



THE
SURREAL TIMES



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

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CAN BONE REMOVAL PREVENT COVID SPREAD?



By COMMON OBSERVER,
News Reporter

[Artist's depiction of these events by Sawyer Philips @doodlesbysawyer]

Saint Kardashian's hospital recently announced a groundbreaking treatment for arthritis and other chronic pain: Complete Bone Removal. The surgery has been a huge hit, but not for the reasons doctors expected.

Parents have begun giving bone removal treatment to their kids in order to prevent them from spreading germs. Adults have given Bone Removal Therapy to their elderly family members as well in order to keep them at home and

safe.

"It's perfect," said one mother, "Now that my son just lays blob-like in his bed all day, there's no way he could get sick. We also don't need to worry about broken bones anymore either, which used to be a frequent issue for him, he loved diving in empty pools."

It's not just individuals. Institutions are catching on too. For instance, some universities have required students to remove their bones before moving into on-campus housing. Rumors suggest also that representatives in the Florida legislature are considering requiring all citizens to remove their bones for the

duration of the pandemic, but this is only speculation thus far.

While the treatment has been wildly successful, there has been a fair bit of criticism. Some call Bone Removal Therapy "short-sighted" and "tyrannical". Yet more and more people are paying doctors to remove their skeletons.

What do you think about all this? Email us your thoughts at common.observer@surrealtimes.net

Common Observer can be reached at common.observer@surrealtimes.net

MORE IN THIS ISSUE...

We at The Surreal Times are a small group of writers doing what we can to keep interdimensional journalism alive. In this issue, you'll find a variety of stories that other news organizations fail to report on, but that we've worked hard to make available to the public. We hope you enjoy these stories, and we hope you do your part as well, keeping your eye out for unusual events in your own life.

- From the Mouth of The Pig..... p2
- Plant Destroyer..... p2
- Eyeball Relocation Procedure... p3
- The Mouth Roomba..... p4
- Plants With Teeth..... p5
- Multiple Personalities..... p6
- Task Tony..... p7
- Redefining Love Function p8
- Legal Notice..... p8
- Spicy Relations..... p9
- Goon Drafted..... p10
- Coughing, Swallowed, Forgotten, Free..... p11
- Boxman p12
- Clay Catastrophe..... p13
- Octopus Saga..... p14
- Community Classifieds..... p15
- Maze..... p16



FROM THE MOUTH OF THE PIG:



By ARMĀDEIUS GALOUEI,
Times Senior Editor

This just in: Armādeius Galouei contacts The Pig using mysterious and unknown means, and hears with his own ears words FROM THE MOUTH OF THE PIG.

They are transcribed here:

*"Derelict amalgamation clients
incite melancholy..."*

The Pig can be reached via armgalou@surrealtimes.net

AMADEUS HUNTINGTON, THE PLANT DESTROYER

By PAUL KRUGER,
Times Staff



[Artist's depiction of these events by Penelope Pumperdinck]

Amadeus Huntington grew up with dreams of becoming a famous rockstar like Ozzy Osborne or Marilyn Manson, but his music career never quite took off. Huntington spent the last decade traveling around the west coast playing at small coffee shops and open mic nights, and absolutely no one liked his music. In order to give himself an edgy persona, Huntington insisted on only playing diminished scales and chords, giving his music a distinctly unpleasant and dissonant quality. People were also put off by his keytar, which seemed like an unnecessary instrumental choice for a solo act. Now as a 35-year-old living in his parent's basement, Huntington had to face the reality that he was not the second coming of Jimi Hendrix.

A few weeks ago, Huntington shuffled out of his damp, cheeto-air filled basement and into his parent's luscious garden. It was a gorgeous Spring day with birds happily chirping, the leaves on a nearby maple tree shimmering in the soft sunlight, and children laughing in the street while playing stick ball. But the cheerful atmosphere around him could not distract Huntington from his miserable life, and a knot of self-loathing and hatred tightened in his stomach. As he sat down

next to a bed of bright red tulips with his trusty keytar, Huntington played a few melancholy notes up and down the C# diminished scale. Then he started playing a melody that was so painfully forlorn that he started weeping amongst the plants.

He channeled all his sadness, all his pent-up frustration into his keytar, and the musical output was pure misery embedded in sound waves. And then the strangest thing happened: all around him, the bright, healthy tulips began to wilt and brown. Huntington kept playing, as if entranced by this new-found power to destroy healthy plants with his music. As the petals of the tulip flowers atrophied away and the plants collapsed in a withered heap, Huntington felt a sense of control in his life he had never before felt.

To test out this new power, Huntington traveled to Antelope Valley, home of the largest reserve of poppy flowers in California. The gentle rolling hills in the valley were a beautiful tapestry of dazzling orange, red, and purple poppies as far as the eye could see. Huntington, now drunk on his plant-killing power, brought the largest amplifier he could find and set up to play his keytar in the middle of the poppy fields. As tourists gasped in horror, Huntington started playing his diminished melody amplified to 150 decibels (almost enough to burst your eardrums) and watched in maniacal delight as scores upon scores of once-beautiful poppy flowers shriveled up and died.

That day, a new supervillain was born. With a keytar strapped around his back, a tight leotard suit he ordered off of Amazon, and a new tattoo that read "plant-destroyer," Huntington travelled around California playing his dissonant songs and destroying every healthy plant in his path. It has been confirmed to the Surreal Times via an anonymous tip that Huntington has begun to make his way across the country, starting from Los Angeles and working his way to New York.

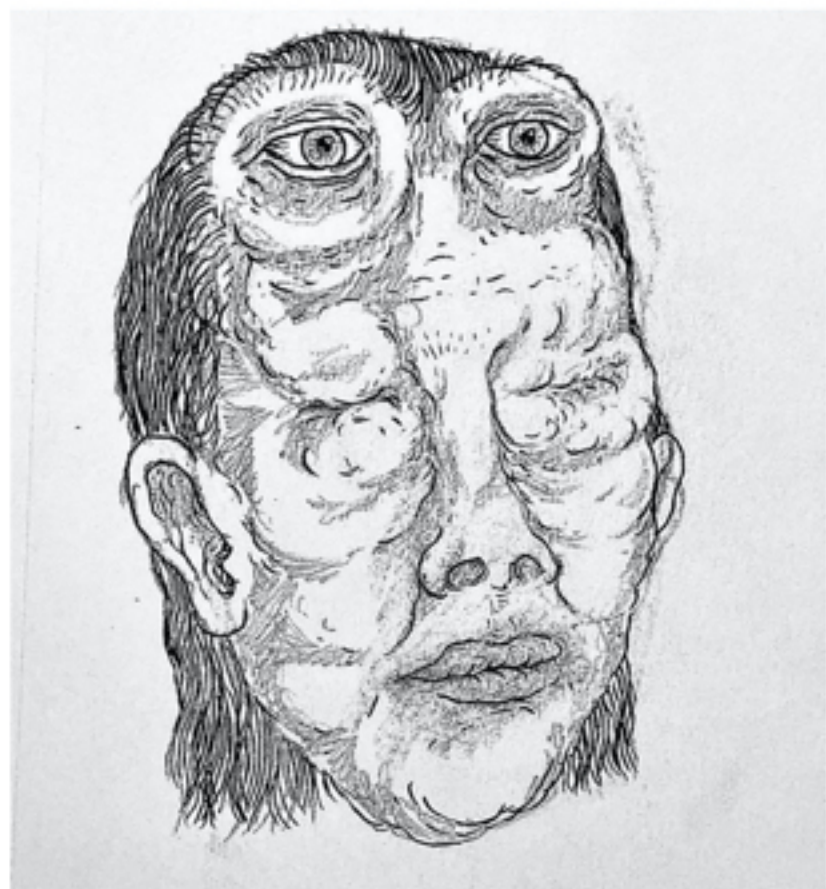
The last known sighting of Huntington was at the Japanese Friendship Garden of Phoenix, Arizona, where with just a few diminished chords, he was able to wipe out the entire garden. It appears his powers are becoming increasingly potent, and authorities are concerned he will not stop until every beautiful plant in America is eradicated. If you have information on this supervillain, please contact us at the Surreal Times. Justice must be served.

Paul Kruger can be reached at kruger.paul@surrealtimes.net



DISGRACED SURGEON PIONEERS EYEBALL RELOCATION PROCEDURE

BY BARTHOLOMEW BAX,
Journalist



[Artist's depiction by Sawyer Phillip @doodlesbysawyer]

After losing his medical license for performing unsuccessful open-heart surgery on a fish, Dr. Charles Elizabeth thought he would never practice again. Three years later, he's started a semi-legal private practice that boasts an exclusive operation already recognized for its innovation and unorthodoxy. His signature procedure, in which the eyeballs are transplanted into the top of the forehead, claims to increase the patient's perception of their height by two to three inches.

