

Two Men Meet, Each Suspecting the Other to be of Higher Rank by Paul Klee

Energy Beer (or, the End of Reinheitsgebot)

By Jess Stephenson

First, I am not a beer expert. In fact, I didn't start drinking beer until the summer of 2004, not for legality reasons, but because the only beer I'd been introduced to in college had names like 'Natty', 'Beast', or 'High Life'. In 2004, I discovered the wonders of foreign beers, while living in the Mormon suburbs of Idaho. Go figure.

Anyway, I had learned, probably as you have, that Germans do two things well; namely cars and beer. Maybe we've even watched the same documentary on the History Channel about the brewing history of the Germans.... Maybe you've even heard the term "Reinheitsgebot", literally purity law, as it pertains to German beer. According to this ancient law, beer is only beer if it's brewed with three ingredients—water, yeast, and hops.

And then there are the images of the Biergartens, right around Oktoberfest, with buxom blue-eyed and braided blondes skipping around with twenty one-liter mugs of frothy, foamy, beautiful beer. I have yet to see one of these women, and I honestly think they import them from Sweden, just for the tourists, but I digress.

Continued on Page 10

Efficacy of Currency Portrait and Orientation Bias within a Heterogeneous Society

Journal of Sociology of Monetary Effects; Des Moines; June 2005; Patrick O'Furnadure; Benjamin Q. Dover; Hugh D. Jazz.

See Page 3

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Featured Articles

- A Letter from Santa by [Santa](#), 10
- Anyone Wanna Join My Fantasy League? by [Alan Fishman](#), 5
- As Many Sensual Perfumes as You Can: Ithaka and Odyssey by [Dan Fritz](#), 13
- Don't Be an Asshole! by [Brett](#), 12
- Efficacy of Currency Portrait and Orientation Bias Within A Heterogeneous Society by [Various Scholars](#), 3
- Energy Beer (or, the End of Reinheitsgebot) by [Jess Stephenson](#), 1
- For What It's Worth: Compensation for Organ Donors by [Amanda Hall](#), 8
- From Ordinary to Luxury by [Dan Fritz](#), 5
- Games While You're Home by [Dan Fritz](#), 13
- Guilty Pleasures by [Dan Fritz](#), 9
- I Voted for Emmitt by [Dan Fritz](#), 11
- Post Industrial Malaise and Dark Sarcasm in Pink Floyd: Part One, Animals by [Dan Fritz](#), 6
- X Box is better than the Wii by [James Schneider](#), 7

Featured Fiction

- Petey Pink by [Several Bored Office Pukes](#), 16
- The Tragic Tale of Madeleine Albright's Career as a Fashion Model in 19th Century New York by [Several Bored Office Pukes](#), 28

Assorted Contributions

- It's 2007 Slogan Time! by [Susan Fritz](#), 2
- Mattlock by [Grant Calderwood and Dan Fritz](#), 4
- Letter from the Editor by [Dan Fritz](#), 2
- Recipe of the Month: Christmas Wreaths by [Elizabeth Carlson](#), 4
- T.O.B.'s "Before-and-After" Corner by [Susan Fritz](#), 2
- A Turkey Pesto Sandwich by [Alan Fishman](#), 4

Images

- Cover Picture: *Two Men Meet, Each Suspecting the Other to be of Higher Rank* by [Paul Klee](#)
- Fish Face contributed by [Elizabeth Carlson](#), 8
- Playing in the Mud, Circa 1947 by [Nathan Beach](#), 2
- Some Kids I Don't Know Playing in Bubbles by [Nathan Beach](#), 2

Newsletter Info

- Newsletter Ideas 11
- Stats 29



Post-Industrial Malaise and Dark Sarcasm in Pink Floyd: Part One, *Animals* By [Dan Fritz](#)

Animals

- Pigs on the Wing: Part one
- Dogs
- Pigs (Three Different Kinds)
- Sheep
- Pigs on the Wing: Part Two

The inclination toward critical social commentary takes a cohesive form in Pink Floyd's *Animals*, an album in five movements. It seems that all feelings except frustrated repulsion are set aside as three

Continued on Page 6

PICTURE GALLERY



Playing in the Mud, Circa 1947
By Nathan Beach



Some Kids I Don't Know
Playing in Bubbles
By Nathan Beach

It's 2007 Slogan Time!
By Susan Fritz

Pretend with me for a minute. You're a squirrel, and someone hands you a bite of Taco Bell. It's not only your human friend's last bite, it also may be *your* last bite...ever! I'm talking about the *Great E-Coli Taco Bell Scare of 2006*. The scary thing is, it could only get worse in 2007, which is why I'm proposing a new slogan to be used immediately on the stroke of midnight when Ryan Seacrest declares it so. Ready?

"Less E-Coli in 2007-oli"

Good, huh? And it rhymes. If you were lucky enough to be privy to the great slogans of the past such as "High 5 in '05" and "Big licks in '06", you won't want to miss this year's challenge. Submit your potential slogans to editor@babbleonline.com today to have yours included. I'm not saying you'll win anything, and even if there were a prize, my entry is clearly the winner, but it might be fun. And remember, don't let this be your interior monologue: "*If only I'd spoken up and told the gang about 'Live in the sticks in '06'.*" ☒

Letter from the Editor

So, 2006 has been a slow year for the newsletter. Susan and I moved to New York when I got a new job, and somehow that translated into six months of newsletter silence. But the blessing in disguise is that it has allowed us all to replenish our creative reserves. It's paved the way for a triumphant year end and a return to free reading material. Enjoy—and keep the submissions coming!

Dan, editor@babbleonline.com ☒

Tower of Babble-ON's
'Before-and-After' Corner
By Susan Fritz

"Up Chuck Woolery"
☒

Submission Suggestions

Your contribution can be anything that fits onto a sheet of paper. Here are a few ideas:

- | | | |
|-------------|---------------|------------|
| Editorials | Reports | Philosophy |
| Reviews | Ramblings | Rants |
| Comics | Puzzles | Jokes |
| Quotes | Polls | Trivia |
| Drawings | Poetry | Recipes |
| Photographs | Short stories | News |
| Predictions | Advice | Graphs |

Please send all of your submissions to editor@babbleonline.com. ☒

Efficacy of Currency Portrait and Orientation Bias within a Heterogeneous Society

*Journal of Sociology of Monetary Effects; Des Moines;
June 2005; Patrick O'Furnadure; Benjamin Q. Dover;
Hugh D. Jazz.*

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Abstract:

This study explores the reactions among perceived attractiveness of the faces on currency sampling 187 random American women. Using multiple regression techniques, it was found that Alexander Hamilton is most visibly desirable; being employed with 20/20 vision were marginally significant predictors.

Full Text:

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The relationship between attraction to the person on currency and the amount spent has not been extensively studied. Nearly all of the research thus far has focused on spending habit with employment, geography, or family make-up as the dependent variable. Some argue that having money directly influences and is positively correlated with the ability to spend it (Reagan, 1988; Futchpahger, 2002). Whether links may be found to attractiveness of the men on currency and the desire to spend it is unknown. Spears (2003) purports that women spend a large majority of the money in circulation, regardless of whether it has been earned by a woman or a man. She postulates further that the spending habits of women would elicit a wealth of data vis a vis factors that influence spending (see also Simpson, 2004; Moore, 2000).

To explore the contribution of attraction on spending, this study intended to first establish an attractiveness rating for each male on currency. Men included on this scale were George Washington (\$1), Thomas Jefferson (\$2), Abraham Lincoln (\$5), Alexander Hamilton (\$10), Andrew Jackson (\$20), US Grant (\$50), Benjamin Franklin (\$100), William McKinley (\$500), Grover Cleveland (\$1,000), James Madison (\$5,000), Salmon P. Chase (\$10,000), and Woodrow Wilson (\$100,000).

Method

Participants

The participants were 187 females from the Philadelphia area.

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These participants were recruited for the study in a randomized street poll. Participants ranged in age from 10 to 87 years ($M=25.79$, $SD=5.55$). Neither race nor age correlated at the $p = .05$ level with any of the variables described later in this article. Participants' self-reported ethnic backgrounds were 67% Caucasian, 6% Hispanic, 19% African American, 6% Asian American or Pacific Islander, and 1% Native American. In response to a question regarding years of schooling completed, they reported a mean of 10.04 ($SD = 3.28$). Participants self-reported work/school status was 4% upper management/professional, 30% employed in middle management, 21% employed in servitude, 10% might as well not be employed for these wages, 8% student (post high school), 7% student (secondary school), 3% languishing in academia forever, 9% Unemployed, and 8% Refused to answer.

Measures

General Attractiveness. The 16-item genetic desirability subscale of the Overall Attractiveness Scale was used to measure attractiveness. Each item describes a feature of attraction which was previously attributed to the people depicted in currency by an independent research facility (399 Bonzitech).

Specific Attractiveness. Each subject was asked to rate each man on a seven point Likert scale: 1 – Ugly As Sin; 2 – I'd Have to Be Really Drunk to Even Touch You; 3 – Eh, I'd Make Out With You But I Wouldn't Introduce You To Any Person That Knows Me; 4 – If We Are Not Married By 30.....5 – That Was Me That Squeezed Your Tushy In The Elevator; 6 – Our Children Would Be Gorgeous; and 7 – I Lit Up A Cigarette After My Naughty Thoughts.

Procedure

During lunch hour at the corner of Walnut and Broad Street, the first author explained to potential participants that the purpose of the study was to investigate issues in spending money. He then distributed packets that participants completed anonymously and returned. The cover sheet asked for demographic information and was followed by the two scales, the second scale including the faces of the men on currency. Approximately 24 women were excluded because they were either Canadian or blind. Open-ended comments were recorded after the presentation of the faces.

The results were tested by correlation, and, just for fun, by regression. Additional laboratory technicians computed the full hierarchical regression attractiveness, perceived "shagability", spending habits, and sight ability, and we termed the full model Step 2. It contained Step 1, which is the regression without the interaction spending habits and sight ability.

Results

Women found Alexander Hamilton to have the highest overall attractiveness yielding an $r = .27$, $p < .01$. The mean score for Hamilton was 5.23 with a standard deviation of .45. Below are the means of each man:

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...*Efficacy of Currency Portrait, from previous page...*

Alexander Hamilton: 5.23

Thomas Jefferson: 4.71

William McKinley 4.29

Andrew Jackson: 3.72

Woodrow Wilson: 3.53

Abraham Lincoln 3.36

US Grant: 3.20

George Washington: 3.01

James Madison: 2.89

Salmon P. Chase: 2.63

Grover Cleveland: 2.1

Ben Franklin: <.01

Participants were also given an opportunity to comment on each man, and the most common responses are contained here.

Alexander Hamilton – “Break me off a piece of that! The Brad Pitt of the Treasury!”

Thomas Jefferson – “Cute, but I can’t get Nick Nolte’s mugshot out of my head when I look at him. Not after Nolte played Jefferson.”

William McKinley – “Who?”

Andrew Jackson – “He needs some John Freida Frizz Ease.”

Woodrow Wilson – “I expect him to bust into *Hello my baby.*”

Abraham Lincoln – “Look out behind you!”

US Grant – “Eh, he looks like the type that would believe that the space program is faked but pro wrestling is real.”

George Washington – “He looks like Barbara Bush. Is it bad that I find that hot?”

James Madison – “Isn’t he like 5’2” and 100 lbs? I’d break him like a twig.”

Salmon P. Chase – “No, seriously, who?”

Grover Cleveland – “If he can take the donut out of his mouth I might get a shot at kissin’ that fool!”

Ben Franklin – “Eww! He looks like a cartoon! No, no. He looks like someone drew a face on a turd or something!”

Discussion

The attractiveness values have now been attributed to each male on paper currency. They suggest that women are attracted to bastards who fall victim to challenges, and they revile creative men with a penchant for clever sayings. The findings from a cross-sectional study cannot establish causality or the direction of the variables’ interrelationships, but this study suggests that further studies may study this. Future studies may use these values and cross reference spending patterns with perceived attractiveness (E.G. would a woman ask for two tens over a twenty? Would a woman not buy something that cost \$100 because she did not want to look at Benjamin Franklin?)

This study did not evaluate the perceptions of gay men as it is awkward to ask on the street. Further testing will be indicated. ☒

Recipe of the Month:

Christmas Wreaths

By Elizabeth Carlson

In the top of a double boiler put:

30 large marshmallows

½ cup butter

When this is melted add:

¼ tsp green food coloring

1 tsp vanilla

In a large bowl put:

3½ cup corn flakes

Drizzle melted mixture over corn flakes, folding until covered. Be careful to not crush corn flakes. On a cookie sheet place wax paper. Dip your fingers in cold water and shape mixture into wreaths. Add little silver balls and cinnamon candies. ☒

A Turkey Pesto Sandwich

By Alan Fishman

Ingredients:

1 Artisan Ciabatta Roll, sliced and toasted

1 quick dribbling of Extra Virgin Olive Oil over the top slice

1 handful of arugula placed over oil

1 generous swath Bella Cucina Fresh Basil Pesto, spread over bottom slice

1 semi-generous portion Boar's Head Salsalito Turkey Breast, folded haphazardly over pesto

1 slice Provolone Cheese over the turkey

1 piece Marinated Roasted Red Pepper over the cheese

Sandwich is best served with Le Grand Pinot Grigio, Sunburst Tangerines, and Chocolate Chip Macaroons while sitting on a blanket in the park with a date. Shoes should be off. Blanket should be warm and cozy. And ideally, there should be kids flying remote controlled airplanes nearby that you can help when planes crash land into branches 20 feet in the air. ☒



Mattlock

By Calderwood
and Fritz

"Possibly in the future, but maybe in the past, my darling."

Anyone Wanna Join My Fantasy League?

By Alan Fishman

Fantasy sports merge the data from games with the trendy marketing of online communities to create a unique entertainment experience. The way in which fans interact with sports programming has changed forever. People don't just root for their favorite teams anymore. They root for specific players to score, sometimes for the opposing team. While the new experience is thrilling, we have lost a defining characteristic of what makes us sports fans... team loyalty.

First Napster, Friendster, and My Space, now fantasy football, basketball, and English premier league soccer, online recreational programming has a measurable impact on our daily lives. Whether one steals five minutes from the work day, uses up a lunch break or spends all day online, we collect and share information over the internet insatiably. In fantasy sports, the social aspects of an online community are bundled together with a competitively scored point system that drives the desire to watch or read about sporting events in a new direction. It connects recreational time spent in front of the television with recreational time spent in front our computer monitors. So we can bounce from one source of stimulation to the next, always seeking out our next stat fix. The whole experience is a marketing executive's wet dream, but it dilutes the experience of watching your favorite team play the game.

ESPN.com reported on December 5, 2006 that most NFL players think fantasy sports is ultimately good for the game. Apparently many players also manage fantasy football teams. Some admitted that in the back of their mind, they will be happy when an opponent makes a play if they have them on their fantasy team. How can this be good for sports? Am I the only one that thinks fantasy sports are bad for sports as a whole?

"I think it's ruined the game, actually," said Jake Plummer, recently replaced as starter by rookie Jay Cutler. "There are no true fans anymore, because if I lose a game I come out of Invesco Field and there's not a Denver fan mad that I lost, but happy because I threw three TDs. When I was growing up, I was a fan of my team, not the points I'm getting. It's kind of unnerving to me because you're like, 'We didn't win, but you're happy.' That's not right, because I'm not happy. I don't care if I throw five TDs if we lose. It's all about getting the win."

"The last three or four years, that's (fantasy point totals) all they care about," Rams quarterback Marc Bulger said of fantasy football fans. "They come up to you: 'Ah, you lost, [but] you still threw for 300. Great job, I got you this week.' I'm more worried about sometimes dealing with people [about fantasy] than I am if we won or lost. Because if you throw for 200 yards, no touchdowns and win, people are more mad at you."

I don't care that fantasy sports generates a greater overall interest in sports. I care if my team wins this weekend. There is so much drama in the NFL right now, I think it's crazy people spend their time crunching numbers to pick the most productive starters for their league teams. For instance, most of the NFC teams vying for playoff spots actually play teams trying to get into the playoffs these last three games!

The Falcons play the Cowboys, Panthers, and Eagles.

The Cowboys play the Falcons and Eagles.

The Panthers play the Steelers, Falcons, and Saints.

The Eagles play the Giants, Cowboys, and Falcons.

The Giants play the Eagles and Saints.

And there's another conference chock full of equally important final games. So what are you waiting for? Aren't you ready for some football?!!! ☒

From Ordinary to Luxury: How Hardship becomes Privilege over Time

By Dan Fritz

Around 1880, at the time the incandescent lamp was invented, Thomas Edison was once noted as saying, "We will make electricity so cheap that only the rich will burn candles." This statement must have sounded so contrary to common sense as to have seemed like a quip from Oscar Wilde. Almost 130 years later, that prediction has, relatively speaking, come true. Candlelit dinners are anything but penurious—shoot, I usually eat at restaurants with neon lights on the exterior. Several years ago, I bought my great aunt a beeswax candle that cost me the equivalent of half a month's worth of internet service. The thing was extravagant enough that it was probably never lit out of hesitancy in ruining a decoration. To a certain degree, candles have become luxury items, mood-setters that cost extra, just like any number of other products and activities in modern life. What once was undesirable or average is now worth purchasing at a high price. The following are just a few examples of how modern life has been transformed by the inevitable advance of technology and wealth.

Camping and Hunting: Mother Nature is a harsh mistress. To this day, flood and famine destroys thousands of people's lives every year. Hunter-gatherers of ancient times found that establishing cities was a good way to survive, compared to the relatively treacherous existence of living in the wilderness. Today, people go out of their way to buy the opportunity to live in a tent and to kill animals the hard way. At least modern campers get to go home to their space heaters and refrigerators when the vacation's over.

Vinyl Records and Vintage: By the time CDs became a common medium for storing music in the 1980s, LP records suddenly turned into bulky, scratch-prone liabilities. While some diehards to this day contend that the analog sound of a record is better, the real comeback of the LP has been due to collectible nostalgia and the sex-appeal of spinning the wax. In vintage products, what was once a throwaway is now eBayable. Inferior has become (in some ways) superior.

