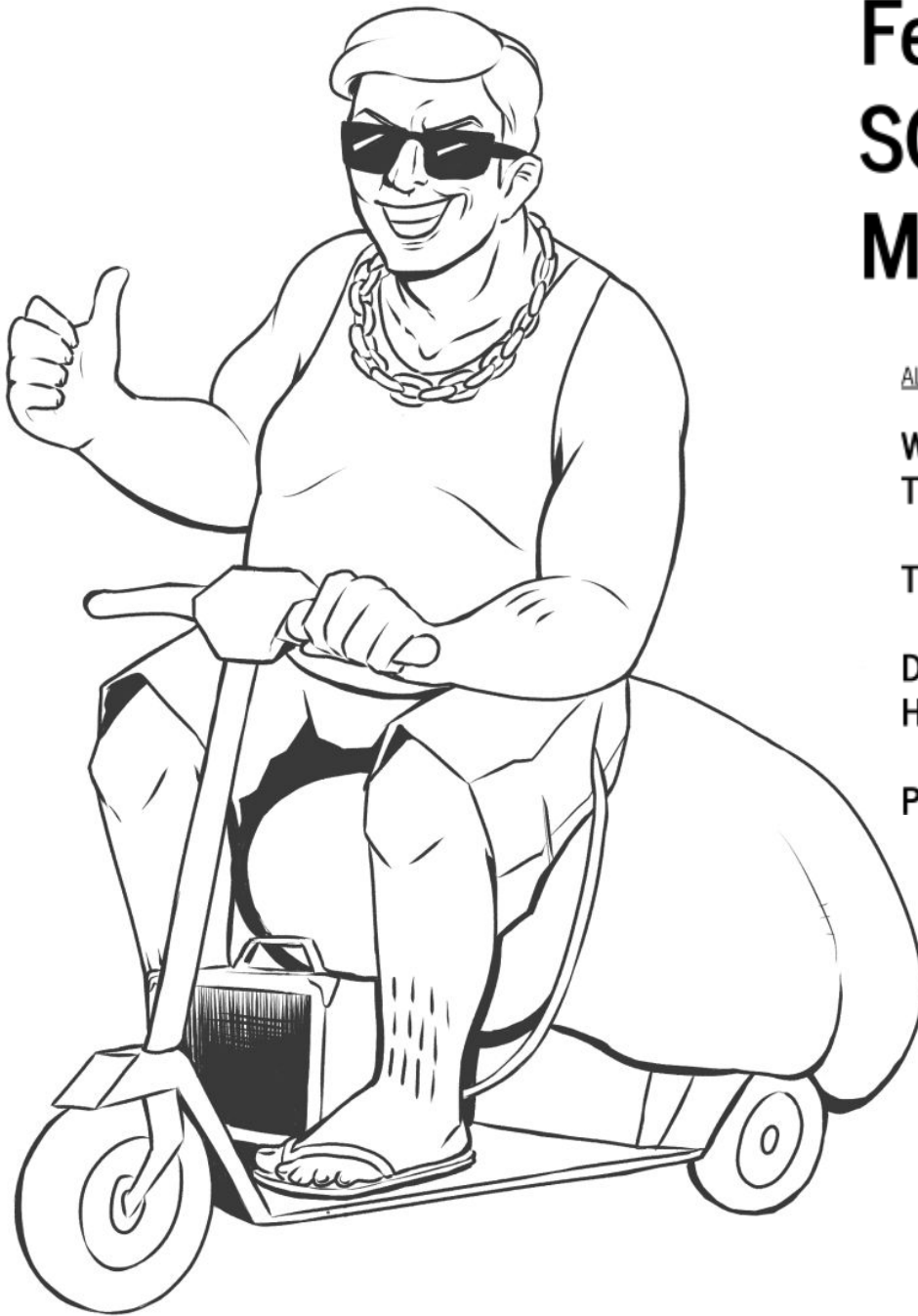




# THE SURREAL TIMES

Special Edition Pandemic News Briefing, 9/14/2020 (BIHEX XXXI)



## Featuring: SCOOTER COOL MAN

### ALSO INCLUDES:

WHY YOU SHOULD REPLACE YOUR  
TEETH WITH RATS!

THE DRUNK HOTLINE!

DID YOUR BEST FRIEND FREEZE  
HERSELF?

PIECES OF SKY IN A BOTTLE???

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**About us:** The Surreal Times newspaper reports on events observed in reality as well as the broader surreality. Its headquarters is located in Amherst, Massachusetts, on the commonwealth's flagship campus. It also maintains satellite branches in Boston and Los Angeles. It publishes online and in print bihexically.

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## WORDS FROM THE THE MOUTH OF THE PIG



This just in: Armădeius Galouei contacts The Pig using mysterious and unknown means. He perceives with his own ears these WORDS FROM THE MOUTH OF THE PIG:

***"Technically every coastline is infinite"***

What does this mean? If you have any idea, please email [pigthoughts@surrealtimes.net](mailto:pigthoughts@surrealtimes.net).



## DENTAL DELINQUENT ON THE LOOSE

~ by Gum Girl, Times Correspondent, [gumgirl@surrealtimes.net](mailto:gumgirl@surrealtimes.net)

AMHERST, MA - Do not submit to the Dental Delinquent, last seen under the tree in front of Baker Hall on University of Massachusetts Amherst campus. He is very persuasive. Do not fall for his charms.

Just last week, I had 45 beautiful teeth. The Dental Delinquent lured me in with his charms. He told me that I had beautiful teeth. He told me he loved my smile. As I blushed and showed my teeth, I started to feel sleepy. When I woke up, all of my teeth were gone.

If you have any information or tips on this menace to society, [gumgirl@surrealtimes.net](mailto:gumgirl@surrealtimes.net).



# SCOOTER COOL MAN FINDS A LOVER

~ by Dernberger Spengleton, Tender to the Grand Conveyer, [spengleton@surrealtimes.net](mailto:spengleton@surrealtimes.net)



Unfortunately, our interview did not last any longer.

Humans of The Surreal Plane

[artwork by Kid Zotov]

VENICE, CA —Saturday. A man 40 years young rolled around the Venice beach boardwalk on a scooter contraption with enough sexual gravity to warp spacetime. His ride consisted of a giant bean bag which dragged on the pavement on either side of a rented electric scooter. He leaned back like a rugged motorcyclist, bumping "I like it when you call me big poppa," on a boombox held between his legs. He wore neon pants and a thick gold chain around his neck and was followed by a gang of seagulls.