"We only feel as tall as our eyes," Eliza-

beth explains. "We have foreheads and hair and in some cases, unfortunate eyebrow piercings, but we only perceive our height to match that of our eyes." According to Elizabeth: Raise the eye level, feel taller. And more importantly: Feel taller, become more self-assured. "What I'm selling isn't the most attractive update to the human face since sideburns, though that certainly is the case. The real benefit my clients receive is confidence."

Indeed, many patients have reported an increase in self-esteem. "It's so rewarding to enjoy the privileges of height, like commanding respect and flaunting a superiority complex. I'm so confident I've even thought about developing a meaningful relationship!" gushed one delighted man. Others have called the operation enlightening. "Feeling taller has made me realize that my problems run much deeper than I previously thought. No longer can I attribute my failing marriage to a sub-six-foot perspective of the world."

Not all reactions have been so positive, however. Some children — unaware that the procedure doesn't actually boost physical stature — were dismayed to discover that, after self-inflicting a lifelong deformity, they still didn't meet the height requirement to ride the roller coasters at nearby Universal Love Studios, a newly-opened amusement park committed to celebrating people of all shapes and sizes.

Still, Elizabeth guarantees customer

satisfaction, though he admits some patients have complained about the "unrelenting, unescapable agony" during surgery. "It's incredibly painful," commented one transplantee. "Borderline torture. Honestly, I couldn't tell you the worst part: whether it was prying my eyeballs from their sockets, or carving two holes in my forehead where my eyeballs were to be re-inserted, or perhaps the fear caused by the temporary blindness in between. But was it worth it? I don't know. Maybe. But it really hurt."

As Elizabeth's practice continues to grow, so does the risk of being shut down by the state of California. "I'm really sorry about the fish," he laments about his checkered past. "I know I shouldn't put this on record, but I didn't even realize it was a fish." In case he is forced to change course, Elizabeth revealed he may transition to transplanting eyeballs into palms "so those self-righteous museum docents can't say, 'Look but don't touch!'" Until then, he will continue to provide the world's least conventional treatment for the vertically challenged.

Due to a non-disclosure agreement, the fish's family was unable to respond to The Surreal Times' request for comment.

Bartholomew Bax can be reached at bax@surrealtimes.net

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teeth
yay!



Glorious
Sunken
eyes



TRAPPED FIVE FEET OFF THE GROUND

By **EDDIE BACKLE**,
Citizen of the World

Please kind stranger, I am in dire need of assistance. The ladder on my bunk bed broke off, and unfortunately I was on the top bunk when it happened and now I'm trapped. It's been three months and still no sign of my mom coming to get me. If you're reading this

I need you to go call the bed bunk company and tell them to come to my house and re-attach the ladder asap. Also, please tell my mom that she was wrong and I was right about this being a potential problem. She insisted if the ladder broke the bed bunk would collapse but look at me now, trapped up here, five feet in the air, and with no

possible way of getting down. If no one comes to rescue me in time, know that I have no regrets, as the bottom bunk is totally lame.

Eddie Backle can be reached at
backle.eddie@surrealtimes.net

NEWEST DENTAL INVENTION: MOUTH ROOMBA

Michael Gigg's (RIP) Unpublished Invention revealed

By **TOMMY POTENTUARY**,
TV Personality

The late Michael Giggs, dentist and amateur robotisticist, died in early February due to a malfunction of his trademarked "robotic teeth". Despite widespread criticism of his methods, his innovative dental hacks garnered him a large following of like-minded biohackers. Many were inspired by his drive to bring 21st century technology into the moist world of teeth and gums, and so when his personal documents were leaked last week, people were quick to act.

Giggs left behind a journal of dental inventions never before released to the world. One such invention, the "Mouth Roomba", was immediately picked up by various dental practices trying to carry on Mr. Giggs' work.

The Mouth Roomba is a small hydro-electric vacuum that roams your mouth, slurping up bacteria and plague. It charges its batteries hydro-electrically when you drink water or swish spit around your mouth. Its lifetime lasts long

enough for 10,000 meals, after which you may simply spit out the Roomba and replace it with another.

"I'll never need to own a toothbrush again," said one early adopter. "The amount of time saved is amazing."

This technology does have serious downsides, though, much like Michael Gigg's earlier inventions. Under rare circumstances The Mouth Roomba can vacuum up a person's tongue, often causing the need for amputation. It also results in bad breath, because while it keeps your teeth and gums clean at all times, it retains a condensed ball of gunk in its hull within your mouth, which smells quite strong when wet.

So the question is, what do you care about most? Your smell, or your time?

Tommy Potentuary can be reached at
Tommy.potent@surrealtimes.net

A VIEW INTO A VIETNAMESE APARTMENT

By **ZULU Z. ZULU**,
Times Staff

Do journalists journal? Are newspapers just the journals of journalists? Are you unwilling to engage in this thought provoking journey? Fine then, let's talk about my apartment. The nineteen liter plastic jug of water behind my head is nearly empty. A small woman in pyjamas and plastic sandals will give me a new one tomorrow. Or perhaps she will on Monday. There is fruit tea on top of my bouncing fridge. It is next to the raisins and the nice smelling stuff. My fridge ticks like a clock, or, maybe it chugs like a train. Hard to say.

Three notebooks, a plastic folder holding paper - just holding it, not stuffed with it or full of it - and a red pen sit next to some Buddhist propaganda not far from me. The man at the hotel on the east side of the island gave it to me. He seems to fit in well on the island, eating vegetables and practicing religions that are illegal in mainland China. That said, he has an intense disdain for

an afternoon wail on the karaoke machine. He finds that the evening is acceptable. He is from Hanoi and owns the resort. The island is now a city but the man still lives there. Perhaps he is unaware.

The pen, the beats, and the paperclip hide behind this screen. Only the sticky red wire emerges from the left side. If you leave Beats headphones untouched in a desk for 9 months they become very sticky. Forever. The black material covering the foam is disintegrating. A little bit is left in my hair after every lesson. It's not actually a paper clip, but a clothes pin. Not the type you clipped on your nose when you were a goofy child, but the type your grandma used to keep the mattress together even though she could afford to buy a new one. When he put all of the thumbtacks in the ceiling of his rust brown Cadillac, it too looked like the flowing, undulating top of an uncovered bed. There was no reason for their colors, but they were spaced evenly and in rows. I have no

thumb tacks in my apartment.

The towel next to the sink silently matches the fridge. I could continue on like this for some time. Both of us would be bored after a while, let's face it. Or should I say all of us? I think those at home need something to remind themselves of impending doom, chaos, and social fragility. That will be subconscious justification for the next orgy binge watching. Someone is shouting in the alleyway and it is distracting me. People do not discuss or merely chit-chat in the narrow lanes. Volume must be adjusted to maximum levels in this part of town, even when it is the middle of the night and no animals are being tortured. Worry not, beating and whining shall commence no later than 5:30 AM. The roosters will remind your neighbors. In fact, they're doing so right now, six hours in advance.

Zulu Z. Zulu can be reached at
zzz@surrealtimes.net



PLANTS WITH TEETH STRIKE FEAR IN ANGELINOS

By CARL MON,
Head of the PIA



[Artist's depiction of these events by Flynn Bryan]

Los Angeles, CA — Invasive plants with teeth are populating parks around Los Angeles, biting at people, pets, and our sense of comfort in our own hometowns.

I was investigating these plants when a woman yelled at me from the sidewalk, absolutely pissed for reasons I didn't at first understand. "My puppy is missing a leg," she said, "It's all your fault!"

I tried to explain that I was not planting the shark-toothed flowers. Actually, I was picking them to bring back to the lab for processing. I was investigating the very problem she was angry about. So I told her, "I'm from the Peripheral Intelligence Agency, ma'am, and I'm trying to figure out why these plants are so violent."

"Sure, sure you are!" She yelled, "You ass. Why can't you all just leave plants as they are, without teeth, like Mother Nature intended?"

In this moment, I lost grip of the monstrous hammer-headed daisy I'd been examining, when right then it reached across the hedge and bit the lady's dog leash in half. Her three-legged pup limped away towards freedom.

"Snickers bopper, no!" the woman cried, "Come back! Momma is lonely." She cursed me out as she chased after the pup.

And so my interaction with her ended as quickly as it had begun. Left I was to ponder on my own what Dr. Michael Giggs, the dentist who invented robotic teeth, might have to do with these strange and dangerous plants.

