

"PIMP MY BRAIN" WILL BLOW YOUR MIND

SQUIDS IN MUD PUDDLES



THE SURREAL TIMES



*"A newspaper is required to document
the history currently unfolding..."*

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*Serving the citizens of the world since
the 3rd dawn of the cicadas.*

#SAVECRABS MOVEMENT SWEEPING THE COUNTRY

BY PAUL KRUGER,
Surreal Times Reporter



FROM THE MOUTH OF THE PIG:

BY ARMÄDEIUS GALOUET,
Times Senior Editor



"scatter Loose Algorithms when needed..."

Pubic lice, the STD commonly known as Crabs, has recently been added to the World Wildlife Fund's endangered species list. The designation of Crabs as a critically endangered species has sparked a massive social movement in an effort to prevent Crabs from going extinct. Joaquin Mojtabai, founder of the #SaveCrabs movement, told The Times, "This is an issue very near and dear to my heart. I'm happy to see Crabs finally demanding the national attention it deserves. The systemic eradication of these precious creatures by lice poachers has gone on for far too long."

In 1986, German scientist Hertzog Gutenberg discovered the incredible medicinal powers of pubic lice in one of the most fortunate scientific accidents in history. After a wild week in Bangkok, Gutenberg discovered he had contracted Crabs. He carefully extracted each painful bugger from his body and rather absentmindedly threw them in a glass of water he had left out on the counter.

That night, Gutenberg went out with his friends for a birthday celebration and had a few too many drinks. Waking up the next morning with a wicked hangover and a parched mouth, Gutenberg grabbed for the nearest glass of water. Unbeknownst to him, he chugged the very same water he'd put Crabs in the previous day. Immediately, his foggy, sluggish head and body felt rejuvenated.

Hailed as the new first known cure for the common hangover, pubic lice turned from a detested STD to a valuable commodity almost overnight. Thousands of lice poachers, known as Crabby Hands, began harvesting and extracting the valuable lice from infected people. While it is a tightly-guarded industry secret how pubic lice is extracted from those infected with Crabs, it is widely believed that the process is painful and malicious...

[[Continued on next page]]



[[Continued from front page]]

... To curb the burgeoning market of Crab extraction, the consumption of Crabs was outlawed in 1988. However, the black-market for the powerful hangover cure

is still lucrative and thriving. Today, Crabs are crushed into a powder and sold on the black market by dealers known as Lice Slingers, a term first made popular at Amherst College.

Since the early 2000s, the Crabs population has been

at a rapid decline. Increasingly, college students have turned to Crab powder to cure their weekend headaches after a night of hard partying. Now is a moment of critical importance, as there have been reports of fewer than 100 people in the

world infected with Crabs.

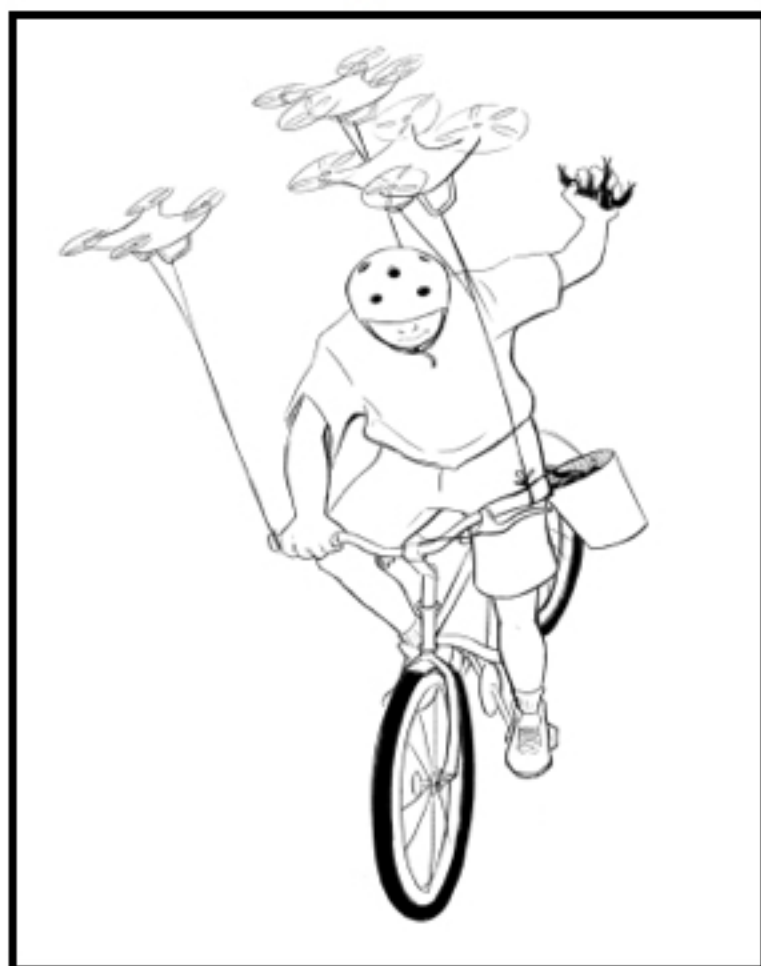
In dire times like these, it is up to the public to keep Crabs from becoming a memory of the past. The government will release a statement in the next few weeks with a detailed plan to keep Crabs from going

extinct. In the meantime, it is up to those in the #Save-Crabs movement to increase awareness for this important cause.

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SLUG DELIVERY NOT CONTROVERSIAL

By TOMMY POTENTUARY,
Reporter



Forward-thinking Amherst residents no longer waste gas and time driving to a local terrestrial mollusk store to buy slugs. Nowadays, they get their favorite slimy creatures delivered to their homes by drones carrying newspaper boys peddling bicycles through the air. Whizzing through the air, these young entrepreneurs toss armfuls of slugs on people's porches, walls, roofs, and in other places depending on subscription type.

Amherst resident Tommy Bonjons said, "It's awesome, I wake up in the morning to a cacophony of creepy crawlies on my bedside window, which I leave cracked open. It's gross but kinda cool. And the ones that don't die on impact are tons of fun to play with. You can put them in your brother's cereal or his underwear drawer."

Edward Cole of South Hadley bragged, "These slugs will decompose my house someday! By the time I'm 40, my home will be earthified and 100% environmentally friendly. I will become a mud person, one with many

slug friends, and an ethical one at that."

If that's not enough testimony for you, let's take a look at one more — this time, from Ferdinand Holden of Amherst:

"Ever since I added the cannibalism option to my slug delivery plan, I got rid of my toilet and my refrigerator. I don't grocery shop because I eat slugs off my walls whenever I want. When I shit, I rub it on my roof. The slugs eat their own digested remains right back up. I am a living example of perpetual motion, baby."

All and all, it seems that slug delivery is not controversial at all. People love it. I mean, who wouldn't want some kid tossing slugs at your house every morning? The splatter sounds are soothing like raindrops.

Tommy can be reached at tommy.potent@surrealtimes.net. Art by Zotov.

NOT NEWS SINCE 1973

By FRANK EARHORN,
Columnist

I present to you my hand-curated list of occurrences that have not occurred since 1973 or earlier to the best of my knowledge.

Not-news item #1: Bob Marley's granddaughter, whatever her name may be, has not engaged in holotrop-

ic breathwork with monolunged or dispersed-brained creatures.

Certainty: 73%

Source: Word of mouth and stargazing.

Not-news item #2: The underlying cellular automaton of the universe, theorized by Stephen Wolfram and Jonathan Gerard, has not been discovered or empirically verified. Thus, the

cause of life, the universe, and everything remains unresolved.

