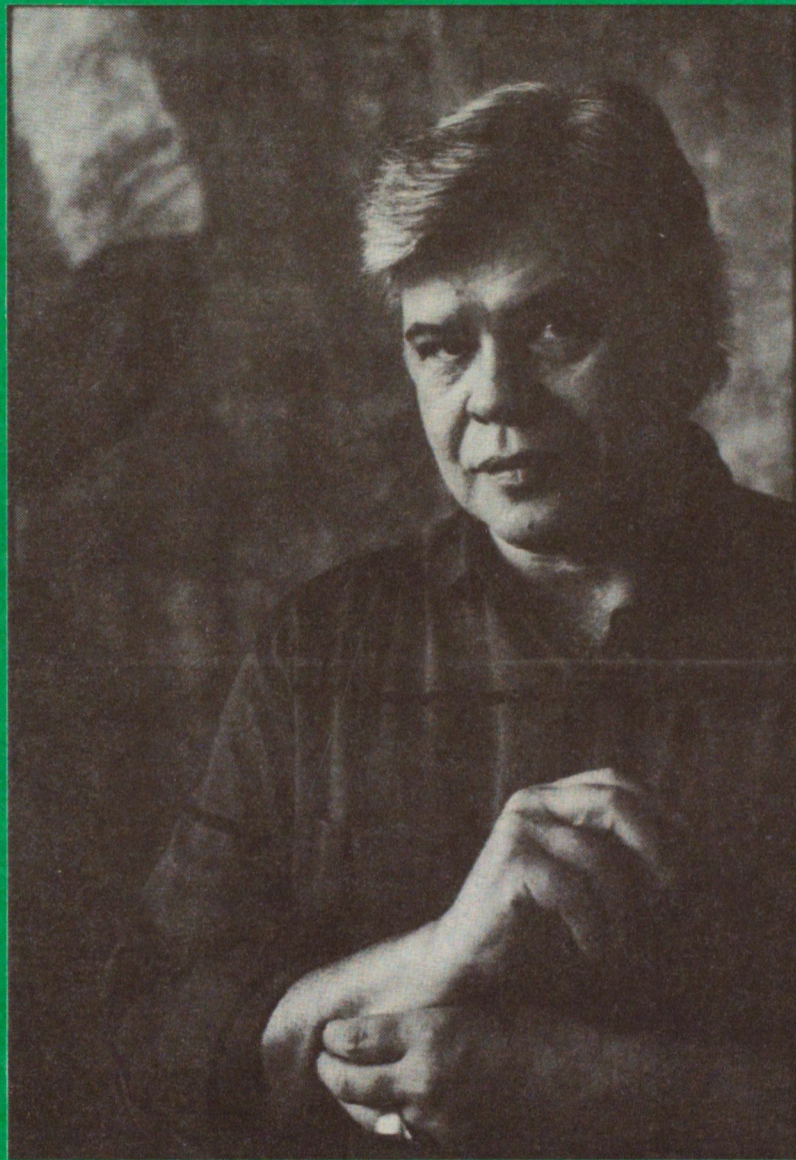


AGENDA

ANN ARBOR'S ALTERNATIVE NEWSMONTHLY

INTERVIEW WITH THE POET



The Diverse Poetics of Clayton Eshleman

by William Harmer - PAGE 4

Special Issue: Books & Literature



Common Language Bookstore & Feminist Literature

by Arwulf

- PAGE 8

Book Reviews & Literary Calendar

- PAGE 9

ARTS AGENDA: Heidelberg Project Demolition Anniversary

- PAGE 16

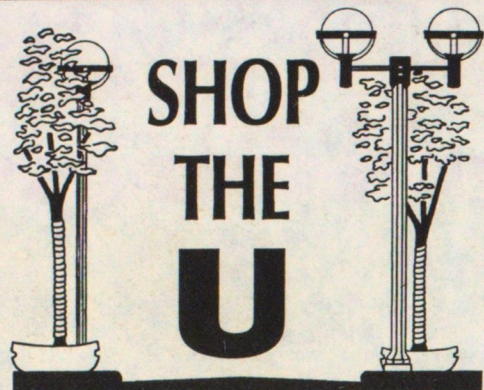
MUSIC: Tribute to Fred "Sonic" Smith

- PAGE 17

SCREEN: Cantú on "INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE" & "IT'S ALL TRUE"

- PAGE 18

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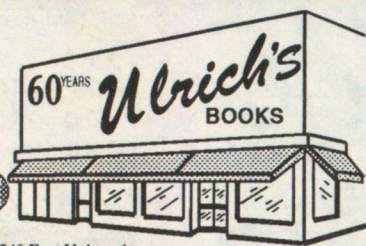


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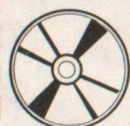
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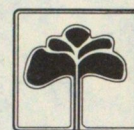


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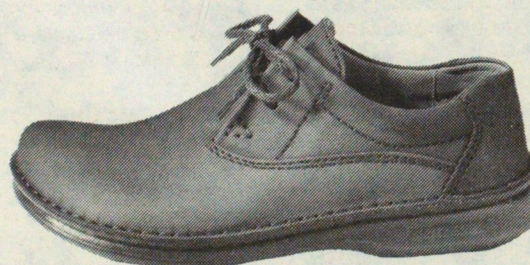
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letters

AGENDA is interested in receiving letters from readers. Please keep them short and include your name and phone number (not for publication). Send letters to: AGENDA, 220 S. Main St., Ann Arbor, MI 48104.

AGENDA Sold Out to Democrats

I was greatly disappointed that in the November issue, AGENDA once again endorsed Democratic Party candidates across the board. While I would expect such endorsements from the Detroit Free Press, I had assumed that AGENDA's editorial positions would be different than those of a mainstream (corporate) liberal newspaper.

AGENDA's reasoning for not endorsing any third party candidates—that the editors were not particularly impressed with any of them and did not endorse any of their agendas overall—may be valid. But doesn't this apply equally to most, if not all, Democratic Party Candidates? Were you "particularly impressed" by Bob Carr or Frank Kelly, two candidates you endorsed? Does AGENDA subscribe overall to Bill Clinton's agenda? Looking solely at party platforms, I would have hoped that AGENDA would have found more in common with Workers World Party candidates than with most Democrats.

Rather than stemming the tide of "cynicism, confusion, and hopelessness," AGENDA merely continued down a path that will actually result in more conservative politicians, both Democratic and Republican. As long as leftists continue to feel compelled to vote Democratic, there will never be any viable progressive alternative to corporate liberal politics as usual. Even assuming the Democratic Party is redeemable, a debatable proposition at best, why should a Democratic politician feel obliged to support progressive policies, knowing that the left will always vote for him or her as the lesser of two evils?

The aftermath of this November's elections only confirms this: Bill Clinton is now heading "to the middle" (read: more to the right), attempting to attract the "middle class white vote" (read: the racist white vote) by trumpeting welfare reform and the like. If progressives did not feel compelled to support the Democrats, regardless of the candidate, Clinton might have thought twice before continuing on this course. And even if he hadn't, at least those of us who do wish to see radical change could be building toward a possibly viable candidate that could challenge the Democrats from the left.

Why should progressives vote for candidates they don't want? The problem with voting for the lesser of two evils is that you may get what you voted for.

Jeffrey D. Dillman
Ann Arbor

To AGENDA With Love

I just finished reading the November issue of AGENDA and realized again what a good publication it is. A lot of newsprint publications come into our house (A2 News, A2 Observer, Detroit Metro Times, Current, Orbit, etc.) and I'm usually anxious to keep it moving into the recycle bins so that we don't get buried in newsprint. But that seems harder to do with AGENDA because the editorial content is so good. The election guide was really useful. The book page is excellent. I also enjoyed Arwulf's column and Orin Buck's piece on Harvey's photography. Even the advertising is interesting (State Street Theatre insert was great!).

But what I think I appreciate most is that AGENDA manages to take an editorial stance that is politically progressive without being dogmatic, overly negative, boring, or strident. Somehow, AGENDA is much more appealing to read than the Metro Times and it seems to include more upbeat, positive stories and features. Also, the layout and design is much lighter and more inviting. So, thanks very much and keep it up.

Kate O'Leary
Ann Arbor

THIS MODERN WORLD by TOM TOMORROW

JUST IN TIME FOR THE HOLIDAYS... IT'S--

The
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BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER WHY HE'S THIS WAY, FOR ANGRY HE IS AND ANGRY HE'LL STAY!
THE GINGRINCH HATES EVERY DEMOCRAT UNDER THE SUN;
WHY HE HATES ANYONE MORE LIBERAL THAN ATTILA THE HUN!



NO ONE QUITE KNOWS WHY HE ACTS SO VILE;
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BUT PERHAPS THE MOST LIKELY REASON OF ALL-- IS THAT HIS CONSCIENCE IS TWO SIZES TOO SMALL!



NOW THE VOTERS--IN A MOOD BITTER AND SOUR, HAVE GIVEN THE GINGRINCH MUCH TOO MUCH POWER!
AND OF ALL OF THE PROBLEMS FACING US THIS YULE, HIS FIRST PRIORITY--



TOM TOMORROW (WITH APOLOGIES TO THE LATE, GREAT THEODOR GEISEL) ©11-30-94

etcetera

AGENDA is interested in receiving items from you for etcetera. Press clippings, press releases, summaries of local events and any other ideas or suggestions are welcome. Just mail them to: Etcetera Editor, AGENDA, 220 S. Main St., Ann Arbor, MI 48104.

AGENDA Welcomes New Family Member

Due to the birth of Ryan Patrick Shea on Nov. 16, neither AGENDA Editor Phillis Engelbert nor Music Editor Bill Shea had time to write articles this month. To make up for this, young Ryan plans to be writing muckraking news and features as a junior journalist sometime in the near future. Congratulations Phillis and Bill!

Tenants Union Needs Funds

For 25 years the Ann Arbor Tenants Union (AATU) has counselled renters on everything from signing leases to preventing eviction,

AGENDA

EDITORS—Ted Sylvester, Phillis Engelbert, Laurie Wechter
ASSOCIATE EDITOR—Eric Jackson
MUSIC EDITOR—William Shea
ARTS EDITOR—Orin Buck
EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS—Danielle Belkin, William Harmer
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AGENDA is an independent, nonaligned newsmonthly published by Agenda Publications, 220 S. Main St., Ann Arbor, MI 48104, 313/996-8018, ISSN 1047-0727. Vol. 9, No. 8, DECEMBER 1994, Copyright © Agenda Publications. Subscriptions: \$15/year U.S., \$30/year international.

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organized tenant and neighborhood associations, monitored housing code enforcement, published educational materials, and attended to legislative issues. Now the AATU needs our help. The U-M student government has traditionally provided 60% of AATU's funding. That support has been withdrawn in the short-term. While a long-term plan is being determined (based on an affirmative Nov. student referendum to fund the AATU) several thousand dollars are needed quickly if the AATU is to stay intact through the year's end. Send contributions to Ann Arbor Tenants Union, 4304 Michigan Union, Ann Arbor, MI 48109.

WIMBY Replacing NIMBY

"Welcome in My Backyard" is the name of a campaign initiated by the Fair Housing Center of Washtenaw County and the Washtenaw County Committees of Correspondence, in response to local attacks on civil rights. In mid-October vandals painted a swastika and ignited two homemade incendiary devices on the front and back porches of the home of an interracial couple on Cloverdale in Ann Arbor. Vandals had twice previously burned a swastika into the lawn of that home, using chemicals.

Members of the WIMBY campaign are working with the victims and their supporters in encouraging area residents to place WIMBY signs, bearing the Fair Housing logo, in their windows. They are also asking people to sign the anti-discriminatory WIMBY pledge.

Ann Arbor citizens and organizations are invited to become a part of the WIMBY Campaign. To join in the canvassing effort or to receive copies of the WIMBY sign and pledge, call the Fair Housing Center at 994-3426. For additional information, contact the Washtenaw County Committees of Correspondence, P.O. Box 4430, Ann Arbor, MI 48106, 741-1951.

Ozone House Calendars for Sale

The 1995 Youth Art Calendars are now available for \$7 in local stores. Proceeds from the sale of the calendars will go to support Ozone House.

The calendar is a compilation of artwork by local students from Community, Chelsea, Father Gabriel Richard, and Adrian high schools. The art selections were chosen from over 98 entries submitted last spring.

Ozone House, a crisis intervention center for runaway and homeless youth, is located at 608 N. Main St., Ann Arbor. For more information, call 662-2222.

Thanks to O.J.?

If there is one positive element to be found in all the media hype around the O.J. Simpson case, it is the increased focus on domestic violence and the frequency with which it occurs. Current estimates on the rate of violent domestic assaults on women stand at 572,000 a year. According to 1991 figures from the F.B.I., 71% of people murdered by their spouses are women.

Spousal battering is a pervasive sickness in society that must be cured. If you know of a victim of domestic violence or are one yourself, there are places you can go to for help. For information call SAFE House, the shelter for victims of domestic violence, at 995-5444; or the Assault Crisis Center, a rape crisis and counseling program, at 483-RAPE.

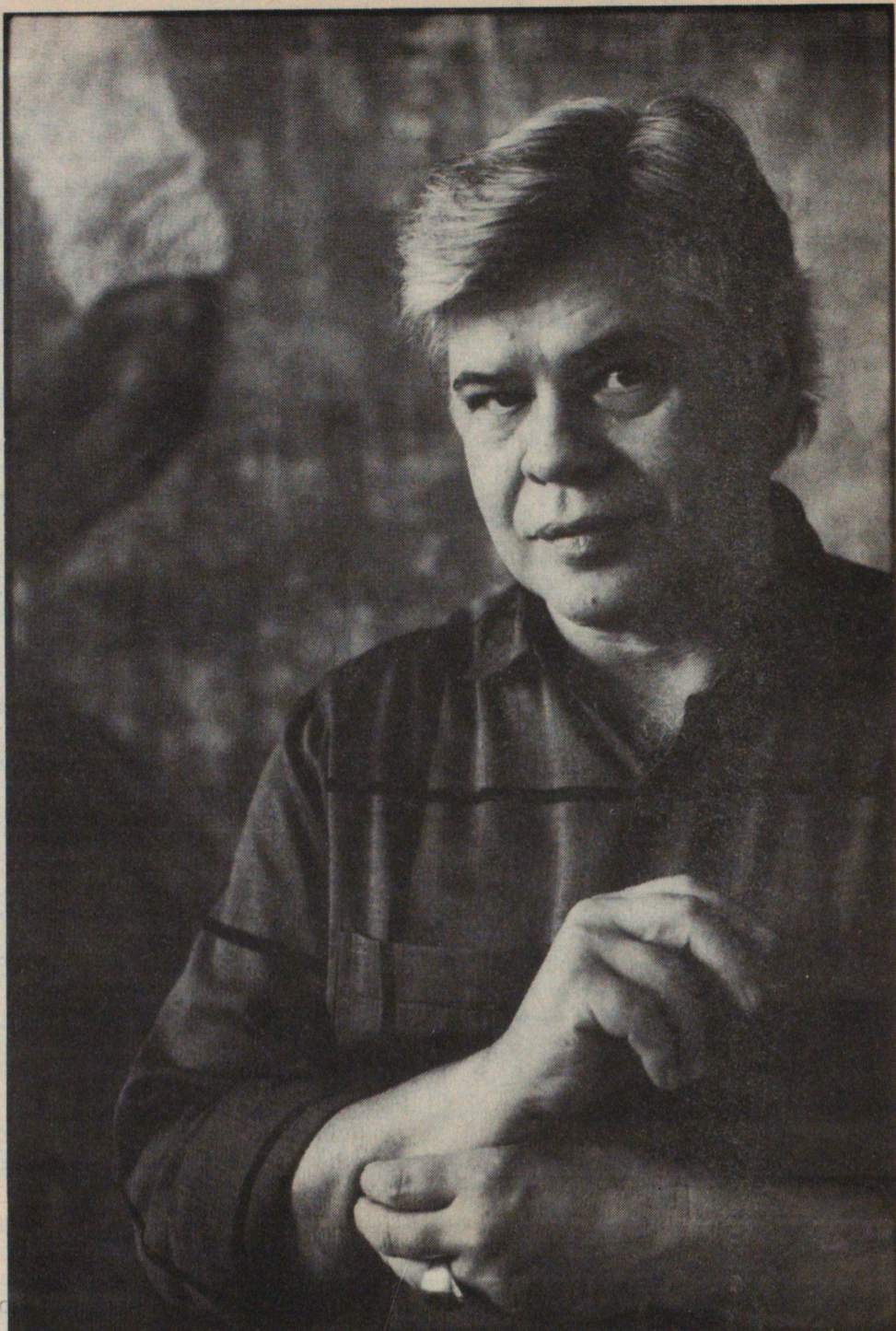
Lawn Season Officially Over

Hurrah! You can retire the lawn mower for the season and not feel guilty about it. Ann Arbor's weekly curbside yard waste collection program is ending on Dec. 2. Collection will resume in April 1995.

