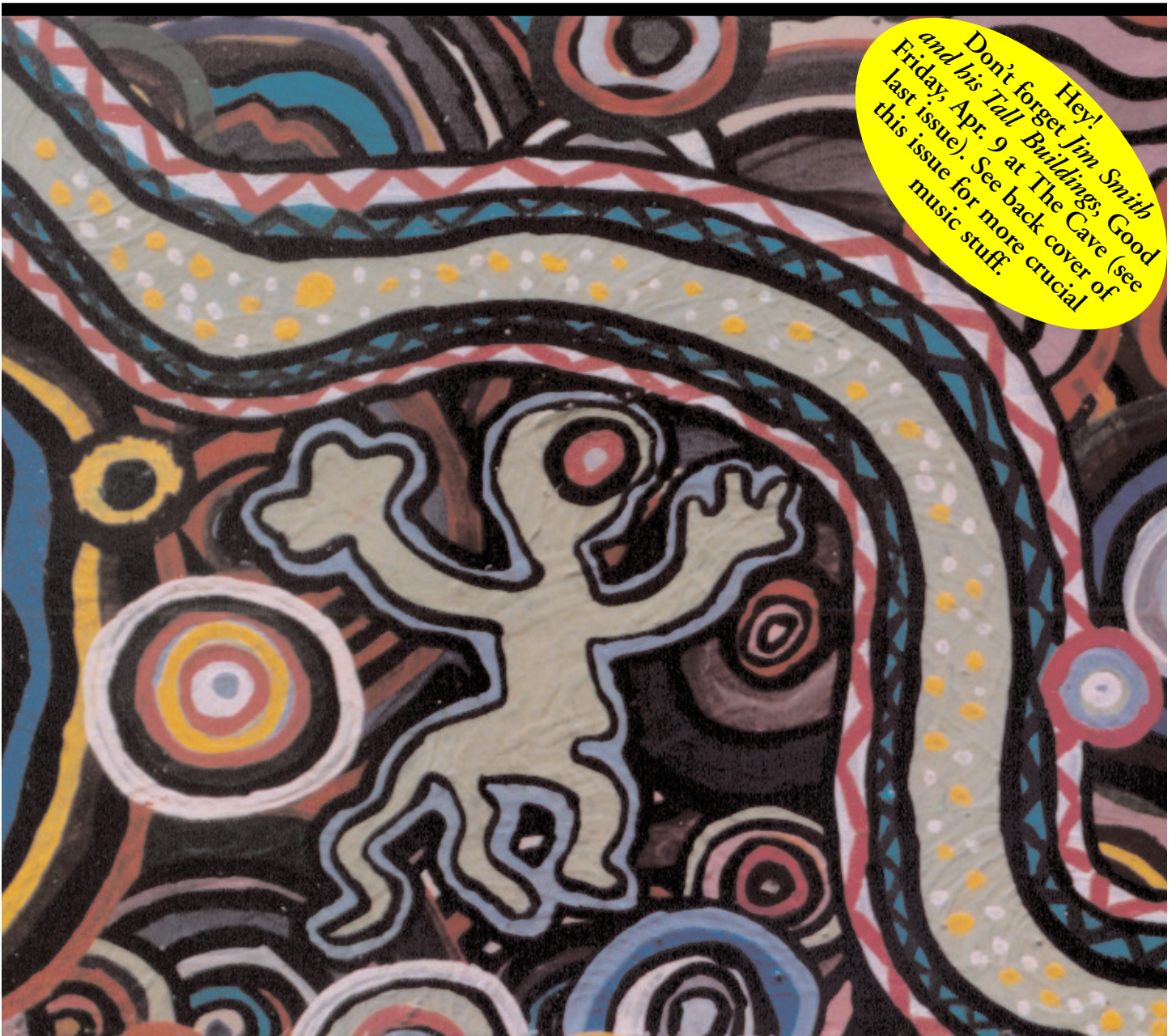


The Blotter

April 2004

Like a Black Flag sticker on six-year-old Volvo

www.blotterrag.com



Hey! Don't forget Jim Smith and his *Tall Buildings*, Good Friday, Apr. 9 at The Cave (see last issue). See back cover of this issue for more crucial music stuff.

In this issue: We have art and comix by L. Haywood Coffey, Seoda Duffy, and Lisa Albinger. The muse of inscrutable sci-fi visited G. Kay Bishop. And a crisp, early crop of poems from Ava Morgan, Amy Ritchie, Mikey Brandon, and William Cannon Purdy popped their heads up out of the garden.