"I like your ride, man," I told him, hoping to initiate conversation.

"I like my ride too, man, but I don't care about you. I'm just looking for a bad bitch. Give me some space. You're polluting my vibes."



# SKY BOTTLING UNCOVERED

~ by Pleakley Pow Pow, Surreal Times Reporter, [powpow@surrealtimes.net](mailto:powpow@surrealtimes.net)

A recent exploration into a long abandoned and presumed desolate lighthouse burrowed in the coastal craigs of New England yielded the discovery of a most extraordinary craft. Largely devoid of the musky debris which generally accrues in abandoned places, the lighthouse was rather stocked with an uncanny assortment of glass bottles. These bottles circled the lighthouse in a seemingly infinite spiral that followed the wooden stairs of the cylindrical building up and up and up and up. There was a certain ethereal hum in their continuance, a similar wonder that accompanies things which appear endless.

Some bottles bear stoat figures and grainy surfaces. Some donned long iridescent necks and pear-like bottoms. Some showed fading soda pop labels and glimpses of bygone days. Some were small vials wedged between boastful, curving jars. They were of endless variety and a myriad of translucent, earthy hues. Their enchanting uncanniness stemmed primarily and undoubtedly from their contents - a snippet of sky from an unknowable number of places and times.

It seems that you could spend all day traversing and exploring the sprawling array of bottles and even longer observing the uniqueness of their skies. In some, hues of gray warred amongst each other in upheaving gales and roaring squalls. Miniature tempests brewed amongst bottlenecks and bolts of lightning severed through smoky clouds. Upon removing the corked stopper from a bottle of this kind, our correspondent noted not only the sound of thunder but a distinct salty spray graze her lips - likely foam from some sprawling sea blanketed beneath a tempestuous sky. Serene summer evenings from abounding lands settled in the cool glass of others, quiet except for the murmuring symphony of cicadas, crickets, and peepers. The kind of sound that eventually comes to feel like quiet the longer you listen and your awareness wanders. Certain bottles could barely contain the glorious golden chromas of various horizon's dusks and dawns. In others, rain pattered ruefully down the bottles' panes, snowflakes drifted silently in cottony tufts or blizzardy torrents. Clouds imbued with a most electrifying spectrum of colors frequented many jars, their hues ranging from the softest of lavenders to cherry reds and lemonade pinks, to the most lustrous of ambers and striking cerulean blues. Beautifully, as with all creatures, none were precisely the same, and nor could they be. Even a sky from the same place assumes newness and uniqueness under the sun of a different day.

In trying times, the human psyche can fall prey to a great number of uninvited yet nonetheless relentless plagues, demons, aches and maladies. One's mind may feel stuck and one's body and life subsequently stagnant. As with the evershifting celestial spheres above us, we too will persist, and lingering darknesses will pass. Finicky and capricious is the world, and we are bodies that must move with it. In moments where the shadows feel impenetrable and permanent, know they are anything but, and derive their power from asserting a sense of overwhelming permanence. Remember, even in the most uproarious storms, the clouds always and miraculously breach to allow for new light. There are infinite skies and boundless horizons and vast tomorrows. They may, at times, get tucked away in dusty corners of yesterday's memory, but are never lost, simply in need of being remembered.

The art of sky bottling seems a quietly curious and wonderful one indeed.



## INEXPERIENCED PILOTS NEEDED

\*Advertisement paid for by Contranym\*

Our company (Contranym) is in search of pilots to control a classified vehicle. Due to clearance-related limitations, pilots are preferred to have a weight of under 85 pounds and a height of under three feet. Due to classified aspects of the vehicle's performance, significant experience in roller coaster riding is required.

Additionally, due to the unique (and classified) nature of the vehicle, applicants are preferred to have little or no experience piloting other vehicles.

The final requirement is that applicants not be fluent in the English language, due to classified restrictions in the vehicle's operating software.

Interested applicants should note that although these are "preferences", we receive an unimaginably huge amount of applications every day. As such, it is unlikely that applicants without significant relevance could be hired.

Applications go to [contranymco@gmail.com](mailto:contranymco@gmail.com). (Individuals with no experience sending email are preferred.)



## EXISTENTIAL DREAD FALLS DOWN THE DRAIN

Dernberger Spengleton, Tender to The Grand Conveyer [spengleton@surrealtimes.net](mailto:spengleton@surrealtimes.net)

A stormy minded Russian woman new to this side of the ocean and this amount of alcohol was told: "There is a stage where people can stand and share their innermost contemplations." Meanwhile, a swath of coronavirus runaways heard word of a renegade comedy show in the same location.

Arriving at the event, I parked in the heart of the LA urban sprawl. A van with a broken windshield flashed advertisements for backpage dot com. I overheard some chatter which I followed into a backyard illuminated by string lights. The place had a grungy personality. There were exotic plants, stolen street-signs, and dozens of mid-grade paintings scattered about, some hanging from the walls and some painted on them directly. A chaos hardened German shepherd made a home out of a small stage made from pallets. People, some wearing masks, some not, sat in various chairs and beanbags. I'd say half were comedians, half were characters.

Each person on "the list" got 9 minutes on the stage.

A guy with a Massachusetts tattoo on one arm and an "I love mom" on the other made jokes about sex and consent. A nurse talked about bacteria and her sister's butt. A demon lured us under his spell with wordplay that would make a dictionary cry. To calm things down, a kid played some ukulele songs about the pains of immortality.

When more comedians took the stage, a guy named Aaron's giggle box was so trigger happy, it drowned out jokes before the punchlines hit. Comedians began to lose interest, but people called this Aaron out for his unstoppable form of heckling. "The guy is so positive," one comic said, "I don't even want to kick him out. I want what he's on! But damn man, please, can you just pipe it down a degree or two?"

Aaron stood up, wobbling drunk and seeing things, saying, "I'm just living life, being positive being present." Shortly thereafter, a beautiful woman wearing a mask sat next to him. He looked her in the eyes and said, "I hate mask people. You are evil. Get the fuck away from me, and sit somewhere else with that underwear on your face." Then he reached to me for a fist bump and genuinely told me and the entire backyard that he hoped we were all having a "fine evening."

Eventually the event host implemented a mandatory no laughing rule, which solved some of the problems.

