

THE REFRIGERATOR

"GEORGE EASTMAN IS DEAD" • ROCHESTER, NY • NO. 3

All subjects pale in comparison with what is happening on the world stage these days. Someone was saying this to me (and they were pretty depressed.) Oh, they do? I said. You know you are completely wrong about that, I advised; I can get a captive audience anytime I want on the subject of . . . fixing the lamps, for instance.

Sure you can, he said—the accuser. Yes I can, I said. I don't think so, he said, who cares about your . . . fixing the lamps? Well, I said, see that girl over by the jukebox? (He'd been staring at her, I knew; she looked promising, like she was selecting the very tunes she wanted, or wanted you to want her to want.) See that girl, she's desperately interested in my subject of fixing the lamps.

Sure she is, he said. Yea, I said, I could get her onto that subject, or if I did get her onto that subject I could captivate her entirely with it, and while the tunes most appropriate were playing, too. It would be wonderful, we'd be considering my . . . fixing the lamps, and it would go on virtually forever, literally forever, it would be

forever we'd be considering all this.

Yea, sure, he said. I said, then what would your world stage stuff amount to? Who cares, I said, it isn't even happening, all this trouble that is depressing you so much you can't even talk to that girl. Do you think anything could happen anywhere to interrupt us, if we were really like . . . fixing the lamps?

Well, he said, you're losing me. I said, go over and try it. Try what, he said. Go talk to her, I said. It's you who's talking about her, he said. Well yea, I said, but that's alright, I'll give her to you.

Man, he said, can't we just stand here and talk, we're just talking, nobody is going to do anything. No, you're just talking, I said, you're talking from inaction, I can tell. And I can tell you this too, if you don't save that girl by the jukebox right now, if you don't distract her or something with some hopeful report from the home front, in five minutes then World War III actually will break out . . . for lack of anything else happening.



In the tradition of Sam Patch, an early Rochester performance artist, a Canadian man tried taking the falls into Lake Ontario this summer. His barrel got stuck in the shallow rapids at the top of the falls where he was rescued and arrested.



Getting a drink can get to be a major project in this town if you let it. For instance, you get out of an early movie on a weeknight and decide to stop and get a drink somewhere, get in the car, and start driving around trying to think of a quiet place to stop. Naturally your mind goes blank and Rochester immediately becomes a ghosttown. The bar you are seeking does not exist. Or if it does, you cannot remember its name until you are doing your laundry two weeks later. The Refrigerator suggests keeping a list in your car (of course we don't follow our own advice). 40 South Union is a place where you can sit in the corner and drink a martini on a weeknight. The atmosphere is very pleasant unless you are homophobic which we're sure you are not. Maxwell's on S. Clinton near Alexander is another island of somewhat noisier civilization to down a drink or two. Same management as Richmonds but less filled with American Express toting U of R students. Grammys, (dumb name), formerly Negresco, also on S. Clinton, is another place to sit at the bar, put your feet on the rail, and order a real cocktail. Good bartenders. The Old Toad in the Medical Arts building on Alexander has a nice pub look with upholstered booths laid out to encourage conversation. Order a Sam Smith Oatmeal Stout

or a cider and relax. I avoid looking at the ceiling which is jarringly out of place. It belongs in an office park not a pub. Small complaint. As a last resort you might consider buying a quart of Genny and sitting on a park bench on East Ave. Don't knock it till you've tried it.

After he wrote his suicide note, and before he shot himself, George Eastman put the cap back on his fountain pen. Also, George Eastman smoked a cigarette, or a cigarillo, right before he shot himself, didn't finish though, and carefully butted it out in a green ashtray.



We went to the Wayne County Fair and witnessed firsthand The Decline of Western Civilization. No freak shows or anything (they weren't necessary). A big night out for the folks who were showing their prize pig in one of the barns we wandered through, but an equally important night for the teenagers in Megadeath T-shirts.

We were there for the demolition derby but saw four fights and we didn't get near the beer tent. One of these was between the two groups I just described. A 45 year old man dukin' it out with a 16 year old right next to the ticket line we were standing in. We were crammed into the

bleachers and a fight broke out in the next section but the most spectacular was right on the track while we were leaving. Guys ran from all directions to join in and there were about 30 of them swinging at each other while we watched from behind the fence. They had just driven 100 cars into each other until only one was able to move and they still had a little something to get out of their systems.

The booths with stuff for sale were the most interesting. Big towels with Charlie Daniels head floating over a western prairie scene, Elvis mirrors, T-shirts with a flag printed on them and the words "Try Burning This Asshole". We thought maybe the T-shirt was flame retardant. We realized later, when we saw a couple of guys wearing them, that it was just another provocation to fight. A jewelry booth with three trays of skull rings, skulls with hatchets and swords stuck in them and a pile of skulls all on one ring. But the most intriguing item was a woman's hat that had the words "Beyond Bitch" printed on the front. That was deep.



