by the judge's order.

I decided to publish the book, *Running Scared*.

Contracts were submitted and signed. An advance was paid against future royalties.

Everything to this point was routine.

3.

Book publishers create catalog descriptions from the author's proposal or outline. A description of the book is written. Catalogs are produced months before an author completes his script so that sales reps can take orders from booksellers.

Such was the case now. Barricade is not unusual in this. Every major book publisher from Random House to Simon & Schuster produce catalogs describing their books six months to a year before the books are actually published.

I'd misplaced Smith's proposal. I had my personal knowledge of Wynn's reputation among the wise guys. I also had in front of me a copy of the FBI's Agosoto 302, a thick Atlantic City investigation report and a thicker New Scotland Yard report.

The latter concluded by saying: "Steve Wynn is under the aegis of the Genovese crime family."

Was he? I didn't know. Almost all things are possible in Las Vegas.

Aegis. How many 23-year-old buyers for book shops would understand that word? I softened it by saying that the book would "detail why a confidential Scotland Yard report said that Wynn was a front man for the Genovese crime family."

One sentence in a catalog. An accurate sentence.

To defend it eventually cost me and my company several hundred thousand dollars and even now threatens to put us out of business.

4.

Steve Wynn read the catalog copy for *Running Scared* and sued John L. Smith for libel.

I wrote to Barry Langberg, Wynn's slick Beverly Hills attorney, whom I later found to be a sleazeball. I pointed out to him that he'd sued the wrong person. I wrote the copy. Smith hadn't seen it until the catalog was published.

This led to a weird series of negotiations. Wynn agreed to drop the suit if I would do something I'd never done in 40 years of publishing.

I agreed to allow Wynn to read the manuscript. Then we would meet and Wynn could point out factual errors only. Changes would be subject to my approval.

I rationalized this by saying that we'd have a 100% accurate book.

My wife and I and my attorney, Albert B. Gerber, and his wife flew to Las Vegas. I was

"Jacques," I replied, "I think this puts a slight damper on our relationship."

* * *

Surviving SLA members Bill and Emily Harris let it be known that, if called to testify, they would take the 5th Amendment, but Emily testified, in effect, via the media. After Patty told the jury that Willie Wolfe had raped her, Emily was quoted in *New Times*: "Once Willie gave her a stone relic in the shape of a monkey face [and] Patty wore it all the time around her neck. After the shootout, she stopped wearing it and carried it in her purse instead, but she always had it with her."

Prosecutor Browning read this in the magazine and had an *Aha!* experience, remembering that "rock" in Patty's purse from the inventory list when she was captured. He presented it as his final piece of evidence in the trial, slowly swinging the necklace back and forth in front of the jurors, as if to hypnotize them into believing that Patty had not been forced to rob a bank, even though he had admitted before the trial that it was "clear from the photographs she may have been acting under duress." He tried to suppress photos of SLA member Camilla Hall pointing her gun at Patty during the robbery.

Patty's claim: "I was doing exactly what I had to do. I just wanted

to get out of the bank. I was just supposed to be in there to get my picture taken, mainly." So the jury found Patty guilty of being a *virtual* bank robber. She faced seven years in prison, but after serving 23 months, her sentence was commuted by President Jimmy Carter.

Enigmatic graffiti, COLE SLAW LIVES, baffled tourists. It was a makeover of SLA LIVES, though one ex-Berkeleyite assumed that a political activist named Cole Slaw was dead because there were graffiti saying that he was alive.

* * *

Epilogue:

As a U.S. Attorney, Browning had informed me that the Black Panthers were "an organization which advocates killing people," and that Groucho Marx's utterance "did not constitute a *true* threat." However, documents prove that the FBI itself published pamphlets in the name of the Panthers advocating the killing of cops, that an FBI file on Marx was indeed begun, and that he actually was labelled "a national security risk." I told Groucho the good news. He replied, "I deny everything, because I *lie* about everything." He paused, then added, "And everything I *deny* is a lie."

given my usual penthouse suite at Wynn's Mirage. As always, the suite and all food and beverage were complimentary. This because I'm a "high roller" — the euphemism for "lollipop," "sucker" or "victim."

5.

At the appointed time, we assembled in Wynn's conference room together with author John L. Smith. We were met not by Wynn and his list of factual errors, but by sleazy attorney Langberg, who told us that Steve Wynn was too busy to meet with us. Then he announced with arrogance: "You're not to publish this manuscript."

My wife, Carole, spoke up: "Steve Wynn is a public figure. All his wealth and power can't prevent an honest biography about him from being published."

No factual corrections were offered, and the meeting was over.

That was on a Saturday. Monday morning a lawsuit based on the catalog was refiled. This time, in addition to Smith, Barricade Books and Lyle Stuart were named as defendants.

6.

The casino industry in Nevada doesn't gamble in court.

In the past few years, the owners of Las Vegas casinos have contributed millions to politicians. They've given more than \$550,000 to state judges for their election campaigns. Wynn and his casinos are the largest fund-raisers and the largest contributors.

Twelve judges announced that because Wynn had contributed to their election campaigns, they were recusing themselves from the case.

The thirteenth judge, a woman named Sally Lohrer, also received money from Wynn but elected to take the case.

She was about to do Steve Wynn a big favor.

7.

For months during pre-trial discovery, Wynn's attorney demanded to know the source of what they described as the "so-called" and "counterfeit" and "fraudulent" Scotland Yard report. They took the position that no such report existed and that we made the whole thing up.

On the eve of the trial, they suddenly reversed themselves and conceded the authenticity of the report.

8.

There is an old saying: "Don't worry about the law; worry about the judge."

We had much to worry about. The judge allowed an 8-person jury that included a man who said his ambition was to get a job with Wynn; a woman who admitted she'd attended parties with Wynn's Las Vegas attorney; two people who said they hated the press, etc.