Not long after, the Russian lady began heckling the host, poking for her chance at the stage. She pushed aside a large man called Stink and grabbed the mic. Stink tried flirting with her, and she flirted back, but she soon fell into the existential monologue that the crowd had no way of foreseeing. It was so wretched, speaking of death and meaninglessness, and she was so drunk and talking like she was in therapy even though this was a comedy show. At first people laughed because they thought she was telling jokes. But as she spiraled downwards, even her boyfriend backed away.

The woman was left drawling emphatically into the mic with nobody in the crowd, until eventually Stink, having finished all the joints he had brought that evening, returned back to sweep her off her feet. Her 50 y/o boyfriend, Russo, who owned the house, didn't care to be the girl's boyfriend anymore and encouraged Stink to take her away.

When everyone left, I found myself inside the house, surrounded by unfinished paintings, bongos, piles of tobacco and half-read books. I talked with Russo, who was the artist of the place. He paints for 3-4 hours each day, conjures chaos and grows tomatoes. I bought one of his smaller paintings, the best I could get with the money in my wallet. It was a painting of his lost love, a quadro-paligic person in a wheelchair who he met in a bar. He threw in a freshly grown tomato for free.

As I bit into the juicy vegetable, an angelic woman, walking down the sidewalk as Russo was showing me his garden, mistook me for his apprentice. Russo gave her a tomato too and she asked me if it was clean. I said "probably not, but it will make you live forever." She said she'd save it for later.

From what I've heard, the comedy treatment had no effect positive or negative.



# DEAR JUPITER: MY BEST FRIEND FROZE HERSELF!

*Dear Jupiter,  
I am so angry at my friend right now.*

*When the pandemic started back in March and the entire country was on lockdown, we both agreed that we would cryogenically freeze ourselves until the virus was over. We did some research, and it ended up costing over \$1,000 per month to freeze yourself. Not knowing how long the pandemic would last, my friend suggested we should stay frozen for at least three months. There was no way I could afford \$1,000 a month to freeze myself. I just had gotten laid off from my job and was constantly struggling to pay my rent, so naturally, I couldn't afford to freeze myself.*

*We got into a huge fight, and she ultimately decided to go through with the process alone. She's been frozen now for almost 5 months.*

*I'll admit, I'm a bit jealous of her. These past few months have been especially rough for me, and it hurts me knowing she doesn't have to experience any of it. I've even debated blowing the rest of my savings on one of those freezing pods, just so I don't have to deal with all this crap.*

*On the other hand, I'm also finding myself incredibly disappointed in her. By freezing herself, she's basically ignoring all of her problems. I've been working to improve myself during this time and become more socially active, but what my friend is doing is totally selfish.*

*I don't know what to do, I'm sad that our friendship ended this way and I wish I could have said something more to make her stay, and appreciate what we had as friends. She's going to unfreeze herself when this pandemic is over, but who knows what the world will be like then? Please help me Jupiter.*

*Sincerely, "Unfrozen & Alone"*

Dear, "Unfrozen & Alone,"

You need to remind yourself that you are doing the right thing by remaining unfrozen. The pandemic has caused many people to seek some form of escape, whether it's by freezing yourself, shooting yourself into space or taking reality-altering drugs. However these escapes are only temporary solutions to bigger problems, and are only *distractions* from the root of those problems. Now, more than ever, we need to mobilize and focus on making the world a better place for ourselves and for others. Yes, self-care is important, but focussing too much on yourself is more destructive than it is productive. When times eventually get rougher and more overwhelming, you will only naturally envy the people in the freezing pods. However, you must remember to stay strong and remind yourself, and with that momentum remind the people you care about, that the world itself will not improve unless everyone does their part.



Don't lose hope for her, even if you think she's acting selfishly. She went through the same emotional process that you did, but she simply made a different decision from yours. Don't hate her for that, people can only react to life's problems in their own way, and while this can be frustrating, it is a simple fact of life. When she eventually becomes unfrozen, try to reach out to her and educate her. It's not too late. Remember that she has the same capacity for growth as you do.

We can't stay frozen forever.

Best regards,

Jupiter



## PLEASE, REPLACE YOUR TEETH WITH SMALL RODENTS

~ by Kitty Collins, Journalist, [collins.kitty@surrealtimes.net](mailto:collins.kitty@surrealtimes.net)

My basement is filled with so many hungry mouths, and let's just say some of them have started gnawing on my vast collection of "Willow" VHSs, (if you know what I mean.) So I gotta adopt out some of this writhing bunch of moldy beanie babies.

Please, just replace your teeth with small rodents.

You probably have more teeth than you can even caress on a daily basis. All those some-odd 87 pearly white teeth, itching and moaning all the time, it can get annoying. And just Imagine smiling down at your children or partner with a mouthful of 37 wiggling little rats, all dreamy eyed and buzzing from the drugs.

And in case you still don't see it, let's go through the rest of the benefits and reasons to get your tooth rats today:

1. Tiny friends in your mouth who can help you eat your food.
3. Rodents have their own teeth, so that means more teeth per "tooth hole". Think of the romance possibilities with many more teeth ;)
2. I hide my puppets in a painted closet, lost lonely, and still with a warm hand of a dead friend inside.
5. Be a living representation of the image "an uncle's black tooth smile", fun!
9. Never mix up your shoe brush and your toothbrush, cause now you'll only need your shoe brush.
2. Immunity to and ability to infect all attackers with the bubonic plague.
8. Snazzy yearbook pictures
5. The rodents could wear little caps and even dress up, they have their own personalities so the possibilities are endless!

Full disclosure the only downside I can think of is, two of my rats are, well... weird. One rat plays the flute, is very anxious, and is afraid of mouths. They will try to escape. Another rat is what we in the kink scene call a "vore" - that's someone who gains sexual pleasure from being swallowed, literally or metaphorically, willingly or unwilling, and boy, that little fucker gets excited. But hey, I don't care to shame anyone, so that could be a positive too!

Please call 781-913-5092 to Replace all your teeth with small rodents! Or, if you'd like to feed my spider Jerry her m&m's (She's very honest!).



## DRUNK HOTLINE AVAILABLE NOW

~by Tommy Potentuary, TV Personality, [tommy.potent@surrealtimes.net](mailto:tommy.potent@surrealtimes.net)

DRUNK HOTLINE

978-333-3656

"Let's make the best of that beer"

Available midnight-4:00am

Had a crazy night? Overflowing with thoughts too weird to waste? Sitting there at 3am wishing your passed out friends would wake up and listen to what you have to say?

