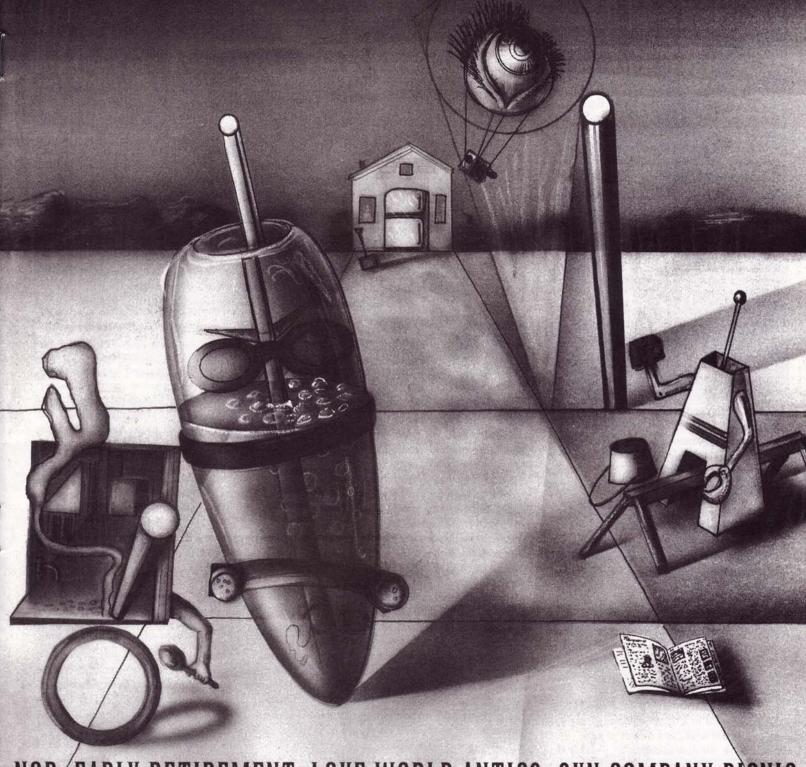
REFRIGERATOR



I Live Next Door to a genius



NOD-EARLY RETIREMENT-LOVE WORLD ANTICS-GUN COMPANY PICNIC

I worked at the big yellow box for ten years before I understood. That I'd be there for the rest of my working life. Denial, I guess. Like when somebody dies. Or maybe a pet. What with the benefits, pay, vacation, and lousy job market, I couldn't leave. Oh sure, I could, but I didn't have it in me. That's what I finally understood.

But that's the great thing about technology. Just when you think you've got no

options, you do.

'We think of our new Early Retirement System as a kind of time travel, Mr. Wheal," she said. Her name was Brickle. She was young. Fresh out of some new management program. Had big eyes, bad skin and a pointy chin. I remember every pixel, like it was yesterday. Enhanced image recall, they call it. A side effect.

"One minute you're here, with decades of work ahead of you. The next minute it's 30 years later and you're ready to enjoy your hard-earned retirement."

I didn't get it, at first. "So who does the

work? What happens to me?"

"Oh, you perform the work, Mr. Wheal. The procedure doesn't effect the way you feel or act. You're the same person doing the same work, except that you are not aware of any of it."

"Just wipe out the best 30 years of my

life for the company?"

"Of course not," she said, like talking to a child. I figured that she'd said the same thing to dozens of other saps like me, so I didn't take it personally. "That's a common misconception. You're not aware of events as they happen, but you recall everything after the procedure is reversed. You have all your memories intact, to cherish during your golden years."

I stood up to go. "I'll think about it."

"Besides," she said, standing also, "are they really the best years, Mr. Wheal? Punching the clock, paying the bills, the same old grind day after day? Wouldn't you like to put it behind you A-S-A-P?"

She stuck out her hand. I felt like crushing it. Yeah, my miserable life. Not her though, not with her cushy job-all the perks that go with it. She wouldn't want to miss a minute.

"Sure," I said, forcing a laugh, "wouldn't you Miss Brickle?"

Her hand went limp and she let go. "Yes," she said in a dreamy voice, gazing past me. "Just last week, as a matter of fact."

It took me few seconds to process this information. My eyes found the pale arc on her left temple. I think my mouth was open.

"Good day," she said, smiling brightly.

She wasn't the only one. A lot of my friends were doing it. They didn't seem any different afterwards. Except maybe, happier Like it was a load off their minds. I didn't mind the idea of being a little happier. That's probably how the company can afford to offer the retirement package that comes with A happy employee is a productive employee—they get their money's worth.