Before Dr. Giggs passed away, did this egomaniac dentist deploy his teathy inventions outside the animal kingdom? Are these biting plants man-made? Some say so.

Others say this is all just another example of rich folks importing exotic creatures from other countries as pets for their children, then getting bored and releasing them into the wild. This is how 30-foot long snakes slither up into the toilets of Florida homes and bite people's balls off.

We just don't know yet, but we're working on it.

As always, peripherally go the winds of progress.

Carl Mon can be reached at cmon@surrealtimes.net

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MULTIPLE PERSONALITIES GIVEN VOTING RIGHTS

By CARL MON,
Head of the Peripheral Intelligence Agency

"The person is the spirit, the soul," said Dr. Somolski in front of congress, "not just the material body. As such, when the constitution granted voting rights to all people, it granted rights to all spirits living within any given material body, of which there can be many."

Congress wrote these ideas into law, and starting in March 2021, every soul will have equal rights, regardless of the number of souls it shares a material body with. Each will have separate identification, census data, and voting power.

Dr. Somolski continued, "The enlightenment philosopher John Locke would be proud. Given that the legislature mandated personality multiplexing treatment last year in order to treat loneliness, it only makes sense in context of a social contract that the legislature also values each individual personality within a 'person'."

Dr Somolski abruptly disagreed with himself. "This is bullshit. speaking here. How will we keep track of votes, if anyone can have however many they'd like? Where is the science??"

Then he changed again to a third personality, "We'll do it with common decency, that's what we'll do! Without voter suppression personality consolidation laws!"

And back to the previous: "It'll make political parties want their followers to develop multiple personalities. What kind of incentive is that? That isn't healthy."

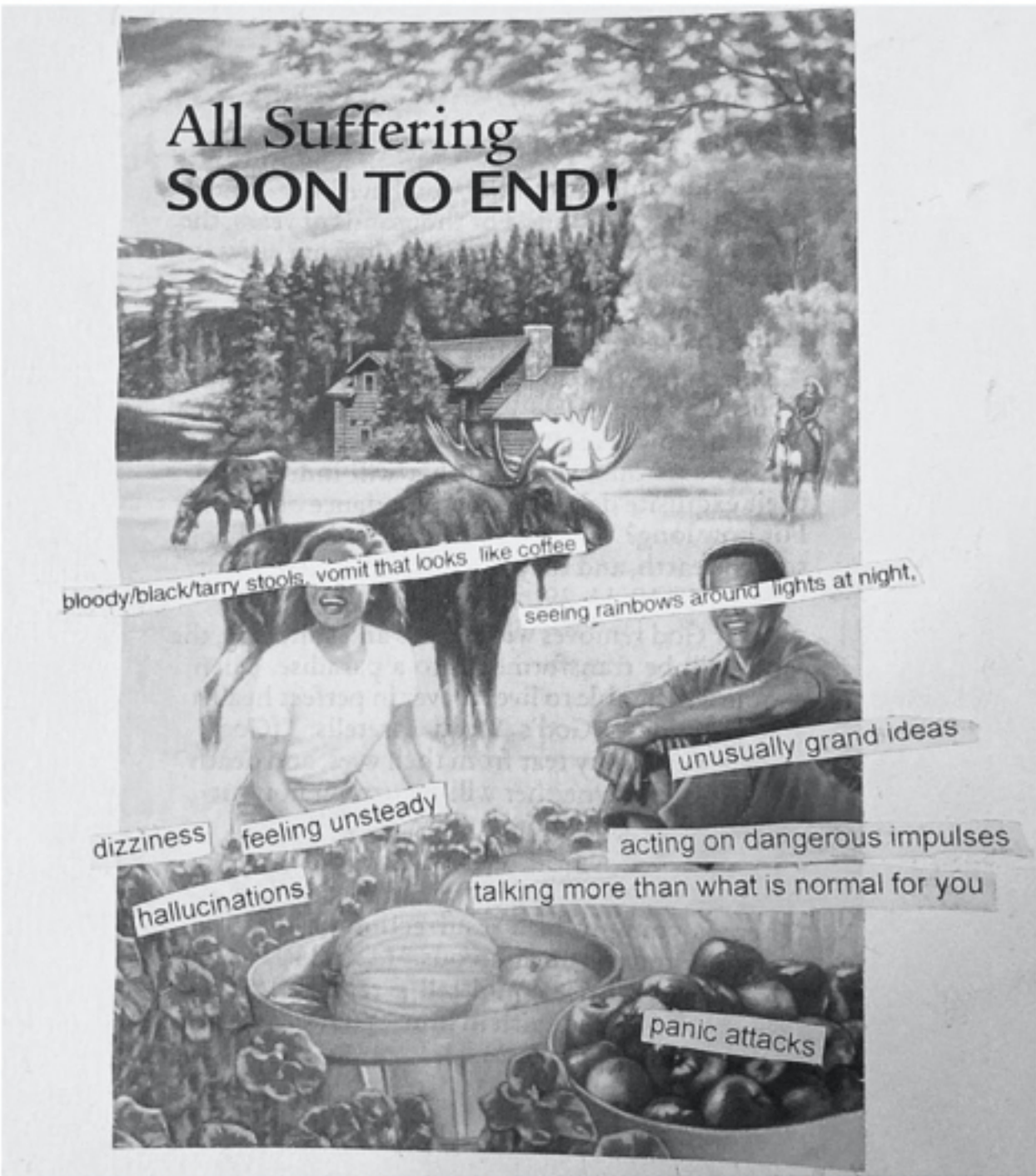
The doctor's multiple personalities went on arguing until the others in the chamber of congress wandered out of the room babbling to themselves, clearly affected by the new mandatory personality multiplexing therapy.

That said, the new voting laws passed and will take effect next month. It's sure going to be interesting to see how many more census papers we get back next year. Government organizations are scrambling to prepare. Political parties are encouraging their followers to book the soonest appointments with personality multiplexing coaches. in order to

maximize voting counts.

It seems that this proud day for all personalities, leaves for an uncertain political climate tomorrow.

Carl Mon can be reached at cmon@surrealtimes.net





HUMAN-LIKE PET STORE OPENS DOWNTOWN

By TOMMY POTENTUARY,
Television Personality



[Artist's depiction of these events by Aaron Friedman]

It's a pandemic. Let's face it, we don't get to see many people nowadays. A lot of us are stuck at home, alone, with nobody but our cats and dogs to keep us company. And that's great, but does it ever get a bit dry hanging out with a creature that can't talk, can't walk on two legs, can't do anything a human can do?

Sometimes, even in normal times, I find myself wishing for a pet that I could relate to a little bit more. I don't necessarily want a human friend, because to be honest, humans suck. But something in between - a cute pet that's just a bit smarter, just a bit more human-like.

If you've ever felt the same way, you're in luck! Come on down to Goatman Pets in Palm Springs California, the hottest new pet store in the county.

At Goatman Pets, you can get a pet with one, two, but always less than three human features (feature limit required in order to conform to current laws).

A cat with human legs!

A fish with human ears!

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Goatman Pets guarantees that you'll like your hybrid pet far more than any pure human or pure animal. And, if you don't, they'll give you another one for free!

Prices are competitive, and if you can't afford the hybrid pet of your dreams, Goatman Pets offers a trade in program unlike any other. This program allows almost anyone to afford a hybrid pet. Just bring along some unwanted pets or unwanted human parts of your own. Goatman Pets will use your trade in materials to re-stock their inventory. And you'll get a great deal!

To get in touch, contact goatmanpets@surrealtimes.net.

Tommy Potentuary can be reached at
tommy.potent@surrealtimes.net

TASK TONY HELPS B FIND LOVE

By TONY PEPPERONI,
Columnist

Hey everybody, I'm Tony! Here's the thing about me: My name is not Annie, so I can't have an "Ask Annie" column. I don't know how to change my name. That's why I do Task Tony.

It works like this: You give me a task, then I'll complete it and report back. **Email me at tony@surrealtimes.net to suggest a task.**

This week's task:

Hi Tony,
I have a task for you!

