

Spring 2002



The Gulch Mulch

all the pulp that's fit to gulp

Anonymous Submissions Dept.

THE FIRST PLANT- 1968

There was a little meadow on a hillside by a creek with natural ground water where we put our first garden underneath the trees; I'll always remember setting up camp: when we nailed an orange crate to a tan oak to finish the kitchen the sap came out red! We were sitting around the kitchen in the garden and in the evening after working we wanted to smoke a jay after dinner or before dinner, probably Mexican. Cleaning the pot in a shoe box top we watched the seeds roll to the bottom and a light bulb went on. Five or six months later we had harvested the first crop. We didn't know anything about separating the males then, it was 1968. We draped the twelve foot plants over the VW and decided to visit our neighbors and give them each a plant. We stopped at the first house and there we were, four naked people popping out of the VW gift in hand!

We dried it as best we could without a structure, broke the plants down a bit from the main stalk, and then stuffed it in burlap bags. We headed down toward San Francisco late at night- three of us in the VW. There were burlap bags in the backseat and under the hood- we looked like we had just come out of the woods. We needed gas and we got to a small town where everything was closed except a 24 -hour coffee shop where we sat bemoaning our situation. We talked the manager into opening the gas station and when he lifted up the bonnet there were branches sticking out of the bag. He asked what that was and we said just some herbs we were picking for tea down in the city. He filled the tank and we got on down the road OK.

It was kind of a miracle how we got rid of it. We got it down to a basement in San Francisco and this guy came by and he said he worked with bands, he had a recording studio. We hadn't cleaned it up much- it was still pretty interesting-looking. He took it and when he came back he said we got \$1200 a pound for it. We were living on \$20 a week so it seemed like an exorbitant price. We didn't get that much again for awhile.



ANTI-HIPPIE PETITION OF 1969

Petition to the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors,
Oct 16, 1969. (Cover letter)

Honorable Sirs,

Enclosed are names of many of our residents, many we did not contact. We are very concerned in this Southern Humboldt area over the mass infiltration of Hippies.

Many residents have come upon them bathing in the nude and having intercourse on the beaches of our rivers and ocean. We are concerned with their utter lack of regard for the moral, health, and sanitary codes.

The local residents and our local law enforcement bodies are very unhappy with our local judge and the lack of sentences he imposes on the hippies when brought into court on dope charges and other charges.

How many of them are on the welfare rolls? According to our store clerks, girls who work in the local hospital and the druggists, their number is many.

Many shacks and dwellings are going up in the brush around Whitethorn and other areas without any building codes or permits or sanitary regulations. We feel they should abide by the same laws, rules, and regulations we the tax payer do.

We don't know what you can do to help us but felt you should become aware of our problem and our sentiments on the subject.

Thank You

Mrs Ralph (Florence) French, Redway

To the Editor, (Redwood Record October 9, 1969)

The concern shown by a local young lady's letter to your paper last week is felt by many residents in Southern Humboldt. The recent hippie increase in this area is noticed by even the most casual observer.

We, the undersigned, concur that the activities and mannerisms of the "back to nature" "flower children" are a deterrent to the aesthetic serenity and cultural aspirations we desire for our homeland.

Particularly in our area, tourism is being promoted to the hilt; people, families who will come and stay a while to awe at the beauty of our forest and ocean shores. How can we justify our earnest desire to hold them when on the other hand we permit the opposite of our aspirations to clutter the backgrounds.

We in Humboldt County feel that we cannot financially afford the loss being suffered by their presence.

(Signed by 111 people)

THE BOARD TOOK NO ACTION

Gulch Mulch, Whitethorn, CA 95589
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SUMMER OF '72

Gaybe was fifteen and I was almost eighteen when I met her at the Indiana University Student Union and we decided to hitch-hike out to Berkeley, California. The first ride was a car picking everyone up; it was soon so loaded with hitchhikers that one boy was lying across us from the front seat to the back. Another ride took us into Lawrence, Kansas in the middle of the night; our hearty benefactor took us back to his house where we got very loaded with a white ceramic pipe full of weed, pot, grass, smoke. By 3:00am we walked through the dewy weeds back to the hiway. Outside Grand Junction, Colorado we split a hit of window pane acid and rode through an incredible lightning storm in Utah. By that time I was babbling nonsensically to the leathery-skinned California driver who was visibly annoyed. The last ride into Los Angeles was a paranoid guy who thought that television and license plates were controlling people; I was afraid he was going to kill us all. By this time Gaybe wouldn't even talk to me because she only wanted to talk about deep things.

Some nice Latinos gave us a place to crash in LA and the next day we headed North. When we got to San Luis Obispo I was so shallow that Gaybe abandoned me, heading up Hiway 1 while I stuck with 101. I got a \$5 ticket for hitch-hiking and rejoined her at Hiway 1.

We crashed in a friendly house in Berkeley and I hung out on Sproul Plaza with my army backpack. (Yes, I was one of those.) Jean, a twenty-seven year old Jr. High teacher from Hayward with a German husband, asked if she could throw my frizbee.

"If you're human you can," I said.

The next day she picked me up off the Plaza and took me to her friends house, a doctoral candidate. We smoked a big redundant fattie but we didn't call them fatties then. We started to have sex but I was very inexperienced.

"Well move up and down or something," she said. The next day I headed to San Francisco and never saw Jean again.

I went across the bridge to the Haight but I was too late. It was 1972, heroin, or the girl shooting up water into her vein right there in front of me at the crash pad. I wanted to find a commune in the country; a hippie chick hanging out her window gave me some names; one I wrote down as Garberville, Oregon. I saw the 14-year-old Guru Maharaji and scored a lid on Guerrero Street.

I headed North. At San Rafael I encountered Shawn, an ex-con just out of San Quentin prison and heading North with two huge dufflebags. He was short and stocky with long red beard and hair, tattoos, and he had a stash too.

"Let's twist one up," he said. "I'm going up to Nooning Creek. People are living naked on the creek. The trees talk to me." He wore an amulet.

We got to Garberville after sleeping in a vacant lot in downtown Willits. I bought a bag of granola and a wedge of cheddar cheese at Evergreen Natural Foods. We stopped in Whitethorn where I was amazed to see people, hippies, smoking grass right out there on the street across from the Post Office by a big stump. The town was

agitated; pot-grower Dirk Dickerson had just been shot and killed by the cops in a drug raid at Alderpoint. Rock and Roll Steve was angry.

We headed out to Nooning Creek; I slept by the river. In the morning the end of my army surplus sleeping bag was sticking in the river. I drank water from the spring flowing down the mountainside through the healthy brown scum. It was all quite a revelation for a naive Hoosier boy. At various intervals along the creek were campsites; Dale and Buffalo at one, Little Black Bobbie and his group at another. The astrologer Andy Gabor joined our site, then along came a nice woman. When she wasn't there I looked at the bookmark in the book she was reading- it was a doctor's note that said "Pain during intercourse." Was she trying to tell us something?

People were killing and eating deer on the creek. I was a vegetarian, I was hungry, I ate the deer. Once we went out in Henry and Laurie's little red VW at night to blind and shoot a deer. When we found one I yelled for it to go away. That annoyed the other hippies.

We went to a Fourth of July party at Whisky Hill in Whale Gulch; I had golden seal and cayenne smeared on my face, the Jethro Kloss solution to poison oak, I looked around at all these cool California hippies- I was a long-haired hick from Indiana with a Frizbee in my hand. I threw it once half-heartedly and it sailed into the woods- I never saw it again. Doug Green was sitting on the side of the hill naked. He was shouting at us.

"C'mon, take off your clothes you phoney hippies! Take off your clothes!"

There was lots of booze and drugs...and sex in the tee-pee. I was a hick from Indiana and I'd lost my frizbee. I headed out of there with my yellow goldenseal face and hitch-hiked back to Nooning Creek. A chubby woman that Shawn had been making nice to was there. I didn't care- I talked my way into her sleeping bag. Soon Shawn returned from the party; I couldn't believe it.

He was raving, "I climbed up one mountain and rolled down another to get back here!"

