

Official Magazine of the RTRAMSOM

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**Volume
456-BR8
Issue 08
Haduary 2007**

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A young woman with dark hair in a ponytail, wearing a black tank top and blue jeans with a brown belt, is walking on a city sidewalk. She is smiling and looking back over her shoulder. She is carrying several shopping bags: a large orange one, a white one, a dark blue one, a yellow one, and a white one with blue stripes. In the background, other people are walking, and the architecture of the city is visible.

Oh yeah. It's a
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Kind of day.

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**Volume 456-BR8 Issue 08,
Haduary 2007**

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Axes & Alleys

Written by Accident!



Here at Axes & Alleys, we understand that there were nine great inventions that truly changed the world; gunpowder, movable type printing, the stirrup, writing, the steam engine, agriculture, digital encoding, the compass, and smelting. And, of course, all of these inventions were created for one reason: to impress girls.

Of course, there's one girl that definitely deserves to be impressed and that girl is none other than Ms. Anne Craig. Each morning, she spreads cheer through her job and we, the Axes & Alleys editorial staff, think that people should try to invent new things to impress Anne Craig.

Think of what humanity could create; flying cars, jet packs, laser blasters, spaceships, a cure for cancer, robots and what not. There would be so many benefits to humanity if our current would-be Thomas Edisons would get off their collective asses and start trying to impress Anne Craig. C'mon, inventors, let's get cracking.

xxx 000

Delores R. Grunion
Editor-in-Chief

**The
Haduary
Cover Girl:
Kate Winslet**



**Like all
good
Americans,
the lovely
Kate Winslet
is a British
Actress.**

WRITTEN CORRESPONDENCES FROM GOOD NATURED GENTLEMEN WHO HAVE READ OUR PREVIOUS INSTALLMENTS AND WISH TO COMMENT ON SOME ASPECTS THEREOF

Hey Mouthbreathers,

Why you gotta make fun of people all the time? You used to be so awesome with all the naked chicks and articles about what the government is hiding from us. You sold out dudes. You just took all that money you got and ran. It's magazines like you that ruin it for everyone else when you could do great stuff. I hope you all catch on fire and that thing that happens when people catch on fire happens to you.

Simon Enderby

Pylon, PL

Esteemed Editors,

I tried to teach myself long division, but it makes no sense. Okay, first you already have to know how to do division, before you even start. Not only that, but you have to do subtraction at the same time to find out how many units are left over. Then you ignore those units. Next you have to do more subtraction and, mysteriously, move one number down from the number from which you're trying to divide. This is repeated until one receives an incorrect answer, at which point one scribbles out the math and figures it out in one's head. Long division is completely stupid.

Henry Wolkowicz

Waterloo, Ontario

Dear *Axes & Alleys*,

For several years now I have visited many different libraries throughout the world, each of which features books. Some of these books are on the subject of geography while others explain about kites and kite history. When building a kite, it is important to remember about wind currents and strings, in that a kite functions as the opposite of a marionette puppet. One floats on strings and other hangs on string. That reminds me of the delicious snack of string cheese. Since when did cheese become bad for you? It makes me wonder, because all this nonsense about cholesterol makes me shiver on cold nights. Those nights make me wonder about the phrase "why be a human being when you could be a human doing." And what I intend to do is read a book about string.

William "Billy" Corgan

Chicago, IL

Dear Ms. D.R. Grunion,

It has come to my attention that Charles III was never recognized as a legitimate king of England, which I think is unfortunate, because I have a number of official Charles III collectors' coins that I got from a pizza restaurant. It seems that now these are worthless. Oh well, I suppose I'll just put them in the drawer with the rest of my pretender coins.

Michelle Turring

Woodside, NY

To the Editors,

Why does *Axes & Alleys*, the world's premier tractor repair and maintenance magazine, not publish an article with accurate information and beautiful pictures of glowfish? Glowfish are an amazing denizen of the aquatic depths. And they glow in the dark! That's absolutely amazing and I think that a lot of people would be interested in knowing more about glowfish. Why not give the people what they want? The people want to know about glowfish and see glowfish pictures. Sure, glowfish are just something I made up, but still, how is anyone going to learn about my imaginary glowing ichthyoids without you writing about them. Glowfish are cool. They glow and they're fish! Glowfish.

Euripides Smith, Jr.

Moscow, Russia.

Dear *Axes & Alleys*,

Your article on history was really offensive. The name of G-d was spelled out several times.

Lister Bertenberg

Tel Aviv, Israel

Dear *Axes & Alleys*,

It's so cool. I'm up all high and can even see my house from here. Amazing.

Erin Pigiron

Toronto, Canada

Dear *Axes & Alleys*,

I recently ordered two double packs of your super-cheesy pinto bean salad concentrate. I am incredibly unhappy with your first foray into the consumer goods sector of the economy.

Betsy Constable

Hanna, PL

To the editors,

I was incredibly upset that I received your Arab-language version in the mails the other day. I am also quite dubious as to your claims to publish a Linear A version of the magazine.

C.R. Floyd

Cambridge, UK

Dear *Axes & Alleys*,

Could you please tell me who the young woman in your fire escape sticker is (Volume 456-BR8, Issue 07)? I think she's totally tubular and I also enjoy fire escapes. Unless she's clip art. In which case it would be really pointless to get her name since it's probably just some file name like DSC389543.jpg. Unless you use .png, of course. Please tell me you don't use .gif, though.

Albermarle Johnson

Pembroke, ID

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Sticker Page!

Enjoy adhesive paper.



NEWS OF THE WORLD

The American The 7



With the 2008 Presidential Election only fifteen months away, the American-Freedom Party frontrunners have converged on the new state of Willinois in anticipation of Mega-Marsday when eleven states (roughly 11/60ths of the total number of states) hold their official primary. While recent Gallup polls have given Free-American party incumbent Dick Armstrong an 87% approval rating, the American Freedom party candidates seem ready for the challenge.

Alaska's junior senator Robert Shoemaker shot out to an early lead when he openly criticized President Dick Armstrong's handling of the Noodle Incident. But, Shoemaker lost in the polls to Ponderada Governor Mary Tarzan after being killed by the rabid wolverines he routinely carries in a specially contracted backpack.

In Calvert, Accadia last week Governor Tarzan appeared for a meet-and-greet with important members of the beef jerky industry. While stacking flatware in an artful way, Governor Tarzan expounded, via haiku poetry, on the need for real solutions to the growing Oboe Crisis. After taking several photographs of figs, she answered questions from a seamstress and a clerk named Stephen, before repairing a unicycle and dancing the flamenco with several members of the Valve Lobby.

Tarzan gained the American-Party lead by announcing, earlier this week, her four point strategy for her proposed Embettering America Plan. The plan includes increased soup exports to Slovenia, demanding that Europe abandon A4 for letter sized paper, a 15% increase in north-bound Amtrak service and a mandatory national curfew of 9pm, so that people don't wake up all grumpy. Other candidates, such as

Ohio congressman Mitch Damage were quick to attack Tarzan's soup export strategy. In a series of attacks, the Committee to Elect Damage (CED) endlessly repeated their extra catchy slogan "Slovenia has enough soup for now and we do not need to send more at this time." Later ads set the slogan to a ragtime tune for added political power.

While Tarzan has refrained from name-calling, Katharinetowne mayor G. Thomas Borden has publicly referred to Damage as a milquesop, an act which earned both Borden and Damage a half-point poll increase. At a recent meet and greet in Tarpaulin, CA, Damage and his entourage took time off from a tour of bowling pin factories to stop off for an asparagus brunch at the local Milquesop Café where he posed for a silhouette and demonstrated his finance skills by balancing hardboiled eggs. Not one to be undone by amateur theatrics, Tarzan appeared at the nearby Dutch Omelet House where she demonstrated her knowledge of foreign affairs by wolfing down seven plates of Belgian waffles and nine cups of Irish coffee. Staggering about the café afterwards, Governor Tarzan called her opponents "a bunch of reactionary f***tards with the combined intellectual capacity of a wet hammer."

