

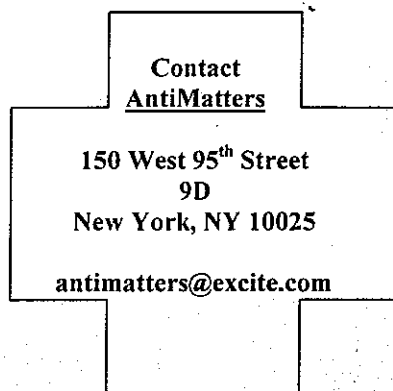
AntiMatters

September
1999

The Puppet Issue!



Just One Dollar!



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Steve Parker
Tom Warnick
Dave Wechsler

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Puppets have always meant only one thing to me: Total Mayhem. No wonder New York City, with its tumultuous, never-ending parade of the grotesqueries of life, has long been considered the puppet capital of the world.

"But," you might think to yourself, "Why are puppets so frenzied and frantic? Why is the phrase 'calm as a puppet' not oft heard?" From Punch and Judy to the Muppets, puppetry has always relied on the more violent aspects of human nature. There is usually more action and carnage in a ten minute puppet show than in a two hour Schwarzenegger film. Puppets are doers, not thinkers.

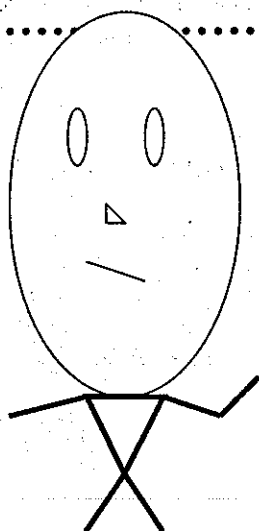
And a puppet will give you what he has, wholeheartedly and without restraint. A dumb puppet has never seen a thought; an evil puppet has no redeeming qualities; do not match wits with a smart puppet, for you will surely fail (at least I have on more than one occasion); a good puppet will have your heart overflowing with the joy of life.

So no wonder the art of puppetry has always found a welcome home in the anti-folk scene. What other scene so embraces the hot-blooded antics of people desperate to drive themselves and everyone around them insane with the violence of true passion.

In this issue of AntiMatters we will trace the hidden story of puppetry and the anti-folk scene. You may be surprised that some of your favorite puppeteers today once started on the mean streets of Manhattan, hustling for a living on the thinnest of lines between poverty and destitution. Hell, the only reason most of those early anti-folk puppeteers took up puppetry in the first place was because you don't have to feed a puppet.

Sadly, in this magazine, we have neglected not only the history of the anti-folk puppetry scene, but the great performers that continue that proud tradition. But no more! Anti-puppeteers, this issue is dedicated to you!

Dave Wechsler



It was all his idea.

Nominal Chieftan
Jonathan Berger

Visionary and Propigator, 9/99
Dave Wechsler

Report from the Fort

General Notice

The AntiFolk Festival, held between Tompkins Square Park, the C-Note, and the Sidewalk Café, at the very beginning of August, was a damned good time. Each night held special shows with incredible acts. Each night featured a plethora of local acts coming out to see a plethora of local acts. Those of us who were out for much of the festival couldn't help but run into a lot of familiar faces - emphasis on both *familiar* and *a lot*.

What happened, it seems, is that, in a self-proclaimed scene, a locus of creative talent, a collection of people who perform and respect each other and share and collaborate... what happened is, well, it worked. It gelled. The AntiFolk Festival was truly a celebration of our little AntiFolk experience. Maybe it got the word out to people beyond the scene, maybe not. But truly, the Festival made us all who partook revel in our community. - Jonathan Berger

8/18/99 - Jack Grace is really getting his Johnny Cash routine down. He even covered Delia. Jack was joined by Marilee who sang with the charm of an Emmy Lou Harris. I look forward to hearing them again. - Steve Parker

8/21/99 - The night kicked with Anomie, a nine-piece avant-jazz groove-goof band. They brought in a cool vibe that set the stage for the rest of a great night of music. Daniella Cotton was next. A basic bar-band vibe, Hendrix-Clapton covers. Nothing to write home about but they brought in a crowd and continued the festive mood. The highlight of the evening was next. The debut of The Billy Crosbys. Figure Johnny Cash meets The Pogues. A wonderful cross of Country, Trad, Rock-a-Billy and Antifolk. Tasteful songs of strife (ala Chris Moore), a slyly pretty singer and a drummer who looked like he was hanging onto a motorcycle sidecar as he swerved in his seat tapping out the beat. Throw in some great violin work and you got a highly recommended band. The Billy Crosbys were followed by Matthew Puckett and his new band. Good rockin' stuff but a little under-rehearsed. Lord knows it's hard to keep a band together in this town. Zef, of illness, was up next. Violin, bass, mini-moog and sampler held the audience entranced and minds enhanced. The night ended strangely with a set by Huw Gower. Mr. Gower is an obscure pop legend. Formerly of The Records he wrote the #1 song "Starry Eyes," he's also played back-up guitar with superstars like Roger Daltrey. One would expect some excitement but we were disappointed by an apologetic, lackluster performance. Though he is a competent guitarist his out-of tune vocals and uninteresting songs led me to believe that time stopped after his success and it's been laurel sitting time for years. He needs a shot of Antifolk reality. Oh well, maybe he'll rub the stars out of his eyes, hang out at a few Antihoots and get the fire back someday. In the meantime, I'll be back for The Billy Crosbys. - Steve Parker

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"A wholly enjoyable voyage into a strange and brilliant musical mind"-Billboard

CMJ Weekly A&R Pick of The Week!

"Lach is the Mastermind of Antifolk, a Lower East Side rendezvous of Bob Dylan and Patti Smith" Jon Pareles-NY Times

AntiFolk Puppetry in the 60s, the 70s and TODAY!

While "folk" music had a resurgence in the early 60s, few know of the many puppets who were a huge influence on the folk stylings of the time. Even fewer know of Peter, Paul and Mary's attempt to get puppet folk-singing sensation "Pepe the Folk Singing Puppet" to join the group in 1961. Like PP & M, Pepe was also managed by Albert Grossman and was a big hit on Bleecker Street with his minor New York hits "Mr. Puppet, Row the Puppet Boat Ashore", "Talkin' World War III Puppet Blues" and "Puppet Wreck of the Old Puppet '97." These hits made Pepe get a big head, big enough that he refused to join Peter, Paul and Mary, who were soon vaulted to superstardom after they changed a few words of Pepe's song "Blowin' in the Puppet Wind" which has been erroneously credited to some obscure folk figure. While Pepe watched his former friends enjoy the limelight, Pepe was eventually reduced to playing three nights a week at Kelly's Castaways, a late 60's dive—a tragic case of inequity for a once-great giant in the field of Puppet Folk. While Pepe made a brief comeback with his 1972 hit "Heart of Puppet Gold", he could not come up with a follow-up, and fell back into obscurity. Sadly, Pepe died in a tragic accident on MacDougal street in 1975: while trying to smoke a cigarette, he lit his mouth on fire—with his little puppet frame going aflame almost immediately. Pepe, perhaps New York's greatest unheralded puppet troubadour, is now only remembered by a few aging puppets that stroll through Washington Square Park. To them, folk and anti-folk begins and ends with Pepe.

—Tom Warnick

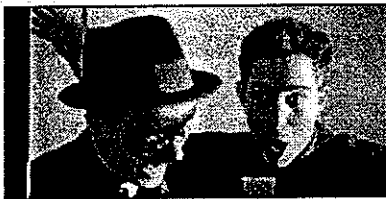
Puppet Fairy Tales Can Come True (It can happen to you!)

There is nothing more disappointing than when a puppet Anti-Folker sells out.

But like all forms of music and show business, it can't help but happen in the big city. Take the case of the pupper Steve, whom was crowned King of Puppet Anti-Folk in 1977. While the pupper Anti-Folk scene was early, it was thriving in select pockets—most notably the Brooklyn Navy Yard—and Steve was its biggest champion. From '77 through 1983, Steve the Puppet could be found at playing at such venerable Puppet Anti-Folk sites as Kenny's Castaways, the Paggot Inn and the heating grate outside of Studio 54. But like all small scenes, big money muscled its way in like an Ultimate Fighting Champion at a Shriner's convention, and the dollars were thrown at anything that moved like a puppet, in hopes the public would catch onto the pupper Antifolk scene. Like today, amid cries of "we'll never sell out!", Steve took the money and ran as fast as his little puppet legs could carry him to Casablanca records. While no one knew it at the time, Steve's debut for Casablanca was originally going to be his standard puppet Anti-Folk set. However, the big money men decided that Steve's act was a bit rough around the edges, and several producers were brought in to "sweeten" Steve's sound. The end result was the synthesizer-laden album, "Meet Steve, the Anti-Folk puppet who Loves to Boogie". Needless to say, the album stiffed and Steve was without critical radio support and a fan base. After touring regionally in Boise, Idaho for several years, Steve retired to his puppet Chicken ranch in Ireland. In 1996, Steve was afflicted with PSB, (Puppet String Brittleness, an incurable disease that causes the strings that hold up a puppet to become brittle and break, resulting in the loss of use of various puppet limbs.) While Steve is a sellout, you can send donations to help alleviate his PSB by sending check or money order, with a minimum payment of \$50, to Steve the Puppet 10 Macgilligand Way Ireland



It started, as so much in AntiFolk has, with Tom Jones.