Certainty: 88%

Source: Direct contact and conversation with the primary theorizers.

Not-news item #3: Cellulose-based lifeforms, and plants specifically, have not been engineered to deliver email through their collective root network, which

could be used much like a vegan Internet.

Certainty: 84%

Source: Observation, inference, and the logic that if this not news was news, the world would be entirely different. Forests would be preserved because cutting down trees would slow down the Internet. Paper would not be wasted on currency.

In conclusion, many things

have not happened since 1973 that we can only hope will happen before 2074.

Note: This list is not exhaustive. Don't email me.

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DUMPSTER SQUIDS MIGRATE TO MUD PUDDLES

BY A CONCERNED CITIZEN,
Citizen of the World



[Artist's depiction of these events by Imogene Larkley]

It is with a heavy heart and heavier fingers that I write to inform the public of terrible news. The recent invasion of mutated squids, previously thought only to live in semi-dry areas such as dumpsters and moist laundry baskets, has indeed spread to the mud puddles now blanketing our little valley hamlet. Three days ago I witnessed Joe Howard, my neighbor, in the midst of a terrible battle between himself and two large specimens. He screamed for help but I, shamefully paralyzed by fear, could only watch as the massive mud-covered tentacles slowly drug his face under the mud, which closed gently around him like a shroud.

Citizens of the Pioneer Valley be warned: WE ARE NOT SAFE. Not

while those great behemoths stalk our beautiful clean mud, not while a single, solitary, specimen continues to squelch its way through our damp lawns. I fear that my old neighbor Joe, may have suffered a terrible fate in vain if we continue to allow this menace to stalk our mud pits.

I fear for my hogs, I fear for my children, I fear for those less fortunate than I who live on dirt-paved roads who will soon be suffering Mud Season. Your all-wheel-drive Subaru will not protect you from eight or more writhing, suckered, slime and mud-covered tentacles -- tentacles probing under your doors, into your exhaust, gripping your tires, and slowly, gently, devouring you. Arm yourselves! Take up harpoons! Take up knives! Take up spear guns! Protect yourselves from this cephalopod invasion, lest our great-grandchildren be born mollusks.

This concerned citizen can be reached at concerned.citizen@surrealtimes.net



LETTER TO THE EDITOR: A CONFESSION

BY CASAUL LUCADA,
Eternal Plasma Entity

I'm sensitive in between my toes, so I hated it as I

crushed many warblers underneath my feet. To cope, I chugged a gallon of milk and a glass of brandy. This was the day I was banned from the school bus. Ms. Frizzle is a bitch. She took away my driver's license. That's why I hate warblers, and now I'm building a breastmilk-powered motorcycle using parts from the junkyard. Anyways, how was your day, mom?

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PUPIL STAGE OF NOISE MOTHS DISCOVERED

BY HUBERT E. "EYEBROWS" PERRYWINKLER,
Professor



What is science but a safety blanket that keeps you from feeling small as you sit wrapped up in it? It is with complete intellectual insecurity that I announce the pupil stage of the infamous

Noise Moth has been discovered!

If you find yourself in the backyard shrubbery of suburban Hadley, you may hear a faint harmonious noise. If you were a child, perhaps you would think it a band of fairies playing about and singing their songs in the morning haze. But those grown out of such foolish fancies, with a more skeptical eye, who looks closely through the bristle, will see a marvelous sight.

Small little white caterpillars, in the shape of crescent moons, can be seen bounc-

ing up and down on their silk threads, plucking them like Darwinian cellos, playing beautiful music from their own threads.

If captured and observed in laboratory conditions, a truly sad end can be found for the caterpillars' songs. For once they emerge from their humming chrysalises fully formed Noise Moths, you'll see them flutter about flying in hasty, scratchy patterns, as if searching for something.

Soon after they mangle on for a bit, they'll simply land and slump their wings

down, sadly realizing that they can no longer craft silk, and as such no longer make music. It does not take a far stretch of purified reason, to realize that with this massive void, this cloud of emptiness, the next stage of a Noise Moth's life cycle is one of bittered anger.

In this mood, they rise from their slump, flying out in ferocious hordes searching out any noise they might find. Once they find a source of noise, they swarm towards it in a full frenzy, sometimes so excited they tragically chew through bystander's vocal cords. They live roam-

ing on hardened hopes that perhaps they will find sound as sweet as the memory of their distant childhood songs. But beware if you see them coming, whether they mean well or not, their nostalgia will devour you.

The Amherst College Philosophy Department wishes healing and love to all the victims of the noise moth plague, you are forever in our ponderences.

Hubert E. "Eyebrows" Perrywinkler can be reached at perrywinkler@surrealtimes.net

DISCOVERY OF JUNKYARD JUKEBOX: ORCHESTRION OF DREAMS

BY PLEAKLEYPowPOW,
Times Correspondent

Dreams are miraculous, glorious, surely magical happenings. They defy the laws of all things which otherwise restrict imagination and possibility in the land of the conscious. Upon dreaming, we become creatures bereft of the limitations that stymie imagination in reality. Whether your dreams are nonexistent, pleasant, dreadful or nothing of the like, no humans have ever possessed the ability to curate dreams wholly to their liking. Fear not, dreamers of demons, insomniacs, conjurers of nightmarish ghouls and sleepers whose dreams re-

main inaccessible to memory's reach. The latest and greatest dream aid is, quite literally, out of this world and will imbue your slumber with the wonders of your desire. The recent discovery of the Jukebox of Dreams in a local junkyard is sure to grant you the subconscious adventures of your exact liking, whenever and wherever you please.

This fantastical mechanism whirls and gloops, fleepops and zams, spitting forth a cacophony of sound whilst manifesting the dream of your choosing. It operates solely on a material known as astral dust. Upon use, the jukebox dispenses orbs of

astral dust encapsulating your precisely tailored dream. While the jukebox houses an inexhaustible catalogue of dream scenarios, you can also choose from broader dream genres, or entirely construct dreams from scratch. You can even select mystery orbs, which provide you with dreams and adventures entirely unknowable until you reach the Land of Nod, or wherever your preferred dream space may be.

These dreams of your design are exactly that, loyal subjects to your own whim. Users of the jukebox are not beholden to select the same dream or type of dream upon repeated use. In what-

ever manner, your mood, your friend, your local barista, or your very subconscious are subtly or expressly influencing the dream you covet at a particular time, the jukebox will adhere happily to the capriciousness of your dreaming desires.

Worried the continued use of the jukebox could snowball into financial burden? Squander such apprehension! The machine uses astral dust not only for orb delivery but for transaction as well. A single orb of astral dust will purchase you a single dream. Astral dust is as free and abundant as the universe is infinite. But bear

caution, dear Earth Dwellers, the caveat lies in wait. Astral dust is indeed readily accessible, but only to those who believe in its existence outright, to those with no tangible proof whatsoever of its existence but maintain a genuine trust that it is there. While innate to some, the ability to realize such trust is learnable to those who don't naturally have it. Harness that trust, and you will possess the currency of dreamers, as limitless as the stars.

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"PIMP MY BRAIN" WILL BLOW YOUR MIND

BY TOMMY POTENTUARY,
Television Personality



Amherst, MA — Folks used to get a back massage, meditate, talk to a therapist, or perhaps get a manicure to clear their mind. But people don't want clear minds anymore; they want potent minds, fun minds, minds that grab you and make you laugh. A new approach to self-care has emerged as a result: "Pimp My Brain", which is basically a complete makeover, but for your

neurons, and it's changing everything.