Running: In the somewhat entertaining third installment of the *Back to the Future* series, Marty (from 1985) talks to some townspeople in 1885, mentioning the recreation of running. One townspeople replies, "Run for fun? What the hell kind of fun is that?" Thank you, Hollywood, for helping

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...*Pink Floyd, p. 1...*

different “animals” of society are described and ultimately condemned. These three animals (the body songs of the work) are flanked by the introduction and conclusion (“Pigs on the Wing: Part One” and “Pigs on the Wing: Part Two”), which work to reveal the inner nature of the criticism and bring us full circle. Using animal motifs to lace up the middle of the album, Pink Floyd achieves its first comprehensive social symphony.

In previous albums (*Atom Heart Mother, Meddle, Dark Side of the Moon, etc.*), Pink Floyd’s style was brought into a unique conceptual sphere, the albums themselves creating cohesive symphonies, touched here and there with melancholy and social commentary. This inclination is further evident in *Animals*, giving it a vivid place in the progression of both structure and content in Pink Floyd’s work. *Dark Side* shows frustrated inklings of the ephemeral nature of life, an echo of themes also developed in *Obscured by Clouds*, while *Wish You Were Here* expands upon the societal dilemmas of the corporate super-structure, even the structure profiting off of the real-world band itself. This social criticism and the regret of unrealized dreams most famously culminates in the album and movie masterpiece *The Wall*. In the middle of this progression sits *Animals*, an exceedingly melancholy though also darkly humorous album. *Animals* consciously works to achieve a stricter level of structure than its predecessors, mirroring (and perhaps mocking) the structure of the monstrous, gloomy factory on the album cover. For the first time, a common image is used throughout one of Pink Floyd’s albums—in this case animal imagery—tying the songs together, especially with the polish of the introduction and the reprisal. *Animals* is essentially a five paragraph essay on the disappointing elements of society with intro, three body paragraphs, and conclusion.

In an almost Kafkaesque exercise in the subjunctive, the introduction presents us with a hypothetical “if,” thus leading us into the piece with options. We are given the opportunity to look at the following argument through a second story window perspective and make a choice in the end. The lyrics “If you didn’t care / what happened to me, / And I didn’t care for you” shows this negative hypothetical. The conclusion of the scenario is presented: we would remain isolated, bitter individuals “zig zagging” our way through our miserable lives. We would find positive interaction only in unlikely chance, as likely as pigs flying, or “pigs on the wing.” In this sense, the mood and the content of the entire album is set. The mood is pessimistic as the hypothetical is presented as a failure of some element(s) of society. So what happens if “you” *did* care what happened to “me” and “I” *did* care for “you?” We are only shown the results by implication through a demonstration of the opposite.

From the very first line of “Dogs,” we hear a more biting approach (pun intended) that feeds on its judgments until the end of the album. The beastly “dog” of the song is a ravenous creature that ruthlessly hunts its prey. This predatory animal clearly corresponds to the modern executive (the societal dog) who fights to climb the corporate ladder through any and every means possible. The first half of the song describes how to be an effective dog while the second half criticizes the outcomes of having become one. A good dog is always alert and nearly mechanical in reaction, as the following verse reads like an instructional audio tape: “You gotta sleep on your toes... / You gotta be able to pick out the easy meat with your eyes closed.” A good dog watches out for itself: “You have to be trusted by the people that you lie to / So that when they turn their backs on you / You’ll get the chance to put the knife in.” And if a good dog sticks to the described guidelines, it will win its reward of...solitary death by cancer? Here, near the middle of the song, the criticism begins, and we are clearly shown that the modern corporate “dog” who prays on the lowlier members of society will “reap the harvest [he has] sown.” He will have bypassed a presumably better life by having spent all of his time clawing his way to the top, stepping on everyone in his wake. He will have bought his success at a price that is too high to reconcile, carrying “weight” that cannot be shed

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...*Ordinary, from previous page...*

make my point. Running (and much exercise in general) used to be a mechanism for escape, an undesirable bit of manual labor. Many soldiers died from forced marches throughout the ages. Today, people line up in droves and spend thousands of dollars to train for marathons.

Skinniness: In the same vein as running, body mass opinion has changed over the course of history. Whereas plumpness used to connote general good health and well-being, slenderness is now the physical ideal (at least in Western Society). People pay money to not eat very much and to destroy what calories they have taken in on any given day. The less plentiful the food consumption, the higher the class. In today’s society, if one’s not slender, apparently one’s not taking care of oneself.

Cooking: Eating at home is still considered to be a frugal option in many cases, but it has also exhibited a retrograde evolution when it comes to preparing a meal for someone on a special occasion. For instance, it is far more personalized—and luxurious, of course—to prepare a salad of tangerine wedges and asparagus spears than it is to order it at the restaurant down the street, whilst on a date, for instance. Cooking has evolved from something every mom does to something only the talented few can do, hence making it a candidate for this article.

Anything Handcrafted: The assembly line eliminated the value of the hand-crafted product. Replaceable parts led the revolt, while incessant branding and marketing put the nail in the coffin. People like what they recognize and can return at the local Macy’s if need be. Yet, the post-industrialist reaction to this is to highly value that which is handcrafted. Anything from shoes to furniture to figurines has a noticeably higher value if handmade, whether or not it actually is better-made.

And the list goes on. The natural outcome of comfort and wealth is to seek ways to simulate *discomfort* and lack of wealth. Commonness becomes quaintness. As technology pushes society into a virtual realm of interaction, people revert to more tactile ways of life. And while this doesn’t lead everyone to become Amish, it does lead to what otherwise might seem illogical progressions. It is for this reason that when voice recognition software becomes easily capable of writing sentences like those in this article, the value of quills will skyrocket. ☒

...*Pink Floyd, from previous page...*

in the end stages of life. The harvest is a miserable, friendless existence full of "bad blood" that "turns to stone" eventually "[dragging him] down." This "stone" is reiterated later in the album as a form of non-disposable burden, or described differently, Jacob Marley-like shackles.

"Pigs (Three different ones)" leads the listener into the middle of the album with the lingering venom of the previous song. This time, we are shown—as the title suggests—three different kinds of societal "pigs." The one thing they have in common is that they're all "charade[s]," they're phonies, to borrow from Salinger. They're "nearly a laugh, / But [they're] really a cry" in that their seriousness destroys any concept of farcical wit. The first pig is a fat-chinned patriot with his "hand on [his] heart," while the second is a handgun-toting, "f*cked up old hag." The third pig is perhaps the government ("Whitehouse") or a political leader. The three pigs root around in this society in unison, each supporting the other, metaphorically slopping around the "pig bin" of the world. These members of society are presented in a grotesque manner, who under normal circumstances would be laughable but because they hold real power are not. The funky beats leave the listener with a concept of cool but no material resolution as the song fades out.

The climax of this album is the third body song of the symphonic essay, "Sheep." The use of sheep is a mundane metaphor—like when someone talks of the mindlessness of the herd (of cattle)—describing the average philistine who wishes to simply (and blindly) "follow the leader," even if that leader does not have the interest of the "sheep" in mind. Even the average person is mocked in this album, being only "dimly aware" of what is going on in the world. Sheep imagery is also highly biblical in context, referring to the body of followers shepherded by God. Interestingly, the song follows through with this biblical connection, providing a darkly humorous version of the 23rd Psalm, "The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want." But whereas the Psalmist's lord is protective and generous, the Floyd's lord has the uncompassionate intention to "converteth [them] to lamb cutlets." There is hope, though, for the mindless sheep if only they quietly reflect and "master the art of karate," rising up against the butcher lord. We learn shortly thereafter that, with the downfall of the lord (equivalent to the "dogs" referred to in the previous song of the same title), the avenger sheep "march cheerfully out of obscurity into the dream." When the sheep of society rise up against the oppressor dogs, the world is theirs for the taking. And yet, they "better stay home / And do as [they're] told." So, even with freedom at their fingertips (hoovetips?), the sheep still need to be told what to do.

Finally, the album closes with the reprisal of "Pigs on the Wing," which comforts us in the end by revealing that we now "know that I care what happens to you" and vice versa. We don't need to "feel alone, / Or the weight of the stone" that dragged the dog down at the beginning of the album. In spite of hearing a series of acidic attacks on every stereotypical group in society, the listener can find a safe place in the concluding lyrics. The album has shown us what not to be, i.e. heartless, phony, remorseless, uncontemplative; this leads us to seek the opposite through one definitive characteristic—compassion. We are not shown the steps to achieve this state of betterment in society (aside from karate maybe), but at least we know one thing on which to focus. And for Roger Waters-era Pink Floyd, that's more positive instruction that you will ever get. ☐

Xbox 360 is better than the Wii

Why a hardcore gamer prefers power over novelty
Originally posted 2:23pm EST, Tue, Nov 28, 2006 on
geek.com

By James Schneider

Four of my brother's college friends showed up at our Thanksgiving dinner as they have since they were Freshmen four years ago. This time was different, however, since standard pleasantries had been replaced with excitement over their suite's recent purchase of a Nintendo Wii.

"Boxing is like real boxing. I had 14 straight knockouts," my brother raved. "Ohmygosh, you have to try the golf," one of his friends said. "Even tennis is fun," another chimed in. The Wii excitement continued for quite a while as others asked about this mystical motion-sensing device.

But I had pretty much had enough of it. I'm not against other people having fun per se, and I'm not against casual gamers or average people getting into gaming--on the surface, at least. But having seen and read all I could read about the Wii, I could nearly guarantee I wouldn't like it.

I'm a hardcore gamer, and I have a home in the Xbox 360--and will in Sony's PlayStation 3 if I should so choose--whereas people intrigued by the Wii are mostly casual gamers. The console is marketed as a fun, cheap system that's easy for anyone to pick up and just play. The graphics are not the selling point, the innovation of the Wii-mote and nunchuk are. So, there should not be any problem with the Wii-people enjoying their Wii separate from me. Fair enough.

One of my brother's friends knew I had a 360 and a widescreen HDTV, and all of them were eager to check it out. Being the good host--and loyal fanboy?--that I am, I loaded up the training mission of *Gears of War* in co-op mode and waited to see their impression.

Not 5 minutes into the mission the guy playing co-op alongside me said, "We should sell our Wii and buy a 360. Look how amazing this looks." Disgusted, one of the suitemates pointed out the aforementioned excitement. "Okay, okay. Well, maybe instead of selling the Wii we should get a 360 also." Ding ding ding!

Scores of reviews and coverage from E3 on the consoles could have told anyone that the 360 would be more of a visual treat than the Wii. And as someone who is not worried by the intricacies of learning multiple buttons, I didn't see any reason to make my game experience simpler.

The next night I was feeling smug about owning the superior console--I'll admit it. With a big "I was right" smile on my face, I shared the story with one of my buddies who--as it happened--had just purchased a Wii and a 360. The Wii made it out of the box first, and his father was utterly hooked on it, his friends were utterly hooked on it ... everyone who had picked it up was utterly hooked on it.

Even if I knew I wasn't the target gamer, I still felt it would not be right to continue to bash the Wii without at least trying it. Since we had plans later, I only had time for one boxing match.

The Wii-mote cinched fine on my right wrist, and the nunchuk felt comfortable in my left hand. The boxing game, part of *Wii Sports*, which comes with the Wii, is quite simple button-wise. One problem I did notice was that I am too tall (six-foot-three-inches)

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Fish Face

Contributed by Elizabeth Carlson



For What It's Worth: Compensation for Organ Donors

By Amanda Hall

Imagine, if you will, that your grandmother owns a priceless diamond ring. The diamond in the center is glorious, one that cannot be recreated in any lab. Your grandmother passes on, leaving you the ring. Now, since you are a male, let's say, and the ring is not of particular sentimental value, you decide to take it to a jeweler. The jeweler happens to have another customer, one who has a ring setting but no diamond for the middle. You give him your ring, and he takes the diamond out of your setting and puts it into his customer's setting. While he makes a fortune on the entire transaction (that diamond is hard to find after all, and he is the only one who knows how to transfer the diamond to the setting), you get nothing at all – not one dime.

Now imagine it's an internal organ.

Ok, maybe it's not the same thing, but I think I make my point: How can we allow something so invaluable as our own organs or the organs of our loved ones to be profitable to medical professionals, while we receive nothing? I know what you are going to say: But, Dear Writer, you are supposed to do it out of altruistic concern for the many people on a waiting list for various organs. Yes, indeed we check "organ donor" on our driver's licenses out of a desire to help others, but that doesn't mean that we sanction the outrageous profits that medical professionals, hospitals, and drug companies make off of these organs. If it was truly a charitable process, we would donate organs at no cost, doctors would insert the organs at cost, and insurance would cover the rest. As it stands now, those who donate do so for nothing, and those who receive have to pay insanely high amounts of money. Both sides seem to be losing something. Where do those payments go?

...continued next page...

...Xbox, from previous page...

and my reach is too wide for me to punch comfortably using the Wii-mote and nunchuk. (As I type "Wii-mote" and "nunchuk", I want to note once again how little I care for all these cutesy names for the console and controller.)

Regardless of my issues with the name and my discomfort, I still wanted an accurate take on the system, so I kept swinging. I had somewhat of a problem blocking, which may take some minor getting used to. The punches seemed to register unevenly, but picked up speed quite well. Probably because it was my first time--and due to some of the other reasons--I was only barely able to beat the boxer. Another thing I noticed was that I am seriously out of shape. I was winded and sweating after less than 5 minutes of gameplay.

But was it fun, you ask? I could see how it could be. I was thinking that even though I didn't particularly like it, should I ever entertain guests it would be a fun game to pull out if people were tired of talking or playing cards. So maybe I'd get it for other people to enjoy. Everyone was amused watching me punching furiously, which means that the Wii is fun.

It wasn't particularly fun for me, however. It was awkward to play videogames, which hasn't been the case for me since I got used to controllers with more than a handful of buttons.

Worse, I thought of the implications of such a system. The motion-sensing on the Wii *is* amazing--let me put that out there. It's probably the closest we've gotten to virtual reality, short of when I played basketball with a neon glove on a blue screen at Liberty Science Center in New Jersey. The graphics can always improve once a sufficient number of people get really hooked. I can definitely see that happening already, even with the simple *Wii Sports* title. So maybe instead of battling boxers who could pass for "South Park" characters, we could fight avatars that were photorealistic ... one day.

I fear, perhaps too much, that future consoles will be more like the Wii than the 360. Even though it's a fun idea to have people boxing pixels with their real fists and swinging virtual golf clubs and the like, my bread and butter will be shooters, and I do not want to have to use anything like a Wii-mote and a nunchuk to shoot down virtual enemies. I don't mind if the controller changes, but I have an idea of a shape, and it looks suspiciously like a 360 controller, or at worst a dual shock. I want the graphics to improve and improve and improve to the point where I am completely immersed in the environment.

I don't want to break a sweat while playing videogames. I used to play soccer and tennis and I ran track and cross-country for 6 years, so I know what it takes to be an athlete. I've also covered so-called cyberathletes for *MLG* and *Team 3D*. While some of the cyberathletes were athletic, too, I don't think being in good athletic shape should be a requirement for gaming. Gaming should be a sedentary experience if you want it to be.

Additionally, I don't want to be given a plastic gun or steering wheel to make me feel more like I am killing people or running them over in *GTA*. I can already see Jack Thompson [*UPDATE 11/29/2006 12:05 A.M. EST: We originally had Scott Thompson there instead of Jack; sorry!*] freaking out over the idea, and I know for a fact it's not going to fly in Germany.

How to move forward? I think it's possible for the Wii to evolve as a casual gamer's paradise, and in time maybe some converted gamers will be less freaked out by something such as the Xbox 360 or PS3. They might grow to like learning something slightly more complex; or they might not, in which case they have a great home. Nintendo DS and the Game Boy have proven that you don't need to market to hardcore gamers like me to be extremely successful.

As for the other side, the 360/PS3 graphics whore side, I hope games grow to be more and more complex, A.I. grows to nearly human levels of adaptation, and graphics become so eye-popping that gamers feel like they are in actual movies.

So, I'm going to give credit where credit is due and suggest that the Wii is a perfect gift for a non-gamer or gamer alike. For me, though, I'm quite excited to finish *GoW* and eventually get my hands on a PS3. ☒

...*Organ Donors, from previous page...*

According to the United Network of Organ Sharing, the estimated cost for getting a liver (just choosing a garden variety organ) transplant is around \$315,000 dollars for the first year, not including annual follow ups. This amount includes: Hospital stay, lab tests, anesthesia, surgeon and operating room personnel, physical therapy, and anti-rejection drugs (which, by the by, cost a whopping \$1500 per month). Insurance usually only pays 80%, leaving you with a \$60,000 bill at the end of the year, and that's if you are lucky enough to have comprehensive insurance.

Now, sitting there with calculator in hand, you may assume that the cost is justified, but consider cancer treatment. While still outrageous in its own right, the cost for a year's worth of similarly extensive cancer treatment rarely tops out over \$100,000, though it may also include hospital stays, ongoing treatments, anesthesia, surgeons, wildly expensive medications etc. (This, of course, does not account for more radical, experimental treatments.)

This leaves me to wonder: What is the major difference in these treatments? Of course, one is adding, and one is subtracting. Therefore, that which is added may be considered the moderating variable, which means that the value of the organ itself greatly increases the amount which hospitals, medical organizations, drug companies, and medical personnel receive. So, why in all this altruism is someone profiting so greatly?

I am not suggesting that doctors work for free or even for less money, particularly if they are specialized enough to perform the delicate procedure (I do understand the true value of doctors –this is not a judgment on the profession). However, they can perform nothing without the benevolence of those who donate organs, some of which cannot even afford funeral expenses. In that way, reward both the doctor for his/her invaluable work and the donor (or donor's family) for his/her valuable organ.

This suggestion toes a bioethical line towards the slippery slope of the "black market organ." Currently, it is illegal to sell organs in the US, but we have all been regaled with tales of waking up in an ice-filled bathtub sans kidney. This vision can be considered a mere apparition of our horror movie-laden society, for I was surprised at how many doctors, lawyers, economists, and transplant candidates do support the idea of incentives for donating a kidney. As this is one of the few things you can donate and survive, much focus is directed at kidney "transfers." For an example of the lush information on the internet, visit:

http://www.econtalk.org/archives/2006/06/the_economics_o_4.html

This site has archived various opinions, statistics, and articles about the idea of profiting from kidney donation. According to these and other resources, almost all kidney donations come from friends, family members, or those who have passed on, while altruistic donations from strangers are miniscule. If every person who died each year offered to be an organ donor post-mortem, only 13,000 people would be able to donate since few causes of death allow for kidney donation. Currently, about 66,000 people are on the kidney transplant waiting list. Therefore, the medical world must turn to the living, and most living people state that they would only donate to a loved one. While hoping that we become a more altruistic society is "nice," it does not help the thousands of people that die each year. We have to move towards a more realistic vision for saving these people's lives. Why is it so wrong to attempt to find a motivation for people to save someone else's life (other than the warm, fuzzy feeling deep down)? As some economists see it, it is a win-win situation, providing that the regulating bodies would be able to maintain the highest standards (i.e. no drifter ninjas could walk in off the street with a grin on their face and your kidney in a cooler).