The jury trial, which lasted almost two

weeks, was a charade. When one of Wynn's attorneys stood up, the judge smiled. When one of my attorneys stood up, the judge frowned. She admitted plaintiff material almost automatically. When we offered evidence, she consistently ruled it out.

9.

We were being "home-towned." To guarantee this, the judge ruled that the Scotland Yard report couldn't be considered an "official document" because Scotland Yard is in a foreign country. Even if it wasn't, she said, we were not protected because it was a confidential report, and so the public shouldn't know about it.

Got the picture?

The jury did. Their mouths hung open when both the governor of Nevada and the mayor of Las Vegas interrupted their vacations to appear in court as Wynn's character witnesses.

We wanted to bring the interrupted-vacation fact to the attention of the jury, but the judge wouldn't allow us to.

The governor, whose father was a known mob associate, had himself been the subject of an intense FBI investigation. He was the man who appointed Judge Locher to her job.

10.

At issue in this case is the "publication rule." It holds that when a journalist quotes from an official document, he is protected even if the facts he quotes are wrong.

The basic constitutional Fair Report privilege is the right to quote from official documents or comments. It's critical to every author, editor and publisher.

Almost every state except Nevada has agreed that a publisher or commentator could not be expected to shoulder the expenses of checking every fact in an official document before quoting from it.

Were the contrary the case, there would be a chilling lack of information available to the American people.

11.

I suppose that even if we'd had a more intelligent and less biased judge than Sally Locher, we would have had a tough time winning a case in Las Vegas against Steve Wynn.

They name streets after him. He is one of the largest employers in the city, and often called "the most powerful man in the state."

The jury was not allowed to see or hear our evidence that linked Wynn with mob associates. Even a CBS documentary on the subject was barred from the court. Nor were the jurors allowed to see the book *Running Scared*, which did indeed detail why the New Scotland Yard report concluded that Wynn was "under the aegis of the Genovese crime family."

A few hours after they went out, they returned with a verdict of \$2,100,000 for Wynn.

Saving Pseudo-Children From Virtual Abuse

by David Steinberg

Crusaders against child pornography have long claimed that the core issue was not people having sexual fantasies about young people but the emotional and sexual abuse inherent in the creation of erotic photos of children and adolescents. Thus, for example, in a precedent-setting 1982 Supreme Court ruling, the court held that a New York child pornography law did not violate the First Amendment because it banned not the expression of an idea but only the abuse of children that occurred in the process.

These arguments were relegated to history when Congress passed the Child Pornography Prevention Act of 1995. For the first time, CPPA made it illegal to make, sell, or own pornographic pictures with models who appear to be underage, even if the person in the photo is, in fact, over 18. With CPPA, the crime has become enabling a reader or viewer to get excited because someone can be imagined to be under 18. The possible abuse of any honest-to-God child has become irrelevant.

As a result, the battleground in the great pornography debate has shifted from actual to virtual reality, from porn to pseudo-porn, from what is in fact being shown to what can

The next day, the judge wouldn't allow me to tell the jurors that we didn't carry libel insurance, so they added \$1,070,000 in punitive damages.

12.

Wynn's attorneys served our Brooklyn warehouse with a restraining order that prohibited them from shipping any of our books. In effect, this would have destroyed Barricade Books.

"Yup, I want to put Lyle Stuart out of business," Wynn was quoted as saying by *New York* magazine.

Meanwhile, the prominent New York attorney, David Blasband, filed our appeal before the Nevada Supreme Court.

An *amicus curiae* was filed in our support by a group that included the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, Time, Inc., Donrey Media Group, Reno Newspapers Inc., Rupert Murdoch's News America Corp., *Playboy*, the Carol Publishing Group, Globe Communications, the Nevada Press Association, Magazine Publishers of America, the Association of American Publishers, PEN, the American Society of Journalists and Authors, and Bloomberg News Service.

With Nevada, one has to wait and wonder even though it is widely believed in legal circles that in any other state, the jury award would be overturned.

Even if the case has to go to the United States Supreme Court.

be imagined, morphed, or simulated. Possibilities for the future are limitless. We could easily, for example, expand the definition of statutory rape to include having sex with someone while *imagining* them to be younger than the age of consent, or having sex while they wear clothing or arrange their hair in ways that make them *look* (or even *feel*) like they are underage.

We could then make it illegal to have sex with someone while imagining what they were like when they were underage, or to have sex while imagining or remembering what *we* were like when we were underage. From there we could go to prohibiting cocktail waitresses from serving drinks while they look under 18, not serving liquor to anyone whose date could imagine her/him being under 18 while watching him/her get plastered, and even to not letting anyone drive a car when they *felt* like they were, say, 15.

But all that is in the future. For the present we have the following:

Last January, a man in Olathe, Kansas, was prosecuted for possession of child pornography. He had cleverly (but illegally, it seems) pasted a photo of a young person's face onto a larger, presumably more sexual, nude picture of an adult woman "with the intent to satisfy his sexual desires." The man was acquitted, but only because the judge could not determine beyond a reasonable doubt that the face in the picture was of a child under 18. Despite his acquittal, the court would not release the man's book of pictures of girls taken from legal catalogs and magazines, nor his diary which chronicled his dreams, including some of young girls.

* * *

David Hilton, 48, who characterizes himself as an anti-pornography crusader, was convicted in Portland, Maine, of possessing a computer image in which an innocent image of a child had been technically altered to make it "indecent." Hilton was initially acquitted on the grounds that the federal law was unconstitutionally vague, but his acquittal was overturned on appeal. The issue, according to First Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Hugh Brownes, was "whether a reasonable unsuspecting viewer would consider the depiction to be of an actual individual less than 18."