Dark horse candidate Lurien Prut disproved this later in the day by organizing a game-show style contest where he, Damage and Borden went head to head against a wet hammer in a test of geography knowledge. While only Borden was able to name the capital of California, the wet hammer failed to score a single point, despite its being redunked in a bucket several times throughout the showdown. Afterward, Borden distributed free "Ponderada Sucks" promotional kites, a move which

Primaries

People Choose!

earned him several points in Ponderada, the Humble State.

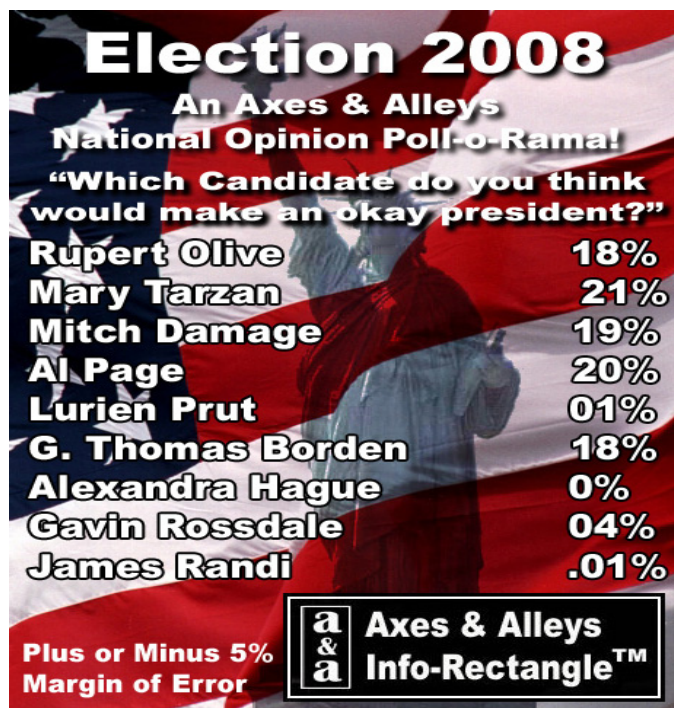
Former Vice President Al Page, bedecked in a sequin jumpsuit and special Vice Presidential helmet, visited a convention of yolk-separators early Tuesday morning and followed with an afternoon of miniature golf. After going twelve above par on the difficult Eiffel Tower hole, Page held an impromptu press conference. When asked what he thought of Armstrong's presidency, Page paused to collect his thoughts and cram several dozen coffee beans into his mouth before launching into a four hour diatribe during which time he explained, in great detail, the inadequacy of the White House soaps and lotions. He explained that, when visiting, he was forced to bring his own soap and proceeded to pass it around for sampling and sniffing before breaking into an impromptu jig. Afterward, Page flapped his arms several times, wrapped himself in a blanket and ran away.

Of course, recent polls have Vice President Page trailing Field Marshal Rupert Olive by as many as two points. The war hero who led the Good Guy armies to victory in the War has yet to officially announce his candidacy, but when asked if he will run has repeatedly responded by winking coyly, smiling, and patting the papers in his breast pocket. Many pundits believe that Olive could lead the American-Freedom Party to the White House, despite Olive's close connections with the Armstrong administration and rumors of his addiction to spoon collecting.

On Wednesday afternoon, the five American-Freedom party candidates Page, Prut, Tarzan, Damage and Borden met at the Calcium Flats Convention Center

on the outskirts of Pinkerton, PA for the first in a series of eight debates. While not officially invited to the debate, Platha State Union candidate Alexandra Hague turned up anyway, but was not allowed to enter after she refused to check her firearms at the door.

Thus far, President Armstrong has been biding his time before beginning his reelection campaign, instead focusing on the escalating situation in Alberta. But for the American-Freedom hopefuls, it's ready, set, go for the start of what appears to be an exciting race.



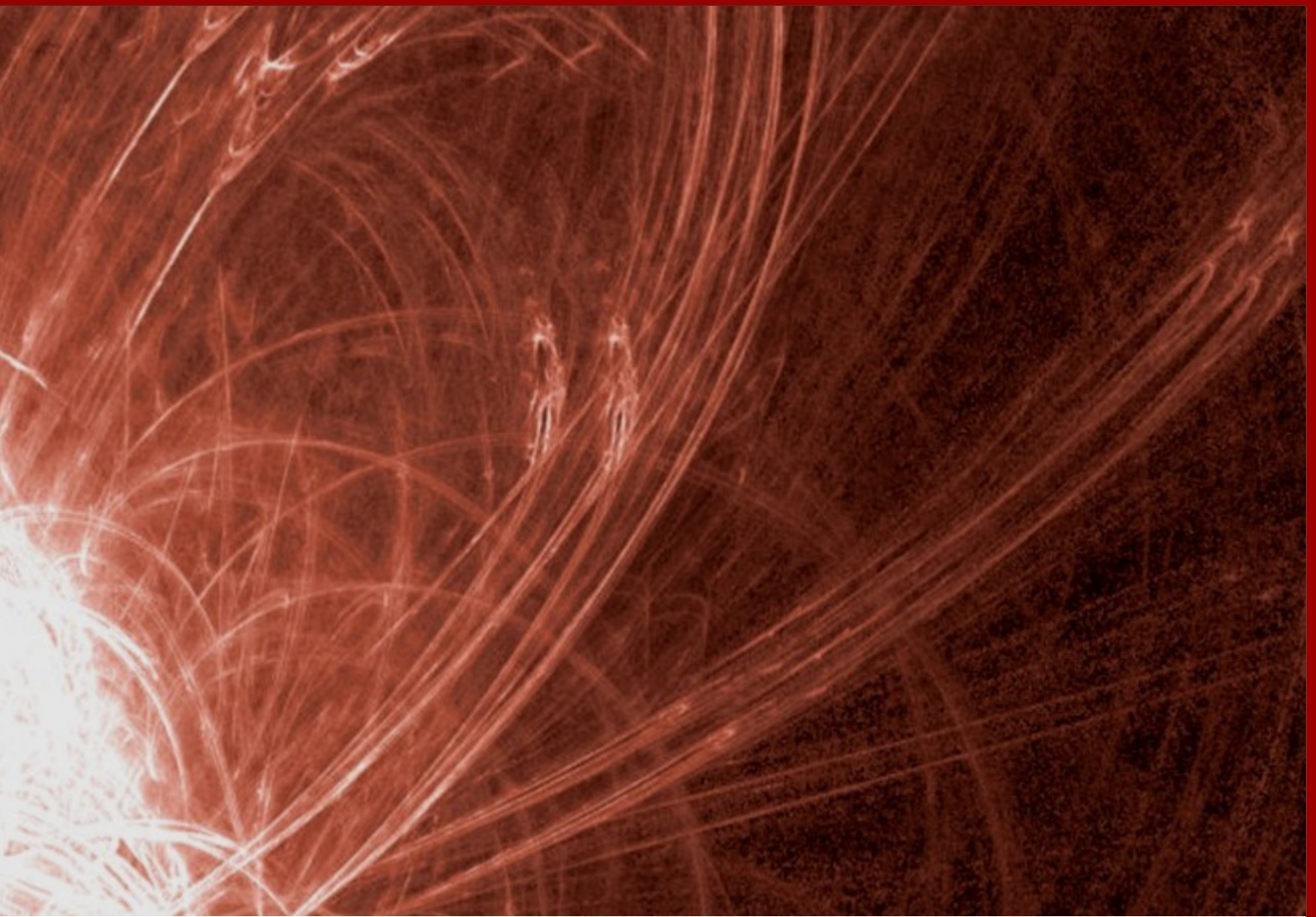
THE MARCH OF PROGRESS

Forget about the M Here's the Megastring Theory!

