

# THE REFRIGERATOR

SPECIAL  
"I LOVE  
TOP-FREE  
NEW YORK"  
ISSUE!

#8

"WHAT THIS WORLD IS COMING TO"

ROCHESTER, NEW YORK



**The Impossible Present Age**  
The idea arises in conversation that the actual corporately-held reason for the existence of so many huge shopping malls is that these malls conceal sites

for future military encampments, and are all connected on a strategic map somewhere. Fortresses for the future take-over of the countryside, well defended from attack by hordes coming out of the old cities, where poor people are trapped in ungodly numbers, in apartment complexes constructed over generations of cynical city planning commissions, these fortresses are at present only thinly disguised as retail shopping malls.

Or look at it this way: A future archeological discovery of these many malls, abandoned and crumbled and half-buried in swamps or whatever, produces the theory that they were strategic fortresses for a planned war, a war that never happened, or a war that was obliterated from the memory. This theory holds until evidence is found that they were actually glorified Retail Outlets—which seems too fantastic to believe, for it is hard to visualize a society so oriented and so mad with products, so many clothes, appliances, toys, varieties of bagels and shades of eye-make-up!, ever existed.

Or course most people just live in the world hardly thinking how implausible it, or their behavior in it, really is. If I said the Pyramids of the past were, actually, huge shopping malls instead of burial tombs for demented pagan-kings or, perhaps, skywise monuments intended to ward off planetary catastrophe, well, this would be taken as merely a funny idea. The pyramids have to be leftover from a time of exotic beliefs and strange adventures; we'd simply be embarrassed for the human race if its shared past showed a focus on . . . what the focus is on today!

Oh my God, the innocent stroller thinks by the plastic fountain, what am I doing out here, shopping for a microwave oven, at Eastview Plaza?



**Refrigerator Magnets**  
Pizza Hut put our phone number on refrigerator magnets that they passed out in our neighborhood. So

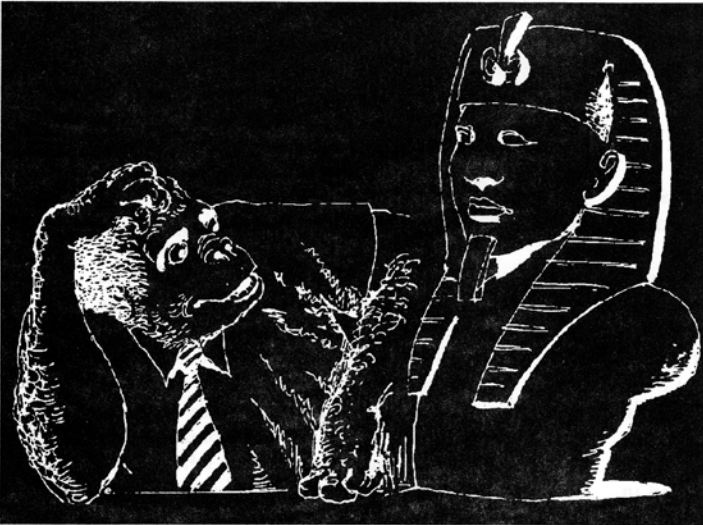
needless to say, we've had our share of wrong numbers. We made a deal with the local franchise. We'd give the callers the right number if they'd send us a few free pizzas. But the pizza is not very good. I mean Nino's is right down the street. I've had to interrupt people that were already telling me what they wanted on it. Some guy left his pizza order on our answering machine the other night. I hope he's not holding his breath. Yesterday a guy called around noon. I said "Hello" and announced the name of my company. The voice on the other end said "Is this Pizza Hut?". I said "No", hung up, and went back to the conversation I was having with someone at my desk. The guy calls back and screams "Fuck You" at me and then he hangs up.