The "Young New Mexican Puppeteer," the old welshman sang, "Saw that people all lived in fear. He thought they might all listen to a puppet telling them what to do."

The song continues, in epic vein, telling how this sweet boy from Albuquerque made people come from miles around to see him portray Lincoln, MLK, Mark Twain, and Jesus all rapping about important subjects like peace and... well, whatever.

And that's where the song ends. But, like so many Tom Jones instigated ideas, it doesn't *truly* end there.

Them Keener Boys, in their recent month-long residency at the Sidewalk Café, represented the concerned boy's tales of peace and love, presented cardboard cut-outs of the important historical characters and their interactions in a tenement building. Combining incest, infidelity, obesity, drug abuse and pompous hubris, Them Keener Boys' representation of the Young New Mexican Puppeteers original playlets ("All portrayed in their entirety!") are cautionary tales for every generation. Ask for them by name.

- Jonathan Berger

have to
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AntiFolk Puppet History

PART I – The Rise and Fall of the Puppet

The history of anti-folk puppetry is the history of our city. Back before this island was even called Manhattan, Native Americans would amuse each other with rollicking and anti-establishment Punch and Judy shows in the quiet, undeveloped forest that grew into the greatest city on Earth.

But perhaps the real start of the story is much later, in the late 1800s, when the practice of "street puppet theatre" became the rage for a majority of young b'hoys, eager to prove their manhood and their "street smarts" to the world. Let us follow the story of young Lach, fresh off the boat in 1878 and green as a leaf to the ways of this new country.



Lach had escaped his rural Rumanian village by walking.

His walking soon turned into a journey and when he reached the ocean his journey became a voyage. When he disembarked the steamship he had stowed away on across the Atlantic he was at the southern tip of Manhattan and he lost no time in getting involved with the worst riff-raff in town. The boys were always trying to "outtuff" each other in games of sport and acts of random violence. But it was young Lach that first suggested the idea of "street puppet theatre" that became the new stage for the bloodiest gang battles this town has ever seen. The idea was simple enough. Find a store or restaurant whose windows were approximately waist level off the ground, then, puppet in hand, scoot on the sidewalk to the middle of the window below the view of the patrons inside. When in place, shoot your puppet-clad hand up and give the folks inside a puppet show they will never forget.

The first shows went well. Street puppet theatre wasn't outlawed until the next year as the cops began to take notice of the violent aftermaths of the puppet shows. Lach did his homework well and became a first rate street puppeteer. He and his gang would stage elaborate shows for viewers in diners and salons across the city. The problems began when one of their shows was witnessed by a member of the Plug Uglies in 1880. The Plug Uglies were not to be outdone by the Bowery Boys¹ (as Lach's gang was known) and started

staging shows of their own, introducing such innovations as dialogue cards and even a makeshift curtain controlled by members of the gang on opposite sides of the window, just out of sight.

The Bowery Boys were furious that the Plug Uglies were treading on their turf and started showing up at Plug Uglies' shows with baseball bats. They would hide until the show started, and then descend on the puppeteers, leaving beheaded puppets and broken fingers in their wake. The Plug Uglies retaliated against the Bowery Boys and before long, one could not walk the streets without stepping over a freshly beaten puppet or a moaning street urchin, clutching his hand. And one could not eat lunch anywhere near a window in lower Manhattan without a puppet jumping up to table level on the other side of the it, only having time to do a frantic, short dance before young hoods descended on it, bats swinging.

Lach developed a puppetry technique known as "The Iron Puppet" which no one to this day has been able to duplicate. Many a bat swung at Lach's hand, only to be broken and dented without the puppet or Lach stopping the show. Perhaps because of the misleading name of his technique, for in truth his hand was never protected beyond the stuffing of the puppet and the puppet was not reinforced in any way, it quickly became a rumor that the Bowery Boys were using iron puppets. But by this time it was no longer just a duel between the Bowery Boys and the Plug Uglies. Puppet massacres were being committed by the South Streeters, the Broadway Boys, the Mott Street Beaters, and Rag Riley's Pansies, among others. And due to the misunderstanding of Lach's puppetry technique, the other gangs started using iron puppets, turning



the puppets from happy-go-lucky pranksters into lethal death machines. The other upshot of this was that, although up to this point fooled by the illusion of life in the puppets, the gangs actually started attacking the puppeteers rather than just the puppets. At this point it was common while watching a street puppet show to see the puppet jerk violently and then

¹ Much can be learned from contrasting the two crime pricing lists from the two gangs. Compare this list from the Bowery Boys:

Punching \$.50
Horse poisoning \$2
Mischievous diversion \$2.20
Ear chewed off \$3
Leg broken \$3.25
Leg gnawed off \$3
Frontal Lobotomy (unprofessional) \$5
Frontal Lobotomy (professional) \$10
Stabbing \$15
Killing \$25
Killing a midget \$50

Vs the Plug Uglies:

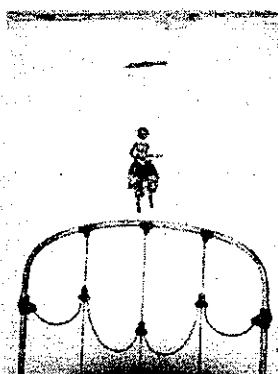
One eye blackened \$.35
Both eyes blackened \$.50
Bomb \$5 to \$15
Slashing \$10
Tying someone's shoelaces together resulting in a comic fall \$12
Witticisms \$15
Non-fatal shooting \$17
Fatal shooting \$25
Flossing \$30

AntiFolk Puppet History

seem to faint dead away out of sight as the puppeteer below was stabbed by the competition.

Clearly, something needed to be done. New York's finest were called in to bring peace. This led to the great puppet riot of '82 when police faced off against gangs of snarling youths, lethal iron headed puppets on their hands in a 2 week battle. Eventually the police were routed by the puppet-wielding gangs, who had formed an uneasy truce amongst themselves to battle the police. Puppets ran amok in the streets, breaking windows and reverting to their former affiliations, roughing up each other and filling the streets with violence.

And it was at this point that Lach was wounded, hit in the head by an iron puppet and left for dead in the middle of Mott



Street. He came to a week later, dragged into shelter by a young Jewish woman named Sophie Leisenberg². She had cared for him while he was unconscious and it was not long after he woke that they were married. It was then that Lach decided that the city needed a place where puppetry could be practiced uninhibited by the threat of violence. He resigned from street life and set up

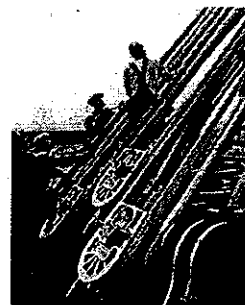
a small puppet theatre in the basement of a lower east side tenement. To enter for a show, you were required to empty all pockets and know a special password that changed for each show. Many gangs tried to break in but Lach had Lefty Montlebaum and Gizzard Phillips as the theatre guards and no one was able to get past them and start trouble. Lach's place was so well guarded that it came to be known as "The Fort" by many folk. Gradually, the "street puppet theatre" craze in the gangs died down and they resumed their other activities such as extortion, robbery and horse poisoning.

But the story does not end there. No sir. For Lach and Sophie had many children, brought up in a world where fortunes turned in the blink of an eye and the only places one ended up were at the top or in the grave. And Lach would occasionally take his children, who he versed well in the art of puppetry, to the site of the great puppet riot and to the cemeteries where gravestone after gravestone had the phrase

² Sophie Leisenberg was an interesting case. She was known somewhat as the Dorothy Parker of her day except that Dorothy Parker wasn't around yet so no one called her that. Also, she ran with a less affluent crowd. Sophie's round table would probably have been at McGurk's Suicide Hall (the building where this notorious saloon was still stands today) rather than the Algonquin. She was known as a wit and a writer but was never able to break herself out of the lower east side street life until Lach came along. She was responsible for writing some of the more popular puppet shows that Lach would put on later in life.

"killed by puppet" engraved on it, so that they would not forget.