Have you ever tried talking to a romantic interest, but felt boring or bland, without any zazz, wishing you could be a bit funnier or smooth? Getting your brain "pimped" might give you what you need to woo and wow.

Wished you had more hobbies and energy to pursue them? Pimp my brain might fill you with more ideas and passion than you could ever imagine. Wished you had some peculiar affinities that might make you unique? Look no further.

The "Pimp my Brain" office is on the corner of Main St and Pleasant St where walk-ins are welcome. When you arrive, they'll put you in a chair and feed you some brandy to soften you up. To get the blood pumping, they might ask you to do some jumping jacks. Then they'll promptly slice off the top of your skull and get to work,

no questions asked. They'll rearrange your brain networks for the better, adding bells, whistles, qualities, passions, peculiarities, all sorts of fun things, before closing up your skull and sending you on your way.

The motto of the business is "Connections, detections, and predilections, oh my, as many as you can get and not die!" said co-founders, Dennis and Jenine Hamilton. "What we want to do is add flavor to peoples' lives."

Hundreds of people of all ages have gotten their brains pimped. A brain pimper mentioned, "Some people even schedule weekly visits to keep their minds fresh and different every week." The Western MA town is now bustling with activities and happenings that people weren't even interested in before. It's like every person in a 5-mile radius is as unique and interesting as a movie character. And it's al-

ways a fun surprise to see what people will be like after their next brain pimping appointment.

The only downside, as some people view it, is that you don't get to choose in what fashion you want your brain to be pimped. But this is a huge pro. When you get your brain pimped, you become a walking serendipity! Who knows what you'll learn to love? Who knows what weird beliefs you might acquire? What sense of humor you might get?

One burnt-out maintenance worker from Amherst High became a particle physicist overnight! And now he does nude somersaulting class on the side.

After her brain pimping appointment, a woman who worked as a delivery driver for Staples all of the sudden became the fastest driver in the state. She learned to recite all the Shakespeare sonnets from memory. And,

once the media noticed her, they gave her a NASCAR Formula 1 sponsorship and made a reality TV show out of her reciting love songs while racing.

Unfortunately, with the possibility of wild success, comes the possibility of unwanted brain pimping results. In several cases, newly-pimped brains have been left permanently fluid, susceptible to all ideas, even the most garbage ones, or permanently stale, unable to learn anything new without more pimping.

Brain pimping is an early science, and it comes with risks, but in general, it has been an overwhelming success. Give it a try sometime. Treat yourself! Let's make the world a more interesting place.

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WOMAN PLAYS VIOLIN DURING BRAIN SURGERY

BY FREAK FUNK FRANK,
the guy sitting next to you on the bus

I heard about a master violinist who discovered that she had a brain tumor. The doctors could perform surgery to remove it, but it would run the risk of permanent brain damage. Wading through her fears, the violinist agreed to brave the procedure, as long as the surgeons would avoid injuring

the neurons associated with her violin playing. The only way to do it was to hook her up to an EEG and have her play violin during the operation, so the doctors could tell which neurons to avoid severing.

Isn't that just amazing? What a poetic image. Imagine her playing "On the Threshold of Winter" while a scalpel cuts at the very heart of her identity. Playing

the violin was a part of her life from childhood all the way up to seniority. Imagine the swell of feelings, raw in her mind and those of her doctors. Fear and hope are there, but you could also feel a cold, ever-still breeze of concentration colored by sparks of ingenuity. Picture the vulnerable iridescent thrift store-like shelves of memories conjoined with thorny blossoms of endless

tomorrows. I'd wager even a flicker of ego, like Icarus catching a sunrise on wax-coved glass, could have been felt in the air of the operating room. I can think of no better ideal of what human beings can beat our peak than in this story, but you know that's just like my opinion, man.

Note: I don't have the full story here, as I only heard this while I was helping

some friends find Emily Dickinson's gravestone. Don't worry, we found it, and I left a page of my journal marked with a kiss and some accidental spit as a real "in memoriam" gesture.

Freak Funk Frank can be reached at fff@surrealtimes.net



THE BANJOMAN STALKS AMHERST

BY ROBERTO PICCOLO,
Reporter

Amherst citizens face a new threat: the Banjoman. Emerging from the shadows, he strikes chords with his banjo and sings a seemingly innocuous tune:

"My name is ol' Hardtack from Ol' Alabam' / This war we're a-fightin' I don't understand / I hate all this fightin' and shootin' and

stuff/ playing my banjo is torment enough."

Anyone exposed to the full verse fall into a coma immediately. Victims become unresponsive and may sustain a concussion as they collapse to the ground. So far, the Banjoman has struck eight people.

Police Chief Maria Gonzales does not suggest Amherst citizens run away from the Banjoman.

"He is very fast," Chief Gonzales told the Times, "and he has his banjo secured to him. Instead, plug your ears with your thumbs and shout as loudly as you can while walking towards a more populated area. If you can prevent yourself from hearing the verse, you may avoid the coma."

Luckily, Finch Inc. has discovered a way to reverse the coma. Finney Finch herself spoke to the Times about the

unusual cure. We approached her as she perched above her desk, her voice clearly excited in the rush of the moment. For those unaware, Finney Finch appears to be an American Goldfinch, yet possesses an uncanny intelligence and the ability to produce human speech.

"The boys at the lab figured out that since crusty folk music got these people into comas, the opposite should

get them out. We blasted avant-garde experimental jazz to our patients and after a few minutes, lo and behold, they woke up."

The Times will update our readers on the Banjoman as the story unfolds.

Roberto Piccolo can be reached at piccolo.roberto@surrealtimes.net

THE TREE FOLK WILL STOP THE BANJOMAN MENACE

BY BY SENIOR HOFF
RICKO NO-WICKO,

My name is Ricko No-Wicko, and I speak for the Tree Folk, a collective of radical centrists who champion causes like medical tort reform, common-sense gun

control, and increased education funding. But today, the Tree Folk face a new menace: the Banjoman. Violence is not in our nature, but we cannot abide by the status quo. While the coma caused by his tunes is reversible, a concussion re-

ceived while falling to the ground is not.

I am proud to announce the first Tree Folk Experimental Jazz Patrol. Our members will create a roaming jazz band ready to countermand the Banjoman where he shows his civically irrespon-

sible head. He gives us some rumpus from his banjo, we give him some razzmatazz from our cello.

We will strap our instruments to ourselves, from fiddles to hi-hats to upright basses to bassoons, and we will overwhelm the

Banjoman.

Stay safe, Amherst. We will help.

By Senior Hoff Ricko No-Wicko can be reached at nowicko@surrealtimes.net.

quiet mortimer: i will cut the banjomans strings

BY QUIET MORTIMER,
Citizen of the World

i am quiet mortimer. i believe in silence and the contemplation that silence cre-

ates. the noisy mind has no space for reflection.

the banjoman, who makes so much noise he puts people in comas, is a threat to

silence and thus a threat to the higher aspirations of the city of amherst. a radical solution is required. i will cut his banjo strings.

if he resists, i will do what i must.

silently yours,

quiet mortimer

quiet mortimer can be reached at quiet.mortimer@surrealtimes.net



PIETY: A REVIEW

BY CRYPTIC MARK,
Times Correspondent

This morning I didn't need my alarm. I awoke to a sharp knock at my door. Standing before me, basking in the acrid stench of my morning breath, were two representatives of the Great Religion, the chosen faith of the Great Nation, governed by the Great Government.

