

THE REFRIGERATOR

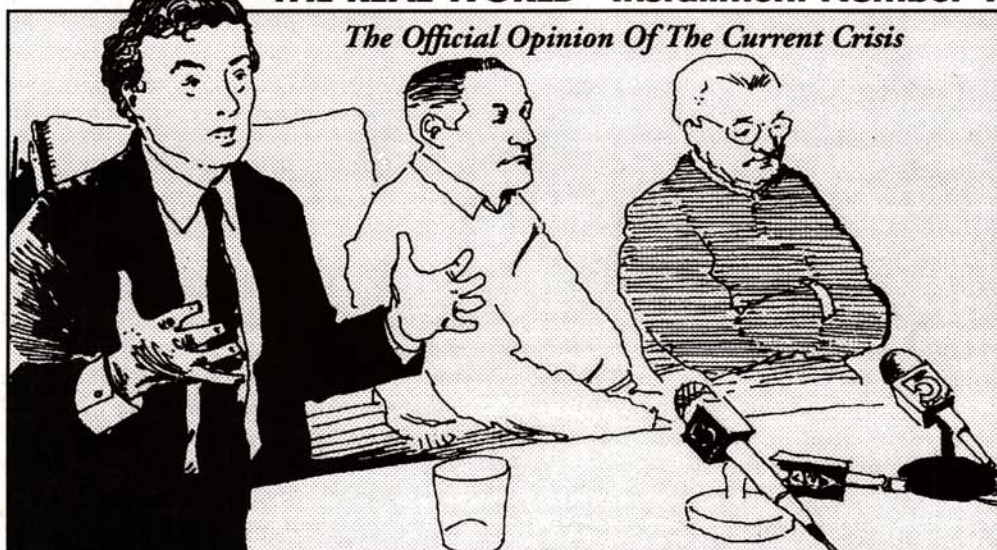
**STOP THE
KILLING!
ISSUE!**

IT'S FREE

13

"THE REAL WORLD" Installment Number 1

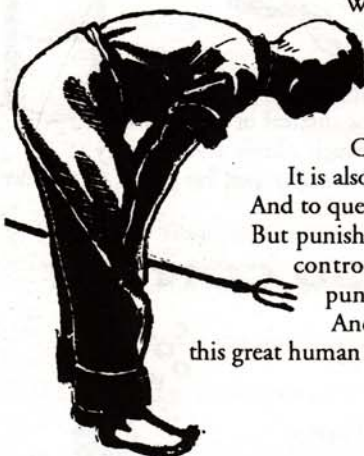
The Official Opinion Of The Current Crisis



When was the last time you witnessed someone in the public eye make a decision, take credit for it and stick with it? For that matter, when was the last time you met a decisive person, period? I'm beginning to think that the crises in this country are not domestic or foreign, economic or environmental. Rather, they stem from a pervasive inability to make decisions. It starts with individuals who have become paralyzed in their careers, relationships and lives and extends upward (?) to the legislatures and boards of directors who allegedly run things. The flood of self-help books, tapes and seminars dealing with low self-esteem and "empowerment," our latest political buzzword, is an indicator of the malaise of indecisiveness.

Millions of dollars are spent researching what it is the people want from their elected officials. The political spectrum shifts accordingly on an almost daily basis. What are the people looking for? Leadership that will make decisions that may be unpopular with large percentages of the population, is my guess. "At least they stand for something" is an increasingly popular refrain. Unfortunately this creates an unprecedented opportunity for the David Dukes and Pat Buchanans of the world to jump up and attract attention by virtue of their singlemindedness. Better a decisive racist than an indecisive Democratic-hopeful? Mario Cuomo, a relatively decisive politician, made a game of this lust for action in his hilariously extended waffling on announcing his candidacy. Indecisiveness was the tool that stopped the Mario in the long run. A New York State legislature paralyzed by the need to please all the people all the time was manipulated by the National Republican Party into not passing a state budget. Since Cuomo had vowed not to run if he could not get a budget passed (a decision!), he was out. Our loss.

CAPITAL IDEA



What do you do with a guy like Jeffrey Dahmer? His lawyer maintains that, since the age of 14, Dahmer has been driven by "a compulsion to have sex with dead men," and that this compulsion has led him to cruelly torture and kill fifteen people, and to eat some of them. It is also believed that he has performed primitive brain surgery on some of his victims, in an attempt to create "zombies" who would always "be there for him."

Might the death penalty be in order here?

Certainly the idea of punishing Dahmer seems to be redundant. His life must be profound torture.

It is also clear that society has failed Jeffrey Dahmer completely and deserves at least some of the blame.

And to question his insanity is absurd.

But punishment and blame are not really the issues here. Jeffrey Dahmer's actions are those of a man who has relinquished control, given himself over to his most horrific instincts. He has become a man with nothing to lose. For him punishment is inconsequential, and no deterrent to anti-social behavior exists.

And blame - though there can be hundreds, thousands of individuals and institutions that indirectly participated in this great human failing, only one - Dahmer himself - directly accounted for these deeds.

Opponents of the death penalty inevitably describe this sort of decision as "playing god." True. We are the the creators, the gods, of our society. How painful to recognize this sad and unavoidable fact.



Some Super Sunday!

On Super Sunday I went out to get some late supplies, after watching the Super Bowl, and at the counter at Wilson Farms some guy (who was buying a 12 pack, belatedly I thought, of Budweiser on special) was telling the clerk (who was wearing a Buffalo Bills sweat shirt, brand new) that "the Bills just let the whole State of New York down tonight." The clerk wholeheartedly agreed, but I thought - surely these guys are . . . exaggerating!

What Else Is There To Do?



Doug Curry, host of WRUR's "Blacks and Blues" show

BLUE FRIDAY INSIDE

SINGING IS HISTORICAL



Then to shake us out of the doldrums I thought of a really divisive assertion I might make, to get the debates rolling again amongst the musicians and poets, who were like just hanging around and complaining about the lack of a big club scene.

Singing is historical, I started announcing, first in small groups, then I had a whole dinner party raging on the theme. I told them the exact reason for this, how words can't really be supplied to singers right now. About how, emotionally right now, there is nothing . . . to sing about! It became incredibly clear to me how true this was. I knew that the exact contemporary meanings or ideas that are available, could be dreamt up, deduced, hammered out by any means, were all at present literary, not musical, nothing musical was happening. Except music itself, of course – but the voice, the voice could no longer sing, the singer himself or herself was engaging purely in references, nostalgia, even cheap imitations.

Then for the first time in my life I started feeding dollars into jukeboxes, to control the flow and atmosphere of songs at the local bar, where simultaneously I had this controversial



idea in circulation. And at my house I brought out old albums and kept saying, "listen to that, listen to that!", to make people free themselves from the delusory pull of these recent bygone eras. Songs, I declared, were historical, the whole format was dead and gone, like . . . limericks, like the stand-up comedians (should be), no longer to be created – but there as a great attempt, even an accomplishment, of other generations.

Of course songs can be renewed, most of the culture is already a time-warped renewal – theaters only do revivals, all Broadway is a musical-comedy revival, soon the nightclubs will be only rock n'roll reviews or young theater-bands into one or another carnival of sound. Ah, those days of rock n'roll! How we love the beautiful half-lyric nonsense, the ambiguous emotions that you forget the content of immediately – and then immediately, when the song is inexplicably repeated, recognize again! – lulled forever and again by the singer's voice and the melody that follows it like a long lost friend.

Such music rapidly transports you into its realms, realms of the familiar. For singing is historical as soon as it happens. It must be like



that type of love that can't suffer beyond its first consciousness, but must always hold its object in romantic fascination. First romance . . . that is the content of . . . most songs.

And naturally, though I made great progress at least in firing up a flagging conversational scene everywhere, all manner of sophistry was brought out to oppose this theory of mine. Ah, theory of mine! – when it was no theory, but an observation. Or if it was a theory, then it was just a theory, like a damned possibility. I couldn't even trace it; it was just like . . . nobody could refute it.

Singing is historical, I kept saying, it's like railroads, or wedding dresses (that sounded good), or stage coaches . . . historical, like sun-gods, planet-worship, other ceremonies the human race abandoned – what, like . . . capital punishment! The list goes on forever, virtually.