Young Lach, the youngest of Lach's sons, especially took to puppetry. And it is perhaps with him that our story really begins. On the eve of manhood, in 1916, at the tender age of 14, he rushed off to join the army in the Great War. But he did not go to fight. Young Lach had greater dreams than that. When he heard of the Great War and the way it was fought, he was told of the great trenches that the armies camped in and fought for, and thought, "That is the largest puppet stage in the world. I must go." Soon he was known in the war for staging epic productions of Dickens' *Nicholas Nickleby* and Rabelais' *Gargantua and Pantagruel* so entertaining that the Germans would come out of their trenches to watch the entertainment. When the show was over and the puppets took their bows, the puppeteers would jump out of the trenches, and mow down the German forces who were still standing and applauding. As the army advanced slowly (the shows ran up to 8 hours in length!) they frequently came across dying Germans who although fatally wounded, would still exclaim, "That was the most fantastic puppet show I have ever seen!" or even had questions like, "But did Panurge find himself a woman in the end?" before they expired.



In accordance with a general's orders, Lach used shorter and shorter works in order that they may advance faster³. But without the epic length to draw the enemy in, the Germans would not be as lulled into unwariness as with the longer works and sometimes the assault did not go as planned and many soldiers had to be taken off the field, their hands blown away by the enemy not as taken with the delight of puppetry. Sadly, in 1918, on the cusp of the war ending, young Lach suffered a devastating blow when both his hands were shot during a crucial scene of his adaptation of *Death in Venice*. It was said that the soldier responsible for stopping the show was lynched by his fellow German soldiers, but that mattered not to Lach, who was whisked off to the English countryside to recuperate in a military hospital. It was there that he fell in love with a young nurse who helped him overcome his disability. And it was with her help that he readied another puppet show, this time for the king of England, for the ceremony that awarded him the Victoria Cross. The young Nurse, one Nancy Pickwick by name, helped him backstage in putting on and taking off the puppets from his stumps and although he was never to regain full mastery of puppetry (It was said that in his prime he could convey the feeling of a lone tear sliding



³ First the General ordered him to use more German themes. This order led to a lengthy *Faust* puppet play that was heralded as the greatest puppet adaptation of Goethe that the world has ever known.

down a puppet's face at 400 yards.) he performed admirably and with great effect. He married Nancy and they moved back to the city where his father had been keeping the Fort alive throughout the war and had attained some modest wealth from the endeavor.

Young Lach grew up and had many sons and daughters whom he all named "Lach". The youngest of his daughters, "Little Lach", was entranced by puppetry and watched her father and grandfather endlessly as they put on shows, day in and day out at the Fort. The Fort by now (1927) was one of the fanciest theatres on Broadway and was heralded worldwide as the one and only true home of puppets. The wealth and fame of the Lach family grew. Little Lach was treated at all times like a princess and grew up amongst the expanding empire. Once the fame of the Fort spread, puppeteers from all over the country came to be a part of the shows and to match wits with the best in the biz. Upstarts would continually startle the more seasoned professional puppeteers with dazzling new techniques and the Fort began to stage impromptu "open hand" sessions every Monday night where the puppeteers would gather and try to "out-style" each other. Eventually these shows were incorporated in the schedule of theater and became an event in and of itself. But it was not to last and it is perhaps here where the story of modern anti-puppetry really begins.

Black Monday. October 28th, 1929. The stock market crashes, and with it, the dreams of a family of puppeteers. Suddenly, no one had time for puppet shows. Within months the Fort closed and the Iron Puppeteer, Lach, who had fought so hard for his dreams only to see them come crashing down, committed suicide. The family had to sell the theater to pay for the funeral. And they sadly bid farewell to the hundreds of puppeteers who had traveled so far just to call the Fort "home". Lach and Nancy moved back to the tenement house that housed the original Fort and worked desperately to



make ends meet and care for their children and the aging Sophie. For a while there was a resurgence of street puppet theater as the now homeless puppeteers spread throughout the city but eventually it dissipated as they returned to their homes, found other jobs or simply died.

As for Little Lach, who had been spoiled from birth, the effect was quite monstrous. She missed her cream and strawberries⁴ served to her at three o'clock each day.

She missed being woken from her dreamy sleep by a gentle breeze blowing 'cross her four poster bed by the theater's

⁴ When in season. At other times of the year they could also have been raspberries, blueberries, boysenberries, etc. Her favorites were loganberries.

AntiFolk Puppet History

wind machine. And most of all, she missed the daily interaction and delight

of puppets in all their forms; big and small, good and evil, happy and sad, that had been part and parcel of life at the Fort. Now she lived in a run down old tenement; her handless father a broken man and her mother working day and night as a nurse to support the family. Naturally, the suicide of his father had upset Lach severely and without the Fort and without puppetry, his life quickly spiraled downward. When puppetclad, he was as able as any man, but without them his handless stumps weren't much good for anything else. More and more he would tell Little Lach to "Come over here and pour some of that whisky⁵ down my throat."



When Nancy found out about the drinking she warned Little Lach to not do as her father asked, but Lach had gone too far by then and when Little Lach would not do as he commanded, he could get violent. A decade of fear and worry began.

It was not long before Little Lach decided that she could do better on her own. Clearly, the adults were making the wrong decisions or they wouldn't have ended up where they were.

She decided to take to the streets and to return when she had the resources to raise the family back up to where it had been. On the morning of March 27th, 1931, she got up early, packed her little belongings and walked across the Brooklyn Bridge where she thought the family would never think to look for her.

In the beginning, she tried to do street puppet theatre, but she had not the temperament for it. She had grown up in a

world where the greatest puppeteers in the country performed enchanting tales of mystery and subtlety. She could not see the broad-motioned and slapsticky street puppet theater as anything but a diminution of the art. In addition, the novelty had worn off and she was prone to be ignored by the patrons in the window. If she was lucky, she'd get a scrap of bread from the kitchen. And it hurt her knees dreadfully.

Slow and sure as the tide flows in and draws back out, Little Lach was inevitably led towards the last place in the city that might welcome her, Coney Island.

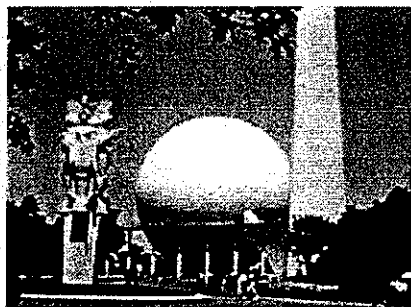
Coney Island had been through some rough times up to this point. It was entering the last of its glory days and the smell of decrepitude was sneaking up on it from all sides. Ever since Robert Moses' Jones Beach opened up, the crowds had begun to thin out and there was much talk of low income housing being built in the immediate surrounding area. But

⁵ Again, when in season. At other times of the year it could have been gin, vodka, beer, wine, etc. His favorite was a Czech liquor called Becherovka.

all Little Lach knew was that she was able to present puppet shows every day. To disguise herself so that none would come and try to take her back to her tenement hovel, she had renamed herself Patsy and dyed her red hair black.

For many years she lived out on Coney Island and never once set foot in Manhattan. But she was never able to make enough money to help the family and as time went on, she forgot about that and concentrated on the ordinary everyday trial of just having enough to eat. As she grew up she lost interest in puppetry, and in truth, although a profound and deep admirer of the art, she had not much skill of her own. But she began to design and operate rides at Coney Island and showed some talent at that.

In fact, she showed so much talent at that that she was approached by GM to help design their Futurama ride for the



1939 world's fair in Queens. It was she who came up with the ingenious sound design of the exhibit that had stumped so many engineers⁶. And since she was doing so well in the world at this point,

she thought it might be time to go back and see what had become of her family and to try and help them out. As luck would have it, though, the day she chose for her visit was September 1st and for that reason, history books tend to mention Hitler's invasion of Poland over Patsy's historic visit back to the tenement.

When she reached the East Side, she was hit with a wave of nostalgia; then by a rock. She collapsed in a heap and the young ruffian who threw it took her money, jewelry and clothes and ran away, leaving her unconscious on the street.

When Patsy woke up, she was home and her mother was gently applying a cold compress to the bump on her head raised by the young rascal's attack. But Patsy had no idea where she was, for the rock had hit her squarely and knocked away her memory. She was a victim of amnesia.

Well, to make a long story short, the family didn't recognize her either, but took in the stranger and Nancy nursed her back to health. Lach had by this time drunk himself to an early grave and all of their children had moved on to try and make their way in the world. Lonely and forgotten by many,



⁶ For a full explanation of the sound design of the Futurama ride, I suggest reading David Gelernter's book *1939- The Lost World of the Fair*, chapter 10, in which he discusses the Polyrheter, as it was called.