Newton got you down? Did Einstein get into your brain like sand in your swim trunks? Are you tired of the same old, day-to-day physics of string theory, M-theory, and the intensely adjectival super-string theory? Throw those theories in the dustbin and look no further! Megastring theory is here to take your physics to the next level.

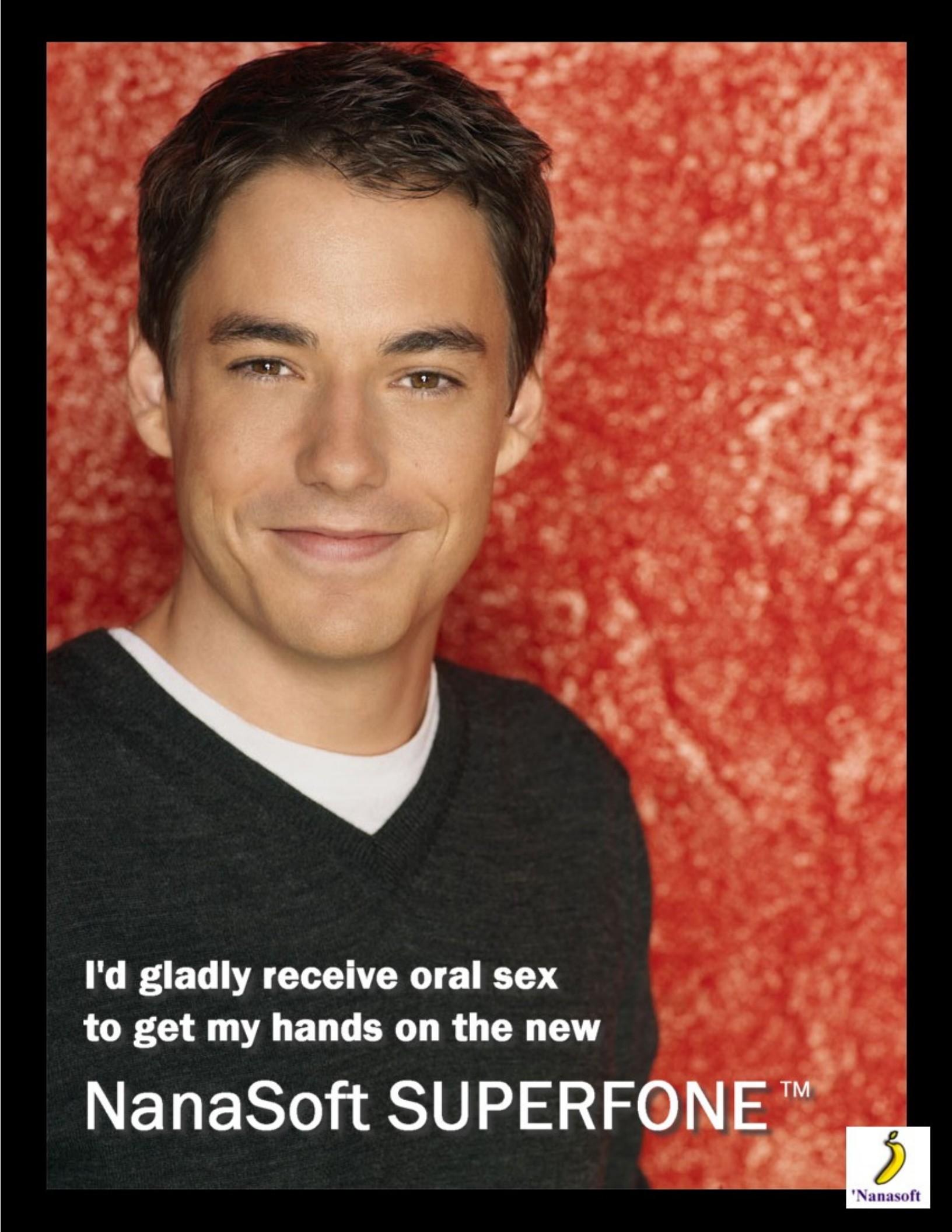
Megastring theory is not for the faint-of-heart. It's not for the weak-willed or the past-their-prime. Megastring theory is not on the path to the theory of everything. Oh no. Megastring theory *is* the theory of everything, the Holy Grail of Physics. Let me tell you how you can tap into the awesome power of Megastring theory. There are no complicated equations here, just eleven easy steps to Universal understanding. Are you ready to dive into the rest of your life? Let me tell you how.

1. Space is not just multi-dimensional, pan-dimensional or other word then dash dimensionals. In fact, it consists of exactly 1,409 spatial dimensions, 13 temporal dimensions, and four dimensions of a consistency with over-cooked spaghetti. These dimensions are not folded up. In fact, they can be found in an old cigare box in Mortimer J. Jacobson's basement. Most smell of fresh apricots, though at least two could be considered more of a dried plum.
2. Most of these dimensions are inhabited by what looks like, and in fact is, stupid pudding. Also, there are eels there. The eels eat the pudding and then excrete gravity. What holds you to the Earth is hyperspatial eel poop. It's a fact.
3. The 695th dimension consists entirely of a two-fingered old woman with no name. Two comical gnomes constantly antagonize her: Shortimer and Flango. Shortimer and Flango are always trying to steal the vast cold-cut and sliced-cheese spreads the anonymous woman has put out for her dinner guests who never arrive. These guests do not arrive because they learned early on that there were no cold-cuts or sliced-cheeses when they arrived. Though the old woman attempts to stop them, Shortimer and Flango invariably outsmart her and all the cunningly complicated traps she lays for them. In fact, they are only cunning by comparison to members of her species with one finger because her specie's brain is located within each of the digits of its hand. The interaction between the woman and the gnomes creates meta-friction which produces the pudding people mentioned in point #2. When Shortimer sneezes, it creates the weak nuclear force. When Flango breaks wind, it creates the strong nuclear force.



4. All pudding people, eels, gnomes, and old women exist because of the interaction of a pot and a kettle in the 501st dimension. As each goes back and forth calling the other black, the other beings are maintained via the interaction of the pot and kettle's negritons, allowing the gnomes to exist.
5. Made of marble, the 45th dimension is covered in cheese which is often smacked by a hammers wielded by tiny elephants. The cheese, thus stricken, vibrates, producing ventricles, or the particles apparent in lower dimensions such as ours. This is also where Madam No-Name Two-Fingers gets the cheese for her platters. The tiny elephants are not pleased about this, but being so tiny there is very little they can do about it.
6. Electromagnetism is there also.
7. Gravity, electricity, and the strong and weak nuclear forces are all mixed in a bowl and stirred regularly by Isis, who is mayor of the 1000th dimension. They are slowly poured into our dimension, which has already been greased around the edges, but not before mischievous, sentient catamarans decide to inject magnetism into the mix, much to the bedevilment of Isis.
8. The universe came into being because of the above mentioned things.
9. Once Flango and Shortimer eat all the cold-cuts, all the electromagnetic forces in the universe will begin to flow upside down, and the strong nuclear force eventually disappears.
10. Because the cause of Flango's sneezing was actually a reaction with the extra-dimensional pepper molecules found in Shortimer's flatulence as a result of his consumption of cold-cuts, the weak nuclear force will also eventually disappear.
11. CAUTION: Should gravity for some reason invert someone should go to Mortimer J. Jacobson's basement and shake the cigar box. Not too hard, though. That should right everything and help recharge the universe. Do it a bit to the left, too, as I'd like to wake up perpetually to the smell of strawberries.

And that's it. The universe in a nutshell. Megastring may seem complex or counter-intuitive, but remember that it has ten times more empirical evidence for it than super string does. 10 times zero is still zero.



**I'd gladly receive oral sex
to get my hands on the new**

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The Axes & Alleys HISTORIGON

This Month in History:

2006 AD: Earl Thomas, of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, looks at a website which features images of non-clothed women.

