

Now & Then Editorial

UPPER LEFT EDGE

In this issue we talk about a lot of crazy things. Things our local, state and national leaders are doing to us and some crazy things we do to our selves.

One of the things that have just gotten too crazy is Trojan. After years of leaks, shutdowns, fines and protests, even the NRC has had enough. Two high level officials have publicly expressed doubt about the wisdom of keeping Trojan plugged in for one more day let alone four more years.

Lloyd Marbet has been arrested TWICE. We recommend the story by Hope Harris in the North Coast Times Eagle, it talks a lot about what it means to still be crazy enough after all these years to think you can make a difference.

Also in this issue Bill Redden from PDX in Portland sends us a story about folks in Lincoln City fighting more craziness of a different kind.

More Stuff. . .

We recieved a post card from France, from non-other the than Wickland - correspondent 'de foreign. It said on one side, "Liberty, Equality, and Absurdity" with a Statue of Liberty off to one side. He is truly a strange man.

Also in the mail was a notice from Gino Sky about his new book "Near the Postcard Beautiful", a series of short stories by the Creator of the Cowboy Buddha. It is available from Floating Ink Books for \$9.95 plus \$1.75 postage and handling. You can order from Wild Dog Construction, P.O. Box 1084 Boise, Idaho 83701. Yet another truly strange man.

Speaking of strange, our own local lawpersons have been slapping leather again, among other things. More about this in next issue; regretfully the stories continue. . .

And speaking of people not getting it - Pack it in Packwood! I'm sorry, but your services are no longer required. Walk away with what you have left of your dignity, and your millions in campaign contributions. Don't put the people of your party and your state through this ugly procedure of recall or ethics committees. If you are worried about losing a Republican Senate seat, Norma Paulus would be a good replacement, since the "most exclusive club" in the world has recently installed a Women's Room.

We would like to welcome our new advertisers/friends Third Eye in Portland, and The Cannes Cinema in Seaside. Cannes is doing a foreign film series for us these days, and even though you have already missed "Howards End" (as good a shot for the Oscars as any), you can still catch "DanZon" in January. (See the review we stole from the Village Voice with permission in this issue.)

So welcome to issue Ten. As though you didn't notice, we have not only more stuff, but more copies, 5,000 this month!!! So, maybe you can send a copy to someone who lives far away, but whom you like anyway. We would like to thank our readers/friends for the support in the subscription area. We now send The Edge to Alaska, Hawaii,



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Subscriptions are now \$10 (We are getting bigger) a year.

Australia, and even Colorado (talk about far away places.... we do in fact support the boycott of Colorado, but only \$\$ not information.)

We also thank our farsighted advertising customers for the growing interest in The Edge. If it works, do it.

Behind the Times

Michael Burgess

The more closely we examine our world, the clearer it becomes that the ends of things are in their beginnings, waving like Burma Shave signs from the edge of our karma. Life teaches, if nothing else, that no wheels grind finer than than those we set in motion by our actions. To learn that the unfolding of our personal creation is the unravelling of cause and effect does not make the mysteries less mysterious, only more intimate and charming.

An elaborate and largely ignored ritual surrounds the birth of the new year. The capstone of the holy days is the winter solstice, a geophysical cusp marking the return of the Light. It is no accident of the calendar that the season is given over to sharing food, considering the roots of whyness, and renewing what remains of our resolve. The dead of winter confronts us with our belief systems. The holyness comes from overlaying them onto reality and finding, once again, our place in the dreamworks of creation. This in mind, a place should be made in tradition for the epiphany of John von Neumann.

Von Neumann was a mathematician, the inventor of the computer as we know it, a pioneer in cybernetics, and coinventor of game theory and quantum logic. His book, The Mathematical Foundations of Quantum Mechanics, is called 'the quantum Bible'. In 1932, von Neumann set out to discover why there is anything. It may be easy to take the universe for granted, but it is not written anywhere in accepted theory that there must be so much as a single quark, let alone a closed and unbounded universe of four dimensional space/time expanding in all directions at nearly the velocity of light.

From quantum electrodynamics, the most successful idea in the history of science, von Neumann knew that, behind the boggling diversity of appearances, the universe is homogenous---composed entirely of quantum stuff, each bit of which is like every other. For reasons not known and in ways not clear, this unmanifest raw material of reality articulates itself into all that is. Not a miracle, but close.

He also knew, again from quantum theory, that reality is a tenuous affair---a thin membrane of object/events dancing on a sea of potential. What registers as reality on our instruments and senses are waves of probabilities. For any point in space/time, there is an array of events that might take place. In order for there to be anything, all possible somethings but one must disappear, collapsed to zero by some statistical deus ex machina. The probability left is what's there when we look.

To find this collapse of probabilities, the creation of something from nothing, von Neumann built a minimal event system called von Neumann's chain---a source, a signal, and a receiver. There is no simpler system since, if any of these links are removed, there is no exchange of energy and so no reality to observe. He figured the site of the collapse should stick out like a sore thumb. It didn't. Try as he might, he could find no likely, or even possible, site for the spontaneous generation of the universe from pregnant nothing.

Because each link in the chain is made of 'quantum stuff' and each bit is like every other, there is no point at which difference, in the form of objects and events, can arise. In what has come to be known as von Neumann's Proof, he showed that, whatever it is that collapses potential into quarks, black holes, and Paris in the spring must lie outside of quantum reality. Von Neumann could think of nothing outside of the empirical world but consciousness. With von Neumann's chain, we meet the ghost in the machine and find it is us.

We are, all of us, links in the quantum chain. Beneath our differences, we are 'quantum stuff'. It is our choices and our actions that collapse the potential of our lives. In a world without illusion, there is no thee and me, and the appropriate action is always love.

Happy new year.

When a man assumes a public trust he should consider himself public property.
 Thomas Jefferson

MEANWHILE, IN NEWPORT

On Christmas Eve, George Bush clothed himself in the character of a certain merry old elf by pardoning six accused conspirators in the Iran-Contra affair including former Sec. of Defence, Caspar Weinberger. Ho ho ho.

On the "This Week with David Brinkley show" on PBS Dec. 27th, Iran-Contra Special Prosecutor Lawrence E. Walsh said of Bush; "... he has shown an arrogand disregard for the rule of law."

Walsh has spent the last six years and multiple millions of taxpayer's dollars grinding away at this mess with such small results that one can't help wondering if his concern isn't more with continuing his sweet little sinecure than the rule of law.

One can't, however, quarrel with Walsh's "... arrogant disregard for the rule of law," statement.

And, guess what Sportsfans, we've got a new presidential holiday tradition! Gerald Ford, in a personal best leap of logic, realized that if R. Nixon was convicted of a crime, he [Gasp]. G. Ford could also be held accountable for illegal acts. A pardon for the unindicted, let alone convicted suspect immediately followed. Now George Bush has reaffirmed the theory and it will be seen as tradition hereafter.

A Modest Proposal: Let us raise enough hell about this to force Congress to pass legislation requiring that presidential or any other variety of pardon be given only after conviction. It would do my heart good to see some of these Beltline Bozos proclaimed as felons, even if only for a few minutes.

Note: The unquestionably scholarly gentleman who wrote in a previous issue of this rag that he didn't kill those "... big yellow ones [slugs] with the black spots that taste like razor clams..." is a fine writer and probably a prince of a fellow but he has a tin palate. They taste exactly like the delicious cockles found in Yaquina Bay.

Alex LaFollette

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