* * *

The Galveston, Texas City Council has asked its city attorney to draft an ordinance that would prohibit the baring of women's breasts, real or phony (no, they're not talking about silicone implants). The law would make it illegal to wear novelty vests embossed with bare breasts and butts, or T-shirts with

David Steinberg's columns and writings are available free via e-mail. Send your name and e-mail address (both will remain confidential) to eronat@aol.com.

photos or drawings of bare breasts or buttocks. City Attorney Barbara Roberts assured the City Council that a similar Fort Worth law had been constitutionally tested and upheld.

* * *

Three boys and a girl in suburban Cleveland, aged 14 to 17, made a videotape of themselves having sex. When the girl's mother heard about the tape, she got police to investigate. The girl initially claimed she had been coerced but, after watching the tape

Most Honest Politician Award

Jim Battin (R-La Quinta), for his outspokenness to California Attorney General Bill Lockyer, who is concerned about the power of the prison guards' union and his inability to crack down on rogue guards. A bill which would have removed prison-brutality cases from the purview of local prosecutors and given them to Lockyer (since prisons are a province of the state) never made it out of the Public Safety Committee, due to intense lobbying by the California Correctional Peace Officers Assn., the same union which lobbied for the three-strikes law. Assemblyman Battin, who has received \$105,000 in campaign contributions from the union, voted against the bill. He said to Lockyer, "Bill, sorry, but I'm whoring for the CCPOA."

Postscript: Lockyer has since admitted that the remark was made not to him but to a third person, and Battin denies saying it to anyone.

with a child psychologist, Juvenile Judge William Chinnock ruled that she was clearly "enjoying her 15 minutes of fame." Nevertheless, he chided the teenagers for using their bodies as "garbage cans" rather than as "sacred vessels." According to investigators, copies of the tape are now in the hands of hundreds of high school students across the nation.

* * *

The Northeast Regional Child Exploitation Task Force has brought charges against a 14-year-old boy in Tenafly, New Jersey for e-mailing child pornography to an undercover detective. It is not clear whether the detective was pretending to be a teenager as well. A spokesman for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children says there are more and more reports of children sharing child pornography on the Internet. This raises the question of whether it's healthier for teenagers searching for pornography on the Net to direct their sexual attention to images of adults, or to images of kids their own age. If we criminalize sexy pictures of kids under 18, are we not encouraging teenagers to

Euthanasia Boat Cruises

by Alan Abel

A group of Florida businessmen have created a unique substitute for Dr. Jack Kevorkian. They call their operation Euthanasia Cruises, Ltd., and you only need to buy a one-way ticket.

Once a month 25 people meet in Fort Lauderdale at dockside, they board *The Last Supper*, a three-masted luxury sloop, and spend three days at sea before going down to Davy Jones' Locker.

The idea of seeing ordinary people walk the plank without coercion sounded insane to me and was probably illegal, although their demise is cleverly planned for international waters. I was privileged to receive a round-trip ticket, as a reporter, providing I wouldn't divulge certain personal details.

This bizarre Heaven's Gate-like adventure made me wonder if the passengers were of sound mind and anxious to depart from earth. Are they truly willing to link up with an octopus or killer whale? Perhaps seeking safe passage to Atlantis?

At midnight I boarded *The Last Supper* along with the one-way ticket holders taking their final vacation cruise. They were mostly

fantasize having sex with adults? Is the Child Exploitation Task Force really a front for pedophiles?

* * *

Meanwhile, notoriously uncredentialed anti-porn crusader Judith Reisman (who was given millions of dollars in federal grants under the Reagan administration to count references to children in the cartoons of *Playboy*, *Hustler*, and the like) is busy conflating pedophiles and pornographers into a single concept.

A report by Reisman on the recent World Pornography Conference at Northridge University (see Nancy Cain's report in *Realist* #141) makes six separate references to "pedophiles and pornographers" as if they were one and the same. According to Reisman, "a cadre of admitted pedophiles and pederasts control[s] the field of sexology" through the nation's academic human sexuality programs, including the Kinsey Institute, the Institute for the Advanced Study of Human Sexuality, and the Northridge Center for Sex Research.

Claiming a "Mafioso-like relationship" between these institutions and "the underworld of pedophiles and pornographers," Reisman describes the Northridge conference as a summit meeting to "share and shape future national pornography and pedophile strategies." She concludes that, in a world where "an academic institution [is] in bed with pedophiles and pornographers," it's no wonder that judges accept the idea of "adults having legal access to our children for sexual purposes" by "routinely giv[ing] custody of children to known sexual abusing parents."

able-bodied adults, including a few with pets, and a handful of terminally ill.

As we quietly set sail to avoid public scrutiny, there was dancing until 2 a.m., along with a bountiful buffet and gambling that included roulette, craps and slots. (Consistent with Las Vegas, the ship keeps 90%.) Beautiful social workers roamed the promenade deck seeking passengers who desired one-on-one therapy in the privacy of their cabins.

John, a used-car salesman in his late sixties, agreed to talk openly: "I never married, my parents are gone and I have no living relatives. Nor do I have any close friends. In my business we have to lie about a car's condition, jack up the price so a customer can haggle you down and wind back the odometer a few thousand miles. If I had to sell cars under oath, General Motors would have indicted me for perjury. So now it's time to say goodbye to the world. My departure will provide Social Security for others, I'll be one less motorist clogging the highways, my empty beer cans won't be around for additional refuse and census-takers won't have to count me any more."

John wasn't remorseful about giving up his life. He had no love interests or hobbies, his debts were all paid up and the small house in Atlanta goes to the ASPCA.

Two more days at sea provided gourmet meals, dancing, gambling, increased therapy and an air of excitement. There was never a sense of gloom.

The final night's dining with the captain was well attended because this special occasion gave everyone an opportunity to speak before their dawn dunking into the Atlantic Ocean.

Captain Sheffield, a tall handsome sun-tanned man in his fifties, retired from the British Navy, hovered over the romantic candlelight dinner. Music by a string quartet added to the relaxed solemnity as passengers munched quietly on filet mignon and lobster, and sipped vintage wines.