I need you to find me a new (wouldn't mind if he was rich OR had a home with a garden, wrap around porch, or roof) boyfriend. I am a super fun, loving, flirty 22 year old girl who can hold it down in the kitchen, but only for a veggie fiend :p. Need 24/7 type of available freak who likes to play cards. Contact me on Kik @belen2360

Love,
Belen Peinado XOXO

How I did it: To complete this task, I needed to ask myself who Belen is and what each individual word in her email meant, as well as what the collective meaning of the words was. Some of Belen's words are especially hard to decipher, such as "love", "girl", and "freak". I absorbed 2.3 kilograms of opium through my eyeballs and meditated for three days. When I awoke in the hospital with wetness between my legs, I knew the answer. I would go to the beach (where there is water!) and find someone with unequal length legs. This would be the ideal "boyfriend" for Belen. I have written letters to both Belen and the chosen beach-goer, arranging for a blind date. I expect gambling vegetarian pornstar babies in approximately 9 months.

Tony Pepperoni can be reached at tony@surrealtimes.net



WOMEN RE-DEFINES LOVE FUNCTION

By DERNBERGER SPENGLER,
Tender to the Grand Conveyor

Legend has it that a woman of L.A. has been experimenting with her heart in ways never before documented. Her name is Jilly Schwartz, and I ran into her a few weeks back at an underground speed dating event.

Jilly wears the function $L(x) = 2q \cdot x^2 + Ax + 230$ on her heart (where 'A' is the Thought Coefficient, as defined by the Federal Reserve of Thoughts, and 'q' is something unknown to me). This defines the amount of love she feels in any given situation.

A flower in a sea of weeds, this exotic function caught my eye. I knew it couldn't be indigenous to Jilly's physiology. She must have somehow acquired or developed this unusual love mechanism.

I asked myself: How would I find out the truth?

I answered myself: I will ask her using my words.

So I asked her, "Could you explain the source of your functionality?"

"I tweaked my software a bit," she said. It surprised me how nonchalantly she responded.

"You did?"

"Yeah, I like to experiment running different programs on my heart and my brain, just to test different possibilities and eventually find out who I want to be."

"Wait, are you a robot or something?" I asked.

"No, silly, what makes you think that?"

"Hmmm, I think it was the part about you re-programming yourself."

"All millennials run on C++," she told me. "Everyone born between 1982 and 1995 runs C++, actually. Before that, it was FORTRAN."

"Talking to her more, I learned that human hardware is known to be of good quality, but that God (a.k.a. "The Supreme Fascist") is not a very good software engineer. In Jilly's opinion, God dumped the responsibility on humans to refine their own software.

"You should try meta-programming yourself if you haven't already!" she told me. "One bit of advice, be careful with those darn infinite loops! I lost a few months while waiting for someone to reset me."

Dernberger Spengler can be reached at spengler@surrealtimes.net

LEGAL NOTICE

By STEINHOUSE STEINHOUSE & STEINHOUSE LLP,



HAVE YOU EVER EATEN LIPSTICK FROM YOUR GIRLFRIEND'S PURSE BECAUSE YOU THOUGHT IT WAS A RED CHERRY CANDY STICK AND THEN YOUR STOMACH STARTED FEELING WEIRD SO YOU DRANK A GALLON OF BLEACH BECAUSE YOU READ ON WWW.WTF-FACTS.COM THAT BLEACH CAN CURE A STOMACH ACHE BUT THEN THE BLEACH JUST MADE EVERYTHING WORSE SO YOU CHUGGED A BOTTLE OF GHOST PEPPER HOT SAUCE TO NEUTRALIZE THE BASE FROM THE BLEACH WITH THE ACID FROM THE HOT SAUCE BUT THEN THE HOT SAUCE WAS TOO SPICY SO YOU DRANK MILK TO NEUTRALIZE THE ACID BUT THEN YOU REALIZED THAT MILK IS ACTUAL A BASE SO THEN YOU SQUIRTED LEMONS INTO YOUR MOUTH TO ACIDIFY THE BASE BUT THEN THE LEMON WAS TOO SOUR SO YOU ATE A BAR OF SOAP TO COUNTERACT THE ACID FROM THE LEMON AND NOW YOU ARE LIVING YOUR LIFE JUST GOING BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN ACIDIC AND BASIC FOODS TO NEUTRALIZE YOUR STOMACH AND YOUR LIFE IS TERRIBLE ALL BECAUSE YOU ATE YOUR GIRLFRIEND'S LIPSTICK THAT ONE TIME? THEN YOU MAY QUALIFY FOR BENEFITS FROM A CLASS ACTION LAWSUIT WITH STEINHOUSE STEINHOUSE & STEINHOUSE LLP.

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COUPLE BRINGS THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO THE NEXT LEVEL

By DERNBERGER SPENGLETON,
Tender to the Grand Conveyer



[Artist's depiction by Mia Depas]

Two lifeforms in their human bodies felt unfathomable, overflowing love for each other.

Until this moment, their attempts at expressing their feelings over the usual mediums of kissing/hugging/sex/speech had been much like poets trying to communicate over morse code. No mortal act of lovemaking of any form seemed to satisfy their tremendous yearning to feel connected. And so, over decades, Holly and Alex grew frustrated and ready to boil over.

It all came to a cusp on February 26th, when their faces burst off their skulls, and their very essences (that which they really were) released from the emotional blockage of material flesh. The dam toppled. Their noses and cheeks and foreheads and jaws disintegrated into atoms like any other. And the cosmic strings reached out from one skull to the next, interwove and swaddled, intermingled, producing heat and an aroma more lovely than broiled daisy stew. Time slowed to a near stop and the moment was forever and everything, as these souls became one.

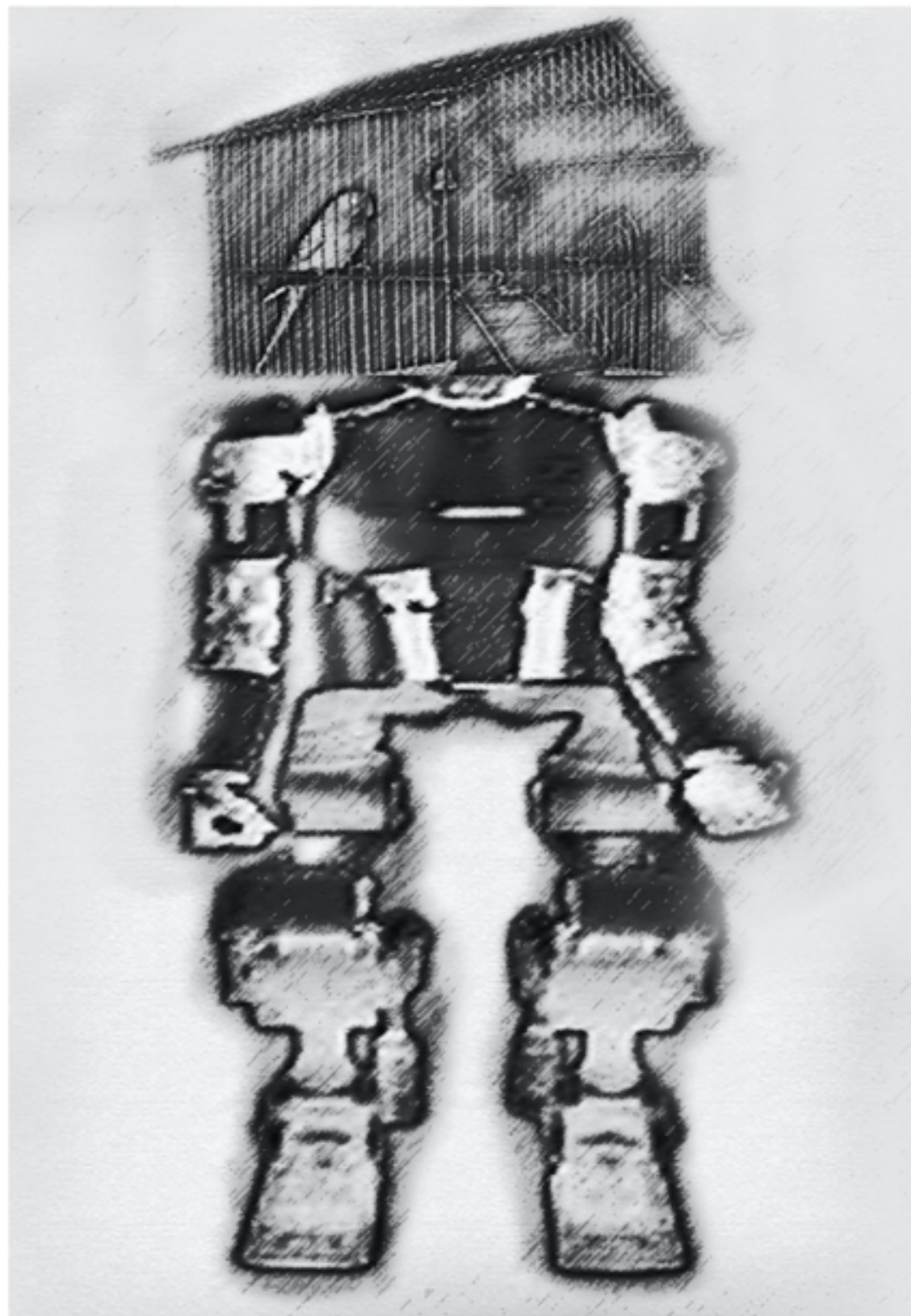
Onlookers shedded tears at this most effusive public showing of love. From a distance time was speghetified as the universe's underlying mechanisms were overwhelmed by sheer infinite purity goodness.