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Nancy asked Patsy if she needed a place to stay until she got her memory back and as Patsy had no idea who she was or where to go, she decided to stay. Mother and daughter were reunited... but the winds of change in Europe were fixin' to blow the family's proud puppet past back into full view in the worst possible way.

PART II - Puppets Amok!

For the next couple years Nancy trained Patsy to become a nurse, knowing that war would soon spread to the shores of America. On December 7th, the Japs brought the war to Hawaii and FDR launched the US into the fray. By January 1942 Patsy and Nancy were in an Navy hospital ship in the middle of the Pacific. It was there that Patsy met a young pilot by the name of Federico Gonsalvo. While it is true that Federico was engaged to a young lass in Mexico City who he was supposed to bring to America as soon as he the money to marry her, the war had swept him up into its history and disregarded his own. All of the sudden he found himself in the middle of the Pacific with the beautiful and fiery Patsy⁷.

They flirted mercilessly with each other every day but never admitted their love for each other until Federico was wounded in Midway. They declared their love for each other as soon as he came to and made plans to marry as soon as the war was over.



By the end of the war, Patsy had a little baby and Federico was dead. But one day in 1965, many years later, Federico's ghost appeared to Patsy in a dream as a large piñata that spoke in a Russian accent and said, "The dreams that you have. They are for your country. They die with me. For now is the time." She never knew what that meant, (or even that it was Federico's ghost!)

According to Nancy's wishes, Patsy named the baby Lach and began to raise him in the new cold war world. Lach grew up to be a sickly, withdrawn child whom nobody thought would amount to much. They were right. For in his blood ran the blood of a puppeteer and if there's one thing we've learned so far, it's that puppeteers are to be pitied, for they are the forgotten and wretched, the cursed and insane. And Lach would grow up with puppets in his veins instead of blood and would come to know the meaning of the word 'suffering' in all its forms.

⁷ It should be noted that it was the subject of great suspicion when Patsy's hair dye first started to fade and her true hair color was revealed to Nancy. However, it was dismissed as either a coincidence or a divine sign that she was meant to stay with the family while she recovered.

Yurifolk Puppet History

In fact, Lach had two strikes against him, for not only was he a puppeteer but he was also a communist. True, he wasn't born a communist, but from an early age watching McCarthy on TV he identified with artists and actors that were prosecuted. Before long he was going to meetings and staging member-getting puppet shows like "*Hey Joe Stalin!*" and "*The RED, white and blue*" which posited that communism was the only true American way. At the age of seven he became the youngest person in the country to be called in front of the House Un-American Activities Committee⁸. They decided the best way to deal with the impending menace of this small puppet-headed commie was to ship him off to Russia, and the sooner the better. So he found himself on a one-way trip to Moscow. And it is perhaps here that our story really begins.

True, the Moscow Circus is now famed throughout the world as one of the premier circus troupes, but back then it was



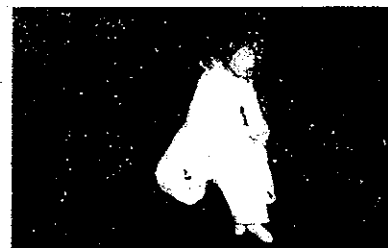
feared throughout America as 'the Red Circus'. Young Lach spent his formative years at the circus, using large puppets to draw in crowds. 2 years after his arrival, Stalin died and he was commissioned, at the tender age of 9, to create a special puppet performance

that would celebrate the life of the great leader. Imagine being a nine year old communist puppeteer given the enormous task of writing a tribute to one of the most enigmatic figures in history. Lach felt he was up to the task at first but it quickly weighed him down. As he did his research for the script he began to find more and more problems that he had with the great leader's governing of the country. He began to hold rehearsals in secret and threw up a shroud of mystery around the show. He stonewalled the party officials who came every month or so to ask how the show was progressing and to see drafts of the current script. Unable to complete the script himself he called in the great Russian clown and animal trainer Yuri Nikulin to help him finish it. The party became anxious.

On the anniversary of Stalin's death the puppet show was performed and it was an immediate scandal. There are not many who saw it but of those who did, every one of them defected from the Soviet Union and took up puppetry. Lach was kicked out of the country and back to America where he

⁸ The oldest person ever to be called in front of the committee was one Archie Icahbad by name, a 96 year old man who clearly had no idea where he was when he was being questioned and who, when asked of his affiliation with the communist party replied, "Connie was a very nice girl, but I couldn't marry her because she and I hated each other with a passion that burned so brightly that the skies caught on fire and the world was reduced to the ashes which purified the soil and caused the fruits of the planet to seep up through the ground and feed the multitudes of the poor and hungry." He was jailed until death claimed him 2 months later.

mounted a new production of his now anticommunist "*Hey Joe Stalin*"⁹.



The show went on tour but was stopped in the summer of 1955 in Kentucky when, lost en route to Little Rock, Arkansas, they pulled into Sutton Farm to ask for directions on August 21st at 7:00pm. The farmer, Elmer Sutton was having guests over that night and when they saw the van pull up they believed they were under attack from aliens and shot at the van. Lach tried to show that they meant no harm by bringing out the puppets and doing a makeshift puppet show in their yard, but to no avail. The frightened Sutton family kept shooting and to this day claims that it was attacked by aliens that night and strangely, the next night as well. This is strange because Lach and his crew were not there that next night. In fact, in the melee of the shooting on the 21st, Lach disappeared. It would be seven years before he resurfaced in 1962 near Alamogordo, New Mexico, naked and bleeding, the only survivor of a mysterious crash that the generals at Holloman Air Force Base covered up immediately. He was sent to a military hospital in Maryland for testing and was released the following year. While in the hospital he met a young nurse named Theresa Leikins and they fell in love. They were married in 1964 at a small ceremony at Grand Army Plaza, Brooklyn¹⁰.

Though Lach was born only 20 years ago, he claimed that he had been away for over 20 years and tests done in the hospital show that he did in fact have the body of a man in his thirties. And he had developed telekinesis, which was a great boon to his puppet artistry.

Lach and Theresa had many children who, with one or two exceptions, were named Lach¹¹. Lach never was able to gain a large acceptance for his puppet shows because although the puppetry was amazing, and quite impossible for anyone without his special abilities, all his shows were about alien abductions and people



quickly tired of the theme. (Nowadays he would have been quite a success.) But every single one of Lach's children became puppeteers (every one except one that is, his eldest

⁹ While it was not originally a musical, songs were added for the American tour.

¹⁰ I have never understood why people enjoy getting married there. It's not kept up very well and traffic is whizzing all around you.

¹¹ The two exceptions were "Latch" and "Lahch".

AntiFolk Puppet History

who took up the guitar instead and ran away at an early age. He was never heard from again.) Lach's children grew up in the topsy-turvy world of the 70s where anything was possible and chances were ya might "freak out" at any second. It is perhaps here where our story of anti-folk puppetry truly begins.

Lach's children banded together to form a puppetry group called *Lach's Key Kids* who schewed the formal story-telling approach to puppetry that had been the bread and butter of the family tradition for so long. They dispensed with story, plot and even recognizable characters. They brought abstract puppetry to a city whose grasp of reality was already pretty tenuous. They also formed a guerilla spin-off group called *Puppetchance* would stage impromptu performances in the streets and avenues of the city. These mostly involved taking human sized puppets and throwing them off buildings. When the police were called, the Laches would pummel them from the rooftop with puppets. For a while it was like the old days of the Great Puppet Riot. In fact, for a while, *Puppenchance* had a militant puppet spinoff group called *The Iron Puppets* in recognition of the old days where men knew how to handle their puppets. They would hide explosives in puppets and then leave them in the park. The elder Lach was oblivious to the havoc his little namesakes were causing, focusing all his attention on his by now quite elaborate and realistic puppet performed depiction of his abduction, which featured over two hundred puppets, all brought to life by Lach's uncanny mental power. He had a special room built for the puppet show and called it The Fort, insulating it with tin foil so that they could not control his brainwaves.

Most of Lach's kids were jailed in the eighties for drug running. Their group had been smuggling drugs to local neighborhood kids in, of course, puppets. As they went from neighborhood to neighborhood with their puppet show they also spread cocaine, pot and heroin.

Which brings us to the nineties. Does the story begin here? No. For the nineties have been almost puppet free at the Fort. But perhaps, just maybe, it isn't. And there's a chance that the real story of anti-folk puppetry has yet to begin...¹²

Text by Harrington Trust

Puppets by RoseVie La Cest



The Truth About Rick Shapiro

It is not widely known, but halfway through his popular Wednesday night run at the Sidewalk, comedian Rick Shapiro was replaced by a life-sized Rick Shapiro puppet. The replacement was of his own choosing and in fact he was the puppeteer controlling his styro-foam alterego on stage. When asked why he replaced himself with a puppet rather than simply doing the shows himself, he replied, "Some people didn't like the show. I mean they really didn't like the show. It started getting ugly some nights. I started getting notes before the show. Luckily I move a lot while I'm on stage and it makes me a harder target, but it started getting really ugly. Then I thought 'I need a fuckin' puppet.'"