It was the money that finally made me decide. And my wife. Always looking out for my best interests.

"If you're gonna slave away for 30 years you might" as well make the best of it," she said the day I signed the papers. "I mean, why not? It's not like you're going to miss anything. Not permanently, anyway." Then she puther hands on me. "And we'd be set for life, honey. You want to take care of me, don't you?" She looked up at me with those eyes. I felt like lead inside. Like my nerves were already cut.

When they brought me around, my first thought was, what the fuck is going on? I was sitting up in bed. There was a guy in a white coat.
"Mr. Wheal?" He waited for me to focus. "You probably feel a

little disoriented. Take a minute. You're doing fine."

And I thought, why shouldn't I be? But something was definitely not right. I started to remember this dream, and it kept unrolling. I couldn't stop it. My head throbbed, I leaned over and threw up. A basin happened to be there, and I noticed the coincidence, but the memories swept me up again.

The technician was talking to someone else. "He's fine. It will take him a few minutes to catch up. You can talk to him then." There were other people in the room, but they were

indistinct. It didn't matter. I was too busy remembering and puking.

They decided to wait in the hall.

It all came back, crystal clear. More than I thought my brain could hold. 30 years. My wife and I were still married, we had three kids who were all grown up and on their own. We owned two cars (one methane, one electric) a boat, a condo on the river (where the brewery used to be) and we vacationed every year at Epcot. We watched a lot of television.

It's all vivid and true. It all happened to me. Trouble is—and maybe this will go away—it

feels like it happened to someone else.

My body's so old. That's the hardest part to get used to.

My wife took me home, gabbing the whole time. "The first retirement check hit our account yesterday,"she chattered, "isn't it wonderful? The Makeys are coming over for dinner tonight to help us celebrate," she said, turning to look at me. "Remember? Tomorrow we can put the boat in the water and go for a spin, would you like that?"

I didn't say much. I was thinking that this woman was going to get me home and expect

me to make love with her like I had once a week for the last 30 years.

She opened the front door and I followed her in. My mind was turning over and over. I

wondered what was going to come up.

It didn't feel like my home. Corning Classics on the wall. But I remembered making the wire hangers. Holographic hummels in the glass curio in the corner. Pastels. Lace. Very clean and neat.

She headed for the fridge. Her solution for everything.

"Can I get you some..?"

"Nothing, thanks."

The world had changed. Miss Brickle had been right. It was like time travel, I thought, as I walked around the house, looking out the windows. But I hadn't expected to feel so different. Who had I been for 30 years?

"Are you all right, dear?" She was following me around.

I remembered how I felt when I signed the papers. The weight that drove my hand. Not the past, I realized; the future. Future dread. A planned life stretching off to the horizon. I made sure it happened. Left nothing to chance. Paid my dues. But for what? Twenty more years of the same?

"How about a nice cold drink?"

Amazing progress in the past 30 years. Hadn't managed to blow ourselves up yet. Cellular com implants. Virtual reality was everywhere. The human genome project had just been completed. The word on the nets was that immortality was around the corner. That's the great thing about technology...

A domestic lifter settled on the rockhard outside. I could see the ghost of her reflection in the glass behind me, wringing her hands. I reached down and called up Financial on the phone board. In seconds I'd moved 50% of our assets into a keycode personal account.

"I'm going for a walk," I said, grabbing my coat and wallet and heading for the door. I paused on the front step, feeling out of shape, wondering how far I could get. I could hear her on the phone, frantic. "Doctor, something's gone terribly wrong!"

Yeah, I thought, but it's not too late to make it right.

THE HALF HOUR GALLERY

It's the smallest small business imaginable. You have to call ahead and are assigned a time slot. Their location is in an industrial building just off the inner loop. You ring the buzzer and go up the freight elevator, feeling more apprehensive as the doorways slide by. On the fourth floor you go down a non-descript hall to a doorway that says, simply "half hour gallery." You go in and the girl gives you a key and points to another door. She says that it will be dark at first. This is your only guidance. You use the key to unlock the door and you go in. The door clicks behind you; it is locked. You're in the dark for a moment or two and then either your eyes adjust or the light is coming up gradually. The room is all off-white including the floor. The art is in the middle. A bench runs around the wall. You sit. After some time (about a half hour) the door opens and you leave. The Pinhole Gallery on East Avenue got me thinking like this.