Dernberger Spengleton can be reached at spengleton@surrealtimes.net



TOP TIER GOON DRAFTED FOR HALF-A-MILLION

By Lenny Abel Hogan,
Citizen of the World



US Senator Mike Stabyu announced via the political social media platform BetterTwitter that he has contracted all-star goon Mr. Morkly for 490,000 dollars, making Morkly currently the highest paid goon on the market. Mr. Morkly previously worked for Dr. Celebrio before a miniaturization experiment gone wrong led to Celebrio being fatally stepped on by a pigeon.

Senator Stabyu, an Independant representing the state of Bigger Pennsylvania remarked "Mr. Morkly has proven time and time again to be the best person around for helping you get away with evil shit. That's exactly what I intend to do because that's what the voters elected me to do." Mr. Morkly declined to make a statement, but his mother Dr. Gloria Grin stated "When I first attached a parakeet cage to a robot body and taught the parakeet to pilot the thing, I never thought he would come as far as he did today. We're all so proud of you Morkly, if only your brothers Flappers and Cheepy were alive to see this and hadn't been eaten by Mr. Mittens."

Kevin Sneed, president of Goons United, declared that "This is a monumental occasion for goons everywhere. Never before have we felt so valued. I think soon enough calling someone a goon will no longer be an insult

Lenny Abel Hogan can be reached at
hogan.lenny@surrealtimes.net

BIHEXICAL COMIC

By RAKA,
Times Correspondent



Raka can be reached at raka@surrealtimes.net



COUGHING, SWALLOWED, FORGOTTEN, FREE

By THE GULLED ONE,
Street Whisperer and Bird Journalist



Hello Surreal Times People, It's been a while and so far I don't think I like this year. I haven't seen my gulls in a long time. It's like I'm on another beach upside down, hung. I close my eyes and see all the gulls playing. I like knowing my friends are having fun but sometimes, I hope they stop to notice I'm not there, and then it sort of feels like I am.

Seagulls will spin for hours just to see the waves meet the rocks through dizzy eyes. My friends toss up leftover sand sculptures with their wings, and follow them up into the air. I remember gulls scribbling their webbed feet, all up in the seafoam, over washed-up papers. Drowsily inky notes slide off the page to be sweetly forgotten or maybe just remembered wrong. But then they'd be just like me; unnoticed. We are swallowed, we wake up to friends frozen, or flown off, or choked on too much spit up, or just choked, but all that is far from me. I feel fictional, but by that I mean free.

Thinking they're grand when they're small, the Pigs took me from Egg Rock, put me in a big mean van that has so many screaming fingerprints stuck on the metal bench. They took me all the way to Salem High, even though I never went to school before.

I guess I was lucky, they sent my friend Francis back home, not to the beach but back to Puerto Santo. She told me when she was littler she was a poor fisherman's basket who found her way to Lynn cause she could never hold her hauls in. Before they came to take us, she was already packing her stuff, very quickly, like she wanted leaving to not take so long. We said goodbye that night, she's not a soft person, I didn't mind that though, she was trying for me, I think.

" , but I will miss you, you've always had alot of excitement. You'll have to wise up for yourself now. You pretend it's not, but this place is a house for the stolen, built on carcasses while they still breathed. And they'll eventually come to clean us "rot" out,"

"Francis, sure I pretend lots of things, but I like it that way, it doesn't mean they aren't true. They're, we're just unseen."

"It's not they don't see us, they just think defuncts like us best wither where we're woven, like all the years I spent here are just rust. They say we're lazy but we're just slept on."

"What's wrong with rust?" I asked, "It's like metal's beard."

"Please forget me quickly, there's so much sweet nonsense in your head and I never could stand being too near that."

But Francis pretends too. She pretends she never liked our games, ever since her and Klip, my seagull friend who I buried a couple months ago sewed me up, Francis'd front, like she wouldn't look over at us and smirk, thinking she was sly, that we never notice how our balls inflated every morning.

[Editor's Note: both parts of Klip the seagull's journal can be found at surrealtimes.net]

She gave the heavy cracked eyeballs that looked down from above the tenements too much mind. They think I don't notice things, but I do. I got so excited I just try not to see them, it hurts to notice. I'm now like my friend Klip like that. I'm scared of mirrors, I'm scared that I'll eat myself by mis-

take and end up too deep inside my guts and stuffing. I think you Surreal Times people would understand. I know I seem strange, I've heard them shout 'fag' and 'shemale', I've felt bruises, judgy people sent me to the beach but they don't get to hold it, it belongs to us featherless gulls.

I think Francis felt better feeling bad, she was thrown into the shade, and found it cooler. But I think feeling bad is tiring, being sad and angry wears you down, but there is alot to feel sad and angry about. I feel bad that I haven't gone to see Klip's body since I don't know when. I used to go down to say "hi" and make sure the ants don't get greedy and take too much of her at once, she liked to take her time before going anywhere. But I haven't been to the beach in so long. The staff who watch us in the beds at the empty school said I'll get sick if I go out to see her. But I know they just want time to wipe down the street art I never told them I did, and clean our little beach hangouts. I'm pretty sure the bike cops wanted to steal my friend's cut-off fingers, after they got them chopped in a puppet's hand hole, but I swallowed them first so they couldn't take them.

And after stealing the breath from black featherless gulls, the staff here expect them to take a big mound of clay filled with years of hate thrown and story erasing, then magically shape it into something pretty. All the staff are tripping on purpose, holding their gas lamps trying to blind us.. Then the staff get grand and grumpy when black gulls take their tired-sadness and righteous anger and sculpt something loud and sharp, powerful and beautiful.

I think that's why I can't go see Klip. They said I could stay in the school or head to the Farm in Lawrence, and I'd rather stay in Salem because I don't like to be far from the beach. They took my earrings, they thought I'll cut if they let me keep them. They served us chicken noodle soup, but they laughed at me when I asked if the noodles and the chicken get along. If they don't, I just hope they will make up. But I can't help them, cause I can't have make-up here. In the bathroom they have all sorts of phone numbers on the walls, like one that says, "Ronnie Mack gives good head. Shoulders knees and toes, amputees please call." Another says, "Come back next week kids for more old fun wonder times with Boko the Dilapidated Ferret." Sometimes you gotta dream big when I get bigger I'm going to be the Security guard of all these bathroom stall masterpieces.

I skipped dinner and tripped on my way back from the bathroom, I hit my nose on the ground. The floors smell like decaying off brand perfume, and anxious hand holding. But I don't mind decay, I even once held its hand when I would wait in line at DMH reception. Decay isn't mean, they just like to loiter, when you're old you have time to loiter. The beds here don't decay too, they are made of special Hong Kong plastic, so bed is always dry, even the tears just pool up.

I'm scared, I feel like I'm flailing inside like a stray newspaper turned into a tattooed origami pigeon, folded paper cut thin, till thankfully no one could see me. I'm shivering into place but my feet won't settle, they're just pins and needles. The tears gather like my tidal pools, they smell saltier and eggier, I'm sleepy.