We're tired of the wrong numbers. We get more than ever on our home phone as well. The other night someone called and asked if Charlie

was here. I said "No". He said "is this the Siragussa residence". I said "No". This must have upset him cause he raised his voice and said "I can't hear you". So I said "No" again, without raising my voice. Now he was hot. He demanded,

Belt into a dead zone and California back into the desert it once was, the U.S. tourist will be forced to seek out new areas to relax in. The Upstate New York area, now christened the North Coast, will suddenly find itself the focus of a burgeoning leisure business. As palms begin to sway along the shores of Lake Ontario, our beaches and quaint neighborhoods will take on a different look with casual cantinas and brightly colored umbrellas sharing the view with explosive tropical vegetation. The typical industrious upstater will find themselves undergoing an attitude change as the siesta mentality begins to settle in.

## UPSIDE DOWN AND BACKWARDS



### "Truth Is Found Whenever Popular Beliefs Are Turned Upside Down And Backwards"

Charles Darwin almost got evolution right. He knew that, since nothing stays the same, humanity must have been different in the past and he had a hunch that monkeys were in there somewhere. His mistake came in the way he lined up the facts. If he had checked with history instead of fragmented bones he would have realized that mankind wasn't descended from the apes at all but was actually descending towards the apes.

Even someone with a very slight interest in history is aware that in ancient times humanity was focused on the religious significance of just about everything. Back then, life was one long religious ceremony. This intense concern about following the will of God made the big difference between early man and the local monkey population. In time, however, the sense of kinship with God gave, like it was too heavy a responsibility.

Next came the Greeks with their worship of wisdom and artistic perfection. In the medieval period which followed, mankind no longer had any great interest in wisdom, but they had a deep sense of the heroic. The Age of Heroes yielded to the merchants and businessmen of the Renaissance, and being clever became the next milestone. In the few short centuries between the Renaissance and today a general distaste for individuals of outstanding cleverness has grown.

Today, the struggle for food and shelter and insurance coverage is what life is all about. The only difference between us and all the other animals on the planet is that man is the only animal that has insurance policies. However, most anthropologists treat that as a minor point and state that human beings are just another branch of the monkey tribe.

I am not arguing that point, what I am claiming is that the further back you go the less of an animal and the more *something else* is found in humanity. In the past people's lives were incredibly complex. They worried about what God thought about them, they had to live up a philosophy or some social ideal, they judged themselves as to whether they were achieving anything great with their lives, even. In our new and improved status as animals all we have to do is survive. That's the whole appeal of being an animal. It's simple.

If you want conclusive proof of this theory, go to a zoo and take some photos of the great apes at rest. Then the next time your favorite coach potato is lounging around watching TV, snap his photo. Then go to your family album and select the oldest photo you can find of some long gone relative. Line the three photos up and if you agree that even in a under a hundred years the trend is unmistakable, then you should think seriously about making an investment in what has got to become the hottest commodity of the coming decade: bananas.

"Are you saying no". I said "yes" very slowly. There was a moment of silence and he hung up. Thank God.



### Vision 2001

As of June 22, 1991 we entered the age of Aquarius with the moon in the seventh house, etc. just like that song from Hair. While speculating on this event I found myself considering just what fair Rochester would look like in the new age. With global warming turning the Sun



I think we should stop viewing downtown as a shopping area and start viewing it as a neighborhood.

And what a neighborhood! Wide streets lined with trees and devoid of traffic, cafes and outdoor music, a mix of lofts and victorian apartments and a population walking to work in the light filled highrises. This utopian vision is not years away, but right around the corner. All we have to do is stop worrying about Sibley's and the mall and start promoting it as a great place to live. Some changes are necessary. After filling in the inner loop, we suggest using a section of it to reroute buses around the central core, creating a bus transfer area where the old Greyhound station is. Jitneys or small vans could ferry people into the cultural center, formerly referred to as downtown. Lift restrictions on outdoor cafes and the conversion of commercial space to multi use and charge merchants a small surcharge on sales to pay for parking. Get the festivals out of the tent and onto the now quiet Main Street. Put police on mountain bikes to patrol 24 hours at street level. Demolish the skyways. With creative thinking in City Hall, we could be months away from a revitalized central core. The East End merchants have shown how it could be done with some effective PR and a loosening of the rules.

### Two More Musical Jokes

How many lead singers does it take to screw in the proverbial light bulb? One. He/She hangs on to the bulb and waits for the world to revolve around him/her. What do you call someone who hangs around musicians? A drummer.