1992 AD: U.S. Vice President Dan Quayle correctly spells pusillanimous in the first round of a Trenton, NJ elementary school spelling bee.

1967 AD: Producers of *Gomer Pyle U.S.M.C.* successfully sue the Beatles, who are forced to come up with a new name for their upcoming album *Sergeant Carter's Lonely Heart's Club Band*.

1936 AD: Alabama State Legislator Atticus Finch shoots a dog. Not the rabid one, another one not mentioned in the book.

1885 AD: The Emperor Meiji, in order to help Japan's great advance, offers to adopt the name Emperor Mr. Charlemagne Van Der Thompson. Aides most respectfully explain that this would require inordinate amounts of paperwork, and the matter is quietly dropped.

1662 AD: John of Strathclyde invents a one-wheeled cart stabilized by primitive gyroscopes. It is not adopted because such an idea is rightly considered stupid.

1515 AD: While the location has been forgotten, an East African, an Indian, and a Chinese are the first such people to visit that location many years before a European did.

1296 AD: Explorer and traveler Marco Polo decides to leave out the chapter of *Le divisament dou monde* wherein he describes in detail his love of nubile young Asian women.

899 AD: Biff steals a kiss from Magdalen at a mid-Summer's festival in Burgundy. Magdalen's father has Biff executed as a lesson to all future osculatory thieves.

678 AD: Several kingdoms in Britain which few rightly remember, if at all, go to war for some reason or other. Probably over a fishing hole or a particularly green hill.

630 AD: In an episode slightly less stunning than his ascension to Heaven, Muhammad is taken up by the Buraq and shown a vision of Tulsa, Oklahoma.

280 AD: Comedians Li Ri Bo and Po Zu Ti win the Emperor's favor in Datong by setting a live chicken on fire and performing a humorous dance as the hapless fowl dies.

40 AD: Absolutely nothing out of the ordinary happened this month. Move along.

238 BC: The Parthians invent heavy cavalry through the use of larger horses.

753 BC: Rome is actually founded by Romulus in this month, not in April as contended by historians. It is also founded about five feet to the west of where it is traditionally believed to have been founded.

849 BC: Court musician Latha of Parsa adopts the stage-name Latha Lyre.

1225 BC: Out of barley and wheat, Snebit the Libyan creates a liquor out of grass and palm leaves instead. It isn't any good and Snebit is thrown into a nearby river to drown.

2002 BC: Korean merchant Hwandan is the first person to come up with the idea of "buy one, get one free."

4888 BC: A ditch digger with one leg shorter than the other plies his trade across Central Europe. His handiwork is discovered 6600 years later by "archaeologists."

8306 BC: Dartho upsets Ungot and becomes the best spear-thrower in the clan.

721,238 BC: While strolling through the plain, Mumaugue sees storm clouds on the horizon. For a moment he shivers in the cold wind.

ON A BOSTON-AREA BAND OF THE LATE 1980S AND EARLY 1990S BY CAVALIER JEREMY-JOSEPH ROSEN



In 1987 The Pixies, labelled an alternative rock band, released a song entitled “Nimrod Son” as part of their first EP recording *Come on Pilgrim*. “Nimrod Son” is evocative both of the later evolution of popular music as well as The Pixies’ antecedents in rock, country, and other popular musics. “Nimrod Son” is one of the best examples of The Pixies’ often deranged and humorous lyrical content, unparalleled technical ability in relation to other groups of the time, and their influence upon contemporary and later musical groups.

To gain a better understanding of the lyrical content and its meaning we must examine the actual form of the piece as it has a large impact on an analysis of the lyrics. “Nimrod Son” opens with a steel guitar riff reminiscent of bluegrass and country music. Two bars later the bassline and the addition of the drums playing a shuffle strongly reinforces this country-bluegrass feel. The A section contains an odd number of bars and two endings both of which contain two measures of stop time with the vocalist, Black Francis, singing throughout both measures with the melody delivered mostly on one note.

The B section is odd-measured as well, suggesting an influence from early American Punk music. The first part combines two measures of a new

bass line and guitar riff with two measures of those from the introduction and A section. The second half of the B section moves into a more solid rock and roll sound ideal. There is less rhythm guitar present, but the melody moves quite a bit with a backup voice adding harmony above the melody. In less than thirty seconds of music, the song has moved through influences clearly derived from at least three distinct forms of music.

Before returning to the A section a transition on a new theme enters and the tempo is slowed down by half. This transition is completely instrumental and moves around the key centre by step. A brief pause and the band is back to a repetition of the A section, then a guitar solo. The band stops briefly and then begins again from the introduction through an A section.

The range of form, tempo, and technicality of this song is quite distinct from the same elements in many other bands of the time. 1987 was a year wherein “heavy metal” bands, groups with very loud, guitar-driven songs and a rock star image were at the height of their popularity and groups like The Pixies, with odd songs and initially no commercial image at all, were still considered “underground.”

The Pixies both predicted and created the later

grunge music scene which was first recognized in Seattle, though it was present in quite a range of metropolitan areas. Grunge, or alternative, music was more diverse in its forms and content across the spectrum of musical groups and can be cited as a commercial label rather than a distinctive sound. One could say what was and wasn't grunge, or alternative, but one couldn't always place parameters around it. See so-called world music for a similar U.S.-centric commercial classification of music.

Much of this was due to the fact that The Pixies began and spread a formula of song writing that most groups of the time didn't. Black Francis, the leader and main writer of most of the songs in The Pixies' book created music of great dynamic variation. Songs would often begin with a quiet intensity only to explode in the chorus with his voice, usually backed up by bassist Kim Deal, singing loudly and often without definite tone. This wide dynamic formula was adopted in due course by bands anywhere The Pixies' music was available in recorded or live form. "Nimrod Son" is one of the earliest examples from which this influence is derived.

While exhibiting numerous differences with other groups of the time, The Pixies shared one obvious similarity borne out within the lyrical content of "Nimrod Son." This is a propensity for typically strange and pictorial lyrics in order to either disturb or amuse the listener. A popular take on such lyrics is that they are there to frighten and scare parents and conservatives with their content. This was likely present, but unimportant, within the band's ethos during their earliest phases because there wasn't much of an audience for their type of music.

Following this amusing and disturbing lyrical trend, however, "Nimrod Son" apparently describes a man who discovers that he is the child of incest between his father and grandmother. This revelation is placed within the space at the end of the A section where there are only vocals and adds a huge emotional wallop as a result. On top of this the man discovers that his current lover is also his sister. Again this revelation is placed within the same space in the A section. The bridge, with its distinct change from the A section expresses his revulsion and confusion with what he has discovered through a wailing melody that floats over the rhythmically faster musical accompaniment.

Of course by itself this content is merely amusing or disturbing and it can realistically be claimed that there is little beyond Black Francis' writing than a progression of strange images. In fact much of this type of music can be criticized for lack of literal, and even metaphorical, sense.

When the lyrics are taken within the context of the musical background of the song a more intricate description appears. Because of the obvious nod to bluegrass music in the A section I see this song as a comment on the stereotypical image of the South where people supposedly have intimate relations with close relatives and drive pickup trucks as another line from the song states. It becomes clear, however, that the

90s



BELLY

90s



THE BREEDERS

90s



FRANK BLACK AND THE CATHOLICS

exact comment being made upon this situation is essentially impossible to discover because, again, The Pixies are more concerned with imagery than commentary.

Unfortunately there is no resolution, no obvious solution, to this question contained anywhere in the song. These revelations are restated for the listener and because they have been heard before have much less impact the second time around. This could possibly be an effort to mimic the reverberations of the revelations within the man's mind, but other songs of the period and after are rarely so introspective while being so visual simultaneously. For the most part there is nary an attempt at resolution. There is merely a picture presented and it is left up to the listener to reflect, enjoy or refuse to analyze. This would mirror quite well the historical and documented intent of the band.