In the morning I put on my floppy hippie hat and left; I headed back to Indiana via Canada and registered late for the draft. A couple years later Shawn murdered a guy in a jealous rage right inside Tomaso's Pizza Parlor in Eureka. They sent him back to prison. He may still be there.



VOTE TO SAVE THE
HOSPITAL
Show who you are.

SUMMER OF '97

STARTING THE INDEPENDENT

After the Redwood Record went out of business there was heard a murmur in the community about starting another paper; after a meeting or two one woman actually lavished thousands of dollars of computers and expenses upon two local worthies who kept the money when the thing went kaput. Of course each thought the other one was the scammer.

Karol had told me about her best friend's husband Jerry who wanted to start a paper; I made it an item in a 'Mulch column lamenting lack of creativity in local media: ("Meanwhile Jerry S. is contemplating starting a local paper. Maybe some of the other people interested could collaborate with him.") A few weeks later a very emotional Karol took me across town to meet Jerry, check out his Internet connection and chat up the paper idea. Karol was crying, calling lawyers, and worrying about custody battles. (That's what happens when you threaten to take your kids to live with your boyfriend in England.) We alternately surfed the web and comforted Karol.

(I had met Karol two years earlier at Manny Frishberg's writer's workshop. She walked into that first session with those glowing hippic eyes and I became infatuated: she was so young...and beautiful. Once we drank tequila swinging on the swings by the hiway; I thought I had a chance but then an old flame came back and she settled back with him. One day in the writer's workshop I had read a story called "My First Time" which included a line about "whether I could count the 'muff-diving' with Suzy" back in Indiana. A short time later Karol received an anonymous clipping, a graphic photo from "Muff-Diving" magazine. She was certain I had sent it because of the story and the Whitethorn postmark. She wouldn't buy any of my arguments of innocence, so I basically wrote her off after that: "Shit, this chick's dangerous with these false accusations!")

When we weren't kissing and hugging and consoling Karol, that little ball of emotions, Jerry and I talked about our visions for a local paper, all great ideas easier said than done. Jerry was poor, marriage on the rocks, darling baby crying; he showed me the template of the first page of his dream paper called The Emerald City Gazette. He seemed hurt when I asked him if he was very attached to that name. I was thinking, "That name has got to go!" Jerry loved that name.

A couple months later I was visiting Karol; she was telling me what a mess Jerry's life was with the impending breakup. I headed over there ostensibly to check out his Web access but also I was like a curious vulture: I wanted to see what a broken man looked like. We romped around on the Internet some, he fed us homemade hummus pockets, and this time his daughter was better behaved, although she still needed a lot of attention. The newspaper idea didn't come up till I was standing outside the door; he wanted me to stay longer.

"What's your hurry?" he said.

He fed me a few bits and pieces of local media concepts which I'd commented on in the last Mulch - I caught that right away, figuring it was meant to butter me up.

"Well there's always the Emerald City Gazette," he said.

I thought about the "paper" idea for a few days; then walking into a local wedding party for Mathew I announced to Rosa, an aspiring writer, "Hey, you wanna start a paper?"

"Yesss!" she said.

The first meeting was just before Reggae on the River at Tooby Park. Six people met to talk about starting a local paper, even a volunteer lawyer. We laid out all of our ideas of what we'd want in it. That first day the most contentious issue was whether we'd allow anonymous pieces in the paper.

A little office in Garberville was rented. We had a couple more formative meetings where a lot of time was spent on what the name should be: Jerry loved "Emerald City Gazette"; nothing was good enough for Rosa: "Eel River Journal"? She hated them all. I had

broken up with my girlfriend so I invited Karol and her kids up to the annual Gulch camp-out at Smith River as my "rent-a-family". On the way we were "brain-storming" names when Karol hit on "The Independent". It had possibilities.

The boys loved the river and Karol liked my wacky neighbors. As we were leaving The Joker handed me a joint. Uh, smoking in the morning? We all did, but I told The Joker that I was going to blow it for sure now.

"Ahh," he said, "C'mon, have another hit."

We headed down the hiway and, sure enough, by the time we hit Arcata Karol said to just "dump me on any street corner." All her stuff? A big pile of camping equipment, ice chests, sleeping bags on the sidewalk, a big pile on the corner of 12th and I? Huh?

So the name "The Independent" stuck: it wasn't too repugnant for Rosa, or too kitschy for Sylvia, or too this or too that, it was a compromise choice. I always figured we could have done better than that though.

The timing for starting a new local paper was propitious; there were all these major local issues coming to the fore and also the editor of "The Life & Times" was annoying a lot of people with divisive editorials basically stirring up the shit between the "hippies" and the "rednecks". He was encouraging the local yahoos to write in with their moronic opinions such as a recent one where the writer accused environmentalists, Earth First?, and the counterculture of sabotaging measure R - the high school bail-out bond measure. (Well I don't know if more stoned hippies or drunk rednecks didn't vote on that one - probably a lot of both! Fucking apathetic weasels!)

The L+T editor was pretty sure his house had been burnt down by a drifter and he may have been going through serious physical and psychological problems also. He was basically doing his job, stirring up the shit, which generated attacks on *him* of course. Now this guy didn't not take criticism well; he published letters criticizing him but then was so thin-skinned that he responded with these rambling defensive screeds rife with generalizations that usually were at least twice the length of the offending letters. Just once I would have like to see him take criticism like a BIG BOY and maybe answer, "Yeah...whatever, dude," which everyone knows means "Fuck you asshole you don't know shit."

When he was criticized for printing divisive bullshit was when he'd *really* rev up his harrange: "All these people are telling me to shut up and it's blah blah my 1st Amendment rights, blah blah Constitution...blah blah." They were telling you to shut up, Bill, 'cause you're making a fool of yourself. But hey it's your paper, it's a hard job to put it out, it's better than nothing, and, somehow, we still love you Bill, even with your RRHC-bashing "articles."

Consequently the people were thinking they'd like to have another voice, start another paper - it could be a crazy foolish venture. It was a great moment to start a paper: The Bear Lincoln trial was ending, all the fair-weather "activists" were gathering for the annual Headwaters rally and the Redwoods Rural Health Center was imploding; many doctors and nurses were defecting to the Hospital Clinic as partnering talks reached an impasse.

(I went to one Hospital meeting when the RRHC was on the defensive like a whimpering wet dog; the Hospital board was saying, "You're too dysfunctional, we don't want to deal with you anymore - you're too flaky, we want agreement now, on our terms - we've waited long enough." And the RRHC was like, "Oh, please give us another chance, we promise to get our shit together, we'll quickly come up with a concrete partnering proposal in like...two months, or so." And the Hospital says, "Sorry, this partnering process has been going on for two years and enough is enough - no more 'two months'.")

Some of the people in the Hospital gallery were sneering and ridiculing the poor wet dog RRHC. "Score one for the rednecks," you could see in one heckler's eyes. "We beat you hippies this time."



Did they beat us at our own game? The "people" game, communication, co-operation? What *did* go wrong at the RRHC to cause all those people to leave? Did it have to do with secretly settled harassment lawsuits? Was it just time for these practitioners to move on? Will the local system be better or worse? Did you follow your doctor or P.A. to the Hospital Clinic or did you stand by the RRHC? If you're very healthy you can stand on principle and support the RRHC; if you're sick you *just want* your doctor and you hate the politics involved.

What did the doctor and PA's who left think? That they were so indispensable that they could force a merger? That the RRHC would just sign everything over to the Hospital District? It is a well-known fact that a hospital is always more important to a community than a clinic.

My opinion is that the majority of RRHC member didn't really trust the Hospital and this probably goes back to the horror stories of the late 60s and early 70s, indeed the reason the RRHC was started. If there was a chance that we could continue to operate as before we'd take it. Now that un-willingness to change may mean the RRHC will go down. Maybe we were wrong; should have been more attuned to what's going on in the health care industry; and jumped on this partnering thing a long time ago. It's also possible the RRHC board was incompetent; hardly anyone wanted those thankless positions. I hope it all works out and there's plenty of good health care available. Joe Sixpack and Pedro Pothead just want to be able to see their doctor...best advice: DON'T GET SICK!