Each person was given the speaker's podium for three minutes. Most just thanked everyone for their compassion and said how happy they were to expire with such wonderful people.

Margaret, an attractive divorcee in her early seventies, spoke most succinctly: "I'm from Kalamazoo, I've got incurable bunions, lordosis, pediculosis pubis and cancer. I hate life."

Unlike vacation cruises, there was no exchange of telephone numbers. Rather, these hardy souls traded mementos among ship-board friends to go down with.

For example, an undertaker gave his gold-plated embalming needle to Mary, an octogenarian with amnesia who miraculously recovered her memory. She remembered a near-death experience when she accidentally fell into the deep end of a swimming pool and her whole life flashed before her. She wasn't in it.

What Hath Irony Wrought?

by Peter McWilliams

Believers in God have always had the satisfaction of thinking that when someone wrongs them, God will be waiting at the end of the world to beat the living crap out of that person. In addition, the wronged believer gets to watch, and is given a videotape of the pummeling for future enjoyment.

Alas, we agnostics cannot bask in the comfort of that soothing belief. There is no retribution in the next life because there is no next life. As Albert Ellis succinctly put it, "When you're dead, you're fucking dead." Terrible people have had terrific lives. Up until the last few months of the war, Hitler had a jolly old time. For every Nixon who gets his comeuppance, there are ten thousand politicians who don't.

As a cancer survivor living with AIDS who knows first-hand the medicinal value of marijuana, it's been good to watch Drug Czar

Mary also had a change of heart about drowning, due to her fear of water, and she immediately purchased a return ticket to shore. The voyage out to sea cost \$1,500 but a ticket back to home port was \$3,500, in keeping with airline prices at the walk-up counter.

Anthony, the funeral director, told me he had prepared so many dead people for services it was now time for *him* to depart and save the exorbitant costs of a land burial.

He added: "I'm 78 years old, a widower, my grownup daughter and son are married, neither of whom have spoken to me in thirty years. So I'm leaving my seventeen million dollar estate to Tibetan Monks. I can only say in conclusion, 'Goodbye, cruel world.'"

At the crack of dawn there were 24 people on the starboard side dressed in their Sunday finest. The string quartet played "Adagio for Strings" from the movie *Platoon* and then switched to "Nearer My God To Thee."

The Last Supper tilted 45 degrees, crewmen lifted a detachable rail and all departees slipped off the greased deck into a calm sea. They were holding hands while reciting "The Lord's Prayer."

There were no tears or remonstrations from the ship's personnel, who are all well paid to just do their job.

Back on shore I telephoned Dr. Kevorkian in prison for his reaction to Euthanasia Cruises. He was livid with expletives about people making money for mercy killings while he performed freely as a labor of love.

When I offered a contribution to help pay his legal bills, Dr. Kevorkian calmed down and purred like a pussy cat. I sent him a dollar.

The Last Supper continues to sail monthly with a full load of happy passengers, while Dr. Kevorkian plans his next mercy killing from behind bars.

General Barry McCaffrey — who single-handedly kept medical marijuana from the sick for three years — get caught in his own web of deception twice in the past few months.

The first was the Institute of Medicine (IOM) report on medical marijuana that McCaffrey arrogantly commissioned to prove once and for all that marijuana as medicine was, as he put it, "a cruel hoax." Two years and 900,000 taxpayer dollars later, the IOM report proclaimed that marijuana was a perfectly good medicine for nausea, anxiety, appetite stimulation (we needed a report to tell us that?) and pain, and that more study would likely reveal a number of other medical uses.

Further, the report said that marijuana was less addictive than Valium, the withdrawal symptoms brief and mild, and that marijuana was not a gateway drug. Indeed, the only reason marijuana was a precursor to "harder" drug use is that it was illegal — the close proximity to other drugs on the black market encouraged their use by those who went "downtown" only to score some reefer.

McCaffrey's most recent contumely came when, under his pressure, the FDA rescheduled Marinol — synthetic THC in pill form — from the most restrictive prescription category, Schedule II, to a much easier to prescribe category, Schedule III. McCaffrey called Marinol "the real medical marijuana" and claimed it was the "safe and proper way" to use marijuana, since Marinol had been "scientifically proven to be safe and effective for medical use." In other words, keep that smoky stuff illegal; we have the real McCoy here.

The instant karma for McCaffrey, however, is that now anyone with a Marinol prescrip-

Asshole of the Month

California Governor Gray Davis, for opposing recommendations by the Attorney General's Task Force on Medical Marijuana, whereby persons legally possessing ID cards would be immune from arrest under state law for possession, transportation, delivery or cultivation of medical marijuana. Senator John Vasconcellos had introduced legislation to implement the committee's recommendations, which was passed by the Assembly Health Committee, 9-3, but Davis announced he would likely veto it. Said Vasconcellos: "This defies anything I've seen in 30 years. I thought the people of California elected the governor, not [Drug Czar] Barry McCaffrey." Davis has previously argued that elected officials should respect the will of the voters when they approve initiatives.

tion — for, say, “pain” or “anxiety” — will automatically, but legally, fail any test designed to detect the presence of *smoked* marijuana in the body. The drug tests look for THC in the urine, hair, saliva or sweat. There is no drug test that can distinguish between synthetic THC (Marinol) and organic THC (marijuana). Recreational marijuana users will have dirty tests, but the prescription for Marinol will wash their record as clean as if they had bathed their wretched souls in the Blood of Jesus.

By pushing Marinol in order to suppress medical marijuana, McCaffrey has effectively destroyed drug testing for recreational marijuana in America.

It's almost enough to make me believe in God — but not quite. If, however, Morality Czar William Bennett ate so much that one day he exploded on C-Span like the fat man in *Monty Python's Meaning of Life*, I would genuflect at least once. But first I'd make a videotape of the explosion for my future enjoyment.