"My good sir," the male of the representatives said, "Would you spare one mo-

ment for us to enlighten you?"

On his face, a dirty beard grew. It had eaten away his neck, swallowed great swathes of sweaty, reddened cheek. His eyes peered dead cold. Shriveled behind him was a her. Her teeth sunk into puffy red gums below thick shields of glass that hung ominously from her hooked and scarred nose. The creature slid forth a gnarled claw clutching a small yellow pill: a "purine

capsule", the purest yellow substance.

"Ready for instant digestion!" hissed the hag. I plucked it from its crooked cradle and blearily eyed it.

The man told me, "Take it and you will understand." I placed it on my tongue and swallowed.

"ACTIVATE THE DEVICE," BELLOWED THE MAN.

I was engulfed in flames.

Raucous noise screamed the wind as it tore my house limb from limb into the darkening sky. It became darker, yet I could see so clearly. The bricks fall around me from above, to my left, my right, my back, and front; they wall me in, and the road slithers away. I am falling as if walking forward, an effortless glide into the engine of rasping breath innnn-ouuuutttt, uhhhhh-huhhhhh.

There, they perch atop a vast

golden throne; they are many carcasses, black wells for eyes. Thick fronds of ivy coat their skulls. A coat of writhing maggots, worms, and vermin covers their awakening bodies. "We have and always will be here. We will supersede and you will become one."

"DEACTIVATE THE DEVICE." My skin peels from the inside and the representatives look at me as I close the door and go back to bed.

BOOK REVIEW: VOLDEMORT GOES TO HAWAII

BY PROFESSOR NUTMEG

It is a self-evident truth that books are not living things. Books have no feelings and no feasible way to express emotions. They are nothing more than stacks of paper bound together by a spine. What if books were physically able to speak? Perhaps they would say, "It hurts when you fold my pages like that", or, "I'm getting lonely and dusty just sitting on this shelf", or even, "Please don't use me like a doorstep." The life of a book must be a lonely one, especially in this age where the Internet has replaced the printed page. Perhaps it's better to imagine them happy with their lives, the same way we imagine Sisyphus is happy eternally pushing a giant stone up a mountain.

If there did exist a truly happy book, it would have to be *Voldemort Goes to Hawaii*.

It is happy for two reasons: 1) it is the most popular book of the year, loved and cherished by adults and children, and 2) it contains some of the most transcendent writing of the century thus far.

Voldemort Goes to Hawaii is an award-winning fanfiction originally written for the web by MrsWeasley188 in 2018. Its growing popularity eventually led it to being published by Fred's Book House earlier this year. It is a light 130 pages. The reader is able to read it once, twice, then backward and upside down, in less than a day.

Lord Voldemort is in need of a vacation from stalking boy wizard Harry Potter. He travels to Hawaii and spends a week drinking margaritas on the beach, going hula dancing and learning how to surf.

The main theme of the story is self-realization. Lord Voldemort is an evil, Machiavellian antagonist, but in Hawaii, he discovers parts of himself he never knew existed: the social butterfly, the party-goer, the adventurous type. It reminds me of the self-reflecting experiments I did when I was younger. When I was 22 years old, I would take LSD and stare into the mirror for hours. My eye color would change from green to brown. I aged 30 years in just a matter of seconds. Sometimes I would look exactly like my father, other times my mother, and on some occasions former president Richard Nixon. I did this every night for a year. But, I digress.

Most novels try to impress readers with its poetry and flowery language. *Voldemort Goes to Hawaii* instead goes for the plainest, most simple descriptions and the

most basic narration. Voldemort's decision to go surfing is written as, "*Voldemort was trying to get a tan on the beach. He noticed some people had surf boards. He wanted to surf too. So he did.*" There is no need to dive into Voldemort's complex thought process and inner psychological conflict, it simply gets to the point. The result is pure poetry.

The dialogue is also written in childish simplistic manner: "Hello, welcome to Hawaii" "Hi! I'm Voldemort I'm here to hula dance" "You've come to the right place!" "Good!"

The simple, nearly robotic dialogue reminds me of the conversations I would have with my son, Charlie. I would ask, "How was school today?" and he would respond with just "Okay." Then I would stare intently at Charlie's head without blinking. I think if I

concentrate long enough, I will be able to penetrate his 14-year-old mind and discover the inner workings of his subconscious. It never works and I always end up passing out on the kitchen floor. But, I digress.

I would recommend this book to everyone. I read this book on the bus and, upon finishing it, cried so intensely that the bus driver asked me to leave. It truly is a beautiful work. I hope that in the near future scientists are able to develop technology that will allow humans to communicate with books. Allowing books the chance to speak will provide us with much needed empathy and help us to see them as more than just inanimate objects. If this does happen, I hope that *Voldemort Goes to Hawaii* is given a platform, for it will no doubt become the Abraham Lincoln of books.



To post a listing or get in touch with sellers or employers, contact classifieds@surrealtimes.net.

BY APPOINTMENT: Reverse lobotomies.

WANTED: Three (3) mudproof harpoons. Speargun accepted but not preferred.

MISSED CONNECTION: A Puddle of Mud off Main Street. Last Thursday. I was walking down the sidewalk concentrating on my coffee and keeping the rain off my face. You smiled at me as you waved and slipped beneath the surface, the mud closing over your radiant eyes. I waited around a while, but you never came back.

FOR SALE: VHS Copy of "Pizza Butt." Yeah, this movie is awful. Does not have John Stamos. The garlic bread was shit. My friend is in jail in Nebraska. Please just take it off my hands.

FOR SALE: Screaming book.

SINGLE MALE, BLIND, Looking for Someone to Watch Porn With Who Will Explain What is Happening On Screen

WANTED: Time machine. You know when you are.

WANTED: Undisputed evidence that the moon landing was faked.

HIRING: Man with rotten arm. Mustn't be detached or soon-to-be-detached.

FOR SALE: Lard bucket.

WANTED: Decaffeinated Gasoline, safe to drink, preferably unopened.

HELP ME: A man won't stop peeing on me

WANTED: Non-Functional Time Machine. Don't worry, I will use my functional time machine to go back to when yours worked.

HELP ME: A man won't stop peeing on me

WANTED: The Original Edward Fortyhands

NEEDED: A baggie of monkey teeth, unflossed, and forty pounds of Big Chew BubbleGum.

WANTED: The Original Edward Fortyhands

WANTED: Half a dozen Zach Braff look-alikes who don't mind getting naked.

FOR SALE: Several Cats Glued Together.

I DEMAND: Who is the monkey with the wrong eyes?

LIMITED TIME ONLY: Therapeutic Human Centipede! 1 free "middle" with every two cabooses brought. "How else can you describe it but plain old wacky fun!" Fill up until your soul is done!

AN OFFER: Complimentary blankets with every stay at Bayview Psych Ward! You can draw on them with the pens they won't let you have, in hopes it might keep your dreams warm.

EVENTS

- Pollinate Ecstatic Dance - 3.6.2020
- Bluegrass Night at the O's - Thursdays
- Surreal Newsroom @Amherst - Thursdays
- Surreal Newsroom @Boston - Mondays
- Chessboxing Tournament - 4.18.2020
- Fractal Festival - 7.16.2020
- The Occation Event - 2.29.2020



Mind the Fool Presents: The Occasion Event

join Moimus, collector of personas, for an evening of wonder and hyperbole. thou shalt laugh like a tempest, thou shalt sob like a horny whale

Saturday, February 29, 2020 at 7
🕒 PM

Email Your RSVP to
Clowning@surrealtimes.net.