If you're still compelled to mow, you can manage your own yard wastes by letting grass clippings self-mulch on the lawn or by setting up a compost area. For a compost demonstration, visit the Leslie Science Center at 1831 Traver Rd. There you can obtain a "How-To Compost" brochure (also available at the City Hall information desk.) Residents also have the option of taking "compostables" to the City's Compost Center, 4120 Platt Road off Ellsworth. Call 994-2723 in advance for hours and items accepted.

Interview With The Poet: The Diverse Poetics of Clayton Eshleman

By William Harmer



PHOTOGRAPH: NINA SUBIN

Clayton Eshleman's poetry has been published by Black Sparrow Press since 1968. His 11 books include his most recent, *Under World Arrest* (1994). In 1991, Black Sparrow also published Paul Christensen's book-length study of Eshleman's poetry, *Minding the Underworld: Clayton Eshleman and Late Postmodernism*. Between 1979 and 1986 Eshleman was a regular reviewer for the *Los Angeles Times Book Review*, contributing 51 articles on books by Rilke, Whitman, Bishop, Olson, Ashbery, etc. He is the main American translator of César Vallejo (with José Rubia Barcia) and of Aimé Césaire (with Annette Smith). He has also translated books by Pablo Neruda, Antonin Artaud, Vladimir Holan, Michel Deguy and Bernard Bador.

Between 1967 and the present, Eshleman has founded and edited two of the most highly-regarded literary magazines of the period. Twenty issues of *Caterpillar* magazine appeared between 1967 and 1973, and in 1981 Eshleman founded *Sulfur* magazine, which has received 10 National Endowment for the Arts grants and is now based at Eastern Michigan University where he has been a Professor in the English Department since 1986.

Eshleman's poetry has appeared in numerous anthologies, most recently *American Poetry Since 1950* and over 400 magazines, including *The Partisan*

Review, *Grand Street*, *The Paris Review*, and *The Kenyon Review*. The recipient of the National Book Award in 1979 for his co-translation of César Vallejo's *Complete Posthumous Poetry*, he has also received a Guggenheim Fellowship in Poetry, two fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, two fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities and several research fellowships from EMU.

AGENDA: You have edited two literary magazines, *Caterpillar*, from 1967 to 1973, and *Sulfur*, which began in 1981 and is now in its 35th issue. In what way are the writing communities different between then and now?

ESHLEMAN: Quite different. When *Caterpillar* began, the Vietnam War was going full-tilt and there was an organized artist resistance to the war, meaning sit-ins, street demonstrations, even going to jail. The student rebellions of the 60s led to an inclusion of poetry as part of various alternative curriculums, meaning, for example, that college students then went to poetry readings like they would now go to hear music. In the late 60s, the experimental writing scene was extremely active and potent, underwritten by the Beat Generation, the Black Mountain affiliated writers, and

by the San Francisco Renaissance. When I started *Caterpillar*, it looked as if experimental American writing might become "the" American writing. It was thus an exciting time to start a magazine that proposed to include the "new" here in an international postmodernist context. Not only were such poets as Charles Olson, Robert Duncan, Allen Ginsberg, Gary Snyder, Denise Levertov at their peak, there was a great deal of translation going on: such poets as Nathaniel Tarn, Cid Corman, Jerry Rothenberg and myself regarded translating as part of our work for the literary community at large. Thus the political, the experimental, and the international, were in heady exchange.

Then the 70s occurred and by the beginning of the 80s—when I started *Sulfur* to retrieve some of the energy that seemed to have died with the death of Olson and the Manson murders in the early 70s—the scene was much, much different. Language Poetry which abstracted out the spiritual and political momentum of the 60s had come in as "the" avant-garde position in a kind of quasi-opposition to the other new kid on the block, the post-Lowellian "sensitivity" writing emanating from the creative writing programs. Students were *writing* instead of *reading*. By the early 80s there were a couple of hundred universities offering degree programs in cre-

ative writing. At this point there must be 500. So on one hand, the new had become so abstract as to preclude content and story, and on the other, bearing a diminution of the despair one finds in the "confessional" writing of Lowell, Berryman, Plath, Sexton, and Wakoski, workshops were turning out hundreds of writers each year whose goals had to include degrees and jobs. A new phenomenon: the professor-poet, or the poet as part of middle class income structure.

While I did not publish much creative writing class poetry in *Sulfur*, I did include a significant amount of Language Poetry. For whether I really liked it or not, I had to acknowledge that it was the most recent defense of the strange and the new. However, in my opinion, both Language Poetry and university writing lack the range of experience out in the real world that one finds in the writers I mentioned associated with the 60s.

AGENDA: In an interview in *Antiphonal Swing: Selected Prose 1962-1987*, you said: "English Departments engender, in the name of tradition, dependence on a body of criticism to read a poem—to such an extent that the act of reading is replaced by a kind of career analysis." Now that you are in an English Department yourself, how do you feel about these matters?

ESHLEMAN: When I came to Eastern Michigan University in 1986, I was 51, and at 51, a poet is a hopeless case. That is, for better or for worse, I was formed, and I do not think that the university environment has in any way improved or weakened my writing. I left Indiana University with a Master's Degree in 1961, and over the next 25 years, lived in Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Bloomington (Indiana), Lima (Peru), New York City, Los Angeles, Mexico, and France. I came here mainly to give Sulfur magazine a home and for some sense of financial security. What I am against is writers never leaving the university environment—such weakens American literature and tends to turn poets into carpenter ants, encouraging them to live in other writers' furniture, at best drilling new tunnels in other peoples' constructions.

AGENDA: Why do you feel the universities tend to ignore the experimental and diverse poetry of the 20th Century?

ESHLEMAN: I don't think it is fair to expect traditional English Departments to be up on contemporary writing and to actively support experiment. It's not their job. Most English Departments are engaged by a range of poetry that begins with Chaucer and comes up to the early modernists, like Eliot and Pound. If you take a person whose life commitment as a scholar is to Wordsworth, say, you can't expect him or her to also really know, for example, Aimé Césaire, Peter Redgrove, and Robert Kelly. While many English Departments have relaxed, as it were, becoming Departments of English and American Literature, and supporting theses on writers who are alive today, there is a sense in which the English Department should be suspicious of the new and address what it has determined to be the canon.

We might evoke William Blake's distinction of the prolific and the devouring here, and recall that Blake also says that these two forces should continue to be at mental war and that whoever tries to reconcile them attempts to destroy what Blake takes to be a meaningful sense of existence.

On the other hand, I think it is also important to acknowledge that poets are often involved in research and self, as well as social criticism, and that a capable poet practices, in his poem, significant aspects of scholarship and dissection. And that scholarship, in the right hands, can be commandingly creative. Without Northrop Frye's "Fearful Symmetry," I would never have gotten through the late Blake I was reading in Kyoto in the early 60s; and I have spent as much time with the writing of Mikhail Bakhtin and N.O. Brown as with many of the poetries I cherish.

The present, for everyone, is always, always the hardest "text" to read. Look at poetry anthologies. The best are on sure grounds with the great dead, but nearly all peter out when it comes to locating the finest contemporary writers. The Norton anthologies, for example, try to solve this problem by loading their cabooses with minority writers, and the irony here is that most of the included minority writers have been through the creative writing workshop mill and have lost most of the sharp edges that contour the lives of minority peoples.

I see that I have come back to the dilemma degree-writing workshops pose. Let me put it slightly differently. If my goal is to get a job, what I turn out must win prizes, be endorsed by currently "important" poets, get into mainstream magazines that are known in the academic profession. In short, I must conform and not try to shake things up. A piece of fiction in the staid New Yorker may mean the difference between a tenure-track job and no job at all.

But as usual, there is another side to this: The presence of writers in universities also means more poetry readings, contact between living writers and students, and quite significantly over the past several decades, the purchase by university libraries of living writers' archives. There is thus an irreconcilable conflict in the lives of most writers between the desire to know oneself in one's own way in one's writing and the need to do so in decent circumstances and with the possibility of a readership of some sort. Gertrude Stein once said that if she created 100 readers of her work during her lifetime, her work would continue to live after her death.

AGENDA: Would you talk a little, for those who are not familiar with your work, about the role of the Peruvian poet, César Vallejo, in it? And say something about his book, "Trilce?"

ESHLEMAN: That's a good question, and I would like to respond in such a way that I can offer a useful alternative to unending university nurture for a writer.

I think it was Charles Olson who once wrote that a young poet should do a big job on another writer, that is, learn *everything* about one other writer and to believe, in doing so, that there would be a gain otherwise not available through reading bits and pieces of many writers. Olson backed up this notion by a deep involvement for many years in the life and writings of Melville. Olson's first book, "Call Me Ishmael," is in this regard his bridge out of Melville onto his own to-be-discovered continent.

I apprenticed myself to the European poetry, written between 1923 and 1938, of Vallejo, having decided while in Kyoto in 1963, that I could learn something essential about poetry by doing accurate and readable versions of these 110 poems. I had no idea, of course, at the time, that I was setting myself up for 16 years of work, involving a dreadful year in Lima, Peru, attempting to get the poet's utterly uncooperative widow to allow me access to the worksheets for these poems (which had not been published in Vallejo's lifetime, had been left in typed and heavily-corrected manuscripts, etc.). As it turned out, Vallejo became my real university experience, or I should say, I learned off Vallejo what no professor could give me. For in going to Vallejo on my own, I was in one way initiating myself into poetry off of not only Vallejo but off of myself. This was an active engagement, and it ended up involving not only pulling some American poetry through Vallejo's clenched Peruvian jaws, but research, scholarship, annotation, etc.

I might mention here that I had never assimilated the word "apprenticeship" before spending several years in Japan. One day in Kyoto, Will Petersen, an Ameri-

(SEE NEXT PAGE)

December Events at Borders

Thursday, December 1, 7:30 p.m.

BORKA TOMLIJENOVIC, author of *Bosnian Counterpoint*, will talk about Bosnia and sign copies of her book. The author donates proceeds of the book to a relief agency working with Bosnian children.

Saturday, December 3, 11 a.m.

SARAH WEEKS, author of *Crocodile Smile*, will sing songs and paint faces for Children's Hour.

Sunday, December 4, 1 p.m.

FIVE GUYS NAMED MOE will play music Upstairs at Borders.

Monday, December 5, 7:30 p.m.

ROSALIE TROESTER, author of *Voices from the Catholic Worker*, will talk about her interviews with residents of Catholic Worker houses and sign copies of her book.

Wednesday, December 7, 7:30 p.m.

MERRY MCINERNEY, author of *Burning Down the House*, will read from her novel, a story of marital sacrifice and betrayal. She will sign copies of her book.

Friday, December 9, 7:30 p.m.

MICHAEL KIELB, author, and **JOHN FELSING** and **HEINER HERTLING**, illustrators, will be at Borders for a talk and sketching demonstration with their new book, *The Birds of Michigan*, the first popular, comprehensive survey of Michigan's birds in more than forty years. They will be on hand to sign copies of the book after the talk and the sketching.

Saturday, December 10, 11 a.m.

Strum and Drum with **STEVE OSBURN**, owner of Oz's Music and Oz's Music Environment will introduce his new musical games at Children's Hour. He will bring small drums and stringed instruments for a sing and play-along.

Sunday, December 11, 10:30 - 12:30

DON SHALL, founder of the Ann Arbor Society 4 Origami, will present a *Holiday Origami Workshop*. Bring your fingers and get ready to fold. You'll have some nice animals and decorations to take home with you. Call the store for information.

Sunday, December 11, 1 p.m.

JAY SHANKAR BALAN, South Indian violinist will perform compositions in the Carnatic tradition, accompanied by **VAIDHE THEAGARAJAN** on the mridangam, a double-headed drum.

Sunday, December 18, 1 p.m.

DAVID SWAIN AND FRIENDS will play jazz Upstairs at Borders.

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Interview With The Poet: The Diverse Poetics of Clayton Eshleman

(FROM PREVIOUS PAGE)

can lithographer, dropped by my house and mentioned that he had just come from the workshop of a bonsai apprentice. I asked, "How old is he?" Will replied, "In his early 60s," and then added that this man was now nearing the end of his apprenticeship and would soon be out there on his own! My mind immediately raced back to my desire to write real poems almost as soon as I discovered poetry at all. I gulped, as what should be in store for me, were I to take the art of poetry "seriously," seeped through me.

So my apprenticeship to Vallejo is now in "The Complete Posthumous Poetry," co-translated with José Rubia Barcia, and published by University of California Press in 1978. I had published the first complete version of these poems with Grove Press in 1968, as "Human Poems" (a title for the collection that turned out to be inaccurate, and imposed on the book by Vallejo's widow). In the early 70s I became dissatisfied with my work in "Human Poems" and teamed up with Barcia who knew much more about the Spanish language than I did. Over six years, we redid everything.

You ask about "Trilce," an earlier book by Vallejo, published in 1922. "Trilce" may be the most difficult collection of poetry ever to have been published in the Spanish language, and until the late 1980s I had only sniffed at it, walking around it as if it were a wrecked spaceship from planet Trilce. While the book had been translated and published in 1973, this translation was superficial and inadequate, and the same thing could also be said about the Spanish and English language scholarship on the book. I guess I decided that as a Vallejo devotee I had a responsibility to

AT LABASTIDE

We were without a key, and it was pouring as we sloshed gingerly down to the slope leading to the base of the ravine and the entrance to Labastide. My heels dug into the sog, bright red beetles were out, dripping ferns, dead leaves.

It was a Rimbaud afternoon, the gate was locked, but I was to see in the soaring rockwall facing the slope more than I might have, had we figured out how to jimmy the lock.

At a certain point, rain penetrates the mind, one becomes part of the gush, a crippled brook, heaving waves, crying, ejaculation form a lotus of imagination in which, a happy drenched elf, the loosened one sits, double to himself, in embrace, a funny-looking four-legged egg, all tendril and crevice. The rockwall bubbled nature-pressed fists into my eyes, a slime of pearls, scarlet crawlers, violet-tan lichen in fans and cones, a fresh rubblework so old

I belonged instantly
to Chez Maître Paul,

I was the goose in the cocotte, a streak of snail graffiti, a self-infecting gaze into the quilted spongework percolating in the rain...

I belonged instantly to the iron hook in my skull upon which I am hung, that is, my destiny was concrete—and seltzer! Rot breaking out like the giggles in casket drill, and all because of this rockwall which certainly had not prepared itself for the drenched stumblers who were to find no entrance, thus blessed imagination creates exit, each puddle depression gets in tow, all nature has arrived and is bridal,

I am affirmed
which beats my affirming nature
only barely,

a rockwall cares its way in, the crystal of vision leads out, like a panopticon, through mazes of disappearing nibbles,
and one who once waited for his fontanel to close over, stretches in mind in Minotaur embrace.