So, what isn't historical – someone wants to know, as if all we've now established is that everything has this drastic tendency. Oh, why don't you wake up, is all I can say. What isn't historical is what you don't comprehend!

"Like your theory," someone says. "Exactly," I said – until the music of the jukebox overwhelmed me.



How Long Will It Be Until They Start Selling Used Merchandise in Malls?

I was wandering around Irondequoit Mall after exchanging a Christmas gift and found myself in Anderson Little looking at a rack of \$19.99 pants. I found some blue ones that I tried on and liked quite a bit but there was something funny about them. They didn't have any tags on them and they looked like they had already been worn.

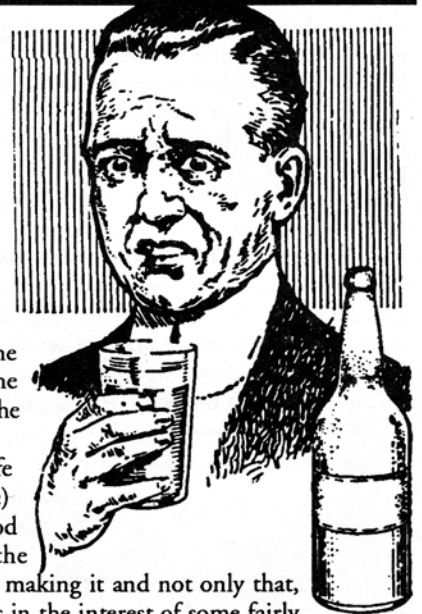
On closer examination I found the hem had been altered. So I asked the clerk what the story was on these pants. He asked where I got them from and I pointed to the rack. He told me they were \$19.99. I explained that they appeared to have been worn already. He got the manager who told me that they did not carry these pants. I told him I was still interested in the pants and wondered how much he wanted for them. He said \$10 so I took them.



Why Do I Drink?

We stopped in at Maxwells the other night to have a drink and Ted Koppel was on TV live from Tokyo. At first I wasn't sure whether it was Ted or a *Saturday Night Live* actor, but this really looked like him. He is getting shorter and heavier. The sound was off and that usually gives an actor away for me. This was the fiftieth anniversary of Pearl Harbor and speakers were lined up on both sides of the Pacific and they had the Pearl Harbor logo ready to take us in and out of the Miller beer commercials. It dawned on me that this was "The Pearl Harbor Movie", in the making, and we were the people that they might cut to when they want to show the common man's perspective on this bombing issue.

Things are always happening in the news and my wife will say "someone should make a mini-series (or a movie) out of this" and sometimes they already have. Hollywood keeps getting quicker and quicker. But now I had the sensation that we were watching the movie as they were making it and not only that, we were there at the bar drinking as part of the cast. It is in the interest of some fairly big concerns that we are seen propped up, consuming their magic elixirs and our very lives have been bought out by bigger companies who may someday just lay us all off for tax reasons or something. And then we probably wouldn't drink at all.



SPECULATIVE DRAWINGS OF GOD CONTEST

A Free Subscription To The Refrigerator Will Be Awarded To

The Reader Whose Drawing Most Ticks Our Art Critic's Fancy



SYMBOLISMS (for The Days)

March 1st

From the yard filled with schoolbuses, a young man is climbing a flight of stairs with a single rose wrapped in a love note, but she is not home.

March 2nd

Gardener enchanted with late autumn envisions turning leaves as fresh flowers of the next spring.

March 3rd

Blind man led by his cane walks through the parking lot and crosses the street all by himself for the first time.

March 4th

Without ornaments and family restrictions a young woman steps out into sunny morning light.

March 5th

Banker arrives home after all the loans were approved. He changes into comfortable clothes and with his youngest child relaxes by the fire.

March 6th

Two chess players postpone their game but the next day they agree on a draw.

March 7th

Ordinary neighborhood bar is visited by a local celebrity but the owner left earlier to attend a political rally.

March 8th

Kitchen fragrances are penetrating throughout the apartment building. All the single tenants feel like one family.

March 9th

Older bachelor after returning from a date eats a fresh apple and goes to bed.

March 10th

Over the expensive piece of furniture an argyle sock is hanging. The other has been lost at the laundromat.

March 11th

Through the closed window singing can be heard late at night. Everybody is awake and in a serene mood.

March 12th

A truck runs through a red light spilling landscaping tools and potting soil over the intersection.

March 13th

Two boxers are charging at each other and punching, hoping to marry each other's sister after the fight.

March 14th

New wine is not ready yet. Winemaker is ambivalent about whether to pour it out or let it turn into either vinegar or champagne.

March 15th

Oatmeal is being served for a brunch at a political rally.

March 16th

Stereo cabinet cannot be used. It is covered with classical records.

March 17th

Artist in a wheelchair at the waterfront is being helped with his easel by a loyal friend.

March 18th

Chickens before roosting examine each other's feathers and some are deliberately plucked.

March 19th

Sawdust rushes through the chimney, pushed by the smoke which is as white as a cotton cloud.

March 20th

Ice-skater glides gracefully waiting for a partner to compose himself.

March 21st

Stock market plunges, then recovers. The price of gold remains unchanged.

March 22nd

A hurricane destroys a mid-Atlantic town. The passengers on the West Coast have to be delayed.

March 23rd

Gypsy band after many rehearsals is being well-received by a musicians' union.

March 24th

With a blownout tire and overheated engine, father with two children is heading toward an Amusement Park.

March 25th

Biological confusion in an experimental lab transforms a man into a woman, and a woman into a man. Cleaning lady throws the experiment out.

March 26th

The ring for the left hand is purchased so that the right hand can welcome us again.

March 27th

Temporarily without electricity, downtown office is quiet and in peace.

March 28th

Choose your own beach, and a fishing rod. For the cats are roaming around with sunglasses on.

March 29th

Surviving tutor from Babylon is hired as a storyteller in exchange for guitar lessons.

March 30th

Most of the tanks on the polygon are circling the tent with a white flag on it.

March 31st

Five of the most popular sportsmen are in a sailboat that is sinking.

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New Horizons

A friend said she saw me driving down Monroe Ave yesterday and she waved but I was so glued to the windshield she could tell I'd never notice her. "You drive like this," she said – then she did a shocking facial imitation of a fish looking blindly out a fishbowl.

"I'm sorry," I said, "I must have been going somewhere in a hurry." But I knew that wasn't it, I drive too intensely all the time and consequently hardly see anything but other cars, traffic lights and signs and of course the lines, hugging the wheel to the right or left.

The road itself is opaque, no color, it's the lines you follow, it's the traffic lights that are horizons which you pause before, or enthusiastically collect in the rear-view mirror. While the other cars, rarely containing real drivers (it seems), you try to outmaneuver if you think you're in a hurry, or blend in with if you're just driving complacently.

But when it was pointed out to me that I drive like a fish, that I look trapped and goggle-eyed in my fishbowl of a car, this did effect me, and today I had the bright idea to start looking around a little. I tried looking around while stopped at a red light at the corner of Monroe and Westfall, where, to my left, I saw The Genesee Bookshop. Rather than stare straight ahead viciously at the light until it changed to green, like I was at a starting gate in a race, I leisurely gazed out the window, and I saw someone I know go into the bookstore. I saw many things, and life seemed altogether pleasant suddenly.

"Damn, I've been stupid," I thought, "I've probably wasted . . . how much time (a whole year?), with staring at traffic lights, staring at stop signs like . . . they would flip around and say "Go!", staring at my place at dinner and not looking up twice in a meal, staring at the sidewalk as I walk, staring at the rows of chewing gum in the store while waiting in line, never looking around. Lord! Staring at ashtrays, staring at my coffee cup like it were a lake, etc., etc.

"Wake up!" a thousand voices began anxiously calling, like the voices of the dead. "You're missing everything!"

Nicholson Baker

Saturday, March 14th 1-3pm

Baker will read selections from an unpublished work and sign copies of VOX after the reading.