SATANIC SIMPSONS

(Continued from Front Cover)

the horn. Gyrate to rock music, three scantily clad babes emerged from the station seductively, and as the driver's eyes widened, they suggestively flipped open the hood, shook off the squeegee and plunged the gas nozzle into the tank. The driver was even more excited when spotting a glittering cross hanging in one of the wiggling female's ample cleavage.

Voice-over: “The Catholic Church: We've made a few . . . changes.” Then the shot widened to include Marge Simpson and Lisa watching the spot on TV between quarters. Lisa: “These Super Bowl commercials are weird.” As are some network decisions, for “Catholic” was deleted from the voice-over in last week's Fox-edited rerun, leaving only “The church.”

Doing that or changing the entire reference to “religion” was what Scully said he was asked to do by Roland McFarland, Fox vice president of broadcast standards. When he balked, Scully said, McFarland advised changing it to “Methodists, Presbyterians or Baptists,” anything but Catholic. Scully: “When I asked what would be the difference changing it to another religion, and wouldn't that just be offending a different group of people, he explained that Fox had already had trouble with Catholics earlier this season.” Different standards for different religions?

The “trouble” cited by McFarland came from the Catholic League, which had protested that earlier gag in an episode of *The Simpsons* when a famished Bart asked Marge while they were in their car: “Mom, can we go Catholic so we can get Communion wafers and booze?” To which she replied: “No one is going Catholic. Three children is enough, thank you.”

POP, POP, FIZZ, FIZZLE

(Continued from Back Cover)

Linguistic Analysis of Personal Dating Advertisements, Male/Female Relationships in Deep Space Nine, and The Ghost in the Postmodern Cinematic Machine: Intertextuality in The Hudsucker Proxy.

Day Three: Next morning *USA Today* said NATO had bombed a hospital by mistake, and I attended an early morning panel on comics. *The Syntax of the Comics Page* and *Constructing a Theory of Encapsulation* almost sent me back to bed, but a last-minute panelist who wasn't even listed on the program presented an interesting paper on a French cartoonist whose comics show America through French eyes: tail-finned cars, Elvis and cowboy boots.

It was a good presentation that actually reflected “the ways of life of American and world cultures,” but what woke me up was this unnamed guy informing us that the *New York Times* had run an obituary for pop culture critic Gershon Legman. Suddenly my feeling of *coitus interruptus* became one of *déjà-vu*. I remembered that fourteen years ago Paul Krassner, covering a humor convention in *The Realist*, reported that Gershon Legman had been stabbed to death at the conference by an angry clown.

The Catholic League also threw its mail might against dialogue about priest pedophilia in two of this season's episodes of the network's *Ally McBeal*. In one, a preacher disclosed to his lawyer that he'd been having an affair, adding, “I realize that doesn't make me an altar boy.” The reply: “If you were an altar boy, you'd be with a priest.” The other episode had a wayward nun chatting about sex with Ally and saying: “A priest has sex with a boy, he gets transferred. . . . At least my lover was of legal age, for God's sake.”

Scully said that the Catholic League organized written protests against both episodes of *The Simpsons* and that Fox, after being supportive, caved in after the second batch of complaints. “We got a couple of hundred letters, and it was very obvious from reading a majority of them that the protesters had not seen the show. Some of them were from third-graders, all saying the same thing: ‘Please don't make fun of my religion.’ Which we all know third-graders are very adamant about,” Scully added, caustically.

The battle continues. Set to air this fall is an episode with Homer and his pals forming a motorcycle gang that he names Hell's Satans. When Ned Flanders, Springfield's most devout Christian, lobbies for something less blasphemous, Moe the IQ-challenged bar-keep blurts out, “The Christ Punchers.” It's rejected, of course. As the joke was by Fox, Scully said. On the other hand, if “The Christ Punchers” were jumping the Grand Canyon during ratings sweeps . . .

MEDIA FREAK

Altered Fairy Tales

From an interview with Shel Silverstein in the August 1961 issue of The Realist:

“I looked at a modern *Little Red Riding Hood*, and I remember I saw an old *Red Riding Hood*, and you know what happens there. The wolf eats her up, and that's it. *Red Riding Hood* comes in and the wolf says, ‘Come over here,’ and she says, ‘What a big mouth you've got,’ and the wolf says, ‘The better to eat you with,’ and he *does*. But I remembered *Red Riding Hood* — which was *after* this edition — she was eaten up by the wolf and then the woodsman comes in and chops him open, and she pops out.

That had turned out to be one of Krassner's famous hoaxes. This obit was real. The *Twilight Zone* theme song played in my head.

I attended a panel on press coverage; a columnist from the *San Diego Union-Tribune* said he was tired of articles on pop culture headlined “Pop Goes the Culture.” I made a mental note to use some other heading for this article, and headed for more comics panels. I worried that if I didn't take in their panels, they'd snub my own comics presentation later that evening.

Panels like *The Dismantling Evolution of Heroes: Aquaman's Amputation* (I hadn't heard the poor guy had lost a limb, but then I'm always last to know) and *Pop Intertextuality in Warner Brothers Cartoons* soon had me humming “Send in the Clowns,” and I sneaked away to take in a great panel on Nancy Drew, featuring a guy who pointed out that *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* is Nancy Drew for the '90s.

Then I presented my slideshow on the changing image of women in comics, and people showed up! I never once used the words *intertextuality* or *encapsulation*.

Day Four: Due to a fortunate miscalculation on my part, I'd booked a return flight for that morning, thereby missing the last day of the conference. What I missed: *A Study of National Identity on an X-Files Electronic Mailing List*, *Politics of Continental European and Independent American Female Vampire Movies*, and *Can Wilson's Virtues of Consilience be Fused with the Wonder of Spiritual Life?*

On the plane I picked up a newspaper and learned that NATO had bombed a truckload of refugees.

