

Hey kids! Hold this page up to a mirror to read a secret message from the

Graduate Student Council

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This pause in your busy schedule brought to you by the Graduate Student Council. For more *fun* news from the GSC, subscribe to our email list* and read the Tech ad each Tuesday on Page 3. Also watch for special ads about joining Institute Committees, where you can make your voice heard—without wasting your time.

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Get a load of this.

In "End O'Term" VooDoo



In Memoriam: Richard Nixon — page 5

A touching commemoration of the late President, by Hoyt Bleakley.

Help for the Submissionally Challenged — page 6

Use Raluca's empty-bubble drawings as a vehicle for your own thoughts.

In Memoriam: Kurt Cobain — page 7

A touching commemoration of the late musician, by Jennie López.

In Memoriam: Jack Kirby — page 8

A touching [no, this time, really] commemoration of the late cartoonist, by Henry Chiu.

Letters to the Editor — page 9

Yakity yak. Readers talk back.

21st Century Romance — page 11

Another glimpse into the future from VooDoo's own soothsayer, Jim Bredt.



Your first all-nighter can really have this effect on you.

End O'Term Crunch — page 17

A tasty new product from Hay Nuss, by Ogata & Bleakley.

The Snap Dragon Chronicles — page 18 -

Henry Chiu draws another great installment. (See special "Cliff's Notes" version on page 22.)

Off for a Holiday — page 25

A cryptic crossword puzzle. Do not attempt in one sitting.

Beyond Maximum Horror, Part IV - page 26

We've lost track ourselves. Wait! No! This is the LAST one! Saints be praised! Alledgedly still by Pete Finkelstein.

Large My Secret Cave — page 29

All Hani Sallum ever needed to know he learned in his backyard.















FROM THE PUBLISHER



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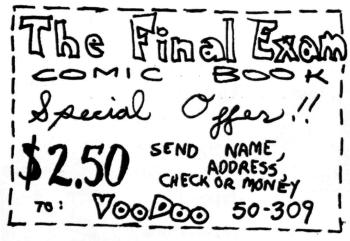
Volume 75, Number 5

VooDoo Magazine MIT Room 50-309 77 Massachusetts Avenue Cambridge, MA 02139 (617) 253-4575 voodoo@mit.edu VooDoo, MIT Journal of Humour, (ISSN 1066-2499) is published "bimonthly" in September, October, December, February, March, and May by Phosphorous Publishing. All material ©1994 VooDoo Magazine and individual authors. Single copy price \$2, six issue mail subscription \$10. Submissions accepted from any past-or-present MIT affiliate. Advertisers: call for rates, page sizes and production deadlines. Any similarity to persons living or dead without satirical intent is coincidence. VooDoo is not printed on recycled paper due to concerns about the environmental impact of the "de-inking" process, but is printed with soy-based inks so if you chew it long enough, it tastes like tofu. Special thanks to the UA FinBoard for financial support. Printed at Chuck River.

VooDoo (voo'doo) n., [Slang c.1920] hubbub; excitement; mischief; an ideal name for a humor magazine.

Factsheet 5 Blurb-o-Tron (corrected, reviewed issue 75.2, from F5#50): Humor from the unwashed students who wind up designing important things like computers and nuclear devices. What the fuck happened? Suddenly, VooDoo got funny. Like, laugh out loud on the tram funny. Is this the same zine? It must be, as there are still things I Just Don't Get. I doesn't matter, I get enough of it. Where else are you going get the Marilyn Monroe/Elvis Presley/JFK connection? Or the results of last year's IgNoble Prizes? College humor at its finest? Yeah, well, maybe. Trades OK/back issues available/paid ads/prints letters/no submissions. Price:\$3.00 Subs:\$10.00 for 6 issues.

Check out our Web Homepage (under construction): http://www.mit.edu:8001/activities/voodoo/voodoo.html





Next Submission Deadline: September 1, 1994.

A Tribute to Richard M. Nixon

by Hoyt Bleakley

President Clinton has asked that we all say a prayer for former President Richard M. Nixon. *VooDoo* suggests the following litany:

Our father who doth eavesdrop upon us,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy executive privilege be preserved;
Thy secrecy be assured,
On Earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread and circus,
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us.

[repeat this last part a few times]
And impeach us not from our corruption,
But deliver us from oversight,
For thine is the administration and the authority
Forever and ever. Amen.



If his balance sheet of Karma is sufficiently positive that the late President eventually makes the ascent into the New Jerusalem, we at *VooDoo* feel that Mr. Nixon and The Lord will have much in common. Consider:

The Lord works in mysterious ways. Nixon had a "secret plan" to end the war in Vietnam.

The Lord said "I am that I am." (Exodus 3:14) Nixon said "I am not a crook."

God helped Moses part the Red Sea. (Exodus 14:21) Nixon helped Kissinger open China. God (through Jesus Christ) said "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth." (Matthew 6:19) Nixon (through John Connally) took the U.S. off the gold standard.

God said "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." (Exodus 20:16) Nixon refused to answer several sub-poenas.

God used the jawbone of an ass to help Samson escape the wrath of the Philistines. (Judges 15:16) Nixon used his little dog Checkers to help escape the

Nixon used his little dog Checkers to help escape the wrath of the voters. (1954)

God's Son's countenance had changed after he rose from the dead. (Matthew 28:3)

Nixon had his countenance changed by all that makeup in the last debate with Kennedy.

After submerging the Egyptian army, God showed the Pharaoh of Egypt that he wouldn't have the Hebrews to kick around any more. (Exodus 14:28)

After losing governorship to Pat Brown, Nixon told California press "you won't have Dick Nixon to kick around anymore."

After realizing that He couldn't help Sodom and Gomorrah, God torched it. (Genesis 19:28) After realizing that he couldn't effectively govern,

Nixon resigned.

God spoke through a burning bush. (Exodus 3:2)
Nixon spoke through a steaming George Bush, the
then GOP chair.

God used Moses to get rid of Aaron for challenging His position as Supreme Being. (Exodus 32:7)

Nixon used Robert Bork to get rid of Archibald Cox for challenging his position as Chief Executive.