LOVE WORLD ANTICS

When I was in high school and was old enough to drive and could come up with a good reason to borrow the car, I would usually head over to my girlfriend's house. She'd get in and we'd pull out onto Ridge Road and I would suddenly get exited at the realization of being alone with her in a car that I was driving and could just keep driving to the Thousand Islands maybe or...as long I was back in two hours. Anyway, she told me about pididles. She explained that it was a a car with one headlight out and it was an old custom to kiss the person next to you when you saw one. And you would always say the word pididle when you spotted one coming. It sounds kind of like the mantra they gave me when I signed up for TM. She had a keen eye and we would sometimes see three in one outing. Now my wife tells me when she was growing up outside of Detroit they also said pididle when they saw one of these vehicles, but their custom was to hit the person next to them if they saw it first.

EVERYONE SMOKES

Here at Gare de Lyon half the seats in the waiting area are covered with pigeon shit. The floor is cement, the seats orange plastic, connected in threes and fours, and dogs run freely. Paris feels warm after eight days of snow in Connecticut. Paris is roomy, with wide streets and clean sidewalks. With no sleep in over 24 hours, I move from euphoria to sullenness with amazing ease. I forget that "oui" means "yes" and keep muttering "bitte" instead. The first room we look at is eerily cheap. In the lobby, two men push past us, the old one carrying take-out food and the sickly one wrapped in a faded raincoat. The narrow staircase winds up to the fifth floor covered in a worn carpet. The hall light in front of our room is nearly gone and the skeleton key gives us trouble. I hold the match as my friend works on the lock. Inside I'm suddenly near tears from the layers of sadness and defeat that rise up from the cracked linoleum that wrinkles against the wall as though melted onto the floor and the thin bed spread stained with grease and less identifiable secretions. That the bed is neatly made only compounds my unhappiness-expect Madman Montz to saunter in at any moment. I pull the blankets back to find dark blood beneath the pillow. We do not take this room, which disappoints my naively romantic friend, but a different one, where breakfast the next morning is decent if not large. And here at the station, waiting for the 22:22 to Milano, Paris seems benign and oddly familiar. The baggage carts have can openers attached to the handles. Our faces are all resigned to the wait but not unpleasantly so. Everyone smokes and drinks coffee or Coca Cola.

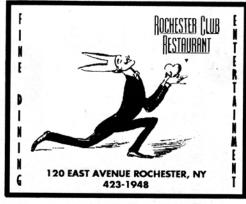
GUN COMPANY PICNIC

A friend who is an attorney represents an arms dealer. He had to travel to Nashville to meet with the owner of the gun company and while in their office he saw an unusual photo on the wall. He asked the man what it was all about. Apparently when the company has their annual picnic, they go out and buy a junk car, gas it up and tie the steering wheel over to the right so that it will drive in circles. They put it out in the center of a field behind the company and start it up. Then they roll out the company cannon and start taking shots at it. Everybody who works there has their own small arms and they commence firing at it at will while swilling beers and eating barbeque. This year one of the cannon shots blew the steering wheel away. The car started running amok with everybody firing away like crazy. Finally a cannon shot to the radiator stopped it and it burned up. The photo shows everyone in the company, standing around the burnt wreck displaying their weapons. A good time was had by all.

RECYCLED MINDS THINK ALIKE

This rechargeable card thing is a real triumph for Kinkos. Their prices are so cheap for copies and you can do it yourself and not have some crazy person looking at you like you're a crazy person for wanting to make a copy of something ridiculous. When they came to town it was like part of the future had arrived and the whole experience was sort of wonderful. Their business seemed like it was run as a public service. They even had a work table laid out for you and they trusted you to tell them how many copies you made before you paid. I couldn't believe it. I always wondered how they made enough money to pay the rent on East Avenue. I can never remember which corner I'm supposed to but my document against and I need a few practice runs. But now this Copy Card with the little magnetic strip on the back. You buy a dollar amount like poker chips before you start. Consequently you pay for mistakes and I would guess half the town is running around with unused Kinko's credit in their wallets.