—Clayton Eshleman

do the best I could with "Trilce." I worked for four years on the translation, and it was published by Marsilio in 1992.

AGENDA: Your own poetry seems to deal with animal nature on one hand and the human capacity for reason on the other. Could you comment on this?

ESHLEMAN: I think that animal nature is exactly what humankind lost in the process of discovering what we might call today the autonomous imagination, or art. As I see it, at around 35,000 BCE, Europeans known as Cro-Magnon (from the rock shelter in the town of Les Eyzies in southwestern France where skeletal remains were discovered in 1868) began

to project their difference from animals, as the animality they were losing, onto cave walls along, with many (to us, today) incomprehensible lines and signs. In this sense, the beginnings of art is a kind of animal undressing, and this loss, as it were, is embedded, at a very deep layer, in the nature of art. In fact, I'd say that the loss of animal spontaneity, which must be involved with the animal's unawareness of its own death, is felt by poets in the abyssal space between desire and the imaginative fulfillment of desire. What you refer to as "animal nature" in my poetry, I'd call the extent to which my own image-making is tied into my ceaseless hauntedness over the



The Bessenberg Bindery

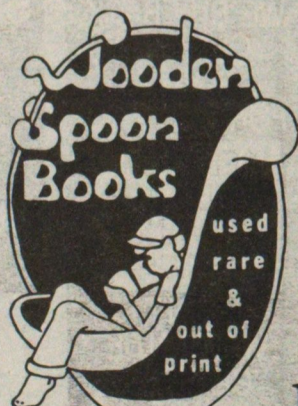
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out-prisoning of my animal nature, which I feel that I have only been able to contact as a person, in extreme, emotional agitation, such as fear, or sexual orgasm. I am haunted by this image that in love-making as one approaches orgasm, it is as if one is inching up a wall surrounding paradise and the sensation is that at the moment of orgasm one will be catapulted over the wall and BE HOME—but as most of us know, this never happens. Man and woman penetrate this sacred precinct—and I can honestly say that I have felt it rush through me—but paradise, as home without outside, is, even when it is closest, at an imaginative remove, and while we can imagine it via other imaginations, the abyss between desire and the fulfillment of desire seems to be bottomless. Of course certain people have clever ways of denying the absoluteness of this abyss—putting bars over it, or wallpapering the bars, or splitting its size between heaven and hell, and so on—but I think that the poet must be the one (and here I am thinking of all artists as poets) who lives this abyss and who is not afraid to allow it to show through his imagination.

I should add here that my comments on the origins of image-making come from my research on what I call "Paleolithic imagination and the construction of the underworld." Since 1974, my wife Caryl—who edits all of my work—and I have been revisiting the decorated caves in southwestern France. The caves are the arena of my second big research project after my earlier apprenticeship to Vallejo.

AGENDA: In the first poem in your new collection, "Under World Arrest," you write:

Begin with this: the world has no origin.
We encircle the moment, lovers
who, encircling each other, steep in
the fantasy:
now we know the meaning of life.

Would you care to comment on these lines?

ESHLEMAN: The paradox: One is always beginning anew, yet one is never at origin. The fetus disappears into a speck disappears into cosmos. We are haunted—that word again—by our seeking to be originators, to be instrumental, make things happen, to be as vital as Van Gogh, say, in his twelve-canded hat under the starry infinite, drawing the infinite into his own tiny grid so that it might implode in me, the viewer—and which, of course, as viewer I want to assimilate, compost, lose in my own energy, turn that moment he has offered me into my own. Thus art goes on and on, a vast daisy-chain, each artist willynilly linked to others in something that is probably deeper than sexual connection. At this point, critics such as Harold Bloom tell us we are all helplessly belated. Origin is something that happened out of sight, blinded from mind. I find this kind of thinking to be one-dimensional, and only critical, in that its intention appears to be to trap me and shut down my workshop. If my poetry is only a faint, faint evocation of some original imaginative leap, why bother to write at all? So, going back to the poem whose opening lines you have quoted, I prefer to get rid of origin *at the same time that* I work with its splintered resplendence.

One may sense the truth of a moment, but "the meaning of life" is at once so absurd, painful, joyous, and strange as to be ineffable. And if, for a moment, we take

origin and belatedness seriously, we realize that Cro-Magnon alone was original. We are all, Dante and Shakespeare included, in a towering Juggernaut of pickabacks, standing on the shoulders of those who made the incredible breakthrough from no image of the world to an image.

I just recalled that Carl Jung once defined the meaning of life as a good companion, and that I used this statement as the epigram to a collection of poems—dedicated to my wife.

AGENDA: In the Preface to "Under World Arrest" you speak of placing yourself under world arrest and refusing to release yourself. Could you elaborate on this?

ESHLEMAN: Well, I go ahead to say, in the same Preface, that "whatever depth these poems have, whatever primary sources they may evoke, they attempt to press themselves to the surfaces and edges of present reality, to assimilate it in its full intensity. One must be under world arrest, for to my mind there is no exit, no escape from human peril here or now or ever." And then I quote from the German archetypal psychologist, Wolfgang Giegerich, on meaning and destiny.

Your question, of course, evokes some notions that press about being under world arrest. To refuse to leave the world, in poetry, can also mean a desire to curtail escape from the world on the part of the reader. All art, on one level, is an escape from what one feels and knows of one's actual situation. Much art is little more than diversion, a pseudo-sophisticated form of entertainment. Yet while we are in our seats, drinking champagne and watching the can-can, we are aware that the beggars are freezing outside the night club, and if we look closely at the chorus line, we can see some of the lineaments of the actual lives of the women who have signed up for this basically humiliating work to pay their rent. Which is to say that in my poetry I want included the street and the beggars, and the condition of these womens' lives, in the dance of the imagination. I must insist on the dance, because to only describe or plea on behalf of the beggars is to abandon the imagination as a force that enables one to see the thing *and* to see through it, around it, and to place it in an individual context, as a sharable aspect of my imagination.

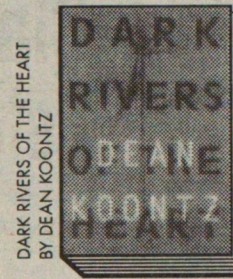
Plus this: We live in the age of the death of eternity, in the age of mortal sky, mortal ocean, mortal earth. From the Tang Dynasty to late English Romanticism, artists, in spite of the never-ending terror of so-called Mother Nature, have sought refuge in a fantasy of the impermanent permanent, supported by the feeling that in spite of our almost weightless impermanence, such was underwritten by "something" that would always be—call it God, earth, or even eternal night. I place myself under world arrest because that is where I really am, where all of us really are. I have tried to adopt a viewpoint that is congruent with my fix, and then to work from that perspective, to imagine it and in that way to affirm it. I believe that what is left of life is worth living, but I want to test this affirmation against as much negation as my writing can accommodate.

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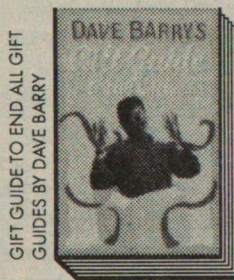
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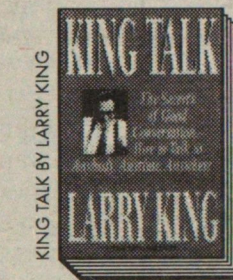
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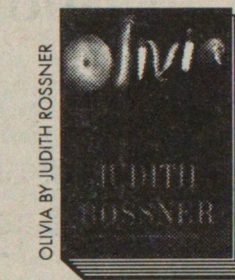
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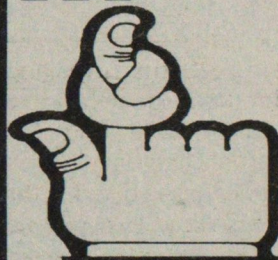
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Feminist Literature

By Arwulf Arwulf

In the beginning... was a very female sea. For two-and-a-half billion years on earth, all life-forms floated in the womb-like environment of the planetary ocean—nourished and protected by its fluid chemicals, rocked by the lunar-tidal rhythms.... The penis first appeared in the Age of Reptiles, about 200 million years ago... when it comes to the two sexes, one of us has been around a lot longer than the other.

This information can be found on page two of "The Great Cosmic Mother," by Monica Sjo and Barbara Mor. If I were to recommend one text for feminist research, this 500 pager would certainly be it. We desperately need a clarified view of history (or, as some say, *herstory*) and as far as this boy can see, nobody has done it up quite so thoroughly and intelligently. What the book develops into is a fascinating and brilliantly stated examination of how we live and what goes down.

Politics happen when people realize their daily survival problems are not caused by individual "sin" and "guilt" but by a collective malfunctioning. Within patriarchal Christian capitalism, this is the taboo vision.... The American split, in raw terms, is this: nominal "freedom" without real-life ecstasy, or nominal "epiphany" without real-life freedom. Such a split is always the result when life is fed into the patriarchal dualistic grinding machine....

There's wisdom here, and a refreshing emphasis upon things as they really demonstrably are. Rarely does one encounter such pragmatism and clarity. It is as if these women are focusing a big lens and saying, look at this world, can't you see how things run, and wouldn't it be better if the people on the face of the earth behaved as if we were really blessed to be here?

Luisah Teish, author of "Jambalaya" and "Carnival of the Spirit" gives us insights based in the wisdom of African spirituality and Pan-African common sense. She gives us this from the Yoruba people: "Life on earth is not regarded as a curse or as the result of negative Karma. Being born human is regarded as a natural manifestation of the design of Creation. Each person who walks upon the face of the earth is thought to have an original contract with Creation.... Life on Earth is an experience, a stage in the cycle of Continuous Creation. Death is also a natural part of that Existence."

Honoring the female principle of the universe is the bottom line for many of us, and as far back as human memory goes there have been metaphors for life and its cycles: Goddesses. Or many manifestations of one Goddess. The feminist archaeological record has been exhaustively documented by Marija Gimbutas, whose "Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe 6500-3500 B.C." should be used in archaeology courses at every university. The

dominant view of that science is mired, like most sciences (even the brave new techno-sciences) in the vestiges of 19th century narrow-mindedness. The time for change is now, and has been for awhile.

Trendification has distorted the common perception of Feminist Cosmology, which has been co-opted and marketed with all the zeal of pop-culture economics. Again, from "The Great Cosmic Mother":

Because "women's spirituality" in the Western world has been, or has often seemed to be, a cultural luxury of mostly white middle-class women, it too has been accused, quite justly, of "lacking a political consciousness"; or, at least, of lacking a political reference. On another level, many Lesbian and even hetero feminists who are "into the Goddess" have opted for cultural-political separatism; they have "left politics" and political solutions, that is, by blaming the world's problems on men, and then refusing to have anything more to do with "the man's world"—i.e., "Let him clean up his own mess." The glaring problem with this separatist solution is that "the man's world" is still filled with a majority population of women and children—it is women and children doing most of the suffering "out there," and to turn one's back on "the man's world" is to turn one's back on them.

A genuine understanding of "the Goddess" would not allow us to do this... for we are in and of that world now, and its suffering is an extension of us, as we are an extension of it. In a true reliving of the world's first religion, we can make no distinctions between "the life of the spirit" and "the life of the flesh," for they are one. And so, we can make no separation between "spirituality" and "politics." We are this world; we cannot leave it. We can only work to transform it as we transform ourselves, in acts of evolution and revolution.

At this point I get ravenously curious and

want to hear more about this way of thinking. "The Politics of Women's Spirituality"—essays on the rise of spiritual power within the feminist movement (edited by Charlene Spretnak) provides many insights. If we consider that the system which is in place today is essentially the same system which burned nine million witches, why then we're caught up in a machine which can not and will not ever truly stand for life, liberty, nor any sort of enduring happiness. Not this motherfucker. Look where it has been; what it has done. See what it's doing right now. Do not labor under the impression that the Inquisition ever ended. It didn't end in Dachau; it didn't end in Vietnam; it hasn't let up in Bosnia. We need to see this, name it for what it is, and work for change.

I am a man, which genetically means I am half

BOOKS IN THIS ARTICLE:

"The Great Cosmic Mother"
By Monica Sjo and Barbara Mor

"Jambalaya" and "Carnival of the Spirit"
By Luisah Teish

"Goddesses and Gods of Old Europe 6500-3500 B.C."
By Marija Gimbutas

"The Politics of Women's Spirituality"
Edited by Charlene Spretnak

"Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex and Politics"
By Starhawk

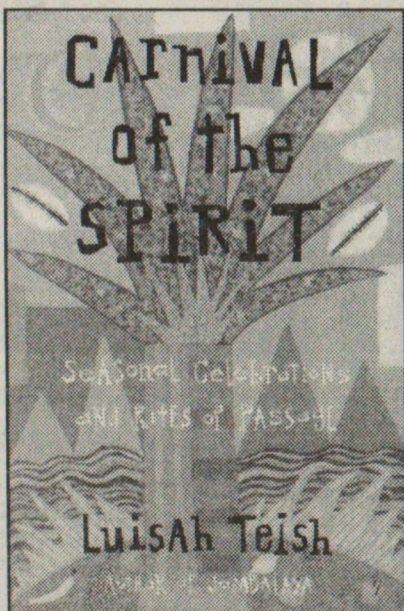


PHOTO: JANE REED

Lynn Kelly and Kate Burkhardt of Common Language Bookstore

Common Language Bookstore: Uncommonly Diverse

By Arwulf Arwulf

Ann Arbor is famous for her bookstores. In searching out feminist literature, there are plenty of places to look. Common Language, at 214 S Fourth Ave., is this area's Feminist Lesbian/Bi/Gay bookshop and will have been in business for five years come next May. Kate Burkhardt and Lynn Kelly, who worked together at the People's Wherehouse, bought up a Lesbian/Bi/Gay store called Common Destinations, which was going out of business. Burkhardt and Kelly have given Ann Arbor a unique and thoughtfully-run resource for Women's Studies, Lesbian/Bi/Gay Studies and fiction, and Ethnic Studies. Kelly describes these categories as "our heart."

She also says "there is a small and growing body of literature for children of Gay and Lesbian parents." The children's section also contains lots of literature without race and sex stereotyping. Having grown up in the 1960s, I vividly recall the confusion resulting from such stereotyped indoctrination. For this reason I was moved by the careful selection of materials to be shown to young, impressionable minds.

Stepping inside the front door, one is struck by the organized layout of the place. Kelly likes to be able to see nearly all of the sections from the front of the store, and has put up very legible signs everywhere so that the many categories can be taken in at a glance:

Biography. Poetry. Humor. Really cool Art books. Health. Recovery. Spirituality (doesn't need to be a huge section; Crazy Wisdom is just down the street). Race and Ethnicity. Fiction, Mystery and Fantasy, mostly female authors. And yes: Lesbian and Gay EROTICA. It's re-

freshing to see this material cheerfully included in the spread of choices.

They've also got cassette tapes and CDs (lots of K.D. Lang) magazines, greeting cards, blank books for writing in, and even a small section of books about writing itself. They have used books and remainders, with a rental library of books and videos. T-shirts. Jewelry. Two "Ken" dolls wearing bridal gowns, looking just ducky over the humor shelves.

There were some beautiful Lesbian and Gay photos on display near the back, and a local information exchange so as to assist in the general communication. A small circle of arm-chairs, also near the rear of the store, is available for groups to meet in (provided said groups are not charging fees).

Kelly took me down to the basement and explained that they'd like for that space to be made available to worthy organizations as well. One idea was that it could become a Lesbian/Bi/Gay coffee shop, which would be wonderful and we're waiting to see what actually happens in that space.

So let it be known we have a bookstore run by two very righteous women who have clearly defined principles regarding sexual politics, that most of the titles in the store are written by women, and that the atmosphere of the place is friendly and supportive towards everyone and especially towards the Lesbian and Gay community.

P.S. Common Language carries most of the titles mentioned in the "Feminist Literature" essay on this same page.

woman. Women are 100% woman. (It's in the chromosomes.) And at this stage in my own feminist research, I can state that my loyalty is to the Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell (W.I.T.C.H.), which means devoting one's energies to the struggle against oppression, especially oppression of women.