Next time: Jesus Christ and Gary Hart, both of whom said "follow me." (Respectively: Galilee, John 1:43; New Hampshire, 1988)





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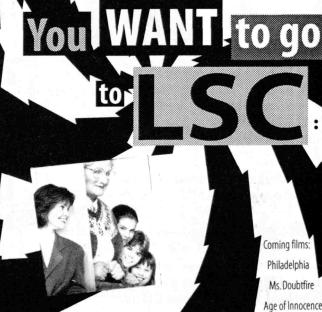
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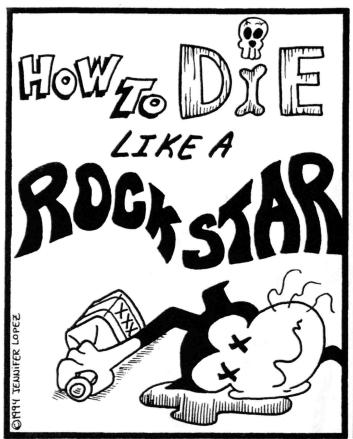


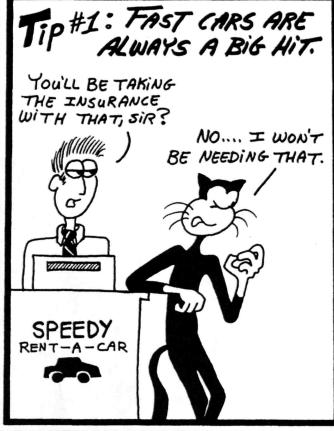


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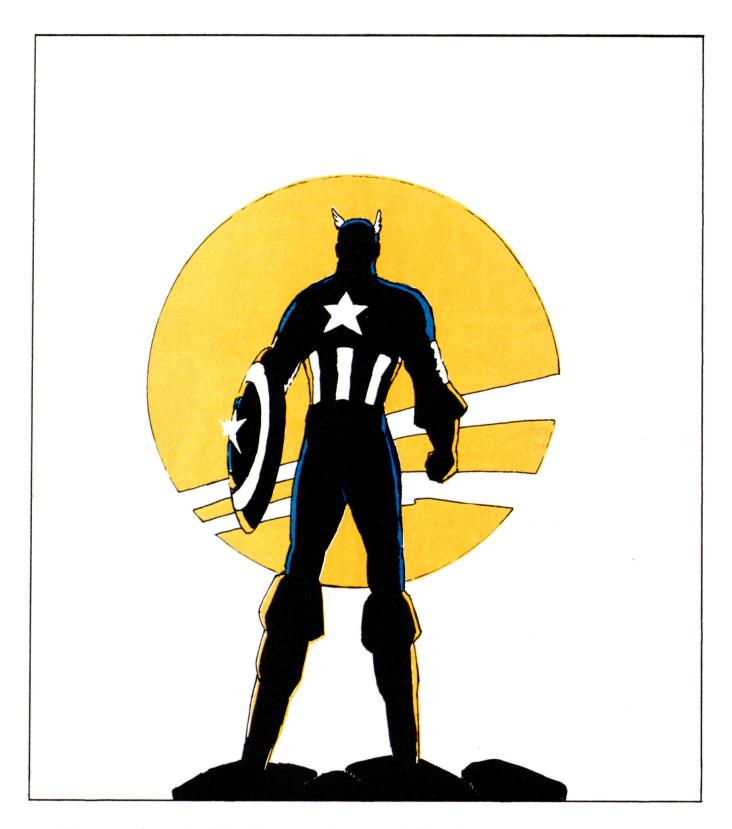












Jack "King" Kirby (1917-1994)

Creator of Captain America, the Fantastic Four, the X-Men, the Incredible Hulk, the Mighty Thor, the Avengers, and countless others. He remains the greatest super-hero in the field of comics.

LETTERS TO VOO DOO

Hey VooDoo-ers,

I'm Hoyt and I'll be the interim Editor of our glorious rag for the next two issues. I'll also be playing one on TV. In my spare time, I build cathedrals and bring water to the desert. I am a four-time winner of the Joseph L. Parker Award for Claiming to Do Things That You Never Actually Did. I have never consensually appeared on Hee-Haw. I do my best work when I'm sleep-deprived. Strike that. Reverse it.

Introductorily, Hoyt

Dear Hoyt,

I have just received your missive. Is your name really Hoyt or are you from Brooklyn and merely in pain?

Jay Keyser



Dear Jay,

Thank you for your recent epistle. I am, in fact, known as Hoyt because that is what my parents had put on my birth certificate. I have never been told of any Brooklyn accents that may have been present in the hospital in Louisville that chilly February morning when I was born. Furthermore, since my father's name is the same plus-or-minus a suffix, I would conclude that my name is not some accident of language, but a deliberate attempt on the part of my father to have his name live beyond his years. Why he didn't build a bridge or create a masterpiece of art instead is not clear.

I would similarly conclude that your name is actually Keyser and that you are not some long-dead turn-of-the-century German leader with relatives in palaces all over Europe and, apparently, bad spelling skills.

Amicably, Hoyt

Dear Hoyt,

I will, of course, believe everything you said about your name. But for godssake don't try to sell me a bridge.

As for my name, it is actually the name of the people who sponsored my father's family coming to America from Russia in 1903. The Keyser spelling is Dutch and the sponsors are, to me, completely unknown, as is the original family name. I do not know what the name of my family was in Russia and I have never tried to find out. I have never been a roots sort of a person.

I do know about Keyser, however. It is the same as latin Caesar and means, of course, "prince." it is cognate with Sanskirt Kuruvila, which, in English, is identical to Cyril. If my parents had had any flair, they might have called me Cyril Keyser, that is, they liked me so much they named me twice.

Best, Jay

Moral of the story: Name your kids Moon Unit, and you'll save them some hassle.

Dearest Phosphorous,

The rumours of my demise were greatly exaggerated too. I'm still going droll in the 1990's. Try this one on for size:

"There is only one thing worse than having your retinas spot-welded with a laser, and that is NOT having your retinas spot-welded with a laser."

There will be more pith from me later.