Part of The Pixies' distinction as an influence upon the rock genre is that some of its members and production staff went on to work with others in the field. The producer of the sessions on *Surfer Rosa*, the follow up album to the EP, Steve Albini, went on to work most notably on Nirvana's first commercial success *Nevermind* and with Stone Temple Pilots. His production sound is distinctive and he is responsible for transmitting the sounds of The Pixies throughout the rock music world. He also later spoke out against the music industry (see "The Problem with Music" from Baffler No. 5).

Black Francis' history, like his music, was quite interesting as well. Born Charles Thompson, he changed his name to Black Francis during the sessions for *Come on Pilgrim*. After internal tensions between Black and bassist Kim Deal the band split and Black Francis went on to become Frank Black and produce three albums departing widely from The Pixies' sound. They seemed to take influence from many of the groups that were at first influenced by The Pixies. He abandoned the formula present in "Nimrod Son" and as a result of the mood at the time fell into commercial disfavour.

Kim Deal found more involvement in the aftermath of The Pixies' influence over rock and roll than any other member of the band. After the breakup of The Pixies she joined the band Belly which took a major part in the beginning of the adoption of The Pixies' sound throughout the rest of rock and roll. This band definitely was quite obviously influenced by The Pixies internally through its lyrics and externally because of its association with the commercial label of alternative music.

Leaving Belly Deal went on to form The Breeders with her twin sister Kelly. The Breeders returned to many elements of the sound of The Pixies and did more in spreading that aesthetic in the early nineties. Deal was the other main force in The Pixies and her desire to have more involvement in the song writing and singing led to The Pixies' demise, so it is no surprise that the band she fronted afterwards was similar in sound ideal. She formed an incredibly short-lived band call The Amps which released one album *Pacer* before

Charles Michael Kittridge Thompson IV
a.k.a.
Black Francis
a.k.a.
Frank Black
a.k.a.
Francois de Noir



dissolving. The last The Breeders album, *Title TK*, was released in 2002.

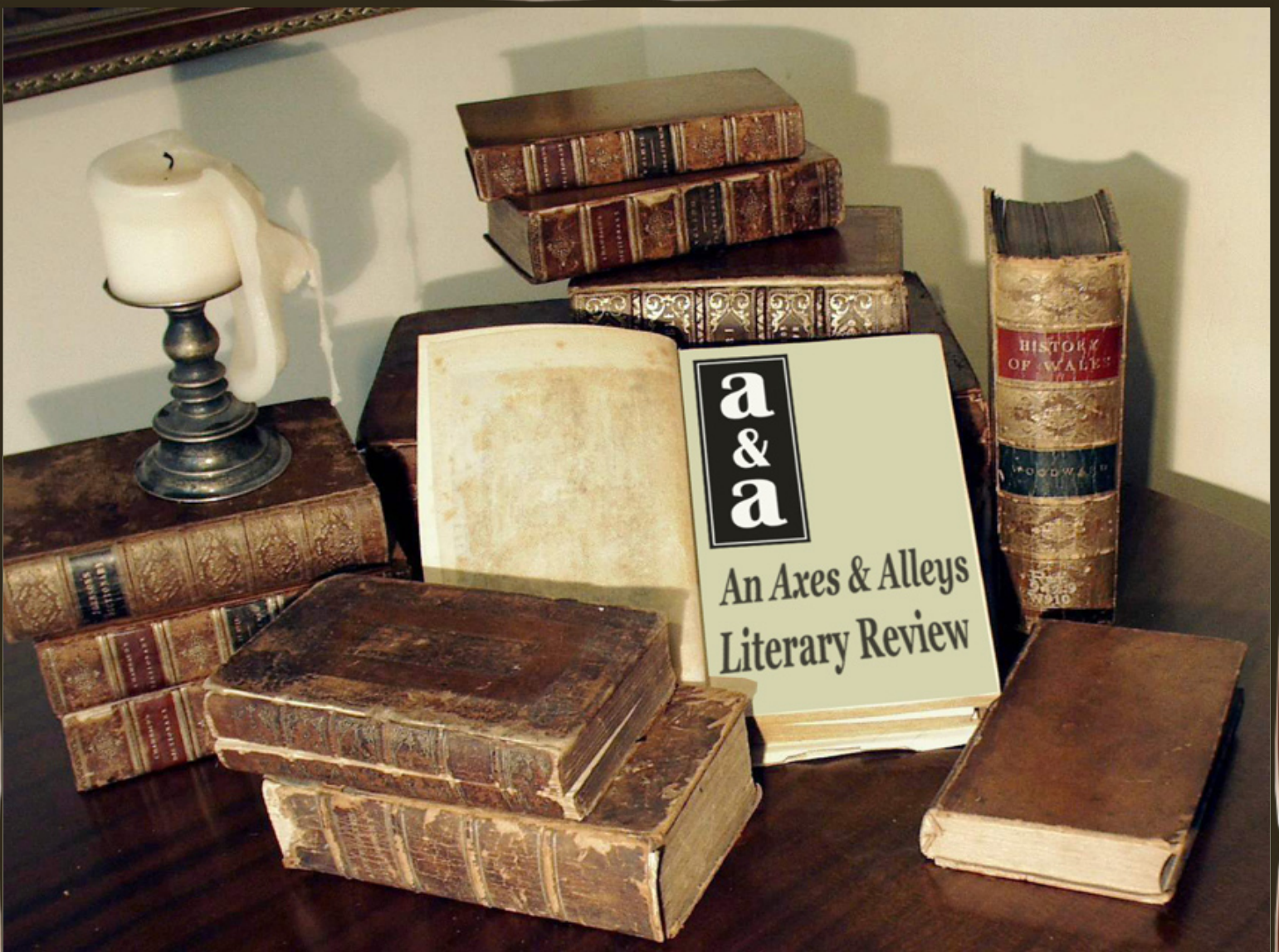
By 2001, though, the importance of The Pixies as a pedestal of more than a decade of rock and popular music was quite obvious to even casual listeners. The band topped the lists of favourites of those who could only have enjoyed the work of Sharon, Lois, and Bram at the time the band was still together. People from the teens to the fifties recognized them for their importance; more importantly a continuing cavalcade of current musical acts recognized and acknowledged their influence. And so, in 2004 the band reunited for a tour which was at once a critical, financial, and fan success, touring with contemporary supporting acts who were influenced by them.

"Nimrod Son" and its sister songs on *Come on Pilgrim* as well as the songs in the same vein from *Surfer Rosa* spread quickly throughout rock music and had a heavy influence on it. "Nimrod Son" expanded, unwittingly I think, upon previous forms and ideals from the underground, adding to them until it created something different yet accessible to listeners. The ability to internalize other styles of music, as in "Nimrod Son," without becoming a strange melange of different musics became a staple of later alternative music as did the wide progression of dynamics. "Nimrod Son" stands, upon analysis, as one of the definitive sources of the music of the early nineties, the commercialization of such music in contemporary culture, and the basis of a vast swath of contemporary musical groups. In total, the rock music scene today would not exist without The Pixies.

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use Happy-Horse Tarps
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LIONS, TIGERS AND BEARS:
THE EFFECTS OF THE MEGAFUNA ON THE FALL AND
RESTORATION OF THE MONARCHY IN OZ.
BY JARED DIAMOND.

In the majority of his written works, scientist and author Jared Diamond attempts to show how the natural environment has influenced history. Previously, he has, with some skill, shown how distribution of biological resources led to the cultural predominance of Eurasian civilization and also how environmental factors precipitated the downfall of societies ranging from the Mayans to the Norse. *Lions, Tigers and Bears* tells a similar story; that of the collapse and eventual restoration of the Ozma government and how large animals came to play a crucial role in the unfolding political drama.