I never again saw the guy who'd told us of Gershon Legman's demise, but I imagine he is even now in a phone booth somewhere, changing into his clown suit.

Trina Robbins is the author of *From Girls to Grrrlz: A History of 2 Comics from Teens to Zines*, published by Chronicle Books.

"So first, she was swallowed by the wolf; then, the next thing you know, she was eaten by the wolf and chopped open and pops out as good as new; a few years later you've got — she's not eaten by the wolf, but the woodsman comes in and chops the wolf open, and the *grandmother* pops out as good as new. Well, eventually, you're going to have the woodsman come in and kill the wolf before he's eaten anybody, I guess. And pretty soon, they're going to turn the wolf into a Saint Bernard."

"I know that in *The Three Little Pigs*, I guess when we were kids, they were eaten up one at a time. The wolf gobbles up the one in the twig house, and he gobbles up the one in the *papier-mâché* house or whatever it is, and finally he comes to the brick house and he's stymied. He falls down the chimney, and that's it for him. He's boiled. But now what they've got is, each little pig runs to the other's house. So the wolf blows down the straw house, and the little pig sneaks out the back door and runs to the twig house. He blows down the twig house, and the little pigs run to the brick house. I mean the goddam wolf doesn't have a chance."

"And I guess now Goldilocks, instead of just running out, will become a friend of the three bears — they'll all be buddies."

Charlie's Devils

The following is excerpted from *GettingIt*, a new online magazine at www.gettingit.com.

August marks the 30th anniversary of the Charles Manson massacre, but here are some facts that you won't see in media coverage of the event:

Hal Lipset, the renowned private investigator, informed *The Realist* that not only did the Los Angeles Police Department seize pornographic films and videotapes they found in Roman Polanski's loft, but also that certain LAPD officers were selling them. Lipset had talked with one police source who told him exactly which porno flicks were available, a total of seven hours' worth for a quarter-million dollars.

Lipset recited a litany of those private porn flicks. There was Greg Bautzer, an attorney for Howard Hughes, with Jane Wyman, the ex-wife of Ronald Reagan, who was governor of California at the time of the murders. There was Cass Elliot in an orgy with Yul Brynner, Peter Sellers and Warren Beatty, the same trio who, with John Phillips, had offered a \$25,000 reward for the capture of the killers. There was Sharon Tate with Dean Martin. There was Sharon with Steve McQueen. And there she was with two black bisexual men.

"The cops weren't too happy about that one," Lipset recalled.

A reporter told *The Realist* that when she was hanging around with Los Angeles police, they showed her a porn video of Susan Atkins, one of Charlie's devils, with Voytek Frykowski, one of the victims, even though,

according to myth, the executioners and the victims had never met until the night of the killings. But apparently the reporter mentioned the wrong victim. Manson told *The Realist*, "You are ill advised and misled. [Jay] Sebring [hair stylist and drug dealer to the stars] done Susan's hair and I think he sucked one or two of her dicks. I'm not sure who she was walking out from her stars and cages, that girl loves dick, you know what I mean, hon. Yul Brynner, Peter Sellers..."

Manson has become a cultural icon, the personification of evil. In surfer jargon, "manson" means a crazy, reckless surfer. For comedians, he is a generic joke reference. In 1992 he told *The Realist*, "I think I know what a generic joke means. That means you talk bad about Reagan or Bush. I've always ran poker games and whores and crime. I'm a crook. You make the reality in court and press. I just ride and play the cards that were pushed on me to play. Mass killer. It's a job, what can I say."

Preston Guillory, a former deputy sheriff in Los Angeles, told *The Realist*, "A few weeks prior to the [arrests at the] Spahn Ranch raid, we were told that we weren't to arrest Manson or any of his followers. The reason he was left on the street was because our department thought that he was going to launch an attack on the Black Panthers." And so it was that racism turned the Sheriff's Department into collaborators in a mass murder.

On the evening of Friday, August 8, 1969, just a few hours before the slaughter took place, Joel Rostau, the boyfriend of Sebring's receptionist and an intermediary in a cocaine ring, visited Sebring and Frykowski at the Tate house, to deliver mescaline and cocaine. During the Manson trial, several associates of Sebring were murdered, including Rostau, whose body was found in the trunk of a car in New York. The Manson family had actually served as a hit squad for a cocaine ring.

Son of a Gun

The following is reprinted from the website www.gwbush.com:

Governor George W. Bush, Jr. has met with senior law enforcement officials, religious leaders, criminal justice academics and federal prison inmates to discuss a bold policy initiative called "Amnesty 2000." As president, Bush would pardon convicts who have "grown up" but are still serving long sentences for possession of cocaine and other illegal drugs.

Bush has long dismissed questions about his own past cocaine use by saying, "What matters is, have you grown up? — and I have." Today he finally went a step further in a prepared statement saying, "My drug use was about average for children and young adults of my social class and upbringing, and yes, that included cocaine as well as several other drugs."

The governor said it is a grave injustice that a million Americans are in jail today for non-

violent drug offenses, such as those that he himself has committed. "Hundreds of thousands of these prisoners were found guilty with no physical evidence, only on the testimony of others who were also charged with drug offenses," he said. Bush promised to declare war on domestic human rights abuses as president.

"We're talking about women serving 20 years or more because they were dating or married to a drug dealer. Recreational drug users — like I used to be — are serving life sentences because dealer friends made up stories to get a lighter sentence. If this were happening in China, we'd probably start bombing them for human rights violations," said an incensed Bush after listening to reports from leading criminal justice experts. "We have to let these people go!"

A source within the Presidential Exploratory Committee estimated that around 400,000 presidential pardons could be issued in his first year as president. "Already one in nine American children have one or both parents in prison, and George W. would like to be known as the president who gave those kids their parents back," the source said.

Filler Items

- Tarzan is the first Disney animated character with nipples.