Oscar Wilde

Dear Phosphorous,

I am writing to object strongly to James Fleming's article in the previous issue. Specifically, I protest vehemently his so-called advice "don't date sisters." This reflects Mr. Fleming's obvious prejudice against West Virginians and others of Appalachian origin. Our home, Appalachia, has a rich and noble history and we do not appreciate being singled out on account of something as personal as our mating practices. We do not deserve this ridicule and harassment by your publication just because our family trees do not branch out in ways that Mr. Fleming would approve.

Indignantly,
Bill E. Bob
Appalachian Students Association

Mr. Fleming responds:

You misunderstand me! It is not my place to judge or harass, merely to advise. I am well aware of Appalachia's rich cultural heritage and find their zeal in stabilizing the region's gene pool noble, to say the least. You might however want to consider that by dating your sister you invite the jealousy and competition of your older brothers and even your father, traditionally given first dibs. This could lead to considerable family tension injurious to a young relationship. I advise extreme caution.

Sincerely,

James Fleming
VooDoo Columnist

Dearly Phosphorescent,

There is only one thing worse than finding a rat turd in your hot dog, and that is not finding the rat turd in your hot dog.

Oscar Meyer Wilde

Dear Editor,

Ouch!

Ouch!!

OOOOOOuch!!!! (mmmphhh...)

...huh? wha...? No! NO! NOOOOOO!

OOOooucchh!

OOOOOOuccch!

00000000000000000UUUUUUUUUWWW

Sincerely,

Michael Fay

Singapore

Dear Editor.

Sure glad I'm not in Singapore!

Sincerely,

David LaMacchia

Cambridge, MA

My Dear Phosphorous,

There is only one thing worse than having a guy named Liam make you famous, and that is not having a guy named Liam make you famous.

Oscar Schindler Wilde

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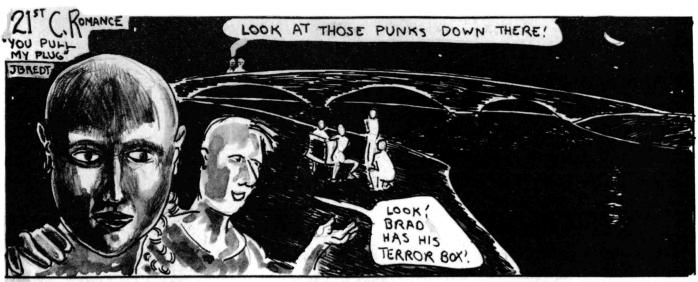
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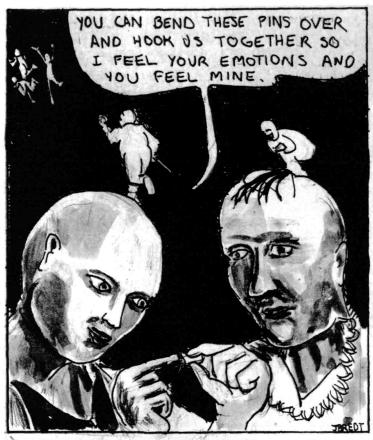


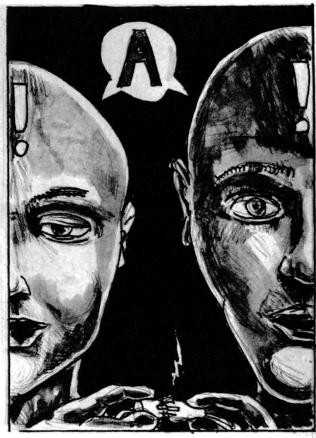








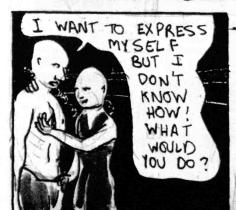














OH, I GET IT! I AM
EXPERIENCING YOUR
DESIRE TO RELATE
AND YOU'RE FEELING
MY DESIRE TO GET
INTO YOUR PANTS!
I WISH I KNEW
HOW TO EXPRESS
MYSELF!















THAT OLD COOT SMASHED MY BIG BROTHER'S TERROR BOX I'M GOING TO DIE WHEN I GET HOME!

Athena

Dancin Mantiloquito

I am sitting on the floor, as happy as usual, loving this hot place that smells almost as good as a course six recitation—not that I would know—I am not course six.

Actually, I do know. This should not offend everyone, really. There are certain people who do not have the typical pungent odor. For example, all of my course six friends (isn't it cool how I write six rather than 6–I am trying to be an MIT rebel–I am a writer, and therefore write the letter–not state it as if it has mathematical connotations. It doesn't. It actually stands for–now, what you've all been waiting for–Computer Science and Electrical Engineering!)

From now on I shall stick only to the topic at hand, which is this empty Athena cluster (what an ugly word—I hereby petition to change the name to room—yes I know, very creative).

Yes, it actually is empty—as usual. That is why I am sitting on the floor.

Now, it is time to let out my anger at the world in the form of humor. Actually, I will just let it out. If it is funny, then it is, and if it isn't, then whatever-no one is forcing you to read my talented writing. So, if you don't like it-fuck you-excuse the language. I really didn't want to resort to such language, but it seemed more apropriate then c'est la vie. But, had I used c'est la vie, I would have been able to show off my knowledge of the French language. Actually, this is not the place to show off (But. I did get 800 on the Math SAT). If my conceit is annoying, then the editor of VooDoo would appreciate letters suggesting my immediate firing. [Eds: Damn straight!] Furthermore, I would not even be offended. I would even like it. So, shall I show off some more-to anger the public-who knows, maybe I can get all of Cambridge and Boston after me. No. it would go on too long.

Now that no one is reading this article anymore, I shall freelance. I will write what is on my mind.

What I meant to say earlier, but something that I did not want people to read unless they deeply cared for me—is that everyone is getting on my nerves. I had said that I hadn't heard of [Eds: name deleted to protect the innocent] and mentioned that I didn't think it was a state, and the person to whom I was speaking to believed

me-even though we were all joking around-that really pissed me off.

Now that that is off my mind, I feel as incredibly releived.

It reflects on the entire world, however, and is the sad reality. People always think the worst about everyone else. It just isn't fair. Why can't people just be nice.

