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content

cover and issue design	spackle
skate video	johnny, melchior, spackle
monster in a box	sarah cox
adventures of max: pleistocene fish	johnny
five days of lunches	melchior
t.i.n. top 5	et al.
semi-vegan reviewer	john wayne's ghost
dirt, grass and very small pebbles	spackle
guide to confectionary madness	bagboy, johnny
princess jenny and the antidote (part 3 of 3)	007
the t.i.n. ballistics report	bagboy, warrior poetess
frisky mama's guide to toys and games (insert)	frisky mama

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This month's guest editorial comes from a group working to oppose corporate infiltration into their community. Fortunately, here in Fort Collins we don't have that sort of threat looming over us.

- Johnny

Monster in a Box

by Sarah Cox, Guest Editor

Tom Fawkes is trying to get an audience with Prince George's Roman Catholic bishop when a colleague phones with a sizzling rumour in early September. Wal-Mart Canada wants to build a big-box store on First Nations land in Duncan. Fawkes, used to corporate wild-goose chases, says simply, "We'll check it out." The Vancouver-based communications director for the United Food and Commercial Workers Union immediately dispatches one of his Vancouver Island staff to gather details and arrange a meeting for him with Cowichan First Nation chief Lydia Hwitsum. But the chief does not even return his calls.

By mid-October, Fawkes, a burly man with a stooped gait, admits he is "going nowhere fast". He is more accustomed to making steady progress. For the past two years, since the UFCW realized it could lose a substantial number of its 18,000 retail-sector B.C. members if Wal-Mart's new nonunion B.C. stores enter the full-fledged grocery business and drive out unionized competitors like Safeway, Fawkes has coordinated a major union campaign to stop Wal-Mart's expansion in the province. The UFCW has initiated, financed, or assisted anti-Wal-Mart campaigns in eight B.C. cities, including Cranbrook, Courtenay, and Surrey. In Duncan, Fawkes jokes, "we've come up against the wall." (The union has attempted, with little success, to represent Wal-Mart workers in the U.S. As for organizing the B.C. stores, Fawkes would only say: "I think it's fair to say that Wal-Mart is definitely a company of serious interest in our organizational plans.")

The federal Department of Indian and

Northern Affairs confirms that the Cowichan First Nation is having "preliminary" and "confidential" discussions with Wal-Mart.

The land Wal-Mart covets probably adjoins the Vancouver Island Highway, south of the tall, grey bridge spanning the Cowichan River. Likely, it is the strip with a phalanx of billboards advertising everything from Midas Muffler to Best Western and Subway. First Nations land is outside of the jurisdiction of the City of Duncan, free from the constraints of bylaws. Wal-Mart and its developers would not have to apply to the city for rezoning, a costly and onerous process that has already halted or delayed Wal-Mart's plans to build new stores in four B.C. cities, including Prince George, where the Catholic Church and Wal-Mart developers have signed a real-estate deal pending approval of a controversial rezoning application. On Native land, Wal-Mart's property taxes would be set by the Cowichan nation and not by Duncan. Status reserve residents who shop at Wal-Mart would not pay GST or PST on their purchases. The company's nonunion wages could be offset by hiring status members of the Cowichan nation who live on the reserve and who do not have federal income tax deducted from their paycheques.

Wal-Mart founder Sam Walton, who had amassed the largest fortune in American history by the time he died in 1992, would certainly have been tickled by Wal-Mart's reception in Canada. In February, Wal-Mart opened a giant warehouse in Cornwall, Ontario, built in part with a \$500,000 grant from the federal government. This year, the Retail Council of Canada named Wal-Mart Canada CEO Dave Ferguson, an American, its "Distinguished Canadian Retailer of the Year". Despite vociferous opposition from the UFCW, the Council of Canadians, a host of neighbourhood associations, and environmental groups worried about the ecological impact of big-box shopping, so many Canadians shop at Wal-Mart that its Canadian operations are "among the most profitable" in the company, according to Andrew Pelletier, Wal-Mart Canada's director of public relations.

Since Wal-Mart gained a toehold here in 1994 with the acquisition of Woolco's 122 stores, it has become Canada's largest retailer. There are now 169 Wal-Marts in Canada, and analysts estimate that the company controls about 40 percent of the Canadian discount- and department store retail market. Wal-



Mart is bigger than Sears, bigger than Zellers and the Bay, bigger than Eaton's used to be before it went bankrupt.

If Wal-Mart's new stores eventually incorporate groceries, mimicking the company's successful U.S. supercentre formula, Wal-Mart could snap up one-tenth of every retailing dollar spent in Canada outside of the automotive sector, according to the Centre for the Study of Commercial Activity at Ryerson Polytechnic University in Toronto. Unable to compete, "thousands and thousands of stores" across the country would close and "one million square feet of retailing space would lie idle", says a 1988-89 study by the centre, titled *Wal-Mart Comes to Canada*. "A substantial portion of the Canadian existing retail landscape would disappear, with smaller communities most severely affected....one of these stores can replace a community shopping centre or the downtown of a small town."

With 1999 revenues of \$167 billion, Wal-Mart has more economic clout than most of the world's nations. Those revenues are higher than the gross national product of countries like Israel, Norway, Greece, Ireland, and Saudi Arabia. This year it ranked second on the Fortune 500 list of companies, second only to General Motors, and it will probably rank first in 2001, according to Fortune. In 1999, Wal-Mart's profits jumped by 21 percent to nearly \$5.4 billion. Everything about the company is gargantuan. It has nearly 4,000 stores and 100 million customers. It has 1,140,000 employees.

Wal-Mart's sheer size enables the company to easily undercut competitors by buying vast quantities of goods from the same suppliers for a far lower price. As Wall Street Journal reporter Bob Ortega writes in his book *In Sam We Trust: The Untold Story of Sam Walton and How Wal-Mart Is Devouring America*, Wal-Mart's fundamental credo is simple. "Offer the lowest prices. Cut your costs to the bone and keep cutting, so you can offer the lowest price. Make your profit by selling more goods, instead of selling goods for more."

One area in which Wal-Mart cuts costs is payroll. In the 1950s, Sam Walton unsuccessfully fought in U.S. federal court to pay employees less than the federal minimum wage. Almost half a century later, almost half of Wal-Mart's 885,000 U.S. employees earn so little that they qualify for federal assistance under the food-stamp program, according

to a May 2000 report by the New York-based National Labor Committee titled *Made in China: The Role of U.S. Companies in Denying Human and Worker Rights*. Pelletier says Wal-Mart's Canadian employees all earn more than minimum wage, but he will not disclose the company's average hourly wage "for competitive reasons". Fawkes, on the other hand, says he has spoken with many Wal-Mart employees in Greater Vancouver who earn barely more than minimum wage and do not qualify for company benefits because they work 28 hours or less a week. (Wal-Mart classifies 28 hours a week as "full-time", but Pelletier claims that most full-time employees work 35 hours.) The disparity between the earnings of Wal-Mart workers and the wealth of the Walton family is striking. Five of Sam Walton's relatives are tied together at the No. 7 spot on Forbes magazine's October 2000 list of the richest people in the U.S., with assets of US\$17 billion.

Wal-Mart also shaves costs by buying products as cheaply as possible. Although the company trumpets the fact that 80 percent of the stock in its Canadian stores comes from Canadian suppliers, Canadian suppliers do not necessarily sell Canadian products. Wal-Mart encourages shoppers to "Buy Canadian", yet the Duncan Wal-Mart has sold clothing that sports a label with two Canadian flags and a loon on the front and Made in China on the back.

Wal-Mart has also been criticized by church, labour, and human-rights groups for selling products made in Third World sweatshops. In 1992, Dateline NBC revealed that Wal-Mart shirts were made in Bangladesh's Saraka factory by children as young as nine. Twenty-five children died at Saraka two years before the NBC investigation, locked in during a fire. Despite NBC's footage, and black-and-white photographs of the children who died, Wal-Mart's CEO at the time, David Glass, denied that the factory employed children.