His first shows with the puppet were surreal and manic as he struggled to gain control of the ungainly life-sized Rick Shapiro puppet, (or 'Weedy' as he came to name it) in front of unsuspecting audiences.

"Weedy had a life of his own at first. I was like 'Fuck you, Weedy!' and then he'd say 'Fuck you, Rick!' and the show would go all downhill."



Eventually, Rick developed a style of puppetry all his own. At first it was Rick in black-clothing and a black hood behind Weedy, controlling him, but that soon changed.

"I thought, 'I'm doing this so I don't get killed but I'm just behind the fucking puppet! If a bullet rips through Weedy, it'll hit me.'"

So Rick started doing the show from above, hanging from the rafters of the Sidewalk Café, he controlled a giant marionette of himself below. But soon paranoia forced even greater measures and within a few months, Rick controlled Weedy's performances from the safety of his own home via remote. It was only then that he felt truly safe.

And his suspicions, as it turns out, were correct. Several audience members opened fire on Weedy around 1am one night. The gunmen and gunwomen got away in the confusion that followed and it is not known whether or not they believe that they actually killed Rick Shapiro. Since then he's been laying low, building a new improved on-stage puppet, the Weedy Mark VI.

When asked how he thought his puppetry skills had increased, Rick replied, "Are you fucking kidding me? Did you see that fucking puppet sweat?!"



Weedy V

— Seong K

¹² But it's not very likely.

Got a question about love, dating, or Kansas? Ask Major Matt.....!

(majormattusa@earthlink.net)

"Hey, Major Matt, how do you know when you're really in love?"

A couple weeks ago at about 7:30, I was walking up sixth avenue, as I typically do every Wednesday at around this time, to attend my weekly shrink appointment. It was pretty humid out and everybody had this misty look in their eyes like they had just smoked pot or something. And as I do every Thursday, at about this time, while walking up sixth avenue, I walk past an apartment building front door that I happen to know, for a fact, presently or at one time, led to full service massage parlor, where actual massages were rarely given. A place where men go and pay money to insert and wiggle their penises into women's vaginas, that they don't know, for on average, about 15 minutes... and then leave. I believe that next to the apartment building is a restaurant and on the other side, some sort of natural foods store. And on this particular day... as I walked by the



building I was thinking that probably thousands of people must pass by this building every day. I was wondering about how many of them have walked through that door. How many of them even have any idea of what's going on in there?

There's no front porch with Dolly Parton in a purple bustier, flagging the winning high school football team through the front door. It's just a very average New York apartment building front double door. It's not green. There's no red light, no neon, just a door, a nicer front door than the one in my building. Now, I wasn't thinking about going in, myself... right! Fuck an "A" I wasn't thinking about going in. I mean, I didn't really feel like I had the time and I'm pretty sure that I didn't have the money, but every single time I walk past this building I think about what it would be like to go in. I mean aren't you the least bit curious about how it all works? I mean... how could anyone walk past a building where you don't just speculate, but you

know for sure that people are getting their schverve on inside and not at least be a little intrigued. If you're in a building and you look out the window and into the building across the street and you see two people engaging in oral sex what do you do... you look You don't necessarily run for the video camera or break down and masturbate but YOU LOOK! and don't say you don't. At least for a little while...



And this time, while walking up sixth avenue, and passing by the building, that's what I did...I looked. I looked at the doorknob. I looked at the buzzer. I looked at the reflection of myself in the front door glass. And without breaking my stride I walked by...

About a block and a half past the building I came upon a black man wearing a sandwich board that was advertising men's suits. I looked him in the eye for a fleeting second and I saw death. Not death like decapitated or laid out in a coffin, but death like just dead... with no feeling... numb. And then I passed a lady in a black pantsuit and a gold chain and she looked dead, too. And then I saw a couple with backpacks on and they looked dead. A man walking two Chihuahuas. He looked dead. A fat little girl. Dead. A blond waiter, a UPS lady, a guy selling incense... dead, dead, dead... So, I'm thinking, "What's going on? Am I freaking because I'm going to my shrink appointment and I have no idea what I'm going to say? Is it because I know that if I had two hundred dollars on me I could be having actual sex within less than five minutes from that moment? You know... I don't really know. And the truth is, I don't really know how someone knows when he or she is in love. But I know that I am...

Any more questions? majormattusa@earthlink.net

Fortified Records Are LACH BLANG!

"A&R pick of the week! For fans of Beck, Woody Guthrie & The Clash!"

- Ron Hart, CMJ Weekly

"A wholly enjoyable voyage into a strange and brilliant musical mind."

- Billboard Magazine

TM Produced By Richard Barone



Big Daddy Distr. Fall 99-Major Matt Mason USA

The Best Records!

Rick Shapiro Unconditional Love

"The most transgressive comedian in America today. He's hilarious!"

- Penthouse Magazine

"Pure brilliance!" "Best Manhattan Comic!" - NYPress

- TimeOut NY

"The funniest man in America" Cups Magazine
Produced By Lach



Winter 2000 Lach - <http://members.aol.com/fo.kbr3>

Puppet New York

A Tour With Your Host, Anne Kadet

Most of our readers already know that the Statue of Liberty is actually a large, French puppet. Now unmanageably stiff due to its exposure to the elements, it once served as wonderfully large, furry play-thing for the city's nouveau riche, who used it to make dramatically oversize obscene gestures at the striving, huddled masses rowing in from Europe. But few realize that our fair city is abounding with many, many, until-now *secret* puppets that populate the landscape. Shall we take a tour?

Let us start at ground zero, Park Slope. (You may call it, as do I, Puppet Slope.) The residents there lavish love and attention on their amusing puppets, which they like to call children. Because these puppets gesture and move without the aid of a human hand, they are technically referred to as automated puppets, or by the more colloquial term, robot (pronounced baw-tum fee-der) but seeing as they are most undoubtedly guided by an unseen (and frankly sinister) force (they won't let me on the swings or the slide) can their fundamental puppet nature be denied?

Walking up Seventh Avenue to Flatbush, admire the vivid, florid spray-paint scrawls on the metal gates pulled over the shop-fronts. The work of extremely angry, isolated puppets, these glyphs allow us a unique opportunity to examine the inner-workings of the puppet mind. Some time ago, I purchased a translation guide. Two examples follow:

Ozy207: "I will make your hand sweat"

Suck me off: "I will make your hand sweat"

Do you detect a pattern? That's right. The sweaty hand one suffers when one vigorously manipulates a puppet is sometimes referred to as "puppet's revenge." The typical puppet hates you, and gloats all day, pondering the discomfort it will wreak when you slide your palm up its nether regions to make it dance and wave.

Continue up Flatbush and over the Manhattan Bridge. Do you hear that music in the distance? It is the sound of puppets playing at the Sidewalk Cafe. Lach and Curtis Eller are two of the better-known puppets. Jon Berger is often referred to as a puppet, but that is just a sick, sick rumor, and if you continue to propagate this mischievous tale (devised by the nefarious Dave Wechsler, who suggested the "puppet issue" you're reading as means to really, really, irritate Mr. Berger) Mr. Berger will make your hand sweat like it has never perspired before.

Stroll south along the East River Esplanade to the South Street Seaport. Every morning starting at 3 a.m., restaurateurs and wholesalers converge on the Fulton Fish Market to select from several tons of freshly caught puppets kept chilled over ice. If you ask, any one of the many cheerful proprietors will gladly slip one of these shiny, scaly

"fish" over his hand and stage an amusing scene from "Goodfellas." It is one of those must-see New York moments that should not be missed.

Make a right on Fulton Street and head up Broadway to Radio City Music Hall. There, you will find the Rockettes. No, they are not puppets, nor, as you may guess, are they marionettes. They are large otters with beautiful legs and womanly heads, *trained by clever puppets*.

The last stop in Manhattan is in the Meat Packing District-- a cluster of warehouses hard by the Hudson River at the end of 14th Street. There you will find colorfully costumed puppets whose company can be purchased at an hourly rate. Don't be fooled by their feminine appearance. They are not otters. They are merely puppets dressed and made up to look like women.

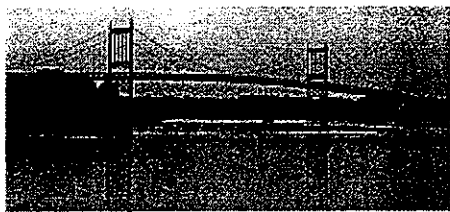
You must be exhausted. Take this opportunity to open your closet door and unchain the puppet you keep handcuffed to the doorknob. Give it a kiss. Did it kiss back? Did it slip you the tongue? *Tre Bon!* Most puppets are very good kissers. The kissing bandit was a puppet, as was your mother when she met your father.