Footnote on Boom Boxes

The sadness of the young man carrying the oversized radio through the streets, consists in the fact that he is so obviously deluded as to the possibilities of radio reception. It is not merely his total attachment to the particular music he has found, which make him a curiosity and a spectacle to all who see him go by, but the most obvious fact that his radio is only symbolically large, since it must from his point of view have ears for numberless stations—this being emphasized further by the many false dials and needless chrome decorations. He has no idea that in reality there are a finite number of stations.



Footnote on Cowboys and Indians

I could see after buying finally uncountable numbers of toy cowboys and Indians, that my playmate had no established limit on the size of the conflict we were continuously planning on the living room rug. I envisioned the final fate of these toy figures, all together in a bottom drawer somewhere, or in a coffee can if they could fit.

One afternoon I enjoined my son to help me set them up in a big circle, around the edge of the living room rug. This we accomplished then as the dusk was falling, and in time for dinner, leaving as it turned out about half an inch between each figure, and alternating them, cowboys and Indians, though in the end there was a surplus of Indians.

How come, he asked; how come there are more Indians? Well, I said, I think the people who make these toys figure that in typical battles more Indians get killed—maybe that is it.

How come, he asked. I don't know, I said, how they think they could know that, when we haven't even had the war yet. This made him thoughtful. What happened when the cowboys and Indians really fought, he wanted to know. Oh, I said, I think the cowboys won.

How come, he said. I'm not sure, I said. But I could see my young son was beginning to think, like it might be an axiom in life: so, the good guys are outnumbered, are they!

Recent photographs taken by telescopes flung into outer space suggest the heavens may not be in perfect focus, but may be like an impressionist painting.



Watching television is socially reprehensible, not necessarily so damaging to the individual watching, but socially damaging, for while you indecently lounge there, other people are

missing your attention. It's not getting dressed, not doing a number of things, but taking care of yourself all the time and watching these programs that flatter your taste for self-indulgence.



I remember asking my wife if we vote for this guy. I meant like is he even in our district. We usually vote Democratic but I didn't remember ever pulling a lever next to his name. It's

fun to vote, I recommend it. It's usually raining that night. We walk to our polling place in the high school and tell each other what we know about the candidates. There's usually a good (good meaning bad and bad meaning good) student art show behind the glass cases. And I usually forget to pull the levers at the bottom for the amendments or proposals or whatever they call them.

We certainly got enough mail from this guy. And always in pairs, one to me and one to my wife. All I remember about them is chucking them both immediately along with the Shopping Bag and that little direct mail piece that always seems to come with it. So I started tuning in to him. It bugged me when he reversed his stand on the death penalty. He got plenty of press for that because he may be the swinging vote when the state decides whether or not to reinstate the death penalty. It was't so much his new stance as his reason for it. He's satisfied there is guaranteed protection for the innocent in the new bill. Only the guilty will fry. Now I've sat through a few court cases and I can't imagine our legal system approaching infallibility. I have a hard time with the pope on that issue. I would like to hear his reasons for believing in the death penalty as a solution. Killing is bad. So we have laws against it. But if someone is really bad, we can kill him. I don't get it.

Any way the mail was getting obnoxious, something every week with his face on it. Who was paying for all this? I decided I didn't like him and I wrote his campaign headquarters and asked them to take my name off the list. I've never written any other junk mail concern. We got something in the mail the following week and I just figured they hadn't deleted my name from the computer yet. But then we got something just a few days later and something else a few days after that. They had accelerated their assault because of my letter. I checked out the literature thinking they were trying to talk me into liking him but the stuff was so bad I realized this was just more junk and they had ignored my letter.

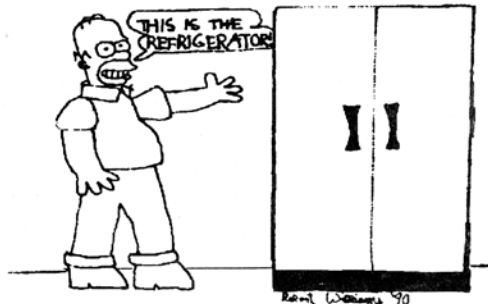
So I continued tossing the black and blue mail until one afternoon when the doorbell rang. I answered it and was stunned to be face to face with Gary Proud. My heart was either beating too fast or too slow but I was trembling. I'm not sure why. This was only politics, an exercise like the debate club, and my opponent looked as innocent as an overgrown Red Wing batboy. I think he introduced himself but I cut him off with "I'm not interested. I've already called your office and asked that my name be taken off your list and I'd appreciate it if you'd do that. Now he was stunned and said, "Can I ask why?" I explained how I felt about his death penalty reversal and he said "Not even for Arthur Shawcross?" I wish now I had told him I favor dismemberment for Arthur. Start with his left hand and when that wound has healed whack it off at the elbow, then at the shoulder. Take a chunk of a limb for each victim, put him in a wheel chair and roll him back out on the street. But I wasn't quick enough. I said, "Not even for Arthur Shawcross". He left and I saw him scribble something in his notebook at the bottom of our driveway.