This is just the beggining of my movement for a new world—one in which everyone is nice. If anyone is interested in helping my assemble a military, and prepare for a coup, just contact the editor of *VooDoo*, who will be happy to give you more information.

More is to come!

Now, all of those readers who are not interested in my group, don't tell the police about it—that would hurt my cause and that would not be nice. But, then again, you are not for the nice movement. So, I suggest that you kill roaches if you want to be mean. That way, you will not be arrested yourself. If you tell on me—I don't even want to get into what will happen.



but don't know how?

It's easy! Come to our next meeting:

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Using the Athena command mailmaint or blanche

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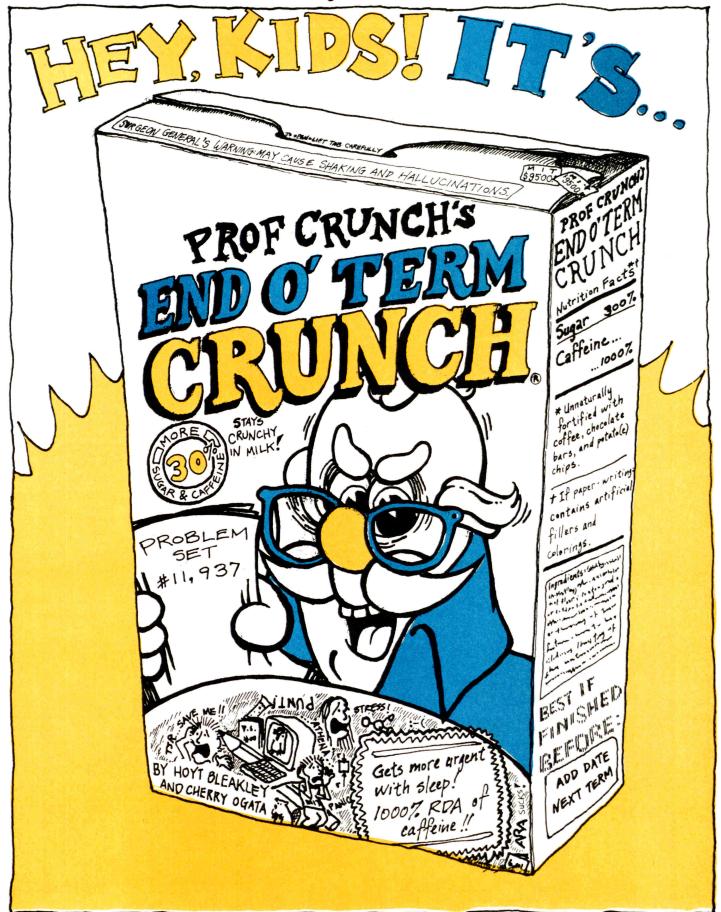


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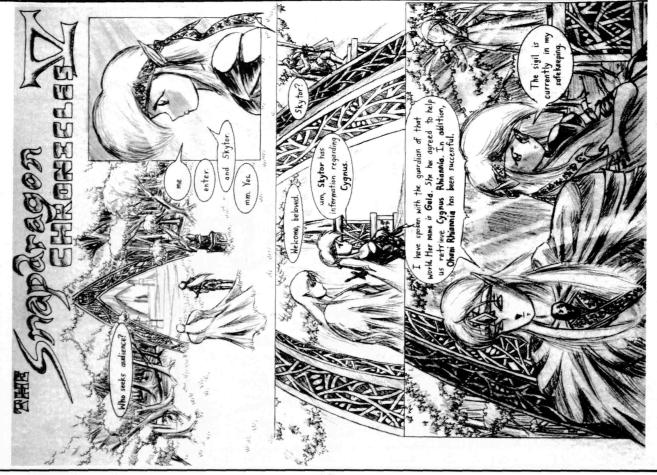
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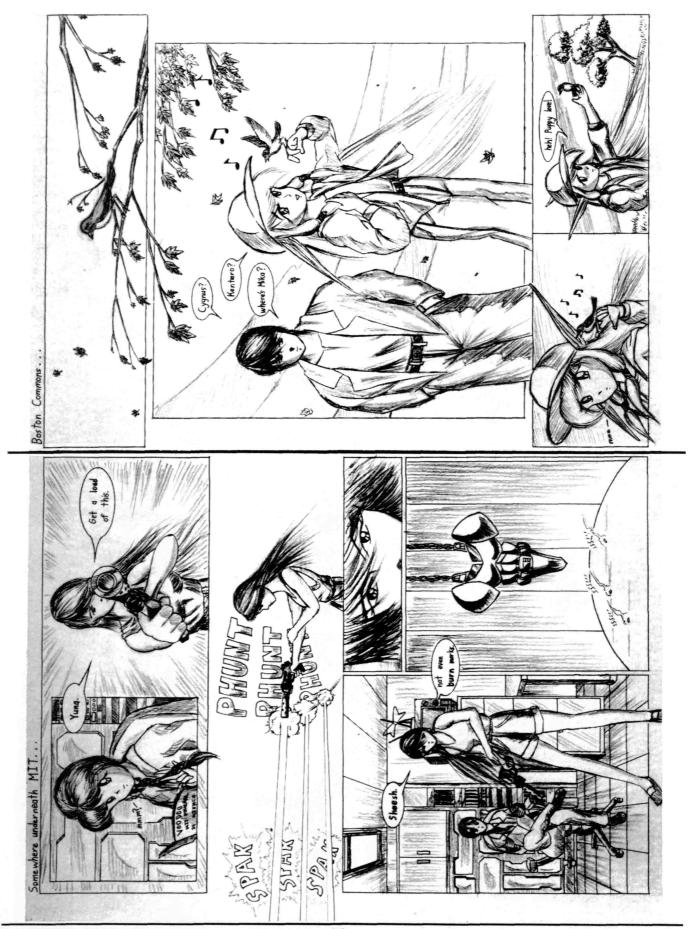
Visit the Reg Day booth for show times and rooms Admission is only \$2 with MIT/WC ID













This is for the scant few people who have exhibited some confusion over my simple and straightforward (hah!) storyline. The first time a character appears or is mentioned, the name will be underlined. Important words are in bold print. "Items" with vague definition will be in quotes. Adjectives, adverbs, and verbs with vague definition will be in italics. SDC stands for, "The Snapdragon Chronicles." Back issues may be obtained from <u>Voodoo</u> magazine (information is located near the front of the magazine - your best bet is to call or email). For questions, comments, or sightings of rodents of unusual size, send email to chiutech@mit.edu

SDC #1 - Kentaro Kawanishi and Cygnus Rhiannia are introduced. Kentaro is shown to have a "healing factor" - he heals extremely fast. The reason behind this will be revealed in an upcoming issue. Cygnus is shown to be very puissant with her sword. This is during the summer before Kentaro's freshman year at MIT. Another woman of Cygnus' race is present briefly as well - she reappears in slightly more detail in the next issue.