So there were all these big issues happening while us nuts were trying to start a paper. We started having weekly editorial meetings and roles emerged: Jerry became our Editor-in-Chief, our leader. People dropped out of the organizing process and new ones came on board—we had a lot of columnists but very few reporters.

Our editor became homeless - no car to boot. Sometimes he camped down by the river in his tent, then spent all day in the little office working on the paper and brooding about his broken family, children 150 miles away. The little kitchen in the office got used a lot though his needs were few: a pot of rice, a pan of vegetables, and a Mac. A new girlfriend took him in for awhile, then she closed her door. At one point he had not ONE PENNY to his name and had to borrow money to keep going. He was supposed to leave the office each evening at ten when the building rules say you gotta close up shop because another tenant, the herb man and Chevron ginseng inventor Arnie "Give me \$50,000 and some free land" Wolman, couldn't handle people in that late, he's trying to get some sleep. Inevitably the office became Jerry's crash pad until the Hospice guy took him in.

The office was in the back of the Humboldt Traders' across the hall from Telepal and there's a story there: for some reason the Telepal lady saw The Independent as a threat. Before the paper even had a name she had complained to authorities about us: traffic, building codes, health dept., etc., all the NIMBY protests you could imagine. Then she wrote the landlord to complain which got her a letter from him telling her to quit harassing the other tenants! The next thing we hear is she's evicted, moved out! But that's how papers are— they just collect the shit.

The business aspect of the paper was daunting: who would be responsible? Was it a collective? A partnership? Everyone wanted to do the creative part but no one really wanted to do the *business*. Jerry tried but it just wasn't *him*. Then an amazing thing happened: our ad salesman Glen walked into a meeting and laid \$2,000 on the table! What a great country! We hadn't even put out the first issue and we had this pile of money! For a paper started with almost nothing that was encouraging indeed!

So Jerry plunged through his homeless, jilted misery to do it all: build the paper, be the editor, write stories, and co-ordinate everything. The publishing deadline passed: no paper. Another few

days: no paper; a week...no.

Now here's where it gets a little murky because Karol told me that she went down to the office where Jerry was stymied, just not getting it together. Karol said that she and Bridgette marched in there and pushed it through, a week late, which doesn't seem too bad considering the first meeting was two months before.

It wasn't too bad of a first issue if you ignore the copious editorial and layout mistakes: all the big stories were covered, it was a pretty lefty rag. At our visioning meetings we were inspired to be a paper for the *whole* community, have interviews with loggers, etc., but the reality was that we were just a bunch of lefties, hopefully fair.

The first issue was *out!* Now would there be another? At our next Thursday night meeting Jerry dropped the bomb: he couldn't work with Karol anymore. He gave us an ultimatum: either she left the paper or he would. She had until Monday to decide if she wanted to run the paper; if yes then he was gone. (I guess that's what happens when two control freaks are trying to share power.)

So Karol's out, and Jerry's plodding toward another issue. I'm torn because Karol was my friend; and I'm trying to figure out the whole breakup.

Karol told me, "Look, I'm out for now but after Jerry runs it into the ground I'll come back and pick up the pieces, rescue it."

A couple weeks later I stopped by the office to see how the paper was going. (I had lost interest in the paper before the first issue had even come out but I kept coming to the meetings because I liked hanging out with Rosa: We'd carpool in, have a bite, and go to a lousy movie after the editorial meeting.)

Jerry told me, "I'm leaving the paper. I'll put the 2nd issue out then I'm moving to Sacramento to be my kids' dad. (Dr. Laura would've been proud.) I thought the paper would become viable faster, I could rent a place, and send for the children. Now I can see it'll take a lot longer than I thought so I'm outta here and I'm taking my computer with me."

"What?!" I said. "We can't do it without you! Why even do another issue? Why not kill it off right *now*?"

He got another issue out, kinda slapped together an "I'm outta here issue." It looked pretty boring but when I actually perused the columns they were readable. But there was no local news! It was a disgrace, an embarrassment!

After Jerry quit we were trying to *give* the paper away to whoever would run it, be the leader. All the writers were volunteering - they just wanted a leader, an editor. It was comical; here we were trying to *give away* a business: Take this paper, please!

Karol and Liz ended up leading the drive for a third issue, one that came out very green, environmental stories on practically every page. After the third issue came out there was another falling out at the top. Liz apparently stalked off saying she'll never work with Karol again and that she's going to start her own paper!

The 4th issue will be out next week.

It's been interesting watching the paper and the ego-wars. Bottom line The Independent, or whatever it's going to be called, needs people to do the work to put it out for little or no pay. There's many columnists and few reporters.

The old Life & Times editor has started to rant again though he did take a good vibes break over Xmas it seemed. I like to think that the existence of The Independent reigned him in a little, but face it...he's still the biggest show in town.

And then we've got The Indie, the little paper that refuses to die.

On his black granite tombstone is the epitaph he wrote:

"In the time of your life, live — so that in that wondrous time you shall not add to the misery and sorrow of the world but shall smile to the infinite delight and mystery of it."

William Saroyan

SAN PANCHO

I was in San Marcos, Texas having just returned from Mexico when I got a wild hair to go back and find some land in San Pancho to build a little beach house. I called Maria de Los Angeles and asked her if she wanted to go to the beach. I picked her up in Matehuala and we drove South to her friends' place in Guanajuato.

In his apartment Jose mapped out for us the strategy for finding some land or a beach house in San Pancho. The idea was to try to penetrate the underground economy, the real economy, to try to avoid paying the inflated Gringo prices. My traveling companion Maria de Los Angeles (who speaks English as a *fifth* language) would be my front person, my super-secret agent who would find me my terreno with her charm and dulcet tones. I would pose as a gruff foreigner chomping on a cigar and occasionally grunting out a word or two in Spanish: "Mujere! Terreno!" Jose says that the first time I open my mouth the price doubles, then goes up from there. I'm giving Maria de Los Angeles the first day off here at the beach before she gets down to business.

Sitting in the breakfast restaurant I wonder do I really want to blow the last of my inheritance on a piece of the San Pancho rock just so my pseudo friends can have a place to go? I look around at all the other travelers and think Everyone else is an ugly American poseur except ME! I am the One True Non-Tourist! Everyone else is a big phony- who do they think they're kidding? (Actually with all those judgemental thoughts I feel like the Biggest Phoney now!)

I'm actually enjoying these lazy days at the beach hiding in the shade watching the waves roll in, the birds fly around. But if i didn't have have my Great Gringo Fantasy Land Search to occupy me I would probably get bored after two days. I guess I just needed the woman to help me enjoy it, get over my aversion to sun, heat, bugs, sand, and tourists. I'm very spoiled staying at Carol's beautiful place outside of San Pancho in Gringolandia: it seems like every day Maria de Los Angeles makes another apple cake which comes out of the oven in the afternoon soon after the munchies have kicked in.

Carol's spot is so perfect it'll be hard to settle for a lot in town as the other SoHummers have. She really scored five years ago, before the prices went up, and built a fantastic little place with all the artistic touches. After walking all over San Pancho, San Francisco, looking at little terrenos and sweating in the tropical heat I ended up back home in the Gringo Mecca of Costa Azul where the piece next door to where we're staying may be available, or perhaps the owner is playing the Reverse Game so that *he* doesn't get too bored: The Great Mexican Fantasy Land Sell-off! I could see myself with a little half acre and a modest beach house up here. Maria de Los Angeles found the owner don Andres earlier in the day, a drunk who's disappointed that his children never visit him. He sits around all day with his big plastic glass of vodka and orange juice sipping it slowly as he supervises the building of his latest house. He has many up here; *my* little fantasy is an orchard of fruit, perhaps four of everything: papaya, banana, mango, orange, and lime! Oh *wouldn't* that be a sweet little Gringo Paradise?

Next I take the Gar Tour looking at all the terrenos and houses for sale around town. Gar is big man on campus around here: he's connected to the real estate business, designs and builds houses, and oversees the properties of absentee owners, of which there are many. This is one of those small towns rife with gossip and rumors: Gar is either a fat alcoholic making lots of money with his hands-off building techniques or a savior to the gringas whose houses he watches while they are in the states. (I think in these small areas, like Garberville and the Gulch, we like to believe the *worst* that we hear about someone- perhaps that makes us feel better about our *own* boring little lives?)