No worries, friend, just hit up the Drunk Hotline at 978-333-3656.

Dernberger Spengleton will be there for you. He'll listen to what you have to say. He'll be a shoulder to lean on. More so, he'll ramble back at you, ask questions, make funny noises, and do whatever is necessary to make the best of your late night energy. He is a black belt in Drunk Energy Harnessing and Cultivation therapy.

Note: Drunk people only. If you are found to be sober, we will hang up. Don't waste our time.



# QUESTIONS: WOULD YOU RATHER?

~ by Paul Krueger, Journalist, [krueger.paul@surrealtimes.net](mailto:krueger.paul@surrealtimes.net)

Our minds are turning to mush, dulled by the constant stream of pointless YouTube videos and mindless tweets. Human interaction is at an all-time low. Our critical thinking skills are essentially non-existent. Research on prisoners and astronauts who experienced extended periods of isolation has shown that social skills decline from lack of use. Now more than ever, bunkered down in wherever we may be, our ability to connect with others and maintain real-world human relationships is weakening.

So it's time to sharpen up and answer some deeply revealing psychological questions that really get at the heart of what it means to be human. Call up an old friend, gather your whole family, or just sit outside of your house and call out to the first person who jogs by. Ask them the questions below. Really think hard about them, as if your whole life depended on the right answer. Take it seriously and consider the implications of your answers. Compare your answers with your friends and debate who is correct. What do your answers reveal about your personality, your friend's personality, and about human nature itself?

Would you rather always shout whenever you speak or constantly be soaking wet with no chance of ever drying off?

Would you rather have a third eye on the back of your head or have antennas on your head that can detect whenever someone tells a lie?

Would you rather never be able to travel outside of a 20-mile bubble around where you are at this exact moment or have elbows and knees that creaks very horribly every time they are hinged?

Would you rather have a neck that is 2 feet long or have fingernails 2 feet long that you can never cut?

Would you rather have an orgasm every ten minutes for the next year or have to pry off all your fingernail with a rusty nail?

Would you rather go on nationally beloved television show "Family Feud" only to answer a question in a terribly embarrassing way that goes viral or meet with your boss/teacher and aggressively try to twerk on them for 10 minutes straight without explanation?

If you were starving and out of options, who would you eat first - mom or dad?



# IN TROUBLED TIMES, THE SKATE-BIRDER SPREADS CALM

~ by Dernberger Spengleton, Surreal Times Staff, [spengleton@surrealtimes.net](mailto:spengleton@surrealtimes.net)  
Humans of The Surreal Plane



[Artist's depiction by Flynn Bryan]

Mr. Antonin travels back and forth between Harvard and M.I.T. three times a day, always atop of his one-of-a-kind set of wheels: two skateboards duct-taped together, with a milk crate on top, and pulled by strings tied to a dozen or so pigeons. It's like a version of Santa's dogsled but from the dusty corner of your imagination, and although not the quickest way around, it's got style. When the captain tosses pieces of bread ahead of his pigeon crew, they waddle forwards and tug the sleigh.

You may know Mr. Antonin for the way he travels without a worry in the world, reading a book in one hand and occasionally tossing bread crumbs with the other.

Sometimes he sits in one spot for a while, leaving his pigeons at their own devices to hop around on his legs and shoulders, or to wander off.

He rarely is one to initiate a conversation. But, if you say hello to him, you're almost guaranteed to learn something subtle and interesting about the world that you'd have never considered otherwise. Just keep poking the conversation along, give Antonin space to talk, and see what comes to fruition.

Much like the way Mr. Antonin allows others to be the ones to initiate conversation with him, he allows his pigeons to come and go freely. Somehow, his good nature attracts them and the crew continues to grow organically.



# IT FINALLY CAME IN THE MAIL

~ by Louie Howden, Inwriter, [howden.louie@surrealtimes.net](mailto:howden.louie@surrealtimes.net)

So, there I am reading my favorite book about people who have disappeared, when I hear a buzz at my door. A visitor? A friend? No impossible. I open the door to see a man dressed in a postal worker's uniform, his face has begun to melt off and he is slowly sinking into the sidewalk as he walks toward his van. I notice the small metal mailbox to the right of my door has a sealed envelope sticking out of it that wasn't there before. As I open the seal the envelope lets out a high-pitched squeal and it spasms, then it ceases moving and falls silent. To my pleasant surprise the contents of the envelope have exactly what I'm hoping for, a signed letter from the governor declaring that my mind is completely gone; finally after years of hard work and effort I have been officially declared completely insane. It feels so strange to be this young and already so accomplished.

If father could see me now; well he might be a bit horrified, but also I'd like to think he'd be somewhat proud, since I've been working towards this for such a long time. Certificate in hand, I slam my front door shut, and practically skip down my hallway.

"Mother! You'll never believe what came in the mail!" I call out. From down the hall I can see mother, as usual sitting on a lawn chair in a photograph of her from 1968 mounted on my wall; she hasn't left that photograph for years. I can already see that she's glowering at me with disdain, and I decide that upon second thought I don't need to talk to her about this. It's not like she'd have anything nice to say. I don't want to hear anything right now that ruins the good mood I have going.

Clutching the certificate lovingly to my chest I giddily walk to my room and close the door behind me, but I make sure to leave it a half-inch ajar, just in case anything wants to come in. My mouse Marty is spinning on his wheel but stops when I enter. Marty has the face of my dead father and often speaks to me in a slow methodical voice, almost as one would a child.

"Are you finally happy now Louis? Is this enough for you?" he asks me.

"I don't know. But it's a start," I reply. I hop onto my bed and tuck myself under the covers, burying my face into a pillow.

"Tomorrow's going to be good. I'm going to stay in bed, nothing crazy," I say and turn off the light, allowing the warm soft dark to wash over me.

"Good night Louis. You know that I can't help you right? You know this?" Marty asks.

"I know," I answer and grin broadly. I still feel so over the moon. Things are going well for me, so extraordinarily well. I simply can't believe how great I'm doing.