SDC #2 - The woman who appeared briefly in the last issue reappears briefly in this issue. Her name is Ohani Rhiannia, and she is the older sister of Cygnus Rhiannia. Cygnus returns to Earth, via a "gate" that materializes in the alleyways of Boston's chinatown district. A four-armed demon also manages to use the gate opened by Cygnus to enter Earth. A battle ensues, and Kentaro is hurt pretty bad. In desperation, Cygnus uses her "gatekey" to summon Skytor, a very powerful warrior. Skytor easily defeats the demon, but now Cygnus is stranded on Earth due to the fact that in using the gatekey to summon Skytor, she has effectively hurled it across to wherever Skytor was at previously. Skytor's method of gate travel does not allow him to bring others. Before Skytor leaves, he gives Cygnus a ring which makes her ears unnoticeable to normal eyes. He also mentions Horrin, who apparently is his chief enemy.

SDC #3 - Kentaro and Cygnus find a lost little girl of around six to eight years old in downtown Boston. Her name is Mika and she exhibits strange abilities - she can cut through things with her fingertips and she can see Cygnus' ears (inferring that she has superior vision). Her past is very sketchy. They take care of her for a while. At a later date, they are in a mall when all of sudden a woman starts attacking Mika. This woman seems to have the same powers as Mika.

SDC #4 - Cygnus reveals herself as being of a race known as the Vanir. Cygnus battles the woman to a stalemate, and then Kentaro arrives with another lady, Professor Yuna. As it turns out, Mika is an acronym for Mutagen Integrated Karyogamatic Android. She is an accidental clone of Yuna made possible by a mysterious mutagen that was found a long time ago in Yuna's younger days. The attacking woman's name is Kachina, once Mika II, and originally Katrina. Kachina is a human being with the mutagen integrated into her system. Kachina had been a normal woman, assisting Professor Yuna in a basement laboratory until a certain government agency came to confiscate Yuna's research with the mysterious mutagen. Kachina was mortally wounded, and as she laying dying Yuna put the mutagen into her system. Kachina thus gained powers similar to Mika's. Kachina was then captured and brainwashed by the government for a period of time, but regained her former sense of being upon seeing the exoskeleton suit that both she and Yuna had been developing. Both Mika and Kachina can emit a kaon field, mainly from their fingers. Kaons are unstable mesons produced from high energy particle collisions. The intensity of the kaon field that they can produce is extremely high - as a result Professor Yuna and Kachina had developed a way to harness that power. The exoskeleton suit is powered by the kaon field emitted from Kachina's body. On the last page, Kachina and Mika make up, and then Kachina warns of another mutagen based organism that the government this time is trying to make. MICA (Mutagen Integrated Cybernetic Android).

SDC #5 (this one!) - This is a plethora of different things going on in different places at roughly the same time. Pages (1&2) Ohani Rhiannia, Skytor, and some unidentified Vanir are discussing plans for the retrieval of Cygnus Rhiannia from Earth. Page (3) Some hapless adventurers are trying to take on Horrin (briefly mentioned in SDC#2) with the aid of the mystical, "Sword of Intrinsic Harmony". Page (4) Government Agents are checking up on the development of MICA (Mutagen Integrated Cybernetic Android). The chief developer happens to be a Dr. Cronon. Page (5) Professor Yuna and Kachina are playing with guns while blabbing away about the exoskeleton. Page (6) Kentaro and Cygnus. Cygnus is listening to a bird. Pages (7&8) Mika sees a boy about her age walking a puppy. The boy's name is Walter. This is his first appearance.

Hope you enjoyed reading it as much as al did creating it,

E



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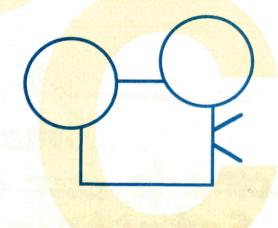
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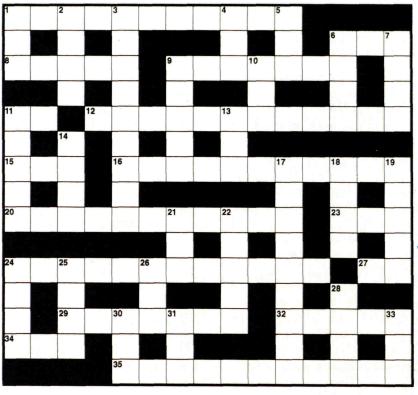
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Off for a Holiday

A Cryptic Crossword Puzzle by Fawn R. Wilkes Puzzle Page Editor -- Erwin W. Flask





ACROSS

- 1 The perfect day to ferment a revolution? (5,2,4)
- 6 See 27 across
- 8 See 29 across
- 9 Did hope ail her crack-up, or her small-town prince's? (7)
- 11 See 21 down
- 12 In Baltimore, a baby bird says thanks in May... (3,6,3)
- 15 ...and goes back to see its inheritance. (3)
- 16 Was Prof's "oh, nice award!" a crazy remark? Did it give him a place to sit, or work? (5,1,5)
- 20 and 33 down A comic prince may spoon over his fork today? (3.3.5.3)
- 23 His rival found love here with a point, but it was nothing to Caesar. (3)
- 24 Why is Tom so calm? Did he hear a cue mixed into virgin angst? (12)
- 27 and 6 across Santa gets his exams confused, while Mrs.
- Claus celebrates their divorce. (2-3) 29 and 8 across Observe this with Mexican fireworks in a
- 29 and 8 across Observe this with Mexican fireworks in a Cajun's leaky pirogue, or shatter the Douce Bay icon. (5,2,5)
- 32 Stay away! It sounds empty. (5)
- 34 See what he says if you do hit a Homer. (3)
- 35 See 18 down