Since the Dateline story, which catapulted Wal-Mart to the forefront of debate about ethical "sourcing", Wal-Mart products have been traced to sweatshops in Central America and Asia. According

to a May 1999 National Labor Committee report, *Wal-Mart's Shirts of Misery*, at the Beximco factory in the Dhaka Export Processing Zone in Bangladesh 1,000 young workers, most of them women, sew shirts and pants for Wal-Mart and other retailers. They work as many as 80 hours a week, are paid less than one-third of the legal overtime rate, earn nine to 20 cents an hour, are denied health care and maternity leave, are monitored in the bathroom, and are screamed at to work faster, according to the eight-page report.

In June, the Toronto-based Maquila Solidarity Network, a clearing-house for Canada's anti-sweatshop groups, presented Wal-Mart with its Sweatshop Retailer of the Year award — on the same

"...almost half of Wal-Mart's 885,000 U.S. employees earn so little that they qualify for federal assistance under the food-stamp program..."

day that Ferguson, who recently became president and CEO of Wal-Mart Europe, received his Canadian Retailer of the Year award. Among other criticisms of Wal-Mart, the MSN pointed out that the company was importing clothes from Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, where the results of a 1990 democratic election won by

the opposition were cancelled by the military, which has ruled ever since.

Although it is not illegal in Canada to import wares from Myanmar, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade said in a statement this year that Canadian firms are "discouraged from entering into investment agreements or commercial ventures in Burma". Myanmar has one of the worst human-rights records in the world, according to Amnesty International. It is also one of the cheapest places to do business in the world, with salaries as low as four U.S. cents an hour, according to Jonathan Eaton, a Toronto-based research director for the Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees. Canadian Friends of Burma spokesperson Corinne Baumgarten says the only way to do business in Myanmar is to enter into a "pact" with the military regime that consists of either a joint venture with the regime or an agreement to share profits.

Shipping documents show that between December 1999 and May 2000, Wal-Mart imported

60.2 tonnes of garments with a customs value of \$1.2 million from Myanmar, all through the port of Vancouver. One of the factories that made the clothes, the Ever Green (Myanmar) Overseas Co. Ltd., is part of Asia World Company, which is owned by notorious Burmese drug trafficker Lo Hsing-han, according to a July 13, 2000, article in Thailand's English-language daily newspaper the Nation. (Wal-Mart also imported 23.6 tonnes of garments in five shipments from Myanmar in June and July 1999.) On June 4 and June 18 of this year, Wal-Mart received two additional orders from Myanmar, both through the port of Vancouver, with a total value of \$98,692, according to shipping records obtained by the Straight.

Pelletier, who said publicly in July 2000 that Wal-Mart's last order from Myanmar had been in May, says the June shipments were "late" shipments that were "not anticipated". Wal-Mart stopped buying from Myanmar in January of this year and does not expect any more shipments, says Pelletier, who denies that the company's decision to stop doing business in Myanmar had anything to do with pressure from anti-sweatshop groups. Wal-Mart stopped, Pelletier says, because "at last we had some direction from the government" and the company realized that "there seems to be a wider problem in Burma with the military regime in place."

In October, Wal-Mart's Victoria store was selling Disney T-shirts with the original tags sloppily cut out and new Made in Bangladesh tags sewn in. Pelletier says he has no idea why original tags would be snipped out, adding, "I highly doubt" that the shirts were made in Myanmar and the tags cut off here to avoid controversy. He says the shirts were unquestionably made under humane working conditions because Wal-Mart has what Pelletier calls the "strictest" vendor codes of conduct in the industry. Wal-Mart spent \$40 million last year certifying and monitoring overseas factories that make its products, and the company has blacklisted 102 factories around the world that do not adhere to its standards, Pelletier says.

However, the ability of Wal-Mart's

monitoring system to detect abuses of workers was called into question by an October 2, 2000, article in Business Week, which pointed out that the company's auditing system "was a disaster" at the Chun Si Enterprise Handbag Factory in the Chinese city of Zhongshan. A three-month Business Week investigation earlier this year found that Wal-Mart's auditors "failed to uncover many of the egregious conditions in the factory despite interviews with dozens of workers". These conditions included a "phony factory" set up to "dupe" Wal-Mart auditors, and workers locked into the walled factory compound for all but a total of 60 minutes a day for meals. Workers said they were also punched and hit by guards, were fined for infractions such as taking

too long in the bathroom, and were charged US\$15 a month by factory management for food and lodging even though they only earned US\$22 a month. Although Wal-Mart says it no longer does business with the handbag factory, the Maquila Solidarity Network and other anti-sweatshop groups say the Business Week investigation proves that company-initiated monitoring

programs are seriously flawed

In B.C., Wal-Mart is engaged in an aggressive expansion plan that critics say will drive down wages and working conditions in the retail sector, bankrupt independent family-run businesses, destroy historical downtowns in small communities, and channel millions of retailing dollars away from other stores. Shoehorned into former Woolco outlets, Wal-Mart is shedding them to build new stores, renovating to gain more floor space, and opening in new areas. "They feel they've outgrown these [Woolco] stores and want to give Canadians an idea of what a true Wal-Mart experience is like," explains Graeme Silvera, a project manager for First Professional Management Inc., the developer that has built 36 of Canada's 40 new Wal-Mart stores. "By the year 2005, we'd like to have a store in every major internal market [in B.C.], and we'd love to have a store in every city or town in the GVRD [Greater Vancouver Regional District]....Potentially, six Wal-Marts could fit in the city of Vancouver."

"Five of Sam Walton's relatives are tied together at the No. 7 spot on Forbes magazine's October 2000 list of the richest people in the U.S., with assets of US\$17 billion."

Silvera sits behind a large desk in First Professional's spare Richmond office, opened two years ago after the Ontario-based developer realized that B.C. offers just what Wal-Mart seeks: a densely populated major city and many smaller cities that act as hubs for rural shoppers longing for a huge array of affordable products. His office is stacked with rolls of blueprints for shopping developments in B.C. and Alberta: not just for Wal-Mart, but for Canadian Tire, Costco, the Great Canadian Superstore, and other hefty names in big-box retailing. Silvera and Fawkes personify opposing viewpoints in this era of globalization. Silvera, the father of three children under the age of five, wants access to a broad array of consumer goods under one roof, and he wants to buy them cheaply. His wife regularly drives from their Richmond home to Burnaby's Lougheed Mall to shop at Wal-Mart. Silvera insists that First Professional Management and Wal-Mart are only reacting to consumer demand: if Canadian consumers did not want Wal-Mart, they would not patronize it.

According to Al Norman, founder of the U.S. nonprofit group Sprawlbusters, which counsels people about how to keep big boxes out of their communities, Wal-Mart's cutthroat business tactics in the U.S. have driven thousands of small retailers out of business and destroyed historical downtowns in small communities. In a telephone interview from his home in Greenfield, Massachusetts, Norman says studies show that 60 to 80 percent of Wal-Mart's sales in the U.S. come from other retailers. "This is not economic development. It is cannibalism of the retail sector."

Silvera says opposition to Wal-Mart in B.C. comes mainly from "special-interest groups that have touted the U.S. line....A lot of these anti-Wal-Mart things are based on the U.S. experience and do not translate to Canada."