I hate it when I misspell a word so badly that the spellcheck on my computer says "No Similar Word Found".



### Life Among the Dead

I was at the corner station at Grana's (The Literary Bar) talking to Don Anonymous about his boring job at a radio station, when this girl we rarely see out at night came over and within a minute she was saying how glad she was that a Ouija Board prediction made last year had now, finally, not come true.

She explained that in December a Ouija Board had predicted she would die before her

next birthday, which was yesterday--so, she was standing there in some relief at this . . . failure of the Ouija Board. I looked at her closely, though, and I noticed there was no light in her eyes.

I said, "Gloria, I think it's a little too early to be sure."

I explained to her that by action of a theory I'd had for years people didn't really know when they died, dying was actually a two-part process (at least). What happens is you die one day, but nobody notices usually, and you keep walking around for awhile, gradually diminishing your substantial function in the world, then you suffer an overt physical collapse and are carted away.

"I see," she said. My theory was easy to understand, if not that palatable. I said there had to be some explanation for the behavior of all the people who act dead, and it was just too simple to assume that death was a single, easily comprehended event. It was too important, for one thing.

"I think you are in the interim period," I told her.

I said, "Gloria, don't get upset." Look at what happens in the next days and weeks, and see if I wasn't right. Typically what happens after you die is people start forgetting about you, the mail diminishes to nothing (except junk mail, that never stops), and, you know, you lose your job--things like that. Or, in some cases, you get a job--it depends upon whatever routine keeps you busy. "You become, when dead, very unbusy," I told her.

"You feel like a ghost," she said.

"Right," I said, "you start hanging around in bars too. Not to socialize, like you used to, but just to waste time. I said I bet two-thirds of the people in even this place, The Literary Bar, where projects of extra-liveliness had originated, were dead." I declared that anybody who constantly plays the jukebox must be dead, just as a group of three girls (all so young!) moved over with their fists full of quarters.

"Well, this all started because of Ouija Board," she then said. She saw some hope in that--if she could trash the Ouija Board. "Do you believe in such things?" she asked me.

"Not at all," I said. "You might have been dead already at that time. I'm sure if you look back you'll see predictions running amuck. You interpreted the truth in a hundred ways. Now tonight you have a little more information."

"When will I know if your theory is correct?" she said.

Aha, I thought, she's almost thrilled now, she's thinking this might give her . . . license for erratic behavior, after all! I looked at Don again, like to warn him that Gloria was about to become . . . transformed. But he was studying her on his own terms; I hadn't made Gloria any less attractive and real, just problematic in a very abstract way.

"I said, 'you'll know if my theory is correct someday.' Some reassurance!--I thought to myself. And in the reddish glow of the tavern it seemed that her eyes were beginning to lighten.

"Of course," I continued, "we have to consider the possibility of resurrection, too."

"Now I know you're not serious," she said.

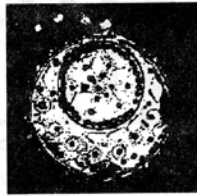
"He's serious," Don said.

"Don't look at her," I said to Don, "she's glowing, dangerously glowing." I gave a swift perusal of the place, and saw several phantoms skulking off.

"It's hard to live among the dead people," I said. "Just remember one thing, Gloria," I said, nearly fainting at her radiance, "as long as you wonder if you might be dead, you aren't."

I know the truth, my theory was a conversational gambit, a deliberate sham, in the

presence of such a person now, I must, I knew, have been half-dead to even think of it



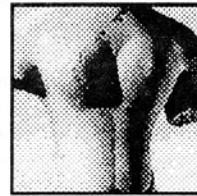
The Pink Flamingo in Buffalo has been one of my favorite watering holes for several years. There was no Rochester equivalent of it's funky atmosphere and eclectic musical mix. A recent excursion to the Bug

Jar (Rosies former location on Monroe at Union) proved to be a pleasant surprise. Affordable bartenders, \$2.50 martinis, a psychedelic paint job and a bizarre background music mix, made for a great place to watch the world go by. They eventually plan live music.