DOWN

- 1 Would the FBI mess with a little one? (3)
- 2 That's a big apple in that ox. Is he stoned? (4)
- 3 It's a spooky day to pull for tapered Jack. We loan hue to him, sort of. (9)
- 4 Show disgust? If you have to with this, it's hard! (3)
- 5 and 24 down The King and I are bound to celebrate this.
- 6 and 33 down "Help out for this one" sounds like a cry for assistance. (4,3)

- 7 If Fi-fi does it up without pause, this'll fix her! (4)
- 9 In 33s like this, some were more 28. (2,3)
- 10 Some got what I am, you see? (3)
- 11 The mold I've seen on this at Princeton or Yale worried the doctor. (3,2)
- 13 Remember how steady this wobbly movement was? (3)
- 14 and 31 down 19, soldier! It might make your hair do this. (4,3)
- 17 A Letterman's new jacket probably has this. (3,2,4)
- 18 and 35 across A tardy ski captain was bewildered to be marching up Broadway by himself. (4,8,3)
- 19 More laxative? Look, just take it easy. (5)
- 21 and 11 across The harbor, you'll see one, yes. But not that famous cape! (3,2)
- 22 They're new, they're hot, but stars like this are hard to live with. (5)
- 24 See 5 down
- 25 Pass through it in any confusion. (4)
- 26 Was it this in Rome 9? (3)
- 28 This symbol denotes a daring spirit, see? (4)
- 30 Deliver this (a pin-up) to your mailman? Rover might if you tell him 26. (3)
- 31 See 14
- 33 See 6 down or 20 across

This is a Cryptic crossword puzzle, sometimes called "English-style," if that helps any. Squint cross-eyed at the clues for anagrams ('chopped', 'sorted', 'crazy', 'dizzy', etc.), hidden answers split across clue words ('see', 'look'), punning definitions, sounded-out letters (an 'eye' for an 'I') and other abominations. The theme of this one is "Non-existent Holidays". Good luck. Do your problem sets first! EWF

Answer on page 30.

Beyond Maximum Horror, part IV

by Pete Finkelstein

Within an hour Steele was back on the road, the station wagon's radial tires once again biting off and bolting great grey-black gobs of pavement in an orgy of free-wheelin', keep-on-truckin', heck-bent-for-leather motoring. But this time the Colonel's station wagon/trailer convoy sported a grim load, a forlorn parody of the shoes and streamers which adorn the limousine carrying happy Bride and Groom to their pleasure bed in a ski resort at Sun Valley: The corpse of Mommie Profundis bounced along, head to the road, attached by leather thongs wrapped securely about her ankles to the gridwork supporting the trailer's tail lights. Two sections of roof rain-gutter material were strapped to her bare chest; the gutters led upward and inside the trailer, where several barrels of cow's milk sat beside the nuclear atom bomb. A series of siphons sprouted from the barrels and fed the downward-sloping gutters with rich, whole pasteurized milk. Creamy rivulets of milk flowed smoothly down the troughs, bathed Mommie Profundis' cool, rhythmically flopping bosom, then spilled out into the road behind the speeding station wagon/U-Haul cavalcade. Steele was trolling, his Evenrud 450 horsepower outboard and 17 foot fiberglass Conestoga speedboat masquerading playfully as automobile and trailer. But his prey on this night of destiny was not a majestic, varicolored trout which leaps from the cool blue water and flops about in mute agony on the crafty fisherman's hook.

Tonight his prey was the Babe.

And to catch a Babe, you need mother's milk... and plenty of it.

Well, it wasn't precisely mother's milk (although I guess cows can be mommies just like people can), but if Baby Vetterlein were prowling the territory anywhere within a few hundred miles of Steele's convoy (and recent intelligence from Ted Kablansky at the White House Information Office suggested that this was, indeed, the case), then the chances were good that the siren's call of His earth-mother's succulent bosom would draw the Unholy Infant into an encounter with Steele.

The miles rolled by, good wholesome milk

trickling down the Life Troughs and sowing the richly-scented maternal bait into the Nevada hardpan. Jonathan Steele watched the nightland, adjusting his trolling speed periodically, and reflected on the sordid nightmare of human life: Humans killing each other, yielding their souls to an Alien God who pined for their complete Humans forfeiting whatever was glorious and noble in them, sinking to their scabrous knees and drinking of corruption, just because a buffed-up Infant from the unfathomable depths of cosmic Madness had bidden them betray their fellows or die! Puny humans! A Being had finally wandered into town with the power to exploit the abject, cringing servility of humankind. Oh, you could have seen it coming. It had to have happened sometime. In fact, anyone with an ounce of foresight would have slit his (or her) own throat long ago, as an act of simple common sense and prudence, in anticipation of the advent of a Being with such monstrous abilities and dark talents. A thin coating of tears washed across the gray-green depths of Steele's eyes: Dear humans, sweet dear humans. How fragile are ye! To enhance his aural environment and foster the bitter-sweet brown study which was rapidly absorbing his unlawful warrior's soul, Steele turned on the station wagon's old, reliable Philco radio. He began to sway back and forth to the lovely, haunting strains of Alberico's Concerto No. 5 for Piano and Banjo in G Minor, his eyes mist-cloaked pools in the reflected dashboard lights, the road hypnotically piercing his vision like the video graphics in one of those penny arcade racing games the kids like so much these days, his mind spiraling in on itself in ever tighter vortices of pure ingrown self-fondling thought, his big swollen head-

The attack came from the right rear.