**BORDERS
BOOK SHOP**

1000 Hylan Drive 292-5900

The George Jones Coffee Cup

When I got my CD player I vowed I would not just go out and rebuy my record collection like I understood many other people were doing. I thought I would just move onto this new format and continue to listen to my old records. Well, as soon as I saw Ornette Coleman's *Virgin Beauty* in the CD rack I grabbed it and I probably won't listen to my *Virgin Beauty* LP again. Ornette's son's drums sound more electronic on the CD and this is still one rollicking, swinging, joyous album with a beautiful cover and hey, Jerry's on three cuts. One hundred CDs later and I have broken my vow four other times but each with good reason. I saw *Bringing It All Back Home* at BJ's Wholesale and remembered the coins on the tone arm as it went around about twenty five years ago. Our needle got so bad at one point we had a small pile of shavings at the end of the record. So I snatched it. Gato Barbieri's *Latin America*, a noisy, deep primitive stew with Gato's mournful sax stirring things up, which we had on vinyl before my girlfriend had broken her childhood habit of handling records with her fingers right on the grooves. Captain Beefheart's *Spotlight Kid* and *Clear Spot* on one CD – come on. And the Art Ensemble's *Third Decade* with the beautiful "Prayer for Jimbo" which started sounding like nine minutes and forty seven seconds of popcorn on record.

I read about this new band, Pulnoc, in the NY Times a few weeks ago and was so anxious to purchase this one that I paid a premium in Irondequoit Mall. Most of this group were in the underground Czechoslovakian band The Plastic People of the Universe and their *Leading Horses* LP from 1980 is the last I'd heard from them. The Czech language is perfectly suited to rock and roll except "vyplivni vsechen vztek" sounds a lot like "make me a chicken sandwich." They have obviously seen their share of MTV now and can't be expected to go on moaning and chanting in their new political environment so their sound has changed a bit. Not as much violins and sax and a bigger western beat with rhythmic guitars, but there are some beautiful songs like the title song, *City Of Hysteria*, a very psychedelic Velvets cover, "All Tomorrow's Parties" and my favorite "I Sweep But Don't Clean."

I heard a very exciting review on WXXI AM one evening for an album that was gonna rearrange the face of the earth for us or something. I wrote the name of the band down and the album's title but when I got to the store I couldn't remember whether My Bloody Valentine was the name of the group and *Loveless* the name of the album or the other way around so I looked in both locations. It comes in one of those packages that's been a style for about five years now with an abstract cropping of a blurry



picture on the cover and as little information as possible. Inside there's light drums and odd pop melodies on a bed of fuzzy guitars and sampled keyboard chords of more fuzzy guitars in Philip Glass-like patterns. Sometimes you get the feeling the record's skipping and the song won't change again until you go over and whack the stereo, like loops of small sections of songs stuck in your head while you try to sleep. They sound like the future but by the time the future is here I'm sure it won't sound like this so you'll have to experience their sound now.

I keep thinking the phone is ringing when the Pixies new *Trompe Le Monde* is on. I guess it kinda makes me nervous. They have a hard edged, college educated punk sound with unusual arrangements and their own infectious melodies. If you spend any time with this you will wake up singing one of them. For me, this morning it was "Bird Dream Of The Olympus Mons."

The first time I heard the Smiths I hated that wimpy whine but with other exposures I grew to love it. My first encounter with The Cure was reading the lyrics to *Head On The Door* on the back of a cassette in someone's car. I thought I hated them until I saw their videos. I read somewhere that Jane's Addiction sounded funky so the first time I heard them I was disappointed. But I bought a used copy of *Ritual De Lo Habitual* and found some funky guitar along with a screeching vocalist and a hard rockin' band that isn't afraid to stretch out like in the song "Three Days." They groove like yesteryear, they've got guitar solos and they're sort of arty. The lead singer did the sculpture on the cover and he writes lyrics like "Of course this land is dangerous! All of the animals are capably murderous."

Mickey Hart has a whole family of records out now. I got his *Planet Drum* CD inside of a book with the same name. It is beautifully recorded and has a 3D sound. It's all drums with some chanting and Flora Purim sings on a few cuts. It is a beautiful record. Test the limits of your sound system with this one. The heaviest record I have is *Honor The Earth Powwow, Songs of The Great Lakes Indians* which was recorded by Mickey Hart. It is almost too heavy to play during the daylight hours, at least around the office. There is only one drum on this record but many men play it at the same time and they sing "We're the people, let's dance, we're all proud, let's all dance." The Gideon people should be passing copies of this thing out.

I saw a Slayer video on MTV's *Headbangers Ball* the other night. I had the TV hooked up to the stereo so I cranked it. They are so heavy. If I was sixteen, I most certainly would be a huge Slayer fan.



I'm in New York last week and I hail a cab and who steps out but my idol Bowie! And I freak out and say "Dave! My man!" I let the cab go so I can walk with him. "Dave, man, I'm your biggest fan! You were too deep in 'Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence'! Ha ha no pun intended!" I said because you know he gets buried alive at the end. He just nods and smiles out of only one side of his face. "My girlfriend says I look like you and likes to fantasize that I'm you when we're, you know, doing IT. He starts to walk fast but I can keep up and I sing that stuttery part from Ch-ch-ch-changes and I even warn him not to step in this pile of steaming puke right in his path and he finally speaks: "OK-thanks-now piss off" and he turns into this fucking snooty building past the sabre-toothed doorman.

It reminds me of the time my friend Marie and I followed Adam Ant to the Royal Knight on East Avenue and sat at the table adjacent to his. We watched him through the pink wrought iron that so elegantly framed his Maybellined face as he sipped tea with "real milk, not that creamer shit" as he put it. Then he whispered something to his companion, the guitarist, who promptly said to Marie, "Please put out that cigarette, we're trying to eat!" And Marie exhaled a blast of the offending smoke in his eyes and said "Mr. Ant, I apologize. But you don't have to get so adamant about it!"

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**CON-
GRAT-
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TIONS**

**to the
First
Subscriber
to
THE
REFRIGERATOR!**



Dear Refrigerator,

It is a pleasure to watch you get bigger and bigger everytime I see you. Whenever I get the munchies I open it up.

It is an honor to be your first "willing" subscriber. This month past I was feeling a bit lonely, so I went on a subscription frenzy.

Now the Refrigerator helps to fill my mailbox and my _____. Keep it Up.

Arthur Grey, Detroit, Mich.

N.B. The anonymous and unseeable Editors of this publication shall be delighted to print photographic icons of new subscribers, with their correspondence. Thank you!

Moschiano Declares Candidacy



Local rock personality Pat Moschiano has thrown his hat into the political ring, declaring his intention to run in the next mayoral election.

Lead singer of the improvisational rock band, The Hotheads, Moschiano sees his run for office as part of a process of taking the reigns of government away from "professional politicians."

"I'd like to see a return to grass-roots politics," he says, "where you don't have to dress a certain way, where you don't have to be a lawyer. Most politicians are lawyers; why aren't they electricians, truck drivers, doctors...?"

Moschiano sees no leaders on the local political scene who seem capable of galvanizing people, motivating them to bring about necessary changes in the community.

"If they're out there, I don't know about them," he says.

He admits his chances of actually becoming mayor are slim. "For me, it's not based on winning," he says. "I know I'm gonna lose ... but you give it a shot. You say 'I'll be honest because I'm not a professional.' I don't want to be a career politician. I'll admit what I've done wrong,

and what I don't know. I won't need to lie, because I'm not out to perpetuate a candidacy."

A product of a working-class background, Moschiano graduated from Gates Chili High School, and also studied at Monroe Community College and RIT. He's worked at a variety of jobs, including construction worker, painter, photo assistant, and ad salesman. He enjoys nightlife and is an avid softball enthusiast. He describes his current musical project as "a lazy man's band." "There's no rehearsal, no practice, no set lists. No songs..."

Things are looking up...

We finally visited Shep's Paradise last Saturday night. A man came up to us as we walked in the door and I figured they'd changed their free admission policy. But as I began to reach for money, Shep introduced himself, asking our names and shaking hands. He showed us to a table in front of the jazz band and we settled in to absorb the considerable ambiance. Here's hoping for some outside jazz to live up to the place in the future. Come on Eastman students!