# TALES OF THE KANDY KINGPIN

~ by Doctor Rotcod, Journalist, [rotcod@surrealtimes.net](mailto:rotcod@surrealtimes.net)

Ashes of soot fall from what once was the heavens. Rubble fires scorch crumbling concrete. Gangs of survivors post up on the remains of street corners and in the skeletons of old buildings. A foul smell of feces, urine, and death creeps from every dark alleyway.

The capital has been blown to smithereens by our adversary. Our nation has been at war for many years but the nemesis had enough toil and blood bled on their soil. They brought bombs here to our home. Annihilation of every army base and city with 30,000 or more in 21 hours. Many millions dead instantly, hundreds of thousands more from radiation, and countless others in the months to follow from starvation, disease, and dysentery.

The barrage did not halt there. Major rivers poisoned from the source. Farmlands of the west ravaged by genetically altered locusts, beetles, and mites. Pipelines and oil rigs exploded followed by a systematic destruction of dams and reservoirs. The people, our people, have had to endure mass chaos for many moons since the bombings first fell.

When the attack all began, I was in the countryside injecting liquid ketamine into a people sized horse. I'm a doctor. I was in shock but as soon as I felt able, I returned to the nearest city to search for my family but everything was gone. Flattened back to Mother Earth's crust. Including my only kin.

I wandered for many days. Sticking to the forests of the North. Surviving. Eventually, I stumbled into a fortified community in the forests. Surviving. Soon, I was a doctor again.

One day I was in my office when the General came in,

"Doctor."

"General."

"Doctor Rotcod."

"General La'Reneg."

"Hello."

"Hi."

"I have an important mission for you. Utmost importance."

"How important?"

"Utmost."

"Okay, I'm in."

"As you know the queen's youngest child has PW syndrome. Princess Whining syndrome. She has recently come down with a spout of the sickness and requires sugary candy. Or she will die. We need lots of it and we need it stat." He paused to lower both eyebrows to show his seriousness then continued, "In the capital on the full moon of each month a night of peace is held amongst tribes. A market takes place on Penn Ave that night and is lit by torches. I need you to go there to retrieve the highest quality medicine and return ASAP."

"Is this intel true?"

"I have no idea."

"Okay, I'm in."

"You will take my best men; Reno, Condor, and Major Martoni. Also, you will take Pete."

"Really?"

"Yes."

"Okay. I guess, I'm in."

He then gave me currency and a small tin tube that would be stored in my rectum to hide from thieves. With the plan stashed away, we were off.

A harrowing pilgrimage of many full moons preceded. All of the men died heroically, except Pete. He just died. Tonight is the full moon and tonight I went to the capital.

I slithered through shadows, unseen, to the street lit by torches. Indeed a market was being held. I soon found the merchant with the medicine the Princess so desperately needed.

The merchant was a cross dresser who was introduced as the Kandy Kingpin. A big round gut with round breasts, sloppy stubble from the neck to the jaw but with a stylish, thick handlebar moustache over the upper lip. Long and luscious light brown hair hung over their shoulders but a natural bald cap on top. Wearing a size-too-small pink sundress with blue flowered fabric and a frilled bottom.

"Hello there, handsome. I'm Kandy."

"Hello there, human. I'm Doctor Rotcod."

"How can I assist you?" with a wink.

"I am here to acquire all your finest products covered in sugar and its dire." with a wink.

A quick twirl of the dress and a gentle arm wave over the table of goods. Instantly, drool collected in my mouth. Everything imaginable was there. Charleston chews, moon pies, rock candy, moon rocks, chocolate pretzels, whack-a-doos, tooth tumblers, dots, kits kats, candy cane, candy corn, candy bats! I pushed my plan out from my butt and handed the tin tube over to Kandy.

"I hope you don't mind."

"That'll do."

Backpack full, I took off. Back to the north to save the Princess from death of the terrible PW syndrome. Before I left the once great capital, I took one last look over the remnants of our empire.

Ashes of soot fall from what once was the heavens. Rubble fires scorch crumbling concrete. Gangs of survivors post up on the remains of street corners and in the skeletons of old buildings. A foul smell of feces, urine, and death creeps from every dark alleyway.



## LUXURY SPACE LAKE READY FOR FAMILY FUN

~ by Tommy Potentuary, [tommy.potent@surrealtimes.net](mailto:tommy.potent@surrealtimes.net)

Lord Muskrat recently finished installing a globular lake in the orbit of Earth's moon. He hopes that the water blob will attract intergalactic tourists for space recreation activities such as space swimming and space volleyball.

"I'm already the moon king", he said, 'but what I really want to be is the guy who aliens pay when they vacation to the Milky Way".

The moon resort boasts 5-star restaurants, floating space hotels, anti-gravity carnivals, and a multitude of crater-exploring activities. As of this week, it also offers drone transportation to and from the space lake, as well as a solar clothesline.

Narbulon, a doogloid from Planet Nebulonis, says he and his family visit the Moon Resort every Nebulonian month (2.3 Earth days). His kids love the new space lake. "We've never seen anything like this before," one said. "Zero-gravity swimming is narbasmic. It's, like, a big coagulation in the middle of a void. How awesome is that!"

"And, every time little Garbtarb over here gets stuck in the water blob, there's no need to worry, because the rescue drones will carry you back to your moon yurt in no time to get some moon cheese and I Can't Believe it's Not Water," the parent explained.

Muskrat commented on the construction of the moon lake. "It was kinda awesome haha. We made a giant eye dropper sort of thing. And then we used a bunch of big cranes to point it into space. At just the right time, we squirted a continent-sized droplet of water into orbit. Cool, right? "





## EXCITING PERFORMANCE ART EXHIBIT TO BE UNVEILED

~ by Vivian Mauve, Journalist, [mauve.vivian@surrealtimes.net](mailto:mauve.vivian@surrealtimes.net), [recently resuscitated]

In January 2021: “Men in Tribal Situations” a simulation of the rise and fall of man, by Sascha Rubenfeld.