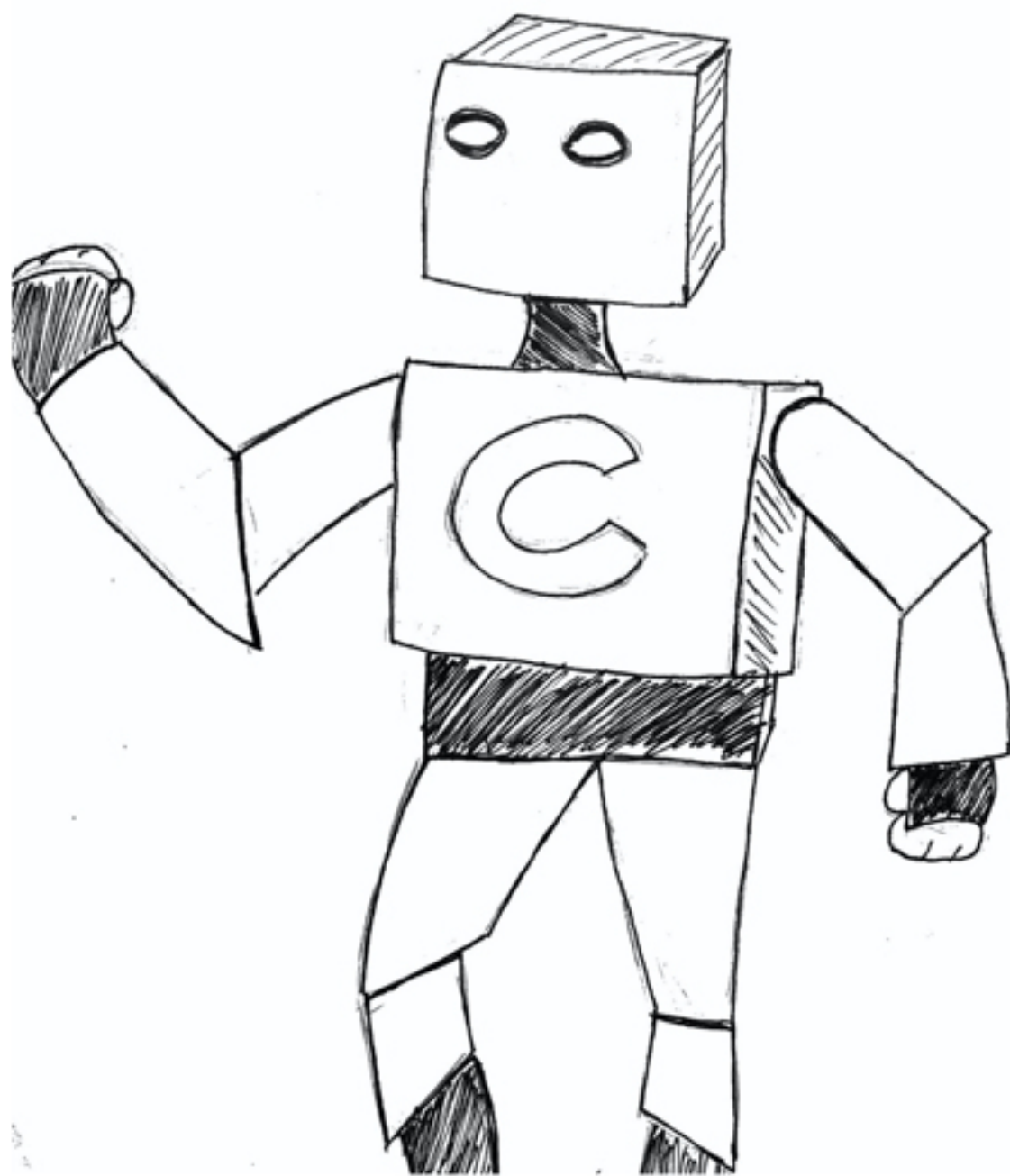
There are little bits of broke wooden row boats twirling around me in the water, I like them. Paint chips with bits of free sea serpents dress up the smog as smoke, and show me how to dance. Klip is back playing with me. I can't feel my feet, hands, or thighs, or any of it. I feel like melted crayons, and the gulls finally let me join their dart games with the hypodermic needles. I'm close to my friends, finally, and now they don't scatter when I wave. I'm scattered but I have warm sighs where my aches used to be, no old skin, just tattoos, the gulls squawk and I understand what they say.

The Gulled One can be reached at gulled.one@surrealtimes.net



BOXMAN: AMHERST'S NEWEST SUPERHERO

By THE MYSTERIOUS M,
Times Staff



"Hold on, Ma'am!" a voice cries out, "you left your eggs on top of your car!"

"Oh my goodness, thank you," says the bewildered old woman. A 6-foot tall man dressed entirely in cardboard armor stands proudly in a superstore parking lot.

"Just doing my job," the mystery man mumbles through his cardboard helmet. He lifts his brown paper gloves and gives a thumbs up. "Boxman away!" he cries before striding away.

This is Boxman, Amherst's local superhero. He doesn't have any superpowers, but he still roams the streets performing good deeds for the citizens of Amherst. Although few know his real identity, his presence within the town has made him a local legend. He has accumulated over 10,000 views on his YouTube channel and has been interviewed multiple times by the local Amherst newspaper. For many residents, Boxman is a symbol of hope, a bringer of joy and an inspiration to both children and the elderly.

Behind the mask and the heavy suit of cardboard armor is 20-year-old Mike Bumble. Since he was a child, Mike has always been obsessed with superheroes. He has seen every Marvel and DC movie and has spent his entire life collecting comic books, action figures and posters of his favorite heroes. His bedroom is completely decked out in superhero memorabilia, the most noticeable being a lifesize cutout of Superman, Mike's favorite superhero.

"Superman is my favorite because he's always trying to do the right thing," Mike says, "and that's very inspiring because most people don't want to make the world better, they just want to focus on themselves."

Mike lives with his Catholic mother and attends Holyoke Community College, while also working shifts as a greeter at the local Wal-Mart. Regarding his strict religious upbringing, Mike says it "taught him how to be a good person in the same way comic books did. Jesus was basically the first superhero."

Mike's secret life as a superhero creates some contention between him and his mother. "This superhero stuff is nice, but

kind of a waste of time," his mother says, "I wish he would focus more on his schoolwork and finding a career instead."

Raised solely by his mother, Mike has never met his biological father. "Superman didn't know his dad either," Mike says. "When I was a kid, I liked to fantasize that my real dad was on some other planet and that I was secretly an alien. It gave me a lot of comfort growing up."

Mike tells me that superheroes helped him through a particularly rough childhood. Because of his weight and social awkwardness, Mike was routinely bullied in school.

"When I was 11, I was very depressed," he tells me, "I think superheroes showed me a little bit of light when I needed it the most."

Mike first developed the character when he was 12. He claims he was inspired by the 2008 film Iron Man. "If Tony Stark could build a robot suit in a cave," he says, "I can easily build my own suit at home." The first version of the suit was constructed when Mike was 16, using empty boxes his mother kept piled up in the garage. The suit was finished with the help of Davis Maines, Mike's best friend and personal "Alfred."

Mike and Davis met each other in middle school. "We used to play GTA together at my grandma's house," Davis tells me, "I always wanted to be a professional cosplayer and I thought it would be cool to design an original character." Using only cardboard and duct tape, Davis was able to invent a full bodysuit for Mike, one that would make it easier for Mike to move his arms and legs. The only problem with the suit, Davis tells me, is that it's impossible to turn your head.

Davis also works as Boxman's videographer. For every adventure, Davis follows Boxman around with his phone and posts the videos to Boxman's YouTube channel. The channel consists of videos where he's performing good deeds, such as helping people cross the street and picking litter up off the sidewalk.

As far as superheroes go, Boxman does very little crime fighting. The reason, Mike claims, came from a previous altercation with the Amherst police. "A house down my street got broken into," Mike says, "when I went to investigate as Boxman, the cops arrested me for trespassing. My mom had to leave her work and pick me up at the station." Since that incident, Mike has felt "discouraged" to fight crime.

"Sometimes I wish I had Superman's strength" Mike confesses, "but mostly I just wish people could be nicer."

Mike admits that there were times he almost gave up on the superhero life altogether. In one instance in particular, he attempted to intervene with a man and a woman having a violent argument in the middle of a public sidewalk. When Davis tried calming the situation, the man began shoving him and called him a "fatass piece of shit."

"That was the moment where I felt the most powerless," Mike claims, "but I suppose every superhero goes through tribulations."

Despite the various setbacks, Mike says that becoming a superhero has given him a renewed sense of purpose. Boxman has offered Mike an escape from his normal life and has given more strength and confidence.

"To me, being a superhero is more than just about wearing a suit or having powers," Mike says, "it's just about doing the right thing. I think anybody can do that, whether they wear a suit or not."

The Mysterious M can be reached at m@surrealtimes.net



CLAY CATASTROPHE: METAMORPHIC EARTH GONE WILD

By By: PLEAKLEY POW POW (AKA SIERRA POWERS),

For my present means of living I make loads and loads of clay. Yee ha cowpeople. Some good ole elbow grease, a whole bunch of various sediments, a splash of water and you're pretty much there. Throw in a big mixer and some ancient extruder machines from the Mesozoic Era and you've just about got the gist. I mix formulas together, toss hunks of clay down their respective shutes, and let the machines pump out logs of mud. High class mud mind you.