Silvera says he does not understand the opposition to Wal-Mart's expansion in B.C. and the rest of Canada. "My wife bugs me every night: 'When are you going to get a Wal-Mart in Richmond?' Wal-Marts are serving local communities. They're bringing in jobs and money. People should just be opening their arms and saying, 'Come in.' "

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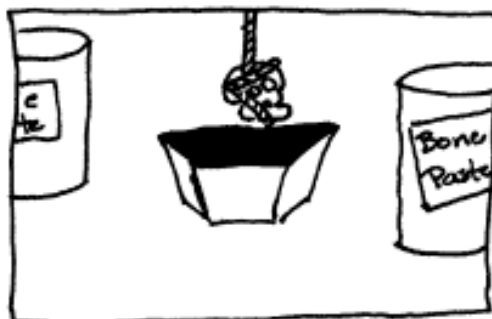
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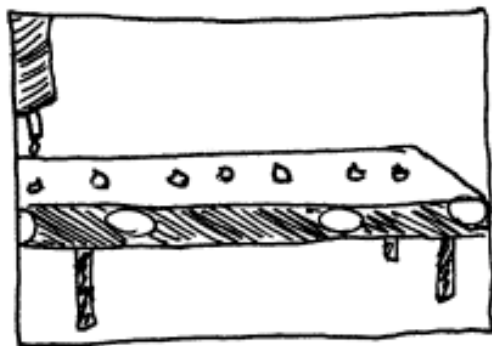
The Adventures of
MAX
Pleistocene Fish

The Hunt for Claire:

Claire was made of bone,
which is used to filter
sugar.



Sugar is used to
make candy.



Ninjas love candy.
Pretty simple.



processed yumminess on the inside, petrochemicals on the outside

Five Days of Lunches with Melchior, the Mad Monkey

While excavating the ruins of the Howes Street Caves (c. 2002AD) an interesting artifact was uncovered at plot 39-ADV69. A journal, which was preserved using a grease coating technique that was popular during that era, appears to detail what might possibly be the final meals of a then contemporary laborer. Anthropologists are still debating its true meaning and significance, but we offer the contents reprinted here.

- Spackle

Monday

I didn't have any money so I had some coffee and stolen cookies. Take a look at the colorful candy chips (in glorious black and white!) that added to the aesthetic appeal, which was good because there wasn't much substance to this lunch. The resulting sugar and caffeine rush was great while it lasted--all of about 20 minutes.

Rating: 34%

Moral: Aesthetics will never appeal to my belly.



Tuesday

Today I had money, so I decided to pick up some lunch. Carl's Jr. was convenient and the signs outside of the restaurant had photos of chicken sandwiches that obviously were from the realm of fast food Platonic Ideals. Pictured on the left is reality though, a BBQ Chicken Sandwich with fries. When I got back to work and set my abilities and desires to the food, I was rather disappointed that it didn't look like anything like the advertising told; maybe the contents shifted during transport? Overall the food was bland, filling, and starchy. There was a faint taste of barbecue in the BBQ Chicken Sandwich, but it was gone after the second bite.

Rating: 57%

Moral: Fast food is merely the shadow of advertising. Time to leave the cave for my next lunch.



Wednesday

Once a week I go to Teriyaki Wok and pick up a Chicken Bowl--no vegetables. Straight forward protein and grain with a generous helping of sodium and sugar; ain't nothing wrong with that. I especially like the florescent scarlet color (in glorious black and white!) of the hot sauce, which is I use liberally. What a great meal! The only problem was that the smell drifted out of my work cubicle and everyone who walked by would say moronic things like, "Who's baking chicken?" (Note: that this is the only day that I don't drink coffee with lunch. Instead I had a Code Red to match the hot sauce.)

Rating 91%

Moral: Simple is good--especially since people seem to have a hard time discerning that I don't have an oven in my cubicle (yet).



Thursday

I had a dollar for lunch, and this is what I got. Two Pop Tarts--Brown Sugar 'n Cinnamon. These were a favorite when I was a kid, so there was some sort of nostalgic appeal. These was good because Pop Tarts are pretty much like frosted cardboard, though they went well with coffee. Another plus was the ingredients list that was bigger than the tarts, which made for amusing reading in the bathroom later (the only literature in there was something put out by the, no kidding, Jewish NRA).

Rating: 71%

Moral: Boy, I ate a lot of crap as a kid. I still eat crap, but now at least I'm witty about it.



Friday

Ah, there's nothing so sweet to the ears of a salary man than the sound of, "Friday." And speaking of sweets, I was too busy this day to actually grab a serious lunch. So instead I snacked on some coffee cake. Hardly nutritious or filling and kind of ugly, I soon eschewed the cake and went right for the coffee. Mmmm . . . hello darkness my old friend.

Rating: 33%

Moral: Caffeine is good





T.I.N. Top 5

Melchior - *Things to do with an unknown woman's underwear found in a board game.*

5. Walk around saying, "Is this yours?"
4. Hang it on your car antennae
3. Add it to the Zen Garden Shrine
2. Wear it (on the outside of your pants)
1. HANDKERCHIEF!

Phlegm - *List of lists from Naive Super, by Erlend Loe. (no particular order)*

- List of forgotten things (remembered later)
- List of what you think about the words - big, long and tall
- List of questions of the relevance of time
- List of top 5 body fluids
- List of what you are looking for in an immediate object

Johnny - *Causes for his scared knuckles.*

5. Beating sourdough bread
4. Hitting walls in anger
3. Scrapping on concrete
2. Somnambulism
1. Idiotic stunts for T.I.N.

Spackle - *Things to consider while sitting in the bathroom.*

5. Do I have more will power than my cat has lung power?
4. Will I ever fix my dripping faucet?
3. Why is there hair on the tops of my toes?
2. Should I order a subscription to Giant Robot?
1. Do men really read in the bathroom because they are afraid of their butts?

saditurn - *Marx Brothers moments.*

5. Surreal dog leaping out of Harpo's chest (*Ducksoup*)
4. Harpo deconstructing the piano (*A Day at the Races*)
3. Harpo tossing bananas (*Horse Feathers*)
2. "Do you mind?" (*A Night at the Opera*)
1. The impromptu breakfast scene (*A Night at the Opera*)

Vaginagirl - *Euphemisms for Sexual Activities.*

5. Crash the Yoghurt Truck
4. Mount a Corporal and Four
3. Talk to the Canoe Driver
2. Bog Snorkeling
1. Gorilla in the Washing Machine

the semi-VEGAN reVIEWER



by
*John Wayne's
Ghost*

After witnessing his own autopsy, lifelong meat eater, John Wayne has returned from the grave to review vegetarian-friendly restaurants in Northern Colorado (though he spends most of his time in Fort Collins). Please send restaurant suggestions to johnwayne@ssdpres.org

Welcome back partners. This issue I thought I had a special treat in store for everyone, but as it turns out Steve Jobs, who is rumored to be a vegan, never returned my email request for an interview. Instead I have a special Coffee House edition of the reviewer.

In recent weeks it has come to my attention that Starbucks will be moving into Old Town Fort Collins. Now I'm not even going to get into the "Is Starbucks Evil?" argument, I'm only going to state that, as I have been informed, Starbucks will be the first completely corporate business to open in Old Town. Even Subway and Ben and Jerry's are franchises, so at least some that money stays local. Starbucks on the other hand is 100% non-Colorado corporate, so the profit from your grande double caf half decaf with a twist of lemon won't likely be sticking around Fort Collins.

So as an alternative I wanted to give people a run down of the different local coffee houses I'm aware of in town because when you support a local coffee house. But first, the question and answer bit.

Q. Is coffee vegan?

A. Yes, technically coffee is vegan. In its simplest form, coffee is nothing more than the seeds of the ripened fruit of the coffee tree - after the fruit is removed, the beans (seeds) are roasted, ground and brewed. However, there are other concerns that might cause you to think a bit about what coffee you are drinking.

It appears coffee may have originally been from Ethiopia, where it was known of before 1000 AD, and used as a food source for some African nomads. It didn't become widely known in North Africa and the Middle East until the 15th century, when it over came religious and political opposition, or in Europe until the mid-17th century, when Pope Clement VIII gave it his thumbs up. After the Boston Tea Party, coffee became a favorite drink in the U.S. after tea had become unfashionable.

Today coffee is second only to oil in its cash value, so like oil, coffee is big business.