As Adam Smith once said, "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest." I believe in the benevolence of all, but that benevolence has a limit for most. To risk surgery for a stranger is a sacrifice of a different order. We must find a way to increase organ donations, while balancing the current reward system of who is profiting and who is not. Imagine YOU are the one who needs the kidney: how much is it worth now? ☒

Guilty Pleasures

By Dan Fritz

Do you ever hold your tongue when someone mentions how terrible *Mission Impossible 2* was? When someone recalls the horrors of the It's a Small World ride in the Magic Kingdom, do you simply nod your head in agreement while averting eye contact? When *Blind Date* pops on TV late at night, do you watch...on purpose? If you answered "yes" to any of these questions (or not), you may be someone who conceals a guilty pleasure.

Well, in this series, I will lay it all out on the table, sharing a few of my own guilty pleasures with you, possibly in the hopes of gaining support for my guilty pleasures, possibly because this is my unintended start at compiling my memoirs. Whatever the case may be, I know I'm not alone in the realm of clandestine desire and veiled gratification. It's only expected that every person has some quirk about them that equates to actually liking something like the Dave Matthews Band....

This issue covers a movie that I have seen quite a few times, though you may never have heard of it. This cinematic meisterwerk is something I watched a while back while sleeping on a blow up mattress on Tom Deutsch's floor. This film stars Dennis Quaid and Louis Gosset, Jr., both whose characters are interstellar warriors in the distant future. One is a human man, heavily bearded at one point. The other is a hermaphroditic, lizard creature. This movie is called *Enemy Mine*.

I used to have this movie on VHS, which accounted for 90% of the viewings, and you probably won't understand why I like this movie—which is why it's a guilty pleasure. (But again, maybe there is a closeted viewer who will send me an email validating my tastes.) Even I can't really tell you why I like it.

The movie starts by giving us a very brief background on the situation of the main characters. Dennis Quaid's character, Will Davedge, as mentioned above, is a space fighter pilot who has developed a particular hatred for the lizard enemy (Drak) that is colonizing the far reaches of outer space in competition with the humans. While engaging the enemy, Davedge and his copilot are shot down over a barren planet, along with the Drak pilot, played by Louis Gosset, Jr. Davedge's co-pilot bites the dust, but Davedge, in his extreme displeasure, continues to try to kill the enemy on foot, even brandishing a knife at one point and lighting the surface of a pond on fire while the Drak is swimming.

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...*Energy Beer, p. 1...*

When I moved to Germany three months ago, I really thought I would be in beer heaven. With such wonderful images and such a strict purity law, how could the beer not be good? The first night in Dortmund, I had a Dortmunder-Actien Brewery (DAB) pilsner. Each major town has its own brewery, and Dortmund has a few, so this would be an exciting beer-filled year!

The pilsner was good, but I'm not a huge pilsner fan. It all tastes like basement frat parties and stale cigarette smoke to me. Don't get me wrong—it's far better than a similar pilsner in the US, but I would prefer a good Belgian-style ale any day. And since Belgium is a neighbor to Germany, how hard could those be to find?

In truth, impossible. After two months, I found a dusty bottle of Chimay in the high-end department store grocery. For a liter of Chimay, I could have purchased 6 liters of local pilsner. So, what's wrong here?

The short answer is a four-syllable word, namely, Reinheitsgebot. This strict purity law basically disallows for creativity in the brewing process. So, while a Belgian Ale can be brewed with cloves and other tasty spices, the German brewer is left with water, hops, and yeast. There are other kinds of beers that qualify under the Reinheitsgebot, like the ubiquitous Hefeweizen and a strange darkish (and very effeminate) brew called Alt-bier, or "old" beer. I love the Hefeweizen, and the Alt-bier is good for a change of pace, but it's like only having three things on the menu at McDonald's—it gets boring.

Take a walk through your local beverage super-discounter-beer-distributor. You'll see all kinds of strange microbrews. Pumpkin-Hefeweizen, wheat, super-malt, apricot, raspberry, cherry, Lambics, Ales, Stouts, all shapes, colors, tastes, and above all, VARIETY. Here, it's Pils (eight different varieties of the same beer), Hefeweizen (regular or dark), and Alt (two different varieties of the same beer).

Not surprisingly, the youth market is losing interest in the beverage of their national heritage. Most bars boast about their cocktail list, not their beer selection. So, in response, brewing companies have started making "hybrids" to lure their youth base back to beer. This is where Energy Beer comes in. I'm not making this up. There are three different kinds of Energy Beer available, and they taste more like malt liquor than beer. There's also flavored beer, in orange, lemon, and my favorite, Kola. (No, not Koala, but cola, with a K).

But this is NOT beer, according to the purity laws. Beer might be in the label name, but it's like calling California Sparkling Wine Champagne...or like calling The High Life the Champagne of Beers.

So, what's first on my drink list when I get back to the US? Right after a margarita (tequila is hard to come by here), I'm thinking either a liter of Belgian tripel, or a nice tall Guinness. Or a variety pack of Samuel Adams.

In the meantime, it's back to the Energy Beer for that pre-party buzz. ☒

...*Guilty Pleasures, from previous page...*

Needless to say, his plan does not work, and he is captured by the Drak. The two of them are forced to depend on each other to survive, and eventually a lovely interracial friendship blossoms.

So, when does it get interesting? It's doesn't really, because it's not an action-based movie. It's a character driven story about race relations that pretends to be a sci-fi adventure. The two races are in conflict with each other due to a lack of understanding, but a barren Mars-like planet fixes that for at least these two. Isn't that sweet?

This movie features a baby Drak, an arrow through someone's neck, a turtle-like creature that probably tastes like chicken, and interplanetary slave drivers.

Notable movie quote:

"Zamis, four five?"

"Uh...no...you're a Drak." ☒

A Letter from Santa

Dear children of the world,

Ho ho ho! I hope you all have been good little boys and girls this year! I wish my tidings were of a more light-hearted nature, but I must share something serious with all of you cherubs. I have become alarmed at the increasing hostility towards Christmas in the United States. The intolerance with Christmas reached a boiling point last week when a Rabbi insisted that a Christmas tree be taken down from the Seattle airport, and, shockingly, the airport obliged (only to put it back a few days later when they realized angry Gentiles outnumbered angry Jews in Seattle by a considerable margin). Now, boys and girls, you all know that Santa supports the separation of church and state, and he opposes the Ten Commandments in government buildings. Religion should not be foisted upon any of you, unless you live in Utah. But, it seems to me that some people have too much time in their day and find ways to chap their own asses. (Excuse the language; Santa's had a few boiler makers.)

I do not deny that Christmas itself has become somewhat of a juggernaut, and that can be daunting for those who do not celebrate. Santa does not begrudge anyone a little annoyance at its ubiquitous nature, but Santa is disappointed that these detractors continue to take away from all that Santa has accomplished in the field on de-religifying Christmas. First of all, many people who do not believe in Jesus celebrate Christmas. In fact, studies have shown that, when asked to think of a name associated with Christmas, people are at least 10 times more likely to say this jolly fellow than the baby Jesus (take that, crown o' thorns). And, while mangers and wise men and virgins all symbolize that great day in Bethlehem some time around mid-April (hehehe), we use Christmas trees, candy canes, and reindeer. How many "manger" snow globes did you see driving down your street tonight? And how many "Santa petting Rudolph" ones did you see? I thought so, Yuppie Scum (man, these Harvey Wallbangers are deeeelicious). Alls I am sayin' is that, if one opposes Christianity, one should L-O-V-E Christmas, a detraction of the very thing it celebrates. I mean, when the kids switch over to "King of Kings" from "Santa Claus Is Coming To Town," then we can talk. Until then, chill out. I don't see the great JC peddling M&Ms and Fruity Pebbles. No! They come to this fella. (In fact, I am starting a drive for, "God bless you," to be replaced with, "Santa bring you gifts." Pass it around.)

And let's be honest: The Christmas season is all about the love and giving and sharing and family (Santa's getting tired of commas). How can you oppose that? Seriously, you need a hobby if you have time to organize petitions and marches against something that doesn't hurt you. Again, Santa understands your right to be angry or annoyed, but Jesus! Let's not insist on sterilizing everything so we

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I Voted for Emmitt

By Dan Fritz

Having moved back to New York this year, I now have access to a plethora of entertainment opportunities. The theatre, musicals, museums, and countless restaurants await my patronage almost whenever I wish. I also have a pretty good television signal, which is where our story begins....

My access to television for the prior two years had been spotty at best. Susan and I lived in an apartment in Connecticut—meaning that we had no television air signal save several Telemundo-type channels (which were clear as crystal). Being thrifty and not wishing to create a hassle had I wished at any point in time to move, I never ordered cable television. As a result, Susan and I took advantage of the library, checking out books, movies, and even music. We saw five seasons of *The Sopranos* this way, read more books than most people read in ten years, and dare I confess, talked to each other extensively. We also listened to talk radio quite a bit, spanning the full range of programming from Fresh Air on NPR to the Savage Nation. After a while, I never even desired to watch television, except for maybe the occasional chance to catch *60 Minutes* or a football game (note: I still know nothing about fantasy football, partially due to this very issue). In other words, television to me was all but dead.

So, when Susan and I moved down to New York again, my world was reawakened with such artful television programming as *Deal or No Deal*, *Show Me the Money*, and *Dancing with the Stars*. This is a tired realization, but nearly every television show is centered on winning money and becoming famous. While this should be the point where I lament this development in society, I actually enjoy all three of these shows. Howie Mandel is surprisingly competent as a gameshow host on *Deal or No Deal* and the models are ridiculous but enjoyable. The only time I cringe is when they have some comment before they open one of the cases. The game itself has close to no strategic component—the only thing the contestant has to decide is whether the chances are better that he'll get rich waiting or get rich taking the money now. The contestant needs only the ability to say "yes" or "no." Now that I think about it, I can't give any serious reasons as to why this show is entertaining, except that it is. It must be the models....

Which leads us to *Show Me the Money*, hosted by William Shatner, or "The Shat," as I now refer to him. Not only does this show have a bunch of models, but they also dance constantly, as does Shatner. I'm a little disappointed that the Shat doesn't make for a more interesting conversationalist with the contestants, but this whole dancing component is fantastic. Or, it may be that I am influenced by the Latino neighborhood that I live in—have you ever watched a gameshow on Hispanic television? It's just silly.

Finally, there's *Dancing with the Stars*. I have a two-part theory why this show is so popular. The theory is that 1) people enjoy watching stars do anything (this is a fact of our culture that doesn't translate to my enjoyment of the show), and 2) it is entirely harmless, in that it makes no political statements, it focuses on talent rather than money, and the judges are easy to boo with their sensational reviews of the dances. And since everyone gets to vote, the viewer has a controlling stake in the show. By the way, I voted once while watching this show, and it was for Emmitt. He wasn't a better dancer, but I don't care. I liked watching him more.

I leave you with these three shows to whet your television palate and enter a fantasy world that doesn't ask anything of you except that you continue to watch. Here's to good-natured, contemplation-less entertainment...with models. My television catharsis is now complete. ☒

...Letter from Santa, from previous page...

don't "offend" anyone. You know, hamburger is made of cow, and Hindus worship cows. BURGER KING IS PREJUDICED TOWARDS ALL HINDUS!!!! (Santa's getting' the munchies...)

I jest, but I think I make my point. The rabbi is insisting on putting a menorah up in the airport, almost like a "if you have it, I get it, too." The reason I say that is, during any other Jewish holiday, I have never once seen a fit thrown because it is not ornamentally represented. Where is all the Passover crap around Easter? (The Easter Bunny wouldn't put up with this shit.) How about those millions of observations throughout the year that don't coincide with any of the Christian holidays? I don't see demands there. Mr. Rabbi, you sound like somebody's little brother: "If he gets a cookie, I want one!" Don't take this as a sleight against your religion; when Santa is done de-Christianizing Christmas, he's coming after Yom Kippur. Get ready, big guy.

All I am saying is, many people celebrate Christmas as a non-religious holiday. I mean, it's like saying St. Valentine's day is offensive because it's a Catholic Observance. Nobody throws a conniption about Cupid single-handedly snatching that shit from the jaws of religious significance. I am sure that, wherever Mr. Valentine is, he's spitting nails that his name is now synonymous with a piece of crap construction paper heart, cut by a 6-year old in the shape of a kidney bean and sprinkled with glitter bits.

Anyway, I hope next Christmas, when you see a pine tree, which they did not have in Bethlehem, bedecked with glass balls in a public place, you will realize that 90% of this country celebrates Christmas, and it is no way a slap in your face. Just like the next time you hear a Jessica Simpson song. It's not people like you who made her popular, but she is, unfortunately, popular, and lots of idiots want to hear her. The masses are idiots, but you Americans celebrate idiocy in a democracy. You have to; otherwise, you'd be China. And the Chinese definitely don't celebrate Hanukah, so either way, you're screwed.

Hugs and Kisses,
Santa C. ☒

Newsletter Ideas

I'm looking for writers for the following topics:

1. The impact of a bi-lingual society in America
2. The current fascination with sci-fi/fantasy/comics
3. How the current James Bond actor stacks up to the others
4. Speciality Mixed Drinks
5. The rise of vegetarianism, or how modern man is shielded from the death created by meat-eating, or the modern dis-association with nature
6. How IMDB changed the world

Send your article ideas in today!
editor@babbleonline.com ☒

Don't Be an Asshole!

A multi series look at surviving college's famous drinking game

By Brett

I welcome friends and players to the introductory session on becoming an outstanding player at the game of asshole. I plan to update this series from time to time, and particularly at times when time is lacking for me to contribute anything else.

Asshole is about two things: drinking and power. Sometimes when drinking you might feel as though you have more power, in which case the role is best suited as the hole - but for those who delight in delegating drinks, the ascension to presidency necessitates moments of strategic clarity to slip through the gaps of consciousness being further constricted by the beverage of your choice. However, should lady luck deal with pro incumbent sentiment, you'll soon find yourself erecting a legacy of rules responsible for ushering in *that* night of naked Dionysian debauchery echoed only in the annals of college lore.

The difficulty in disseminating such knowledge resides first in the non standard rules of asshole. Every house will have its own standard practices that will regulate how you play your hand. Some might be into the flurry of finger movement required by turn-skipping rules that allow you to drop your load down during a fortuitous lay. There is no real strategy behind this. Be fast. Be quick. Be attentive. That's it. And who would want that? - besides those folks who behind closed doors thread their needle with the repetitious regularity of a sewing machine, leaving the love session a little threadbare. Turn-skipping by way of a quick hand is for the over-excited. You can't even lap your beverage with a lazy tongue or gaze your opponents with a lusty eye when you constantly have to worry about the pile in front of you. Furthermore, it allows for easier upheaval of the social structure my strategy will work so hard to make you the top of, and in the end, how can you have your lascivious paradise if you can never govern it with the necessary rules? So henceforth all of my strategies assume that the rules do not include such provisions. Still, there are other house rules that will complicate my task, so I will provide my advice based on a few standard rules that generally find their way into every game. Each subsequent article will always operate with the following rules in mind (special or additional rules will be introduced at the beginning of articles dealing with that phenomenon):

- You can "pass" even if you have the ability to trump what is on the table. This is the most important rule that you can play with, otherwise there is no strategy involved at all in this game and you might as well go roll dice and play Three Man. However, if you pass, you must drink!

- The president and vice president trade cards with the asshole and vice asshole (two and one) respectively

- There is at least one card that clears

- There is one social card

- A card thrown down of the same value will skip the next person. Skipped people must drink!

- Doubles require doubles, meaning, you can't drop one nine on a pair of nines, you must hold a pair that has equal or greater value. Triples require triples - a group of four is obviously a free clear.

- Cards are dealt to the lowest rank first - meaning they generally

...continued in right column...

...continued from left column...

have more

- Anyone of greater rank in the social hierarchy can ask those of lower standing to perform any alcohol related task such as drinking, drink mixing, drink retrieval, etc.

I believe these are the basic rules, and my articles will assume them. Again, there are other popular favorites, including the asshole removing cards and/or dealing or the famous "last card!" rule (which I will address in another article).

This article focuses on one point: **the next nearest player of lower standing is your biggest threat!** In a clockwise game, this is the person on your left, and from this point forward I will assume you are running a clockwise game. Pay close attention to the person who has the highest card in a round and is ready to clear. The closer that person is to you on your left, the worse off you will be with any ensuing clear. People often operate under the misconception that they should immediately trump a person to their right or someone further up the line (knowing how and when to hold cards will be addressed in another article).

It is O.K., in fact, it is usually good if the person on your right clears. Unless they have a stellar hand, they usually are going to drop a low card, the benefits of which are twofold. First, you get to thankfully rid yourself of lower cards. Secondly, you may have a card of equal value, which means that you not only shed yourself of that damnable weight, but you get to bounce the turn past the player most dangerous to you (the one on the left). And what if they do have a stellar hand? Well who cares, if they go out?! If that is the case, you get to start a round, which is as good as clearing - the most powerful move in the game.

Yes, there can be trouble with these ideas. For example, if the person next to the person on your right starts and drops a low card, you can get skipped and the person on your left <gasp> gets to drop a low card - so be careful in allowing that right hand player on the even spot to start a round. Counting evens/odds in hopes of the participating in the skip loop is highly advanced strategy for another time and article. In addition to the aforementioned peril, the person on your right could also drop doubles or something that you fail to match. Well, then you take another drink (for passing) and roll with the punches. But ultimately, even given these caveats, the last thing you want to see is the person on your left starting the round by getting rid of a three that by the time it reaches you will eventually become an ace. So if you have the ability to trump something dropped by someone close to your left side that multiple people have passed on (and many will have, if it has somehow reached you), then you might want to think about parting with your end game card(s), to thwart your left hand nemesis from harming you, because the value of the card in the next round will probably be just as high - except the "left" player will now have lost two cards to your none. Now, if you see that everyone has passed on that person's card, and you decide to drop, you can assume that they may all pass again, making you the winner and most importantly the clearer. This situation always allows you to find out who really hates you and doesn't want you to win (diplomacy will be tackled in another article), for if a particular player allowed a similarly high value card to pass by when played by another but all of a sudden trumps yours, well then either two things are for certain: They loathe you (which, should they be a bedtime interest

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Games While You're Home

By Dan Fritz

One of my previous articles ("University of Games," in Volume 3, Issue 6 of *Babble-ON*) outlined the significance that games have had in my life, even beyond the typical enjoyment. Well, this article includes a list of games that are purely fun to play while you're at home over the holidays. I have included some of my favorite board, party, computer, and card games.