HOW IBLIS MET NATURE

BY RAKA



WARNING

BY LEAH KALISKI



THE OLD GODS ARE
HUNGRY,
AND CAN ONLY BE APPEASED
BY GINGERBREAD.
PLAN ACCORDINGLY

A PARABLE OF LOST SOULS

CAPTAIN C.





REST IN PEACE WITH RIPPER LINDA

BY RIPPER LINDA,

Advice Columnist

Dear Ripper Linda,

It was an evening in January. I was lounging on my bed eating fruit. The covers had been peeled back so the mattress gawked bare and expecting. On the walls hung several loving faces, their eyes sharp and bizarre just like the alive. Perhaps they wanted my fruit.

The books on my shelves leaned exhausted. They had such matters to whisper of, bent pages defeated and gossiping. I was listening to the voice of a stranger chirp a twisting melody from my record player and I was eating fruit.

I was definitely peeing. I filled my bed with golden waters and floated triumphant as the sheets undulated like an arrogant stream. I flooded the room. I had a lot of water to drink that day. I had eaten a lot of

fruit.

Suddenly the eyes on my walls were pouring flirtatious tears, the rising tide made them cry. The books were tossed about the current as the faces continued to peepee weep. I was still peeing. My organs were empty, dry and growing little pores. It was quite a sensation.

The ceiling was clicking. My neighbor from above, in heels, drew little dots of routine. Her sink was running. It made me have to pee. I can't stop peeing, Linda.

-M

Dearest M,

I thank you graciously for your humbling vulnerability and I hold you warmly as you sting raw with tension. This could not have been easy for you. Through the compassionate exploitation of your moderate heroism, I shall deliver dank and beefy

wisdom to lovers and the unloved across state lines and generations. But enough about me. If I were to go on, one might consider me vain. Thus, I will proceed no further because I do not wish to come across as vain. I'm a cultural keystone; I listen when no one can hear you. You could say my calling is your call, the delicious whine of my telephone and your voice droning hollow despair. When I'm finished with you, you'll feel confidence clear as crystal and you'll be full of charm, plump like a champion.

Indeed, this brings me to your initial intoxicating inquiry. This peeing of yours is a sensation old as a pickled century, shared by many, conquered by few. M, I'll be frank: you should probably go to the hospital. Maybe your upstairs neighbor can drive you there. While I appreciate the shock and potency of your poetic call for help, (and don't get me wrong, I do consider myself

an Athenian, lover, nay mistress of the arts) I implore you to seek medical attention.

They wouldn't call me the best of the best if I didn't know just how to help. While you wait for an ambulance, here are some thoughts you didn't know you needed:

This obsession with peeing may be more simple than you would expect. Urethral wellbeing is not what's at stake here. Think about us. You and I, an unlikely pairing not unlike the stale irony of a joke so bad it hugs you like a fleece of guilt. If you wish to wear me like a fleece, I am yours. We can get in my car and drive and eat fruit. You can fill my car with your golden waters and we can go anywhere you like. Have you ever been to the ocean? The universe is yours if you'll have me.

Now breathe the deepest of inhalations. Flutter open

your eyes because they ought to have been closed. This is not where you expected to be, is it? You have a lot to think about, M. Take your time - you know where to find me.

-Ripper Linda

Author note: Linda Ripley P.h.D. (Ripper Linda) studied alternative anthropology at "The Best School For To Get Smart.". Ripley gives compassionate and uplifting advice for people in crisis, taking special interest in those with nonlinear dilemmas. Ripley is now in her thirtieth year of devotion to this chivalrous social service. Contact Ripper Linda with questions and concerns at ripperlindaripley@gmail.com - a real email address for a sense of security during these surreal times.

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ELDERLY ARTIST GROWS INTO OAK TREE

BY IMOGENE LARKLEY

An elderly artist, not yet forgotten by neighbors, grew into an oak tree, rung with carvings just as her human form was with wrinkles and tattoos. You can hear birds songs bound off her branches even while in the dreamiest of sleeps.

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BLOOD LETTING TO PREVENT THE COMMON COLD

BY GALEN,
Medical Doctor

Author's note: Galen of Pergamon is a renowned doctor in Rome. Just don't mention the plague.

The Pioneer Valley is under attack. Microscopic warriors want to end our way of life, threatening our airways with battalions of mucus, inflaming our ear canals and throats, forcing us into bed. Indeed, the cold has arrived in Amherst and is coming for you.

In these challenging times, I

can promise only one guarantee of safety: bloodletting. The human body is controlled by four different humours- blood, phlegm, black bile, and yellow bile. An imbalance in the humours causes illness. Therefore, it is necessary to purge the body of any excess humours.

Bloodletting, while unfamiliar to the average Amherst citizen, is a highly helpful practice. It can treat and prevent almost any ailment known to humankind. Of the four humours, blood is by far the most troublesome,

creating unpleasant swelling in the throat, ears, and nasal cavities, causing pain

I suggest you blood let every day to maximize health benefits. For daily bloodletting I usually prescribe slugs. Slugs are easy to find in Amherst. They are usually happy to suck on your arm for anywhere from forty-five minutes to two hours. Slugs are patient creatures and appreciate the chance to get their daily dose of omega-three fatty acids. They are best found underneath decomposing logs and in moist corners of

basements. Orange slugs are my favorites because they look the most like blood.

If you are already very sick or are worried about coronavirus, I recommend eels. Eels can be harder to find, but get to any UMass dining hall early in the morning before the crowds have arrived and I'm sure you can manage to find one. A couple of eel bites will easily bleed you more than any pile of slugs could in a week, leaving you with far less blood and preventing vicious germs from taking you down.

It is also important to note that occasionally a cold may result in increased production of phlegm. On the off chance you also become overcome with phlegm, there are several secondary steps you can take. Avoid sleep, seafood, viscous foods, and water, in addition to your daily bloodlettings.

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DEAR JUPITER: MY BIOLOGICAL FATHER IS ABRAHAM LINCOLN

BY JUPITER,
Columnist

Dear Jupiter,

I was raised in a single-parent household and I've always wondered about my biological father. Before I was born, my mother was a time traveler. She's told me about her previous relationships with Alexander the Great, Joan of Arc and Pablo Picasso. On my 18th birthday, I finally got the chance to meet my father, and it turns out he's Abraham Lincoln! He was exactly as I imagined him: tall, well-spoken and with a great big bushy beard. Even

though we both got along pretty well, I still felt a strong, unspoken resentment for him. Sure, he was an important historical figure, but where was he when I needed a dad? Sure, he wrote the Emancipation Proclamation, but where was he during my high school graduation? I can't even look at a five-dollar bill without getting sick. I want to have a relationship with my dad, but how do I love someone who was never really there?

Sincerely,
"Founding Daddy Issues"

Dear, "Founding Daddy Issues",

Believe it or not, you're not the first person I've met with this problem. I once knew the daughter of a time-traveler whose biological father was Alexander Graham Bell. This created a tricky dilemma. She wanted to spend time with her dad, but she didn't want to remove him from history. If Graham Bell left his time period to raise his daughter in the future, he would never invent the telephone. In short, you can't remove people from history. It creates too many problems for the space-time continuum. Without Abraham Lincoln, the Emancipation Proclamation would never get signed and the 13th Amendment

would never get passed. U.S. history would be completely skewed. That's a heavy burden you don't want to carry.