There's a woman named Starhawk whose teachings are widely cherished and studied. "Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex and Politics" is her magnum opus, wherein she defines the system as being based upon estrangement and the practice of maintaining power over others. Starhawk suggests we evolve past the limitations of not only patriarchy but hierarchy as well (although the two are nearly synonymous). She compares the Communist Party to the Catholic Church and says that structurally there's not a lot of difference between the two.

Structure, not content, determines how energy will flow, where it will be directed, what new forms and structures it will create. Hierarchical structures, no matter what principles they espouse, will breed new hierarchical structures that embody power-over, not power-from-within...the structure itself reinforces the idea that some people are inherently more worthy than others.

Looking back over many years of counter-cultural activities, how true these words ring, and then the realization comes that we have a mammoth task before us if we ever expect any of this to catch on. Because the ways of power and greed are deeply etched in our people. Fortunately, women's wisdom runs deeper. Women's wisdom is the oldest wisdom. And over the last 20 years, feminist research has brought us closer to a comprehension of the true way of things, than we've been for many centuries.

December Literary Events

1 THURSDAY

Discussion and Booksigning: Borders 7:30 pm, 612 E. Liberty. With BORKA TOMLJENOVIC, author of "Bosnian Counterpart." Her book is a collection of stories about Bosnia from the period between 1920 and 1940, when four different religious and ethnic groups peacefully co-existed while preserving their distinct cultures. 668-7652

Publication Party: Shaman Drum 4-6 pm, 315 S. State. With SANTIAGO COLAS, author of "Postmodernity in Latin America: The Argentine Paradigm." Colas is Assistant Professor of Latin American Studies and Comparative Literature at U-M. 662-7407

2 FRIDAY

Publication Party: Shaman Drum 8 pm, 315 S. State. With MICHAEL HOFMANN, reading from his recently published translation of Wolfgang Koeppen's "Death in Rome." Hofmann is a visiting lecturer in English at U-M. 662-7407

3 SATURDAY

Children's Book Reading: Borders 11 am, 612 E. Liberty. SARAH WEEKS, author of "Crocodile Smile," will read her new book, sing songs, paint faces and rock the house with her karaoke machine. 668-7652

Recipe Taste Test: Borders noon-2 pm, 612 E. Liberty. Ann Arbor Junior League members will have samples from their cookbook, "Bountiful Arbor," in the espresso bar. 668-7652

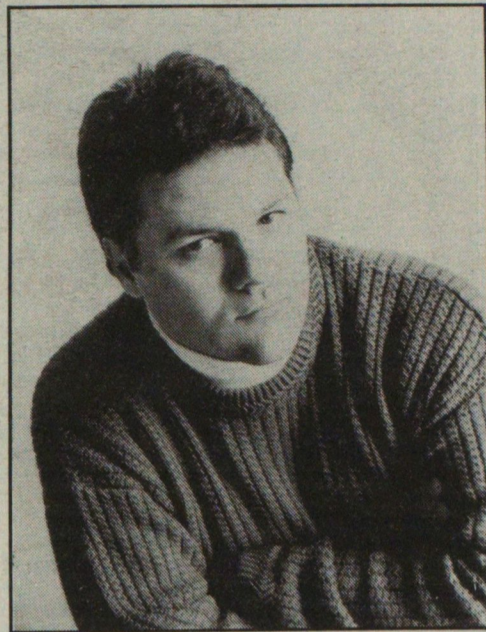
4 SUNDAY

Publication Party: Shaman Drum 2-4 pm, 315 S. State. With MARTHA KRANSDORF, author of "A Matter of Loyalty: The Los Angeles School Board vs. Frances Eisenberg." Kransdorf is a lecturer in the Department of Teacher Education at EMU. 662-7407

"Kerry Tales": Kerrytown Shops/Workbench Furniture 2pm, 410 N. Fourth Ave. (2nd floor children's furniture area). Rhymes, riddles and rollicking good fun with special guest storyteller, Mother Goose! All ages welcome. 769-3115

5 MONDAY

Discussion and Booksigning: Borders 7:30 pm, 612 E. Liberty. With ROSALIE TROESTER, author of "Voices from the Catholic Worker." Founded in 1933, the Catholic Worker has continued to apply the principles of voluntary poverty and nonviolence to changing social and political realities. Troester has compiled a rich oral history of this movement. 668-7652



CRAIG HOLDEN will be signing copies of his first novel at Aunt Agatha's (see 10 Sat)

7 WEDNESDAY

Book Reading: Borders 7:30 pm, 612 E. Liberty. With MERRY McINERNEY, author of "Burning Down the House." This is a story much like McInerney's own: An aspiring graduate student puts her career on hold to support her husband while he writes a novel. When the novel becomes a best seller, the husband turns all his attention to a life of parties, film deals and celebrity. 668-7652

9 FRIDAY

Publication Party: Shaman Drum 3-5 pm, 315 S. State. In honor of "Infant Tongues: The Voice of the Child in Literature," edited by ELIZABETH GOODENOUGH, MARK A. HERBERT and NAOMI SOKOLOFF, with a foreword by ROBERT COLES. Goodenough is Assistant Professor of Literature at Claremont McKenna College and is a visiting professor this semester in English at U-M. She will be on hand to sign books. 662-7407

Book Reading: Little Professor 7-8 pm, 2513 Jackson Rd. Gather around the fireplace for excerpts from the holiday classic, "Child's Christmas in Wales." 662-4110

Discussion and Booksigning: Borders 7:30 pm, 612 E. Liberty. With author MICHAEL KIELB and illustrators JOHN FELSING and HEINER HERTLING, introducing their new book "The Birds of Michigan." These ornithologists and naturalists have produced the first popular, comprehensive survey of Michigan's birds in more than 40 years. 668-7652

10 SATURDAY

Storytime with Bart and Kim: Little Professor 11 am-noon, 2513 Jackson Rd. With special guest, Winnie the Pooh. For ages 4-10. 662-4110

Booksigning: Aunt Agatha's 12:30-2 pm, 213 S. Fourth Ave. CRAIG HOLDEN will be signing copies of his first novel, "The River Sorrow," (see review, this page). 769-1114

11 SUNDAY

Mystery Book Club: Little Professor 6:30-7:30 pm, 2513 Jackson Rd. Join Little Professor's Murder on the Second Sunday Book Group as they gather around the fireplace to discuss the usual...murder, mystery and mayhem. Group members receive 15% off group selections and new members are always welcome. 662-4110

17 SATURDAY

Children's Reading: Borders 11 am, 612 E. Liberty. Holiday stories from around the world. 668-7652

Storytime with Bart and Kim: Little Professor 11 am-noon, 2513 Jackson Rd. Join in the holiday magic. For ages 4-10. 662-4110

18 SUNDAY

Discussion and Book Signing: Little Professor 2-3 pm, 2513 Jackson Rd. With DALE FISHER, author of "Detroit: Visions of the Eagle." His new book is a beautiful photographic tour of Detroit. 662-4110

21 WEDNESDAY

African American Book Club: Little Professor 7-8 pm, 2513 Jackson Rd. Gather around the fireplace to discuss this month's selections. Members receive 15% off group selections and new members are always welcome. 662-4110

23 FRIDAY

Christmas Reading: Little Professor 6:30-7 pm, 2513 Jackson Rd. Gather around the fireplace for hot chocolate, cookies, and a reading of "Night Before Christmas." 662-4110



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(SEE NEXT PAGE)

Book Reviews

MYSTERY

The River Sorrow

by Craig Holden
Delacort, 384 pages, \$21.95

Reviewed by Jamie Agnew
Owner of Aunt Agatha's, a mystery and true crime book store

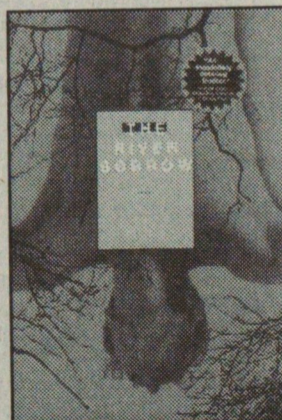
We're starting to get a fair number of authors to come to Aunt Agatha's for signings, and I try to make it a practice to read their books. Needless to say, this is easier with some authors than with others. In the case of Craig Holden's "The River Sorrow" it was truly my pleasure, although "reading" doesn't really seem to be the right word to describe the experience. You don't just read a thriller this good. You experience it like a ride at the carnival or (more to the point) a dose of some wicked drug.

"The River Sorrow" is the story of Adrian Lancaster, a doctor in the small (fictional) Michigan community of Morgantown, who finds his crooked junkie past inexplicably returning to haunt his straight present. When he finds himself implicated in the violent deaths of various druggies, he decides that, in order to exorcise this buried but not dead part of his life, he has to go back underground to the hell strangely shot with heaven, that he hoped he had left forever. Add a good cop with

a bad wardrobe, small town and big city politics, designer drugs of deadly potency, heroin heroines and mysterious psycho-killers to the mix, and the consumer knows he or she is in for one-hell-of-a-trip.

Holden's supposed aim was to crank out a potboiler for some chump change, but he found out that it's as hard for a good writer to produce a trashy book (witness Faulkner's "Sanctuary") as it is for a trashy writer to write a good book. If you wanted to get "lit-crit" about it, you could even say that there's a subtext here about a generation still trying to come to terms with the tide of drugs it loosed upon the land.

Despite four years of re-writing and the guidance of the estimable James Ellroy, there are still a few small flaws remaining from this original conception—mostly the stock characterizations of the beginning and the tad-too-clever twists of the end. Largely, however, this is a seamless and compelling ride up that old River Sorrow to the terminal



called the heart of darkness, reminiscent of Robert Stone, as much as the usual pantheon of guy crime novelists. I'm not the only one predicting a great future for Craig Holden, and probably won't be the only one cradling my signed, first-edition of "The River Sorrow" as if it were something very precious indeed.

(Author Craig Holden will be signing at Aunt Agatha's on Saturday, December 10 from 12:30 to 2 pm.)

PHILOSOPHY

What is Philosophy?

By Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari.
Columbia University Press, 253 pages, \$29.95

Reviewed by Lou Hillman

In 1992, Felix Guattari died at the age of 62, thus ending a 20-year experiment with Gilles Deleuze. Their four books utilized their experimental mode of writing called "assemblage"—which in its very making was multivocal.

Guattari was a non-philosopher, a psychotherapist whose major focus was the analysis of the social institution. Deleuze was a professor of philosophy at the University of Paris until his retirement in 1987. Their experimental collaboration has

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(FROM PREVIOUS PAGE)

been described as "...an essential relationship with a NO.... Philosophy needs a non-philosophy that comprehends it; it needs a nonphilosophical comprehension just as art needs nonart and science needs nonscience."

This "essential relationship," this in-between, was the space Deleuze and Guattari found so productive. In "Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature" they explore the in-between of Kafka's writing by discussing him as a Jew living in Prague, writing German prose. In "Anti-Oedipus" the authors move between the triangulation of psychoanalysis and the schizophrenia of postmodern capitalism. "A Thousand Plateaus" multiplies relationships to an exponential factor. There they discuss political economy and science, social psychology and art theory, Nietzsche and Marx, Bergson and Foucault, Castaneda and Reich, and "black holes" and "white walls."

Now in "What is Philosophy?" the writers stay with philosophy, science and art; their relationships and differences and their possibilities as creative activity.

In an earlier work, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that the reader "sample" their text as one would sample a record or CD: turn to the chapters that "grab" you; skip over the others. The same holds

true for this book. The writers are "doing" philosophy as they explain themselves; they are using terms as they make them. This mode of production makes for an eccentric writing style, which may explain why some readers have difficulty with it.

In the introduction to "What is Philosophy?," the writers take aim at the "simulacrum" and provide us with its greatest rival: pedagogy. The history of Western thought is presented as a territory or "plane" upon which concepts connect and overlap. The creation of concepts extends the plane, allowing thought to move. It is the pedagogy of the conditions of the possibility of the concept—its creation—which provide us with the ability to differentiate between concept and say, advertising.

But "doing" thought in this way, say the authors, has its dangers. It doesn't make for good state employees, soldiers or labor slaves. Providing people with thinking tools for tearing holes in the clichés of contemporary communications can only have a transgressive effect. Still, to every warning, Deleuze and Guattari add their trademark humor. From the drawings of Descartes' "cogito" to the brilliant, final chapter on "Chaos and the Brain," the writers blend an intense intellectual rigor with an "impossible joy" which perhaps, only creative acts can produce. As a final contribution to their experiment "What is Philosophy?" shows not only the value of experimenting, but the productivity of collaboration.

COMMUNICATIONS

Pounding Nails In The Floor With My Forehead

By Eric Bogosian
 Theatre Communications Group, 82 pgs., \$8.95

Reviewed by Tyler Hewitt
 Staff member at Tower Records/Video/Books



Bogosian places his characters in middle- to upper-class urban and suburban settings. By doing this, he reveals some of the real, hidden motivators behind the American drive for success, and places it within a familiar context. Those people that seem completely unable to see beyond the small, protected worlds they have built around themselves could

very well be us, or someone we know.

Bogosian's work is interesting and enjoyable because the overall dark thematic content is paired with a biting sense of humor and a rapid-fire delivery. On stage, Bogosian jumps from one monologue to another, pausing only briefly to assume a different character. In book form, the pieces are 10 pages or shorter in length, with an immediacy that makes the reading go very quickly. The humor in this work ranges from dark social satire to sharp parody and makes its presence known on almost every page.

"Pounding Nails In The Floor With My Forehead" is a breath-taking look at the subconscious of the American public. It's funny, frightening, sometimes disturbing, and perhaps more revealing than we would like it to be.

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

The Chinese Siamese Cat

By Amy Tan
 Illustrated by Gretchen Shields
 Macmillan, 30 pages, \$16.95

Reviewed by Mark Warshaw & Victoria Watt

Have you ever wondered how the Chinese Siamese cat came into being? Amy Tan's "The Chinese Siamese Cat" answers that question. In this charming story, the mother cat, Ming Miao tells her five kittens the tale of their cat ancestors. It began a thousand cat lives ago with Sagwa, the first Chinese Siamese cat.

Mama Miao and Baba Miao were the cats of the Foolish Magistrate, who was foolish because he only made laws which benefitted himself and hurt others. Mama and Baba Miao's first involvement with the Foolish Magistrate's awful laws began when he started using their tails as pens. As he wrote more and more proclamations, two things happened: their tails became permanently stained black from the ink and they learned how to write without his guiding hand.

One day Mama and Baba Miao were summoned to the Foolish Magistrate's office to write a new law against singing. The Magistrate believed that if people sang while they worked, they could not possibly be working hard enough. Sagwa, Mama and Baba Miao's playful kitten, was napping high on a bookshelf when she overheard her parents lamenting the unfairness of the new law, and decided to follow them and tell them, "We're not helpless. We can change the world." But as she jumped down from her hiding place, she landed right in the ink pot. As she wiped ink from her nose and paws, she changed the course both of the Magistrate's rule and of the people he had so long tormented. Her independence and spirit gained all Chinese cats an honored place in the Magistrate's house and also a new look. From that day forward Chinese cats all had dark faces, ears, paws, and tails.

If you'd like to find out how Sagwa changed so much with a single, determined act, check out this superbly written and beautifully illustrated book. Each page is filled with intricate drawings and decorative Chinese borders. We love this book for its lively telling of a tale of origins and for its focus on a small but powerful character. "The Chinese Siamese Cat" is a great choice for reading aloud to kids—as much fun for the reader as for the listener.