Board:

1. Life – This classic board game is still enjoyable. Get married, have kids, make money—this is the game of life. Two tips, gamble as much as possible and buy life insurance.
2. Settlers of Catan – For a game without any death and destruction, this is a pretty good one. Start a settlement on an island and trade resources. Every game is different. Even Susan likes it.
3. Survive – Dust this one off if you have it, and let me know what you think. As an island in the middle of the board sinks, you are challenged to get your people onto boats and safely across shark-infested waters to the mainland. The pieces are fun.

Party:

1. Trial Pursuit – Always a favorite of mine. Try to find a version that will appeal to the people who will be playing the game. The original version, for instance, contains ample trivia references to black-and-white movies and was created before Britney Spears was born. You might want to upgrade. Win a pie-piece for me!
2. Pictionary – Good with teams of 2 to 4. Someone in a team is given a word to draw in the allotted time, and everyone else guesses what it is. Remember, the winner of this game is not the best drawer but the best communicator through pictures.
3. Balderdash – This one doesn't require the store bought board. Excellent for large groups of people, this game has a perfect blend of knowledge and BS ability. The group is given a word, and each player makes up definitions for the word. The winner is the one who can convince everyone that he has the true definition.

Computer:

1. Cannon Fodder – From the mid-nineties, this game was one of the first Sharewares I ever downloaded from the internet. Command a small group of 3 to 4 soldiers on missions around the world. When your soldiers survive a mission, they get promoted. When they get shot once, they die. And yet, it's fun because it's a game.
2. Scorched Earth – Also an old downloadable Shareware. Before Worms Armageddon (another great game), this game involved tanks taking turns shooting special guns at each other. Look for this one on the internet.
3. Red Baron – You might even be able to download a version of this old Sierra/Dynamix game these days. Get a joystick and pummel enemy bi-planes with hot lead. This World War I flight simulator is one of the best. Sweet!

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...Asshole, from previous page...

might make for bigger sparks, as this is a clear sign of aggressive flirting. If they are not such an interest, then they just hate you.) OR you are too close to their "left" for comfort. Finally, since you are indeed usually higher in standing (if the asshole to president jump is not part of the loop), you can and should make sure the person on your left is constantly drinking when they must make an important decision - this turns up the fun anyway.

I hope my first article has been a helpful little journey, but always keep in mind the most important rule of all: don't be an asshole! ☒

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Card:

1. Asshole – see Brett's article.
2. Uno – Even though this game is just a trumped up version of Crazy Eights, it's fun, and it takes about two minutes to learn. And since it doesn't take much brain power, you've got plenty of time to actually socialize with the people you're with.
3. Spit – Better than War, this two-player, high-intensity duel has to do with your reaction time, not your ability to play percentages like many other card games. Look up the rules on the net.

If none of this appeals to you, well, I guess there's a lot of other things you could be doing. Like finding some mistletoe. Merry Christmas! ☒

As Many Sensual Perfumes as You

Can

Ithaka and Odyssey

By Dan Fritz

The story of Odysseus (Ulysses) has survived as a best-seller for thousands of years—about three thousand if anyone is counting. Considering the average life-cycle of the modern best-seller and considering the massive cultural evolution over so many generations, the continued appeal of the saga is legendary. As a matter of fact, it's even biblical in power—ranking up there with the pyramids in terms of longevity. The nature of the story is so quintessential, it gave birth to the term "odyssey" and defined it forever. Of course, most people have heard of this epic before with varying degrees of detail: a man, Odysseus, goes off to war, he tries to return home but finds himself sidetracked by a series of obstacles and adventures. He continually struggles against fortune and the arbitrary will of the gods in his simple attempt to return home. Meanwhile, his wife fends off disrespectful suitors, and his son grows up, eventually seeking to end the abuse of his father's estate. The components of this story clearly strike a cord in the human experience, far beyond the scholarly and historical value this ancient work possesses. All of these characters are admirable: Odysseus is steadfast and lacks bitterness, Penelope (his wife)

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remains faithful and patient, Telemachus (his son) seeks to protect the estate from opportunists. Along the way, Odysseus encounters fascinating beings and supernatural creatures as he travels from island to island on the unpredictable waves of the sea. The story contains good and bad, civilized and uncivilized, with a lot of suffering in between but a happy ending eventually. What's not to like?

In some ways, this tale is very American in its appeal to the individual and the sense of adventure through travel, reminiscent of Steinbeck's novel *Travels with Charlie*, in which Steinbeck drives around the United States in a truck with his dog. Steinbeck believes that he has lost a close sense of the flavor of the culture and therefore seeks understanding through travel. There is no better way for him to achieve this sense of identity, as the entire point is that his first-person experiences drive the message home for him. Additionally, most people he meets along the way don't necessarily know where they want to go, but they know that they want to go somewhere, surely literally and likely metaphorically. While Odysseus does not seek his adventure, Steinbeck specifically uses travel as a tool for cultural identification.

Likewise, Tennyson focuses on self-definition through travel in his poem "Ulysses." "I am a part of all that I have met," the speaker (Ulysses) explains, "Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough / Gleams that untraveled world, whose margin fades / For ever and for ever when I move." The destination is the proverbial carrot dangling in front of his nose; walking toward the carrot does not bring him any closer to it, but he continues walking toward it nonetheless. But Ulysses needs this "carrot" (Ithaka) to keep him moving forward, for he loses all self-definition by standing still. For him, therefore, life must be an ongoing journey. Pain and strife are but obligatory parts of the journey, lest idleness and pleasure lead to stagnation. Again, this is all symbolic of life, of course. For Ulysses, to surrender to immobility is to surrender his sense of who he is.

The Greek poet C. P. Cavafy also focuses on the value of the journey in his poem *Ithaka*, though here we see a different tone toward suffering. One's own suffering is almost self-imposed: "Laistrygonians, Cyclops, / wild Poseidon—you won't encounter them / unless you bring them along inside your soul, / unless your soul sets them up in front of you." Yet the journey still defines one and holds the core value. As the poem concludes and Ithaka is reached, "you'll have understood by then what these Ithakas mean." Ithaka is a destination, a goal, akin to the eternal search for *Zuhause*, i.e. home (German). One may eventually reach Ithaka, but the journey along the way was the purpose, so to speak. "Ithaka gave you the marvelous journey. / Without her you wouldn't have set out," but don't expect "Ithaka to make you rich." Again, the richness is in the journey.

The movie *Castaway* starring Tom Hanks illustrates this particular sentiment very well. As Tom Hanks's character returns home after several years living on an island in the Pacific, he ironically finds himself out of his element—everything has changed. Without giving the entire story away, it is sufficient to say that what kept him going while stranded on the island no longer exists when he returns home. He has reached "Ithaka" but it has nothing left to offer him. He must therefore continue his journey, presenting the audience with a poignant visual in the closing scenes

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of the movie. Standing at a physical crossroads in the middle of nowhere, after having reached home, his journey must be recalibrated in order for his life to continue to have meaning.

Meanwhile in the *Odyssey*, Odysseus continually faces perilous roadblocks but keeps a dark humor in general. He does not enjoy suffering, but his ubiquitous struggles become almost comical to him after so long. As he bobs in the sea after his raft is destroyed in a tempest, he comments of Poseidon, "I know the Earthshaker has an odd dislike for Odysseus" (Book V). This is gross understatement after being away from home for roughly twenty years at that point. Going through so much trouble has not broken his will—it has made him who he is.

But of course, that's not the entire story, and like real life, Odysseus's tale isn't all hugs and kisses when he returns to Ithaka. Perhaps even more than struggle and the unpredictability of life's course, the *Odyssey* is about revenge. Odysseus recounts his tale and returns to Ithaka within nine of twenty-four of the books that comprise the *Odyssey*. That leaves a vast majority of the epic devoted to outlining the problem at home and the following vengeance.

Odysseus had treated people well before leaving for the war, as the reader is reminded throughout the tale. Penelope's suitors—even given the benefit of the fact that Odysseus has been missing for years—are highly disrespectful of Odysseus's estate, eating and drinking constantly, taking advantage of the fact that he is gone and his son is but one man. Yet through clever infiltration into his own household, Odysseus uses his still-present strength to destroy his enemies. This part of the *Odyssey* is rarely emphasized, but it does reveal a shared value in the epic's popularity. While the travel aspect is highly recognizable and equated to the *Odyssey*, clearly revenge is a highly satisfying element in the story. The desire for things to work out is more powerful than the desire for things to always be pleasant.

For your reading enjoyment, I have included both poems referenced in this essay. While I have focused here on the journey as a mechanism for self-definition, I also urge you to enjoy yourself in your own "journey." As Cavafy puts it, "may you stop at Phoenician trading stations / to buy fine things, / mother of pearl and coral, amber and ebony, / sensual perfume of every kind— / as many sensual perfumes as you can." Enjoy the trip every step of the way. ☒

Ithaka

By C. P. Cavafy

As you set out for Ithaka
hope your road is a long one,
full of adventure, full of discovery.
Laistrygonians, Cyclops,
angry Poseidon—don't be afraid of them:
you'll never find things like that on your way
as long as you keep your thoughts raised high,
as long as a rare excitement
stirs your spirit and your body.
Laistrygonians, Cyclops,
wild Poseidon—you won't encounter them

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...*Odyssey*, from previous page...

unless you bring them along inside your soul,
unless your soul sets them up in front of you.

Hope your road is a long one.
May there be many summer mornings when,
with what pleasure, what joy,
you enter harbors you're seeing for the first time;
may you stop at Phoenician trading stations
to buy fine things,
mother of pearl and coral, amber and ebony,
sensual perfume of every kind—
as many sensual perfumes as you can;
and may you visit many Egyptian cities
to learn and go on learning from their scholars.

Keep Ithaka always in your mind.
Arriving there is what you're destined for.
But don't hurry the journey at all.
Better if it lasts for years,
so you're old by the time you reach the island,
wealthy with all you've gained on the way,
not expecting Ithaka to make you rich.
Ithaka gave you the marvelous journey.
Without her you wouldn't have set out.
She has nothing left to give you now.

And if you find her poor, Ithaka won't have fooled you.
Wise as you will have become, so full of experience,
you'll have understood by then what these Ithakas mean.

"Ithaka," p. 35. Transl. Edmund Keeley and Philip Sherrard. Ed. George Savidis.
C. P. Cavafy: Collected Poems. New York: Princeton University Press, 1975.

Ulysses

By Alfred, Lord Tennyson

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Matched with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.
I cannot rest from travel; I will drink
Life to the lees. All times I have enjoyed
Greatly, have suffered greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Through scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
Vext the dim sea. I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known,— cities of men,
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honored of them all;
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethrough
Gleams that untraveled world, whose margin fades

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For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnished, not to shine in use!
As though to breathe were life! Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains; but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the scepter and the isle—
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labor, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and through soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centered in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.
There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail:
There gloom the dark, broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toiled, and wrought, and thought with me—
That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads—you and I are old;
Old age had yet his honor and his toil.
Death closes all; but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks;
The long day wanes; the slow moon climbs; the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down;
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Though much is taken, much abides; and though
We are not now that strength which in the old days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

"Ulysses," p.91-92. Ed. Laurence Perrine and Thomas R. Arp. *Sound and Sense: An Introduction to Poetry, Eighth Edition*. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers, 1992.

PETEY PINK

Caution: Attempt to find entertainment in this juvenile story at your own risk
By Several Bored Office Pukes

The piglets squealed as they crawled over Petey, who was dressed in nothing but dirty, blue overalls, lying on his back. It was moments like these in which Petey thought of nothing else in the world, not even his burning desire to make it in the industry of super-artistry as a super-artist. It was moments like these in which he simply lay on his back and absorbed the explosive joy of the moment. The piglets tickled as they crawled across his bare chest and licked at his earlobes. Wee Weee Weeeeekkke went the dainty piglets, gently cooing in Petey's ears, waves lapping on the shore of his desire. Petey reveled in the comforting nuzzles and soft piglet hairs tickling his nose, when suddenly he had a hankering for bacon, and so he grabbed the piglets one by one, and slaughtered them with his trusty boning knife, which he carried in a diamond-encrusted scabbard at his hip.

"Oh, man! There's nothing like piglet for a good breakfast!" said Petey, and he ran off with the piglet carcasses, already cleaned, in search of a kitchen, where he could get to cooking. He had not gone far when he happened upon a homeless man, lounging in front of a bar called "Rods". The bum wore a dirty Jiffy Lube shirt that had a name on it: Landopoo. Petey normally kicked homeless people, but this guy looked familiar to him...

It was Ryan Ricks, a roommate from his college days. It was always rumored that he and Petey were more than roommates, which conjured up images of squealing in Petey's mind again, but seeing as Ryan wore a shirt that said "Landopoo," something just didn't add up.

"Wake up, duder!" yelled Petey. "It's time for breakfast!"

Ryan grunted and woke up, his eyes bloodshot from a night, or maybe a decade, of drinking.

"Dude," he said. "That was one crazy night. Where am I?"

"California," replied Petey. "Get up."

"It tastes like a cat crapped in my mouth," said Ryan. "Where'd you get those pigs?"

"I was taking care of them for Fred. He had to hide them from the Humane Society because they suspected him of abuse. The dirty kind that they can't show even on cable. He's a sick bastard, but I love him." Petey secretly wished he hadn't put on Fred's dirty overalls while taking care of the pigs, but it had seemed at the time the right course of action, lest he ruin his sweet suit.

Ryan belched so loudly pigeons fell from the sky, "Oh, man. Speaking of Fred, I ran into Lando last night. He was at that bar Rods...oh, and by the way, they do not mean as in Rod, the dude. They mean as in 'rods,' what dudes have." The pair continued walking, in search of a kitchen.

"What the hell was he doing there?" Petey asked. Lando was known to fly cross-country on gay trysts, but Petey thought he'd politely ask anyway.

"Dudes," shrugged Ryan. Just then, a large black Bentley pulled up alongside the two, and the rear window rolled down, revealing a beautiful blonde woman consuming a lollipop.

"Petey, do you remember me? My name is Jill Fulsome. We went to high school together but you were never willing to man up and give it to me dirty."

Ryan laughed out loud, hacking up part of his lung. "Damn

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straight, everyone wanted to give it to you dirty, but since you were only willing to give it to Petey, he was able to monumentally screw that up!"

Jill continued, "I ran into Lando last night at my bar. At first I didn't know it was him, because he looked like Zeus, and he was there with his friend Fred who was looking like Thor. I knew you would have missed it, but I own the members-only lounge above Rods called the Blossoming Lotus."

Ryan coughed again "Ha Petey, you were one to always miss a 'blossoming lotus.'"

"Thanks for pointing that out, Ryan," Jill scoffed. "Lando walked out of my bar with six of my girlfriends. After I broke up with the Clan, I made friends with nymphomaniac, bisexual supermodels, six of which took Lando to the Ritz Carlton last night. I'm out now looking for my lesbian lovers, because it seems that Lando took five of them on his private jet down to Brazil. The only one left, Adriana Lima, said that she could not wait to get down to Brazil to join the troupe and play more Zeus and mortal woman. She looked exhausted." Jill had a soulful look in her eyes, "Ryan, do you think you would come with me to Brazil. I could use the company."

"Damn it!" Petey exclaimed. "I want to come too."

"Alright, Petey, just make sure you get cleaned up beforehand. Those dirty overalls have got to go. And so does that gay diamond-encrusted scabbard." With that, Petey started blubbering, taking the scabbard comment personally, as usual.

Just then, a familiar Italian wearing a powder blue, short-sleeved, button-up shirt walked by. "Jungfrau!" he said, pointing and laughing. The Italian proceeded to hail a streetwalker and turn down a back alley, still laughing. Petey stuck out his lower lip and cried some more.

Jill stifled a giggle, "Are we going or what? I've got to get waxed before the flight leaves. Hulda won't stand for this peach fuzz..."

Leaving Ryan and Jill, Petey hurriedly ran to the YMCA at the end of street, where he kept most of his disco clothing in a shower room locker. Sequins, glitter, and what was (one could only hope) a curly, black wig spilled out onto the floor as he opened the locker door. Petey dug through the locker, clearing carefully selected and placed debris. Finally, he removed the false panel at the rear of the locker and pulled out the sweetest suit a man had ever laid eyes on. It was handmade by Italian midgets high in the Alps. The fabric was woven from the wool of alpacas that had been somehow crossed with silkworms and P. Diddy. The color was indescribable, but it was definitively masculine...and sweet.

"Oh, it's time to get busy with some Brazilian ladies." As Petey donned the world's sweetest suit, a picture escaped from the coat pocket and fluttered to the ground, landing with a poof of pink fairy dust. Petey picked it up and turned it over, dusting it off. The picture was of a tall man, with blonde hair and a strong nose. His face was twisted into a horrible grimace as he attempted to fend off a hoard of snarling fairies with a tiny, tinkling wand.

"Son of bitch," said Petey, remembering the fateful day when Fred had been lost to the fairy hoards. Things had not been the same since. Oh no, they had not.... Fred had recounted the tale to many a listener over a Glenlivet on the rocks. It was a wonder the two of them talked to each other at all after what had happened.

Sometime in the late '90s of the last century, the city of Richardson,

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...*Petey Pink, from previous page...*

Texas had employed a SWAT team to hunt and murder a certain “menace” who had been plaguing the neighborhood. Scattered bones and feathers had been frequently found where Savage Fred, the Suburban Hunter (as Fred had been known back then), had slaughtered full flocks of pigeons, grinding them into sausage and feeding them to his pet wolf pack. Afraid of this and other terrors, the residents turned to Petey to lead the SWAT team and lure Fred into a trap. Petey was the perfect choice, being one of Fred’s friends, knowing that Fred had one secret weakness, which was his violent, allergic reaction to fairy dust.