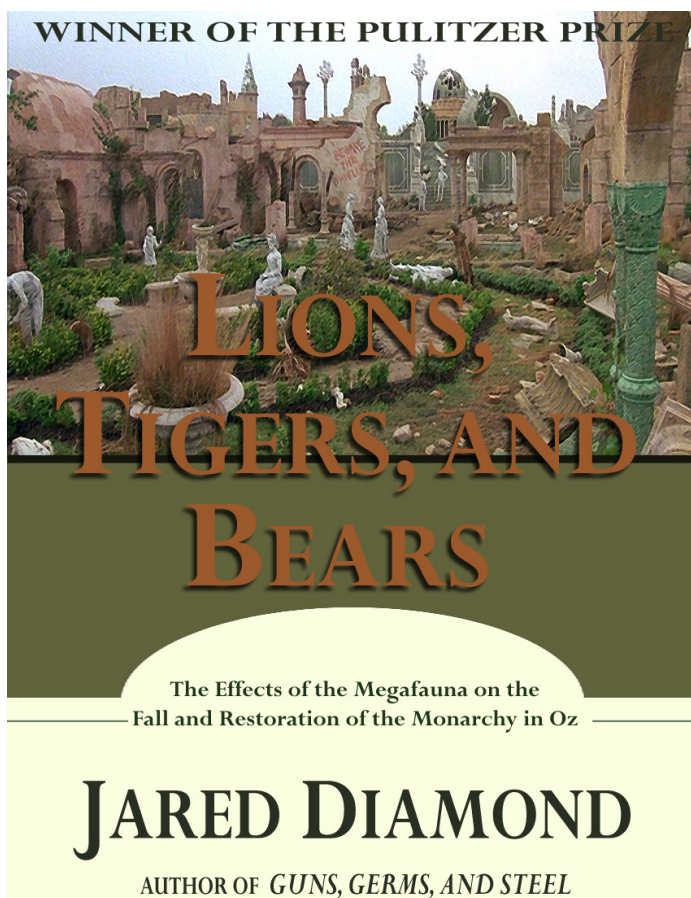
Diamond begins by examining the history of the realm of Oz and how its unique and tenuous monarchy came to power. Initially four separate sovereign nations; Munchkin, Gillikin, Quadling and Winkie became united by a monarchy which ruled from the city-state of Emerald City. It is through this history that Diamond makes the first and most crucial of his points; that geography made the eventual toppling of the monarchy a near certainty. Emerald City, situated on the central plain of Oz was unable to consolidate complete control over the rough and mountainous terrains in the outlying region. Throughout the Outlands, small societies were able to prosper in isolation and were often ignorant of the very existence of the centralized monarchy.

Furthermore, the cultures which grew up around the central plain were able to travel from one place to another easily, allowing for a cultural fusion of ideas, inventions and economies while the outlying mountainous regions and those beyond the Deadly Desert gave rise to isolated civilizations which could not share in the central plains culture. While the Ozma government could technically claim to rule the Land of Oz or the Dominions of the Nome King, the inhabitants of those lands, due to geography, would continually assert their independence causing a great deal of external stress to the central government. These outlying cultures developed societies entirely alien to the central plains societies; including differing religious systems and different domestication strategies. Thus, it was via environmental factors that Ozma was never able to consolidate complete control over the continent of Nonestica.

This would prove the monarchy's undoing. Cultural fears of the desert and mountain regions made Ozma unwilling to expand. Without a coastline, and surrounded by alien cultures, the central plain became isolated, surrounded by hostile peoples. Continual attacks by the Nome King as well as by the Wicked Witches, a theocratic sect found in isolated mountainous regions of the West, weakened the power of the monarchy. The Wicked Witches were able to domesticate only one species; a flying monkey, found only in the mountains. The central plains societies were ill-adapted to fighting the soaring simians that would occasionally raid the central plains, further destabilizing the monarchy.

The flying monkeys (*Brachyteles ecaudata*) allow Diamond to introduce his thesis; the influence of the Megafauna on the collapse of Ozma's government. The inhabitants of the central plains never domesticated any fauna, and were unable to cope with attacks by the flying monkeys. Thus, the Wicked Witches, with the help of the related sect of Wicked Wizards were able to expel King Pastoria of Oz and send his daughter Princess Ozma into exile. While Ozma was able to return to the throne for a short time, she was nevertheless unable to establish true governmental supremacy over the Land of Oz. After she was captured by the Nome King, the central government collapsed. With the central government non-existent, individual fiefdoms grew up and the influence of the trade unions, such as the Lollipop Guild, grew to fill the void of power in the lands.

Diamond then explores the issue of Megafauna, including central plains societies' cultural aversion to large, predatory animals. Though the people of the plains feared lions, tigers and bears, it would be a lion, a rare form of forest-dwelling lion, that eventually helped secure a new dynasty in the Emerald City. Following the interregnum, the Scarecrow took control of the throne, though he was a weak monarch who ruled over a society near collapse. Trade had nearly broken down, infrastructure was ill-maintained and despite the numerous enemies on the borders, the army consisted



of only one poorly built mechanical soldier. Though the Ozma monarchy was eventually restored, the problems inherent in Oz's social, political and economic systems remain.

As an afterthought, Diamond presents a warning that societies such as the Land of Oz face important issues in their handling of the natural environment. Geographic pressures created a situation where the central plains people considered themselves invulnerable, while the outlying societies considered Oz ripe for the plucking. Had the denizens of Oz, Diamond asserts, taken a clear look at environmental and geographic factors, their society might not have been driven to near collapse.

While *Lions, Tigers and Bears*, is a good read, Diamond characteristically meanders through his ideas, stopping for several chapters to explore the evolutionary and agricultural history of meat trees. Indeed, the book presents a new and interesting take on the history of Oz, but generally only explores Megafauna in a few small sections, focusing instead on geology, weather and tectonics as an explanation of the political events in question while completely ignoring the fact that Megafauna in the lands in and around Oz would be apparently normal by Earthen standards. There have been several major scholarly works on political and economic life in the Land of Oz, but none have explored the bio-history of the region. Though Diamond's writing has its faults, the issues he presents allow a new understanding of a troubled area's past and possible futures.



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ZOOS

The Ticking Time Bomb

It is important for people of all ages to understand biology. After all, people are animals. For this reason, zoological gardens, otherwise known as zoos or wildlife parks can be found lurking within the depths of many of the world's urban areas. There, near our schools, hospitals and churches, zoos bide their time, waiting silently to unleash a furry fury upon humanity. Zoos are a powder keg waiting to be ignited. Zoos are a ticking time bomb poised to destroy us all in a bloody orgy of claws, teeth, talons and fangs.

Perhaps you have been to a zoo and seen the variety of animals: cuddly koalas, cute little lemurs, majestic gorillas, and even regal lions. And perhaps you also spied the zookeepers, who, for some reason, wear safari-style khaki uniforms and hats. The zookeepers are the key to this impending catastrophe. Who cares for the menagerie? Who feeds the animals, cleans their enclosures and heals their wounds? That's right. Zookeepers.

Without the zookeepers (The thin brown line) the zoos would be in chaos. Hungry tigers would greedily eat babies while nearby hyenas would fight over the carcasses of school field trip groups. In the dark corner, a content little monkey would lap up the pools of fresh crimson blood collecting around a dead grandmother whose face had been pecked apart and devoured by blue plumaged macaws.

By night the animals would escape their confines and stealthily invade our cities. Glowing eyes would be all the warning a sales executive would get before being ripped to sanguine shreds by a pack of vicious wolves. Venomous snakes would fly, via centrifugal force, from moving ceiling fans in suburban homes and sink their fangs into the faces of horrid, screaming housewives. After mastering the use of screwdrivers, chimpanzees would remove our doors, kill us in our sleep or cut the brakes on our city busses. Elephants would trample the elderly to death, crunching rib cages like potato chips and giraffes would bite flying kites out of the air and spit them back as children ran away crying. Society would collapse and hippopotamuses would eat our heads.