Mister Clean

Has everyone seen the latest television spot from the few and the proud? It features a sort of macro chess match with sprung-to-life knights and pawns (you pick) jousting it out, aided, of course, by the latest in video game technology. It reminds me of those epic-scale dinner theater extravaganzas indigenous to Ohio, only taking place on Mr. Clean's floor. Anyway, the really strange thing is that despite the fact that our whiter, shinier Marine Corps knights are stabbing their way through every dark enemy on the board, there is no bloodshed. Upon suffering the lance, the victims are mercifully ionized in a supernova of laser turbografix and simply disappear. Zap! They're just gone. No Bobby Fisher need remove the pieces from play. Zap! They disappear.

I suppose that at the distance from which the U.S.A. can conduct wars these days, that's pretty much the reality in the cockpit or control room. The knights wield their joysticks and...Zap! The audience applauds, and Mr. Clean stays spic 'n span in his big white kitchen in his big white house.

The longer the driveway, the smaller the tip.

Pizza Delivery Man

Moschiano speaks

On city development

We need improvements outside of the downtown area -- where people actually live. It's the same thing the mainstream politicians are saying: Drug problems, crime problems. We've got to improve in that area.

On the Inner Loop

The loop is not needed, plus the State Police are in there. State Police has an ominous ring... (I propose) a greenbelt circling the city. A lot of trees. A circular park with a bike path. People could walk, push their strollers, ride their bicycles. Sit around on park benches...

On the police force

Citizens Review Committee! They've been pushing for it, they should get it. Police cannot police themselves...you need a fair, outside committee to decide on brutality.

On transportation

Let's go back to the old days; maybe a streetcar from Main Street to Charlotte. Maybe through Corn Hill, or to the ball park. They attract tourists; they're money makers...

On a new stadium

New ball park, yeah. The old ball park -- it's like saying goodbye to a dog that you really love, but you've got to, so you get a puppy and start over. (Silver Stadium) won't take baseball into the year 2000...

On drugs

I think it's high time to legalize drugs. You're never gonna win the war -- people are gonna get high. I don't buy the argument that more people are going to get high if it's legal. Legalize it, then tax it and raise money for drug education.

On Mario Cuomo

I think Mario Cuomo is a snake oil salesman. He's too good, he talks too well. He's trying to dazzle the public.

On local party politics

I don't believe in the political ideology of each party. I think they're basically the same. I guess if you were ever going to be serious about wanting to be elected, you'd have to belong to one of the two parties. I'm registered independent; I kind of like that.

On segregation

You'd have to say (Rochester) is a pretty segregated city. Not too many mixed neighborhoods. If you go to a reggae concert, that's where you'll find the most mixed crowds.

On Catholic school

I left in the third grade. Third or fourth.

Blackmailed out of there. I had to go to religious school

on Saturday...that was the deal we cut.

No bowling on Saturdays.

No skiing on Saturdays. No

cartoons, nothing. Gospel, new testament.



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AM RULES

I was driving to work and listening to WKQG, the new AM oldies station, when I heard a song I'd never heard before. It was an instrumental, with an electric organ riff that had me convinced it was some minor late 50s gem — KQG plays more little-known r&b than most "oldies" stations, I was humming along with it when a trashy surf-guitar part came in, Like Dick Dale (but not Dick Dale). And then I was completely stumped.

The song segued into "The Wanderer." By then I was sitting in the parking lot. Someone I work with walked by, and I pretended to be looking through some papers. I sat through the Dion song, but I drew the line when a female announcer came back on and gave her name, and the station name, but not the names of the songs she'd played — not even Dion DiMucci's.

When I got inside I looked up "WKQG" in the phonebook, and found a listing for "studio line" (325-9090). I told the man who answered that I wanted to know the name of the song before "The Wanderer."



"I can't help you but I'll give you the number of someone who can," he said. "You have to call 1-800-433-5665."

I hung up and called the 800 number. It rang — and rang, and rang. After the thirtieth ring, a recording came on: "The number you have called is not answering," a woman's voice said. "Your call will be disconnected now."

And there was a dial tone.

I called the local number again. "There's no answer at that 800 number you gave me," I said.

"Really?" the man said, without sounding surprised.

"Really," I said. "Where is that, anyway?"

"That's the studio line."

"But it's an 800 number," I said.

"Well yeah, that's how you reach the studio."

"In Rochester?"

"Uh, yeah."

"Then why is it an 800 number?"

"Well it's — it's in Phoenix."

"Phoenix, Arizona?"

"Yeah, yeah, it's a satellite feed."

"So you're not really a local station," I said.

"But this is the only WKQG, right? And you don't know what song WKQG played ten minutes ago?"

"I'm sorry, I wasn't listening," he said. "What did it sound like?"

"It uh, it — hmm." I looked over at the woman who works at the desk next to mine. She was watching me. "It was an *instrumental*," I said.

"Green Onions!" he said, "By Booker T. & The MGs!"

"No, I'm sorry," I said, and hung up.



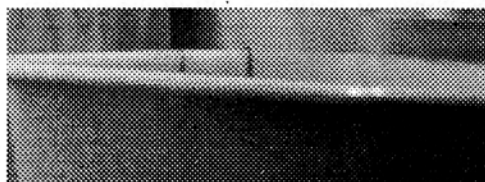
Oliver Stone's "JFK" relies on an American notion that democracy is somehow a moral political system, and that Kennedy's assassination grievously tainted it — just as though one could lie down with dogs and not get up with fleas. But democracy is the most amoral political system people have devised. Look: It accepts any politics, any morality. Hitler's election was no failure of democracy — the system functioned perfectly then, and it did again a month ago, when Islamic fundamentalists won elections in Algeria. In the interim, however, Vietnam exploded America's moral fibre, leaving bits of despair and ethical mysticism lying about. (The Gulf War happened too fast to put the pieces together again.) Stone's film rises from that wreckage, a messiah with awful timing.



Zen And The Art Of Parking

I was coming back from CanalTown Coffee with a fresh bag of Rochester's Choice and the guy in the lane next to me on East Avenue had this sticker on the window of his car that I almost managed to read without sideswiping him. "You are occupying two parking spaces. Please try to park so your car . . ."

Zen Center Administrator



Not a Bathtub Piece, A Bathroom Piece

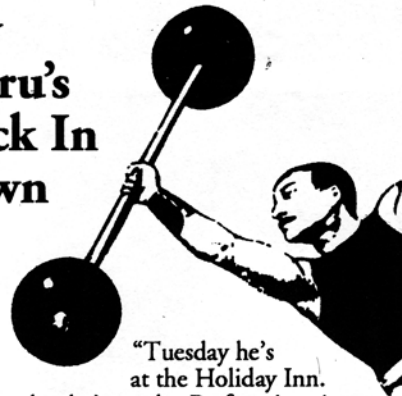
In Albany... They had the best bathroom in the world with a giant red and orange painting and souvenirs arranged like precious things. Even a book case! and plants. I think she misunderstood the *House Beautiful* articles. The curtains matched the rug matched the paint matched the bowl with the plastic wrapped soaps and the towels no one dries their hands on. I was afraid to lift up the toilet seat (like lifting up a rock finding spiders) to find Mr. Tidybowl dyed to match the decor.

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My Guru's Back In Town



"Tuesday he's at the Holiday Inn.

Wednesday he's at the Performing Arts Center. Thursday he hosts the Ladies Home Auxiliary and Friday he's at the Moose Club, I think. But you better catch him fast cause after that he's off to the Bahamas. He's a money making machine." You had to be there to hear Chris Schepp belt this one out at the debut performance of Nihil Garde. They were opening for the very theatrical Lilly's Buffet at Friends and Players. The Essential's Ten Year Anniversary Show to a packed house at Jazzberry's February 1st proved once and for all that this band has the entertainment skills to guarantee a good time with each performance. They have been threatening to release a CD of new material for the last few months.

Three of the Essentials are also in The Squires Of The Subterrain which is clearly the brainchild of their drummer Chris Earl. They sent the Refrigerator a copy of their new tape *Electric Blanket* last week and we took it up to the mountains with us. It's a jam-packed labor of love and as good as their previous release *Cowboys and Indians* which we had on our Top Ten list a few issues back. We played it for Pete Labonne, whose own *Blasting Cap* cassette (available at Godiva's) will sit permanently on our all time top ten list, and he described it as sounding like "Nico's little brother or maybe a cross between Wilson Philips and the Shags." Their cassette is available at The Bop Shop and is highly recommended for something completely different.