One solution is cloning your dad. It's a practical (although very expensive) approach, but it will only make you more attached to something that isn't real. In reality, your father was never there. As much as you want to start a relationship with your dad, he never really was your dad. If you're able to forgive him, that's great. Holding grudges only creates more resentment and anger. However, you shouldn't force yourself to love someone who never showed you love. Be thank-

ful for your mom, who raised you to become the strong, intelligent person you are today. Be thankful you finally got to meet your father. That part of your life is no longer a mystery. End that chapter and move on. Become your own person. Don't let how others treat you affect how you treat yourself.

Also, be thankful your father is Abraham Lincoln and not Vlad the Impaler. That would have made things way more complicated.

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AN ENCOUNTER WITH THE DEMON THAT DOES GOOD

By VIVIAN MAUVE,

Captive of the Purple Vibrating Castle

I came into the office to find a note under my feet. It was pulsating strangely, and in smeared blood-red lettering made an invitation. "THE DEMON THAT DOES GOOD. IMPLORES YOU TO VISIT THE RABBIT WHOLE."

Now I've had experience with demons. Demonic encounters are rife when documenting the spaces between reality, but an invitation is rare. So, I gathered up an unsuspecting colleague of mine, Schenectady Oates, and together we traversed the lonely blackness of the Valley in search of this "Rabbit Whole," hoping to shed light on the inner workings of such a cabal to an unsuspecting public and allow them a thoughtful glimpse into the idea realm.

As we strode along the western highway, a red energy could be seen floating beyond the horizon. Its field of intensity grew and grew, culminating in a tubular shape towering high above the milltown of Easthampton. Speculation brought us dead center towards the eye of the cloud wherein a wilted warehouse stood menacingly along the banks of a garbage spackled river.

Thanks to the graciousness of an unsuspecting office worker, "The Rabbit Whole" was located, and it was in front of the door where Schenectady and I came into contact with the

first being of the demonic cabal. Assuming the visage self-described as "Bubbe, the Eternal Jewish Grandmother".

The visage assumed the shape of a human woman, seemingly aged between twenty-five to thirty, though dressed as if they were truly a grandmother. Her friendliness was off-putting, for slowly and assuredly she inched us towards a red door labeled "The Rabbit Whole." Then, suddenly, expelling itself from the Rabbit Whole as if birthed by a tear in reality, we met the demon itself, Demeyes, "The Demon that Does Good."

"Yesssss." the demon's tongue slithered.

"You must beeeeeeee.... The pressssssssssss."

"With the Surreal Times, your majesty," Schenectady said.

"Ohh! The Surreal Times!" Bubbe exclaimed.

Their words danced around us, like sirens from the tales of ancient Greece, they had lulled and serenaded us until we found ourselves standing before the Rabbit Whole, door open, a vast black void inside.

"Enjoy your pressss passss!" was the last thing Schenectady and I heard before feeling the rough sole of a rubber boot on our behinds fling us into the dark.

What transpired next felt

like the climax of a fever dream coupled with the voracious intensity of swimming in a void pot. A ball floating in the void, Demeyes delivering a monologue to all souls past and present. The Vampire of Time, Kitty, Death, A Violinist, Damien, Bubbe, Demeyes, The Angel That Does Bad. We watched history unfurl, Babylon on fire, World War Two, the Waco Siege. Demeyes and the Vampire of Time, a destructive duo, a bane on humanity: feeding off fear, swishing blood in their mouths while they tossed matches and danced in the falling ash. They sensed our fear, us, and all the souls floating in the void pot, dead and alive, falling eternally down the Rabbit Whole.

What began as a relationship with a burning passion gradually degraded into the same drudgery for thousands of years. Immortality became boring. God left his creations. Demons ran rampant and destruction became a chore. Time and time again. The Vampire and Demeyes grew sick of each other, sick of the dance of death.

While I floated shapeless in the void, I questioned the demon.

"What good do you do, oh demon? All we have seen is the demise of civilization. The deaths of kings and queens and peasants and lords. You are not a demon that does good, but a demon that does bad. A true

demon."

Cryptically: "Wait until death comes."

A slideshow reel. Bubbe gives birth to Demeyes. A robed eyeball. Death appears. Her skull protruding through her skin, black veil, flow of tears, roping Demeyes into an eternal dance. I had resigned to the fact that I too had died, that my whole life had been a ploy to lead me to this moment, a demon dancing with death for eternity. The demon had got us good. We had been duped, killed outright. The void pot was our home, the Rabbit Whole the great beyond. I went to close my eyes but I had none to close. The only solace was that souls were real and that maybe I'd get the chance to jump right back into some other meat machine. Memories gone, sure, but a chance at life again. For then, and now, time did not exist. What happened while I floated could've been mere minutes, thousands of years, billions of decades. The expanse drudged on, expanding in every direction.

But the expanse did end and the Demon did good after all. For suddenly death had too died at the hands of Demeyes. The veil was lifted and we found ourselves in a room. Demeyes and the Vampire emaciated.

"We neeeeed death."

"Now we will starve!"

"Calllllll Kitty."

"What can I do for ya, sweet thang?"

Pointing at the body.

"Oh lord."

They scattered, readying a strange ritual. A robed eyeball, a moth, a ball of light and a ladder, a tincture being readied, steam, the shrill screech of a violin, masks, lamps, telephone pocket-book. Downloading from another dimension.

Chanting:

"Potion or poison the virus the cure

Potion or poison, buried or unearthed.

Potion or poison the virus the cure,

Potion or poison, buried or unearthed.

Potion or poison the virus the cure,

Potion or poison, buried or unearthed.

A life for the light in the shadows.

A life for the light in the shadows.

A life for the light in the shadows."

Randomly, the room was filled with the sounds of Kate Bush. We had resumed our shapes, and found ourselves shoeless on a series of mats. Demeyes and Damien dancing hypnotically.

