

Friday, January 13, 1984

Good Italian eats,
but they won't break
your heart.
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The Friday Edition

The weekly arts and entertainment newsmagazine

Bam!

Whammo!

Just who are these masked Maggots?

Spray-painted on a wall in the alleyway between the Atrium Building and Newberry's, some artsy latterday Vandal has written: "Eugene, home of the Art Midgets."

Most others might have cracked underfoot at that comment, but Art Maggot Billy Haddock just doubles over in laughter. "Yeah, I saw that," he says. "Hey, any response, even a bad response incites somebody to do something."

Who are these Art Maggots and why do they incite people to paint on walls?

**Story by Cort Fernald
Photos by Mark Pynes**

According to "Bad to the Bone," the "proud history" of the Art Maggots as chronicled in the Art Maggots' newsletter, they "shlepped into existense" (sic) in Eugene around 1977. From such humble beginnings, they say, paraphrasing ZZ Top, they are bad — nationwide. That should be amended, the Art Maggots are bad — world-wide.

The house is on the west side of Willamette Street — the heartland of Eugene suburbia. There are kids coming home from school, kids on bikes, kids yelling: "Yoo, Scooter, how 'bout some videos?" and teens slowly walking arm in arm, nestling acned cheeks. At dusk young mothers push pacifiers into the mouths of their new babes, wedge their diaper-fat bottoms into walkers and wheel the little buggers all over the neighborhood. And in this neighborhood live the Art Maggots, hat-

ching their insidious designs and plotting their subversive intent "ars gratia ars."

The house is an anonymous off-beige, off-bronze two-tone one-story run-of-the-mill, no frills (front lawn with a few bushes and one tree, attached garage with concrete driveway and black sedan parked out front) type of house. It lacks only the overturned trike to be the home of John and Jill Doe. John sells State Farm insurance. Jill is a perky homemaker. Snotty-nosed little Jimmy Doe makes mudpies in the backyard.

A sparse-limbed, altogether bedraggled Christmas tree stands before the picture window and dominates the livingroom. Nothing really incongruous about this, except the season for indoor forestry has long since passed. The livingroom is furnished in minimalist 1950s decor. It's very German.

The dish rags are all neatly hung on the dish rack, a clean and efficient kitchen. In an adjacent room, though, is a drafting table, a round table and walls stocked with supplies. Posters, Art Maggot and others, grace the walls. The room has the look and feel of creative clutter.

Mick "Chud" Chudy, Joan DeLoretto, Haddock, Rudy Fox and other Art Maggots circulate about the house. Randy Jack, guitarist with The Milkmen and Cyndee Domke, the band's manager, are at the house to see about the poster for the next Milkmen gig.

"One thing about our group," says Chud, "is that we like to remain anonymous to a certain extent."

"This is a small town and at least Mick and I are associated with the Mag-

gots," Haddock says. "We do a lot of business so we're not totally anonymous."

Vicki Bruno comes in. "Ah, home sweet home," she says. "Nothing like suburbia."

In the beginning of the Art Maggots there were two houses, creative people and a collective obsession for expression. While the Art Maggots were starting up, the Foamlords and other adventuresome musical groups like the Symbiotics were also starting up.

"We just ended up in a situation where we had a bunch of creative people living in two houses right next door to each other and just by the way the people were, getting to be good friends and sitting around the table, we could start doing things together and work on some things," Haddock says.

"With every new movement in music there is a new movement in art that goes along with it," Chud says. "We were diving into a new art form."

How did this group of creative people come to be called Art Maggots? That's as much an accident as the spontaneous generation that spawned the founding maggots.

During the early days the Art Maggots were prolific in producing anonymous art — provocative flyers that would suddenly appear on walls and telephone poles. While working on a word and photo collage for a flyer, Haddock happened to put together the words "art" and "maggot." And like Laszlo Toth's hammer stroke on Michelangelo's *Pieta*, the Eugene art scene was never the same.

The years have seen some Art Mag-

gots come, go and proliferate. Neither Haddock or Chud dare venture a guess how many practicing Art Maggots now exist, but, like the maggots they are, they are multiplying at an alarming rate.

"It's all starting to come back together again," Haddock says. "Things splintered up for awhile. Now it's more cohesive. Not necessarily that everybody's coming back, people are still pretty spread out."

"There's a chapter of the Maggots in Austin, Texas," Chud says, "that does a lot of work with bands — does posters and stuff."

The Austin chapter was founded by Haddock who moved to Austin and within a year was working with five or six people on Art Maggot projects. He's proud of the fact the Austin Art Maggots have festered, er, flourished even after he returned to Eugene last year.

The Art Maggots are actually known the world over. Individual Art Maggots have toured the Continent distributing Art Maggot flyers and stickers. T-Bone Williams, an Art Maggot from Chicago, Ill., left cards and stickers in East Germany, Poland, Moscow and Leningrad. There are Art Maggots residing in France. The Art Maggots are indeed bad — world-wide.

"Joan went to London with a lot of flyers (Maggot stuff)," Chud says, "and put them up and left around. And this button (It's pinned to his lapel, he shows it.) we gave out at the (Portland) Stray Cats show. In 1982 we rented a bus and took 50 Art Maggots up. We had reserved seats by the stage. We

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