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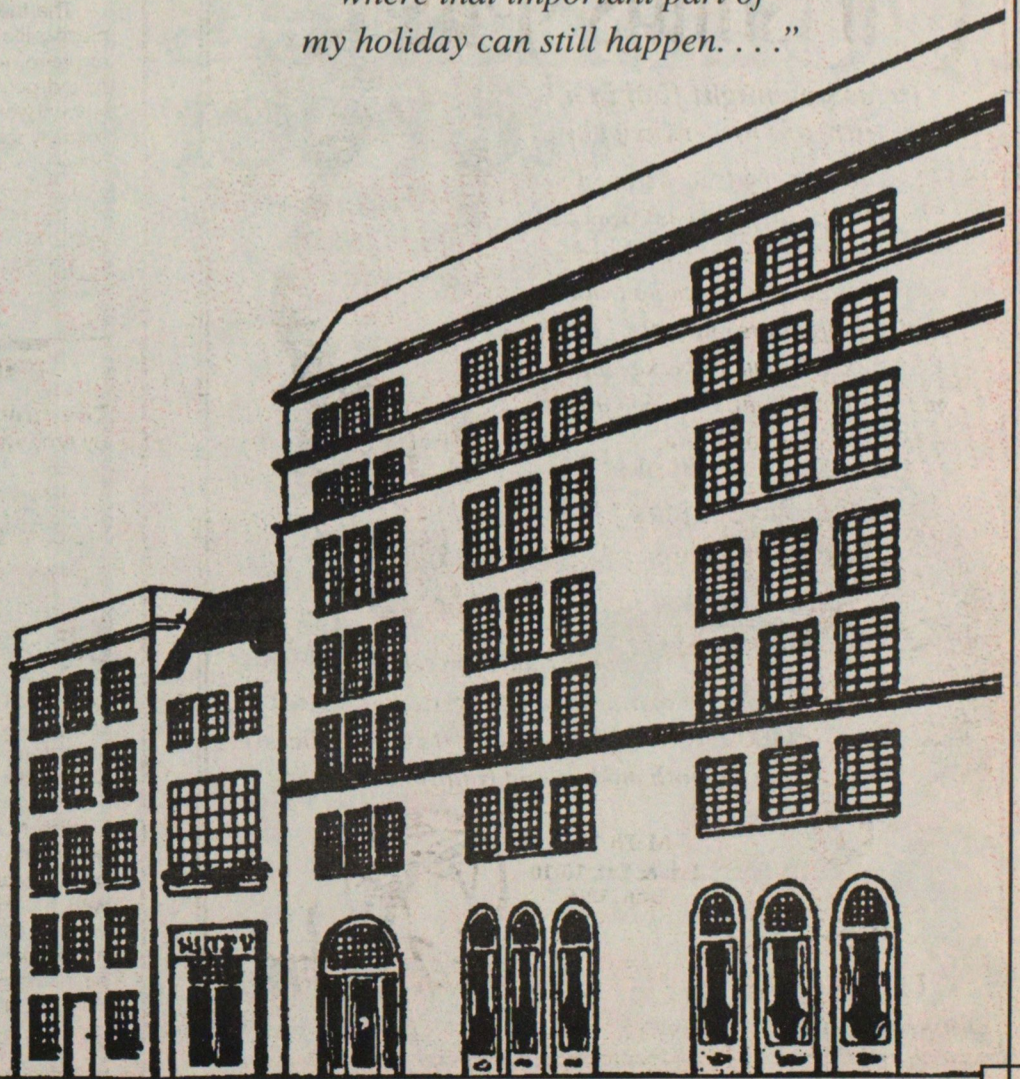
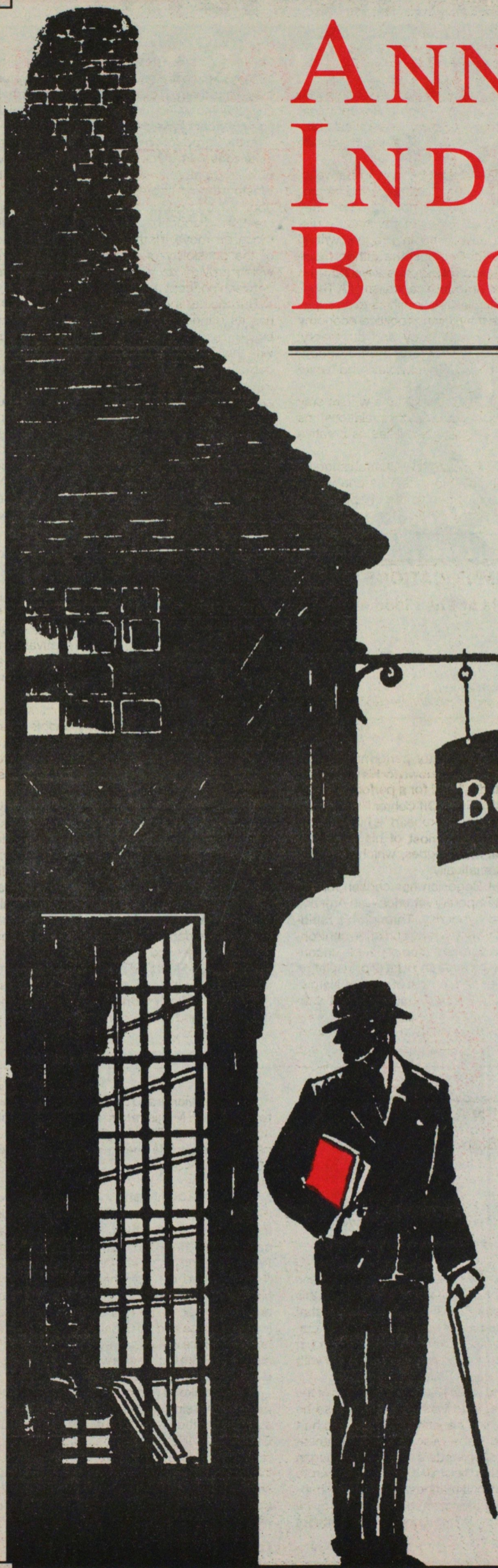
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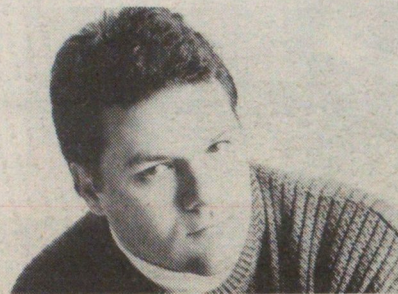
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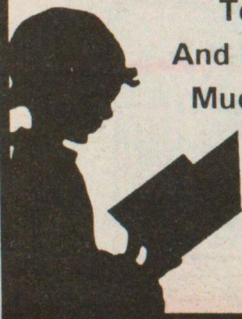
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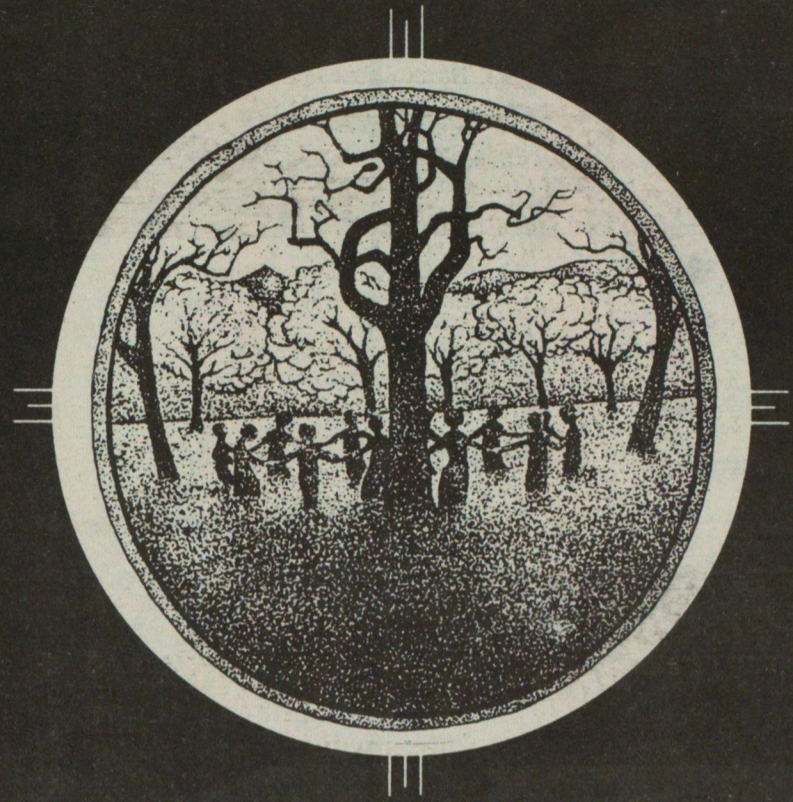
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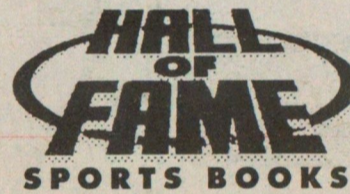


C. Chicken Wing



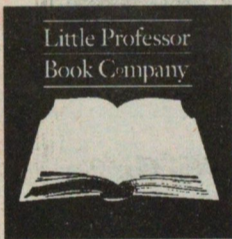
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Answer: C. Chicken Wing. Left wings, right wings, and Red Wings allegedly play hockey in Detroit. As far as we know, the San Diego Chicken isn't a real bird, and so doesn't verifiably have a real wing.



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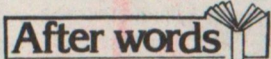
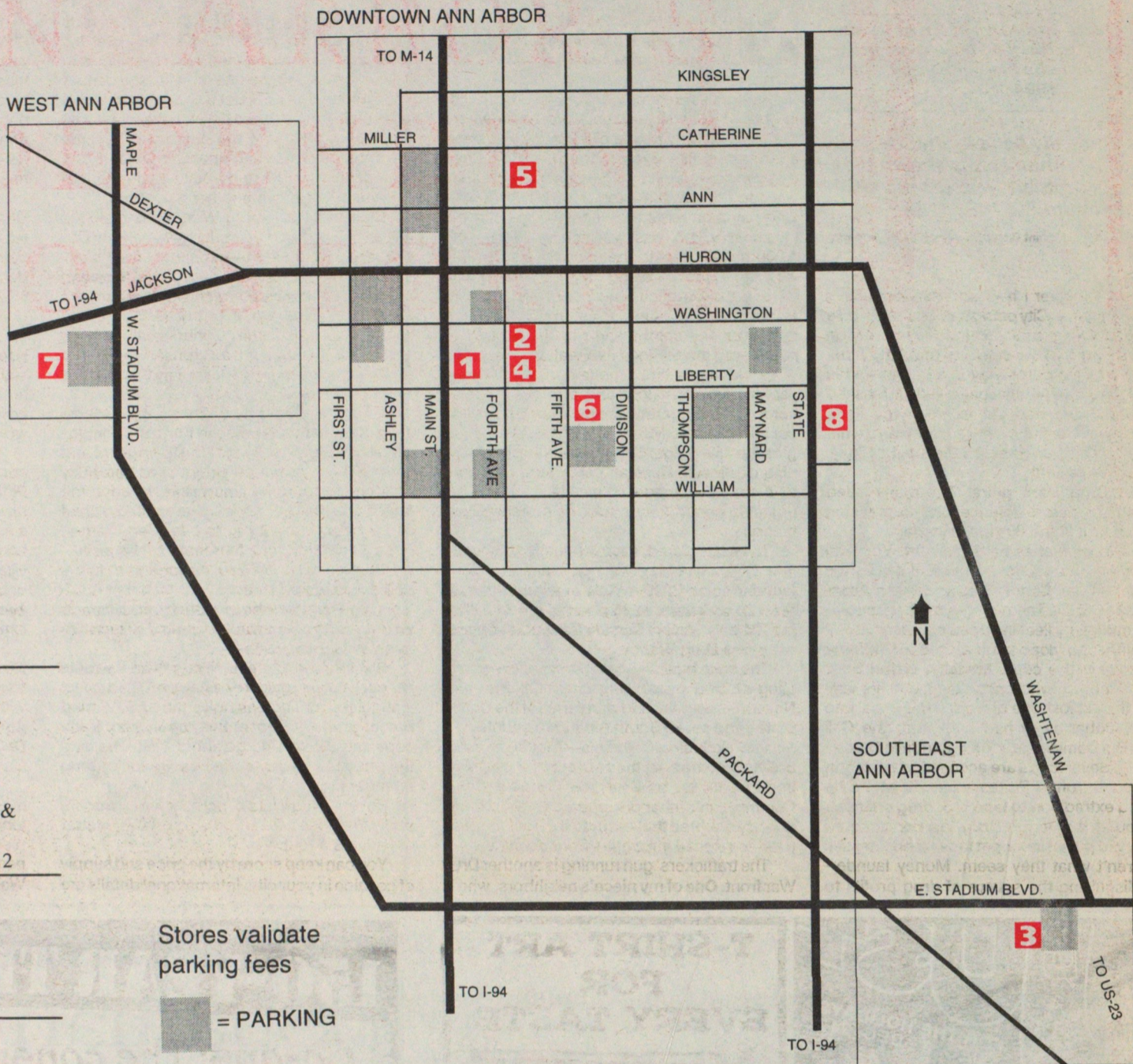


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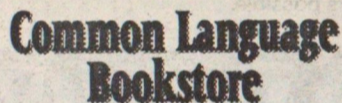
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Drug Wars Parked Out Front

Editor's Note: Eric Jackson, an Associate Editor of AGENDA, filed this report from Panama, where he has been living since mid-February, 1994.

"I personally believe that the history of humanity has shown that you can't prohibit vice. It's part of human nature."

—Bolivian President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada

In October I had an interview with a Panama City publisher. The cops were blocking traffic, so I made my way on foot, walking past the object of their attention. A decomposing corpse lay in a car parked in front of the office. Another gangland hit. Masked detectives, who had yet to open the car's doors, dusted for fingerprints. Catching a whiff as I walked by, I understood the masks. Truly, the Drug Wars stink.

I say Drug Wars, plural. The many-sided labyrinth of narco-violence and repression makes Beirut in the 80s look simple.

Rival drug mafias battle for turf. Ypsilanti saw this in the 1980s. But in Columbia, the entrenched Cali Cartel faces an upstart Atlantic Coast Cartel. The new guys aren't poor—their smuggling fleet includes submarines.

Competing dope lords also wage bidding wars for the cops. Medellín Cartel boss Pablo Escobar, who once could buy his way out of things, lost one of those. The cops who blew Escobar away had help from the Cali Cartel. But Dominican drug kingpin Julio Cueva won big. Seven cops are accused of bribery in his escape from a Panamanian jail where he awaited extradition to face U.S. drug charges.

Around the world, Drug Warrior accountants try to put an innocent face on businesses that aren't what they seem. Money laundering—disguising the source of drug profits to

avoid forfeiture laws—is the talk of Panama. Its hallmarks are big-time cash deals and thriving businesses which make no intrinsic economic sense.

Authorities are probing Panama City's building boom. New skyscrapers are rising where there are apartments and offices and there are. (It's even more ludicrous when one considers what the Panama Canal treaties will soon mean: the exodus of U.S. troops—who pay high rents in Panama City—and the closings of U.S. bases which will put some 4,000 buildings onto the market.) Multimillion dollar projects are being paid for entirely with cash. A narcotrafficker may play building contractor, realtor, materials supplier, investor, lawyer or any combination of these roles to make drug money look like real estate profit.

In Noriega's time, money shifted through secret bank accounts and dummy corporations. Now launderers use real businesses and countless scams. Merchants without profit margins live like kings. Drug barons broker shipping deals with Russian gangsters, designed to create the image of wealth gained from unstable commodity prices or currency fluctuations.

To be laundered, cash is usually smuggled. The DEA estimates that Cali dealers alone launder some \$200 million every month in at least 20 countries. At 75 pounds per \$1 million in \$100 bills, tons of illegally transported paper are prime drug war targets.