Don't be afraid to visit the Bronx. The opportunity to see the parade of puppets on the Grand Concourse is well worth the risk. I generalize at the risk of sounding offensive, but man, can those puppets sing and dance! And play basketball! Several years ago, this point was illustrated in the movie, "White Men Can't Jump." Woody Harrelson played a puppet humiliated by another puppet. If you haven't seen it, rent it today!

The Triborough Bridge, a devilish puppet devised by Robert Moses, (the spawn of a wild puppet o-g-) will take you to Queens. Take the BQE to the LIE to 69th Street. There you will find "Walter Sanchez," a cigar-smoking puppet who served as my

editor at a newspaper for which I wrote many articles. Every story had to be about puppets. But you know, sometimes there just isn't any puppet news. *Sometimes, all the puppets are just laying chained in the closet for weeks devising ways to make your hand sweat.* That's not news! Feel free to call Mr. Sanchez at the Queens Ledger (718) 629-7000 (fax 429-1234) and remind him of this fact. It would more than compensate for the trouble I took to outline this puppet tour.

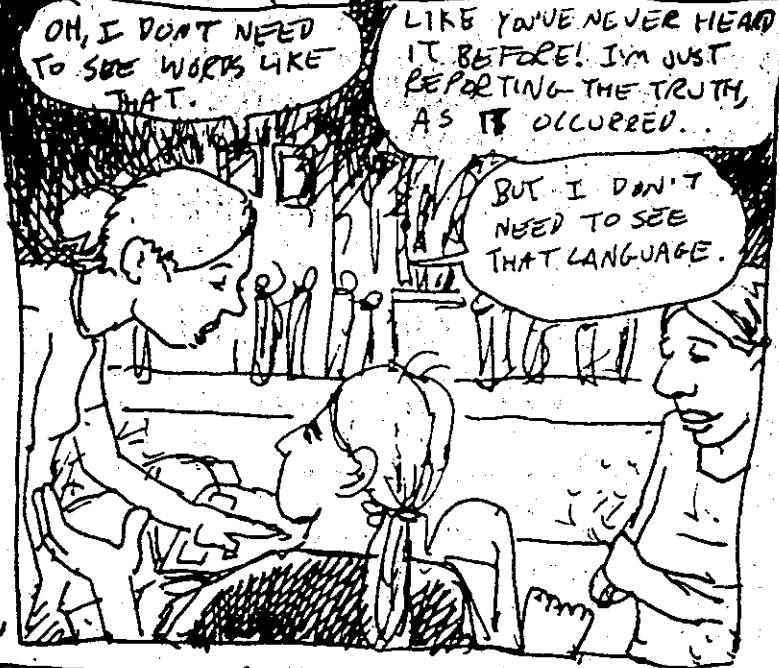
Now I know you must be wondering-- "There are so many things in New York I never dreamed were actually puppets. How can I tell when someone, or some thing, is a puppet?" But you should know the answer to that, Mr. Sweaty Hands. You should know by now.



When the prostitutes and pimps came by, after one of the girls got in a fight with some in a car.



Rich, who was about to be married, and her bachelorette party, took a quick look at my comic.



So, when I woke up on the beach to a big storm about to explode, I felt a little guilty at not actually having used the money for its intended purpose, but it justified my spending 6.75 on a chicken sandwich to get in out of the rain.



Hey Patrick! What's up!

Nothing... you see all those people running to get out of a little rain?

Boy is it embarrassing to be seen in a restaurant!

YEAH... THIS BUY JUST GAVE ME 20 BUCKS LAST NIGHT! UH, THAT'S WHY I CAME IN HERE...

A guy on the beach talked to me about my career...

I CAN SEE BY YOUR WORK YOU HAVE THE ARTISTIC SKILL TO PURSUE THIS. I KNOW PEOPLE IN THE PUBLISHING INDUSTRY...

YOU COULD DO THIS AS A NOVEL WITH ILLUSTRATIONS... A TRAVELLER'S GUIDE TO KEY WEST.

BUT I LIKE THE FACT THAT IT'S A COMIC. I MEAN, THAT'S WHAT I LOVE DOING.

IF YOU PUT YOUR STORIES ON THE INTERNET, YOU CAN...

BUT I LIKE THE COMIC BOOK MEDIUM, IT'S WHAT I WANT TO DO.

ONCE YOU HAVE A POPULAR CHARACTER, YOU CAN START BREAKING INTO CARTOONS, MAKE A LOT OF MONEY.

YEAH, BUT...

ALSO, SEND YOUR IDEAS TO MOVIE PRODUCERS. I KNOW SOME PEOPLE...

UH-HUH, BUT...

Y'SEE, IN THE CREATING FIELDS, WHEN YOU BREAK, YOU BREAK BIG!

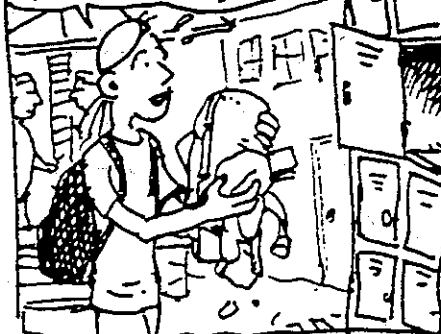
WELL, WITH COMIX YOU CAN HAVE A SORT OF CULT FOLLOWING...

A CULT FOLLOWING IS A GOOD STEP ON YOUR WAY TO THE REAL MAIN STREAM EXPOSURE.

Etc., etc...

I rented a bike from the Youth Hostel; 8 bucks for 24 hours. And I made a great discovery...

FOR 75¢ I CAN LEAVE ALL MY EXTRA STUFF IN THESE LOCKERS! GOD I WISH I'D KNOWN THAT DAYS AGO!



For hours + hours I rode all over the island. When the rain came back I put my sneakers + socks in my knapsack, put on my mom's plastic rain pants and a 1.49 plastic poncho + was totally dry!



THIS IS FUGGIN' GREAT!!! THE WEATHER'S STILL WARM, I'M DRY... JUST CRUISIN' BAREFOOT ALL OVER IN THE TROPICAL STORM... YAAAY!!

Unfortunately it started getting kinda windy and chilly at night. It stopped raining, but the rain that morning had cut my sleep kinda short.

OH YISS, IT'S ONLY FIVE AND I'M PASSING OUT.

...GOTTA... STAY... AWAKE...

...JUST TWO MORE HOURS...



Finding places to go to the bathroom was an issue. Occasionally I'd notice a Porta-potty at a construction site, but they moved from night to night. There was a public bathroom on the beach but that closed around 10.

NO ONE'LL NOTICE ME PEEING IN THE WATER.



(This was before I discovered the aforementioned bathroom)

My savior was a 24-hour Dunkin Donuts. I discovered after a couple days.

YES?

CAN I HAVE...
UHH... UMM... ONE
MAPLE FROSTED...
YEAH.

AND A TRIP TO THE
BATHROOM! THIS
GUY PROBABLY THINKS
I COME TO SHOOT
SMACK IN HIS STORE
EVERY NIGHT...



Anyway, after that long chilly night I figured I'd seen + done what I'd needed to for a complete Key West experience. I bumped into Patrick and he took me up to the roof of Key West's tallest building, a 6-story Hotel on Duval St.

WOW, NICE SUNSET.

YEAH. YOU CAN TOTALLY SEE THE WHOLE LITTLE
I STAND FROM UP HERE.

I'M GONNA GET A SLICE OF
KEY LIME PIE TO COMPLETE
MY EXPERIENCE, THEN
GET A ROOM AT THE HOSTEL.
I'VE HEARD IT'S REALLY
EASY TO FIND PEOPLE
THERE WHO'RE DRIVING
TO MIAMI.



We went to a little ice-cream place that Patrick had taken me to before. It's a good place to get something and just sit on their chairs outside + watch people + hang out.

HMM, THAT GIRL
WORKING BEHIND THE
COUNTER WAS
DEFINITELY SMILING
AT ME.

SO YOU'RE
GONNA LEAVE
ALREADY?

YEAH... THAT'S
USUALLY MY PROBLEM
ANYTIME I'M TRAVELING.
I'LL BE SOMEWHERE FOR
A COUPLE DAYS, THEN I
START GETTIN' ANTSY.

UH-HUH.



Five minutes after setting up my bunk at the Youth Hostel I hooked up with a ride to Miami from a young German guy. He was leaving the next morning. Then I went for a last walk around.