- From *Mouse Tales: A Behind-the-Ears Look at Disneyland* by David Koenig: "Henry Kissinger used to escape the pressures of the Nixon White House by going to Disneyland, where they let him anonymously work at one of the popcorn stands."

- On CNBC, Geraldo Rivera interviewed Elie Wiesel, Holocaust survivor and Nobel Peace Prize recipient. Rivera concluded: "I love you, man."

- The new sensitivity, from musician Kid Rock: "Even if I'm with a groupie at a show, and I have sex with her or something, I'm not mean to her. It's something we both wanted to do, and so it's like, 'Nice to meet you' and everything, not, 'Get the fuck off my bus.' I'm not like that at all."

- David Misch observes: "Among the hype regarding *Eyes Wide Shut* were odes to the courage of Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman, who allowed themselves to be molded to Kubrick's vision over two long and difficult years. Yeah, who would've thought two Scientologists would be so willing to give up control?" As for slapstick comedy, in view of come-on-the-ear in *There's Something About Mary* and come-on-the-beer in *American Pie*, "Semen is the custard pie of the '90s."

- Pundits at work: On CNN's *Reliable Sources*, in reference to the competitive reportage during National JFK Jr. Week, distinguished host Bernard Kalb stated the old journalistic credo: "Get it first, but first get it second." *Washington Post* media critic Howie Kurtz eagerly agreed. Ironically, Kalb had intended to say: "Get it first, but first get it right." There was no correction.

The Love Song of Timothy Leary

by Ken Kesey

[Editor's Note: It has recently been "revealed" that Tim Leary was an FBI informant in prison. Did anybody get hurt? A central figure in underground-overground contacts was targeted by the FBI, and an agent managed to become his roommate, eventually setting up his group to spend several years in prison for planning terrorist activities. Also, a lawyer who gave Leary a chunk of hashish in jail was fingered by Leary's "wife," DEA operative Joanna Harcourt-Smith, and his license was suspended for a month.]

Tim and I talked about our similar predicaments: the cops had us both by the shorthairs a time or two. They wanted me to speak out against acid after the FBI snagged me in 1966. I did the Acid Test Graduation, telling people we had to go beyond LSD. All that evening I yammered doublespeak, knowing the crowd could tell I was ripped — as Hunter Thompson put it — to the tits on 600 mikes. It was tricky business.

Tim knew he had to make the same sort of rollover when he was in the belly of the beast. He also knew he wasn't telling the feds anything they didn't already know. And he figured it the same way I did: our true allies and comrades would understand.

I have no need to associate with doubters. When the priests in the Star Chamber promise to stop pouring hot lead in your ear if you'll confess to being in league with Satan, you do what you have to do. Those citizens who think you are being a traitorous coward have never had hot lead poured in their ears.

Tim Leary was a great warrior, funny and wise and clever and, above all, courageous. I judge myself blessed to have battled alongside a revolutionary like this blue-eyed battler. Those who want to gnaw on his bones never knew his heart.

The Joke-O-Matic

by Bob Harris

Kids! Build your own jokes for fun and profit, right in the comfort of your own home! Have you ever thought a comedian or a sitcom you were watching sucked, and that you could do better, but weren't quite sure how? Friends, wonder no more.

In my current gig, I have to come up with a minute of funny stuff to say about politics every weekday. (Unfortunately, I'm not allowed just to repeat the words "Strom Thurmond" over and over.) Which might seem like a daunting challenge to some comedians. Alchemists come up with new material more often than most comics do.

I've also got the added complication that, because of the logistics of distribution, I have to write the pieces in two-week batches of ten per sitting, knowing that they won't be heard for an average of three weeks afterwards. Which means I have to guess at what's going to be (a) newsworthy and (b) funny three weeks ahead of time, ten solid minutes at a pop.

Pressure? Nah. It's the easiest job in the world.

There are about a dozen tricks that, once understood, make joke writing about as simple and mindless as making microwave popcorn, getting laid at a wedding, or working as a TV news anchor. Here's the first and most important:

Many jokes work by triggering an unexpected connection between seemingly unrelated topics. For example (glancing at the op-ed page of the *Los Angeles Times*), Arianna Huffington . . . and a tab of Ecstasy. Okay, both are easy to find in L.A., both have a bright orange skin, and both have been in the mouths of gay men.

Bob Harris is a syndicated radio commentator, stand-up comic, and author of *Steal This Book* and *Get Life Without Parole* (Common Courage Press). He also writes a weekly political column, "The Scoop," which has e-mail subscribers in 40 countries and can be accessed free at www.bobharris.com.

With imagination, it's possible to find connections between almost any two random things. (Picking up the *Information Please 1997 Almanac* and flipping blindly, I swear): the pyramids of Egypt (page 303) . . . and American troops in Bosnia (first glossy photo). Hmmm. Okay, both are symbols of military power, come with instructions no one really understands, and will likely remain where they are for all eternity.

The trick is multiple free association. If I say "Mike Tyson," you might think instantly of: rape, biting off Holyfield's ear, high squeaky voice, beating the crap out of people. All of which are pretty obvious. Let's go a step further with each:

Rape = the id. Biting off Holyfield's ear = fighting on an empty stomach; showbiz air-kisses. High squeaky voice = Minnie Mouse; Minnie Ripperton; helium. Beating the crap out of people = Rodney King; the NYPD.

So suppose you're writing a piece and you'd like to add a punchline to emphasize an adjective. I'll open up *Roget's Thesaurus* and pick four adjectives at random: silent, respectful, imperceptible, penitent. Let's modify them into joke clauses, even forcing them into place in the order we found them:

More silent than Mike Tyson's superego. Less respectful than a Mike Tyson air-kiss. Less perceptible than Mike Tyson singing "Loving You" on helium. More penitent than Stacey Koon pulling a nightstick on Mike Tyson.

See? Badda-bing, badda-boom. Like making sausage.