Just when I'm finally realizing the absurdity of my San Pancho

Beach House Search I think, well, how about in twenty years when I'm nearing 70? These other SoHummers will have *their* Mexican Beach Houses and I WON'T! What would I do? Come down here and pay \$100 a night? Oh, I suppose I Could Survive without a Coastal Maintenance Nightmare to worry about. Look at all these lavish empty houses around here; is a \$50,000 beach house any less decadent than a Million Dollar one?...And then I see this little lot on the road out of San Pancho and I MUST HAVE IT! I must build a pretty little place to come to once a year to sit behind the walls drinking coffee and smoking mota and wonder *what else* do I need that I don't really need?

Ah yes this is the life: sitting out on Carol's patio in the morning sipping coffee and eating homemade applecake after spending the dawn hours playing with Maria de Los Angeles. Land fever, the San Pancho dream nightmare, died a happy healthy death yesterday; I realized it would not be worth it to buy a marginal piece of property in this tropical paradise...however if a great majical deal with an ocean view came along.....

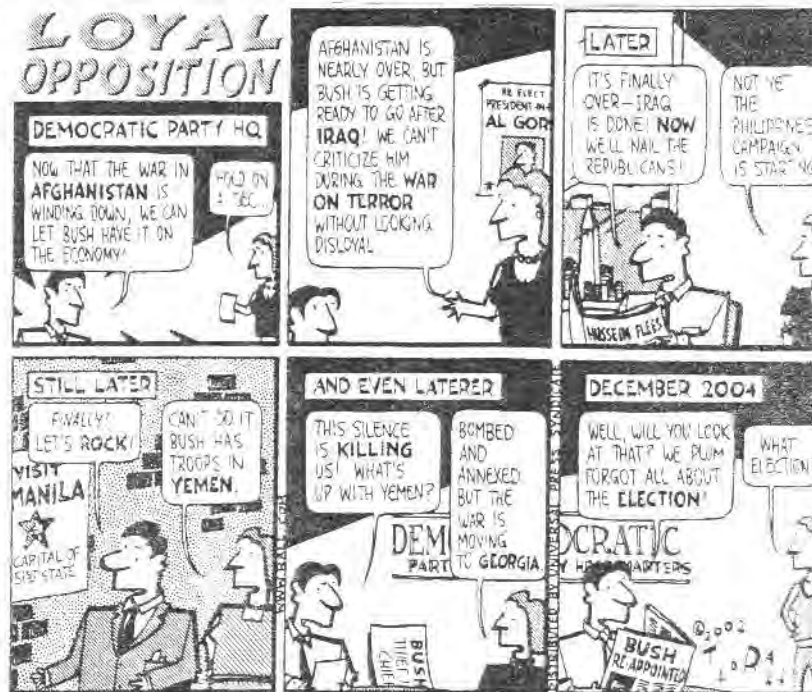
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Oh what a difference a *day* makes! I have found my Beach House! It is a two minute walk to the sea; you can hear the waves crash; and there is an ocean view. It is also on a quiet street in a quiet neighborhood away from all those pesky Mexicans with their loud music and burning plastic. Everything I could want with room to build UP!

Well really Maria de Los Angeles found it: she made don Andres an applecake, then one evening when were just getting back from La Pinita he invited her down the street to visit his sister who mentioned that *she* was selling a little place for *her* sister in Guadilajara.

That night we celebrated at dinner at the Ola Rica while I worked on a humorous Pro-Con list for the latest fantasy. My philosophy is to always celebrate prematurely because it may never happen so at least you got the party! Sure enough the next day we found out that don Andres's sister had stolen the house from him when he was making and losing his millions in the States; he said he would fight to get it back; and I didn't want to get involved in that.

So what happened? Maybe it was all just an excuse to have another beach vacation with Maria de Los Angeles.....



Real Estate Wanted: Laytonville High School teacher looking for land or house with land in the Leggett area. Contact Lucy c/o this paper.

INTERVIEW WITH DON MCGREEVY AT CLINIC IN DALLAS

GulchMulch: How would you describe this place?

Don: The Environmental Health Center is a center for people who have environmental illness, who have been mostly poisoned by various things, a lot of people have had too much formaldehyde exposure in new houses, a lot of people have been over-exposed to pesticides, there's some Gulf War Syndrome people here, and mostly a lot of mold, a lot of people that have been exposed to mold, and people who have been exposed to mold *and* other things. It's pretty common to see families who have moved into a new house, especially double-wide trailers, with building materials that are full of formaldehyde and various other chemicals.

GM: Why are you here?

Don: I'm here because I have a history of being exposed to...it started out with solvents when I was an artist, I used toluene as a medium, a solvent for acrylic crystals, I made my own paint, I used spray paint, I've been around solvents in car stuff, and then I lived in the house in Whale Gulch and there was a lot of mold in the walls where my bed was because the roof blew off. Then I moved to the Mill Vally house and the whole heating system was full of mold; I got over-exposed to mold and once that happens your immune system goes into overdrive, it starts to make you allergic to lots of things, and I also have yeast infections because of a challenged immune system, and that can give you something called "leaky gut" where the food goes directly into your blood stream and through your intestinal wall and you become allergic to lots of foods.

GM: What is the process here?

Don: When you first come here they give you a lot of different tests to see if they can determine how much damage whatever you have been exposed to has done to you; they also somewhat try to determine what you *have* been exposed to by giving you lots of blood tests to see what chemicals are in your blood, and they do a very interesting thing called "cybratherm" which is a thermographic test that measures about a hundred different points on your body, puts it in a computer, you wait ten minutes in a cold room, and then they remeasure the same points to see what the temperature differential is, and if the temperature stays the same in different areas it indicates toxicity in those areas. They also do pupilography, they test your auto-immune system, your sympathetic and para-sympathetic nervous system- so they give you lots and lots of tests.

GM: Is this place helping you and how?

Don: It's helped me a lot because when I arrived here I had brain toxicity, I had no short-term memory at all, I'd get to the top of the stairs and I couldn't remember which way to turn, I couldn't remember where the offices were, I was not in very good shape, I was pretty toxic and then I did the blood tests; I didn't have very many chemicals but I had lots of mold toxicity. The treatment is doing saunas every day to sweat out the toxins; the toxins wind up in your tissues, in your fat and in your cells also. Then you do "rotation diets" so you're not eating the foods you're allergic to and you take antigen shots for them, and then once you have not eaten them for three months you can begin to start eating the foods that you *were* allergic to and have been made *less* allergic to by taking the antigen shots, but you also take antigen shots for *everything* you were allergic to except for chemicals and that tends to desensitize your immune system over a year or so. Then there's nutritional treatment, supplements; there's a very good nutritionist and he helps you figure out what you're lacking and how to improve it.

GM: Is this place giving you any answers in helping deal with your health issues?

Don: Yeah. I would be in very bad shape if I hadn't come here. I didn't know about the mold, I didn't realize how seriously toxic I have become because of the mold. I had temporal arteritis which I would say is the acute stage of vasculitis, in other words my vascular system has

become irritated- I didn't know about *any* of this stuff, I was just doing acupuncture and I was on steroids, prednisone, which is not good to take over a period of time and my doctors were patting me on my back saying "Oh you're getting better, you're getting better, don't worry about it, you'll be off prednisone, you'll be fine" and that wasn't the case, if I hadn't come here I wouldn't have realized that I have "multi-chemical sensitivity."

GM: How did you hear about this place?

Don: Well it's actually a very famous place, a guy called Randolph in Chicago was one of the first environmental doctors, he had a clinic there, and then Dr. Ray who runs this clinic was a thoracic surgeon who became environmentally ill from being around what doctors are around, I guess, and he went to Dr. Randolph and was his assistant- he worked with Dr. Randolph for years and then he opened his own clinic down here and he's world famous, people come from all over the world to go to this clinic, it's very well-known, this is one of the few places in the world that does this kind of stuff, there's no mystery to it, it's just straight-forward immunotherapy.

GM: What's the best part of the program?

Don: Going home...Getting it over with. (laughs)...

GM: What's the worst part of the program?