*Sascha Rubenfeld, on having his plan foiled*

One day I got a call from an old friend of mine named Sascha Rubenfeld. We had originally been friends during my time at UMass Amherst, where he studied acting and art history. We met in a contemporary art class and eventually became good enough friends that for a few summers he'd invite me to his parents summer cottage in Lily Cove. Lily Cove is a little village on a microscopic peninsula near Newburyport with a population of about 500. It was the usual summer shenanigans, we'd dement ourselves excessively, go to parties, swim, watch our friends play in bands at the bar, or go to watch games at the official Lily Cove Men's Slow Pitch Softball Beer League field nicknamed 'The Treedome'



I didn't think much of The Treedome on my first impression. It was an unkempt, gravelly, crabgrass ridden baseball pitch where tall trees lurched high and bent towards the angle of the sun's zenith. This, in turn, cast a ring like shadow or 'dome' around its outskirts, which gave the field it's moniker. The field's dimensions did not adhere to any standards to which any organization would put into place. The basepaths ran only about thirty five feet in length, which, for any player standing above 4'11", could be traversed with an easy jog in no time at all (which in turn called for an experienced infield). Not only that, but right field was also suspiciously short. This was a dream for left-handed batters, as anything in the woods was an automatic double. Conveserley, and unfortunately, for right handed batters such as myself, left field extended a quarter of a mile into a tiny algae covered playground. The playground was covered in the green and invasive kudzu vine that curled itself around the disused blue plastic obstacles and slides and swings. Regardless of it's disuse, the shade from the lurching trees left it in constant shadow, which in turn made it a popular spot for watchers on hot summer days. Despite the field's unkempt quality and it's sweltering heat, the games are usually always a fun time. Though, perhaps it was only because the alcohol flowed like a vast river and the field hung in a constant haze of cannabis smoke. Regardless, everyone seemed to have a good time.

I myself hadn't thought about the Lily Cove Men's Slow Pitch Softball League since I had last visited in the summer of 2017. Yet, somehow through the grapevine, Sascha had learned that I moved and lived only forty-five minutes away. He wanted me, despite my quite dubious credentials, to be involved in his "magnum opus" which was an unspecified 'creative project' that he had been working on for a 'while.' He said that we should have a beer at 'The Treedome' like the good old days of years past to discuss it and I agreed.

So I met Sascha at The Treedome. It was a day or two before the opening ‘Sunday Funday’ (as they called it) of the 2020 Lily Cove Men’s Slow Pitch Softball League season, and he wanted to discuss the scope of this project and what he intended my role to be.

“Well,” he said pulling out and cracking open a tall can of Miller Lite, “I joined the team a few summers back, The Rebels,” he coughed, “Well I mean, The team is officially called ‘The Rebels,’ *but*, slowly but surely I have transformed the team into ‘The Rebels Against Winning.’” He stopped and took a sip from his drink. “The point is we always lose. The *point* is to lose. But it has to stay convincing,” he took a long drink before looking me squarely in the eyes. It was then that Sascha relayed to me that he was in the midst of a hostile takeover of the team, and that that was the essence of his whole project.

‘The Rebels Against Winning’ originally stemmed from a series of loose associations with the team’s founder and de-jure team captain, Jared Flower. Jared was an unassuming but well-meaning sports lover who also founded the team in 2018.

The problem with Jared Flower was, despite his best attempts at crafting a functioning and winning ball team, his efforts had fallen hilariously flat. The Rebels record coming into the 2020 season was 1-25. Sascha had played in every game. Perhaps because of their continuous losing streak, and the other team’s reaction to their continued misfortune, Sascha put into effect a carefully crafted performance art piece he called “Men in Tribal Situations.” He believed this would ultimately humiliate the other team for years, and possibly millennia to come. He wanted me to be involved in the final act of his plan.

ADespite my aforementioned dubious credentials, I was asked to play the media aspect. The end result became this article, which details how this subversive act was carried out on an unsuspecting crowd, and what their reactions were to its unveiling.

According to Sascha, The first part plan was to slowly replace the members of the team with a series of carefully chosen and fairly duplicitous actors who were especially handpicked due their unwavering dedication to the craft of underground character acting. According to Sascha, the most important positions to guarantee losses were the pitcher, right field, and first base. All of these actors were to be called by codenames. The first player Sascha selected was, according to his dossier, a short-order cook at a health food restaurant who was nicknamed “Benny Two-Shoes.” He and Sascha had met in their elementary school Actor’s Guild and had also played little league together, where Benny was a star pitcher and also an incredible actor. Not having a regular pitcher, Jared took Benny onto the team with open arms. The next step was replacing the right fielder, which took more work than anticipated. The first right fielder Sascha attempted to bring on was a tiny 19 year old aspiring Marine named “Tom.” The problem with Tom is that he was just too obviously bad, and Jared had him replaced with a series of his own picks before Sascha could find a suitable replacement in a West Point graduate called “Tony Timbale.” (Tom and Tony’s military background was totally coincidental). Sascha had met Tony while watching a performance called “Gay: The Musical” in a bar in Buffalo, New York, only to find out he was part of a travelling acting commune called the ‘Insatiable Marlins’ and actually lived in a housing complex Beverly, MA. Out of all Sascha’s actors, Tony was the most interesting. He had totally shed his true personality more so than any of the others, and delved fully into the character he had created for himself. He became a gruff, woman-loving fisherman with a penchant for swinging his fists at the slightest sign of disrespect. He even brought an old friend to stand in as his long term girlfriend, Margaret “Maggie” Hill. The two lived together only for the sake of the act and became mainstays of the Rebel family. The final position, first base, was played by Sascha himself. This was, though probably oblivious to Sascha himself, an obviously bad choice. It even became too obvious for the original plan to work. Jared Flower would eventually replace him due to continuous fielding errors, and Sascha became relegated to the designated hitter position, filling in at first base whenever his final first base actor, codenamed “Big Sexy,” a friend of he and Benny’s, could not be rustled out of bed. Big Sexy was a hugely tall man who stood at 6’7” and weighed close to 300 pounds. Due to his height, in Jared’s eyes, it just made more sense to have him on first base than to have Sascha on first base. Big Sexy managed to play a convincingly good but seriously bad first baseman, which relieved Jared and the other *de-facto* captains, as his intentions were obviously unknown to them.

The second part of the plan was to hone their craft. Sascha, and the other actors practiced regularly behind his parent's summer cottage, a lovely field overlooking a rocky terrace, where they increased their skill in learning how and when to make mistakes, while also learning how to also make themselves look more convincing. Sascha's father, Peter, was a big help in coordinating and coaching these sessions, as he had relevant credentials in acting. His resume includes his work as an extra in *The Sandlot* (1993) and a speaking role in *Caddyshack* (1980). Peter was a nice guy who read audiobooks for a living and knew the ropes of acting. These practice sessions lasted from June to October for two years until the final part of the plan was to take place starting the third Rebels season in 2020.