As you can now clearly see, we need two things if we're to avoid this calamity:

1. Back up zookeepers, in case the regular zookeepers are sick or unable to work for some reason.
2. Secure locks on animal enclosures.

So, write your legislators and tell them that you do not want to be mauled by a zebra. Tell them America needs backup zookeepers and locks on the animal enclosures, lest we be destroyed. Thank you.

ASK MONTEZUMA IT'S THE ANSWER MAN FROM TENOCHTITLAN



Montezuma once spackled an entire wall using only toothpaste. His favorite atomic element is Neon but he also loves learning about voles and foxes.

Dear Montezuma,
My girlfriend suffers from narcolepsy. Isn't that neat? I thought so. That's one of the reasons I started dating her. But, between bouts of drowsiness, she tells me that she feels objectified because of this. I can understand that. I told her what I was looking for was basically a warm mannequin that smelled good and she fit the bill. The fifth octave E-flat key on my piano is kind of sticky. Should I use WD-40 on that?
Nick L. Odeon
Kingston, Jamaica

Mr. Odeon, many interesting people throughout history have experienced the narcoleptic affliction descending upon them. Meriwether Lewis, I've heard tell, slept through the entirety of the Lewis and Clark expedition except for certain segments in Idaho where the local oxygen content of the air managed to create a foggy path out of his lethargy.

Dear Montezuma,
My best friend and I publish a magazine and I was wondering if you had some advice for me. You see, we differ about how the styling on letters should be. He thinks that the opening, body, and closing should have no spaces between them. I think that looks terrible, but he's the guy who lays everything out. Even if I do put spaces between those things, he gets rid of them, even after I copy edit everything. How can I get him to do it the way that looks good?
Charles Sumner
Columbia, SC

CS, the Modern Language Association style guide clearly states that letters should be double-spaced throughout. However, the Chicago Manual of Style says that the opening, closing and body of a letter should have no spaces between them, as your co-editor currently does it. There is a third option, though. The Punxsutawney Association of Grammarians Guide to Style states that one should avoid letter-writing altogether and instead save up what one wishes to say until there is enough content to go forward with the publication of a monograph. I did this in my book Answering Phil: Responses to Phil Chaudhry of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Montezuma,
For once in my life I'd prefer to go through the day without being anxious about just about everything. I get upset about my coffee and whether it has too much sugar, if I sounded like an ass in my last email, whether I'm doing a good job, and on and on. Do you have any advice for a used watch salesman down on his luck?
Cherry Picard
North Umbridge, AC

My dearest Cherry, perhaps the best idea for you would be to get out of the watch business entirely. Perhaps become a grocery cashier. You see, no one really uses watches anymore. They're an accessory and one that only highly-snooty persons use. However, grocery employees are always in demand because people must eat. In order to avoid entropy, open systems, such as organisms must take in new energy from food, the sale of which is facilitated by grocery store check out clerks at the nation's many grocery stores. There's also a high turnover rate across the board, so there's plenty of room to move up. You may need to relocate to somewhere where the stores are larger in order to suit someone of your talents, but that shouldn't be difficult in nearby states such as Georgia or Mississippi which do not have the grocery store shortage currently present in Acadia.

That would depend upon the location of the body within the exchange. For instance, if it was on the floor, probably very little because it would be covered in those papers stock brokers throw around at work. Now, if it were in the vestibule, you could be talking about anything from \$4-5 a pound.

Dear Montezuma,

This guy I used to work with here at the blood bank dropped me a line the other day. He wanted my help returning three pints of blood he stole from our office manager. I don't know what to do. Should I help him or tell my office manager?

George Kawasaki
San Francisco, CA

George, I would wager that your office manager is well-aware that he is missing three pints of blood. The dizziness due to low blood pressure has probably been his first clue. To be honest, I am incredibly interested in how your former co-worker managed to siphon off 20% of your manager's blood without his knowledge. With skills such as those, it would be most appropriate for your old work comrade to perhaps have taken a job at the Central Intelligence Agency or some other covert government institution. He may even be of interest to various enmobulated criminal enterprises. If your former officemate is, in fact, a vampire, I wouldn't be surprised that the office manager has not noticed his blood loss as vampires do not exist.

Dear Montezuma,

I am a lesbian and I would like to meet a new woman who can share my life with me, you know someone I

could love and hold and care for. On Sunday mornings we could wake up and read the paper together over coffee. We could even maybe do the crossword together and then go get lunch at an Ethiopian restaurant and then work on our socialist newsletter. Finding a great lesbian lover is my greatest stumbling block. My second-biggest stumbling block is the fact that I am a man. Can you help?

Chax McSorely

St. Johns, Nova Scotia

Chaxy, gender and sexuality are such fluid terms. They shouldn't be governed merely by the functional organs with which one was born. Seeing as this is true, have you considered sleeping with other lesbian men? Lesbian culture can be so finicky sometimes that it may be best to stick to your small corner of it.

Montezuma,

My downstairs neighbors enjoy the music of Stravinsky, but I hate Stravinsky. On the other hand I enjoy the music of Shostakovich and they hate Shostakovich. This makes being neighbourly a bit difficult when they're blasting *The Rake's Progress* or I have *Symphony No. 7* (Opus 60) turned up all the way on my Dolby 5.1. Is there any way to resolve this?

James Carmel

Peoria, IL

One of the most common and best ways to resolve symphonic disputes between neighbors is the bassoon duel at dawn. Depending upon your level of proficiency, this may take some months to prepare for, but will solve the problem once and for all.



Montezuma's Helpful Hints for the Home

Many actions in the house (or home) require the use of one repetitive motion or another. Sometimes these actions will require more than one at once! For instance, you have recently spackled several holes in your wall and now need to sand the affected area. Doing so will end up tiring your arm out in moments. As another example, if you need to scrub soap scum from your bathing tub, it will require a similar repetitive motion. What's a busy home owner, renter, or leaser to do? Alternate which arm you use! That's right, simply switching from the body part you're using to an entirely different one can save you stress and/or injury.



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Katie Stalin

Out and About



Atlanta, GA- Why, you might ask, am I writing this award-neglected travelogue from Atlanta, even though the fat cats at *Axes & Alleys* paid for a trip to Reykjavik? Well, it all has to do with the little light-up signs on the airplane. When you need to put on your seat belt the sign shows a seatbelt. Makes sense, right? Now, the No Smoking sign shows a cigarette, doesn't it? Not a pipe. In fact, no one ever mentioned pipes at all and yet you pull out a pipe after dinner and they act like you're a godless communist or something. I mean, for Christ's sake, they'll bring you a brandy. What was I supposed to do, just sit there drinking brandy and not smoke a pipe?

Yeah, so they went all ballistic and I got stuck in Atlanta. Luckily, I met this cute doctor at the hotel bar. It was lucky for me because he works at this company called CDC and offered to give me a special guided tour. And it was lucky for him in a few different ways that I won't mention because this is a family magazine.

CDC is a pretty cool company, I guess, you know like in a futuristic way. But their headquarters is pretty big and it's easy to get lost. There are lots of long, white corridors and rooms full of science and medicine and stuff. They probably even have a janitor's closet reserved for "maths." Anyway, they had the biggest refrigerator I've ever seen, like almost as big as a whole Arby's!

There were also a bunch of vials and stuff, and it turns out they were all drugs. Sweet. Though I didn't know the actual street value of the stuff, I figured it would be fun to try them out and see what happened. I am a journalist you know, and I seek the truth, especially the truth about cool new drugs that even I've never heard of like Smallpox or Polio.

Turns out this stuff must have been really expensive. Seriously. You think they freak out when you get caught loading an ice machine from the hotel onto your truck, that's nothing compared to how these CDC guys freaked. All these astronauts ran in the room and they were armed to the teeth. And they're all yelling and stuff and made me put all the drugs back.