Traditionally coffee is a shade-grown plant that doesn't require deforestation to clear the land for crops. However, to yield larger harvests, many coffee producers have succumbed to sun-grown techniques that require larger chemical input, that results in land degradation, pollution, drastically reduced plant life-spans and serious health concerns for the laborers.

Aside from environmental concerns, most of us have also heard the personal health concerns revolving around caffeine. Though many of us need it to get going in the morning or just want to have a cup or two to “relax” there are lots of studies that indicate excessive caffeine consumption can cause problems ranging from insomnia to heart irregularities. Just remember, caffeine is a mood altering drug so be safe - wear a helmet.

So, if you are looking to drink environmentally sound coffee you will likely want to search out organic shade-grown varieties. Either way, if you are looking for a caffeine high and a cool place to hang out, here are some suggestions.

(The first few are recommendations, the rest are listed in alphabetical order. I initially meant to have more objective comparisons of these different places, but time constraints and a stressed out editor resulted in this more subjective review. - JWG)

Fort Collins Coffee Houses

Paris Koffee Hauze - 255 Linden, Fort Collins, CO 80524 - 498-0705

Although this coffee house shares a similar name with the old Paris on the Poudre, it is not that same old shop. If you were sick of the inconsistent coffee and shitty service of the Paris of old before it closed and haven't gone to it since it changed ownership more recently, you will be more than pleasantly surprised that the Paris Koffee Hauze, consistently, now serves some of the best coffee drinks in the downtown area. They always have soy or rice milk, have good bottled sodas and even serve vegan shakes in the summer. Also, Paris is owned by two of the coolest punk rock parents in Fort Collins. If you are looking for sterility and total quiet to do homework, you may want to visit during the day (they open at 7:30am during the week) because Paris is a smoking coffee house (I believe the only one in Fort Collins), so it sometimes gets a little loud and smoky. However, if you are looking for a place where you can laugh out loud without worrying about disturbing others, listen to (usually) non-offensive punk, industrial and other non-homogenized music, this is the place for you.

Justa Cuppa Jo - 1232 W. Elizabeth, Fort Collins, CO 80521 - 493-7099

Recently reopened in October under new management, Justa Cuppa Jo is one of Fort Collins' oldest coffee houses and is well worth revisiting or trying for the first time. If you are unfamiliar, Justa Cuppa Jo is around the side of the west Campus West Plaza (back behind Blackjack Pizza) - don't confuse it the other coffee shop in the same plaza (see the review for that other shop later). Aside from the best baklava I have had in town, their coffee is always first rate and a little cheaper than the other coffee house. They have soy milk, and even have soy drinks on their menu, as well as a number of in-store made food items. Also owned by what appears to be a husband and wife team, you will be able to meet the owners and confirm that you are supporting real people because one of them is always there. Unlike Paris, which can get a little noisy at night, Justa Cuppa Jo is an ideal place for getting homework done or doing some quiet reading. Since the editors of this magazine don't pay me enough to live in a place with a washer and dryer (yes, even ghosts have to wash their unmentionables), I find this is also a great place to hang out while doing laundry at the near by laundromat.

Jon and Angie's Blue Note - 147 W. Oak, Fort Collins, CO 80524 - 490-2695

Rounding out the husband and wife teams, the Blue Note appeals to many crowds - from the business folks during the day to the hippies and poets at night. This is sort of a crazy place - relaxed with good, mellow music playing. They have tables in the front and couches in that back and they even have a pool table. I'll admit that I don't visit the Blue Note much any more, but it is partially because I no longer work at Kinko's (which is right behind them) and because it really isn't my crowd of people. However, as far as a local businesses goes these guys deserve the support. They have good coffee and I'm told they serve cheap Consuelo's Breakfast Burritos.

Deja Vu - 646 1/2 S. College Ave, Fort Collins, CO 80524 - 221-3243

According to one of the people at the counter, Deja Vu has been in business for about 15 years, I believe this makes it the oldest shop in town, but that's mostly just a piece of trivia. I have resided in Fort Collins for almost 10 years now myself and have only been here a few times, though more recently now that my GF lives only a block away from it. I have no complaints whatsoever, good coffee, good food, but again similar to the Blue Note, it just really isn't my crowd. Deja Vu tends to have an older, or at least more subdued, crowd. If you're on campus, don't want to walk more than a few blocks and looking for quiet this might be the place for you. Plus they almost always have fresh flowers on their tables, a nice touch.

Java Plaza - 123 N. College Ave, Fort Collins, CO 80524 - 484-6346

I used to spend a lot of time here in the past but now tend to frequent mostly Paris and Justa Cuppa Jo. This is the hang out for many of the CSU art crowd so they tend to have really good displays of art, though they still have a their share of crap. Their espresso drinks are good and they always have soy, but honestly I really don't like their regular coffee. Even though they roast it themselves, which is rad, I always go for an Americano if I'm going simple. They have a cribbage board behind the counter, so if you are looking to pass time with a friend, and forgot yours, you can just ask to borrow it. Say "Hi" to Woody if you see him.

Koffe Rassiya - 1006 Spring Creek Ln #B-9, Fort Collins, CO 80526 - 416-7576

I've only been here a few times, but those few experiences have been good. The counter people are friendly and the atmosphere is nice and quite (almost too quiet) and they have a large selection of beverages. They are located off Shields in the same plaza as Pitchers, but are sort of hard to spot from the road.

Rocky Mountain Coffee Connection - 2555-B S. Shields, Fort Collins, CO - 495-6989

One might think that just because good old JWG had his innards removed during the autopsy he wouldn't have to worry about keeping in shape, unfortunately you'd be wrong. Since this is located next to the Pulse I usually spend a little time doing homework here after I'm done working out. However, I'm rarely in the mood for coffee after working out so I normally get their hot apple cider. For the longest time I thought there was something strange about this place because I never saw the same counter person twice, but soon after this revelation I started to see the friendly dude with the blonde hair and the owner there quite a bit. Good place if you live on the southwest side of town. Lots of space. Good for nonsmoking High School kids it seems.

Starry Night Coffee Company - Two Locations - 493-3039

Probably one of the more successful local shops it would seem because they've recently opened a second location down by the Cinemark Theater. If you're looking for the "Starbucks feel", but don't like stabbing your neighbors in the back, this is probably the place for you. They have consistently good coffee and seem to cater a little more to the yuppie crowd. Their Downtown shop is a little too cramped for my taste and not so good for hanging out at, though their South shop is much more spacious. They've also done a good job of decorating the new store to make it feel like it is an outdoor cafe. If you ask for a twist of lemon with your espresso, don't be surprised if they give you a few lemon wedges.

Western Coffee Bar - 144 N. Mason, Fort Collins, CO 80524 - 472-9046

I've only been here once, and it had a little more leather than I personally care for. They are a day time shop and cater to the professional crowd that works over in the government buildings downtown. The time I was there the counter person (I assume owner) was genuinely friendly and nice and the coffee was good. One of the more original shops in town.

Wired Bean Coffee House - 1240 W. Elizabeth, Fort Collins, CO 80521 - 493-5200

Don't get me wrong, there is nothing wrong with the Wired Bean. This is the most popular shop on the west side of town and there's likely a reason. I personally used to spend a lot of time at the Wired Bean until about two months ago. I had gotten sick of not knowing if there would be a place to sit and they play Enigma

just a little too often for my taste. I personally used to like their couches and until the last six months to a year they were pretty quiet. They seem to get a lot of the crowd from Ram's Village so are a little too "Greek" for my taste. I was happy when Justa Cuppa Jo opened because they always have seats and are nice and quiet like the Wired Bean used to be. Also, honestly, I found that the Wired Bean's coffee was very inconsistent, most days it was good, but some days it was downright undrinkable.