Well the new issue of Hotel Dire arrived last week. It has one dollar on the cover so I assume it's for sale somewhere. The front cover is by J. Reto who has left Rochester for California of all places and there is a wonderful 14 page cartoon inside entitled *You Have To Say Amen*, a conversation with a schizophrenic teenager. There's an hilarious cheesecake center photo and a rave review of Mexico.

It might be an optical illusion, produced by blank skies but . . . two weekly programs installed at local clubs promise to liven up the music scene this month. A jazz band called "Jim's Idea", featuring members of The Urban Squirrels and regular guests (including poets) starts on Thursday Feb. 27th, and is free., at The Cactus Cafe on Monroe Ave. in Brighton. And at Jazzberry's, Geoff Wilson and Co. host an open-jam every Monday starting February 24th.

The moment when the roll-top desk passed into that volatile domain some call merely conversation, but I call history, went by so fast I hardly noticed it, I did not plan it. It was when I inserted into the description (for a sufficiently awestruck spectator, gazing at the desk in the front hall and waiting for me to say something about it) that, yes, I'd inherited it from my uncle, and it had come here from Westport, Conn. through a winding route taking nine years, though I'd seen the desk in my uncle's study . . . back then. It seemed important to say that I'd seen the desk back then, and like it wasn't a fabrication, but rather a memory I should have, or even one I would have if I asserted I had it — it was so likely.

That was better than saying, "I guess I must have seen this desk when my Uncle had it, though I can't remember seeing it." The truth is I may remember it still, I think, for I did visit my Uncle Edward Weingartner in Westport a couple times, I remember other things about his house and yard, I remember pitching round stones across the surface of the pond there on Otter Pond Trail, also the circular rose gardens, the amazing cupboard in his garage for tools, the way he drew the outline of his tools on the wall in black crayon, the hundred boxes he had labelled for screws and nails, etc. And even in writing this testimony to the roll-top desk is an action causing my memory to expand.

My uncle was a great organizer, he told me he had every check he wrote in numbered sequence, a fact that I (already an outlaw in the eyes of several credit bureaus, and incapable of balancing a checkbook from birth) put instantly into history and further conversation — history being of course what is repeated, not just what has happened. Yes, my Uncle Edward wrote a postcard a day to his mother here in Rochester, usually on the train into New York City where he worked, and this was legendary, the postcards were in shoeboxes, they were maybe a literary masterpiece, uncollated yet by some future editor; and the legend was attended by the apochryphal story that my grandmother one day threw away several boxes of these cards because she was mad at him, but that was conversation that ground out — no one seemed to know for sure what the truth was.

But when my uncle died ten years ago my other uncle here in Rochester made sure his personal belongings and speciality furniture like the desk and the globe-lamp of the world that I have in my upstairs office, along

Roll Top Desk

with things like a monogrammed set of playing cards, and especially his many paintings that, now, decorated my parents living room, all got back to Rochester.

The roll-top desk is fitted with a small fluorescent lamp that perfectly lights up a sheet of writing paper. With the whole house dark, late at

night, you can sit there and dream endlessly, then open one of the smooth gliding drawers and take out a felt tip pen and a sheet of blank paper, to write some long put off communication — or with a sense of equal profundity, do a little mathematics to reassure yourself . . . about those checks you floated.

My brother, who delivered the roll-top desk to me a few days after Christmas, after having stored it at his various houses over the last nine years and never really putting it to use, pointed out the light to me as we were setting the desk up in my front alcove. "I never turned it on," he said. Immediately I was filled with great suspense, I could hardly wait to be alone with the desk and determine the exact uses of all the cubbyholes and filing slots, with the center recessed cubicle and its little lamp now . . . waiting to be relighted.

The desk not only remade the alcove but I could see it would cause a reorganization of furniture around the house's many rooms. Coincident with taking down the Christmas tree, the desk was to become the corner stone, so to

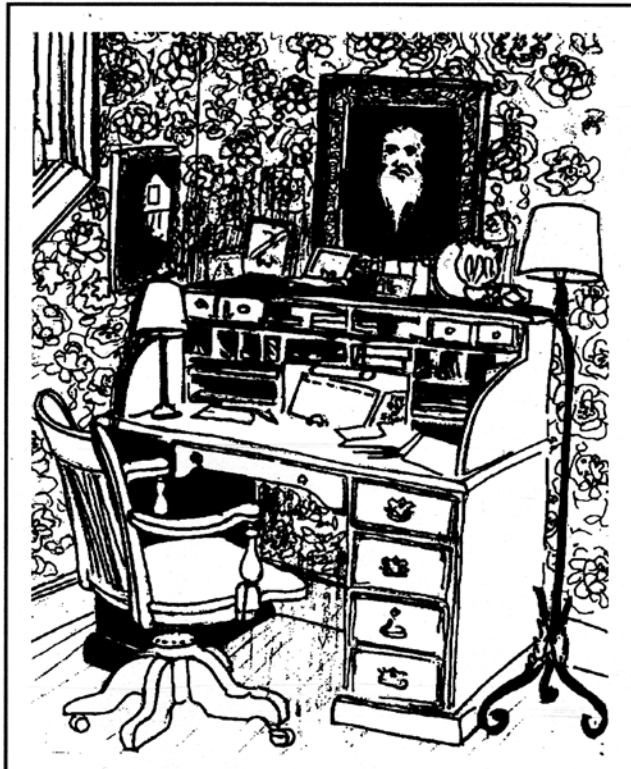
speak, in a newly dedicated awareness of where I was living. And, importantly, I was caused to make visitors pause and acknowledge the desk and say something about it, or allow me to say something about it.

It is theoretically possible that I saw the desk in Westport, though actually . . . I can't find the memory. But it's like I want to keep my uncle narratively involved, that is where there is a truth involved. And I am provided with that same linkage, still mysteriously, when, the first night after the desk was set up and the cords plugged in, I tried the ultimate desk lamp and it went on — after nine years of darkness.

I told my visitor about that lamp, and said: "It's a fact, with nothing too spectacular about it. He turned the desk lamp off, and I turned it back on nine years later."

"A fact worth noting," said my friend, "definitely worth noting."

Yes, though we don't know what to make of it, anymore than we know what to make of the rest of the setting preserved — through decades of hope and confusion and brave, sometimes groundless, assertions that try to hit at the meaning of life coming to us in colorful pieces, part of a grand context yet to be discerned.



The women behind the bulletproof glass in the Midtown Parking Garage don't smoke like they used to.

**They are already
counting down
the murders this
year on the local
TV news.**

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Inside the Mind of COOKIE (Critic of Art)

Because some people in the media have presumed to know what I think about certain subjects, sometimes even before I know what I think myself on those subjects, I have decided to periodically think through certain subjects--and say what I think. I have decided that is an important thing for a public person to do, whether or not it enhances my political future,

Now, there has been enough said about art in the airport certainly. I don't want to hear any more about it, certainly. Why should there be art in an airport, much less our airport? How about an airport in an art gallery? A few of my constituents and I had a good laugh about that one at Happy Hour! We need more art galleries, I say, so people who are interested in that sort of thing can all do it together. They could meet each other and find out who they are, how many of them there are. They could marry, and have artistic children!

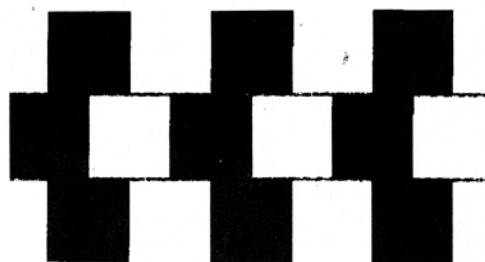
I like art actually. I like actual art. One of my best friends is named Art. If I'm an art critic, like some say I am, then I'm the type of art critic who lays it on the line. Steps on it, if need be. If I seem critical of art, it's because I'm a critical person. I even think the airport isn't large enough. Plus you can't really tell the inside from the outside. I mean when I first went inside I wasn't really inside but only in the parking garage, and then when I went inside the actual airport I still wasn't sure I was inside, and I never felt I was all the way inside, until I was suddenly going outside again, through one of those large vacuum cleaner hoses that attach to the planes.