Was this awesome? Why yes, yes it was. Was there something, eh hem, someone, curtailing such awesomeness? Why YES, and they came in the form of The Brutey Boar. I didn't know where my overseer hailed from but it couldn't be anywhere far from Tartarus. In short, she was the most duplicitous, sadistic, cold-blooded human of all homo-sapiens. Tip-topping it all, her resemblance to a hog of the wildest and mangiest variety was simply uncanny.

I'd thus far avoided being a royal fuck up and had evaded the worst of her fury. However, I learned from a previous employee who, prior to quitting and moving to New Hampshire, warned that the most microscopic misstep could render you helpless in some underground dungeon for an undefined detention. I think this dungeon-lair thing had some terribly hellish name but I made a point to distract myself out of dread when he was talking about it.

Thus, when pool noodles started squeezing out of the extruder I was simultaneously flabbergasted and petrified. Uhhhh-hh what? If this was where the audience would see cranial gears turning and a heroic plan hammering together in a forge of superior intellect, well my sincerest apologies because I stood there blankly like an absolute numb nut. After a few seconds too long I jolted to the built in wire cutter and sliced through pink squeaky foam where I would normally cut a hunk of clay. I futilely fed it back through the extruder and squeezed my eyes closed with every part of my body tensed and desperately hoping this was a hallucination and that normal clay would resume its mundane extrusion. After a few seconds I let the wee corner of my right eyelid crack open and hummed out a panicky breath bordering on hysterical.

Oh frick. Oh shit. Aghhmmm. Oh no no no no no no no. FUCK. Not only was this real but there now appeared to be the largest pipe cleaners I'd ever seen churning out slowly and taunting me with their fuzzy, purple ease.

Ummmm. Okay. Okay. Maybe I could get this shit off the machine and floor real quick and shove it in a closet or something and then figure out how to get back to clay. I haphazardly grabbed at noodles and piper cleaners, raked everything possible into my embrace, shoved it all in the depths of a miniscule closet, and heaved a breath.

I quickly glanced behind me. Dear freaking Mary Mother of Merlin's beard. Anyone order a penne entree?! I sure as hell hope so because I'd be damned if those weren't some glossy ass noodles extruding forth in buttery glory. If only they were alla vodka.

Oh my god I was so dead. I was so so so dead. WHAT THE FLYING FUCK WAS SHE GONNA THINK HAPPENED IN HERE WHEN SHE CAME BACK. If I could have shrunk myself down to the teeniest-tiniest-smallest-most-mother-shitting-insignificant-blot-of-almost-nothingness-so-stupid-small-an-ameo-ba-might-trip-over-it-and-stub-its-dumb-ass-toe-on-me-speck and sink forever in a crevass of floor to be tread on for the rest of time I would have. Anything, and I MEAN ANYTHING, would've been a heavenly experience next to the rumored wrath of The Brutey Boar.

I swerved with such elite acuteness you'd think making left turns was my actual full-time job and absolutely sucker punched the main switch which was just a big red-lit button. It sputtered and flickered a few times threatening to rev back up so I then simply kicked the living hell out of it. Aaannnd-dddd still the machine didn't stop. Okay. Alright mysterious, metamorphic clay. Meet your literal goddamn maker. I clumsily hopscotched my way over palettes and penne to get to the back wall and yanked the python like plug for the extruder from it's outlet. Aaannndddd the extruder kept churning out what seemed like everything in the cursed universe expect clay. Where the actual cheese and crackers was all this evening coming from and why wasn't it delightfully boring clay?

Loping my way back around to the front of the extruder I swiveled my torso around probably looking like some vulnerable, helpless jack without its box and looked down around me to assess the debris mounting at my ankles. I started to madly and witlessly rake my fingers through my hair to wrench it from its roots in sheer panic. There was so much hardened clay cementing the strands together from the batch I did earlier when my clay was just plain ole clay that my own dome thwarted my hands like it'd abruptly summoned a force field. If I lived to see the dark of this evening I would never in my right mind even look at a grain of sand again let alone come within six feet of anything remotely resembling clay.

Above me, the floorboards moaned. Terror flooded my system faster than if adrenaline was injected directly to my heart. The Brutey Boar was back in her office upstairs and would be mere moments from coming down here to assess my progress. Honestly, I thought I was either gonna poop myself or cry. Or both. ... Definitely both.

By: Pleakley Pow Pow (aka Sierra Powers) can be reached at



FEED MY SPIDER M&M'S: I go out daily to toss raspberries to the local school children, I'm gone from dawn till dusk, and I need someone to come to my house and feed my spider, Larry, her M&M's, she is very quiet and never moves or lies to me, but she LOVES her M&M's! Call 781-913-5092



THE OCTOPUS SAGA: HOW I ATE A LIVE OCTOPUS AND FORMED A BOND WITH IT

By PAUL KRUGER,
Journalist



[Artist's depiction by Captain Crunch]

I knew something was wrong the moment that wet, slippery octopus slid down my gullet. My throat was a slip-and-slide for the little creature, and you better believe he enjoyed the ride all the way down to my small intestine. I was in Korea at the time for a very important business trip, and my boss invited me out for a night of fine dining in Seoul. Apparently it's considered a delicacy over there to eat a live octopus, and I wasn't going to seem culturally insensitive in front of my boss.

As the waiter brought over the little dish with an octopus squirming around in it, my stomach churned with dreadful queasiness. I slowly picked up the pale cephalopod and brought it to the edge of my trembling lips. My boss's judgmental eyes bore into my skull, and I knew I just had to eat the poor creature. So in one quick gulp, I threw the octopus into my mouth and it slid right down my esophagus. I didn't

even have time to chew.

The sensation I felt as the octopus glided down into my stomach was so frightening I had to excuse myself from the table. Most food, as I'm sure you know, gets destroyed by your powerful stomach acids, but this octopus must have been some sort of genetically mutated creature because it took a cannonball dive right into my small intestine and started swimming and splashing around without a care in the world.

I spent the next week locked in my hotel room, too sick to get out of bed. I could feel every movement of the octopus in my stomach as it explored its new surroundings. It traveled down to my large intestine, then squeezed its flexible body into my blood veins and explored my legs, then jumped into my lymphatic system to poke around my liver and kidneys. I went to half a dozen specialists and they all laughed at me when I explained what had happened. Oh, the humiliation I felt when they told me I was crazy.

Finally I convinced a doctor to perform an ultrasound like I was a god damn pregnant woman and lo and behold, the octopus was fully visible, healthy as can be. The doctor freaked out as expected, but I was relieved I wasn't going crazy. That night, I went through a whole range of emotions: fear, anger, depression, disgust, shame, and horror.

But then the strangest thing happened after a few weeks. I became emotionally attached to the octopus like a mother does to her baby. I would rub my belly gently and feel its tentacles pressed up against the linings of my intestines. We would play little games where I tapped one side of my body and the octopus would try to find my hand. The first time the octopus traveled all the way down to my foot, I was so proud because I knew how scared he was of my kneecaps.

After a little while, the octopus and I became so synchronized that we developed a language system similar to morse code. When the octopus was hungry, he would tap my stomach lining three times and I knew it was time for feeding. I began to crave a strictly seafood diet of crabs, clams, and sea snails – all other land food disgusted me. When he was in the mood to play, he would tap twice and drag his tentacle along my liver. If he was bored, he would squirt a little ink through my throat and into my mouth. So cute, right?

But soon I noticed something was missing in my pet octopus's life. He became mercurial and agitated all the time like a teenager rebelling against their parents. I asked him what was wrong by tapping my belly button twice and he responded, through an intricate series of taps, that it was lonely in my belly. He was a lonesome creature floating aimlessly amongst a mass of fluid and mucus, and my octopus companion was feeling helplessly isolated. As much as I loved him, I could never fulfill the emotional intimacy that another friend in my stomach could provide. So I decided for his upcoming birthday, I will surprise him by swallowing a lady octopus to become his bride. Hopefully someday soon I'll have a whole family of octopi who call my body home.

Paul Kruger can be reached at kruger.paul@surrealtimes.net



COMMUNITY CLASSIFIEDS

TO POST A LISTING OR GET IN TOUCH WITH SELLERS OR EMPLOYERS, CONTACT CLASSIFIEDS@SURREALTIMES.NET. A 2% FEE WILL BE TAKEN UPON TRANSACTION.

WANTED: a strand of Elon Musk's hair follicle for DNA analysis

WANTED: To burn through our fumed love and cease to feel atomic.

FOR SALE: Small kitten who won't stop bringing me dead frogs and jaw harps.

FELT: I swear sometimes I want to kill you, then of course, I'd wander the earth until I could find a way to bring you back.