While doing research for this article I also noticed that there are a number of coffee shops I had never heard of. Here is a list of names, addresses and phone numbers so you can check them out. Honestly, I don't know if these places are locally owned or even open still. If you own a coffee shop and I missed you, I apologize, let me know and I will add you to my next column. - JWG

Bogart's Coffee House - 1600 Specht Point Rd, Fort Collins, CO 80525 - 490-1322

Colorado Coffee Exchange - Foothills Fashion Mall, Fort Collins, CO 80525 - 223-0300

Dijkstra Huis Coffee & Toffee - 749 S. Lemay Ave, Fort Collins, CO 80524 - 416-9122

Koppa Koffee - 1526 E. Harmony Rd, Fort Collins, CO 80525 - 282-0177

Mocha Bay Company - 931 E. Harmony Rd, Fort Collins, CO 80525 - 204-4161

Pony Espresso - 225 N. Lemay Ave, Fort Collins, CO 80524 - 484-4295

Tea Table, The - 105 W. Mountain Ave, Fort Collins, CO 80524 - 221-5520

Coffee House Cheat Sheet

(for those who hate to see things categorized, tough, the world sometimes requires labels to ease communication when trying to describe something. Just realize these notes are not full descriptors of these coffee houses.)

Paris Koffee Hauze - Punk, Goth, Smoking - **Downtown**

Justa Cuppa Jo - Quiet, Couches, Baklava - **Campus West**

Blue Note - Hippies, Poets, Pool Table - **Downtown**

Deja Vu - Quiet, Mature, Flowers - **Northeast of Campus**

Java Plaza - Artist - not "Artsy", Cribbage - **Downtown**

Koffe Rassiya - Quiet, Russian, Hard to Spot - **Southwest of Campus**

Coffee Connection - Spacious, Cider, H.S. Friendly - **Southwest/Central**

Starry Night - Yuppies, Quiet, Starbucks-ish - **Downtown and South Side**

Western Coffee Bar - Professionals, Leather, Daytime - **Downtown**

Wired Bean - Greek, Enigma, Popular - **Campus West**

Disclaimer: As always, if you are eating out you are most definitely not eating vegan.
A rule of thumb: If you don't want to know, don't ask. If you do want to know, don't eat out.

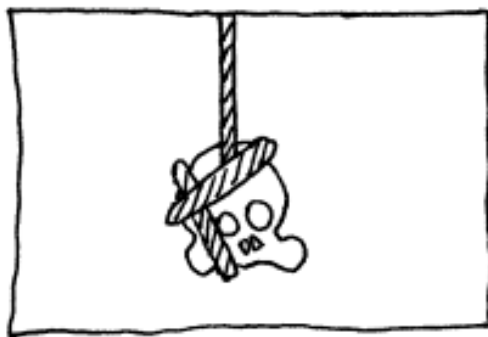


The Adventures of
MAX
Pleistocene Fish

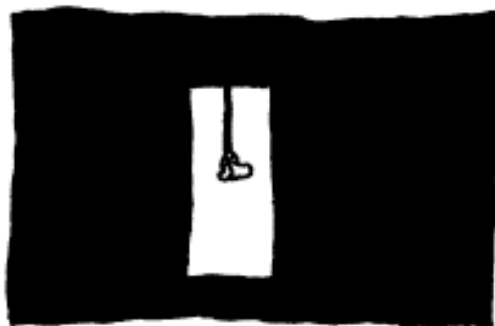
I chewed my way
through thousands
of tabi -



dodging shuriken,
ninja-to and razor
sharp naginata....



to the sugar
refinery - the ninja's
inner sanctum.



some vegan recipes from
spackle's kitchen

Dirt, Grass and Very Small Pebbles

This issue we have ideas for an Italian style dinner. With a good salad this could probably server eight, but leftovers are always good. I would recommend enjoying all this with a good bottle or two of wine. I'm personally a huge fan of Australian reds, though there is probably something to be said about drinking Italian wine with Italian food.

- Spackle

Eggplant Bruschetta with Tomato and Basil

(gratefully discovered at <http://home.att.net/~ashburysaubergines>)

Ingredients:

two 1-pound Eggplants
Kosher Salt
1/2 cup Extra-Virgin Olive Oil
4 Garlic Cloves, Minced
1/2 teaspoon Crushed Red Pepper
1/2 teaspoon Freshly Ground Black Pepper
1/4 cup Packed Basil Leaves, Coarsely Shredded
1 14-ounce can Diced and Peeled Italian
Plum Tomatoes
16 1/2-inch Slices of Country Bread

Directions:

1. Using a vegetable peeler, remove 1 lengthwise strip of skin from opposite sides of each eggplant. Slice the eggplants crosswise 1/4 inch thick. Stack several slices and cut them into 1/4-inch match sticks; repeat with the remaining eggplant. Transfer the eggplant to a colander, sprinkle generously with salt and toss to coat. Let drain for at least 30 minutes. Squeeze handfuls of the eggplant to extract the bitter juices.
2. Warm 1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons of the olive oil in a large skillet over high heat. Add the eggplant and toss it quickly to coat with oil. Reduce the heat to moderate, add the garlic and crushed red pepper and season with black pepper. Cook, stirring, until the eggplant begins to soften, about 15 minutes. Add 3 tablespoons of the basil and cook until just wilted. Add half the tomatoes and cook over moderately low heat, stirring, until the liquid has evaporated, about 5 minutes. Add the remaining tomatoes and cook until thick, about 15 minutes longer. Season with salt and keep warm.
3. Meanwhile, preheat a grill or broiler. Brush the bread on both sides with the remaining 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Grill or broil the bread until lightly charred. Spoon the eggplant on the grilled bread, top with the remaining 1 tablespoon of basil and serve right away.

Note: This will for a few days in the fridge so you can make it ahead of time, just rewarm it.

Salad Ideas

Stay away from iceberg lettuce if you can at all help it. Mixed baby greens, romaine or spinach are much better choices: they have taste. Here are some good things to add to the green leafy stuff:

- Green Pepper
- Red Pepper
- Red Onion
- Radicchio
- Kalamata or Italian Olives
- Zucchini (or Summer Squash)
- Seasoned Crumbled or Cubed Tofu
- Chives
- Sun Dried Tomatoes
- Anything else that sounds good and adds color...

Nutritional Yeast Cheese

(from Bark and Grass #2: Revolution Supper)
(used in the manicotti recipe below)

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup Nutritional Yeast
- 1/2 cup White Flour
- 1 teaspoon Salt
- 1/2 teaspoon Garlic Powder
- 2 cups Water
- 1/4 cup Margarine
- 1 teaspoon Wet Mustard

Directions:

Mix dry ingredients in a saucepan. Whisk in water. Cook over medium/medium-high heat, whisking, until it thickens and bubbles (it takes longer than you might think). Whip in margarine and mustard. It will thicken more as it cools. *(This can also be used over shells or macaroni)*

Spinach Manicotti

(also from Bark and Grass #2: Revolution Supper)

Ingredients:

- 1 recipe Nutritional Yeast Cheese (above)
- 1 pound Firm Tofu
- 1 Package Frozen Chopped Spinach (thawed)
- Tomato/Spaghetti Sauce of Your Choice
- A package or two of Uncooked Manicotti Shells

Directions:

Take the nutritional yeast cheese you just made from above and crumble the tofu into it. Then mix in the spinach and whatever spices you might want. Place a thin layer of tomato sauce on the bottom of a 9 X 12 casserole dish. Stuff the dry shells with the cheese mixture and place them on top of the layer of sauce. Cover with the remaining sauce. Bake, covered with foil, for 30-40 minutes at around 400 degrees. I have had varying success with the cook times so watch to make sure they aren't burning and check to make sure they are soft before eating. If you make two layers of shells you will need to cook them longer. *(The nutritional yeast cheese, tofu and spinach mixture can also be used in place of ricotta in lasagne.)*



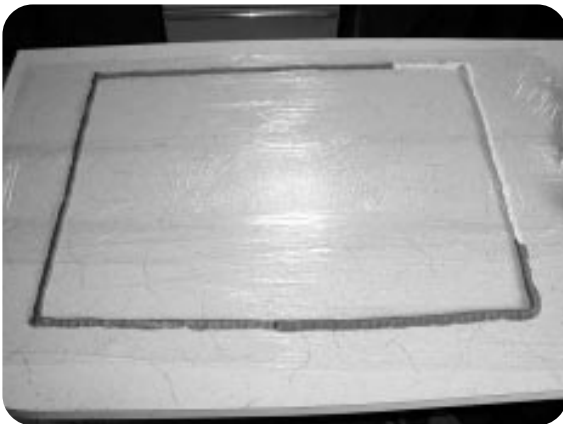
BAGBOY AND JOHNNY'S GUIDE TO CONFECTIONARY MADNESS:

HOLLYWOOD GLASS

Welcome back, crime fighters! Last we showed you how to imitate Mexico's conduit with the dead. This month we'll show you our own culture's conduit with the living! That's right, Hollywood, in all its rotting decadence, and what is Hollywood without fake glass?