We continued to get mail from him and then a hand addressed envelope to me (there wasn't a matching piece for my wife). It was a form letter with my name in blue ballpoint pen trying to rationalize his death penalty position. Next week, more mail (Gary with Girl Scouts, Gary with District Attorney Howard Relin and Gary holding a sign saying that he saved Silver

Stadium). This guy is a real pest. I started collecting the pieces he sent and even cut an article out of the paper about him. Then yesterday there was an 11x14 inch manila envelope in our mailbox addressed to my wife. There was no return address on it. We opened it. We were speechless. It was a blue fly swatter and on the handle it said "Vote PROUD-He Works For You". At least, I thought he's taken my name off the mailing list. We hung the fly swatter on the wall. The next day my fly swatter came.

Wilmore Corporation, developers of Eastview, Marketplace, and Irondequoit Mall, adamantly deny marketing studies concluding that shoppers will desert shopping malls within the next few years.

THE REFRIGERATOR



Rochester is full of guitar players. Since nearly everyone in the US has owned a guitar at some point in their lives it is not surprising that these musicians are held up to close scrutiny. We've heard

almost as many guitar solos in our lives as commercials for miracle cleaning cloths. My pick for most sublime guitarist heard in recent memory would have to be blues player Alex Dishlanovic (spelling?). He is the master of the beautifully played note. They fall into the air like sparks from a fire, and remain in place long after the music has ended. Catch Alex with the Rockin Red blues band at various nightspots around town.

It's possible to furnish a house with things thrown on the curb, within two weeks of diligence.

We're always on the lookout for original entertainment concepts and have not found it in the local music scene lately. We remember outdoor concerts in Highland Bowl (it wasn't Nick and the Nice Guys), bands at the Top of the Plaza with upwards of 700 people, multi-media shows at the Community Playhouse and a crazy mix of bands at Scorgies, like a Latin band opening for a local rock favorite. Wild stuff. Jazzberrys' has been on the mark with it's menu but we haven't seen the enthusiasm yet.

Two recent albums by The Essentials and Uncle Sam should not go unnoticed. The album may be tired as an entertainment concept but these are both original and fantastic. Colorblind James' Bob Dylan night is a brilliant concept and a highlight of every year. Colorblind is without a doubt the most popular original band in town and thoroughly entertaining.

Surely the most original entertainment concept we've come across, though, is The Stage Poetry Series on Monday nights at Jazzberrys where last week we heard a George Eastman lookalike sing his suicide note.



The Shorter History of the World

We wouldn't have a past at all, if God had not. Acted in that past. And the truth carries the Rest. The morning is

already started, when You awake. The historical is an incident

Within the transcendental--which is what was Here. And it arises, the terrain of life, Ecstatically--the love that you feel, for everything, the very dust you breathe.

It occurs within the thought, that all of this Is a later chapter in a story begun without you--My child . . . It was all begun without you, And here you are, within sighting of the truth! Swift and total are the armies of the night In any nation that forgets; and then they have No past at all, but cyclical dreams of passion And violence, stamped out, like on the prairie where the desert flowers blossom And the gypsy girl comes--where the famished Traveller comes to find the rare, unbidden oasis.

I thought I heard you say there were other places That you can't get to. China . . . Russia . . . There are hordes of people, on the globe. But you must look, there is a lost tradition in The incidental life. I thought I heard you were Despairing. But I can save the world, this time In posting a letter--because the mailman is more Fleet than Mercury, the old time messenger of That same mysterious, foreboding, frowning, hard to fathom, most accused and Hardly understood God in the neighborhood.

Due to lack of interest Eastman Kodak Company has suspended the showing of lunchtime movies free for their employees.



The Refrigerator Talks Back!

Refrigerator, I discovered your neat page in a crate at a friend's house. I only found #1 and #2. ...being a writer/publisher I was real interested to discover you.

Could you send me the issues from #3 to recent? I'll trade you one each of the four zines I've done - Gulag Dada, Hotel Dire and Tales From The Diner. Are you familiar with the church of the Sub Genius?

Gobi, Rochester

Dear Gobi,

As you may already know, with all the censorship hubbub of late, local publications must be approved by Mayor Ryan. Thankfully he's no Norgaphobic but we were forced to do a few rewrites. So this is just Refrigerator #3 now and I'm afraid we can't take you up on that trade. The church of the Sub Genius sounds like something we should have heard of though.

Greeting's Refrigerator,

I missed #1 and I know I missed alot - your comments are so wonderfully unique. You've pointed out things I missed - the art work not on the Museum Trail ... the subculture hop...If you have any #1 left please leave them at Sweet Stuff. Thanks for the chuckles and more.

Christina

Dear Christina

We distribute one thousand of each issue and when they're gone they're gone (which is the beauty of the whole thing). Thanks for the postcard of Nixon jumping though. We may use it in this issue somewhere.

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