One afternoon, Petey presented Fred with a gift, a war mallet to Fred’s mind. At the time, Fred had little use for weapons, preferring instead to tear his enemies to shreds with his bare hands. But the mallet was accepted as a great gift of power, ripe for the use. It was only a short time later that night that the dastardly Petey crouched in a tree branch and waited for Fred to pass. As it turned out, Fred was already nearby, munching on the carcass of a brutally butchered cow. Fred caught an immediate whiff of fairy dust as Petey released a swarm of pixies from a little pouch tied to his neck. Grabbing what he thought was the war mallet, Fred—face smeared with bovine blood—leaped to his feet and charged the fairy devils before their dust could cause permanent damage. At the very instant of engagement, Petey sprinkled some dust on the mallet, breaking the illusion spell the fairies had cast and revealing the mallet to be none other than Hecate’s own fairy wand! Fred swatted ferociously, red spots breaking out on his leather-like hide, but the swatting only made things worse. Twinkle twinkle noises emanated incessantly from the wand, forcing Fred into a crumbled heap on the ground. In typical fashion and filled with great glee, Petey squealed like a pig in heat.

Back in the YMCA locker room, Petey grinned in reminiscence, slipping the picture back into his inside jacket pocket, “Ah, the good old days. I haven’t seen a midget put a raw sausage in his mouth for quite some time. Not all of us live in Charlotte, North Carolina.”

Petey busted out of the YMCA locker room in his sweet suit, and he proceeded to strut—balls-out strut—to where he left Ryan and Jill. Arriving at the limo, he met with a gruesome scene. Ryan had lost control and cuddled Jill to death, turning her into something worse than week-old hamburger.

“By the Beard of Zeus!” breathed Petey, “What a mess!” Petey looked around for traces of Ryan, but he was nowhere to be found. Something didn’t smell right. Something smelled like oil...like freshly checked oil...something smelled like Jiffy Lube.

Just then, Petey’s heightened sense of hearing, developed over years of listening for phone numbers of beautiful women through the screaming hoards of fans, picked up a wild cackling in the distance...a cackling he recognized...a cackling that accompanied small doses of a certain altitude sickness medication. Petey unzipped his pants, and let them fall down around his ankles. The sun sparkled intensely on his powder blue thong, blinding passers-by. His crotch looked like an explosion in a sequin factory. Petey always went near commando when he wore his oh-so-sweet suit. The corners of his lips curled into a smile, and his eyes rolled back in his head as he slid across the soft grain leather, warmed ever so slightly by the sun, into the Bentley’s back seat. “To the airport, Jeeves. I’m going to Brazil.”

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As the car pulled away from the curb, Petey dropped a large clump of blonde hair out of the window, which slid gently through the air and fell by the sewer. A sudden flash of a pasty, red-hairy arm flicked out of the sewer and grabbed the hair before it could hit the ground. If one had been there at that very moment, just when the car pulled away, and just in time for the sun to reflect one last time off of Petey’s crotch into the sewer, one would have seen the glint in Ryan’s eyes revealing that which Petey mistook for a decade of drinking, was actually the hunger that grew deep, deep inside Ryan. Ryan wiped the blood away from his mouth and a femur clattered off of the ledge onto the oil-slicked sewer floor. He cackled once more and slid down the steep decline into the bowels of Rods.

Petey arrived at the airport, zipped up his pants, and strutted into the airport terminal. “One ticket to Brazil. Rio of course.”

“Could I see your ID, please?” the attendant asked.

Petey suddenly began sweating, having forgotten momentarily that he didn’t have an ID and didn’t think they would let someone with his background enter Brazil.

A voice piped up on the intercom on the attendant’s desk. “Let him pass.”

“Excuse me?” the attendant asked.

“Anyone with a suit that sweet doesn’t need to present his ID. You’re fired.”

Speechless, the attendant staggered. Petey flashed his collar and gave a wink as he headed off through the security line, right past the metal detectors. And it was a good thing he got to go around, because aside from all of the metallic material in his clothing, in his pocket he carried a Sacajawea dollar coin. You know, for luck.

His thoughts were interrupted by the same distant cackling he had heard back on the street. He ducked into a restroom, moonwalked into a stall, shut the door, and extracted the blue, sequined thong without removing his pants.

“Goddamn thing,” he muttered, throwing it into the toilet and flushing it down. He hated wearing thongs, especially gay sequined ones, but they were the only sure way to draw Lando out of hiding. Lando to gay sequined thongs wrapped tightly over a man’s member was like a moth to flame. Petey was just glad he didn’t have to wear the thong all the way to Brazil.

He exited the restroom and three women swooned at the sight of his suit. Behind them crouched Lando, dressed in dirty Jiffy Lube coveralls and cackling wildly. Petey exclaimed, “Lando, what are you doing crouched down there on the floor?”

“Petey, watch out...there is some seriously crazy shit going down.” Petey’s gaze turned steely as he realized the cackling was coming from somewhere behind Lando. Standing up and walking toward Petey, Lando spoke in hushed tones, “Naomi, Gisele, Claudia, Daniela, Karolina, Adriana, and I had just finished playing Zeus and mortal women when I had to end my evening early and take off to the airport. We have got to get to Brazil, today! Security rifled through my luggage taking my \$10MM in bearer bonds, stole my luggage, and left me with only my dirty-work overalls.”

“How are the boys doing?” Petey said with a glint of excitement in his eyes.

“I now have six Ferraris and seven Lamborghinis, as well as my new Mazaratti family sedan. But forget about that, your life is in

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...Petey Pink, from previous page...

danger!"

For a split second, Petey focused on a train of thought. *How could I think that Lando is attracted to sparkly thongs, like a moth to flame? I must either be projecting or totally insane.* Petey heard the sound of a sledge hammer colliding with a watermelon. He spun around just in time to see Naomi's head explode into a million bloody flecks. Time stood still and Petey squinted hard to see the shape behind the nearly constant muzzle flashes emptying out of the security area. He was unafraid, unflinching, and flat on his back, covered in brain parts. The world started to gray. *Not now—fight it, Petey, fight it.* "It's Titania!" Lando's voice boomed over the erupting gunfire.

As the world went black, Petey felt Lando's iron grip hosting him onto his shoulders. "To the airplane girls!" Lando boomed once again. He thought to himself, *Isn't it ironic that I said 'girls,' and I happen to be carrying Petey on my shoulders.* Lando spun around dodging bullets like raindrops, and sprinted down the hallway, Petey and supermodels in tow.

Petey awoke what felt like hours later from the jolt of turbulence on the DC-10. He assumed (and of course hoped) that he was still headed for Brazil, because he was getting a little antsy to see the Copacabana and all its bronzed, fleshly wonder. His vision was a bit blurry after coming out of the coma, but he did notice one other person with a couple of kids sitting next to him. He rubbed his eyes, fists in balls. What he really needed was a stiff...drink...after the episode at the airport.

Noticing his movement, the person next to him began speaking. "Petey! Hey, Petey! You're awake finally."

The feminine voice was familiar. Too familiar. A cold shiver ran down his spine.

"What a coincidence—I haven't seen you in years!" she exclaimed. Petey glanced at the kids, quickly regaining his vision. One of them sat staring blankly in his face. The approximately ten year old boy had dark brown hair and glasses, fueling a sense of déjà vu. Petey's stomach turned sour as he finally realized who this was.

"Hi, Sara," Petey said. "It *has* been years, hasn't it? About ten or so, if I recall...."

Something deep within Petey stirred, something ancient and terrible. It burned with a terrible heat that spread from Petey's belly, moving down his limbs and finally creeping into his skull, where it filled his vision with bright stars. Long years had passed since Petey the Malevolent had walked this world, blazing a path of destruction to rival Sherman's march to the sea. But now, far above the unsuspecting plant, a great danger had been unleashed.

Petey the Malevolent's hands clenched, and the armrests on his seat sheared off. He growled low in his throat as he looked at Sara Succubus, and she trembled like a pirate hooker. "Run, Ned B., Jr.," she was able to mutter weakly in the mere seconds before she exploded out the ghastly hole suddenly ripped in the side of the aircraft and was immediately sucked into one of the giant turbines shredding her into blood confetti. The inside of the aircraft went dark, and the plane began to shake horribly. The drone of quickening wind over the wings muffled the panic stricken shrieks of sheer panic coming from the other passengers.

Petey the Malevolent ripped a seatbelt lose from one of the chairs and hurled it with thunderous force toward little Ned B., Jr.,

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who was trundling down the aisle toward the back of the plane. The beads of sweat poured down over Little B's chubby cheeks, plump from endless cheesy poofs and unlimited Pepsi. He began to whimper as if he could sense what shadow was covering his soul. Breathing hard, he tried not to look back. *If only I can make the snack closet,* he thought. The seat belt buckle caught Little Ned B., Jr. in the back of the neck, shearing his head clean off and sending it rolling back down the aisle toward the front of the plane. Before Little Ned B., Jr.'s body could sink to the floor, Petey the Malevolent dashed toward the back of the plane, grabbing the decapitated body and crashing through the back of the plane out into the cold night air. The wind whistled past Petey the Malevolent's ears, a welcome relief from the incessant screaming of the panicked passengers. He watched the streaming fireball hurdle toward the ground, and a very thin smile rounded the corners of his star-flecked vision.

Petey switched to holding the toes of the still twitching corpse and with one quick snap of his wrist separated skin from the bloody sausage that was Little Ned B., Jr. The skin filled with air, and whistling wind turned to a peaceful evening, floating down over a lush green canopy.

Meanwhile, Lando pulled off his gold noise-canceling headphones to see why all of the supermodels were screaming. First class was rough: one's own personal 'masseur,' a hot shower, buttermilk pancakes, and booze. These girls were being a bit high maintenance with only a few minutes till landing. *Ah! the sun, the sand, Ipanema...*, Lando thought. Just then a chubby head of what looked like a ten year old boy bounced through the curtain into the first class cabin coming to rest with a thud on the cockpit door. The plane shook, and Lando noticed that they were descending rather quickly. "Let's get out of here, girls." He took the four of them, opened the emergency hatch, and jumped. As they began to freefall through the air, Lando belted out instructions, "Gisele, Claudia, Daniela, Karolina, hold hands and form a circle." Lando then maneuvered below them and held four slender supermodel ankles in each hand as they hurdled at terminal velocity toward the jungle. With the eight legs dangling above him in mid air, Lando gnashed his teeth and thought, *If this doesn't work....* Just then the four supermodels' miniskirts caught the rushing air, and they group-floated gently through the cool night. Being a gentleman, Lando did not make any comments about Daniela's Hanes-Her-Way, Karolina's Victoria's-Secret-Freebees, Claudia's Agent Provocateur, or Gisele's lack thereof.

Petey walked up, sweet suit swishing, to the edge of the river he had landed near. *This must be the Amazon, home of the fabled Anacondas!* he thought to himself, blushing slightly. *I'm a little dirty from the whole plane jumping bit. I might as well take a quick dip to get cleaned up....* With that, Petey slipped out of his suit as though he were unpeeling a giant banana and dipped into the waters of the Amazon...in search of Anaconda. The skin parachute lay on the banks of the river for later use.

Meanwhile, high in the branches of a monkey-infested ficus tree, Lando awoke with a start. He didn't remember anything after noticing Gisele's lack of undies, and he assumed that he had passed out—which is understandable. Looking around him, he couldn't see much of anything. Far below, the forest floor was visible, as were shreds of various colors of fabric. Lando thought he

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...Petey Pink, from previous page...

recognized Karolina's tiny denim jacket (he haaaad been envying it). The branches around him rustled noisily and then erupted in a chorus of shrieks that pounded Lando's eardrums until his vision blurred. Out of nowhere, a monkey, howling in impossible tones, glommed onto Lando's leg and started humping it so ferociously that a tear in Lando's Jiffy Lube coveralls started to form just above his knee.

Just as the shock and disorientation was wearing off and Lando had the presence of mind to reach violently for the monkey, another hairy little bastard appeared out of nowhere and attached itself to his outstretched arm. The tree exploded in a storm of monkeys, howling and humping the dickens out of poor Lando, who slipped from his comfortable branch, and the entire writhing mass of them fell from the tree toward the forest floor far below.

"Son of a biiiiitiiiiiiiiiiiiitch . . .!!!!" shouted Lando just before he slammed into the ground. But his scream went unheard, as the giant feral ball of spasm monkeys continued their ferocious humping. Unbridled sexuality resonated from their thrashing, and monkeys from all of the forest piled onto the ball, a massive love fest. The howls buffeted Lando's ears at the center of this writhing ball, and as he started creeping toward the edge of consciousness, the blend of thousands of monkey voices transformed into Prince's Purple Rain, the sexiest of all songs ever. His Jiffy Lube overalls shredded into unrecognizable threads from the friction of the monkeys' sexual struggle.

The heat at the center of the ball was intense, a volcanic heat brewed from pure love and monkey humping. The heat permeated the air around the ball, built on itself, first as a sweaty moist heat, but transformed into the damnable heat of Hades. It seemed that a spark would send everything into roaring flames. Lando curled into a ball to protect his naked body, but the monkeys kept humping as hard and as fast as they had ever humped anything ever. The air around the vibrant ball began to vaporize, spreading the heat through the rain forest, deflagrating trees, boiling rivers. The monkeys continued unabated, the heat of fanatical copulation driving them to even faster undulations. The mass of flesh writhed and for a moment seemed to move as one force. Deep within a ranging river of molten fire, Lando was pushed to the edge of consciousness. Lightening struck all around the ball; flashes penetrated Lando's eyes which he closed by instantaneous reflex. But the light was inescapable, a halo of pure white dancing on his eyelids. The intensity grew, and Lando felt as though he would be instantaneously deflagrated. Suddenly the mass of flesh convulsed, and went nova, a love supernova.

Lando opened his eyes as something within him stirred, something ancient, something immensely soothing. It assuaged the terrible heat and spread from Lando's belly, moving down his limbs and finally creeping into his skull, where it filled his vision with bright stars. He sat up and looked over the now barren moonscape. The monkeys were gone, vaporized by the explosion of love. Folded neatly beside him on the ground was an ultra-sweet, black cashmere leisure warm-up suit and flip-flops. Lando pulled on the oh-so-ultra-sweet leisure suit and zipped up the jacket. As he did, angels started weeping as love and an unquenchable fire of desire were nascent, born to earth in the form of Deflagratory Lando the Assuager. "Sweet," he said and started flip-floppin' down to where he knew Petey last entered the river....

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Meanwhile, back at the Blossoming Lotus, Fred lay back in a lounge chair, sipping a margarita while silk-clad nymphs fanned him with palm leaves. *Good thing I purchased 51% of the shares for this place...*, he thought, taking a sip of the margarita. "As much as I would have loved to fly down to Brazil, who would be left to look after the delicate petals of this bouquet...?" this time speaking out loud. Giggles echoed throughout the den.

Back in the Amazonian jungle, Petey lay water-wrinkled on the banks of the river asleep. He was dreaming he wore an anaconda-skin bandana, died chartreuse, and nothing else but a beaming smile. It was another moment for him in which he knew what lay ahead—he knew that chartreuse Anaconda bandanas would be his claim to fame, to super-artistry. Propping himself up using his elbows as a recliner, Petey let out a piercing, no-fingered whistle.

Moments later, the jungle rumbled with the sound of stampeding animals. Petey grinned as he slipped into his suit like a bratwurst slipping into a bun.

Suddenly, hundreds of jaguars burst forth from the jungle underbrush, snarling wildly. Atop the largest, jet-black jaguar rode a massive, tank-like figure.

"Vegetarians Suck!" Scott roared.

"Let's get to Rio!" Petey shouted, mounting just behind Scott but keeping a manly distance. The jaguar's bounded off with blinding speed, almost flinging Petey from his perch. "Great Odin's Raven! Where have you been, Scott? You smell like sailor! Gross!" Petey knew what sailors smelled like because of a gigantic brawl he had gotten into during Fleet Week 2003 that had almost destroyed the city of San Francisco.

"I just got done with 70 days underwater with 250 men. It was awesome!" Scott exclaimed. Scott looked resplendent in his dress Navy whites, which he fondly called his "slut slayers."

"Well, that's just gayer than disco," drawled Petey. Out of the corner of his eye, he noticed something strange as the jungle flitted by. "Scott, hold up. What's that?" On the ground not ten yards from them was a small shape, twitching oddly, and as the two crept up on it, they noticed that it was Lando, curled into a ball, twitching and sucking his thumb, and occasionally murmuring something about monkeys.

"Lando! Wake the hell up!" yelled Petey. He turned to Scott, "He must have hit his head after jumping from the plane. LANDO! WAKE UP!"

Lando woke with a start, screaming, "DON'T PUT IT THERE!" He then blinked, looked around slowly, then at Petey and Scott and said, "Where are my pajamas?"

"You seriously need to stop dropping acid on airplanes, Dude. You almost got us killed and probably did get all of those supermodels killed," said Petey, handing over an anaconda bandana.

"Whatever, man. You tore the plane apart," Lando mumbled.

"And I suppose it's my fault you had my arch-nemesis and her bastard kid on your PRIVATE JET?" Petey retorted. "Now, you've obviously wet yourself, and we need to get you cleaned up and back into deflagratory shape so that we can"

Petey was interrupted by a piercing shriek that came from far off in the jungle. The shriek sounded somewhat familiar, somewhat smoking hot. It sounded supermodelish.

Scott's ears perked up like radar. "She's two miles south-

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...Petey Pink, from previous page...

southwest. Get on the giant pussy.” Lando donned his bandana, and he and Petey both climbed on jaguars and bounded into the jungle. Bumping and thumping, Petey slid down close to Scott and squeezed the jaguar tightly with his legs. Scott turned as they were bumping and thumping on the jaguar and wrapped his arms around Petey squeezing him tightly. Petey squeaked, “Scott, you are hurting me. Watch out for my collar bone!”

Scott squeezed as Lando wrapped his arms around Petey, as well. “How do you like that, Petey! Big Tiger! You are such a hunk of man.” Petey squeaked again, this time with joy. “Hey boys, what are you doing, I’ve always wanted to be sandwiched between two nearly naked brutes.” Petey wriggled between their massive arms, as the leopard bucked wildly. “Oh my, but if this trashing keeps up I might be thrown off and get my super artistry headband dirty.” Petey heard the piercing shriek which seemed to reverberate off the inside of his skull. “What was that?” Scott said between gritted teeth. “Sounds like a pussy to me.” Petey was losing himself now, the hot sweat pouring from Scott and Lando’s bodies was more than Petey could handle. “Stop, you are hurting me!” “Sounds like pussy. Big, girly pussy.” Petey tried to breathe, but it was only a slow rasp exhaled. Scott’s sweat poured off his brow and Petey felt as though he would drown. “Stop squeezing! I can’t breathe.” Lando uncoupled his arms and swatted Petey across the face and said “Big pussy, Chippendale, monkey butt, hot beef injection.” A second slap crossed Petey’s face and Lando shouted, “Humping a turkey with a thong in your mouth.” Another slap, and Petey’s eyes popped open.