The Coca Business also involves the smuggling of drug processing chemicals. In mid-November soldiers and warplanes of the United States and seven South American countries—notably excluding Columbia—moved to close Bolivia's borders to these precursor chemical imports. When tons of the Panama Canal Commission's ether disappeared a while back, nobody doubted that the industrial solvent was used to remove impurities from cocaine.

The traffickers' gun running is another Drug War front. One of my niece's neighbors, who is

in the U.S. Army's Special Forces, was recently away honing his warrior skills. He subtlet his apartment to a young man whose family is in the import/export business. The sub-tenant was good for the rent, but it was a terrible deal for a soldier trying to rise through the ranks. The soldiers' apartment, the cops say, became the center of an international machine gun smuggling ring. The raid added excitement to the lives of my niece and her neighbors.

Then there are Drug Wars among public officials. The Serpico story—an honest narc's oppression by crooked ones—replays. Knowing LARNET's uncanny ability to raid floating crack houses on days when business isn't being done—even though the neighbors call the cops when it is—I wouldn't be surprised to see the same sort of scandal in Wastewater County. But it could be worse.

It could be Paraguay. There, the government and TV stations alleged that a drug smuggling operation involving U.S. DEA agents and the country's former president used Paraguay as a bridge for coke smuggling between the Andes and the U.S. Shortly thereafter the chief of Paraguay's anti-drug forces, Gen. Ramón Rosa Rodríguez, was murdered by his aide.

Or it could be Mexico. According to many sources, factions of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party have been putting out contracts on one another in a war for control of lucrative dope smuggling routes.

But to most people, "Drug Wars" evokes images of cops against dealers, the DEA against smugglers, or increasingly, the U.S. Armed Forces at war. It's not entirely an illusion. Many cops and soldiers do go about their jobs, and the prisons of many countries are full of drug offenders.

But the Drug Wars of popular lore are going badly for those who enforce DEA laws. Matter of fact, it's a rout.

You can keep score by the price and supply of cocaine in your city. International details are

harder to find, because mainstream media tend to repeat government propaganda without questions or independent inquiry. But the U.S. strategy of carrying the Drug Wars to the Andes is in shambles.

A drive to end coca growing in Bolivia's El Chapare Valley led to nationwide protests, which grew when President Sánchez de Lozada tried to suppress them. Nobel laureate Rigoberta Menchú led an international indigenous defense of the 4,000-year-old coca tradition. Sánchez de Lozada retreated, but not before his congressional coalition collapsed. Now he's making statements like the one quoted above.

Joseph Toft, formerly head of the Bogota DEA office, aggravated touchy U.S.-Columbia relations when he called Columbia a "narco-democracy." The government, led by a president accused of taking drug money, says that 59 recently-elected mayors are drug traffickers or drug-financed guerillas.

But the biggest blow to the Andean strategy is technological. New strains and farming techniques have expanded the coca cultivation area. Columbia's acreage has doubled. Coca now grows in Panama, Venezuela and Brazil, where it couldn't grow before.

Ever-changing smuggling routes also encompass more area. Thus Drug Wars came to Piña, a beach I enjoyed as a kid. A plane dropped cocaine bales into the sea, for men in a fishing boat to retrieve and bury in the sand. Local kids dug them up. So hit men came to the village, sending whole families fleeing. Such dramas are now playing on Pacific and Caribbean beaches in every country between Columbia and the Rio Grande.

The Drug Warriors are losing ground. So they're throwing more military force into the fray. The U.S. Southern Command is as busy with Drug Wars now as it was with the Central American conflicts in the 80s. The U.S. has Drug War troops in 19 Latin American and Caribbean countries.

But troops and weapons won't decide the question. It will turn on whether—and for how long—people will accept the price in lives, money and human degradation that will be needed to make a military solution to the Drug Wars possible.

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TYREE GUYTON COMMEMORATES 3RD ANNIVERSARY OF ART DEMOLITION
by Orin Buck

On November 23 Tyree Guyton, famous Detroit artist and creator of the Heidelberg Project, commemorated the demolition of four of his houses by Mayor Coleman Young 3 years ago with a work of performance art called "Smoke in Your Eyes."

It was partly a media event, with coverage by AP, ABC, Fox and others. Fox sent one of their crews from the new cable channel FX (Channel 61 on Columbia Cable) and the event was cablecast live to 20 million cable boxes. Children crowded around the TV crew as they interviewed Tyree and showed him adding to a painted bus that he has transformed into a work about civil rights pioneer Rosa Parks.

After the excitement of the Fox TV crew, the crowd melted away and individual journalists filtered in to cover the event. When the intended climax of the day came at noon there was nobody to witness but the media and Tyree's associates. In a performance that included the media and a representative of the City of Detroit, Tyree attempted to end the chapter which began three years ago.

On November 23 1991, very early on a Saturday morning, a demolition crew descended on Heidelberg Street in Detroit to demolish four of the aban-

doned houses which had been turned into works of art by Tyree Guyton, his grandfather Sam Mackey and his wife Karen. One house was filled with their paintings, and they were given 15 minutes to take them out. Tyree had to give up trying to save them when a wall almost caved in on him. The event shattered them all, and Sam Mackey lost his health and died not long after.

The Mayor was present, and at the time Tyree felt that if he could just talk to the Mayor, perhaps the Mayor could understand how the project was art, and how it had helped the neighborhood to rise above the hell of inner city Detroit. But Coleman Young would not talk to him at all, hiding behind his police and bodyguards. The destruction proceeded, getting international media attention and causing Tyree to initiate a lawsuit against the City of Detroit.

Now, three years later, Coleman Young is no longer Mayor of Detroit and Tyree wants to move beyond the bad feelings caused by the incident. He conceived a performance to symbolize this end.

The piece consists of Tyree sitting on a chair on a wooden platform in the middle of Heidelberg Street, surrounded by a dump truck (to symbolize the demolition), a picture of his grandpap Sam



Tyree waits for the city to come to him VIDEO STILL BY ORIN BUCK

Mackey, a picture of one of the destroyed houses, and a bouquet of flowers. Covering him is a sheet which symbolizes the ignorance of Coleman Young—the smoke in Coleman's eyes—and around his neck is the Governor's Award for Artist of the Year which was given him the year after the demolition by Michigan Governor John Engler. Highly visible from both ends of the street, he attracted sightseers who squeezed by in their cars as they ogled.

Around noon Cliff Russell, the Press Secretary to Mayor Dennis Archer, arrived to witness the event on behalf of the city. Tyree kept silent, symbolizing again Coleman Young's refusal to hear him speak, but Tyree's spokesman Dr. Maclin informed Mr. Russell that they were dropping the suit against the city and wanted to move on to a more productive relationship. Media people

crowded around as Russell gave a positive statement, and then everyone rushed to get out of the freezing cold.

The event was not a total success. For Tyree and associates were hoping that Mayor Archer would come himself. If he had, the sheet would have come off and Tyree would have broken his silence as part of the performance. But everyone felt a first step had been made, and dropping the lawsuit and bad feelings would lead to a better relationship in the future.

The Heidelberg Project, now a nonprofit organization, is also seeking funding and ways for Tyree's work to begin to pay for itself. Their address is P.O. Box 19422, Detroit MI 48219. In Ann Arbor, Nicole Cattell, Naked Eye Productions, is working on a film about the project. She needs volunteers, funding, and in-kind donations. Call her at 213-2781.

DECEMBER 1994 visual arts exhibition calendar

1 THURSDAY
"Mary Gillis - Paintings and Sculpture" Exhibit thru 23 Dec. Alexa Lee Gallery, 201 Nickels Arcade, Ann Arbor. Large abstract mixed media paintings and welded steel sculptures by Michigan artist. 663-8800

"Lyric" Thru 4 Dec at Matrix Gallery, 212 Miller. Sculpture and collage by Amy Hanks. 663-7775

"Tactile Articulation" Exhibit thru 9 Dec. U-M North Campus Commons Atrium. Andrea Berez, Ana Furnios, Nora Venturilli, Ellen Whetmore U-M Bachelor of Fine Arts Exhibition. Featured work includes figurative painting and sculpture, mixed media and metals. 764-7544

Ann Arbor Women Painters Holiday Art Sale Exhibition thru 19 Dec. Loft Gallery, 122 S. Main St., Ste. 320. 996-2777

Original photogravures from Alfred Stieglitz's "Camera Work" On display in West Side Book Shop's gallery during store hours thru 31 Dec. 113 W. Liberty. 995-1891

AIDS Quilt 2 12x12 panels on display in the Michigan Union Art Lounge thru 3 Dec in conjunction with AIDS Awareness Week. 764-7544

Chelsea Painters Display thru 22 Dec on North Campus Commons Gallery Wall. 764-7544

"Visiones del Pueblo the folk art of Latin America" Toledo Museum of Art thru 15 Jan 95. 419-255-8000

Master of Fine Arts and Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree Exhibitions Rackham Galleries, Harlan Hatcher Bldg., 915 E. Fletcher, A2. Exhibits featuring Dec. graduates of the School of Art change weekly thru 17 Dec. 763-4417

"Caves to Cathedrals" Ann Arbor Art Association 117 West Liberty. Installation of the yearly theme "Basic to Beautiful" includes this unit, thru Jan. 994-8004

The works of Lula Nester and James Patterson The Michigan Guild Gallery 118 N. Fourth Ave. Exhibit of abstract watercolors by Nester and contemporary jewelry of Patterson, thru 4 Dec. 662-0339

"John Stephenson: After the Fire, A Retrospective" Joint exhibit at Slusser Gallery (at School of Art, N. Campus) thru 18 Dec, and U-M Museum of Art thru 15 Jan 95. Celebrating work of the well-known ceramicist on his retirement from U-M School of Art. 764-0395

African Art U-M Museum of Art Exhibit of works of sub-Saharan African art, thru June '95. 764-0395

2 FRIDAY
"Memory Bags" Galerie Jacques Opening 8 pm-midnight 616 Wesley. Michel Herreria's first one-person show in the U.S.—paintings & drawings, exhibit through 18 Jan 95. Also: "First Fridays" 8:30 pm Poets Sarah Peters & Thom Jurek. 665-9889

Alice B. Crawford Artist Reception 5-8 pm (last day of exhibition) Accessible Art Gallery 304 S. Ashley. Small prints and monotypes. Crawford Studio (410 W. Huron) open during Art Day. 769-0670

"Tree of Life" Slusser School of Art Pedestal Rm., also 3 & 6 Dec. Computer artist Jamy Sheridan and computer musician/programmer John Dunn present a computer-based algorithmic multimedia installation & performance. Call for times. 763-4438

3 SATURDAY
Art Day 12-5pm. All over Ann Arbor follow balloons and arrow trails or pick up a map in downtown art galleries for locations of artist's studio open houses, galleries and other special visual arts events. 995-7281

Painter, Jill Donovan & Sculptor, Jane Bunge Noffke 12-5 pm Technology Center, 410 W. Washington, Suites 7up & 20. Open house in conjunction with Art Day. 668-0327

15th Annual Associate Membership Exhibition Opening 6-9 pm, Michigan Gallery, 2661 Michigan Ave., Detroit. After reception the Jeff Maylin Group performs till 2 am. 961-7867

"Emblems of Power" 8 pm, Angell Hall Aud. B. Lecture by Ramona Wilson marks the opening of "Staffs of Life: African

Rods, Staffs, and Scepters from the Coudron Collection" exhibition at the U-M Museum of Art. Reception at the Museum following lecture. Exhibition thru 26 Feb 95. 764-0395

4 SUNDAY
Art Day 12-5 pm all over Ann Arbor. See Saturday 3 December.

"Then and Now" Opening 3-6 pm, Clair Spitzer Works of Art, 2007 Pauline Ct. Annual holiday group show includes work in various media by Larry Baker, Laila Kujala, Tom Nuzum, Tomoko Ogawa, Arthur Secunda and Barbara Southworth. Exhibition thru 31 Jan 95. 662-8914

9 FRIDAY
"Finnemore's Wake" Opening 7-10 pm, Matrix Gallery, 212 Miller. British photographer Peter Finnemore introduced sculptural and other concepts to gardening to produce this set of work. Exhibition thru 23 Dec. 663-7775

"Avant Garde in the Art Lounge" Opening in the MU Art Lounge for 4-16 Dec exhibit. Kaleidoscope sponsors this show of student work which includes various media including 3D and performance. Call for time. 764-7544

26 MONDAY
Artrain is home for the holidays! The nation's only traveling museum on train is here (1100 N. Main St.) thru 7 Jan with its current exhibit "The Romance of Transportation: Vehicle and Voyage in N. American Art." Exhibit features work by Thomas Hart Benton, Andy Warhol, etc. Watch artists at work in studio car. 10 am-5 pm, \$4 adults, \$2 children. 747-8300

opportunities IN ALL MEDIA

Women interested in joining the newly formed Michigan Chapter of the National Women's Caucus for Art please contact Roberta Ann Busard for meeting information: call 665-3033; or write 118 S. Main St., #346, Ann Arbor MI 48104.

Artrain is looking for volunteers for its holiday at home in A2. Guides and artists are needed 26 Dec-7 Jan. To sign up contact Mary or Jeannette, 747-8300.

Art Center seeks artwork to furnish and accent a custom-built home. Local builder Larry Salliotte & the Ann Arbor Art Association Art Center are planning a gala opening night benefit that will bring together art appreciators, prospective home buyers and others. Home tour dates are 19 May-30 June. For info & prospectus artists in all media should write the Center at 117 W. Liberty, A2 MI 48104 or call 994-8004.

Volunteers at the Ann Arbor Art Association Art Center receive free art classes, a discount in the Gallery Shop and other benefits. Need art project leaders and sales associates. 994-8004

Art 95: International Art Competition New York 1995 Deadline for requesting application forms: postmarked by 9 Dec 94 or phone/fax by 16 Dec. Apply: ART 95, Dept. A; Route 304; Bardonia, NY 10954, USA. Voice 914-623-0599 or 1-800-278-7000; fax 914-623-0611. Open to all artists, professional & amateur in all media & styles from painting & sculpture, cartooning & computer art to jewelry & furniture, etc., 11 notable judges, \$55,000 in awards, exhibition in Art 54 Gallery, NY, 20 July-6 Aug 95.

PrePress Publishing of Michigan, a nonprofit publisher whose mission is to promote new Michigan writers, seeks poetry & fiction by new Michigan writers. Deadline 15 Dec 94. Bruce Brown, PrePress Publishing of Michigan, PO Box 2153, Portage MI 49081-2153.

"PhotoNational 2" National exhibition. Deadline 15 Dec 94. All forms of 2-dimensional photo media. To request prospectus: legal size SASE to Michigan Friends of Photography, PhotoNational 2, PO Box 280, Royal Oak MI 48068.

"Hand-Eye" Exhibition. Proposals (due 23 Dec 94) are sought for works in any media which require audience participation/interaction and/or pertain to the sense of touch. Paint Creek Center for the Arts, 407 Pine St., Rochester MI 48307. 810-651-4110

33rd Ann Arbor Film Festival, 14-19 March 1995. Deadline 15 Feb 95. All categories & genre in independent 16mm filmmaking. \$8,000 in cash prizes. Write, call or fax for entry form: A2 Film Festival, PO Box 8232, Detroit MI 48107. Voice 995-5356; fax 995-5396.