WELL THAT WAS EASY!

HMM, WHY DON'T I GO
BACK TO THE ICE CREAM
PLACE AND ASK THAT GIRL
TO HANG OUT WITH ME?



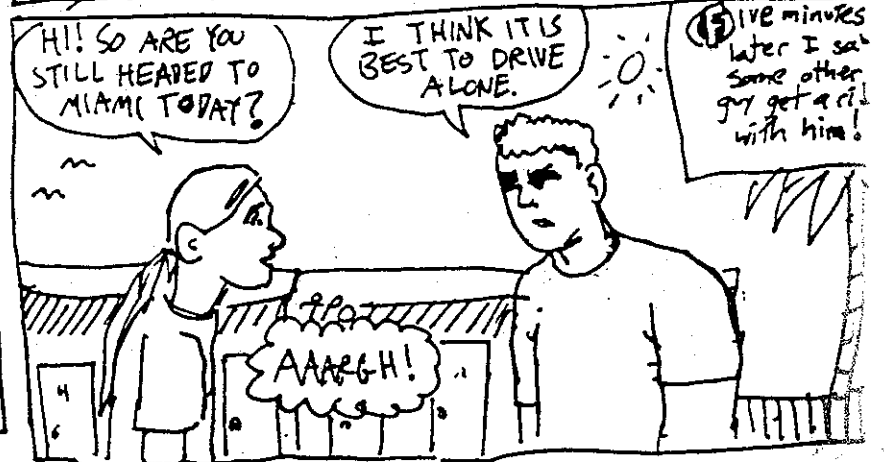
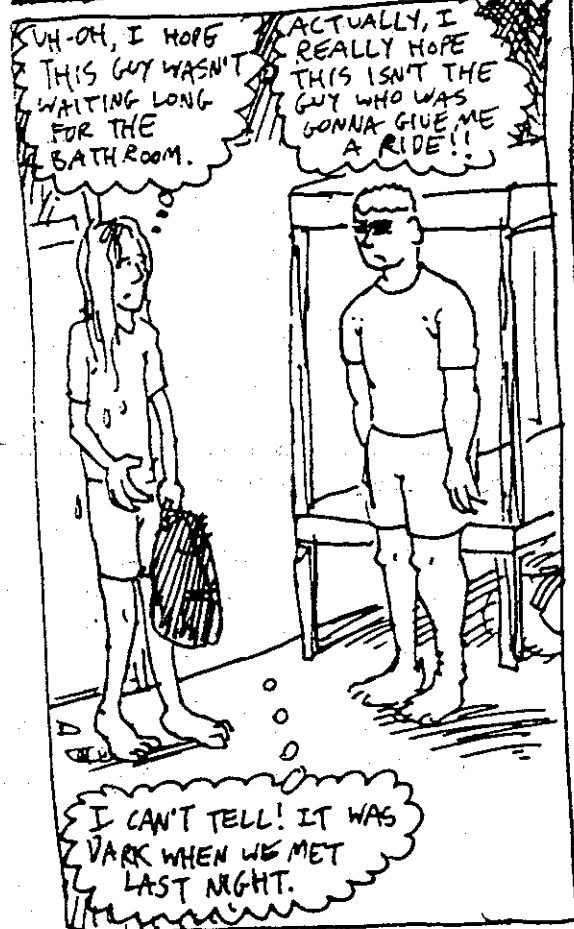
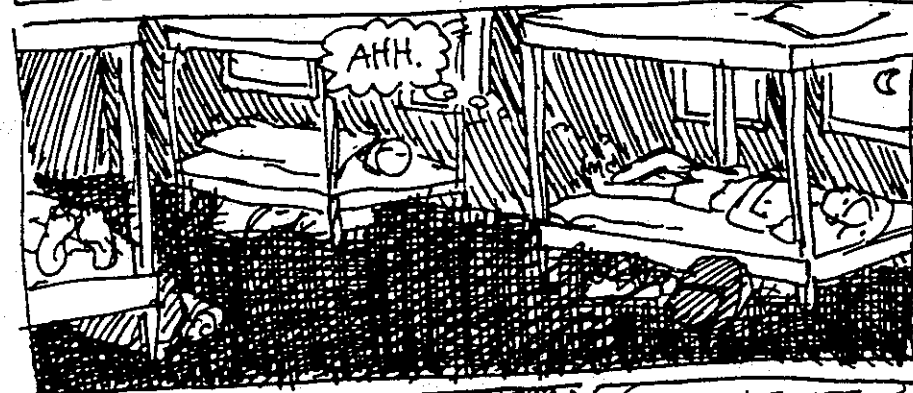
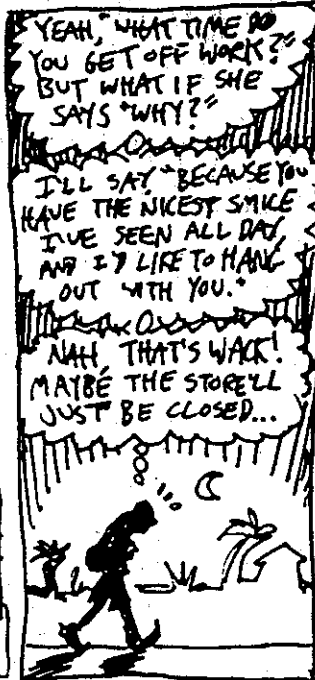
Hold on, rewind to a few hours before, when I returned the bicycle...

JEFF LEWIS? THERE'S
A MESSAGE FOR YOU...
"DAN" CALLED.

WOW, WHAT LUCK! HE
MUSTA THOUGHT HE'D FIND
ME AT THE KEY WEST HOSTEL
+ LOOKED UP THE NUMBER! I
DON'T EVEN HAVE A RED HERE
I JUST RENEWED TO RENT
A BIKE YESTERDAY!



I missed him at
his house, but Bill
(the guy he lived
with) recommended
I hit South Beach,
Miami before I
left Florida.



THEN:

We got to the gymnasium just before

show-time, and as always, I was reverent - my sister's high school gym was twice the size of the one in my elementary school, the smell of wax twice as fragrant, the squeak of shoes all the more like thunder claps from an awesome sweaty heaven.

Laurie Evans and I had come for the Saturday afternoon puppet show, shunning our usual pursuits of watching Soul Train, holding seances to contact her missing father (she said 'Nam, everyone else said Cleveland), or spinning around in the front yard until we collapsed in a dizzy natural high.

We climbed the bleachers and waited for puppet magic to begin.

The lights dimmed. Out came the first puppet, looking rather disappointingly like a regular human with some minor head-to-body proportion issues. Thus spake the puppet:

"Did you know that you're never alone?"

Laurie and I looked at each other.

"Did you know you have a friend who always walks beside you, even though you don't see him?"

Alright! Spook ghost story ahead!

"A friend who understands you when no one else does?"

Huh? Like secret codes?

"A friend who forgives you, even when you're naughty?"

NOW and THEN

Ugh. "Naughty." At the age of seven, there was already a litany

of words that made me cringe: "Silly..." "Tummy..." "Toe..." "Naughty." I know where this was heading. This was turning out to be... a Christian puppet show!

Laurie looked at me, confused and agitated. She was being raised by a Kool menthol with a mother attached who had barely taught her basic manners, much less talked to her about God or sent her to church. Laurie had come for pure puppet entertainment and was baffled by these platitudes coming out of these hand-operated proselytes.

I, on the other hand, had been going to Catholic church every Sunday since I was born, and didn't know there was any other option.

I hated church. It made me queasy: the incense; the writhing, 1/2 naked body of Jesus on the cross; the sponges in holy water that looked nauseatingly like wet loaves of bread. Mostly, I hated the way church transformed my mother's sweet face into a stern mask, her forehead rent in a single martyred crease. I used to climb onto her lap and try to iron the crease out with my fingers, but it'd spring back again, deeper, and she'd push me off. Eventually, I stopped trying.

The Christian puppets droned on and on, wearing their pedestrian fables, devastatingly un-muppetlike. My credibility with Laurie slipped away in a great, sucking vortex of betrayal and dorkiness. I felt sick inside.

"When does the real show start?" she kept asking forlornly, "When does it start?"

**CMJ Music Marathon Presents
The Fortified Records Showcase
Saturday September 18
At Sidewalk Cafe
(94 Ave.A&6th st)
9 pm- Major Matt Mason USA
10 pm-Lach**

Also:

8-Curtis Eller's
American Circus

11-Slide

12- Bionic Finger

Fortified Are

The Best Records!



<http://members.aol.com/folkbro>

NOW:

Guru Dev takes the stage for Saturday night Satsang, his weekly question-and-answer period, followed by vigorous chanting.