“Wake up, damn it! Petey, that anaconda was up to your shoulders!” Lando shouted. Petey looked down to see the massive snake coiled around his body. “You’re lucky I came along when I did. I found Daniela, Karolina, Claudia, and Gisele but was almost distracted for too long because they were playing a version of smear the queer with a gaggle of Amazons...kind of naked, trampoline, wrestle ball.” Petey looked down again and saw some of the Amazons cutting off parts of the snake and eating them. The entire sequence about meeting Scott and riding jaguars with Lando had been a dream. “I had to barbeque this sucker to keep it from eating you. I guess you are more like Petey the Impotent when you are sleeping,” Lando chuckled as blue flames licked across his hands.

Infuriated, Petey jumped up not realizing that the he was still undressed from dipping in the river. All of the (what in any other country in the world would be considered supermodels) girls turned around, pointed, and laughed. Petey sheepishly slinked over and pulled on his sweet suit. Lando walked over to Petey with his now characteristic flip flop, and oh-so-ultra-sweet leisure suit, black as a giant jaguar pussycat. “It sounded like you were having a pretty horrific dream as the snake was eating you. You have to pull it together. No more sleeping by the river trying to lure anacondas with your twinkle toes.”

Petey broke down and started to cry. Through his tears he blubbered, “Scott smelled like a sailor and was riding a giant cat, and I was riding him too. I thought he was back but NO(!) I was in back.” Petey stumbled to the ground clutching his cheek, struck by a tremendous back hand bitch slap.

“PULL IT TOGETHER! We don’t have time for this. Titania is after us, and we have to get to Rio before she does. And for all I

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know the whole Clan could be on their way down here. Scott is dead. He lives in suburbia with a lawn, a mortgage, and a baby. Dead, I tell you, dead!”

The Amazons continued the snake BBQ, and the evening passed in a surreal, boy scout adventure way, partially wet dream and partially nightmare. They decided to camp out for the night and make the blitz to Rio in the morning. Giant mosquitoes annoyingly landed on an ankle here and a bare buttock there, until later in the night it became a veritable swarm of sludge. The mosquitoes relentlessly attacked Petey, poking him like a dancer at the Oaxacan donkey show. It was from this muggy, disease-ridden transaction that a certain stirring developed in Petey’s abdominal area.

The next day, everyone woke up with dark circles under their eyes. “What a terrible night,” Lando groaned. “Gisele kept swatting my munchkin, thinking it was another giant mosquito.” He turned toward Petey. “Hey, we really need to – Jupiter’s thunder! What happened to you?”

Petey writhed on the ground, clutching his protruding belly. “It must have been the mosquitoes. Their diabolical fluids must have mixed with my Petey the Malevolent hormones.” He let out a horrible moan.

“But what does that mean, Petey?” Lando and the girls stood on in terror.

Petey clutched his swollen belly. “I’m giving birth to a mutant child!”

Far away, lounging comfortably in his private room at the Blossoming Lotus, sipping on a key-lime pie martini, Fred sighed a satisfied sigh. He had hung up his sword, his axe, and his whips and chains (sort of), and he was enjoying retirement. Life was good. Oh, it was really good—about as good as a key-lime pie martini.

Suddenly, the door started rattling on its hinges, and the television picture began to waver, which pissed Fred off, because he was watching Matlock. He put down his martini, and the sweet contents of his gold-plated glass sloshed slightly as the tremor began to seize the entire room. Alarmed, Fred stood up, his bare toes sinking into the velvety, plush red carpet. He looked around, but the place was empty. The girls were all exhausted and had gone to bed. He took a timid step forward, and the floor heaved. He was thrown on his back, and as he tried to stand, the floor clung to him and the carpet around him began to undulate. It was becoming slippery and moist, and he felt as if it were forming an incline toward the center of the room.

He watched in horror as his fabulous easy chair slid slowly toward the center of the room and disappeared with a horrendous gurgle. He couldn’t tell where it had gone, what it had gone through, but he tried to hang on, knowing he didn’t want to follow. He could only hold on so long, though.

“UNCLE JONATHAN’S CORNCOB PIPE!” Fred exclaimed as the floor offered one more monstrous heave, and he fell backwards to the center of the room and vanished with a giant, wet slurp.

Thousands of miles away, Petey lay on his back, terror seizing him. His entire body was wracked with pain, as something inside his belly jumped and bucked. He screamed with every movement, and Lando looked on with abject horror (and some really sick fascination centered on where it would come out).

Petey writhed and moaned, and then suddenly flipped over and

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...*Petey Pink, from previous page...*

pointed his ass high into the air. He screamed with such power that the trees shook and birds fell from the sky. The ground beneath him buckled and crumbled, and Lando was flung from his feet, claspng the roots of Amazonian flora to avoid being drawn into the sinkhole.

"SON OF A BEE STING!" Petey raged, the shout echoing out of the giant sinkhole, and then there has a gigantic POP that blasted Lando's eardrums, and he looked over his shoulder to see a blast of light emanate from Petey's upraised ass. An object rocketed forth and flew some distance into the sky, and then landed with a thud at the edge of the hole. Petey collapsed, shaking quietly on the soft earth.

Lando crawled to the top of the hole, and edged over to whatever had come flying out of Petey's ass. He first threw a flip-flop at it, and missed, but his shoe was too close to retrieve without disturbing it, so he hesitated for a moment, glum that he could be certain that it was NOT a hedgehog. He stepped closer, kneeled down to grab his shoe, and the object came to life, sputtering, coughing, and finally sitting up, meeting Lando's gaze.

"ELI WHITNEY'S NOSE!" breathed Lando. "SAVAGE FRED! How did you get in Petey's ass?"

"Crap, one minute in the Blossoming Lotus, next minute Petey's ass," Fred said with a doubly ironic sense of irony. "But seriously, Lando, I'm not 'savage.' What are you talking about?"

Lando stepped back in bewilderment, a little too far as he fell off the rim of the crater and tumbled down, head over heels to where Petey lay prostrate. The three of them burst out laughing. But Lando's smile quickly flattened as he peered into the blue morning sky. A spec was growing larger, and Lando could see it falling at tremendous speed. Before he could stand up, the object slammed into the side of the crater.

"Your BL chair! It must have shot out of Petey's ass, too," Lando yelled up from the bottom of the sink hole. Fred replied as he scampered over to take a seat on the new arrival, "I wonder if anything else is going to come falling out of the sky. Maybe some of my nymphs were ensnared by the dirt star vortex." As he sat down, the earth gave way beneath him as he looked over his shoulder, realizing for the first time what kind of trouble the three of them were in. "LUCIFER'S THIRD NUT, THE RIVER!" Fred shouted as the edge of sink hole gave way. The silt laden sludge washed Fred into the sink hole and soon gathered up Lando and Petey washing them downstream. As the three of them bobbed to the surface, Petey said, "I wonder where the River of January will take us."

The current carried them through the swampy lowlands and deposited them in a very dark, heavily wooded section of the jungle. Petey rejoiced about the partial enema that he had received in the process. Everyone else felt filthy.

"Just great!" Lando moaned. Now we'll never get to Brazil. How am I supposed to get to the supermodel auction on Sunday?"

"Supermodel auction?" Petey asked.

"Yeah—aside from the millions I've made in the oil change business, I sell supermodels to bungalows like the Blossoming Lotus. Why else would we be in a rush to get to Rio?"

"I wasn't," Fred lamented, reliving the hell he had just experienced.

"Maybe you weren't. Maybe not today. But would you give all

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the days at the Blossoming Lotus, from this day to that, for one chance, just *one* chance, to see the fleshpots of the Copacabana!"

"I wanna go to Bangkok," Petey interjected.

"Fuck Bangkok! We're going to Rio, and we're gonna have a showdown with Titania. That Jezebel has been assassinating my supermodels for some time now...."

Just then a helicopter could be heard overhead, increasing in volume as it got closer. They soon realized that it was landing right next to them. The wind from the propeller increased, blowing Petey's hair into a frizz. He was visibly upset.

As the helicopter touched down, a staircase flopped open to the ground, and a figure burst forth.

"KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS!" said Fred, Lando, and Petey in unison. Atop the staircase, dressed in a resplendent white uniform, face familiar but grizzled with a sense of parental responsibility that was wholly new, Scott smiled. His uniform gleamed in the night, reflecting the moonlight so vividly it illuminated the jungle for hundreds of yards. Sudden squeals of delight cut through the whirring of the helicopter rotor. The three turned in stunned silence as the supermodels flew through the air and flung themselves at Scott, their dull stares reminiscent of June bugs flying senselessly into brightly-lit Texas swimming pools.

"Well, don't just stand there, you sissies. Get your butts on the damn chopper! We're going to Rio!" Scott growled, a stump of a cigar gripped tightly between his teeth. Fred, Lando, and Petey obliged, Lando flip-flopping his way up the stairs, Fred bounding up them, and Petey staggering up them, rubbing his very sore posterior, and trying in vain to smooth his now splendiditous mane of hair. He could not understand how on earth his otherwise normal weekend had become the nightmarish events of the past night, but he was happy to be on a helicopter and away from Lando's howler monkeys.

Inside, the supermodels were buzzing wildly, throwing themselves around Scott, crashing into the walls of the helicopter. Lando was looking absolutely dejected, glancing enviously at Scott's shocking white uniform and then down at his suddenly lackluster pajamas. Fred had found a bag of beef jerky and eaten it in its entirety, plastic bag and all.

"Git this damn thing in the air!!" Scott hollered, swatting away a supermodel. The pilot did not look back, but Petey thought that he looked familiar.

Lando looked once again, enviously of Scott's white uniform, and pulled a black cashmere string from his own bedraggled jumpsuit, discarding it into the air. The four of them sat with their backs to the wall, feet in the middle isle enjoying both the view of supermodels and a sense of purpose.

Fred peered out the window as the outskirts of Rio de Janeiro exposed themselves slowly from underneath the dense canopy. The street lights shown over the unknown neighborhoods and unknown enclaves where supermodels were yet to be discovered. He peered toward a neon sign that had the words written "*Daddy Do Osso*," but thought to himself that he would have to use Google language tools later on to figure out what that meant from Portuguese to English.

Petey sat bemused, seemingly by Scott's good looks, but was distracted by the sun glinting off of the pilot's hair. It was red, very red. "HOLY MARK SUPERFUDGE!" Petey exclaimed gleefully!

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...Petey Pink, from previous page...

The pilot turned around with the happy grin of a minister in Scott's army, a well sexed, happy grin.

"Petey, haven't seen you since we bagged that German club trophy and Frau all in the same afternoon! Oh Yeah!" Mark shouted up from the front. He pressed a few buttons, putting the helicopter on autopilot and extricated himself from his seat to come join the new companions. As he walked into the passenger area of the helicopter stretching his legs for the first time in many hours, he saw Fred still munching on what was now partially regurgitated beef jerky. Mark seemed to ignore him as an unknown and continued on to sit by Petey. But as Mark noticed the small pepper flake on Fred's lip and remembered the way the muscles in his face masticated the dried meet, an uncontrollable urge came over him. Mark spun around, while at the same time planting one of his feet above Fred's head in the splits, gyrating his loins vigorously, nearly bouncing his balls off of Fred's nose.

Fred's face flushed red, just as every other time a socially awkward situation presented itself. Lando was by now done sulking about his pajamas and was watching the scene unfold from the back to the helicopter. Petey was in the middle of saying something about how good Mark looked in his whites, and Scott was cuddling with one of the supermodels in a very indiscreet manner. Only Lando noticed that as Fred's face flushed red, the whites of his eyes filmed over gray and then seemed to snap to an inky darkness full of hate and eerily savage. All this happened in the instant before that black string from Lando's pajamas settled through the air and landed on Scott's slut slayer whites, acting, of course, as antimatter....

An epic explosion ripped a hole in the side of the helicopter, sending a ball of fire high into the atmosphere. The helicopter leaned dangerously to the side, causing Mark to stumble backward onto Scott's now-heavily-singed lap. Meanwhile, Fred catapulted to his feet and tore off his shirt, Hulk Hogan-style, and bellowed a guttural roar that popped rivets that were holding the helicopter's tail propeller in place. Petey screamed like a pre-pubescent girl watching Barney get decapitated. As the helicopter started swirling out of control and descending rapidly, a secondary explosion blew Scott out of the helicopter and left Mark clutching the edge of the hole, feet dangling in mid-air. Lando had the presence of mind to grab Petey and the girls and dive out of the helicopter into a billionaire's swimming pool below. The last image Lando saw while jumping from the helicopter was Fred, his eyes like obsidian, his vanes near bursting, lunging at Mark with intent to obliterate. Looking up from the swimming pool, everyone saw the helicopter crash into the side of a hill in an explosion to rival the destruction of the Hindenburg. Chunks of metal could be heard hitting the ground for the next thirty seconds.

Moments later, everyone's attention turned to Scott, who groaned as he slid off the roof and onto the patio below, landing with a dull thud. His uniform was no longer white, or intact for that matter. Lando could hardly suppress a smirk. The supermodels jumped out of the pool and immediately came to Scott's aid.

One last explosion went off in the distance as the owner of the mansion came out to investigate the hubbub. Dressed in his usual, burgundy robe, Hugh Heffner glided across the lawn, not even a hint of concern marring his perma-grin, "Girls. You know the rules," he said to the supermodels. Giggling, they all immediately

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shed the remnants of their clothes.

"Wait!" hollered Hef in a huff. "That doesn't mean *you*," he said to Lando, who was already halfway out of his pajamas. Pointing at Petey, who was floating on his back in the pool and singing "Afternoon Delight" in a ridiculous falsetto, Hef asked, "What in the holy hell is wrong with that guy?"

"He hasn't been the same since Fred and a recliner came flying out of his ass," answered Lando, picking at a singed hole in his pajamas.

"Well, you boys obviously need some help. And I'm going to give it to you. Why, you might be asking. Well, it's because I'm a Christ-like fellow. Jimmy! Get over here."

James Caan stood up from a chessboard not far from the pool where he had been deeply involved in a match against an orangutan, and walked over. "Yeah-uh, well what's goin' on, Hef. See, I'm kinda in the middle of a match over there."

Hef clapped him on the back, "I know, Jimmy. But I need you to see about helping that guy in the pool there. He just had an easy chair and a friend of his come out of his ass, and I know you know what to do."

James Caan whistled sharply, "Yeah, Hef. I can help with that. We need to give him the Wilt Chamberlain treatment." He fished Petey out of the water, and threw him over his shoulder. Petey was still singing and humming, "MY LOVE FOR YOU IS LIKE A TRUCK!"

James Caan sighed and said, "That's all right, man. All you need is an epic Jimmy Caan bender, and you'll be fine." He walked into the house with Petey on his shoulder.

Hef turned to Lando, "You call those *pajamas*? Is there something wrong with y—" he was cut off by a horrible *BOOM* that cut through the still jungle night. A fireball lit up the night and shot through the air, over the pool, and plowed into the orangutan, still pondering his next move. He exploded in a cloud of ape bits and orange hair, and the glass wall behind him shattered into a thousand tiny pieces. Out of the jungle came a roar, an unearthly, hollow roar, and over the high concrete wall bounded a creature, an ancient horrible creature fueled by rage and humiliation. He thudded to the ground and looked around, sniffing for his prey.

"Fred!" yelled Lando. "Don't eat the girls!! They don't think you're gay!!" Savage Fred's coal-colored eyes scanned the palatial back yard, as bit of orange hair, rolling like a tumble weed, settled in the pool. Fred sniffed the air, and his eyes seemed to have turned a deeper black than anyone thought possible. Scott was still lay groaning on the ground, writhing in pain, bleeding from his shoulder, and hands firmly attached to the buttocks of two aiding supermodels.

Hugh snapped his fingers and three Amazonian beauties—daughters of Aphrodite, one blonde, and two brunette—cat-walked out of the house. "Lando, choose which pajamas you would like to wear." Lando heaved himself out of the pool, springing forth, dripping wet. "I choose the brunettes." Effortlessly they unzipped their oh-so-ultra-sweet-Hugh-Heffner-endorsed-from-the-body-of-a-Goddess-pajamas and gave them to Lando. Like magic, Lando turned around and was clad in what could only be described as oh-so-ultra-sweetly-perfect *manjamas*, slyly stowing his old pair and the other pair in the Hugh-Heffner-endorsed-secret pocket. "I like the way you choose your clothes, Mr. Heffner." Lando said, taking

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...Petey Pink, from previous page...

both girls under his arms. “I see they weren’t lying about the way the women take care of their naughty bits down here either. I’ll be back in a day or two,” Lando said over his shoulder as the three walked into the house.

Hugh nodded toward Lando and the girls with a knowing smile. And as the pair plus one disappeared into the house, Hugh suddenly did a back flip, landing with one knee, balancing himself perfectly on the soft ground. “Welcome to the Playgirl Mansion!” Two lines of Chippendale-clad servants streamed out of the house carrying trays piled high with tropical fruit. An audible gasp emanated from both Fred and Scott.

Scott pushed down the pain and rolled over, peering through the soft grass at the house. *Got – to – get – out – of – here*, he thought as he struggled to push himself up to his elbow. Hugh rose to his feet and the spigot of man meat emanating from the house came to an end. Fred stood frozen, teeth bared, muscles flexing. He calculated ferociously how many men and trays of fruit he could destroy in the next one, three, five, seconds. Hugh puffed up his chest and said, “Enjoy the fea—” but was cut short as the back half of the house exploded in a blue ball of flame. Lando emerged from the house at a dead sprint, voice booming. “I saw the remnants of Petey’s clothes, near the entrance to the dungeon. I could hear, pigs squealing and someone said ‘bring out the gimp.’”