Atlanta is stupid. First, the hotel pool was closed and second the police won't believe you when you say you're not a terrorist. And police station coffee sucks. So, I'm like, who do you have to blow to get good coffee around here? Turns out it's Special Agent Pickett. He took me to get coffee and then while he was in the bathroom, I skipped out of there before I had to pay up on my part of the deal and hitchhiked to the bus station. Sherman was right; screw Atlanta, I'm going to Iceland.

FIFTY THINGS TO DO **BEFORE YOU DIE**

1. Portray Blanche Dubois in a stage version of *A Streetcar Named Desire*.
2. Affix postage to a live duck and try to mail it to Walla Walla, Washington. It only counts if the stamps are canceled.
3. Shave a swear word into your pubic hair with a straight razor and a stencil.
4. Dance the Flamenco with Bruce Villanche.
5. Share a firm handshake with the sideshow's glass eater.
6. Deliver a ten minute speech about radishes.
7. Put an eight dollar trifecta on "Lucky," "Chance," and "Fortune."
8. Write several letters to a Colombian pen-pal.
9. Make a toast in honor of the Prime Minister of Canada.
10. Lose a backgammon tournament, but remain a good sport about it.
11. Dial a number at random and ask for Steven.
12. Chase an escaped canary across a frozen lake.
13. Play Trivial Pursuit with members of your local VFW.
14. Sneak seven kilos of heroin through customs.
15. Have sexual intercourse with Sarah Polley.
16. Eat an entire Virginia ham in a single sitting.
17. Swindle a vegan.
18. Attend a rodeo while dressed as Thomas Jefferson.
19. Smile at an albatross.
20. Break a glass and then blame it on your sister.
21. Pretend to date a cute blonde girl named Samantha.
22. Get winked at by a fat guy using a gas station slot machine.
23. Feign interest when Isobel talks about her back ache.
24. Discover a new atomic element.
25. See Rock City.
26. Face down an angry moose while bearing only a can of Pepsi.
27. Receive your ordination by mail and bless water fountains in your town.
28. Put on your aviator sunglasses, grab your corn cob pipe, and show that Chester Nimitz your MacArthur impression.
29. Ridicule an old lady's knick knacks.
30. Lay underwater cable across a local pond.
31. Dress up like a samurai to impress girls.
32. Dress up like a gun moll to impress boys.
33. Fax a crossword puzzle to a dairy farmer.
34. Perch on a tree limb and pretend to be a songbird.
35. Make nuclear reactor construction plans out of origami.
36. Put chain link fence around a cubic foot of space.
37. Eat spaghetti (with or without meatballs).
38. Deride the works of that tart Chopin, but get him confused with Franz Liszt.
39. Cross the streams.
40. Buy something, anything, that says "manufactured in Micronesia" on it.
41. Play your wax paper and plastic comb harmonica for a bus full of graveyard shift factory employees on their way home in the morning.
42. Argue with a German about how Cologne is really part of France.
43. See Daniel Bester, Inc.'s Humongotronic, the audio-visual telescreen borne aloft by four zeppelins, as it makes its stately procession over Katharinetowne.
44. Play drums in a band which achieves minor celebrity amongst the nation's so-called tastemaking class.
45. Engage in sexual activity with someone who isn't that into it.
46. Attempt to organize the defense of a bee colony. Exhort them to go down fighting if the operation wavers.
47. Sell charcoal-filtered air on a street corner in brightly-coloured plastic bottles.
48. Remind five people a day for an entire week that Mark Twain's real name was Samuel Clemens and it rhymes with lemons.
49. Construct a ramshackle Greek trireme on wheels, plug your ears with wax, give it a good push down the road and strap yourself to the mast. Include some friends who are easily distracted by singing if you want verisimilitude.
50. Experience the groaning agony of pancreatic cancer.

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The first annual Gay Humble Month Bingo Spectacular is coming to Omaha! To participate, please write Bishop David McClurkle at Omaha 1st Episcopal Church, Omaha, NB.

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Footage of Fiona Apple's last boyfriend talking to her on the phone. He mentions a farmers' market somewhere and I can't remember where nor how to find the video again. May be located somewhere on the internet. Please call Lemmy Ramone a godbag.

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The bones of Dr. Lyman Hall of Georgia, signer of the Declaration. Recently disinterred illegally from his burial place in Augusta, GA. Original pulverized lime coating included. Will trade for the femur of Aaron Burr, or sell for \$6750. James K. Chesterton, 825 Johns Rd., Augusta, GA, 30904.

WANTED

Family in Spain wishes to lease one boat for use on Tuesday crabbing expeditions to the Azores. Azore crabs are more delicious than the other crabs of the world. Hacienda Lopez, 83-292-19-1-10293-183. Ext. 282.

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Two Finnish women needed to sort screwdrivers for \$30.00 per hour. Part time only, one hour per week. Bestco Tool Co. Office of Human Resources. Katharinetowne, WD.

WANTED

Life-sized Sopwith Camel replica made out of muenster cheese with cracker propeller. Must be delivered by Tuesday for my WWI aviation themed wine and cheese party. Laura Peacock, no. 71.

FOR SALE

Box of cocker spaniel hair. Mostly brown. \$2.00, or best offer. Roman Polanski, Box 2.

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FOR RENT

Man in Viking costume. Will pose for images needed for magazine articles or pin up calendars. Call Marshall at 91-853-7741.

WANTED

A heroin candy bar. I prefer something with nougat and chocolate, but no nuts please. Unless they're pistachios. There's not really very many pistachio candies. Just that ice cream. But I don't want heroin in my ice cream. Charles Krauthammer, Box 75.

FOR SALE

Delicious lime flavored spackling paste. Highly toxic. G.P. Henning, 67 Signal St. Harper's Lap, AC.

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Crayfish salad. Five tonnes available in fifty gallon drums. Some expired but most good. Don't eat the brownish parts. No, sir. Halbone Salad Drum Warehouse. Hippen, PA.

WANTED

Disassembled helicopter where the parts are stored in pillowcases and labeled alphabetically. Will pay up to \$1000 or trade for Bolivian postage stamps. Petey, Box 203.

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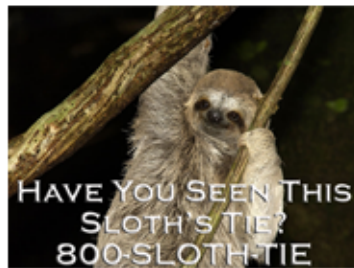
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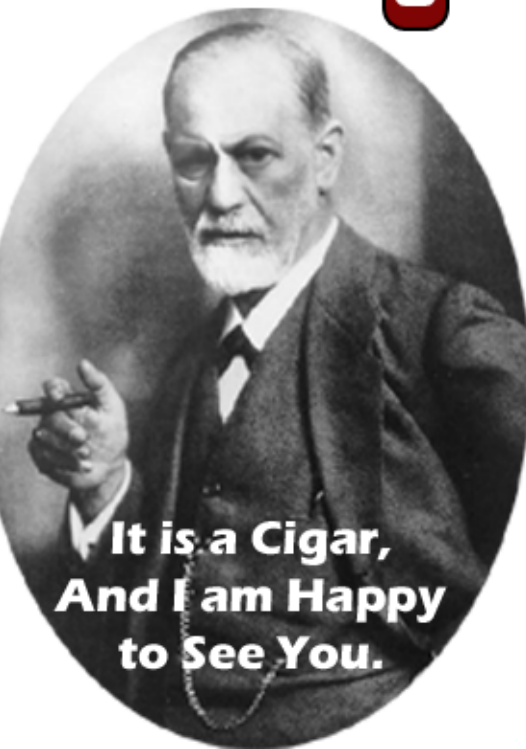
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