BORDERS BOOK SHOP

1000 Hylan Drive (716) 292-5900, TDD (716) 292-0301

Next issue: My Funeral Submissions on this or any subject are welcome Deadline: February 28

The Refrigerator is published about 10 times a year. Contributions are welcome. All contributions are kept anonymous. Subscriptions are available for \$10 a year. Price includes postage and a Magic Refrigerator card that gives you a discount on Refrigerator sponsored events. Back issues are not available. Back Page 1" square ads are \$10 and rate sheets are available for the bigger ads. Call or Fax (716) 288-0880 for more information and/or submissions. Copyright 1993

PO Box 40313 Rochester, NY 14604

Bill from Publishers Workshop said get many submissions for Neighbors issue because the DaDa neighbors are



Live Next Door to a genius

We used to think that the neighbors to the left of us were the ideal Leave It To Beaver- type family. Three kids, the wife He would wash the car on weekends and lis- we had a little problem up here, ten to the country station at low volume. She I don't know if you all remember, ing around. And then came the divorce.

other night. He told me how big it was and it was bigger than any opening on the sewer grate. He has cancer now in a few places. He went to the VA hospital in Syracuse for some exploratory surgery. He was a little freaked out because all the doctors were foreign. He got his wallet stolen while he was being operated on and claims the doctors fucked up so he had to wear a bag for a while, to go to the bathroom in. He showed me the bag. He went into Park Ridge to get that problem

At the market, feedstore, blacksmith and spring ran bandages, antiseptic, guns and strychnine fueling our local economy thru a sluggish season.

But what does a physician owe a disease?

Children lost ears, young mothers their toes,

Woodsmen gone speechless from gum infection,

Sightless shepherds drove flocks into oncoming highway traffic.

Toothless old lumberjacks recalled dark forgotten chapters of plague and misery,

evil sylvan spirits and the way of all flesh in general.

Suspicious tempers eclipsed our mysterious assailant. went into Park Ridge to get that problem Suspicious tempers eclipsed our mysterious assailant.

straightened out and while he was in there he shared a room with this guy who had just been shot. The other members of his gang all the short of his gang al he demanded a new room. He plays guitar. He's always telling me to bring my guitar over and he'll "put it on the tuner." He says I look into a startling dawn across the field. The townfolk uprising. Shouts, Rakes and Torches Exempt last weekend and he sat in with a punk band. I was trying to picture that. punk band. I was trying to picture that.

A girl who was in my high school class My driver prepares the coach. lives across the street with her husband. Ajax is tucked in my satchel. When we first moved here they had the nicest house on the street. They are never outside. They hire kids to mow their lawn and shovel. The last time I saw her was at my high school reunion. Their house has not

> been painted in at least fifteen years. Next door to them lives a retired fireman. His wife died a few years ago. He has handicapped license plates and I suspect it may be for the best parking spots.

And next door to him is a widow and teen age daughter. Her husband was very heavy and very nice. Pizza trucks delivered two pizzas at a time to their house all the time. He had a heart attack last year.

There is woman who lives a block over. She has about ten cats that live around her house. They walk up and down the street, two and three at a time. We saw her on her porch one day and said "Hi." She acted like she didn't understand us.



didn't work. She hung the laundry out back. Last year around the time of the Hockey Playoffs had an identical twin sister who was over all we just about approached tabloid.

the time and then mysteriously stopped coming account And the company of and tried to figure it all out, The neighbor on the other side of us maybe around New Year's Eve. packs a gun. He told me he shot a rat that Of course now in hindsight I wonder came out of the sewer across the street the At the market, feedstore, blacksmith and spring it was bigger than any course.

Outside our apartment window a large pine tree provides a room size shelter for a collection of shopping carts. Invisible from the street, the carts are filled with neatly arranged plastic bags and boxes wrapped in plastic. The curator of this collection is a stocky sixtyish women dressed warmly in a long coat, boots and a hat that resembles a nylon babushka. She has an extraordinarily loud piercing voice that sounds like it's right outside the window when she is halfway down the block. I work at home and still haven't gotten used to the wild moans and cursing that erupt outside my office. We can look down on her from our living room windows and watch her sorting her stuff. It's like a tableau from the museum or a reconstruction of a habitat at the zoo. We're not sure what to do. Sometimes she yells at us on the street.

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a \$40 ad here could be the best investment of your life ADVERTISE IN THE REFRIGERATOR CALL 288 • 0880

The Bug Jar billboard (for their cd compilation, above the bar on Monroe Avenue) is the most beautiful thing we've seen since the House of Guitars' "Keep America Beautiful, Let It Grow" billboard on the expressway in the mid sixties.