#### Mulch

As a final coda to the infamous ice thing our thoughts have turned to mulch lately. We've observed an unending stream of gardeners filling their pickups and station wagons with the ground up remains of the county's trees for several months now. This unexpected bounty is making many a small plot of ground a snuggler place for our little plant friends. (oh my god!) Mulch not only dresses up your yard, it helps retain moisture in the soil and provides organic reinforcement as it decays. The most pleasant way to gather mother nature's shredded wheat is to head down to the beach at Durand Eastman Park and enjoy the lake breeze while pitching fragrant wood chips into your car.



#### The Tiniest Bathtub, the Worst Situation #3

I must have my bath. I will make do under any circumstances, no matter how dire. The worst 5 months of my life demanded many a replenishing soak, which I eked out of a 2'x2', 8" deep tub. I was a Freshman at Purgatory U., arriving midway through the year to a hostile seething room of the 5 most mismatched roommates ever. We all hated each other and were all completely insane. It was like some awful sitcom. I was forced to take the living room as my home, and had to deal with having the front door and the bathroom in my bedroom. People would come to visit the others and watch me sleep. My only privacy was achieved by locking myself in the bathroom for hours, playing very loud music and drowning myself. Amazing how a little warm water and bath salts can cure aching loneliness and utter despair. I could barely curl up and lie down, filling my ears up with water and sliding into a healing trance. Of course my roommates were curious and irritated by my reclusive lavatory time, but I knew any roommate related repercussions were worth it. I may have been water-logged, but I was still alive and ready to take on another day.



#### John Q. Public Redux

Sometimes the headlines leap right out at you. Yesterday on the front page of the Times-Union there was a story about Dan Quayle, a story about a "quake" in the Philippines, and a story about a doctor named Quill. The question is: was this a coincidence?

We don't think so. Today, when Quayle

visited Xerox, he was introduced to a pet duck named Quakers; the doctor Quill was quoted as saying he wouldn't "quit"; and the quake, well, was "quite catastrophic." Further, Quayle said Americans had feared the Persian Gulf War (remember that?) might turn into a "quagmire."

It's definitely an epidemic. We went to see Hamlet on Sunday, right before this quantity of QU words broke out, and heard Hamlet say: "who would his quietus make." The same night, at a band practice, I found myself saying repeatedly: "don't worry, I'll cue you."

Just when I thought I was done with this, there was a conjunction of Jupiter, Venus, and Mars, and I was standing in the field with this neighbor who we call the "squirrel man", because he knows the squirrels by name and feeds them nuts and, yes, crackers, and he pointed at the triangle of planets and said: "that's quintessential!"

"Very quintessential," I said, "no question about it." And quick as a wink I remembered the computer program I use, to type this very report, is named "Quark." "Just quit it!" I heard my son shout; "stop quarrelling," I heard my wife say. "Quiet," an inner voice said (and I quote), "it's only a quasi-linguistic frenzy, or a queasiness, John Q. Public is . . . suffering."

"Oh my Quod!" I shouted. Then I quenched my thirst with some . . . orange soda!, and quickly repaired to the parlour to resume my reading by candlelight of the (translated) Babylonian Epic.



#### Dear Fridge:

Your unique publication strikes my fancy...the "off the wall" anecdotes, etc. I would love to talk to you...so I can determine who the BRAINS behind The Refrigerator is/are.

J. Valentine

#### Dear J.

If you only want to talk to determine "who the brains are", it would be a pretty boring conversation. The "brains" belong, anonymously, to the city of Rochester.

**Correction:** We received several letters pointing out the misplaced decimal points in our story on the mysterious price breakdown for the parking meters in downtown Rochester (Refrigerator 7). It should have read as follows: A nickel for 6 minutes (.83 cent a minute), a dime for 11 minutes (.91 cents a minute), and a quarter for 26 minutes (.96 cents a minute). *Ed. note: No one was able to offer any plausible explanation for this situation though.*

**Look For The Refrigerator at Village Green, Pyramid, The Old Toad, Kinkos, Jazzberry's, Godivas, Writers & Books, Aladdins, Sweet Stuff, The Bop Shop, Borders Books, The Bug Jar, Hungerford's etc. 1" square ads are \$10. Call 288-0880 for info. Submissions are welcome.**

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