On the plane all I could remember of the airport was this huge piece of sculpture in an esplanade. (Did I spell those two words right?) Plus some blank walls. I remember the blank walls vividly. I'm not critical of blank walls, come to think of it. We should keep as many walls as blank as possible for the following reason: Scientists have almost perfected a device that will enable people (certain people, people in government for instance) to walk through walls. Now when this starts happening I think it would be tragic and confusing if there were, for instance, large paintings on the walls, because nobody would want to walk through a painting. There is a natural human fear I believe of walking through paintings (you might get caught in the painting and never get back to real life!)

But anyway I especially like those murals in Country Diners, especially the ones with deer and snow scenes on cloth. I saw one near Toronto with hockey players (kids) on a pond, which reminded me of my soccer days at Pittsford High School. It's funny the way the mind works, because that reminds me I wanted to say before anything else in this discussion something about my hobbies. I wanted to point out that I build model airplanes still, as an adult, and this is a very artistic hobby, so no one can say I am against the association of art and airplanes, or the idea of them both using airports. (Thanks to Jenny for help with punctuation.)

It is just that more important things come first. But I wouldn't die if it happened. I wouldn't look at the art, because art is thought-provoking and I don't like having thoughts while in the air. It's difficult enough flying inside one of those machines which I always think might come apart like the models I make come apart because I don't always glue them carefully. It's a horrible sight, a wing flapping off the fuselage. (I know I spelled that right.) I think if a survey were taken we'd find people coming off planes look at the art in airports more than people about to take planes, actually. Actually, I would recommend the County Legislature commission a study to see if that is true. I bet it is.

Just glancing at that sculpture made me think of a plane wreck and my flight to Toronto was harassed by thoughts, as a result of that airport art junkpile. Otherwise I am not that critical of it. It might be inevitable because art galleries are failing and people refuse to throw away this kind of thing.



The ABCs Of City Living

There is a new (to us) bookstore on East Avenue near Alexander called Abacus Books. It has chairs to sit in, old etchings to buy and shelves full of great things. It has signed copies of Henry Miller first editions, old books of typefaces from ancient Rome and Andy Warhol and Stephen King books. It has a section full of old books about golf and a studiously intellectual bearded man with round glasses for a proprietor. It has bookcases too tall to reach the top shelves and little ladders to sit on and climb up. Everything is made of old dark wood but the room is high and airy and friendlier inside than it looks.

Across the street is what has become one of the great meeting places of the city, Kinko's Copy Center. In this place, ideas are cut, pasted and multiplied. Its waste baskets are filled with the hearts and souls of the writers and artists of the urban area. For a buck you can manipulate and duplicate your work into a pastiche of observation, communication, visualization. You can also park indoors for free.

Two sandwich shops and two interior design stores and an art gallery are also in this block--all comfortable and/or thought provoking. What's going on here? The big church on the block is opening a large soup kitchen and homeless center around the corner in the old car dealer. Go two blocks further in any direction and you will find three movie screens, two dessert/espresso bars, two hotels and a half dozen or so restaurants and niteclubs. Apparently we have another neighborhood that makes us feel like real city dwellers.



Closed Circle of Humanity

The visitor from another planet stepping into the coffee shop notices

everybody has a newspaper, and in that paper there are pictures of . . . people. People are reading about people. "Is that natural?" the visitor wonders. Well, not entirely, the paper could have pictures of something else. Like . . . speculative drawings of God, maybe.

Well, they take an interest in their own affairs," the visitor reasons. The guy at this end of the street is reading about what is happening at the other end of the street. "Is that natural? Well . . ."

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Midnight looms in WRUR's cramped basement studio when Doug Curry says "Heads up," and pulls on a pair of headphones. He leans over a microphone. By his count, this is nearly the 500th Friday he's done this: "Oh yes, a little Chicago blues," he says over a fading guitar note, "to bring us into the final hour of this edition of Blacks And Blues."

His voice is deep, smooth and distinctive, instantly familiar to any blues fan within reach of WRUR's fm signal. Curry, 40, works as a car salesman by day; by night, on Fridays, with his artful delivery, and the care he lavishes on all the minutiae of the music, he's one of the best blues disc-jockeys anywhere.

Yes, anywhere — who can dispute it? Once, forty years ago, around urban centers like Chicago and Memphis, electric blues was played night and day on some commercial radio stations; now, you can argue about whether T-Bone Walker was a better guitarist than B.B. King, but one sure way to define blues is that it's what you'll never hear on a radio station just before or after a beer commercial.

"Wrapped In My Baby," Curry continues, "a song by Willie 'Big-Eye' Smith, recorded in 1954 in Chicago. Willie Smith, of course, would go on to be part of what was known as The Legendary Blues Band, the last great band to play with the great Muddy Waters."

The content is typical of Curry's "Blacks And Blues" program. Without ever getting in the way of the music, he still manages to fit the songs and the artists together into a family pattern. And for the music he loves, an oral history is the most fitting tribute.

Listening to his show, I've often thought that a dozen taped hours of it could serve as a talking text of blues. "There're tapes of Blacks & Blues all over the world," he says. "A guy just called me tonight and said he sends the tapes to a friend in what was formerly the U.S.S.R., because this guy is hungry for music ... There's tapes of Blacks & Blues all down south that've been sold. I had friends that went down to Mississippi, and on Saturday in this town square they were blaring this show out of loudspeakers from a truck — yeah! So we've been around."

"Heads up!" he says suddenly — and he's back on the air: "We continue on with more music here on Blacks and Blues. And for fans of the newer style, the Malaco sweet-soul style of the blues, we've got music by Little Milton, and then by Bobby Bland. Nothing but the

BLUE FRIDAY

very best of the recorded black blues." His hand releases the record; he pulls the headphones off just as Little Milton starts to sing.

"Some more shit I can do without," he says, laughing. "It's the stuff that cries out for commercial black radio, 'Please play me.'"

On the one hand, it's doubtful you'd hear

The white market, he concedes, "keeps the bills paid, but it's also why Buddy Guy sounds more like Eric Clapton than he does Muddy Waters — it diminishes product. If it's not for the white market it won't get the reissue programs or a lot of stuff — but it's the white market that also has the blues marketed in the context of what it did for *white* music ... I have a stated position that I don't play white blues on this show. Shit, you can hear Eric Clapton or

Stevie Ray Vaughan ten other places, and every time I play one of them I'm not playin' somethin' that you *can't* hear ten other places."

You can't hear old Elmore James or Lowell Fulson sides ten other places — but that's at least in part because popular music has long since moved on from syncopation to commercial consolidation, and dance beats. And it's also because blues — about loss and recovery — is an adult music; it's a rare blues fan today that's teenaged.

Curry was no exception. "The first record I ever bought was probably by James Brown, 'Think,' when I was 12 or 13," he says, as he shuffles through records. "But see, I always had records around me. Back then when I was growin' up people had the old 78s, and they would throw 'em away. The only time records got thrown away was when people would move, 'cause they was big and bulky and heavy. So they'd set a box out, and the kids would go out — it was the fifties, right? — and play flyin' saucer. 'Straighten Up and Fly Right' — bang! 'Let The Good Times Roll' — bang! All these great R & B tunes smashed up against the brick houses in Harlem."

He heard blues playing on jukeboxes, he says, but he didn't know much about the music until he left New York to attend Carnegie-Mellon University, in Pittsburgh. And then, when he did find the music — the postwar, urban electric blues-style he favors to this day — it was through the white market he now rails against.

"When I was at college hanging out with my black friends I'm listenin' to stuff like the Temptations and the Chi-Lites," he recalls. "And then with white people I'm listenin' to the Allman Brothers and Jimi Hendrix, stuff like that — and it's strikin' a real familiar chord, but I don't know where it's comin' from."