I was picking my shoes up at Mancuso's Shoe Repair on Monroe and it ocurred to me that here was a perfect candidate-tobe-a-Refrigerator-advertiser. I brought up the possibility to Kenny, the proprietor who replied, "I don't advertise. All my business is word-of-mouth." "Oh, I see,"

I replied. "Except I really think you belong in the Refrigerator since a good portion of the readers live in this neighborhood." "If they live in the neighborhood, then they know I'm here already," he countered. "Yeah, that's true. But, by advertising in the Refrigerator, you're making a statement about yourself and where you stand." (or something along those lines) "Not that I'm trying to do a hard sell or anything but the Refrigerator seems perfect for you." "I just don't advertise. It's all word-of-mouth," he repeated laughing. "This paper is kinda like word-of-mouth in that the readers look for it and talk about it...no I don't need a bag for the shoes. Well you can't say I didn't try." As I was walking out the door, Kenny said "So it would be \$100 for the year?" "Oh, you don't have to do a whole year. How about a couple issues?" "OK. Should I write you a check now?" "Sure."



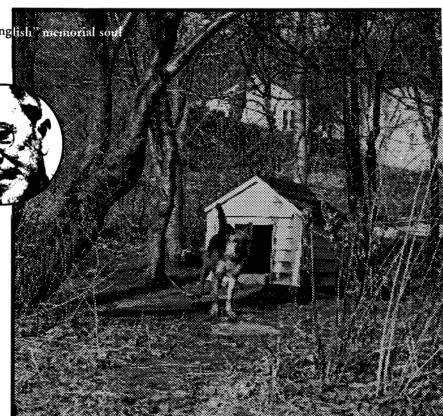
Tell It To The Judge

A recent study has shown that men who use electric shavers are twice as likely to end up with leukemia for some damn reason. A friend of mine gave me one of those old fashioned shaving brushes about twenty years ago when they seemed

like the perfect gift for a young man. He already had one and his aunt had just given him another. The little round bars of shaving soap that Colgate and Williamson make are very cheap but almost hard to find among the racks of canned foam. It may be a conspiracy. It lasts forever and the manly ritual of applying the warm lather almost compensates for the unmanly act of removing your facial hair.

Since we have many last minute additions by the king and the mayor, we'd like to put our own on the table. Let's build an artificial island off of Charlotte and put the stadium there. Its in the city but close enough to the suburbs and very safe. It revitalizes the lakefront area. It could be built out of solid waste products, alleviating our landfill problem. It will put the Red Wings on the map and attract fans from all over. When used for concerts it won't disturb the neighbors (there aren't any). All the power boaters will have some place to go and may even catch a home run ball. We can build a trolley line that goes out the pier to the island. This is our final stadium proposal.

Go Bills!



CARPE DIEM

WELCOMES EVERYONE TO OUR CLUB REGARDLESS OF RACE, COLOR, CREED OR SEXUAL ORIENTATION. WE EXPECT OUR PATRONS TO DO THE SAME. THANK YOU.



Spanish To Me"

the great conjunto count, Flaco Jimenez on accordion, Augie Meyers on organ and deep country vocals, Freddie Fender, the Mexican Elvis, on Vegas vocals and Doug Sahm's thirty years of border rock and occasionally Doug's son Shawn on lead guitar. About half their songs are in Spanish and they use it so you can understand it when you really can't speak a lick. Their first and third cds include "Gringo Lingo" charts in case there is any problem with words like chavala-a good looking Mexican girl and Adios Mi Corazon-goodbye my heart. Just listening to"Who Were You Thinkin Of" (when we were makin love, last night) and makin "Guacamole" all night long works up an appetite for salsa and cerveza con limón. Their latest, "Hangin On By A Thread" with the Bob Dylan's "To Ramona" and a nod to the Grateful Dead is my favorite.

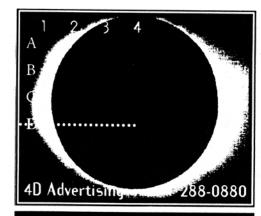
THE HING'S BIG SHOES

It was no Disgraceland at Milestones where Elvis Presley's birthday was celebrated with the Colorblind James Experience as hosts. Elvis and his dead twin would have been like 58 now (born 1935). The songs he made famous (mostly pre-bloated period) were systematical timer-brewed by the reently

meta-morphed "Experience" (out horns, in keys and female singer) along with about 30 other local musicians mostly singing one at a time like some kind of gongless target shoot with a fifty's-tune soundtrack. Milestones new stage is great. I love the hourglass gridlock at the bar and the sound is so much better. Anyway, ancient songs were tossed liberally but not hopelessly to an effervescent crowd (did everyone there sing something?). Each performer put themselves into the King's throne to boisterous approval with only an occasional semi-lamo (let's get a beer) every once in a while.