(Glass, sugar or sand base, is dangerous. But so is coffee, smoking and Twinkie racing. Use common sense, and don't say we didn't tell you! - Spackle)

What you will need: Two cups Water, 3 1/2 cups White Sugar, 1 cup White Corn Syrup, 1/4 teaspoon Cream of Tartar, some Playdough, a roll of Plastic Wrap. *(We used a triple batch for the skate video to yield a single two foot square panel. - Johnny.)*



Step One: Make yourself a mold for the glass. Here we wrapped Spackle's counter top with the plastic wrap and then molded a Playdough dam. In a pinch, you can also use a greased cookie sheet, or any other non-stick surface.



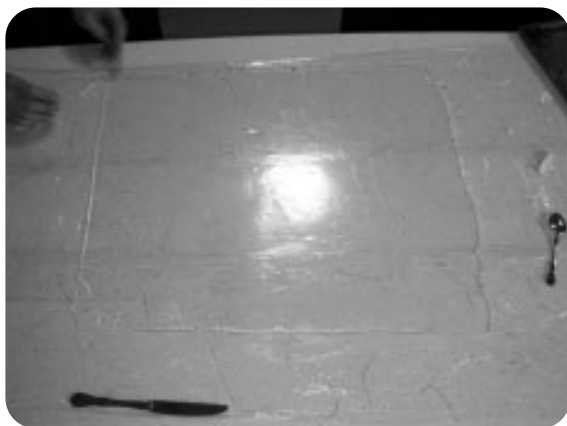
Step Two: Mix all the ingredients into a sauce pan and set the sucker cooking on high. Stir occasionally, especially in the beginning. It will be thick and opaque.

Step Three: As the mixture heats up it will also begin to clarify, going from opaque to clear. It's tempting to want to pour your mix now, but hold on, or else you'll just end up with a gooey mess.



Step Four: Wait until the boiling mix stops steaming, then wait even longer. Pretty soon it will begin to thicken and catch bubbles. Periodically test a drop on a cool surface. If it hardens (not just stiffens - really hardens) you're ready to go!

Step Five: Decant the mix into your mold and leave it alone for 5-6 hours, preferably in some cool, dry place. Once it's done cooling, remove very carefully. Initial set up should happen within 15 - 20 minutes.



Ta-da! Now you too can jump through plate glass windows!



Johnny's Tips:

- Just because the glass is sugar, doesn't mean it isn't sharp. When we ollied through our sheet it broke into a thousand small pieces . . .and a few well placed shards. Both Spackle and myself came away with small abrasions.
- That much said, the longer you boil it, the more glass-like (hard and sharp) it becomes. Find a nice medium between gooey mess and traumatic blood loss. Goggles and leather accessories are highly recommended.
- If your mix is yellow and isn't giving off steam, it is probably ready to be used.
- Don't move the mold while the glass is cooling. It will ripple the surface, making it less believable. If you can, just forget about the whole thing while it cools in your garage. The less you touch it, the better off you'll be.

Princess Jenny and the Antidote

Part 3 of 3

When we last left the princess she had just been shrunk by Monkey, using a Demagnifactor he won in a card game, so she could sneak into the Queen Ant's throne room to recover the antidote to the poison that was quickly killing her. Luckily, Monkey also had some medicine for the princess that would temporarily fight off the effects of the poison. For the complete back story see T.I.N. #2-3.

- Spackle

"AAHHHH!!!" she screamed. "You're huge, Monkey!" The medicine was beginning to kick in and the princess had regained full power of her voice.

"It worked! Hot dog!!" cried Monkey. "All right, now remember, you have two hours before the shrinking effect wears out. You need to get to the throne room and somehow get a hold of the antidote. Be strong and courageous and come back soon! Goodbye, my sweet."

"But how am I going to find the throooooaahhhhh...!?" the brave princess screeched as she slid down a partially collapsed ant passage.

The first thing she noticed was the sound of clicking mandibles. Then the sound of falling stones. Then she saw a large group of worker ants coming up the path toward her. She quickly hid behind a sooty pile of charcoal rock, which turned her skin a frightful dark gray, as she watched the procession pass her by.

One of the stragglers in the group noticed her, however. She saw him turn and was sure she

was done for, but he merely called out, "Hey, you! Worker! You'd better quit stalling and follow along! We've got to be at the council meeting in an hour and I don't want to get in trouble because we're late. You know how the queen can get! Hurry up!"

The princess, stunned, looked at the rich black streaks staining her clothes and her face and got an idea.

"Okay... uh... I'll be right there! Give me a second!" she called back to the ant.

She quickly rooted through the charcoal filament, pulled out two wiry chunks and tied them to her head. She rolled through the soot, completely coating her body. When she stood up, she said to herself, "Well, I'm as ant-like as I'm ever going to be. Let's give it a shot." She stood up and joined the rear of the procession in the pitch-dark corridor.

It seemed like they walked for miles, but the princess had never felt better. The pill Monkey had given her must have been very powerful. And besides, the other ants seemed so preoccupied that nobody noticed her disguise. She was still unsure as to what she would do when she finally saw the queen, but she was having too much fun pretending and getting dirty to really even notice any lingering fear.

After about forty-five minutes, the princess began to notice that the corridor was getting much wider and that more and more ants were joining her little band. Soon she began to feel a draft as

the path opened into a series of larger rooms, situated something like the chain of receiving rooms in her own castle. The last of the series opened into a huge grotto in which thousands of ants were milling about, surrounding what appeared to be a high balcony cut into the dirt.

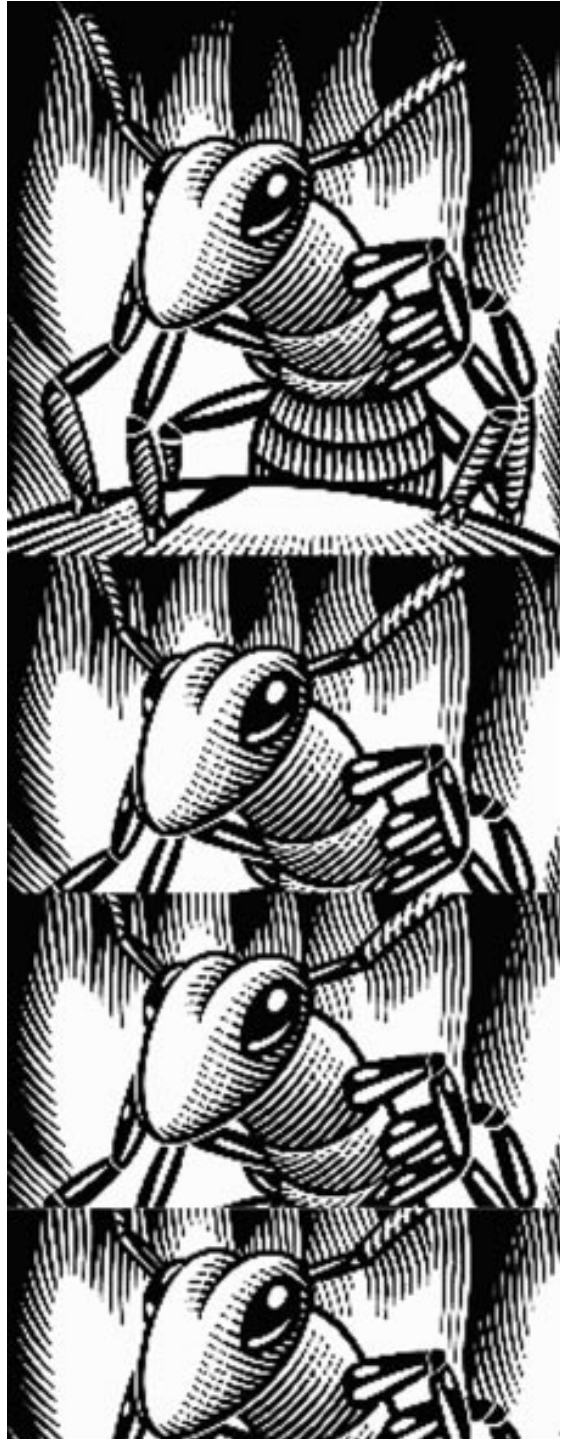
She and her group took their places at the back of the horde and the princess noticed a small walkway winding around the side of the meeting room up to the balcony. She figured she'd have to sneak off at some point and investigate the path to see if it would lead her to the throne room. Meanwhile, however, the ants settled down as a piercing screeching sound (she supposed it was some sort of fanfare) heralded the entrance of the queen.