Even before Lando covered the length of the lawn, Fred sprang into action and a flurry of fruit and body parts rained down into the pool, a veritable meat grinder of destruction. Scott had managed to get to his feet as Lando arrived and pulled his white jacket out of the bushes. The two of them ran down the slope and jumped down to the beachfront. One could hear the screams as Fred tore through limb after limb. “Scott, give me that jacket!” In his other hand, Lando produced his black pajamas, as Scott handed him the jacket. One after the other, Lando threw the two diametrically opposed materials into the middle of the melee. As the clothing left his hands, a beast covered in blood sprang forth from the mass, landing in the water, beside them on the beach. Directly over the house, the two pieces of clothing collided, acting, of course, as antimatter. Scott, Fred, and Lando slowly turned away from the house. The sun shone both behind them and split the horizon ahead of them to the east.

Meanwhile, in a dark dungeon in the City of God, Titania slid a silvery blade up and down a whetstone. Water dripped from the kitchen faucet with a constant plink...plink...plink. She stopped sharpening and held the blade close to her face, finding the light in the room to examine its edge. With a lightening flick of the wrist, she sliced an eight-pound slab of tofu clean in two and proceeded to wipe the blade clean.

“This will do,” she hissed. Water continued dripping in the sink. Out of nowhere, she produced a head of iceberg lettuce and proceeded to shred it to pieces with her newly sharpened knife. Preparing vegetarian feed was always something she enjoyed, but (ironically) not as much as she enjoyed preparing for an imminent manslaughter. She had heard about the helicopter explosion earlier in the day, and knew that it could only have been caused by one group of people—the woman-oppressors themselves, the supermodel traders of the Blossoming Lotus. After her falling out with Jill, Titania had reformed a militant branch of the Clan, bent on destroying all man-kind, especially those who wore manjamas

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and ate red meat. Tomorrow she would finally crush the infidel oppressor. Tomorrow she would destroy Lando at the supermodel exchange and begin a new era of woman-dominated civilization, in which Lilith Fair would convene once a week to worship the sacred feminine.

Lost in her reverie, she almost failed to notice Blondie, Hecuba, and Trixie enter the room.

“Tonight we feast, girls,” Titania barked, “for tomorrow we kill the oppressor!”

Witch-like screeches of sick glee echoed throughout the building. Bits of tofu and iceberg lettuce whizzed through the air as the Clan devoured their pre-war fare.

“Oh, yes, girls! Tomorrow will be a day for the scrapbooks...!”

As silence fell on the courtyard of the faux Playboy mansion, the three warriors surveyed the damage. The house was a smoking hulk, and the pool was red with blood. The yard was littered with broken bodies and steaming piles of refuse.

“Where did Hef get to?” asked Scott.

“Grrrrrrraaaaaaaaaa!” growled Fred, pointing at the rubble. A cackle erupted from the figure of Hef, hunching down near the doorway leading to the building’s basement. He reached behind his head and yanked off his Mission-Impossible-style mask, and Lando gasped.

“Long Dong Ray!” The three immediately went into a convulsion of anger and disgust at having to revisit a part of their past so tainted with horror and nerdiness.

“Fast as fast as can be, you’ll never catch me,” trilled Ray, and then he disappeared into the doorway. The three charged after him, crashing down a dark stairway illuminated by torches somehow tricked into burning iridescent pink. The light burned their eyes, but they charged on. At the end of a long hallway was a door and no sign of Ray. As they approached the door, Fred started growling low in his throat. Faintly, through the thick steel barrier, music could be heard...awful...terrible music that beat at Lando, Fred, and Scott’s eardrums like a swarm of hideous bees screaming supersonic shrieks in unison.

“Sweet mother of Neptune . . . is that . . . THE ROB ROY SOUNDTRACK?” gasped Lando.

“AAAAAARARRRRRRRRGGHGHGHGHGHGHGGHGHGH!!!” screamed Fred, who fell to the ground, clutching at his ears in anguish.

Scott, however, fresh from the Navy, removed from his pocket two paperclips, a stick of Doublemint gum, a rubber band, and a few Jujubees. He quickly constructed a tiny explosive charge and fastened it to the door, blowing off the hinges and causing it to fall backward. The music washed over them, and the horrible scene that unfolded in front of them caused Lando to puke all over his sweet, velvety shoes.

Petey was secured to a stone wall, dressed in pink pajamas adorned with Hello Kitty characters. His head was held in place by a steel brace, and on the wall across from his was Rob Roy, playing in a continuous loop, the dialogue drowned out by the soundtrack blaring over loud speakers.

“Petey! What happened?!!!” yelled Lando, wiping his mouth.

“It wasn’t Jimmy Caan...,” gargled Petey. “They took the girls...I couldn’t stop...Rob Roy like kryptonite...going to Rio....”

“THINK OF YOURSELF A SCABBARD, MISTRESS

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...Petey Pink, from previous page...

MCGREGOR, AND I THE SWORD. AND A FINE FIT YOU WERE, TOO. I WILL THINK ON YOU DEAD, UNTIL MY HUSBAND MAKES YOU SO. AND THEN I WILL THINK ON YOU NO MORE.” The speakers blared, “IT IS YEARS, YOUR GRACE, SINCE I BUGGERED A BOY... AND IN MY OWN DEFENSE, I MUST ADD, I THOUGHT HIM A GIRL AT THE MOMENT OF ENTRY.”

The pink light burned their eyes as Lando and Scott clambered across the vault door, which lay askance on the sticky floor. “Hold on, I’ll get him down,” Scott yelled above the din. “WHAT DID YOU DO WITH THAT BAG OF GUTS KILLEARN? VEX ME NOT, MCGREGOR, OR I SHALL HAVE YOU DRAGGED A WHILE. AND I AM A MAN OF MY WORD.”

Scott reached into his pants, and pulled out a bottle. He uncorked what looked like a seltzer bottle, and with a few squirts, Petey slumped out of his shackles onto the floor.

“JERRY CURL—how did you do that?” Lando yelled above the din.

“It’s my, SCOTT’S SUPER-SLICK-SEAMAN-SMEAR, GUARANTEED TO GLICE IN ANY PORT OF CALL.”

Petey looked up from the floor. “I don’t want to know.”

Lando held out the second pair of pajamas and Petey thankfully changed out of the Hello Kitty covered abominations into the other pair of ultra-sweet manjamas. As they turned to leave, a bellicose roar rang out in the hall. They rushed back onto the vault door to see Fred with a huge satisfied smile on his face. The group looked around for what had happened. Their eyes settled at once on two hands rubbing Fred’s feet, spindly arms reaching out from underneath the vault door. “LOVE IS A DUNG HILL, BETTY, AND I AM BUT A COCK THAT CLIMBS UPON IT TO CROW.”

All three jumped up and down frantically on the vault door till the hands stopped moving. As they stepped off the vault door, there was a squishing sound from the shifting of weight on the corpse. Long Dong Ray had met his doom.

Just then, an image of a nude Liam Neeson flashed on the TV screen, and something snapped in Petey’s mind. Grabbing a nearby sledgehammer, Petey the Malevolent came back to life. He hurled the hammer with the might of a woolly mammoth, causing a massive explosion and sending TV screen shards flying.

As the TV popped and spit fire, one little spark landed at Petey’s feet and burned a toe hair.

“It smells like burnt toe hair in here,” Scott blurted. “Let’s get out of here and go to the beach.”

“Finally,” Lando said, shooting Petey an accusatory glance. “Unless, of course, you have to fly back to Richardson to meet with your girlfriend...,” he added sarcastically. Fred made a growling noise that resembled a laugh.

But to everyone’s dismay, seeing as Petey was still in his malevolent state of mind, he leapt at Lando, effectively knocking everyone down. While they rolled around in an entirely masculine brawl, a late explosion from the TV sent a spark into a pile of WD-40-soaked rags in the corner of the room. Flames instantly sprung forth from the pile.

Screams of “pig fucker” and “dimple nuts” drowned out the sounds of the spreading inferno, which eventually barred the escape path back through the vault doorway.

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“Fire!” Scott yelled, as Lando smushed Petey’s face into Long Dong Ray’s crotch. Fred stopped chewing his own leg and started sniffing the air for an escape route. Petey slapped Lando’s buttocks a few more times before searching for a solution to their predicament. Panic soon overtook them as they desperately pounded on the walls of the basement. Fred’s eyes returned to their normal white, and Petey lost his malevolence. Scott started writing a last will and testament on the floor in chalk, so as to leave a fireproof record. Lando frantically searched his pockets for a little black pill. It was at that serendipitous moment that he discovered a bottle of altitude sickness pills in a hidden manjama pocket.

The pills rained down Lando’s throat like a box of blazing white tic-tacs. In half a second, they were all gone.

“Uh, dude...do you think you should have taken that many?” asked Scott, but his wise caution was too late. Lando suddenly stood perfectly...ahem...erect, and then he began to spin so fast he stirred up a breeze in the room. Wild giggles began to emanate from Lando cum whirling dervish, and then the breeze became a wind. The wind became ferocious, and Scott, Fred, and Petey began to struggle toward the wall in an attempt to secure themselves against being sucked into Lando’s maelstrom of hyperactivity and school-girl giggles.

The wind became a wall of sound so powerful the three clutched their ears and fell onto the floor. They began to slide in Lando’s direction. Meanwhile, the fire that was blocking the way out had been sucked into the swirling air, and as Lando spun and giggled, the fire died down and eventually disappeared. Fred, his near-naked body smeared with the blood of his enemies, lost his grip on the stone floor and began to slide toward Lando, his Labrador eyes full of fear. He sped across the floor at great speed and slammed into the spinning Lando, who was now cooing senselessly. Lando’s spinning stopped suddenly, and he was flung from his axis and crashed into the wall, sundering the stone and sending debris across the room. He fell from the wall, his pajamas torn and singed, his eyes wild and exhausted, landed on the floor and released a thunderous fart.

Scott and Petey sat up, their hair standing straight up and tinted with white dust and dark soot. Scott looked at Petey and laughed, “What a splendiferous edudimication of most flambambulatory flagrosity!”

“Dude,” said Petey. “What the hell is this?” He was pointing at writing in chalk on the floor that read, “Tell Carl I love him. – Scott.”

Scott whipped out his S-S-S-S-G-T-G bottle and squirted it at Petey’s feet. Petey immediately lost his footing and fell down also with a thunderous fart. Scott shouted, “I don’t want to have to explain that now, I’m bored as it is. Let’s get the hell outahere.” The four compatriots ran down the corridor and out into the sunlight. They kept running till they stood at Ipanema Beach in front of a two story building. The gaudy neon sign on the façade read “Daddy Do Osso.”

“Hey, this is the place I saw from the plane,” Fred said, wiping sweat from his brow. “Let’s check it out.”

“Check it out?” Petey blurted. “We’ve finally made it to the beach and you want to go into this...this bar?” Petey put his hands on his hips and tilted his head to the side.

At that very moment, as they stood on the steps in front the

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...Petey Pink, from previous page...

building, a woman who could only be described as diamond-melting hot, wearing gleaming white short-shorts so short that they were virtually non-existent, bosoms heaving with impossible buoyancy, about to burst the single knot that held the halter top together—this woman, smelling like a field of Baby’s Breath, suddenly strutted past them carrying a tray of Mai Tais.

“Ter uma bedida, boys,” she said handing one to each of them. “Welcome to Bone Daddy’s....” Her voice was liquid gold. Fred, Lando, and Scott fell to the ground from cardiac arrest. Petey pushed aside the miniature umbrella and sipped his Mai Tai, “Thanks. Table for four, please.”

The über-chick led them into the darkly-lit, steamy restaurant, that was some strange fusion of American barbeque and churrascaria, which apparently meant that servers came to the table lugging an entire side of smoked beef and giant vats of sauce, and you got to hack your meal of the side of beef with a special silver hatchet. Fred began to softly cry, tears glistening on his cheeks.

The four sat down at their table, its wrap-around booth cloaked in soft velvet. The side of beef showed up, and each took a turn hacking off a giant portion of succulent meat. Each with a mound of protein in front of them, they clinked glasses, took giant swigs, picked up their oversized forks, and dug in. They chewed at first with gusto, and then slowed, a look of consternation and then horror washing over their faces almost in unison. Fred began to choke, spewing food from his mouth, hands rushing to his throat.

“GREAT LINCOLN’S GHOST!” cried Petey. “IT’S TOFU!!”

Scott looked up from his plate calmly, “No no, go ahead and eat, if you put enough sauce on it...you can’t tell the difference.”

“IMPOSTER!” cried Fred as the last bit of tofu cleared his mouth, skittering across the table and falling in a wet lump to the floor. In one motion, Fred stood up from the velvet seat grabbing one of the cow ribs, a bovine cudgel.

Just as Fred was about to break the club over Scott’s head, the waitress appeared and with the wispy tones of, “Boys, done with your appetizers?” put an end to the explosive situation.

“THANK LITTLE BABY JESUS,” yelled Petey. “I thought Titania had infiltrated this most holy of shrines.” The bustle of the busy restaurant fell immediately silent, all eyes turned to where a heavysset man with a girl on each arm had just entered the restaurant. He was a legend in these parts, having canoed from New York to Brazil more times than could be remembered, every time frequenting this, his favorite hang out. His circular spectacles caught a ray of disco light and nearly burned a hole through one of the serving wenches halter tops. She giggled from the mild sting as every woman in the building let out a collective, wistful sigh. Teddy Roosevelt always had this effect on women...

“GOD DAMN IT, FRED!” screamed Petey, astride Fred’s slumped form. “WAKE UP!” Fred had gobbled down more tofu than any of them, seeing as he was quite savage, particularly when it came to meat consumptions, and thus he had gone into some sort of induced stupor upon Petey’s proclamation that they were eating, in fact, tofu posing as sweet, wonderful barbequed beef.

Fred opened his eyes, eyelids very heavy, and glimpsed the chaos of the surprisingly small cavern into which they had been baited. Scott and Lando were locked in battle with several hotties cum vegetable monsters and where quickly running out of pajamas and sailor suit to hurl at their foes.

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“DAMMIT! THAT’S IT! DRASTIC TIMES CALL FOR DRASTIC MEASURES!” With that, Petey planted a giant kiss straight on Fred’s mouth. At first, Fred went limp, but soon his eyelids flew open with such velocity that the resulting wind knocked a hole in the roof. He grasped Petey by both shoulders and lifted him up, Fred’s face twisted in such a horrible grimace that it appeared as if all the universe’s anger had been concentrated in one small place at this one moment in time. He flung Petey toward a vegetable monster with all his might, and the two collided with such a thunderous explosion of sound that Scott and Lando were knocked backward. Fred looked down at the side of tofu beef, looked up at the vegetable monsters, and let loose a roar rippling with rage and carnivorous indignation.

Petey lay prostrate in the corner of the restaurant, the roar still echoing in his ears. He peered back into the restaurant where Lando and Scott were engaged in a battle royale with the vegetable monsters. As Petey rolled over on his sore ass, he winced, not because the previous day’s rectal roto-rooter but because there was a child holding out his hand just in front of Petey’s face surprising Petey so utterly that he nearly soiled himself, again.

“WHAT DO YOU WANT RETARDED MIDGET?” Petey screeched.

“Don’t yell, GRINGO. You dropped your glasses from your PJs when your friend threw you across the room.”

Petey cautiously took his glasses and hooked them over his ears, pulled his hair back and gasped as he saw Lando and Scott dancing with, or at least trying to keep up with, six of the most lusciously dressed carnival dancers with tiny pasties and feather headdresses. He remembered reading his Lonely Planet guide to Brazil: Daddy Do Osso’s carnival party central. The haze had disappeared, which forced Petey to finally realize that his poor vision was not an excuse for dreaming up an utterly idiotic vegetable-monster stupidity. He hung his head as he was embarrassed that he came up with such nonsense, instead of just putting on his glasses. Creative thoughts failing him, he stuck his finger in his ear to try and alleviate some of the roar that was still ringing in his ears.

A passive observer would have seen the scrawny brunette thrown across the room by the brutish blonde, enormous hands flexing in a menacing mechanical tightening. They would have seen the tiny urchin scrambling to give the brunette his glasses and the brunette clamber to his feet looking around in a drunken daze. They would have seen the blonde walk back toward their table, now piled high with the second course, organic cattle beef ribs. They would have seen the consternation on the blonde’s face as he seemed to be thinking over something. If they had been really astute they would have seen one last longing look cast by the blonde at the table of beef ribs, before turning, taking three steps and launching into flight, over the bar—stacked with beautiful female bartenders, over the carnival dancers—purely stacked, past the diamond chandelier, over sixteen tables of guests—completely oblivious, before clutching the throat of the scrawny brunette and planting his knees squarely in the brunette’s chest, driving him to the ground with such crushing force that the snapping of bones was apparent. But what the observer would not have seen was the blonde’s obsidian eyeballs and for the sake of the group, it was lucky because there were no passive observers in the restaurant that day.

Petey woke up wearing a pink cast enclosing half of his body. As

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...Petey Pink, from previous page...

his eyelids split open, he heard a murmur from a box in the top corner of the room, which after some time revealed itself in his mind to be a television set. Matlock's pale gray suit flashed on the screen in different angles as a very deep Portuguese voice overdubbed his speech. "Você cheiro da verdade!"

Petey blinked and noticed that his eyelids were actually the only thing that he could move. He coughed as he sucked on a sugary liquid through a straw taped to his mouth. He felt like hell.

Scanning the room more thoroughly with his eyes, he suddenly realized he wasn't the only person there. A buxom nurse, hearing his cough, quickly leaned over to see what was wrong.

"Are joo okay, Petey? Let me check your tubing...." He quickly realized that other body parts were still functioning.

Lost in the dazzling hills of the Brazilian nurse's bosom, Petey didn't notice that she took the pillow from behind his head.

"There joo go," she said. "Feel better?" As a matter of fact, he didn't feel better, but he was too enthralled to care. The nurse started fluffing the pillow. "It'll all be over soon...."

Petey had no idea what had happened between the time Fred smashed into him at the bar and what he was experiencing now. Something didn't add up, but he would just have to figure it out later, since three other nurses walked through the door at that very moment. He almost thought he had died and gone to heaven. He even said so out loud.

"No, you haven't died...yet," one of them answered in sugary tones. The others giggled. It started as a little sorority girl giggle that morphed into a Cruella DeVille giggle that turned into the Wicked Witch of the West maniacal screeching! In unison, the four nurses ripped off their face masks to reveal them to be none other than Clan henchman! The closest one to him reached out to smother him with the pillow, when suddenly the entire building began to shake violently. The nurses were thrown from their feet and crashed into the walls. Petey hung onto his hospital bed for dear life as the walls trembled and began to crack and buckle. The window in the room shattered, and the wind outside raged with a shrieking fury. The lights went out, and lightning intermittently painted the room in blue and black between fantastic bursts of thunder so close and loud that Petey had to clasp his ears and close his eyes.