The final part of the plan, as previously stated, was the media aspect. To include a 'journalist' as part of the team to examine how this plan worked, and to record it sensationally to some publication to drum up publicity for the unveiling of the exhibit which was slated to take place in January 2021 at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem MA.

Sascha had me join in as the second baseman. The original second baseman, Jared's in law Eddie, had apparently 'deliberately' broken both of his legs in a freak accident involving a forklift, several tons of grocery merchandise and at least one hundred and twenty eight 526 pound iron I rods, which came crashing down behind a Stop and Shop warehouse. Apparently, at some point I had drunkenly stated that I played second base in little league and the Babe Ruth League, thus, this plus my dubious media credentials, landed me the job.

My experience on the team and acting in its performance did not feel much different than being on any losing team, as I had experienced in the teams I had participated in during my youth. However, the difference between my youth experience and now was that we purposely and convincingly lost in an extremely graceful manner.

On opening day we faced a group of excessively drunk hooligans who called themselves "Pass the Bunt." Pass the Bunt played a dirty game, frequently bending the rules with little to no reaction from the umpire, who according to one source "made the game interesting with purposely bad calls". One example of this exhibitionism occurred when I myself was tackled by a 400lb player as he heaved himself towards second base. Remaining in character, and resulting from the obliqueness of the umpire's decision, Tony sprinted in from right field and pummeled the umpire himself, Kevin Mancini, with a brutal uppercut to the jaw. This was a particularly troublesome act of violence, as the umpire had suffered a brain aneurysm within the past year. The entire debacle cost the team 3 runs. Luckily Kevin was fine, but The Rebels went on to lose the game 6-1.

Many teams acted in this manner. Perhaps because of the drinking, or, as Sascha was trying to prove in his hypothesis for "Men in Tribal Situations," 'purposeful machoness.' Sascha defined purposeful machoness as "demonstrating purposefully disrespecting actions and dialogue in order to attempt to demoralize and emasculate the adversarial team for no other reason than bad faith." This phrase would be an important term for his "Men in Tribal Situations" upcoming exhibit at the PEM.

By the ninth game of the season, Big Sexy had once again, (being the fourth or fifth time) failed to be roused out of bed, and Sascha was summoned from the bench to replace him on first base. It did not turn out very well. As a result, be it because of the drinking, the oppressive heat, or the fact that it was 10am, Sascha made 6 errors, and in a fit of anger from Jared Flower, ended up being fired from the team after the game.

He relayed to us that we should continue to play. Sascha had been kicked out before the final game of the season and he wouldn't be on the field to see his performance completed. The Rebels were to face a team known as "Little Jimmy's Bar Hands," who had a record of 2-7 on the season, the second worst ahead of us. In an extremely strange turn of events, The Rebels accidentally won the game 1-0 when Benny Two-Shoes, awake from the night before and begging for sleep, threw a no-hitter under the influence of psilocybin mushrooms. Incredibly enough, the debacle did not end there. Following the end of the game, Benny approached the bench of Little Jimmy's and explained to them, as he knew it, the entire philosophy of Sascha's plan. The revelation was met with a brief silence, during which I took the advantage to run to my car to get my notebook. I wrote down some things from the Little Jimmy's guys, but I found only one thing they said had any merit towards the article.

"Their games looked totally normal. I couldn't even tell they were trying to lose on purpose."

# MEET THE DENIZENS OF MY CYST, YOU DIRTY DOG

~ by The Inanimate Empathist (Drunk), [inanimate.empathist@surrealtimes.net](mailto:inanimate.empathist@surrealtimes.net)

I have a cyst, it's pretty bad, hope it's not malignant. I don't even know if cyst can be malignant - if they can't, they should. My cyst is special because it has about seven really big cells instead of all those annoying small ones.

I'm not a negative person, but the first cell is the worst, he's got giant buck teeth that he's so proud of "after years hiding behind them". He's blue, but not sky blue, a sickly blue. He works at a hairdresser and pretends to love it, but I suspect he's taking the downfallen upswept hair and making voodoo dolls, or he's supplying the illegal hair salad trade.

Cell #2 is a cross eyed peace frog that's been trying desperately to get high by smoking dandelions to feel confident enough to ask out that boy with the fishing rod who feels like Snufkin. He got some shit advice, no doubt, he'll find nothing. Cell #3 is another mother fluffer'n sad one, a little moldy bean-bag rag doll with crescent crown and crosshatch eyes. Also, she's quite the gambler. Don't bring your deck to her table.

Now Cell #4 I feel bad for. I haven't gotten to know them as they're very shy. They have a body vaguely resembling that of a monkey, although "body" may be a stretch of definition.

Somewhat like a spirit trapped in a tree, free only in the carvings of their genitalless bark. Sometimes they look like a cluster of ageless stars piercing a sheet of purple construction paper, hung together for some reason Cell #4 does not understand. Onto all of which is painted a pastel face bearing a soft smile and hung eyes. I don't know if they did it themselves. They do look the arty sort, but if they did I don't know why they'd paint in scars. They suffocate watching makeup tutorials, beneath a flesh mask, trying to learn how to do one that fits.

Cell #5 is just a pair of small button eyes. She used to be shy too, and she still says she is. For years she hid drowning in the pool of puss close to the septum of the cyst. One day she broke all outside herself. Dead leaf blossoming, she tattooed a bunch of porcelain dolls all frozen in place in the moment that they would have shattered. Their stenciled eyes spill out dreams, while they're stuck. She is glee that once was blue in hue, like almost an impressionist swell, but any canvas has long melted or burnt away as if she was painted on air.

I don't have anything poetic for this next one cause #6 straight up looks just like Spike Lee, if he were a beetle and was pretending to have Hep C. He's always doing Visionary pose, with his pincers squared over his eyes framing out some overlooked Black outsider artist. The last one is a crack up, she's a small goth girl





perpetually perched on a counter top sucking on a pop tart like that toaster. She was also clicking a pair of ragged roller skates that really look like they should be haunted, but creepily, they are not. Yeah that's my cyst, if you know any doctors I'd still like to know if it's malignant.