She talked forever. At least it seemed so to the princess, who felt the pill gradually lose its power. She talked about the glorious victory of the ants over the kingdom; the heroic sacrifice of Clipper; the death of the princess (the little girl smiled at this part; apparently the queen thought she had already died. She was tougher than she thought.) The ants stood on cue, cheered on cue, got insulted by the queen on cue. She was getting bored and annoyed listening to the queen's nasally voice, when suddenly two strong forearms clamped on her shoulders.

"You'd better come with me; and quietly."

She tried to spin, but was secured by the strong grasp. Another pair of arms clutched her legs as she was whisked into the air; she was able to catch a glimpse of a grotesque soldier ant's face before her body was turned skyward and slung onto its greasy back. Quickly and quietly she was taken up the very path she had noticed earlier, the crackling voice of the queen fading in the distance. She never even thought about screaming.

Fifteen minutes of bumps and shakes later (a wave of cold nausea passed through the princess at all the jostling) she was set down in a cool, well furnished room somewhere deep in the palace. At least it looked like a palace, or an ant





version of one. There were portraits on the wall of noble ancestors, plush violet drapes, and a very strange looking throne, obviously made for someone with an awkward number of legs.

"You wait here, impostor," commanded the soldier ant, easily the largest insect she had ever seen. "The queen will be with you shortly." He made a shrill whistle and two smaller guards came to the circular entranceway in response. He then disappeared down the corridor.

Frightened, the princess began to try to think. For one thing, here she was, about to meet the one creature who could help her. But this was also the leader of the ants, the horrid enemy of the kingdom, and the one who had tried to kill her. If the queen found out exactly who she was, she'd never get the antidote; much less make it back to the surface. Besides, with every passing moment she was feeling dizzier and weaker.

She tried to figure out how the soldier had known she was a fake. Was her disguise out of place? She checked. One of her antennae had slipped down past her ear. "Shoot!" she whispered harshly. "No wonder; I must look like a Jamaican chimney sweep!" She quickly reattached it, but sighed. If that soldier had told the queen about her antennae, she was cooked. Things did not look good, not at all. And especially not when the queen, escorted by several large soldiers, entered the room with a most ferocious (and, thought the princess, hungry) scowl upon her ugly face.

"And who might this be?" she asked. "An infiltrator? A spy? A spook, a rapscallion, or a curmudgeon, perhaps? Colonel Claw has told me he found you slithering around in the great hall; you'd better explain yourself, and quickly. I'm feeling particularly irritated today and wish to do away with you as soon as possible." The queen's dull, black manifold eyes glared at the trembling princess.

She gulped.

"Well..." she slowly began. Her mind was working furiously, when she remembered

Monkey's secret. Weakness! Her own eyes lit up and narrowed slightly. She let her antennae brush against the grotesque bug, who recoiled. Perhaps Colonel Claw had not had enough time to alert the queen after all.

"Well, you see, it's like this. I come from the humans of the kingdom. I've come...; well, I've come to make peace."

"I knew it!" screeched the bug. "I just knew it! A spy! Peace? Phooey! How did you intend to make peace, tiny one? What were you going to do, offer me some more cheese? Phooey! Who are you, anyway? What are you? A spy! I thought so! We'd better kill her now, boys." The queen crossed her arms for emphasis and nearly clipped the princess in the face.

"No! Wait! Let me explain. You see; I've come to... apologize to you on behalf of the princess."

"Apology denied! Kill her bo—"

"Wait, for crying out loud!" the princess stamped her tiny foot in frustration. "Can't you listen to even one little word without interrupting?! Geeze! You see; well, I'm not just apologizing for the princess. I am the princess!"

The queen hesitated for a moment, clearly confused. "Impossible! The princess is dead! I killed her myself, with my own special potion! And, besides, she's a human! I don't know what you are, but you're too small to be one of them!" The queen's eyes blinked deadily.

"No, don't you see. Your potion failed. You didn't kill me. Instead you turned me into an ant!" The princess tried to suppress a cough. "And believe me, nobody was happy about it, especially not my father, who kicked me out and told me to come down here and say sorry!"

"Turned you into an ant? What kind of idiot talk is that?! I have never, not once, not even remotely, ever made a mistake with one of my

potions! I don't even think it's possible!"

"Well, obviously I'm not dead, and I didn't just get this way because I ate some bad chicken!" The princess was feeling quite feisty. "See for yourself; what else could have happened?"

The proud queen, who had kept her blindness a secret from everyone in the kingdom for years, stopped for a moment and blinked her thousands of worthless eyes.

She then haughtily peered forward, close enough so that the little girl could smell her putrid breath, and pretended to examine her.

"Humph!" she said. "That still doesn't explain why you came down here! And why you destroyed my summer home."

"It was an accident, I swear. I was just admiring how strong ants were and was dropping rocks on them as a scientific experiment. I was very foolish and am very sorry.

But now I'm in a horrible state; I mean, just look at me! An ant! What could be worse?"

"Worse?! I'll show you worse!" the queen acidly shot back. "Dropping rocks on my summer home? Scientific experiment? Now, look here! Not only am I going to kill you myself; but I'm going to turn you back into an ugly little girl first, so that your beloved family will find you, and will cry, and will moan, and will know my awesome power! And then I'll kill them too! Yes, you and all your kingdom and all your friends are going to die horrible, painful, tortuous deaths!" At this point, the queen was spitting every syllable, spraying the princess with a horrid green goo. "Guard! Wait here while I fetch my special key; and don't let her try anything fishy!" She disappeared behind one of the purple walls and returned several moments later with a small silver key. She then reached under her throne and withdrew a very ornate and ancient brass

"She was able to catch a glimpse of a grotesque soldier ant's face before her body was turned skyward and slung onto its greasy back"

box.

"Look close," she scowled impatiently. "You see, every potion creates its own natural antidote, which takes a form appropriate to its user. In your case, the potion I made for you made this. Don't ask me why." The queen slid the key into the lock, opened the box, and pulled out a book, covered in stars and suns and very magical looking. "Now I guess what you must do is read this book; that is, if a mental ditch dweller like yourself is even able to read."

She then took out a foul looking vial filled with a dark brown liquid and snickered, "And this, my pretty, is my most deadly of poisons. I perfected it yesterday, just in time for your little visit. One whiff of this and your heart explodes into a million pieces!"