The process has become even easier since, with competing cable news operations running 24-hour news cycles filled with nothing but visceral flash and scandal, American political life has been reduced to nothing but one endless series of set-ups:

Bill Clinton = blow jobs and cigars. Bob Dole = Viagra. Ross Perot = crazed alien midget. Steve Forbes = same, but taller. Jesse Jackson = speaks with rhyme and rhythm in unusual fashion. Dan Quayle = spells the words "rhyme" and "rhythm" in unusual fashion.

Given how easy this all is, it's scandalous how much money is wasted on sitcoms that aren't even funny. TV networks are actually a lot like the Pentagon, only with fewer minorities and even less sex. Which would have been a funnier line a few minutes ago, before you knew how it was written.

Del's Last Words

by Mike Gold

The day after his Going-Away Party/Wake/Memorial Service, Del Close, legend of Improv, spent most of the day trying to die. His doctor gave him two morphine injections, but Del was too strong (and of course several people have since suggested that he had built up a tolerance).

Finally, Del and his partner, Charna Halpern, browbeat his doctor into hooking him up to a morphine drip. Just before he did so, he asked Del if this was what he really wanted, and Del nodded yes. He said, "I'm tired of being the funniest one in the room."

Fifteen minutes later, he was gone — but never forgotten.

Del's will was fairly straightforward, but there was one odd provision. He bequeathed his own skull to the Goodman Theater in Chicago, to be used in their productions of *Hamlet*, with him getting a credit in the program.

He asked the Goodman in advance, and they said sure — never, ever dreaming he would do it. But the day after he died, Charna was on the phone making arrangements with a local medical school to remove the skull before he was cremated.

She presented the skull, encased in a glass box and resting upon a red cushion, to artistic director Robert Falls, who has no plans for a production of *Hamlet*, but said that the skull might be used in other plays, and Close will be acknowledged in the playbill.

"Del wants to be remembered in laughter, not sadness," Charna said. "Now he just wants to keep working."

Alas, poor Del, I knew him well.

Pop, Pop, Fizz, Fizzle by Trina Robbins

Day One: As a comics convention veteran, I was pleasantly surprised by the absence of twelve-year-old *Spiderman* clones and exotic dancers impersonating Vampirella when I picked up my membership badge at the 29th annual Popular Culture conference in San Diego. I was surrounded by people who looked like, and in fact were, academics. Judging from their badges, they represented every known place of learning in the United States.

This dropout was impressed. My 240-page program book gave me lots of options and stated that the Popular Culture Association is "convinced that the vast body of material encompassed in print, television, graphics, folk culture, indoor and outdoor entertainment, as well as other activities and media reflect the ways of life of American and world cultures."

Programming started at 5:00 p.m., and I sacrificed *With Rosie on my Chest: Tattoos in Popular Song Lyrics and Bass Fishing Contests and Their Effects on Sports Fishing* in favor of *Gender Studies: Viewing Dangerous Beauty*, which meant I got to watch a movie for ninety minutes and then analyze it with a room full of earnest academicians. *Dangerous Beauty*, if you missed it, is no *Citizen Kane*. It's a variation on the *Hooker With a Heart of Gold*, set in Renaissance Venice with cool costumes.

Nevertheless, Deep Feminist Significance

was discussed. I checked the program book to see what else I might have missed. *The Smell of the Rat, the Whiteness of the Lamb: Didacticism versus Nonsense in Children's Verse* sounded pretty good, as did *Computer Forensics and Your Hard Drive Can Spell Legal Trouble*, but I was most fascinated by *Journey Through the Secret Life of Signal-To-Noise Ratios: Communication Technology in Contact and The Arrival*.

That night I dreamed I was back in high school, naked and unprepared for the big test. Next morning, the ubiquitous *USA Today*, left at my hotel-room door, showed me smoking rubble in Kosovo, a product of NATO's smart bombs.

Day Two: It began with a children's literature panel featuring a mysterious paper called *Is It Progress? Motion Pictures, Modernity, and Interwar Summer Camps*. "Interwar Summer Camps" turned out to be exactly what they sounded like: summer camps during the years between both World Wars. What I got out of the presentation was that summer camps for children started showing movies after World War I. That was it; no analysis of how this reflected "the ways of American life," as the pop culture statement had read. What did it all mean? I began to get a nagging feeling of *coitus interruptus*.

Next came a promising panel on *Xena*, the best TV amazon since Linda Carter dumped her *Wonder Woman* costume in the '70s. A woman on the panel commented that the lesbian relationship between the warrior

princess and her sidekick, Gabrielle, once the hidden agenda on the show, had become simply The Agenda. There's nothing sisterly about it when Gaby blinks her baby blues at Lucy Lawless and whispers, "I love you, Xena." The alternative on-line Xena fan fiction is pretty good, too. We were treated to a video of Xena's musical episode, *Bitter Suite*, dubbed with new lyrics that really were funny. And being about today's out lesbianism, damned if the panel didn't actually "reflect the ways of American life."

Back to the movies for a third panel, which promised *Bette Davis As a Star Vehicle*. Unfortunately, the man who was supposed to present the paper on my favorite screen bitch couldn't make it, so I was stuck with two other presentations, the first being *Failure Is Not An Option: Demi Moore as Hester Prynne and G.I. Jane*. I sat transfixed as the presenter argued passionately about the feminism of the actress who'd starred in *Striptease*. This woman's heartfelt speech about deep meaning in the worst remake of *The Scarlet Letter* ever made — a New Age mishmash that added Wicca and Noble Savages to Hawthorne's classic — was actually heavy shit compared to what came next: an intense couple from Palm Springs Community College and their paper on Calista Flockhart fan websites. Unable to make a run for the door without being noticed, I kept my seat and allowed my eyes to glaze.

Thanks to Calista Flockhart, I missed: A
(Continued on Page 9)