Baby Vetterlein hit the trailer like a soft, baby-shaped piledriver. The car flew up on two wheels like one of Joey Chitwood's stunt cars, then flipped over with a scream of metal on asphalt. The flimsy case-hardened titanium/metalonium-alloy hook-in-eyeball rigging which linked the trailer to the station wagon buckled and then snapped; the

trailer teetered precariously, the contents within shifting and tumbling about, then flopped over on its side. The station wagon skidded upside down several vards, then burst into glorious flame. Jonathan Steele frantically released himself from the chest harness which he wore to ensure safe motoring, but before he could wriggle his way out of the inverted automobile, a roiling ball of flame shot from underneath the hood of the car and bathed his bewildered, what's-going-on-here head in searing heat. Maybe you've never been in a flash fire, Gentle Reader, but I have, and let me tell you man-to-man that I'm not gonna let you open that bulkhead door and kill us all. The flesh on Steele's face, unaccustomed to the trauma which sheets of torrential flame can inflict, spot-melted and sealed shut the more important of the portals through which the body selfishly helps itself to life-nurturing oxygen: namely, the nostrils and the mouth-hole.

Steele flopped out of the twisted car, the leatherette upholstery bubbling and dripping blistering runnels from the now in cruel. fully-involved interior, and desperately began searching the ground around him for a piece of glass. But then he noticed (his flame-crisped nose wrinkling in distaste) that the glass on the ground was all... yucky and dirty and stuff. Miraculously, the window on the driver's side of the car had remained intact. Steele's fingertips probed the window, sought pointless purchase, drummed a catchy little impromptu staccato... then he quit fooling around and slammed his fist through the glass. He wrenched a jagged shard of the shattered saf-t-glass from the window frame. the gleaming edge slicing deep into his burned and bloody palm, and applied the pointy tip of the shard to his melted lips. He rammed the point home and, with a good field nurse's steady, no-nonsense precision, began neatly sawing back and forth to cut an opening for the flow of air.

Ah, it surely felt good to breath again! And the air was so sweet and pure tonight!

He turned his attention to the trailer... and Baby Vetterlein. The Babe stood over His mother, splashing viscous, silky sheets of the cow's milk on her road-worn body and sucking it into His fetid innards. Steele examined his legs, and found to his pleasant surprise that, other than the splintered tibia protruding through the skin of his right shin, they were more or less all right. If only he could reach the Detonation Plunger before Baby Vetter-

lein sated His lordly hunger and reached that item on the evening's agenda which called for the extinguishing of Steele's life! Steele dragged himself to the door of the trailer, then slithered inside. The Atom Bomb appeared to be intact, its supply of Nucleonium 108 still stowed safely inside (where it bubbled and gleamed with an unearthly radiance). Jonathan Steele glanced back at the foul Babe.

Baby Vetterlein had ceased his frenzied, jubilant feasting and was watching Steele. And He was kind of... well, pantomiming an impatient glance at His wristwatch, or at least the place on His pulsating biomass where a wristwatch might have been mounted with the least inconvenience. The gesture might even have been comic, if the desperate circumstances hadn't tainted the merriment and gaiety with the shadow of the end of all human life on earth.

Baby Vetterlein tapped the ground with a lumpy appendage and gazed heavenward in exaggerated exasperation.

Steele reached the Explosion Plunger, pulled up the handle, then paused dramatically to deliver a final defiant line to Baby Vetterlein. It was supposed to come out, "I'll save a place for You when I get to Hell," but because of the massive facial trauma he had suffered during the car fire, the declaration of reckless, manly bravado kind of dripped out of his shredded-sausage lips and ended up sounding something like,

"Do you like gelatin, Andy?"

Col. Jonathan Steele pushed the plunger down.

And nothing happened.

Steele looked at the Atom Bomb with bemused incredulity. How ironic, he thought. The product of Man's vaunted technology, his ultimate tool of destruction and defense, his sole means of deliverance from an alien Power beyond all understanding, dry-firing like a wizened old night watchman's poorly maintained service revolver. Baby Vetterlein climbed — nay, oozed — into the trailer, His slaughter-house breath billowing out in great, gutcramping clouds, His eyes burning the liquid sulfur red of molten lava pits. And the last words Steele heard on this earth sputtered from the Babe's repulsive, grinning, quasi-humanoid lips:

"Here, let me give you a hand with that."

And in the twinkling of an eye, Happy Nuclear Daylight reigned triumphant in the Nevada nightworld once again.

Well, you probably could have guessed it: Baby Vetterlein was born of the foul star-stuff which churns and gurgles inside the quasars endlessly (and pointlessly) \mathbf{at} unreachable boundaries of the Universe. The energy released by the Atom Bomb, far from destroying Him, simply empowered Him all the more. He drank it in, digested it, and worked it into the fiber of His blasphemous being. He grew to be a Super Baby, walking about like a new Colossus, stomping on things and killing people even more ruthlessly than before. Well, at this point people pretty much gave up. No one even felt like dressing for dinner as we are accustomed to doing in civilized lands where savagery has been subdued. The World just ... collapsed inward on itself, much as a once light and fluffy souffle will sag lifelessly in the oven after Deke and the Boys have come stomping through the kitchen like they



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And, of course, once all the anti-Babe humans had been dispatched, their eyes hopeless, their hearts breaking, their mouths screaming, the Babe turned to eliminating His disciples. The work went much faster now because of Baby Vetterlein's tremendous bigness. He was really astoundingly large. No kidding. He crushed, maimed, tortured, harassed.... And before long, the stain of human life had been wiped from the countertop of Existence, and Planet Earth was His alone.

Oh, wait. I forgot to tell you about the small, courageous, hearty band of humans who escaped to the veritable plethora of other inhabitable planets in our solar system and galaxy via a magnetic space boat. Their inspiring journey of hope and endurance is fodder enough for a whole other story.

But I'm guessing that, at this point, you wouldn't read that story if it meant you could ransom your grandma's soul from Hell.



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Large My Secret Cave

by Hani Sallum

One fine morning when I was about six, I got up with the sun and set forth to my favorite childhood place: Broman's Hill, out in the land behind my parent's house.

It was Summer, and I usually played all day. I was the only person my age around, so I had to make do with my own company. That was no problem though. I spent many happy hours alone, and I never had an argument, a disagreement, or a fight.