Through it all came a thin sound from outside the building, soft, but constant and confident...Peteeeeeeeeee, Peteeeeeeeeee, Peteeeeeeeeee, PEEEEEEEEEEEE! "DEVIL'S DAQARI. MALIBU AND CAMPARI. MOTHER'S MILK, MALIBU, I'M GOING TO BEAT THE SHIT OUT OF YOU."

The henchman froze and edged closer to the window. Petey noticed their breasts were heaving with a nervous tension that he readily appreciated.

"ON THE ROCKS, THE GRAY GOOSE ROAMS, IN MY BELLY WILL FIND A HOME. MINT AND RUM, MY TASTE BUDS HUM, FEE FY FO FUM, I AM THE DISAMBIGUOUSLY CHOSEN ONE."

Petey seized the opportunity and pushed the henchwomen out the window, scattering their brains on the sidewalk below. He peered through the lightning and saw what was unmistakably a huge wart on the end of Trixie Tannenbaum's nose.

"CANTANKEROUS WENCH!" Petey screamed from the window. *School in Georgia really screwed her up*, he thought

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to himself as he dashed his cast against the wall shattering it into a million pieces. He looked out the window just in time to see Trixie finish off a Magnum of Skol Gin. Petey recoiled in horror...that stuff is gross.

Trixie belched fire that blackened the side of the building just as Petey leapt back from the window. "IN AS LIQUID, OUT AS FIRE, NOW'S THE TIME TO UNLEASH IRE!" Petey's eyes darted around the room as the whirling wind intensified outside. Like nails on a chalkboard, Trixie's screeches relentlessly pounded Petey's eardrums. It became apparent quickly that she was summoning a massive tornado to tear down the entire building. "HEHEHEHEHEHEHEHE-EEEEEE!"

Petey involuntarily started sliding toward the window as the whirlwind's suction grew to Dirt Devil M08230X Ultra Hand Vac levels, of which he was intimately familiar from certain unspeakable episodes when his family was out of town and he (with his stack of *Muscle* magazines) was the only one left at home. He grabbed onto the railing on the side of the hospital room and wondered where Scott, Lando, and Fred were, when suddenly the tornado's fury was bent inward like a defracted ray of light, ripping a perpendicular hole straight through the building. Little Petey wept like an Oompah Loompah with an onion allergy.

Trixie Tannenbaum's screech reverberated throughout the neighborhood as she demolished the hospital and tried to crush the male inhabitant therein, when suddenly a police van pulled up alongside the emergency entrance, stopped momentarily, spit out three scraggly looking Americans, and peeled out. Scott, Lando, and Fred looked like they hadn't slept for days. How long had Petey been unconscious?

Scott, not wearing any pants, rolled over and went to sleep....

"YOU SHALL DIE A PEASANT'S DEATH!" screeched Trixie, unknowingly quoting the movie *Team America*, thus summoning the spirits of Trey Parker and Matt Stone in the storm clouds above. Trixie directed her tornado blast toward Fred and Lando, scattering them across the parking lot. From the hospital room above, Petey wringed his hands in fear.

Suddenly, the spirit of Trey and Matt, sensing an evil, ultra-feminist vegetarian in the vicinity, unleashed a barrage of fiery hail. In an apocalyptic fury, Trixie's alcoholic breath immediately burst into a column of flames, sending a belch of magma high into the sky. Her tyranny met a premature end with that last, intense blast. All that remained was a black pile of carbon on the pavement below and a few melted glass bottles.

But before Fred, Lando, and Petey even realized their victory, a mammoth boom cracked the sky as the spirit of Matt and Trey was instantaneously vaporized in a thunderbolt! Titania had arrived on the scene with her Clan denizens close behind her.

"Oh crap," muttered Lando, trying to pick himself off the concrete. Petey started sucking his thumb.

"That's right, Lando!" Titania screeched, bits of tofu spewing out of her mouth. "The evil oppression of the abhorrent supermodel slave trade will come to an end this day! The Blossoming Lotus and all dens of misogynistic abuse shall be destroyed!" With a flick of her wrist, she sent another terrifying thunderbolt toward the hospital, turning the rest of the structure into powder and sending Petey to the earth in a freefall. The rest of the clan rushed forward in a wild fury. Her powers were too grotesquely powerful to stand

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...*Petey Pink, from previous page...*

against.

A bit of ash landed on Scott, who had been passed out on the ground, and as the ash entered his nostril, he sneezed and woke himself up, flinging himself to his feet like a sprung bear trap. Titania gasped in mid-cackle as Scott's eyes narrowed, homing in on Titania's equivalent to her jugular—her friendship bracelet.

"It's been fun, guys," Scott barked over his shoulder. "See you on the other side."

You see, Scott was the only one of them who knew Titania's weakness, having destroyed many a haystack with her in former days, back when the world was newer. Titania tried to hide this shame and devoted her life to the destruction of all man-dom, gathering the Clan henchwomen on an evil crusade of hatred. Now Scott saw his moment to act as Titania stood stunned. He leapt with the discipline of a trained seaman, shredding the friendship bracelet, which acted like anti-matter to him, causing another doomsday explosion that wrecked havoc on the entire city of Rio. A sizzling light burned shadows into the pavement and left all in the city temporarily blind. When the dust settled, Petey, Fred, and Lando lay frazzled on the ground. Scott was nowhere to be found.

Two months later, Petey lounged by his pool in California, sipping a Martini with lemon twist and listening to Elton John on the radio. Having recovered entirely from the fiasco in South America, he realized that there was only one thing for him to pursue in life, that being super-artistry in the form of chartreuse anaconda-skin bandanas. If there was one thing he knew for sure, it was that these bandanas would be the next slap bracelets. ☒

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THE TRAGIC TALE OF
MADELEINE ALBRIGHT'S CAREER AS A FASHION MODEL
IN 19TH CENTURY NEW YORK
(PART 10)

By Several Bored Office Pukes

In our last installment, the Rough Riders made a name for themselves in their wartime adventures. In New York, Madeleine ran into Strom Thurmond and learned the secret that pigmy slaves run Strom's chocolate plantation. Then there was her brother Schenker's dark secret, which Strom began telling....

"Schenker, although popular in New York, hated the Irish so much that he joined the Immaculate Confederacy of Southern States so that he could kill some Irish. But as fate would have it, at the battle of Gettysburg, running across the open battlefield in Pickett's Immaculate and Devine Charge to Defeat the Oppressor Infidels, he tripped on the battle field and fell into the mud just as an explosive shell sent bone shards of the men in front of him deep into his skull. Schenker awoke in my country house, just south of the Mason Dixon, forever mentally impaired, deformed, and speaking with an Irish accent. When I went in to see the wounded, he grabbed my ruffled sleeve and told me that he had seen General Pickett shat upon, and that the spatter had infected his wounds. And that he had a wonderful sister that he wanted to be his wife. A year past, and he stayed at my mansion, as I traveled south to see my holdings. Eventually, I got word that he was back in New York, and I returned to New York as quickly as I could. I stopped my stagecoach when I saw him. He was completely covered in horse dung and talking in his usual Irish accent. It was your brother that was the hideous turd monster. But he did not die when the same horse that shit splattered him on the battlefield sent him flaming—no pun intended—into my stage coach. He returned finally, after all those years to see your parents, back in Amish country."

"Um, I don't get it," said Madeline.

"Schenker and I were LOVERS!" Strom sobbed. His head sagged into his hands, and Maddy just stood there, baffled, her mouth opening and closing soundlessly. She didn't have time to collect her thoughts before the door to the hospital room burst open as a man rushed wildly into the room.

"I'm Bob Dole, and Bob Dole knew it!" he proclaimed, triumph painted on his face in bold strokes. "You've won your last election, ol' buddy, and Bob Dole's off to be president!" He turned to leave the room, but before he cleared the door, Strom slammed into him like the Hammer of Thor.

Maddy screamed loudly as she was knocked aside into a medicine cabinet, the glass shattering and showering over her as she fell to the floor. The last thing she saw before she lost consciousness was a number of syringes rolling off a damaged shelf above her and dropping, one-by-one down toward her.

Strom and Bob Dole were oblivious to her plight. Strom's mechanical heart pumped blood ignited by hatred and passion, and Bob Dole fought with the vicious spirit of a man possessed by delusions of power. Their epic struggle roiled through the halls of the hospital and spilled out into the streets of New York. Shots rang out, innocent people were maimed, and several carriages were commandeered and then eviscerated by fire. The fight raged for several blocks, down to the waterfront, where finally Strom and Bob Dole squared off and began circling each other slowly. Strom held a pitchfork he had wrested from a surprised farmer unloading hay, and Bob Dole brandished a kitchen knife and a poodle.

"This is it, Bob! My secret dies with you!" Strom hissed through false teeth.

"I'm Bob Dole!" shouted Bob.

"Great God in Heaven! What is the meaning of this spectacle?" boomed an all too familiar voice from above them, giving them pause. Bob and Strom looked up, and atop the deck of a huge ship at dock was the outline of a muscled man, his face bristling with mustache and round glasses glinting from the shadow cast by an unusual hat, its brim pulled up on one side. As their vision focused, Bob and Strom recognized their old adversary, and noticed that he was flanked by similarly dressed, rather beautiful, thought Strom, men, and by one man who was beautiful by the measure of only one man's eyes.

"SCHENKER!" cried Strom.

Jumping down from atop his donkey, which he sat on even while out to sea, Schenker squinted his eyes in disbelief. "Thurmie, is that you?"

...continued in right column...

...Madeleine Albright, from left column...

"Hahaha!" blurted Bob Dole. "The newspapers will eat this up. You're history, Strom!"

Strom's eyes darted back and forth as he panicked at the prospect of losing his political career. He yearned for Schenker's comforting touch now that the truth was out, but he had doomed himself politically. There was only one thing to do. He pulled out a pan flute and played a quick, choppy melody.

"Au revoir, Bobby!" Strom called, once again faking a French accent. Full of yearning, he looked up toward the boat. "I'll never forget you, Schenker." Just then thousands of pigmy slaves in suspenders flocked to the flute call of their master. They swarmed Strom like locusts (the origin of the word "maelstrom") and whisked him away to the chocolate plantation, never to be seen until many years later during the Civil Rights movement.

"Bob Dole will be President!" screamed Bob Dole like a psychopath on fire, an empty bottle of pills clutched in his hand. The look of ecstasy on his face was both maniacal and terrific.

"Not so fast," Teddy interrupted as he leapt thirty feet down to street level. "There's only room for one President in this country, and I intend to be that President."

Bob snapped out of his reverie and shot a bitter look in his direction. "You what?"

"We're entering a new century, Bob. I'm gonna be the 26th President of this country, and there's not a damn thing you can do about it! I suggest you step aside and go home."

Enraged, Bob Dole threw the woolly mass that was the poodle directly at Teddy, who, instantaneously reacting to the threat, barreled into Bob like a thousand ton train. The Mexican Greeks "oo"ed and "aw"ed at the sight of two men slamming into each other. It all resembled a game they had played in Cuba called "Slick Hippos"....

Dusting himself off, having sent Bob flying, Teddy took a deep breath that filled his chest. He always did that after physically crushing his opponents. And like usual, it gave him a slight tingle that reminded him of his woman, Little Maddy. Where was that juicy little crumpet? He was interested in breaking that whalebone bed in their apartment, especially after months of seafaring and war.

At the far end of the alley, a groaning Bob Dole dragged himself into a nearby garbage bin where he passed out for a good four days. He wasn't heard from again that side of the year 1900.

Meanwhile, Schenker wiped a tear of fond memory from his eye and climbed down to street level with Teddy. He had finally returned to New York to retrieve his sister, though by now even with a slightly retarded brain, he realized that things wouldn't be the same with Teddy around. Madeline would be a supermodel, and Teddy would be President. Schenker, on the other hand, would be relegated to shoveling horse crap and mud back in Amish country.

But it wasn't until hours later, when they found young Madeleine, that the true course of things would be revealed. Having been stabbed by dozens of syringes like a human pin cushion, Maddy lay in a coma, her face terribly disfigured. The career she had worked so hard to achieve would be over. She might not have survived except the hospital intravenously fed her some Coca Cola.

Between campaigning across the country and hunting bison barehanded in South Dakota, Teddy had no more time for Madeleine—he could (and would) find his "snake charmer" elsewhere. Schenker would give Madeleine massages to keep her muscles from atrophying. The Mexican Greeks would visit her frequently and create a makeshift catwalk to show off the latest fashions for her. All the while, Madeleine lay in limbo, her future uncertain.

Then suddenly, while Schenker was massaging her thighs one day, her eyes creased open ever so slowly. Schenker dropped her leg as if having committed a sin and stared in awe. Her eyes twinkled brightly as she visibly regained a sense of awareness.

"I'll get the doctor!" Schenker squealed and ran out of the room.

Somehow, Madeleine knew that her modeling days were over. She was so filled with hate and sorrow, she hardly knew what to do. All she knew was that she hated one Strom Thurmond and one Bob Dole, two people she vowed to exterminate from the face of the earth. As Strom had once told her, seemingly ages ago, there was only one way to gain the power to do that: politics.

When Schenker finally returned to the hospital room with a box of malted milk balls—having forgotten that he was supposed to get a doctor—the only things that remained in Madeleine's bed were a tube dripping with Coke and a note written in blood stating, "El Strom y el Bobby son bastardos!"

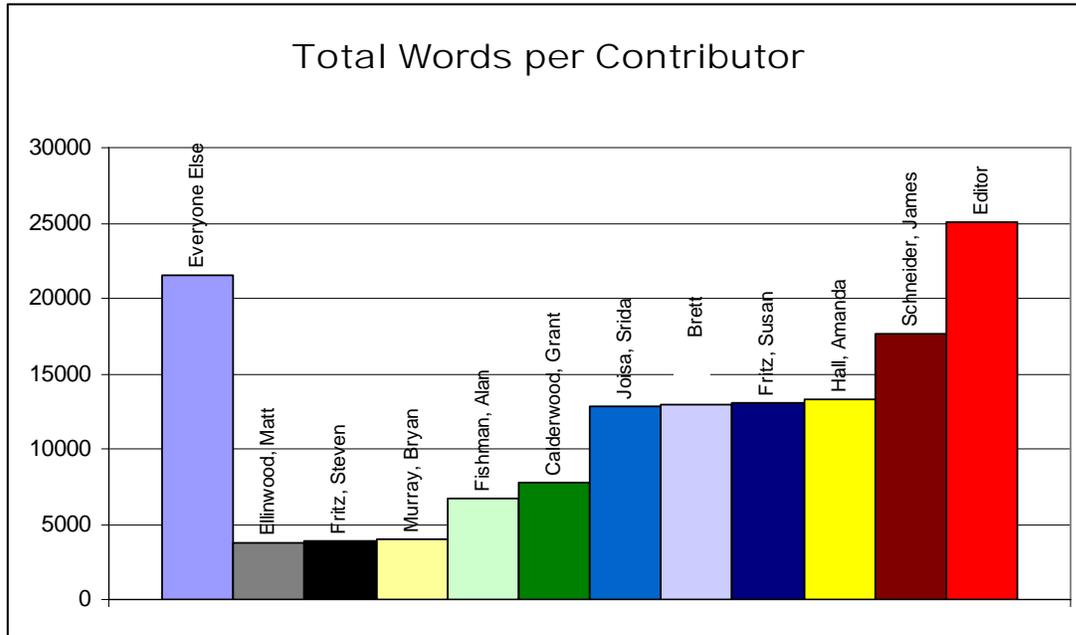
Madeleine Klum was never seen in a lingerie catalogue again....

THE END!

NEWSLETTER STATS

Note: These statistics are accurate to +/- 3% and do not include the current issue.

Total Words per Contributor



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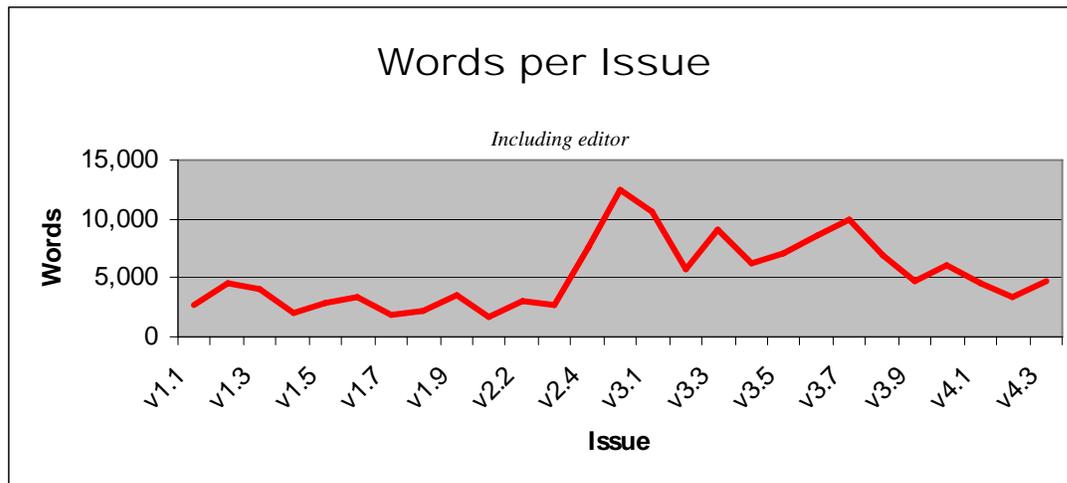
Dan Fritz, Editor
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Awards

These awards could be yours!

For Total Words Contributed:
1,000: **Little Scribbler**
5,000: **Babble-ON-ian**
10,000: **Grimmelshausen Award**
Each additional 10,000:
Proust BabbleStar

For Exceptional Content:
Alfred, Lord Tennyson
Platinum Seal of Excellence:
To date, no one has won this.

Good luck, and keep the submissions coming! ☒

Global Watch Map

BabbleON has attracted contributors and readers from around the globe. In addition to the U.S. writers from 14 different states (noted on the map), there have been international submissions from:

Nussloch, Germany,
Brussels, Belgium,
Venice, Italy, and
Sydney, Australia.

Key: Red squares mark the residence of each contributor. ☒