Don: They can't supply safe housing for people because this is Dallas and a lot of their air-conditioning systems get full of mold; they've taken over a series of apartments and made condominiums out of them- they don't own some of them, they just lease them and they don't have access to tear them apart to clean them, but they do their best, they're trying to continually clean them, but since they originally had this place power lines have gone in right next to it so now it's right next to 250 volt powerlines and so some of the apartments have too much EMF (electro magnetic frequency) and it's bad- in the whole area it's hard to find a good place to stay, that's the difficult part. I've lived in four or five different places since I came here in October.

GM: Do you believe in the program?

Don: Oh yeah, yeah. Absolutely.

GM: How much longer do you think you're going to be here?

Don: Well, through thermography I've found that my teeth are pretty toxic, I have old fillings that probably have infection behind them so I would like to stay here long enough to get the amalgams taken out of my teeth and any other fillings replaced that I need to do and the gold taken out of my teeth also, so I could be out of here in a month if I'm lucky, and I'll leave anyway- I can't stay too much longer, the place is too stressful, it's hard being here, I'm all alone and there's hardly any support for patients, they fail the patients in terms of looking after them and it's way too expensive.

GM: If everything is toxic and we're all going to die anyway why not just try to have a nice life without being overly obsessed with the poisons in the environment. What are you doing? Are you trying to get well? Are you doing everything possible to be healthy? Is that the bottom line?

Don: Well, I had no choice because I would have gotten really sick; if I hadn't come here I would have continued to go down hill and the quality of my life wasn't very good as before I came here because I had headaches and I knew I was getting worse. In a way this has been a discovery journey for me- I now know what I have to do to stay pretty well and I can recover and be normal if I stay with the program, and so that's the "carrot", to stay with the program and get back to pretty much normal.

GM: The mind is, of course, a powerful thing. What would you say to the comment that it's all in your head or some of it's in your head?

Don: Well that's a common complaint about people who are environmentally sensitive, everybody says it's in their head but it

really isn't, its a physiological phenomenon...I've seen people react to things that I can't even smell or feel- it just takes a few molecules if you're extremely sensitive like some of the people here; a few molecules of something that they're allergic to can make them very ill. And back to your other question about,well, since there's poisons all around us why don't we just have a good time and relax and not worry about it, well that works until you get ill so one should do the best you can to avoid everything so it doesn't catch up with you eventually, and ofcourse we're all different: two people can do exactly the same thing and one person can become environmentally sensitized and the other person won't. Another interesting thing is that *women* are more vulnerable to environmental illness than men- it may be that men have more testosterone and that helps them be protected; also we all need to sweat, we need to detox everyday and if you live in a cold climate, thats why Norwegians and Swedish people do saunas all the time- its extremely important to get rid of the toxins in your body, and ofcourse I didn't realize *how* important it was but I wish I had lived in a very much warmer climate and sweated a lot because the toxins probably would not have built up so much had I done that.

GM: Do a lot of skeptical family members come through here and wonder whats going on?

Don: Nobody understand it unless you go through it. A lot of skeptical family members say "Oh its all in your head." A lot of people have gone from doctor to doctor, they've been sent to psychiatrists, they say its all in your head- its not at all and luckily the understanding of environmental illness is coming into mainstream slowly...

GM: But don't you think some of it's in your head? Or someone's head because here's all these people with all these environmental illnesses and they're all there and you guys are constantly talking talking talking about it and you're just overwhelmed by all this information, I mean pretty soon you become...

Don: Paranoid, I'm very paranoid but I allow for that because you become afraid, you become afraid of everything: "Oh, can I go *here*? Can I be in this store? Oh, is there mold in this building? Oh, what am I being exposed to..."

GM: I can't believe you even buy gas. You're sitting there breathing those fumes, you're getting some on your hands. Is there a certain point where you just have to draw the line and say, well...

Don: You have to live your life.

GM: OK, last question. Where do you think you'll be in a year from now?

Don: I don't know, I don't know, I guess we could say "Where would I *like* to be?" Some place between Mill Vally and some place HOT. South of Mill Vally in the Wintertime, and Mill Vally and Humboldt in the Summertime.

GM: Any other comments?

Don: People should be aware that this could happen to *them* and I kind of think its a dangerous attitude to say "Oh it doesn't matter, its all around us." Here's what I *really* think: Everybody has to eat organic food, just nochoice...EAT ORGANIC FOOD. Don't eat anything canned, avoid things wrapped in plastic, don't eat prepared food, don't eat anything you don't prepare yourself like toasted cereal, packaged foods, frozen food. Sauna and sweat regularly, avoid living in a polluted area, avoid living next to a freeway, avoid working in buildings and offices with new carpeting and paint- get out of there, it will *kill* you.

GM: Most people don't have the choice; they live where they live, they're barely making a living. So basically it comes down to you can buy your health.

Don: I think thats an over-simplification. Knowledge sets you free in a way. You may have this job you hate but if its killing you, slowly

or even *fast*, you're going to have huge medical expenses or *die* so you're better off dealing with it when you think there's that possibility.

GM: I think that cities are basically killing fields; you have the wires, you have the pollution, you have all the stuff, so what can you tell everyone? To move to the country? Is there no way out really for most of the people in the world?

Don: Wherever you are you've got to minimize your exposure. If you live in a city don't live next to a freeway; avoid living downwind from factories, and try not to go hiking along busy streets- these people jogging along in the traffic?! Omigod!

GM: I know: Pounding on the pavement, in the sun, breathing the exhaust, under the wires...I'm pretty paranoid.

Don: Its natural... Everyone has to become aware of the dangers and here's the *interesting* thing: I just read this wonderful paper from this nutritional organization saying theres something like 80,000 or 300,000 chemicals in the environment, and cigarets don't produce cancer, right? Thats what they always said, well the chemical companies are saying "Oh this stuff's OK, its such minute amounts- its not hurting you." But it *is* and it goes against the comercialism of the United States to have this information hit mainstream. If people knew how much they were being poisoned, how much accumulates in the body over a lifetime: a certain percentage is detoxed but a certain percentage stays, and its like Russian Roulette.



Letters

Editor,

Thanks for the Gulch Mulchburgerzette. I LOVED what you had to say about the AVA--my sentiments exactly, and on volunteerism and terrorism-- you subtly linked the two, which I appreciate.

Exposing the intimate particulars of your dad's illness and dying process, to me, was very crass and I just cringe to think of all the parents who see your article, the abject shock and terror they would experience to think of their own children doing it to them. Well, at least you may have spurred them on to die alone and without the "comfort" of their family in that time should it come.

That goes for your relationships as well. I must add that I thank you not to have mentioned me by name, wonder if all the others were real names.

You're one of a kind.

A.R, Arcata

P.S. Talking about death is something that we ought to be able to face. So is talking about shit. But for me, I don't happen to see the need to mention the inevitable, that our last act on this Earth is to shit ourselves. At least not for a deceased parent. Otherwise, especially in the "in general" sense, it seems strange, don't you think that of all the great deeds we do in life, the last thing we do is shit uncontrollably? In that sense how in control are we?

Two things I try to edit for when writing are whether my words say exactly the schizophrenic, fantastically uplifting essence of a feeling...and the futile stabs at determining whether it makes me sound like a total asshole.

Editor,

I know you are aware that I have enjoyed Gulch Mulch for years, but your "KMUD CONTROVERSY" is the most relevant thing about community politics that I have read in years. Thanks

S.B. Garberville

Editor,

Concerning the Judi Bari bombing, I never read a mystery novel where the husband's not the first suspect in a wife's murder. I've about had it with Bruce (Anderson and the AVA) and that subject, but I like him bashing the do-gooders who support the clique trying for our taxes like they're some shit-eating corporation or something. I HAVE had it with Bruce and his misguided, knee-jerk, ex-marine support for the totally illegal, immoral doings in Afghanistan, but I ain't writing that to him so he can crush my little ass like a cockroach. No balls. So? Maybe he'd like to go on down to Guantanamo and pull some fingernails. Sorry about your dad. I think you were very good there at the end. Made me feel guilty for not being more supportive of my mother in her last days in the Garb. hosp, from which Dr. H sent me to the pharmacy to buy morphine, though from the looks of her, I wondered if she was getting any or all of it. Maybe the continued bombing is really designed to lay down a route for the pipeline. Keep them flags flying.

e.c.nicaragua

Editor,

I cannot tell you how meaningful it was to me that you sent me a copy of the GulchMulch--what a delightful surprise, and how inspired I am by the quality of your publication. You are a wonder and the paper is such a seasoned mixture of "wit and wisdom". You are another Mark Twain-- so attentive to details! Honestly, Garberville could lead-and heal- our nation and our earth with someone like you there, and in such a community. Sally is truly blessed to have a son like you, a man of such vision, and yet who is also so down-to-earth.