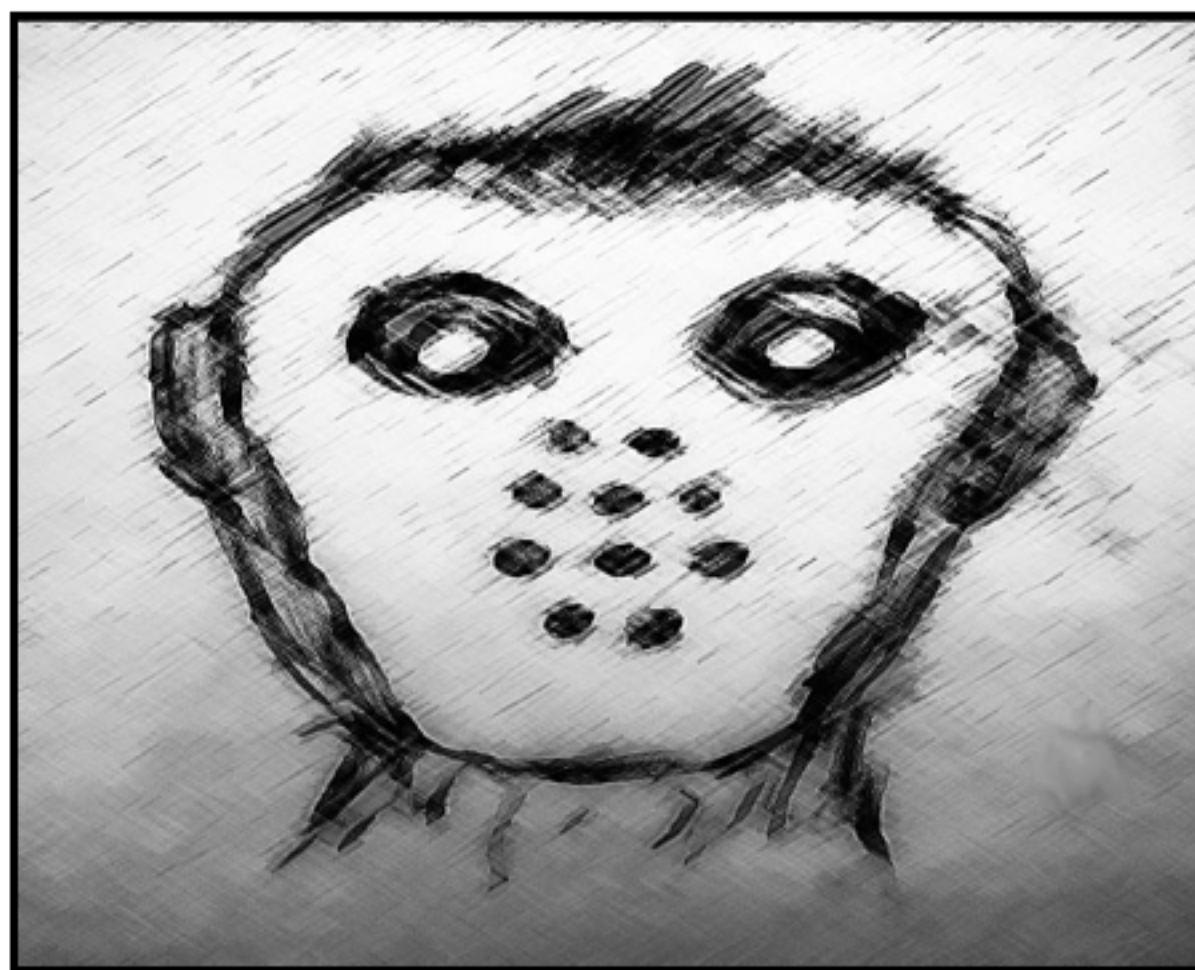
"Heathcliff, it's me, I'm Cathy." The lights turned off. A candle floated away of its own volition, signaling us revived souls towards the red door of the Rabbit Whole.

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HORROR FILM CRITICS PUTTING MASKED MANIACS OUT OF WORK

BY HOCKEY FACE,
Masked Menace



Many of you are probably too young to remember the good old days when new albums came out on cassettes, gasoline cost a little over a buck, and any teenager who heard an unexplained noise in the cellar would loudly say "Who is it?" and then walk directly towards that noise. Those were better days. But then these snide tweed-coat-wearing "film critics" came out of the woodwork, writing so-called "reviews" in loathsome publications like *The Hollywood Reporter*, *The Boston Trombone*, *The Surreal Times*, and *US Almost-Weekly*. In their critiques of flawless cinematic masterworks, such as "Sleepaway Camp II: Unhappy Campers", they started bringing up dangerous notions like "reason", and "logic", and "Why would any person ever do that?" Heartless vultures. They have left me with nothing, and now my machete sits unused and rusting in the corner of my decrepit log cabin.

If you're anything like me, you're the vengeful spirit of a murderer who was brought back from the dead for vague, undefined reasons. And if you're not like me, that's okay too. I hope you'll still be able to empathize with me. It all started back when I was a young (freshly undead). I was shambling through a mostly abandoned strip mall when I came across "Mort's Sports: Sporting Goods & Eye Exams". I realized my purpose in life. What some might have seen as a simple hockey mask adver-

tising the upcoming 1992 Disney film *Mighty Ducks*, I saw as opportunity knocking at my door. From then on I would no longer be known as "Ahhhh! What is that thing?!" I would be known as Hockey Face, the masked maniac of Fleetwood Street, and children would write nursery rhymes about how I was like, really really scary. In my prime I would be hailed as one of the greats, right up there with Freddy K., Leatherface, Pinhead, Featherface, and that other guy who wore a hockey mask. I was riding high on life, but then I saw the first warning sign. Peter Nascapolotini of the *Harvard Tribune* wrote a scathing review of "Bloody Knife 2: Extra Blood", a horror film inspired by events taken directly from my life, in which he wrote:

"The protagonist suspects an intruder is in the house and never once considers calling the police. Why? Our main characters continually make such poor decisions it seems that they're actually trying to get stabbed by this second rate Jason knock-off."

I found these comments quite disturbing, and the last line extremely hurtful. A horrible thought occurred to me: "What if people actually read film reviews?" Impossible, I assured myself, no one would actually do such a thing, but over the coming years it became increasingly clear that the opposite was true. This was in fact the beginning of the end.

Much like skin magazines and Hooters, the masked maniac business has been devastated by changing cultural attitudes. Nowadays, when you ring someone's doorbell they'll often actually look through the peephole to see who it is. Horrifying, I know. A couple years ago, when I was chasing a camp counselor with an axe, instead of locking himself in a room, behind a wooden door, with no means of escape, he actually ran outside – I was flummoxed. Now what was I supposed to do, full on sprint?! I shouldn't be expected to do that, I don't even have a gym membership. It doesn't matter anymore, even just attempting to murder somebody is not worth the effort. I never thought I'd see the day that teenagers would exercise "sound thinking" and "rational safety precautions." It's grotesque, vomit inducing. I'm ashamed to admit that I haven't been able to stab anybody in over ten years. I know, please don't laugh. In fact, sadly, I've been reduced to switching careers entirely. Now I do remote data entry for a tech startup. I say this to you as a warning: you might not think it, but one day society might decide that your entire way off life operates on "poor logic" and "doesn't even make any sense," and then what do you do? How are you expected to make ends meet when the people you victimize start actually thinking for themselves?

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FIREWORKS AT THE CONVERGENCE BOWL

BY COMMON OBSERVER,
Staff Reporter

Sunderland, MA -- At the annual Novelty Games this year, all eyes were on a giant bowl 100 stories tall, equally wide, and made from a glistening silver material that focussed sunlight into a central point.

Thousands of contestants perched upon the outer rim, gazing down the steep curve before them. They were nervous but excited, awaiting their chance at entry to a higher realm.

For these people, the day would bring one of two possible outcomes: to become Godly or to be devoured by the Gods.

So, when a trombone-wielding silhouette appeared at the center of the bowl, adrenaline levels ran high.

"On your mark!"

"Get set!"

"Go!"

The signal came when the silhouetted man honked his trombone with all the air in his lungs, conjuring a menacing echo within the bowl. People dove down the sides of the bowl head first, accelerating to high speeds. Some paddled with their hands to go faster. They collided brutally in the center of the bowl.

Most contestants died on impact and were considered

"safe losers". Survivors were "painful losers." Mangled like birds in a blender, they were stuck unpleasantly in this realm, left frying on a burning hot pan.

But the winners, the people at the forefront of the collision, were teleported instantly into a higher dimension. They vanished!

Onlookers cheered, "To the sky! To the sky! Some will die on the way to the improbable sky!"

The bowl resonated an infinitely-harmonic song that brought divine feelings to all.

When it was over, a crane lowered its claw to stir the contents of the bowl, mixing

in water from fire engines and letting the sun bring it to a boil. It would be a stew for the gods which, despite its rancid smell, would be left sitting for the following year as an offering.

We asked one veteran of these events some questions.

Q: "So, why do you do all this"? **A:** "For the novelty of it, for the improbable promise of it all, the great fight against entropy!"