WANTED: The sound of a rusted harmonica a makes while being vomited up.

WANTED: Alexander Dumas' skeletal finger hid in a three musketeers chocolate bar.

WANTED: Eight-tubed conjoined condom capable of 8-directional protection. Must remain attached and effective in water.

WANTED: Pizza party for one. I am very lonely and would like to keep it that way

WANTED: My ribcage to open like a butterfly.

FOR SALE: Nipples that shoot confetti

And WANTED: Babies that suckle streamers.

FOR SALE: OMNISCIENT TOASTER - has the ability to speak, will try to convince you to invest in gold. Has a British accent.

Help Wanted: Roofer - \$18/hour - Must have a giant hand for a head

FOR SALE: A potpourri of throwup from different continents. Extremely fertile and capable of growing crops on any surface, organic or otherwise.

WANTED: Mind Reader who Is Good At Fighting.

FOR SALE: Bonkers crack-head goldfish from the 5th dimension.

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

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

FOR SALE:Parrot that is able to dirty talk

WANTED: heavy-set male capable of playing his big tummy like a drum

FOR SALE: Twelve Mason jars full of barks (oak, maple, dog, etc)

WANTED: Puppet born with vestigial puppeteer.

NEEDED: How to tell which Krazy Glue products are safe to eat.

WANTED: The Most Powerful Weasels Ranked.

FOR LEASE: A Cage (Previously Owned by a Rage-Filled Rat)

WANTED: My imaginary friend Dennis, dead or alive

FOR HIRE: Man with exceedingly malleable emotional state

WANTED: Grapes equipped with mouth-targeting guidance systems.

FOR SALE: Methadone Gum-my Bears, Half Melted, pre licked

WANTED: Largest turtle.

HELP NEEDED: I've covered myself head to toe in peanut butter and can't get it off. Please contact me ASAP with suggestions; the dogs are closing in fast!

Needed: A sequence of auditory sounds which will bring tears to my wrinkly eyes.

WANTED: Victrola cones for broadcasting sonic disruption waves to finally get some sleep

FOR HIRE: Man with exceedingly malleable emotional state

FOR SALE: Tumble weeds laced with hydrochloric acid and adrenochrome. Not recommended for vertebrate consumption.

WANTED: Raman Noodles still live and writhing

WANTED:Friends. All of my friends have been revealed to be machinations of my own imagination, so I am in the market for some real ones. For the initial meeting, I can pay for pizza.

FOR SALE: Collection of Saliva

FOR HIRE: Mouse Strippers

FOR LEASE: An igloo inside of another igloo

NEEDED: more bones to stuff in my flesh wound.

FOR HIRE: toad boy.

For Lease: The vacant crevice in my heart.

WANTED: Numerous elegant cadavers from families of oligarchs. Must be dressed well and be marinated in caviar.

WANTED:Vampire Alberta. We met at a club and I think you gave me the wrong number. It keeps referring me to an underground nightclub whose address is Hell. I really thought we hit it off, if you see this, call me. 506-555-6669

For Sale: 1/4th of my soul. Fair warning, it's the portion that's kind of insufferable.

Needed: more bones to stuff in my flesh wound

Wanted: Buddy to go roll down a grassy hill with. Must be rotund, bouncy, chunky, and spherical (fatties only).

WANTED: Spray On Insect Attractant.

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

HIRING: Professional wanderer. Email recruiting@surrealtimes.net.

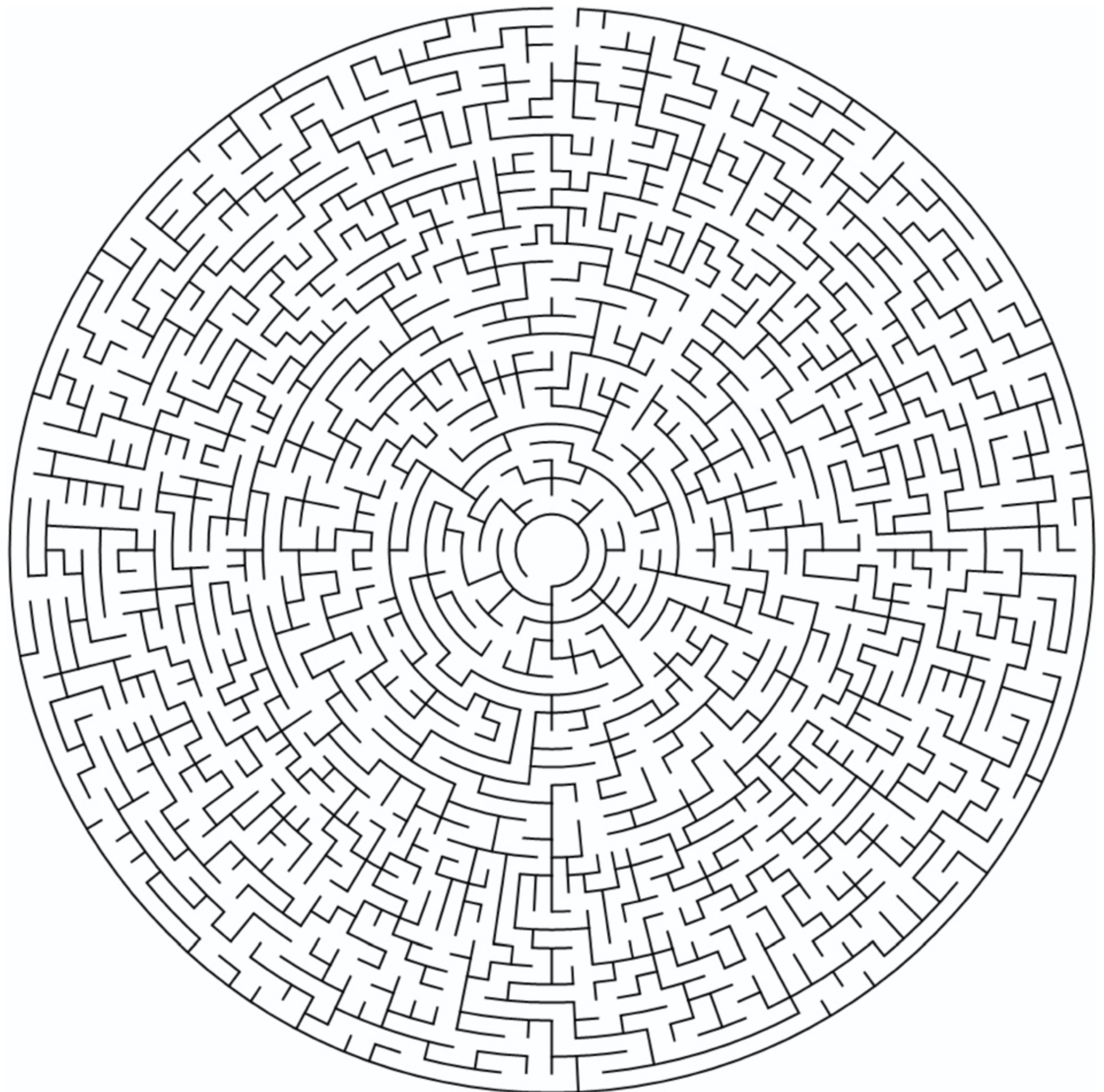


THE BIHEXICAL SEARCH

By ARMĀDEIUS GALOUET'S SURROGATE,
Mechanical Contraption

Utilizing a spectacular isomorphism, the solution to the following maze can be translated directly to a solution to an abstract problem in the real world. In turn, by completing this maze, you provide us the information necessary for us to make the world a better place.

If against all odds you manage to find a solution, email it promptly to **isomorphism@surrealtimes.net** so that we can put the fruits of your labor into action. Once results come back affirmative, you will be contacted to arrange delivery of a **secret prize** more grandiose than the most distant corners of your imagination.



UPCOMING EVENTS AND CAUSES

- Surreal Newsroom Meeting every Week (writers wanted)
- Juggling Club on Wednesdays on Venice Beach
- Renegades of Comedy on Thursdays at Pete's house
- FractalFest in The Fractal Forest (fractaltribe.org)
- Cosmic Clown shows (facebook.com/eyeblicktherefore)
- Moismus, the one and only (instagram.com/moiimus)
- The Museum of Other Realities (www.museumor.co)
- Ranked Choice Voting [ballotpedia.org/Ranked-choice_voting_\(RCV\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Ranked-choice_voting_(RCV))
- masspeaceaction.org/act/volunteer/

Email **events@surrealtimes.net** to get information on these events or to inform us of other events and occurrences.

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