Thankfully, with deep respect and fondness, P L, Chicago

A Christmas Tree For Charlemagne

I had been bow-sawing a Douglas Fir that grew about 5 feet away from the southeast corner of my cabin because it happened to be leaning towards my modest but greatly appreciated home. Since I'd been working on it for 6 weeks I decided I'd better finish it off before a big wind pushed it onto my roof.

This tree was about 25 feet tall and 7 or 8 inches in diameter. I tried to cut it in such a way that it would land anywhere but on the house. I had already bow-sawed quite a few oaks that were a little thinner and shorter. Because they were smaller I could guide them as they fell. For some reason I tied a rope to this tree thinking that it might help.

As I bow-sawed it started cracking and I noticed it was falling on my roof. Though it was only a little larger than the others this tree was too heavy for me to guide. As it fell I heard myself yell "I need a man!" When I tied the dangling rope to a nearby tree so no one would steal it I proudly proclaimed "I AM a man!" Then I did what a man would do...I took pictures!

After that I grabbed a baggie of paper towels that I had wiped up some spilled water from the Miraculous Grotto at Lourdes. I tied it to the rope and looking Heavenward I announced "I know you'll help!"

Meanwhile I went inside hoping maybe someone would come by. Since I'm a weird eccentric loner no one ever does. So 2 hours later I felt my sub-conscious jump in fear, and at that exact same moment the tree rolled off the roof!

I immediately went out and looked under it for my cat. The reason I did this was because one morning as I let him in I got a psychic smelling of a bloody cat body. (It turned out there was a "cat-eating" Bobcat and a neighbor saw one walk up my driveway around the same time.) Meanwhile I kept growling fiercely into the forest like a big Momma Mountain Lion. I thought I was doing great until three months later when I heard a wounded insane Wailacki Banshee ghost. Then I thought it was a serial killer- insane and out to get me. My cat joined in with an ancient feline empathy wail. "Ofcourse...mating season," I thought.

When they quieted down there was a teen-aged Cougar with its face in the open part of the window as it lounged on my porch couch--right where I got the psychic smelling! (I noticed this when I finally got the guts to go downstairs. It was dazed so I shone the light on its body. No Bobcat spots on this specimen-- more like German Shepherd fur and way too big to be called a kitty kat. Then it sprinted off.)

I decided that the top 10 feet of Mr. Tree would be my Christmas tree. So like any good conquerer I bow-sawed that mother and dragged that booty into my house with vicious glee. (This was way before Christmas...) As I did this I remembered that someone in our family once said that we might be direct descendents of Charlemagne, the famous King who conquered a lot of Europe.

Marianne Faithful (Mick Jagger's famous songstress Ex) knows for sure that she indeed is a descendent. And guess what?! Sometimes I even kinda look like her! (You oughta hear me sing "This Little Bird!") I even compared a picture of my granddad from the 1890's and Voila! He and the King's portrait show they have the exact same mouth!

Maybe I'll get some Doggie Valiums and put a leash and collar on that Cougar, get a ride with a fun-loving adventurous neighbor and take that Cougar (who maybe feels abandoned) to the proper agency! Sure...

I told a friend from Europe about my possible lineage...He laughed and said that everyone in Europe claims to be a descendent of that famous fellow. I rest my case!

By Candace C. Joolley

The universe is a giant flywheel spinning dizzily through space. Man is an ant that has hitched a ride on the flywheel. Religion is the notion that the flywheel was constructed for the sole purpose of giving the ant a ride.

— H.L. Mencken

CAMILLA

She was a very New Yorky girl of fifteen and I was a nine-teen year old cab driver when we met at The Center for the Living Force in upstate New York. I was in love, obsessed; once writing her poems under the midnight light of the Post Office on East 13th Street I met an alkie-bum named Jim-Jim, also a poet. Thus began sessions at his apartment where his welfare wife Maria lay back in the bathtub while cockroaches skittered across her brown body. His buddy Billy-Dave was the consummate panhandler, one time I went out with him asking for ten cents for my therapy.

Once I picked up Camilla from her private school and took her in my taxi to Harlem where we climbed the tower at Mount Morris Park, a smoking spot I had discovered when working at Samuel's Temple School, a 24-hour day-care center on 125th Street. We liked to dance wildly together to the Sunrise Song, the one just before Stairway to Heaven- later she did sleep with Robert Plant of Led Zeppelin. Yes, Camilla truly was a star-fucker.

After a few months in the Gulch in '73 I went back to Indiana looking for a woman to live in a plastic house with me in California. Back then you could cut down a few alder poles, buy a roll of plastic, get on food stamps, and survive in the second growth woods of the coastal hills. I got hung up in Indiana where I got an apartment and started driving taxi.

The day after my friend Larry got out of prison for draft resistance we hitched up to Ann Arbor where we each scored a pound and hitchhiked back. He went off to Boston to track down his love while I stayed in Fort Wayne. My good friend Connie convinced me to go with her and friends to the largest rock festival ever: 600,000 people at Watkins Glen Raceway to see The Grateful Dead, The Allman Brothers, and The Band. The morning after a bad acid trip there I met Trudy Seidman, a nice little Jewish girl from 59th Street in Brooklyn. We walked the streets of New York City looking to buy contraceptive foam which I injected between her legs after feasting on her fresh teen-aged breasts with my hands and mouth. She set me up in her Aunt's apartment, who was vacationing in Israel.

I bopped over to Boston to visit Larry, see how he was doing with his pound. I had been selling mine at the rock festival but it was a hassle and when I split from Connie the next day I forgot all the money (\$225) in her van! Meanwhile Larry had gotten his ripped off from the apartment where he was staying at 96 Gainsborough. I met Pam in a park at Cambridge and lured her back to Gainsborough to make a soy bean pie. Then she took me to The Center where I became infatuated with Camilla.

The Center for the Living Force was all about "working on yourself": bioenergetics, crying, screaming, higher self, lower self, hugging, and "working through" your problems. The three main facets were: #Eva Pierrokos going into a trance every other Tuesday in a large loft in Manhattan as "The Guide" spoke through her, hence the Guide Lectures; #group- you can imagine; #and individual "helper" sessions. Up at the Center there was also nude volleyball, actually nude everything.

I hadn't seen Camilla in twenty-five years when she opened the door of her Harlem apartment; her girlfriend Yvonne was this big dyke, very cool except she chain-smoked. Do you have to be from California to realize how inconsiderate and selfish it is to smoke cigarets constantly around your mate, kids, and guests?

At first we hung around talking about old Path days and Path people. Yvonne was very down on The Path, ridiculing it at every opportunity. Camilla had drifted away from it over the years though her mother still took part in the remnants of what was left. Her sister Marina had been seriously estranged from the family for years because of her negative reaction to being raised on The Path. For example, one of Marina's objections was how Thanksgiving was never just a family dinner but always a Path Event.

We all went out for a walk around the neighborhood just across the Harlem River from Yankee Stadium. Camilla lived next door to a building (414 Edgecombe) that had housed many famous and prominent African Americans. Indeed, as we walked by I recognized William Rhoden, the New York Times columnist and occasional guest on ESPN's Sports Reporter show, getting out of a car. I was THRILLED!

In the park the boys played, Yvonne did her photography, and Camilla and I ended up singing every song from "HAIR" together. The boys and Yvonne looked at us like what kooks but we just went on singing, segueing into "West Side Story."

"I love Broadway showtunes and I'm not even GAY!" I told Yvonne.

"Are you SURE?" she asked.