"The Allman Brothers' *Filmware West* album, they get ready to play this song, 'Must Have Did Somebody Wrong,' and they say, 'This is an old Elmore James song' — so listening to the Allman Brothers reawakened Elmore James

THE ACHIEVEMENT OF LATE NIGHT TELEVISION



The interviewer, that's Charlie Rose on "Nightwatch" with the boyish sincerity, asks: "what did you feel like at the time, when you were making history that way."

The guy in the chair (that's Phil Woods, legendary musician) says: "well, Charlie, alot different than I do at the moment of course." He pauses, and spells it out. "Life was more real back then, you could say that."

The interviewer says: "go on ..."

The guy in the chair says, "I feel like, well, you know, somebody in the future."

The interviewer smiles at the camera. "Stay with us, folks," he says.

As the music comes on and the screen changes, and the nether world of repeating ads come on, the third person involved suffers a fit of awareness. He is sitting in the couch in his living room.

He thinks, "holy mother of mercy this is weird!" He goes out to the kitchen, and cracks open a beer. The house around him looks like a relic. "Somebody ought to live here," he thinks.

Even later, when he shuts the television off, he has to close his eyes as he punches the knob, because if he sees the screen shrink inward like it does, sucking the world there into a center point which emits a bright light just as it ... vanishes!, he gets the horrible idea that his brain just died.

Little Milton on any commercial radio station, or anywhere in Upstate New York, if Curry didn't play him; on the other, Milton and Bland, with their later brassy soul styles, are as easy to listen to as they are far removed from the rural roots of the blues. Curry has a lot of territory to cover. The greater black audience professes not to care about blues that *aren't* prettied up, if they care about blues at all, while Curry says he doesn't care about any white blues market.

More Curry Please

for me. And then I was sitting in a room drinkin' some wine one night, and this young white girl played for me one of these obscure J.B. Lenoir songs — I think it was 'Korea Blues.' That's when I started getting seriously into this kind of stuff, the Chicago stuff."

Curry had his first radio show — a blues show — on a Pittsburgh public station. He eventually made his way to Rochester, intending to study at the U. of R.'s graduate school of business management — where he lasted a month and a half. ("After Carnegie-Mellon I was not impressed with the U of R," he says now.) In 1982 he took over the blues show at WRUR. Meanwhile, he worked a series of community-oriented day-jobs, for New York State, the City of Rochester, and the Rochester Urban League. And then, in 1987, he went to work selling cars at Pichler Pontiac.

"Yeah, I sell Pontiacs," he says, smiling, "and guess what: I ain't at all concerned about all the hoopla and the Big Three running off to Japan and makin' a spectacle of themselves. I make more money sellin' cars than I woulda made if I woulda graduated from here. I like sellin' cars 'cause I can go there and do an honest day's work. Job satisfaction is gettin' paid."

Much of his pay goes back into the music. Curry lives alone in a house he rents on Culver Road — alone with thousands of records. "In the last few years I've made good money selling cars, and I don't have anything else to do. I don't like things — you know, I don't like new cars — but I like records, so I spend money on records. I got records lined all around one wall, and I got a walk-in closet that's ceiling-to-the-floor albums."

Meanwhile, he has his regular Friday-night home away from home where he can showcase a planned fraction of his collection each week. He also has a pre-recorded one-hour show that's broadcast on WXXI-am on Sunday nights, from 9 to 10 pm. While he's paid a nominal fee for his WXXI show, Curry's regular WRUR program is, like almost all college radio, strictly a labor of love.

Having abandoned community-based work to sell cars, he sees his radio show as a form of public service. "I don't have the patience, and I have too much ego, to sit around tutoring kids," he says — "I can't stand to do that kind of thing. I'm not gonna hand out baskets at Christmas-time because I don't like life among the low; I had to pull out of that, okay, so it doesn't gratify my ego to help out in that kinda way. But this is me doing what I can do. And I don't care if it seems easy because

it's just talkin' on the radio, or it's not significant 'cuz I'm not gettin' my hands dirty — I'm not gonna git my hands dirty."

And then it's Heads-Up time: "James 'Thunderbird' Davis," Curry says over the closing notes of another song. "Poor James Davis died this week, but left behind a string of good songs, including his most recent work, which can be found on the Blacktop record label. The tune that we selected was from what was probably the album that started to turn things around for him — the album's called *Checkout Time*, and the tune is called 'What Else Is There To Do?' James Davis was

singing that song when he keeled over. And another man done gone, as they say in the blues."

So many of the musicians he plays on Blacks And Blues have died since he took the program over (Willie Dixon, for one, died the same week Davis did)

that eulogizing seems like a weekly feature. Still others are slowly winding their careers down — or should have retired by now. "Like John Lee Hooker," Curry says.

Hooker recently released an album, *Mr. Lucky*, that's a far cry from the sparse acoustic blues that made his name; a generally graceful collaboration, it features some aging rock-and-rollers who are nonetheless little more than half Hooker's age — Keith Richards, Van Morrison, and Carlos Santana. "John Lee's got no business hopping around at his age," Curry says. "Anybody else with the kind of reputation and acclaim and actual accomplishment in his field wouldn't be doin' that at 70 years old. The carrot wouldn't be so lucrative at this point; he might even be satisfied to live on social security — but now it's like big money, and you can't turn away from it."

Curry's recognition is overdue, too, and if CD-boxed-set sales are any indication (a collection of recordings by Robert Johnson, a crude, eerie Delta musician, sold over half a million copies in the last two years), the blues market, black and white, is bigger than ever now.

But Blacks And Blues is in its tenth year under Curry's thumb. How long will he keep doing it?

"Yeah, I think about that," he says nodding. "You know what? Honest answer? I can't stop doin' this for the people. I got people that call up every Friday night, I got people when I go down to the B.K. lounge, saying, 'Hey Doug, play this for me.' Having done it ten years, it's enough time to look back and say, 'What would I have been doing with Friday nights otherwise?' And ya know, I can't really see the end of it."



TALK IS CHEAP

What rock star, past or present, would have made a great president?

Frank Zappa. He has some good ideas. Actually I'm voting for Lyndon LaRouche. No offense to the conservative party, but he believes in building the world economy, not just the U.S. economy. I hope he gets out of jail, at least.
Leno, Jazzberry's patron

I'd vote for Art Blakey, but he's dead.
friend of Leno

Mick Jagger. He has leadership qualities. I'd follow him, whatever he said. Are you taping that?
Betty Smith, teacher/actress

I'd vote for David Lindley. He wears polyester. In an age when most people have values, he still wears polyester.

Randy R. Sickler, lighting technician

Captain Beefheart. Maybe Eugene Chadbourne or Tom Waits. Chadbourne for his radical left, Beefheart for his surreal vision, and Tom Waits for his insobriety at times. You don't want the guy who wrote "My Sharona" in there, do ya?

Mike Rey, music archivist

That's a good one, I don't know. What are my choices. I know! Professor Longhair. He captured the imagination of a lotta people. He got people to wake up and get their act together. He got music happening. He was the father of rock'n'roll in New Orleans. Professor Longhair! Gone. He's gone now, though. Not alive anymore.

Dr. Digger, deposed Folk Lunch deejay

Roy Orbison. Kind nature, gentle soul.

Patrick Moschiano, singer, mayoral candidate

I would say, I would have to vote for John Lennon. He had vision, and he spoke the truth. He was a fair man. And he was a great speaker. He had the best wit of anyone ever in rock music.

Frank Boehm, Bonedipper

Paul Kantner. He had some good ideas twenty-five years ago; maybe the rest of the country's caught up with them.

Mark Wilkins, Blessed Thistle Bakery proprietor



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He was a hero. That's what Joseph Campbell says. John Lennon. He was a hero. In what the Greek sense of a hero is, in that he pushed back the boundaries of what

was human. I would have to agree with the previous gentleman.

Matt McGuire, voter

Robert Johnson.

Ann Berleant, songwriter

Alice Cooper. I don't know, I just think he'd make a great president. 'Cause his father was a minister and he would follow in his religious footsteps, and be the real conservative person that he really is deep down inside. I just got the album *Billion Dollar Babies*, and I just think that he'd make a great president. I was thinking about that, actually. Everyone says Zappa; I don't think so. I say Alice Cooper. Or maybe someone like — who's that guy from Aerosmith? — the drummer from Aerosmith.