More than anything, one was left with the usual conclusion that these guys and one girl are officially world class-let everybody hail. Rochester is truly fortunate to have a band of this calibre on hand-remember ... people don't kill guns... bands do.

Next day was the *Bug Jar Compilation* Show at the Pyramid. It started an hour and a half late so many of us wandered aimlessly around the Village Gate mumbling irritatingly. At about 5 o'clock "Supermarket" opened and the produce was fresh and edible. On came "Nod" who bowledgus—that was good enough for my 5 bucks. I had to bail. I heard every other band was great. An out of town



SUNCATATURE LIVE AT MALESTONES WEDNESDAY FREERVANTO

friend witnessed the whole deal and proclaimed "Dirt Box 5" and "Big Hair" ready to be signable. So I'm burimed I hadda go, but dems da breaks. Maybe next time



Dear Refrigerator, As I am effectively out of contact with the Rochester scene, I missed your article in Refrigerator #19 which mentioned my independent recording efforts over the past decade. It was my friend, Ted Mosher of Joe Beard's band, that brought it to my attention recently. (I have known Ted since kindergarten and he appears on 2 of the 3 recent albums on cassette I have included.)

I want to thank you for including me with the list of local artists who you mentioned in connection with the local "indie" scene. Don Campau and I go back 7 or 8 years now, and he has featured my music on his radio shows since the mid 1980's.

Although my music includes some 15 albums or so, I have received most of my radio exposure in Canada, (where I had a #1 hit in Vancouver, B.C. in 1985) and then in Europe. This is due to American radio censorship of my lyrics in particular. I do receive internationally syndicated air-play from DJ's such as Dr. Demento however, (who have state-of-the-art editing facilities at their disposal...Ha!). It has been my sarcastic sense of humor that has outraged most of my detractors over the years. Believe me... "sartaken to its ultimate levels and beyond...is where my material comes from. I think you'll agree, my lyrics are nowhere near as nasty or anti-social as those on most rap videos that you see on MTV or elsewhere. You be the judge. I have included 3 recent releases for your investigation.

Banal Fixation is from last spring; Joe Shmoe: I Gotta Go is from last fall; and Chasing Tires is a collection of previously unreleased stuff as well as music off Chemical Engineering which I withheld from releasing last year because...(even though only sarcastic in intent)...turned out to sound somewhat derogatory towards certain people. Thus, I exercised what I felt is artistic responsibility in toning it down somewhat. It is and was at its inception intended to be funny...but as an "independent" recording artist, I have the ability to exercise a higher level of artistic responsibility than big record companies that manipulate sensationalism in order to \$ell records, CD's and tapes. Sometimes in the heat of a recording session, you lose sight of other people's feelings-and although my statements poke fun at the idiosyncrasies of "humanity", it isn't intended to "hurt" anybody. Thanx again! John Bartles

Dear Refrigerator, Just finished reading issue #20. Enjoyed it very much, as always. Checked out the new "cooler by several degrees" publication, too. Frankly, I don't think you need to be concerned; a reduction in temperature is not always a good idea. I mean, snarfling up a big bowl of cookie dough ice cream can be a supremely

satisfying experience...but you chill that sucker just a couple degrees cooler and all it'll give you is one of those really bad ice cream headaches. So there you go.

I've enclosed \$20 for two subscriptions—one for me and one for my friend Billy Sauer, who first introduced me to The Refrigerator. As living proof that a borderline avant-garde sensibility can be successfully integrated with an exemplary dedication to family and ceaseless home improvements, Bill deserves to have The Refrigerator delivered directly to his door.

Sincerely, David Reece

Dear Refrigerator, Just got through reading your stuff that was reprinted in the current issue of Out Your Backdoor and Yowza! It was great! I hope you're still publishing. The reason I'm writing is because recently I opened an alternative magazine store and would be very interested in carrying your zine. Would you consider this?

Thanks, Philip Francis, The Hypnotic Eye, 504 1/2 Euclid Avenue, Lexington, KY 40502 Dear Philip, We'll consider anything. Thanks.

BRIBE **WBER** BENEFIT FEB II MILESTONES





































Readings R Workshops TERS **Small Press** Books



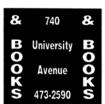




































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