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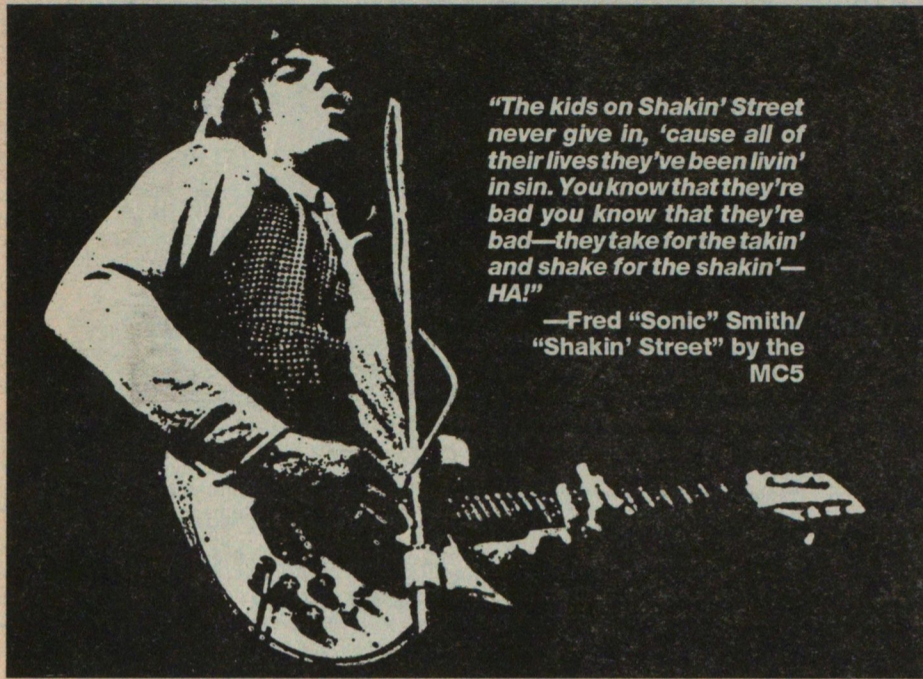
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MUSIC

"The View from Nowhere"

By Alan Goldsmith



"The kids on Shakin' Street never give in, 'cause all of their lives they've been livin' in sin. You know that they're bad you know that they're bad—they take for the takin' and shake for the shakin'—HA!"

—Fred "Sonic" Smith/
"Shakin' Street" by the MC5

Fred "Sonic" Smith: Rock In Peace

Fred "Sonic" Smith, one of the greatest rock and roll poets and guitarists of all time, and a member of the legendary MC5 as well as Sonic's Rendezvous Band, passed away in early November from heart failure. In the late 60s and early 70s, the MC5 were IT. Under the guidance of radical writer John Sinclair, the Five were DANGEROUS and brilliant, poetic and political, and before they burned out from the intensity of it all, produced three albums that stand as some of the best music of all time ("Kick Out The Jams," "Back In The USA" and "High Time.")

At the center stood guitarist Fred Smith. His playing was rooted in the Stones and the Yardbirds, but there was a freshness that no one else could touch. It had the feel of Chuck Berry, but there was something else—a haunting quality, a ghost-like triumph over an unbearable pain, with a laugh-in-the-face-of-death sort of tone to it. A Fred Smith guitar solo UPLIFTED you. It saved your soul.

In the 70s, Smith fronted the Sonic's band and did endless gigs at the late, lamented Second Chance, while still pumping out incredible stuff. The songs were classic and his playing got better and better. Only one single, "City Slang" was released. Over the decade the band performed numerous local gigs and searched for "a big-time record deal." The record deal never came.

After Smith's marriage to rock poet Patti Smith in the early 80s, the pair dropped out of sight, forsaking music to raise a family. The two resurfaced on Patti Smith's 1988 "Dream of Life" CD with the two co-writing the songs and Fred playing guitar. The hit "People Have The Power" showed he still had the hooks and passion.

What did I leave out? The MC5 arrests at West Park for playing too damn loud and Smith being smashed around by Ann Arbor cops for wanting to rock and roll? How Smith's solo on the Five's "Over and Over" still nearly brings me to tears, even after hearing it maybe 1000 times? How one Sonic's song "Do It Again," which I last heard them do live YEARS ago—and which tragically never was released on record—still runs through my brain now and then? Or how, with the death of Fred Sonic Smith, this planet, this city and the music to follow will be missing something special and beautiful that can't be replaced? Fred "Sonic" Smith. RIP.

TAKING NOTE—Kudos to the corporate media giant-owned Ann Arbor News. A recent Saturday music review section featured five or six reviews featuring local music. A nice start. The Green Room, the new all ages club at 206 W. Michigan Avenue in downtown Ypsilanti is starting to take off. Watch your local telephone pole for upcoming gig posters. Schoolkids Records has announced plans to release a series of CDs

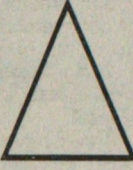
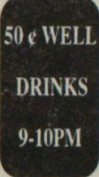



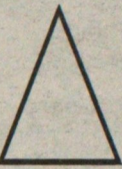
featuring music from past Ann Arbor Blues and Jazz Festivals, including material from Sun Ra, Little Sonny, Boogie Woogie Red and zillions more. Great! Photographer Ken Bawcom has a display of his cool, cool Frog Island and B & J Festival photos from the likes of George Bedard, Sonny Sharrock, John Mayall, Madcat Ruth and many more at Schoolkids and P. J.'s Records, with a portion of the sales going to benefit next year's B & J Fest.

In what may be the most unusual new local duo this year, Mantyla and Swickerath play Thursday, Dec. 15 as part of P. J.'s Nokickdrums music series. Their new self-titled cassette is bizarrely entertaining. Don Swickerath is a traditional singer/songwriter with a grainy, smoked voice and an amazing musical resumé (one of the founders of The Iguanas—hip, the mid-60s pre-Stooges garage band that included Iggy Pop (!), as well as a side man for Robin McNamara of "Lay A Little Lovin' On Me" fame. No, I'm not making this up...). Tim Mantyla is a more modern, goofy, twisted writer of warped pop for the twilight zone. The tape mixes these two, shall we say, musically diverse performers, and sounds like...something you should check out. It's folksy pop and...it's free.

John Hammink's new tape "Night Train to Burma" is the singer/songwriter of Fairlight, British kind of feel to his voice and you can imagine him busking his way across Europe, which he's done. His guitar isn't as easy to get—sometimes it's a mix of the same sort of folk sounds, at others you get a soft, jazzy, Brazilian air. This is perfect music for dinking a quiet cup of tea, relaxing by a fire or driving around in your car at 3 am and waiting for the sun to rise.

If you're driving around at 3 am and you feel like playing Russian roulette, or breaking into a liquor store because the last two bottles of scotch didn't quite do the trick and you need MORE, the new Paxton Hood cassette, "Palace of Pain" is just the soundtrack to your own personal movie. This is heavy, heavy, very heavy metal. Dry ice machines, dramatic, powerful guitar solos, thunder drums, and not a single nod to commercial radio airplay. This is the kind of stuff folkies HATE, English majors look down on, and factory rats love more than life itself. I love it. The production is a little muddy here, but otherwise it's a first-class effort.

Another month is over. Continue to be wary of rock and roll critics, people in the "music biz" and other agents of the devil, but do continue sending your mail, tapes CDs, and the story of your life in 25 words or less to: AGENDA, The View From Nowhere, 220 S. Main Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48104

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SCREEN SCENE

By John Carlos Cantú

INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE

[1994. Directed by Neil Jordan. Cast: Tom Cruise, Brad Pitt, Antonio Banderas, Christian Slater. Geffen Films. 122 mins.]



There ought to be a rule in the movie business that says you can't produce a film you don't believe in. For if such a rule was adopted, stories like *Interview With the Vampire* would eventually find their legitimate métier.

The fact that Neil Jordan has seemingly betrayed his better instincts only makes this issue that much more significant. Jordan has directed two of the most interesting films in this half-decade—*Mona Lisa* and *The Crying Game*—that have grappled with the trials of same-sex relationships. Both of these films have a natural-grittiness that makes their protagonists' stark tangle of nerves seem revelatory.

Unfortunately, this sharp-edge is lost in *Interview With the Vampire*. The film begins with the interviewer, Malloy (Christian Slater), being led to an abandoned San Francisco Market Street room by the abnormally pale Louis (Brad Pitt). After settling down with a tape recorder, Louis proceeds to tell Malloy his centuries-old tale of woe.

He was seduced in 1791 by an aristocrat, Lestat (Tom Cruise), who was cruising New Orleans' wharves for a late-night snack. After bleeding his quarry, Lestat gives Louis a choice: Either drink the blood of the vampire, and thereby live an immortal life preying upon others, or die an extremely painful death.

Whether through cowardice or better judgment, Louis takes up Lestat's offer and the two proceed to live a satyrasis delight until they turn an orphan (Kirsten Dunst) into the third member of their night life. The result is a trail of vampyric gore leading up to the apartment where Louis unburdens himself on his interlocutor.

Perhaps this story made atmospheric sense

in Ann Rice's best-selling novel, but on screen *Interview With the Vampire* becomes a soapy confection of foggy corners, dank cellars, and grisly blood-ridden incisors. It's a little gross, but certainly not very scary.

But even this compromised slushiness would be tolerable if the film had a core of integrity. Instead, its high priced talent goes to waste in recurrently burnt set pieces that are sharply off-set against the screenplay's falsely rung dialogue.

The argument might be made that filming what is essentially a gay subtext—boy bites boy—would not have garnered the participation of Cruise, Pitt, Slater, or Banderas.

But so what? Cathy Tyson in *Mona Lisa* and Jaye Davidson in *The Crying Game* weren't exactly household names when those earlier films were released. Much better to aim for a script and cast that would roll with the story's punches and not worry so much about collective images and incomes.

Instead, Jordan's heart is clearly not in his film. He's a directoral gun for hire on what is supposed to be a cash cow and he substitutes cinematic flash (and not nearly enough cinematic flesh) for substance.

We're reduced to watching a cast of handsome actors playing at what Ann Rice thinks vampires should be. But when the entire logic of the film impels good-guy Louis to lovingly embrace the handsomely satanic Armand (Antonio Banderas)—and they both back off nervously at twitter—somebody's not dealing in good faith.

RATING KEY

- ☆ Acting
- ✿ Cinematography
- ☞ Direction
- ✂ Editing
- ☞ Narrative
- ⊙ Sound
- ⊗ Special Effects

When a symbol appears following a title, it implies that the corresponding category is a strength of the movie.

IT'S ALL TRUE

[1993. Directed by Richard Wilson, Myron Meisel, Bill Krohn. Cast: Orson Welles and his ego. Paramount/Paramount Home Video. 83 mins.]



Essentially a morality tale draped in the guise of a murder mystery, the lesson behind *It's All True* is enough to chill the heart of all independent filmmakers. For it is, indeed, all true: Don't take a million of your bosses' dollars and run off to Rio while you're supposed to be editing your masterpiece.

It's All True tries mightily to cast Orson Welles in the role of a victim, but this is easy to do when most of the principles are deceased. Besides, RKO was the studio being dunned in the '40s and Paramount (in conjunction with the American Film Institute) can take the high road releasing the remains of his South American pet project a half-century later.

Here are the facts: In 1941 Welles was asked by Nelson Rockefeller on behalf of the U.S. State Department to be a cinematic "goodwill ambassador" to Latin America during World War II. And once he was convinced that only he could save western civilization, he took the loot offered by RKO to shoot Brazil's carnival as part of a projected documentary he was supervising called *It's All True*.

What he was supposed to be doing was edit *The Magnificent Ambersons* with Robert Wise in Hollywood. Instead, Welles tried to rig up a system where he could edit by long-distance cable and telephone; but needless to say, the gambit didn't work...especially when RKO got swallowed in a merger and the studio's new owners were looking for ways to save money.

The first thing they noticed was one of their "star" directors being a couple of continents out of pocket spending their money on a samba documentary that didn't have a screenplay or any of the other niggling details one typically thinks in terms of when pitching film projects. Even by Hollywood standards, this is extraordinarily "high concept."

Meanwhile, back at the Rio, Welles heard about the story of four fishermen who had captured the

heart of South America through a remarkably heroic Atlantic sea-hopping odyssey. These fishermen had endured potential death daily to bring their fellow *jangadeiros*' plight to the attention of the Brazilian government. In a moment of cinematic inspiration, Welles prevailed upon them to reenact their triumphant entry into Rio's harbor upon which their leader drowned in a freak accident.

This sad turn of events led a chastened Welles to turn his attention towards filming their adventure for posterity in his documentary. But RKO tightened the screws and left him with just enough funds to hire a cameraman and stripped-down crew to film his quixotic journey. It's this footage that creates the drama in *It's All True*.

In 1985, Paramount executive, Fred Chandler, stumbled across 90,000 feet of black-and-white film in their archives that turned out to be the raw stock of Welles' lost feature entitled "Four Men on a Raft." Using modern technology, the assistant director on that trip, Richard Wilson, restored the sense of what Welles improvised on a day-by-day basis.

The footage is simply stunning. Welles has so thoroughly stamped his imprint on this project—no matter how meager his resources—by sheer force of personality, "Four Men on a Raft" becomes an exciting tale of love, death, and adventure. Every image in this lost film has been pulled from his magnificently fertile imagination.

Ultimately, however, one has to be stunned by the profligate—as well as protean—talent revealed in *It's All True*. Working with only one camera, and inspiring his amateur South American cast well beyond their comprehension, Welles demonstrates how much beauty and tension a talented filmmaker can create even with his back against the wall.

The Magnificent Ambersons got mangled and it failed at the box office. The original *It's All True* got shelved, and Welles bought all the footage shot in the 40s, but it was never completed. Even "Four Men on a Raft" was abandoned and it languished in studio cans until being miraculously resurrected by the ever-faithful Wilson.

But Welles was not the one who got cheated. We were all cheated. One of cinema's greatest talents would never discipline himself and as a result Welles wandered the rest of his life grasping for the elusive funds to complete his visions. It's all-too-true: Despite intermittent success, he never fully regained his balance.

DECEMBER

LITERARY EVENTS

Book Readings, Publication Parties, Poetry Readings, Writers Groups, etc. are now listed in the LITERARY EVENTS Calendar (see page 9).

VISUAL ARTS

Art Exhibitions, Workshops, Artist Opportunities, etc., are now listed in the VISUAL ARTS Calendar (see page 21).



Bill Miller brings a mixture of Native American imagery, sounds, chants and instruments to *The Ark* (see 4 Sunday)

To publicize January Calendar events, send formatted listings by December 15 to AGENDA, 220 S. Main St., A2, MI 48104. Unless otherwise noted, all events listed in the CALENDAR are free and open to the public. All locations are in Ann Arbor unless otherwise noted.