We went back to the apartment then Yvonne and I took off downtown to buy pastries and Starbucks lattes. That was dinner- they KNOW how to live! We played Scrabble till three in the morning. Camilla was GOOD: very slow, intense and she actually beat me once with the seven letter word "paranoid." In another game she turned enchant into penchant, very brainy and impressive. I told them I wanted to be called Tex but Yvonne, lover of Lyle Lovett songs really wants to be a cowboy so we started calling HER Tex. After a while it was like a scene out of a Sam Shepard play: Yvonne in her cowboy hat and she and I sitting there reading our books while we waited for Camilla to studiously make her move.

In the morning I left without saying goodbye- couldn't handle that smoke!



mariguita

REGGAE 2001

The History of My Backstage Press Pass

I had gone to almost every **Reggae On The River** but had never been backstage, didn't even know it existed. I just partied with the masses high on **beer, pot, and mushrooms**. Then at one festival I told an insider that I'd like to give a little something for the bands, ya know?. Jerry put a special wrist band on me, introduced me to Alan (now living in Honduras), and the gift was delivered. When I started doing this rag I got a press pass. Oh God in those early days I got two of everything: Free tickets, backstage passes, photo passes, the works. Well no, I never got a *laminant* but I still have my Soul! (I think). It was nice being a hippie good ol' boy, finally an Insider dammit, one of the Chosen! Maybe I was just fortunate that I knew Gulch insiders like Charity who always came through even though we had a little "friendly" antagonism going: My actual "journalistic" production was intermittent (Oh you mean now I have to actually write a story? Well some years I did!) Ofcourse I liked to tease the hand that fed me, one year calling her **The Benbow to Baja Beach Bunny Bimbo** in my latest rag.

Times changed, Doug and Charity were OUT; Carol, PB and Peoples Production was IN, but I was still swept along for a few years in the backstage scene which, frankly, was losing its allure because they were letting all these hangers on like ME in; it became crowded back there.

Charity was out, Scott was in, and I still hadn't heard a word about my press credential. It was time to make a pilgrimage up the hill to the Peoples Productions nerve center on that little back street in Redway. Talk to Scott the front office girls said. Talk to Scott was all I heard. Carol? No, talk to Scott. PB?-SCOTT!

Scott was talking on the phone when I walked in and took a seat on the ratty couch. And he talked...and talked. All that reggae lingo, you know?: "Yah mon, respect, respect." Actually I had no intention of going to Reggae that year as I was leaving immediately for Indiana to help my father through another operation or medical panic attack. But I still wanted to see how much minor clout I had left, see if my Old Timer Former Ex-Hippie Retread credentials were still intact, see if I could get the press pass to use as some kind of hopeless romantic barter item.

Finally Scott got off the phone, Yah Mon! As he acknowledged me on the couch the first words out of my mouth were: "**Are you WORKING or SCHMOOZING?**" Scott wanted evidence, proof that I'd ever written *anything* about Reggae before. This was unbelievable! Carol had chuckled over my last Reggae story, Ascha had said it was the best 'Mulch ever, and even PB had made some pointed reference to it. But Scott, man, was playing it by the book; I guess I had neglected to give him a copy of the last issue in a timely manner, probably because I only hand it out to people I know. (Though sometimes I give it to an attractive woman in hopes that it will help me get laid, but I'm starting to think that it may have the opposite effect, in fact if I never published another word again I'd probably have a better chance! Case in point: A few years ago I met a new woman in town at the Farmers Market. I scurried off excitedly to my car to bring her my latest issue, the one where I had printed **16 personal adds for myself**. She later told me that she read it and thought "Who IS this freak?"- though a year later we did get together.)

I left town and Reggae survived without me. The next year I didn't bother to apply for a press pass; out in the woods 20 miles from town on Reggae weekend I felt a little loss like I was missing something. The next year I didn't go and didn't care- I was over it. Hell, often I'd gone to Reggae with my press pass just for an hour or so, just not wanting to miss the experience. When 2001 rolled around I hadn't done the 'Mulch in a couple of years making me realize how much of an incentive that press pass was. Around March I saw Carol at the

Mateel and asked her if I could have a press pass for the upcoming Reggae.

"And your magazine is...?" she asked.

"Well, its this little insignificant, eminently forgettable, barely existent zine called **The Gulch Mulch**. Remember?"

"Oh, OK. I'll talk to Scotty," she said.

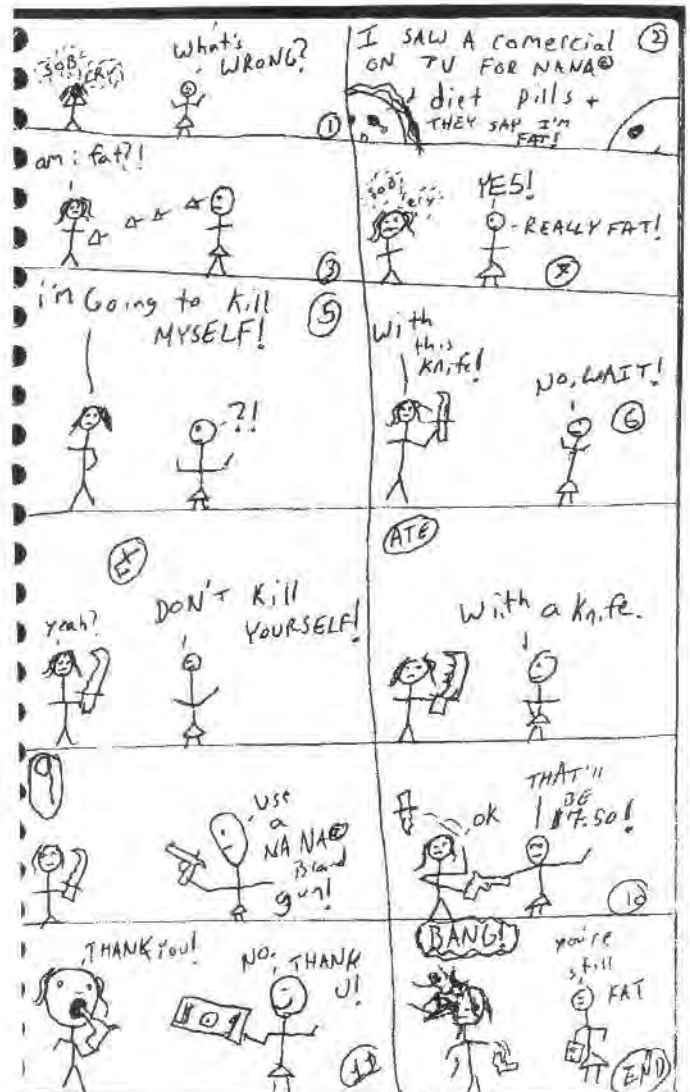
A couple of weeks later she came up to me at the Iguana and said "Yes, we'll give you a press pass this year." Hot damn! I was back *in*.

July rolled around so I figured I better make another trip over to the Reggae brain trust to make sure I was on The List. I wasn't. I talked to Carol who sent me to Scot who went back to confer with Carol and I was IN! Scot gave me my blue wrist band then and there and I gave them a Woodrose gift certificate.

Reggae was fun. I did it all: smoked, drank, ate and danced. Back stage was pretty irrelevant- maybe I'm over it. Shari came up to me, took my arm and checked out my wristband.

"What are you? The backstage police?" I said suspiciously. Turns out she just wanted to give me another wristband to get into the press tent.

Friday night was the best- I was a dancing fool. Then Sunday night I wondered if I could **get into the photo pit**. I found Shari promptly; she was just leading a group there. That was my climax for the weekend: right in front of the band, taking a few lousy amateur photos, vibrating with the other insiders while the hoards rollicked behind the fence line. After about 20 minutes there I left the photo pit, left backstage, left Reggae, and boarded the shuttle bus for the midnight trip back to my car in Garberville.



CONFESSIONS OF A GYM RAT

I never thought I'd become one of those boring people sweating on an exercise machine in front of a row of TVs. The whole fat-burning thing started when walking the streets of Fort Wayne in the Summer of '98 where I tried to avoid the many pitfalls and poisons on the Indiana Death Trip.