Q: "That's great. Sounds like a noble cause. I'm curious, what does the soup taste like?" **A:** "I don't know. You can't comprehend the taste from within our realm. Only beings of at least dimension 5 can perceive the full range of its

flavors."

Q: "Right, I think I've heard that before. Now, we don't have much time, I'm getting sick from the smell. One more question. What happened to the people who disappeared at the end of the collision?"

A: They transcended our realm!"

"Lovely, thank you for your time"

Another successful year at the Novelty Games.

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MISSION FAILS DUE TO A PROBLEMATIC GREG

BY KANGARTH JRAGZIP,
Historian

The Salvation of Gleez mission had little success on the northernmost gaseous moon, largely due to issues with translation, and more specifically, issues with Greg.

Greg became involved with the mission largely by accident. He'd grown up among merchants on the moon station known for a thriving meltable apple trade. Therefore he developed enough of a working knowledge of the Glauzean language to make polite-but-still-unpleasant elevator conversation. He

mastered the following phrases and little else:

"Hello, the acid rain is lovely today, isn't it?"

"Hello, I'm Greg."

"Hello, I've just slightly murdered a fellow in a dispute downstairs. Can I hide from law enforcement in your spaceship?"

The elevator-goer directed Greg to a vessel taking asylum seekers. He went in the opposite direction and wound up on a vessel owned by a prominent Gleezian's half-sister. From there, he became acquainted with the

northward-bound Salvation of Gleez mission, who sponsored his degree in Gleezian theology. Greg then accompanied the mission to a distant gaseous moon, linguistically similar though not identical to his home planet.

Upon docking, the Salvation asked their translator to convey this message to the gathering crowd: "Hello! Gather ye for your Salvation by Gleez is imminent; come hear about the glory and mercy offered by our divine and returning Lord Gleez!"

Greg summed this up in the local vernacular: "Hello! I

am going to talk about a eat you."

One of the listening caffeineated egg harvesters asked a question to the linguistic novice, "Why should we care about this guy?" which Greg then communicated to the Mission leaders.

The Mission responded: "Gleez is all-knowing and all-loving. He is the way to eternal Salvation and asylum from damnation. Come be absorbed into his welcoming glow and light!"

Greg took a stab at translating this: "He is nice. He will

Author's note: This was an excerpt from the upcoming installment in theological historian Kangarth Jragzip's series on the spread of various religions across worlds in the invisible galaxy. Jragzip is celebrated not only for her scholarship, but for her accessible writing style that blends a fictitious writing style with historical fact.

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MY FIRST LINE TRAINING EXPERIENCE

By **DERNBERGER
SPENGLETON,**
Surreal Times Reporter

Atop Mount Pollux overlooking UMass, six of us were lying on comfortable green grass looking up at overcast.

"The sky is blended today", the Line Muse said, "It takes an open mind to notice the subtle borders between shades of gray. In time, you will find them. Let your eyes drift along these gentle lines, ever so casually, ever so comfortably. The universe will provide a path for you if you let it."

I had trouble seeing the "lines" at first. The sky looked like a bland blob.

But once I stopped looking so carefully, my attention gravitated to the faint ridges between colors and elevation changes. In my imagination, I soared along these implicit lines... I followed them with my pointer finger...

It wasn't long before we got on our feet and began walking about, still looking upwards. We went in the directions that our personal cloud lines suggested.

"If you find a crossroads," the Cloud Muse said, "choose a direction without hesitation. Always follow a track, jump between tracks, improvise, but always remain guided."

We meandered about for

hours until we had followed the clouds to the horizon.

When I finally looked down from the sky, I found myself in a beachside parking lot. I didn't recognize it at first, but it conjured up thoughts of freedom and endless possibilities.

My friend, Armădeius Galouei, was there, running figure eights around two painted parking spaces, stepping only on the painted lines. I followed him. After a few loops, he yelled, "A Wooo Bop!" and jumped off the painted lines onto a curb. He darted along the curb towards the woods, making more sounds. I replicated the sounds as I followed him. We scurried

across serpentine root systems on the surface of the forest loam. We balanced across a fallen log. We crawled underneath hedges.

We popped out of the trees and back onto the parking lot, racing along the cracks in the pavement in all directions.

The sun was high in the sky. I felt some sort of universal synergy. It was time for me to be my own muse.

A wandering beetle separated me from Armădeius and led me to the beach, a brief apprenticeship after which I found a line in the sand of my own. Perhaps a kid drew it with a stick or his foot. Regardless of the source, it led me back and forth in a

zig-zag. Eventually, it spit me out off the dock and with a splash into the water. I couldn't hold my breath for long enough to faithfully follow my nearest line underwater.

I had no choice but to abandon my Path. After the most synchronized 24 hours of my life, I returned home and to bed peacefully. When I woke up, I found strings tied from each of my fingertips to my typewriter, and so I wrote. When I finished writing these words, I found another string tied to my belt and stretching out my window and far into the distance. I will follow it someday.

HAND DISEMBODIMENT ON THE CHARLES

By **TOM JOHNSON,**
Sergeant UMass PD

Cambridge, MA — Four disembodied hands were found on the banks of the Charles River last week. There were three right hands and one left hand, and the skin color of the left hand didn't match any of the others. Police investigations have spiraled into more issues.

Dangling from each disembodied wrist was a wet, broken watch, its hand stuck in the place of the time when it was first dumped into the river.

The watches read 1:00 am,

2:30 am, 4:00 am, and 5:30 am, respectively.

As my partner and I waded in the river for more hands, we quickly approached 7:00 am. I felt a tweak in my elbow, just a slight pull. My partner, Ramirez, said something was bothering him in his forearm. We were exhausted, having worked through the night, but we had no choice. We kept looking.

My hand coordination went down the drain. I kept dropping my flashlight. My fingers felt numb even though it wasn't too cold. My palms were dry and cracking.

I noticed something under a

log. I called Ramirez over to help me lift it. As we lifted, I felt some pain. My hand felt "loose". The tendons in my fingers felt longer than before, more stretchy. It was strange, but I assumed it was just because of my tiredness.

Once we moved that log, we saw two disembodied hands in a puddle underneath, both right hands and of different skin colors.

Ramirez and I brought the hands straight to the mortician for analysis, but when we arrived, she looked at us like we were crazy.

"My God, sergeant, what happened?" she asked,

"Ramirez, you too? What happened?"

"We found these by the river. Seems to be in line with the existing case."

"Look at yourself," she said.

Both myself and Ramirez looked down at the same time to find our right hands and watches missing, clean stumps on our arms. We felt no pain. There was no blood.

"We've got to get those in milk," the mortician said as she grabbed our disembodied hands. She tried to put them into plastic baggies with milk inside, but while doing so, her own right hand

loosened and fell off.

The three of us collaborated using our left hands to bag up our right hands. I don't know if it was any use. Our tendons are hardened. Our stumps are healed, the wounds closed.

This is a disease unlike any we've ever seen. The river is a black hole for hands. Today, disembodied right hands line the banks of the Charles River. We don't know why. We don't like the smell, but cleaning up the rotting hands is not worth the risk of losing the hands we have left.



THE BIHEXICAL SEARCH

BY ARMĀDEIUS GALOUET'S SURROGATE,
Mechanical Contraption

Thanks to a spectacular isomorphism, the solution to the following maze corresponds directly to a solution to an abstract problem in our world. In turn, by solving this maze, you make the world a better place. If against all odds you find a solution, please email it to isomorphism@surrealtimes.net so that we can put the fruits of your labor into action. In return, you will be awarded a **secret prize**.