1 Thursday

World AIDS Day: N. Campus Commons Arts & Programs 11 am-1 pm, NCC old lobby. Pick up a ribbon and check out activities for the week. 764-7544

Sensory Magic: A2 Parks & Rec. 12:30 pm, Leslie Science Ctr., 1831 Traver. Children 4-5 years old will discover the wonders of our five senses, \$20/child for four weekly sessions. Pre-register 662-7802

"Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual Strategies in the New Republican-Dominated Era": LGBPO 4:15-6:30 pm, 250 Hutchins Hall. Talk by Paula Etlebrick. 763-4186

Men's Support Group: LGBPO Open Group-B 4:30-6 pm, LGBPO, 3110 Mich. Union. Open to all men, members of the University as well as the A2 area. 763-4186

Opera Workshop: U-M School of Music 5 pm, McIntosh Theatre. "La Bohème, Act III," with Music Director Timothy Cheek. 763-4726

Shulchan Ivrit: Hillel 5 pm, Cava Java. A chance to practice your Hebrew in a fun, social atmosphere! 769-0500

Meeting: Homeless Action Committee 5:30 pm, 802 Monroe. 930-0601

Christmas Party: Bird of Paradise 6-9 pm, 207 S. Ashley. The Easy Street Blue Four w/Paul Klinger, The Ron Brooks Trio w/Eddie Russ, \$7. 662-8310

Grads and Young Professionals Chanukah Dinner and Party: Hillel 6 pm, Hillel, 1429 Hill. Join us in lighting the menorah for Chanukah followed by a latke dinner. Reservations, 769-0500

Frontrunners: Gay/Lesbian Running Club 6:30 pm, call for place. Runners of all levels and ages are welcome. 434-4494 or 763-4186

"Folk Magic for the Home": The Seeker 7 pm, Common Language, 215 S. Fourth Ave. 665-8428

World AIDS Day Candlelight Vigil & March: HIV/AIDS Resource Center 7 pm, Art Lounge, Mich. Union. Arrive

early to view panels of the Quilt. The procession ends at the First Congregational Church (State & William) where there will be a closing ceremony and reception. Participants encouraged to bring their own candles. 572-0554

TV Night: Hillel 8-11 pm, Hillel, 1429 Hill. Watch "Mad About You," "Seinfeld," with others. 769-0500

Meeting: Latin American Solidarity Comm. 8 pm, 4120 Mich. Union. 662-5552

"Three Hands Clapping": Performance Network 8 pm, 408 W. Washington. Three one-act plays—about a ridiculous savior, a doomed haiku poet, and a Spanish dancer, \$12/\$9 students & seniors (Thursdays are "pay-what-you-can"). 663-0681

John Hammond: The Ark 8 pm, 637-1/2 S. Main. Acoustic country blues guitarist, \$12.50. 761-1800

Jazz Composers Orchestra: U-M School of Music 8 pm, Rackham Aud. Big-band jazz. 763-4726

"The Three Sisters": U-M School of Music 8 pm, Trueblood Theatre. Chekhov's classic, \$12/\$6 students. 763-4726

Live Jazz: North Campus Commons Arts & Programs 8-10 pm, Leonardo's, NCC. 764-7544

Darwin Hines: Mainstreet Comedy Showcase 8:30 pm, 314 E. Liberty. One of the bad boys from the Motor City, \$10. 996-9080

Live Call-In: Peace InSight 9:05 pm, Cable Channel 9. Topic TBA. 769-7422

Ron Brooks Trio Featuring Eddie Russ: Bird of Paradise 9:30 pm, 207 S. Ashley, \$3. 662-8310

Without a Net: University Club 10 pm, Mich. Union. Improv comedy. For students, faculty, alumni and guests, \$3. 763-3281

2 Friday

Swimmers: A2 Queer Aquatics call for time, Kimball High School, Royal Oak. Charley 665-8063 or Kelly 663-0036

Winter Clothing Giveaway: A2 Parks & Rec. 9-11 am, Bryant Community Ctr., 3 W. Eden Ct. Warm coats and other apparel available for adults and children. Donations welcome. 994-2722

"Haiti: What's REALLY Happening? Perspectives on the Current Situation": Haiti Solidarity Group 7-9 pm,

Rackham Amphitheater. A panel of local activists and experts on Haiti will discuss the most recent events in Haiti and U.S. policy toward Haiti. 971-8582

"Modern Technology for Traditional Religion: Being a Techno-Pagan": Magical Education Council 7 pm, Guild House, 802 Monroe. 761-1137

Opera Workshop: U-M School of Music 7 pm, McIntosh Theatre. "Romeo and Juliet" and more with Music Director Timothy Cheek. 763-4726

Christmas Caroling: A2 Parks & Rec. 7:15 pm, Kempf House, 312 S. Division. Salvation Army leads carolers thru downtown area. 994-2780

Meeting: Lesbians, Gay Men, & Bisexuals' AA & Alanon 7:30 pm, Rainbow Rm (AA); Upstairs Lounge (Alanon), St. Andrews Episcopal, 306 N. Division. 665-6939

"Jeffrey": Dignity Detroit 8 pm, 1234 Porter, Detroit. Comic play about a gay man in New York in the age of AIDS, \$12.50. 313-582-6260

"The Sound of Music": Croswell Opera House 8 pm, 129 E. Maumee St., Adrian, \$15/\$13 students & seniors/\$8 children. 517-264-SHOW

Malcolm Tulip: People Dancing's "Fine. Be That Way" Series 8 pm, People Dancing Studio, 111 Third St. This new show, "Tulipomania," is bizarre, hilarious, eloquent—pure Tulip. Discussion follows performance, \$8 (broke? pay less). 930-6596

Metro Grass: The Ark 8 pm, 637-1/2 S. Main. Bluegrass, \$8.75/\$7.75 members, students, seniors. 761-1800

Live Jazz: N. Campus Commons Arts & Programs 8-10 pm, Leonardo's, NCC. Dave Sayers performs. 764-7544

Roberto Ausel: University Musical Society 8 pm, Rackham Aud. A beacon in the international guitar world, \$10-\$20. 764-2538

"The Three Sisters": U-M School of Music 8 pm (see 1 Thu)

"Three Hands Clapping": Performance Network 8 pm (see 1 Thu)

Darwin Hines: Mainstreet Comedy Showcase 8:30 & 10:30 pm (see 1 Thu)

The Benny Green Trio: Bird of Paradise 9 & 11:15 pm, 207 S. Ashley. Jazz pianist with bass & drums, \$15. 662-8310

The Impatients: Cava Java 9:30 pm, 1101 S. University. Tasty pop and roll, \$3. 741-5282

3 Saturday

Potluck: Gays & Lesbians Older & Wiser 11 am-1 pm, Turner Clinic, 1010 Wall. 936-5962

The Ambassadors: Little Professor 11:30 am-noon, 2513 Jackson Rd. Singing group from Belleville High School will fill the store with music. 662-4110

Shabbat Lunch: Conservative Minyan 12:30 pm, Hillel, 1429 Hill St. Reserve a week in advance, \$3. 769-0500

German Family Christmas: A2 Parks & Rec. 1-4 pm, Kempf House, 312 S. Division. Traditional turn-of-the-century event, \$1. 994-4898

Michigan Marching Band in Concert: U-M School of Music 2:30 pm, Crisler Arena, \$4/\$2 children. 763-4726

"The Sound of Music": Croswell Opera House 3 & 8 pm (see 2 Fri)

Havdalah Service: Reform Chavurah 7 pm, Hillel, 1429 Hill. Gather for the traditional Shabbat ceremony, munchies and conversation. 769-0500

"Raise the Roof": Performance Network 8 pm, Mich. Theater. Annual fundraiser features Dick Siegel, Tracy Lee Komarmy, Frank Allison, Mr. B, Malcolm Tulip, Elise Bryant, LaRon Williams, & more, \$20/\$30 preferred seating. 663-0681

Handel's "Messiah": University Musical Society 8 pm, Hill Aud. A2's oldest musical tradition celebrates its 116th year, \$8-\$16. 764-2538

"Contemporary Directions Ensemble—Music of Ben Johnston and William Albright": U-M School of Music 8 pm, Rackham Aud. 763-4726

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Young Matt Smith, The Ragtime Millionaire: PJ's No Kickdrum Acoustic Concert Series 7 pm, PJ's Used Records & CDs, 617-B Packard Rd. In-store performance by solo, acoustic blues artist. 663-3441

Bardic Night: The Seeker 7-11 pm, 1522 Hill. Drumming & singing with the Druids of Shining Lake Grove. 665-8428

"Glen or Glenda": Ann Arbor Film Co-op 7:30 & 9:30 pm, Angell Hall Aud. A. Ed Wood's first and finest film. A true confession of Wood's struggle with obsessive transvestitism. \$3. 769-7787

Maura O'Connell: The Ark 7:30 & 9:30 pm, 637-1/2 S. Main. Jazz, Southern gospel, pop, traditional Irish, & more. \$12.50. 761-1800

Discussion: Older Lesbians Organizing (OLO) 7:30-9:30 pm, call for location. "Today's Lesbian in Film" with Fran Dunaway, film writer and producer. Open to women of all ages. 482-2996

Meetings: Lesbians, Gay Men, & Bisexuals' AA & Alanon 7:30 pm (see 2 Fri)

Frank Pahl & Terri Sarris: People Dancing's "Fine. Be That Way" Series 8 pm, People Dancing Studio, 111 Third St. Musician Pahl plays every instrument known to humans. Sarris is a video artist who creates statements on American culture, love, menstruation & UFOs. Discussion follows performance, \$8 (broke? pay less). 930-6596

The Raisin Pickers: N. Campus Commons Arts & Programs 8-10 pm, Leonardo's, NCC. Good old-time dance music, swing and newgrass. 764-7544

Symphony & Concert Band: U-M School of Music 8 pm, Hill Aud. 763-4726

"Jeffrey": Dignity Detroit 8 pm (see 2 Fri)

"Three Hands Clapping": Performance Network 8 pm (see 1 Thu)

"The Three Sisters": U-M School of Music 8 pm (see 1 Thu)

Dance and Related Arts Concert: U-M School of Music 8 pm (see 8 Thu)

Glen Steer: Mainstreet Comedy Showcase 8:30 & 10:30 pm (see 8 Thu)

Gwen Wells with The Ron Brooks Trio: Bird of Paradise 9:30 pm, 207 S. Ashley. Singer in the Nancy Wilson tradition. \$5. 662-8310

Circus of Lao: Cava Java 9:30 pm, 1101 S. University. Singer Lisa Matthews & Co., unplugged. \$3. 741-5282

Cabaret Performance: U-M School of Music 11 pm, Arena Theater, Frieze Bldg. With Joan Morris' cabaret class. 763-4726

10 Saturday

Home Accessibility Workshop: A2 Center for Independent Living 9 am-noon, 2568 Packard (in Georgetown Mall). With architect David Esau. 971-0277; 971-0310 (TDD)

3rd World Handcrafts Sale: SERRV 9 am-noon, Zion Lutheran Church, 1501 W. Liberty. 663-0362

Kids in the Farm Kitchen: A2 Parks & Rec. 10 am-noon (ages 5-8) & 1-3 pm (ages 7-12), Cobblestone Farm, 2781 Packard. Bake and decorate gingerbread people and make a craft, \$12/child. Pre-register, 662-7802

Cooking Encounters: Ypsi Food Co-op 11 am-3 pm, 312 N. River St., Ypsi. Learn about whole grain baking. 483-1520

Strum and Drum with Steve Osburn: Borders 11 am, 612 E. Liberty. Musical games for children. 668-7652

German Family Christmas: A2 Parks & Rec. 1-4 pm (see 3 Sat)

Orientation: Ypsi Food Co-op 2 pm, 312 N. River St., Ypsi. Learn about the Co-op, how to join, products available. 483-1520

Community High Jazz Ensemble: Little Professor 2:30-3:30 pm, 2513 Jackson Rd. 662-4110

Havdalah Service: Reform Chavurah 7 pm (see 3 Sat)

"Debbie Does Dallas": Ann Arbor Film Co-op 7:30 & 9:30 pm, Angell Hall Aud. A. Debbie's XXX feature debut. \$4. 769-7787



Catch D.C. comic Glen Steer at Mainstreet (see 8 Thu-10 Sat)

Victorian Holiday Ball: Grand Traditions Vintage Dance Academy 8-11 pm, Pittsfield Grange Hall, A2-Saline Rd. Waltzes, polkas, quadrilles, and country dances. Vintage attire encouraged. Live music and refreshments, no partner required. Price includes beginner workshop (1-2 pm) and advanced workshop (2-4 pm), \$18. Pre-register, 429-0014

Arts Choral: U-M School of Music 8 pm, Hill Aud. 763-4726

The RFD Boys: The Ark 8 pm, 637-1/2 S. Main. A2's favorite bluegrass band, \$8.75/\$7.75 members, students, seniors. 761-1800

Kol ha-Kavod in Concert: Hillel 8 pm, Hillel, 1429 Hill St. Hillel's own a cappella group sings a wide variety of Jewish music. \$2. 769-0500

"Jeffrey": Dignity Detroit 8 pm (see 2 Fri)

"Three Hands Clapping": Performance Network 8 pm (see 1 Thu)

"The Three Sisters": U-M School of Music 8 pm (see 1 Thu)

Dance and Related Arts Concert: U-M School of Music 8 pm (see 8 Thu)

Glen Steer: Mainstreet Comedy Showcase 8:30 & 10:30 pm (see 8 Thu)

Blue Vinyl: Cava Java 9:30 pm, 1101 S. University. Solid guitar-fired blues. \$3. 741-5282

Gwen Wells w/The Ron Brooks Trio: Bird of Paradise 9:30 pm (see 9 Fri)

Frank Pahl & Terri Sarris: People Dancing's "Fine. Be That Way" Series 10 pm, \$5 (see 9 Fri)

Cabaret Performance: U-M School of Music 11 pm (see 9 Fri)

11 Sunday

3rd World Handcrafts Sale: SERRV 8:30 am-12:30 pm, Zion Lutheran Church, 1501 W. Liberty. 663-0362

"Make Your Own Backyard Ice Rink" Clinic: A2 Parks & Rec. 10:30 am, West Park, 313 Chapin. 994-2768

Swimmers: A2 Queer Aquatics 11 am (see 4 Sun)

Country Christmas: A2 Parks & Rec. noon-5 pm (see 4 Sun)

Second Sunday Stroll—"Christmas Decorations the Natural Way": A2 Parks & Rec. 1-2:30 pm, Leslie Science Ctr., 1831 Traver. For all ages, \$3 per person/\$20 per family. 662-7802

"Upstairs at Borders": Borders 1-3 pm, 612 E. Liberty. With South Indian violinist Jay Shankar Balan. 668-6652

Alex Art Playday: Generations 1 pm, 337 S. Main. Children can create colorful collages. 662-6615

Gemini: The Ark 1 & 3 pm, 637-1/2 S. Main. Twin brother musicians perform kids shows. \$5. 761-1800

German Family Christmas: A2 Parks & Rec. 1-4 pm (see 3 Sat)

Dr. Snowflake: Little Professor 2-4 pm, 2513 Jackson Rd. Magic with scissors and paper. 662-4110

"The Three Sisters": U-M School of Music 2 pm (see 1 Thu)

Ministry to Gay Men, Bisexuals & Lesbians 2 pm (see 4 Sun)

"Rethinking Racism, Sexism, & Violence": Peace InSight 2:05 pm (see 6 Tue)

Michigan Chamber Players: U-M School of Music 4 pm, Hill Aud. Campus Band. 763-4726

Gay & Bisexual Men of Color Group 4-6 pm (see 4 Sun)

Live Jazz 'n Dinner: University Club 5-7:30 pm (see 4 Sun)

Services for Lesbians, Gay Men & Bisexuals 6 pm (see 4 Sun)

Sunday Jazz: Del Rio 6-9 pm (see 4 Sun)

Men's Coming Out Group: LGBPO CLOSED Group 6:30-8 pm (see 4 Sun)

Beit Kafe (Coffehouse): Hillel 7-9 pm, Hillel, 1429 Hill St. Food, music, and creative expression. 769-0500

Michigan Chamber Players: U-M School of Music 7 pm, Recital Hall. Brass ensembles. 763-4726

"Three Hands Clapping": Performance Network 7 pm (see 1 Thu)

Meeting: Ypsilanti Lesbian, Gay Men, & Bisexuals' AA 7:30 pm (see 4 Sun)

Israeli Dancing: Hillel 8 pm (see 4 Sun)

A2 Bluestage: Blind Pig 9 pm (see 4 Sun)

Paul Finkbeiner's Jazz Jam Session: Bird of Paradise 9 pm (see 4 Sun)

12 Monday

"Women's Rights & Rhythms" WCBN 88.3 FM 8:30 am. 763-3500

Women's Support Group: LGBPO Open Group 5-7 pm (see 5 Mon)


Teen Les/Bi/Gay Support Group 7 pm (see 5 Mon)

Multiple Sclerosis Support Group 7 pm (see 5 Mon)

Shamanic Journeys: The Seeker 7:30 pm (see 5 Mon)

Social for Lesbians, Bisexuals & Gay Men: Canterbury House 9 pm (see 5 Mon)

Bird of Paradise Orchestra: Bird of Paradise 9 pm (see 5 Mon)



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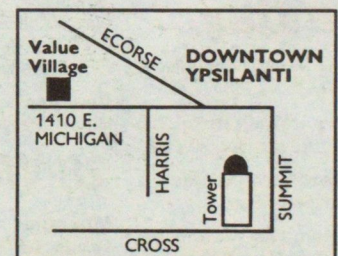
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