She took out a dropper and put several drops in a steaming broth. "As soon as you turn back into a human I'm going to pour this glorious stuff all over your stinking mountain so that your entire stinking kingdom will perish, and my wondrous reign will be extended across the earth! Yes! I can already feel the power!" The queen was sloshing the broth all over in her excitement.

"But first, just to make sure you can't escape, I think I'll put a little of this on the last page of the book, so that just as you transform back into your beloved human form, you will be the first to die!" She made a move to drop some of the liquid on the book when suddenly the earth began to shake.

The princess, who felt very much like a sick, limp doll in the grasp of the guards, felt her stomach fly into her face. She anxiously glanced around the throne room to see the source of the shaking when her knee bumped against something. It was the throne, just seconds before completely out of her reach. She was growing! The Demagnifactor's shrinking effect was wearing out and her head was about to knock into the ceiling. Quick as a flash she reached toward the now terrified queen and snatched the book, just as walls and roof began to cave in around her.

Her lungs were pressed, her eyes coated and covered with sand and still she clutched the book, which remarkably was growing with her. She felt every last droplet of strength leak from her as she smashed against the earth. From the distance she heard the screams of crushed ants, even as the rush of size made the sounds fade. Her arms, heavy in mud and sickness, seemed useless against press of the ground and her mind seemed close to blackness when something grabbed her shoulders and wrenched her from the ground.

She could hardly open her eyes, but she still somehow knew it was Monkey. He dragged her several feet from the collapsed ant palace (which now, by the way, appropriately resembled a cesspit) and doused her forehead with cool water. Through some unholy effort, she was able to gather enough strength to sit and gaze at the mud-matted beast. She realized she had traveled hardly at all; she was only twenty feet from the hole into which she had originally descended.

"Now, my dear; be very careful... just sit there for a moment and relax. Catch your breath. There you are.

"You..." she wheezed, "you look like a shag carpet!"

For once, monkey laughed. "And you; well, I won't tell you what you look like, because I've never seen anything like it before!"

Monkey paused for a moment to let the princess catch her breath, but he noticed, under all that soot and grime that she was starting to turn a pale green.

"Listen closely. Were you able to find the antidote?"

"Yes," the princess coughed. Her eyes had begun to waver. "It's...it's right, uh... here. Yes, this is it." From her small, strong hands Monkey took the book.

"A book? Very curious."

"What..." She coughed again. "What does it mean?"

"Well, I'm not sure."

"The queen told me I'm supposed to read it;

but I still don't see how that can help me."

"It might just be that the best way for a sick, wonderful person like yourself to feel better is to hear a good story."

"But... oh... Monkey, I feel so col—" The princess began to collapse, but Monkey drew her up and looked in her eyes.

"We have no time to wait. You've got to read that book."

"Can't... you... read... it to me?" the princess managed.

"You are going to do it yourself. But here; I'll hold it for you. Now hang in there, my dear. Pretend you are me and tell me the story like I would tell it."

The princess drooped her eyes drunkenly toward the page and began to read. Her voice was so quiet and her words so jumbled, that Monkey was hardly able to understand. She stopped several times in the middle of a phrase to catch her breath, but Monkey held her hand tight and she persevered.

Painfully, she made it through the first page. Then the next. Slowly her speech became less slurred, as the story grew more stunning and the sun shone much brighter. It was a wonderful tale of little girls and ants, revenge and bravery. A very familiar story, the miraculous story of the last couple of weeks! Monkey found himself enwrapped in the mesh of the princess' brave adventures. Her voice grew pure and strong and he rejoiced with her and laughed and cried. He came under the magic of the story's spell and felt, with her, it's power to heal.

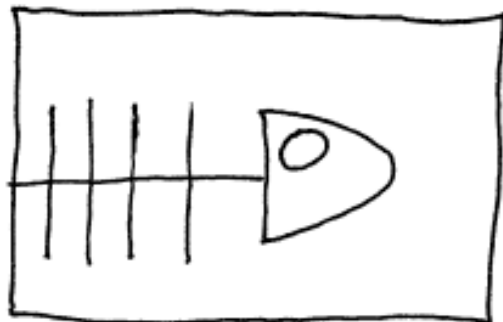
As she read, the girl grew radiant and the book began to glow. Somehow, the pallor left her skin, the ache left her body, and the cold left her touch and everything seemed new and fresh. The sun grew hot, in fact, and probably chuckled and cried with Monkey. But the most amazing part of all, was that, on the last page, with the last phrase, when all was well and the battle was won, the story never really ended...



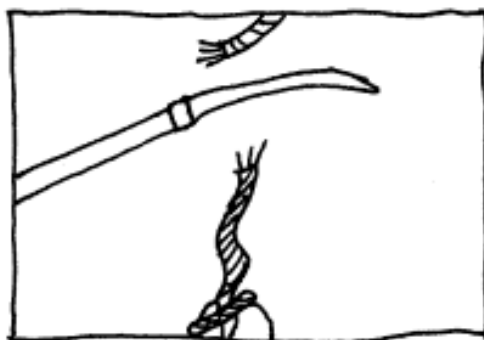


The Adventures of
MAX
Pleistocene Fish

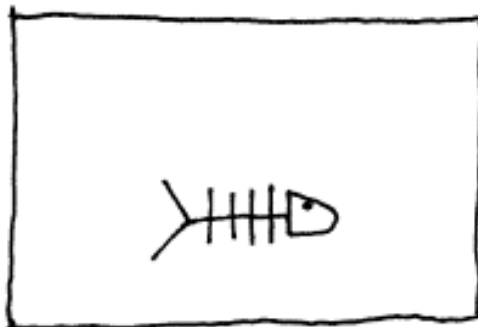
At the sight of
Claire I paused—



and the Ninja—
Sensei dropped her
into the grinder.



He vanished, leaving
me alone in the blood,
sugar and chalky dust.
To be continued!



Sex in Public Places ¹

WAL★MART



Sex with Riding Crops ²



Sex on the Kitchen Counter ³



Sex with a Cigar ⁴



Sex with Hilary Clinton ⁵



Sex with a Cucumber ⁶



Sex with the Family Pet ⁷



The T.I.N. Ballistic Report

Tests by Warrior Poetess, tested on Bagboy

Move over Cosmo! It's time to make way for the first ever Ballistics Report Valentine's Day Special! For thousands of years now men have been equating sex and violence. Girls, it is time to take matters into own hands! All you boys, beware, this is a ladies-only edition of the T.I.N. Ballistic Report. Without further ado, let the fireworks begin!

(First, let it be stated: if the one you love is using coercion, threats or violence to control you or your emotions, it is time to get off the short bus. Everyone knows that abusers abuse because they are hung like thimbles. So dump his ass and get with a real man (or woman); sex and violence can be fun, but only when everybody has the chance to hurt everybody else. Litmus test: if you can't say "no" without feeling like dirt, it is time to say "c-ya!")

That much said, onto today's lesson: stuff we see everyday is boring; stuff we see everyday is taken for granted; stuff we see everyday doesn't have any value because it is common. Don't let this be you! The destination is always the same, so you might as well make the journey a funky one! Following is a report on the ballistics of love - feel free to practice this one at home, kiddos!

¹ Everyone says sex in public is fun, but the truth is my BBoy can't get it up in public . . . which is always worth a laugh or two, but is essentially sexually unsatisfying.

² A little leather on flesh action is always a turn-on. Feel free to put a real hurt on, especially if he is tied up and is sucking on a bit and bridle. Be careful of saddle sores.

³ It's all fun and games until your butt starts to adhere to the linoleum counter top.

⁴ If Clinton did it, it is creepy, but this might be just the thing if you're into burns.

⁵ See previous footnote, but it seems that BB has a thing for Chelsea. Super-creepy.

⁶ The cucumber intimidated BB into going home early, if you know what I mean.
Note: always wrap your veggies with latex. You don't know where its been!

⁷ It's all about where you put the peanut butter.

Next Issue: Special Cinco de Mayo Ballistics Report!

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