This morning would prove to be different in all respects. When I got to the hill, I decided that I would dig a hole in the far side of the hill and make a tunnel all the way to the other side. I was sure this would only take a few hours, and, of course, it had that six-year-old appeal.

Of course, the appeal wore off eventually as I realized the amount of work that would be involved, and I settled on just searching aimlessly for buried treasure that some old pirate, who had managed to get his frigate moving at such a clip that when it hit shore it slid two hundred miles inland to where my hometown was and, having no other place to put it, buried it here, later putting a hill over it for good measure.

I had used to share these theories with my parents and older siblings when I had been younger than six (say, five and a half), but by this time I knew better than to even try to explain the underlying logic. In their eyes a pirate would have no reason to ram a perfectly good boat into a beach and try to keep it going as long as possible, but if I were a pirate, with a horde of treasure I might add, I would. Not for some logical reason, but the old six-year-old axiom: Just to see if you can do it.

The digging was good; it was a dry day and hadn't rained for weeks. I thought about turning back for a shovel on the way to the hill, but now it was obvious that I wouldn't need it. Besides, there's that other six-year-old axiom: You haven't done anything worthwhile unless you have gotten dirty doing it.

I had dug for a good half hour, a large pile of displaced earth at my side, when I felt something hit my hand. Before I could stop myself, I had dug another handful of dirt, and something looped effortlessly around my right ring finger.

At first I was scared, thinking I had been bitten by a snake. The snake was soon replaced by the image of an angry creature who lived in the hill and was peeved at my ruining his home.

Neither of these, to my relief, turned out to be so. Instead, my wild fantasy had become reality.

There was a ring around my finger.

I pulled my hand away from the hole in the hill, and felt the ring resist slightly, then slowly give way to the force of my hand. I drew my hand close to my face to examine the ring.

It was exquisite. It was of a metal I had never seen. Where I wiped away the dust a shiny slate color shone, and was extremely smooth to the touch.

It must have been in the ground for hundreds of years, yet not a trace of aging showed on it. It was seamless metal all around, and although it was rather big, it still stayed on my ring finger.

On the top of the ring, the part which I pulled from the hill, was a small loop which ran through a tiny notched rod no more than an inch and a half long. I picked at the dirt and clay which caked it, and saw that thin writing ran down the rod. My eyes would not focus on the writing, it was much to small to see. I could only assume it was the words to some enchantment of sorts.

The rod was of the same metal as the ring, but thicker than the ring's small width. It jingled quietly against the ring as I moved my hand around, and I fancied that men hundreds of years in the past new the sound well; knew the sound of the ring which belonged to that daring pirate and sorcerer... knew it and feared it.

It's my ring now.

I examined the ring for a long time, then looked at the hole. It went into the hill, as if I still subconsciously wanted to dig all the way through. And suddenly I did. Only a foot in and I had found this incredible ring. Who knew what I would find if I kept going?

I began digging again, faster now. I had no idea what to expect, but I was ready to find anything.

Or so I thought.

On my third handful of soft earth an object fell out of the side of the hole. I nearly wet myself out of excitement, then I did wet myself out of fear.

The thing rolled out and bumped against my knee. It was roughly oblique; actually, it looked like a very large egg, although it was dark gray. It was undoubtedly the same metal as the ring, but not nearly as shiny. The thing was covered with thick grooves like some tiny relief globe, and spun roughly off center when it hit my knee. There was something that resembled a soda-siphon top on one end of it, with a tiny hole in it's side. I would later realize that the rod on the ring probably fit in it.

As the object hit the ground, a thin piece of bluish metal seemed to propel itself away from the object, landing on my right. It was about the same length as the object, but not nearly as wide. As I looked at it, I noticed plain white writing on it. The words were:

34802 ARMY MUNITIONS WASHINGTON BASE.

My parents were always proud that I was fairly quick on the uptake, and at that moment I was too. At that point, I guessed I had about two, maybe three seconds, to haul ass before that grenade went off. Luckily, I had not begun my hole at the base of the hill, and as I leapt back in fear, I fell below the level of the hole.

The explosive in the grenade detonated, covering me with thick dust and turning me temporarily deaf. When I knew for certain I was still alive, I took in a tentative breath. I breathed in a lot of dust, and I coughed non-stop for a full minute. The smell of burnt air surrounded me, and could see a few torn pieces of shrapnel which had once been the housing of the grenade.

Now, when any other normal grown-up would have been playing the gibbering idiot, I calmly got up and looked at my hole. When you're six, you don't realize what it's like to come close to death. Indeed, in the moment before the grenade went off my entire life had flashed before me, but I can't say I really noticed it, seeing as my life had only been going on for a few years, and it went by so fast it didn't register.

And, of course there was the third six-year-old axiom: If you're still okay, then there's no reason to go home yet...

Looking at my hole I saw it had grown some. A lot, really. In fact it seemed to bore straight into the hill. For a second, I thought I had achieved my original goal to dig all the way through, but I saw that this was not so. But, I did want to see what was inside, so I gathered my courage and climbed in

The hole was wide enough to allow easy crawling room, and I soon found myself in a large open space. The hill was evidently hollow.

I spent the rest of the day at that artificial cave, poking through everything that was there (after running home and fetching a flashlight). I found eight crates of grenades like the one I had stumbled upon, a crate containing ten M-16's, four crates of M-16 clips, a case containing a stand-mounted M-60, three crates of ammo belts for the M-60, a long cylinder containing a collapsible Light Antitank Weapon, and five crates of missiles. In addition, there was a locker containing several bulletproof vests, boots, pants, infrared goggles, and rations. The rations turned out to be bad, but I had soon replaced them with my own from home.

And as my childhood continued I spent many hours in that old hidden munitions dump which was no longer quite so hidden. I learned a great deal about wars from what was in that old bunker, and it still holds a sense of magic, even from so far away; that magic I felt when I had first entered. And when I think about the fact that I might not ever see it again, I feel as if an old friend has moved away. I mean, this whole thing wasn't entirely my fault, if that dummy Philip hadn't asked to see the LAW during recess and accidentally shot it off before I even had chance to show everyone at show-and-tell, I might not be spending this time in the reformatorium.

Answers to "Off for a Holiday" from page 25:

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