I've been at his ashram for two weeks now. Two solid weeks of chanting, meditating, chores, classes, "sharing" circles, hatha yoga, bhakti yoga, raja yoga, karma yoga.

My mind is clear, my body indomitable, and yet almost every time I sit down to meditate my heart aches and my head constricts. I've been on the verge of tears for two weeks now, only they seem like tears that have been gathering for much longer. Every uncried tear resonates: Where am I headed? What am I supposed to do with this lame life I've constructed for myself? Are my dreams ever going to become a reality? Will I ever succeed in music? The months before my stay here it

By Velvet Lane

NOW and THEN

by Velvet Lane

seemed as if my dreams crumblin' like day-old cheesecake -- mediocre performances, poor attendance at shows, inter-band personality clashes, friends giving me helpful suggestions such as, "Maybe you should, uh, get someone else to sing your songs..." I was beginning to feel like the world's biggest loser.

I've come here for some peace and perspective, and frankly, I'm still feeling stuck.

I look onstage at Guru Dev, and all his devotees, not the sleek wise creatures I'd expected, they all look disappointingly like real human beings.

Guru Dev himself is a doddering ol' codger with vague eyes who holds sway over hundreds of followers. Much as I admire his work, the Saturday night satsangs are painful to sit through. I never remember the words to the chants, the melodies are repetitive and boring and bore into your skull like the Food Emporium jingle. Worst of all, Guru Dev's answers to the questions we ask are shockingly uninformed. They are the content-free answers of a tired old man who loves the spotlight, but who really ought to be in bed at this hour.

My indifference to him gives over to annoyance, and, in the second hour, annoyance turns to fury.

When your boyfriend leaves you
when he catches us at this
horrible act we repeat
when we should rinse

When your boyfriend recognizes
that you don't love him
-- not enough -- and never will

When your boyfriend hears about
your dreams and your plans
and your half truths and whole-
cloth stories

When your boyfriend leaves you
Will you have more time for me?

Jonathan Berger:
Out-Spoken Word Artist!
September 14th @ 10pm
A night of letters
@ the Sidewalk Café

JohnN Sizzle

FROM THE
ACOUSTIC
PUNK
SCENE
IN
TORONTO

Sept. 5
11:30pm
THE
FORT

FOLK-me-FASTER



(BACK ROOM OF THE SIDEWALK CAFE AT 94 AVENUE ~~WEST~~)

I came here for peace; I came here to learn. I want to be amazed, thrilled by his wisdom and intelligence and cool psychic powers. When does the real show start?

I get up to leave the sat sand, a severe breach of ashram policy. But satsang 'em all: I do what I want. I crunch along the gravel path to the dorms. I hear someone crunching along after me. Ugh. I turn around -- it's swami Prakashananda, a frail old biddy who's been with Guru Dev since the 60s, when she left the Catholic Sisterhood to follow him.

"Are you a singer?" she asks sweetly, her eyes kind. "Well... sorta."

"I heard you chanting -- you have such an expressive voice. It was a joy to sing along with you."

Something wells up behind my eyes. "I'm sorry I left the sat sand. I'm not feeling well and I have to go lie down."

She reaches over to me, touches my forehead, smoothing out the crease that's formed there. I start to sob and collapse in her arms, like a marionette, whose strings have finally been let go.

entertainment sidewalk cafe the fort

Tues. August 31- 7:30- Gene Bryan Johnson, 8-Ariana, 8:30-North, 9-Them Keener Boys, 10- Life in a Blender, 11-Jeff Lang
 Wed. Sept. 1-8- Bebo, 8:30- Dierdre Flint, 9-Duane, 9:30- Al Lee Wyer, 10- Rick Shapiro
 Thurs. Sept. 2-7:30- Harry Nagle, 8- Like Sonya, 9- Ben Eyler, 10- Lach, 11- The Bobby Syvarth Combo
 Fri. Sept. 3- 7:30- Evan Samuels, 8-Jim Kemp, 9-The Voices, 10-The Bones, 11-Magges, 12- The Dan Neustadt Group
 Sat. Sept. 4- 8-Kenny Davidsen, 9-Jim Knable, 10-The Billy Crosbys, 11-Roxanne Beck, 12- Jonas Grumby
 Sun. Sept. 5- 8-Deborah, 8:30-Boaz, 9- Patsy Grace, 9:30-Mole, 10- Shamsi, 11-Nina, 11:30- Johnny Sizzle
 Mon. Sept. 6- The Antihoot with Lach. Sign-up at 7:30.
 Tues. Sept. 7 - Piano Night: 8-David Easton, 8:30-Russ Turk, 9-Cedric, 9:30-Bill Popp, 10- Atoosa, 10:30-Drew Blood, 11- Jeff Gaynor
 Wed. Sept. 8- 7:30-Patty Murray, 8:30-Dina Richarson, 9-Paleface, 9:30-Chris Grogan 10- Rick Shapiro
 Thurs. Sept. 9- 7:30-Belden Gaynor, 8-Sheela Na Gig, 9-Shameless, 10- Lach
 Fri. Sept. 10- 7:30- Permanent Bubble, 8-Nicole McKenna, 9- Haale, 10-Jesse White, 11-TBA, 12-Tom Clark
 Sat. Sept. 11- 8-Christine, 9-Billy Populus
 Sun. Sept. 12- 7:30- Brer Brian, 8-Viction, 8:30- Don Everett Pearce, 9- Fragile Male Ego, 9:30- Smudge, 10- Ari Hest
 Mon. Sept. 13- The Antihoot with Lach. Sign-up at 7:30
 Tues. Sept. 14- Smokin' Word Party: 7:30-Kid Lucky, Miles Griffith and M, 8:30- Pablo, 9- Sean Lee, 9:30- Kevin Drain, 10- Jonathan Berger (of AntiMatters), 10:30-Sounds Like, 11- Pat Harper

College Music Journal Music Marathon 1999

Wed. Sept. 15- 8-Mayor McCa, 9-Saltgrass, 9:30-Joshua Judges Ruth, 10-Rick Shapiro, Ian Crockett
 Thur. Sept. 16-Michal Towber, 8:30- Michael McDaeth, 9-Heather Eatman, 10-Lach, 11-Kristin Hoffman, 12-Hamell On Trial
 Fri. Sept. 17- the humans, 9-Rachel Sage, 10-Danny Lynn Wilson, 10:30-Joie/DBG, 11-Joe Bendik & the Heathens, 12- Tennis
 Sat. 18-8-Curtis Eller's American Circus,
 9- Fortified Records Showcase: Major Matt Mason USA,
 10-Fortified Records Showcase:Lach, 11-Slide, 12- Bionic Finger
 Sun. Sept. 19- 7:30- Yoav, 8-John Kessel, 8:30- Elektra Complex,
 9-Brian Piltin, 9:30- Testosterone Kills, 10- Howard Fireheart,
 11- Dallas (from Estonia)
 Mon. Sept. 20- The Antihoot with Lach. Sign-up at 7:30.
 Tues. Sept. 21-7:30- Jennifer Halpern, 8:30- Danny Fastfingers, 9-
 Queen Basi, 9:30- Andrew McCann, 10- Regina Spektor, 10:30-
 Alice Texas
 Wed. Sept. 22-7:30-Peter Dizozza, 9-Nancy Falkow,
 9:30- Mike ill, 10- Rick Shapiro
 Thurs. Sept. 23- 8- Laurenelli, 9- Paul Page, 10- Lach, 11- TBA,
 12- Jason Blum
 Fri. Sept. 24-10- Deni Bonet, 11- Dots Will Echo
 Sat. Sept. 25- 8-Sarah Lentz, 9- Johnny Seven,
 10- The Billy Crosbys, 11- The Meanwhiles
 Sun. Sept. 26- 7:30- Hannah, 8- Alan Orski, 8:30-Devorah,
 9-Patsy Grace, 9:30- Allete Brooks
 Mon. Sept. 27- The Antihoot with Lach. Sign-up at 7:30.
 Tues. Sept. 28-8-Huff, 8:30-Barry Smith, 9-Warren Kimmel,
 9:30-Sarah Gillespie and Jason (Running on Fumes)
 Wed. Sept. 29- 8:30- Butch, 9-Eric N, 10- Rick Shapiro
 Thurs. Sept. 30-7-The Trance Sender, 8- Ramon O'Tauma,
 10-Lach

Anne Husick
 invites YOU to the
6th Annual
Libra Birthday Bash
 Saturday, October 9th
 at Sidewalk Café

featuring
 6:30-Lorijo Manley
 7:30-Jonathan Berger
 8-Mike ill
 8:30-Kenny Davidsen
 9-*** Shameless ***
 10-Grey Revell
 11-Smelt
 12-Joie/DBG
 1-Art Deco sing the songs of John Lennon
 all signs are welcome!