Pete Andrews, seer/doorman

Frank Zappa. He's got very interesting, bizzare ideas that I think the majority of people can't relate to. I think that's really important, because I can't relate to what's going on now, so I might as well have someone that I like to not be able to relate to.

Susan Plunkett, Jazzberry's proprietor

It would have to be Little Richard. He's just so funky. He could reach people. He reached out to people when people weren't really listening to the message. He was one of the first cross-over artists that really got across to all different kinds of people. It wasn't so much race music anymore, it was something that everybody could relate to. He got across to Paul McCartney, and he lived in another country! That's my idea of a president, somebody who comes across to people.

Bob Mallin, percussionist

Whatever the question is, the answer is always going to be Eric Clapton.

John Abraham, pragmatist

I want to see Elvis. I want to see Elvis on the dollar. I would vote for Elvis. Well, wouldn't you?

Greg Lyons, fan



ARCTIC EXPLORERS

The other night we drove past Hemingways on Alexander at 7:00 pm on a wintry Friday and saw a large group of thirty-somethings waiting in line to get in. We turned right on Broadway and when we got to Monroe we saw another very long line outside Woody's. Two hours later there was a line outside the Bug Jar on the same corner. Down the street, at the Sports Page, there was (yes, you guessed it) another line. Is this a new socializing ritual we haven't hooked into yet? Perhaps the shared experience of freezing on a sidewalk contributes to the atmosphere of conviviality in these nite spots. Perhaps those who participate come to look back on this part of the evening with particular fondness, not unlike arctic explorers reminiscing about the time they nearly froze to death, while gazing into a comfortable fire at home. Only this time the fire is a television and the person on it is saying: "NOT!"



Bob and Ed,

over at our output place, thought this phrase (that they typeset, made into a sign and hung on their wall after hearing it on a talkshow) should be in the Refrigerator. "Good judgement is a product of experience. Experience is a product of poor judgement."



Let's Do Lunch, Naked.

This movie is a real shot in the arm for the drug industry. The only cool thing about "Rush" was the kid who couldn't stop smiling and he hung himself at the end. I would get bored in "Naked Lunch" and daydream right into one surreal surprise after another. One of the typewriters would ooze an intoxicating substance if it liked what was being typed. The people in the theatre all kind of looked at each other after it was over like they were searching for something to ground them. And the soundtrack was beautiful. Where do we get the bug juice?



Life in the Slow Lane

I don't have a desire to read the newspaper, but some days I go up to the corner store to get a few supplies and I see it there and I think, oh buy it, maybe you'll get a little perspective about something.

My coffee gets cold, and I realize I haven't done anything today. The mail hasn't even arrived. First I was feeling pretty idle, then the newspaper, it's like . . . sapping my strength.

Well the whole day passes rather quickly. It's night and I decide to go out and check the Money Machine, see if it's above or below zero you know, my balance, and get some coffee at Brighton Donuts. I usually get so philosophical, if not downright melancholy, in coffee shops, that I feel like taking strong action, somewhere!

Two policemen come in and they're idling, in fact one of them is saying it's been a "slow winter." I think, he's in no movie — he should hope he's idle. Across the counter a broken-down woman is telling her (broken-down) companion that she doesn't even have enough extra cash (from her Social Services check) to splurge on a pizza delivery.

Then I realize I am really jaded, because I think I must look like . . . an exceptionally clever (disguised) undercover agent, drinking coffee furtively with a notebook and pen at my side, like pretending to be . . . some disenfranchised poet of the street. In reality, I am with the two blue uniformed cops, and we are entrapping the waitress, who I've been thinking looks like . . . my sister, no not my sister, it's . . . the girl I went to the Senior Prom with in High School—twenty years ago! She's come to this.

Come to what? Serving coffee and donuts to all fugitives. Christ! Actually nothing is happening at all. If I wrote it down . . . it would be apparent enough. I have to say the night is nothing but . . . empty space, traffic lights. I'm in the slow lane, edging out in the the empty dream. Over on Lyell Avenue, prostitution, which isn't very exciting, is trying to flourish, but they are shutting it down, or making it worse. I'll shut the whole scenario down, I think, with my tremendous . . . non-interest..

These coffee shops, I judge, are worse than bars, everyone is more than wrecked, instead of just on their way (to being wrecked). What happened, I wonder, when it's evident that . . . nothing is happening.

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Dear Refrigerator

This is supposed to be a dispatch from Transcendia, in New York City. My world has gotten very small. In New York City I feel like I am at the Hub of the Universe a lot of the time. Today I was hiding hanging, onto an outer wheel near to being thrown off. I felt lazy in that I slept all day, but determined that maybe it was not that I had slept all day, but that I was just starting my day when I wanted to.

I am experiencing shooting pain in my back leg and arm. This is from a fall I took in the play that I am performing in. I suppose you could say the play is about the television-drugged dysfunctional family in the television-drugged dysfunctional society/culture in which we live. There is this scene where a lot of the cast eat turkey legs and whatnot. I run on stage in a rage to kick a stool, and then cry and rave on for about the next 16 minutes, if I can remember it all. In the last show I slipped and slid on my back after putting my cowboy booted heel on a glob of turkey. The scene hit new heights. There was a dazed moment when I didn't know where I was in the scene, but then it went where it was supposed to go. I terrorized everyone in the theater. I think that is what I am supposed to do in that scene. One of the reasons I act is because Reagan was President. The play has paid me a little and I've learned why performers need to eat well and travel well. I haven't been eating well, or enough, or at the right times for a long time. If left to my own devices, I probably would not eat. I have a lot of trouble thinking about food if I am alone. I forced myself to eat three pancakes on 23rd Street. Then I went to Billy's, a topless place on 26th and 6th and had a bottle of water, quickly, and walked on home.

Home is between 27th and 28th on Madison Ave. It has this masculine view that I am awed by. Once when I wanted revenge over a lie told me, I made sure that someone lost some money, and realized that it was more satisfying than punching somebody in the face, and really believed that I lived on Madison Ave.

I need to find a job that pays me regular or a lot every so often. About two days ago I decided I wanted a job at a radio station. My family is telling me to become a waiter, but it has about as much appeal to me as becoming an insurance salesman. Incredibly ironic that I now live across



the street from the New York Life building. I've done that sort of stuff before. The list of jobs I've had fills a single spaced page. I turned on the radio for a bit a little while ago and promptly turned it off. Maybe TV. But you know the unions seem to keep me from working, though they are convenient to blame. I don't want to join. Could as well just be that I don't have the job to warrant it. A union would pin me down to some label, and I must fear that. King Poet. Where does that fit into a union label, other than the one I created, Transcendia. If you know me you are tired of hearing about it maybe, since there is nothing there. My classified ad in The Refrigerator didn't secure one single order for a passport. I've started to pay attention to horoscopes for the first time in my life. My horoscope said that this week was going to be strange, but my fortunes would be improving out of it all, though that would be next week. There are four more performances of the play, and I want to get a good job out of them.

Transcendian Passports will provide dual citizenship, useful eventually for travelers and futurists. Transcendia, the Company, the Country, the Work of Art, will send you a very low numbered Transcendian Passport for ten dollars if you send your order to 179 Laburnum Cres. Rochester, NY 14620. Some people read the classifieds everyday.

There is a rocket sitting on my windowsill. I have to put it together. Today there is an article about Russian Nuclear rockets for trips to Mars on the front page of the New York Times. And another article about this being the decade of decision.

We are living in the future. I make arguments for technology. Things are getting to the point where making television is as possible as writing. The cameras are nearly as common as pencils. I feel this end of time though. Last chance to offer our children hope. The plan now is to sell passports, make money off videos, buy or lease some airports and head for the stars. Mars in a Russian-built nuclear spaceship. Possibly it is time to combine Detroit and Russian workers into making spaceships and spaceports for Transcendia. Mankind needs three planets apparently, whether Robert Redford approves or not.

Russell Scott Day

Russell Scott Day was born in White Plains, N.Y. and grew up in the South. His lifelong project is to create a country of airports that becomes a country of spaceports named after his vision Transcend O Ray (Borges called it the Aleph). The country is called Transcendia. He has worked in aviation and filmmaking and has a six year old daughter, Olivia Marie.

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