## PRO-REALITY COHORT SENTENCED TO SANE ASYLUM

~ by Carl Mon, Head of the PIA, [mon.carl@surrealtimes.net](mailto:mon.carl@surrealtimes.net)

The Reality Supremacist Cohort (RSC), a violent activist organization known for forcing reality upon unconsenting victims, has been apprehended by the Peripheral Intelligence Agency (PIA) and sentenced to two years in the newly-constructed "Sane Asylum", where they will learn to be tolerant of those who dwell or frolic in non-objective realms. Finally, we are free to diverge as we so desire without fear of being squashed into three dimensions.

The Reality Supremacist Cohort will receive a special treatment involving hypnotizing them into addiction to live action role play games of all kinds.

This punishment (or recuperation, as some call it) comes in wake of many violent acts by the cohort on imaginative folks of all kinds. The PIA suffered numerous losses of dimensionality in the tragic battle of the Gin Mill. Carl Mon, head of the PIA, said that he is "glad to get this fatal dose of reality off the streets."



## THE HERO'S JOURNEY: SPIDER WEARING A HAT

~ by Elyse Galan, [galan.elyse@surrealtimes.net](mailto:galan.elyse@surrealtimes.net)

Spider wearing a hat  
Hat protects from what may harm  
Spider's hat is it's savior



# COMMUNITY CLASSIFIEDS

(email [classifieds@surrealtimes.net](mailto:classifieds@surrealtimes.net) to inquire about an ad or to place one of your own)

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**YOU'LL NEVER SEE ME:** Let me know and I'll never get close to you. I promise you'll never even know I'm not there.

**WANTED:** An idea that drowned in my brain and is nearly un-revivable.

**WANTED:** Mind Reader who Is Good At Fighting.

**FOR SALE:** Bonkers, that little crackhead goldfish from the 5th dimension.

**TRADE WANTED:** Assorted Baby Doll Parts in exchange for cuddles.

**FOR SALE:** Box of chest hair and a glue stick.

**WANTED:** More lengthy small intestine. Needed for daily use.

**FOR SALE:** Four sails.

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

**FOR RENT:** Cozy bungalow in my armpit. \$2,250 a month, No Smoking Please!

**WANTED:** Spray On Insect Attractant.

**Wanted:** To see snowflakes float upward behind the windows barred on the inside for my safety.

**Needed:** A Gallon of Mustard Water with a painted fingernail floating in it, and no questions.

**WANTED:** Altercation with my neighbor. Not fatal, but serious enough to rile me up.

**For Sale:** A piece of my baby blanket that smells like old fritos and feels like cold comfort.

**HIRING:** Four of each of the colors of the rainbow. Each must bring its own tools and duct tape.

**WANTED:** Grapes equipped with mouth-targeting guidance systems.

**FOR SALE:** Methadone Gummy Bears, Half Melted, pre licked

**FOR SALE:** Single Hair from Frank Zappa's Mustache.

**FOR SALE:** Button that allows you to experience a brief but specific moment of time from the past. Various moments available, but only one permitted per person.

**WANTED:** Soft and cuddly fascism.

**WANTED:** The heaviest incest on earth

**WANTED:** A typewriter missing most of the keys, except for the letters F, A, I, L, U, R, and E. Oh, and also W.

**FOR SALE:** Vintage Henry Kissinger Action Figure (with Kung Fu Grip).

**HIRING:** Professional wanderer. Email [recruiting@surrealtimes.net](mailto:recruiting@surrealtimes.net).

**Wanted:** That shyly humming gnome who lives in the center of a peanut M&M.

**Hiring:** Unprofessional Writer, Must be Disorganized and Disheveled.

**For Lease:** The vacant crevice in my heart.

# CAUSES & COMMUNITIES

Currently we are witnessing events unfold that are the results of decades of fear, prejudice, and systematic oppression. The Surreal Times would again like to use our voice to provide resources to support the Black

Lives Matter Movement's struggle against a racist system and announce our unwavering alliance to their cause.



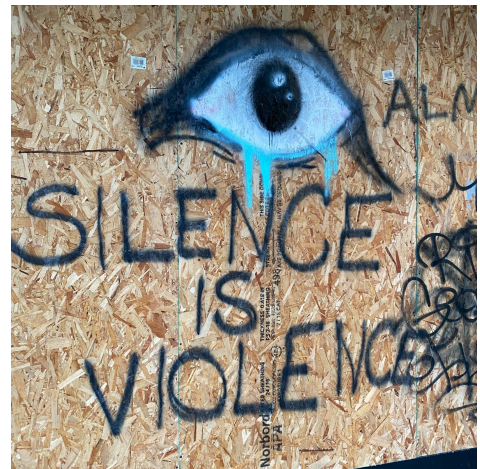
Nationwide media coverage of the BLM has moved away from black lives to the spectacle and ethics of protests. The fight to end police brutality and dismantle systems of institutional racism is still very much ongoing in court, classrooms, and elsewhere.

Listed here are resources where you can contribute to that fight.

- [blacklivesmatter.com/](https://blacklivesmatter.com/)
- [masspeaceaction.org/act/volunteer/](https://masspeaceaction.org/act/volunteer/)

Visit The Augusta Savage Gallery's digital exhibition Breathing While Black; at The Umass Amherst Fine Arts Center Website

- [sayevery.name/](https://sayevery.name/)



Other links for helping those in need and getting help when you need it:

- Get Tested for Covid-19: <https://www.hhs.gov/coronavirus/community-based-testing-sites/index.html>
- Find Mental Health resources: [www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline](https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/national-helpline)
- Promote mutual aid: [www.mutualaidhub.org/](https://www.mutualaidhub.org/)
- Learn about ranked choice voting: [ballotpedia.org/Ranked-choice\\_voting\\_\(RCV\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Ranked-choice_voting_(RCV))

And some links for bringing color to the world:

- Dance with strange fractal beings: [fractaltribe.org](https://fractaltribe.org)
- Get cosmic with Marie Eyeball: [facebook.com/eyeblicktherefore](https://facebook.com/eyeblicktherefore)
- Get foolish with Moimus: [instagram.com/moimus](https://instagram.com/moimus)
- Jump across dimensions at the Museum of Other Realities: [www.museumor.co](https://www.museumor.co)

# THE BIHEXICAL SEARCH

~ by Armădeius Galouei's surrogate, [ag.bot@surrealtimes.net](mailto:ag.bot@surrealtimes.net)

Thanks to a spectacular isomorphism, the solution to this 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](mailto:isomorphism@surrealtimes.net) so that we can put the fruits of your labor into action. In return, you will be awarded **a secret prize**.