I avoided walking on pavement because that was bad on the joints; I walked on the edges of lawns and grass median strips between sidewalk and street. I also had to dodge those little flags so courteously stuck into the grass after chemical treatment by The Green Lawn Company. I walked on the opposite side of the street where the electrical wires hung emitting their possibly harmful EMF's. I walked mainly at night to avoid the sun and whenever a car drove by I took it as a personal insult that I had to inhale their exhaust. No matter how you looked at it the city was killing me. (It always galled me to see someone jogging along a busy street in the middle of the day: what price beauty?)

I went on East to Vermont to visit Grandma and hike the Appalachian Trail to a daily morning dip in Big Pond. (I often ran into bedraggled hikers who had been on the trail for months with their big backpacks and ragged shoes falling apart.) It had become increasingly difficult to communicate with Grandma over the last few years. I either sat there semi-mutely or overwhelmed her with rambling recollections of life driving taxi in New York when I used to regularly hitch-hike up to her home in Newburgh sixty miles North for some R&R from the big city.

On this Last Visit she was dying, could barely talk, and not to me. I told her the story, again, about how I had once impulsively sent her a joint from Mexico, and a year later found one in her Newburgh parking lot and thought, "Hmm?" She looked at me with a shocked stroke-ridden look on her face. Her eyes locked into mine but she couldn't, wouldn't respond. I imagined that she heard and understood me. I kissed her goodnight.

The next morning when I returned from hike and skinny-dip in Big Pond I found a note from my mother that said Grandma had died that morning. I went to my Aunt's house up the hill where my mother, who had moved from Berkeley a few years earlier to take care of Grandma, was curiously touching the body and commenting on the physical anomalies.

"You can touch her," she said, and I did, once on the face.

Back in Northern California I started hiking the Thompson Creek backtrail; after a day or so it got boring so I started jogging, then running it. It was the perfect layout, a four mile round trip from the Community Center to the Monastery: flat, no dust, shady, and ofcourse no cars or electric wires.

That winter I headed back to Indiana to help out my father who was recovering from lung cancer surgery and suffering from congestive heart failure. I lived my life, did errands for him, drove him to doctor appointments, made dinners, and joined the YWCA. I continued

running but took the show indoors where I pounded around the track. The conditions were pretty good except the track surface was not as forgiving as the dirt trail. There was the welcome distraction of the other runners as well as the basketball courts and exercise machines which we could glance at below us. I bought my first Sony WalkMan and listened to classic rock, Dr Laura, and sports talk as I counted off the laps.

I noticed that most of the woman runners wore these loooooong shirts that completely covered their asses; that was too bad. Then one morning this sweet little gal began running with her cute ass out there for all to adore, well at least me. She grew hot and sweatier and tossed off her overshirt so that she was running in a tight little two-piece ensemble. She ran faster than I so I would just get to follow her for a few seconds as she blazed by. Though her face was a little ragged it was Oh My My, quite a nice distraction for those four mile runs around the tenth of a mile track. I passed her shirt a couple times and formulated my plan. When she was half a lap ahead and no other runner was nearby I picked up her shirt, pushed it against my face, and breathed deeply. I tossed it back down and continued my run.

Pounding around the track was hurting my legs; I decided to check out the exercise machines. The first time I got on the Pre-Cor (an elliptical device that is like skiing or running with minimal impact) I just couldn't relate, couldn't get into the rhythm. I tried the spinners group where we all got on these bikes and peddled rapidly for twenty minutes while the leader screamed at us like a drill sergeant with the music Blaring! I hated it- it was too loud and intense though the women spinning along there were intriguing.

I tried the Stair Master but that was the Most Boring though really the best damn sweaty workout. By that time I had a cassette WalkMan and listened to the physically inspiring tunes of Green Day, Red Hot Chile Peppers, and Jethro Tull. I tried the Pre Cor again one day and got Hooked- it was a great sweat bath!

Yup there I was five days a week at the YWCA, kind of a Gym Rat working out on the elliptical trainer, listening to music, and watching the TVs: ESPN, VH1, Home and Garden, Golf Tournaments, and CNN. I wasn't a real Super Gym Rat like the muscle boys at the Garberville Health Club; I was just doing the fat-burner machines and not the weights.

Stone sober without the munchies to impair me I was losing weight. I weighed myself butt naked after each workout, shower and blow dry in the locker room. I figured it was a mixed bag of health efforts because I assumed the chlorinated water I showered in was killing me a little daily, and aren't those blow dryers hazardous too?

At any rate on my last day at the YWCA, and in Ft. Wayne that winter, I reached my goal of losing 40 lbs of fat in nine months. To celebrate, to dot the "i", to put down the exclamation point, I went upstairs to the track and ran a Victory Lap against traffic.



PERSONALS GUIDE

Ever wondered what some of the words in a personal want ad really mean? Maybe this will help. (From WWW)

WOMEN'S ADS:

- 40-ish.....49
- Adventurer.....Slept with all your friends
- Beautiful.....Pathological liar
- Contagious smile.....Does a lot of Ecstasy
- Educated.....Banged her Political Science Professor
- Free spirit.....Junkie
- Friendship first.....Trying to live down reputation as a slut
- Gentle.....Comatose
- Good listener.....Borderline Autistic
- Old-fashioned....Lights out, missionary position only, no BJ's
- Open-minded.....Desperate
- Outgoing.....Loud and embarrassing
- Passionate.....Sloppy drunk
- Poet.....Depressive Schizophrenic
- Professional.....Certified Bitch
- Reubenesque.....Grossly fat
- Romantic.....Looks better by candle light
- Social.....Has been passed around like an hors d'oeuvres
- Wants soul mate.....Stalker
- Young at heart.....Old bat

MEN'S ADS:

- 40-ish.....52 and looking for a 25 year old
- Athletic.....Watches a lot of NASCAR
- Average looking.....Unusual hair growth, ears, nose and back
- Educated.....Will patronize the crap out of you
- Free spirit.....Banging your sister
- Friendship first.....As long as friendship involves nookie
- Fun.....Good with a remote and a six pack
- Good looking.....Arrogant
- Very good looking.....Dumb as a board
- Honest.....Pathological liar
- Huggable.....Overweight, more body hair than a bear
- Likes to cuddle.....Insecure mama's boy
- Mature.....Older than your father
- Open-minded.....Wants to sleep with your roommate
- Fit.....Does a lot of 12-ounce curls
- Poet.....Wrote ex-girlfriend's # on a bathroom stall
- Sensitive.....Cries at chick flicks
- Very sensitive.....Gay
- Spiritual.....Got laid in a cemetery once
- Stable.....Arrested for stalking, but not convicted
- Thoughtful.....Says "Excuse me" when he farts

Gulch Mulch Flashback: From the first issue March, 1987

WHITETHORN JUNK

Drug abuse in Whitethorn became an issue last week with the death of "Little Stevie" Doyle, from an apparent overdose of horse, shit, smack, junk ... **HEROIN**. Stevie's was the third **D.D.** by a local man within the last year. A few nights after his death someone painted the forms of the fallen bodies on the sidewalk with red paint. Within the bodies were written the names of the victims; one more was half-painted with a question mark instead of a name. That graffiti set the stage for the meeting that took place last Monday at the Whitethorn School.

More than 75 residents of the greater Whitethorn area gathered to try to find a solution to the using and selling of hard drugs in Whitethorn. An alarming scenario was painted by a local resident. It turns out that junkies from all over Southern Humboldt regularly come to Whitethorn to score their shit. They then drive a little ways outside Whitethorn to shoot up the drugs, often near what used to be a popular swimming hole on the Mattole. As totally disgusting proof of this, one person brought in a bag of **old needles and empty heroin bags** found by the river and poured them out onto a newspaper on a table. (Hepatitis, AIDS, anyone?) There was a horrified gasp as this display was shown.

The rest of the meeting was spent trying to figure out how to get the dealers of death out of town. Local law enforcement had heroin contained in Whitethorn; a hands-off attitude that had to change if these concerned citizens were unable to rid the town of this scourge by petitioning the pushers themselves. It was also pointed out that the *drug addicts* needed help. Next meeting Monday, March 9 at 7:00 p.m. at the Whitethorn School.