The Blotter is:

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by the artist, not the magazine.**Cover art, detail of what we'll call *Pi
Snake*, by L. Haywood Coffey. See pp.
8-9 for more from this artist.*The Blotter* is a production of:
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Submissions are always welcome, as
are ad inquiries and opportunities to
cross-promote interesting events.**Items Worth Mentioning
from the desk of Johnny Pence****First of All, Big Ups to God.**

You the best, Lord. And we've been getting some earthly encouragement lately, so I want to say thanks. Some of it has been outright financial, and that's the kind we like a whole lot, and need. New advertisers this month include **Hazmat** and **Creative Metalsmiths**, so please choose them for your studded bracelet and artisanal jewelry needs, respectively. Same-same for **Firefly Shoes**, **Carrburritos**, **Altered Image**, **Capital Fitness**, **Sarajo Berman**, and of course, to **Branch's Chapel Hill Bookshop**. Man, you gotta make those guys your first choice for shoes, burritos, haircuts, workin' out, craniosacral therapy, and, uh, independent bookshoppery, respectively. Rock and roll. Thanks. Thanks also to people like **Temple Ball**, **The Cave**, and **Ringside** for letting us put on our "Blotter Presents" shows, and to the bands who play them.

But we also get little pats on the back here and there from people who write in, or who we talk to when we're out on the town. Thanks to all of y'all too: to the restaurant workers who neglect their customers to thumb through the new issue, to the young dude at the hardware store in Timberlyne, to the drunk college kids at our shows, to the people who come to our readings at Branch's and don't talk to nobody, but listen politely—to all of y'all, thank you. To those of you who think we suck, you obviously don't know what you're talking about.

Spring Cleaning:

Good riddance to bad rubbish. **Ignatz R. Butterfly**, our submissions-handling pseudonym, has left *The Blotter* after a shameful and debasing row. We caught the fictitious character stealing Sharpies and selling them to middle-schoolers, or using the ill-gotten markers to write "Big Iggy" in two-foot-tall letters on the otherwise spotless bathroom walls of classy joints. He was a little bit insane, even for a pseudonym, so we're glad to see him go.

Filling his enormous, smelly shoes is a new submissions-handling pseudonym, **Ms. Jenny Haniver**. Jenny comes to us after a stint with a large New York publishing concern that would sue us for merely mentioning its name (and no, they're not accepting unsolicited submissions either). Submissions to *The Blotter* now go to mermaid@blotterrag.com, same PO Box as before. Please and thanks.

End of an Era

I doubt anybody out there read our June '03 issue, but in it I printed an essay of mine about my grandmother's beautiful old 1968 Ford LTD. (Well, it was also "about" her and me, and our whole family, but the car was in the middle.) Anywho, I've driven that smooth-ass ride for two years now, and have fixed it up a little (although it was never in bad shape), and now I have to sell it. I'd like it to go to a good home. Check out blotterrag.com for links to the old essay and to the car's listing in the *Auto Trader*. (Hey, I can't write myself a paycheck from this magazine, so I don't feel bad about horsetrading in it. Until Marty fires me, anyhow.)

—ediot@blotterrag.com

DIXON'S LAST STAND

S. DUFFY



WHEN I WAS YOUNGER I WORKED PART TIME AT A HOME-COOKING RESTAURANT. IT WAS JUST ACROSS THE STATE LINE AND SMACK BETWEEN A LOW-RENT MOTEL AND A HOUSING PROJECT. OUR CUSTOMERS WERE A VARIED LOT, MOSTLY OLDER FOLKS, WORKERS & TOURISTS.

THE CONSTRUCTION WORKERS & AUTO MECHANICS WERE FRIENDLY & TIPPED OKAY, BUT IT WAS COMMON FOR US TO LEAVE A 6-HOUR SHIFT WITH ONLY \$30 IN OUR POCKETS. IT WAS A JOB LIKE A BAD RELATIONSHIP. I MAINLY STAYED ON TO CONVENIENCE AND TO SEE WHAT WOULD HAPPEN NEXT.

ONE OF OUR MOST NOTORIOUS CUSTOMERS WAS MR. DIXON, A CRUSTY OLD MAN WITH JUST ONE ARM. RUMOR HAD IT THAT HE WAS A RETIRED CAB DRIVER WHO PACKED SIGNIFICANT FIREPOWER AND HAD ONCE SHOT & KILLED A MAN WHO HAD TRIED TO ROB HIM ON THE JOB.



TRACI, THE MANAGER, THOUGHT HE WAS "CUTE," BUT THIS WAS FAR FROM THE TRUTH.



NONE OF THE WAITRESSES LIKED TO SERVE HIM, AND WHEN WE SAW HIM COMING, EVEN THE MOST SEASONED OF US WOULD CRINGE.



SWEET OR UNSWEET?

HOWEVER NO ONE HAD IT WORSE THAN THE CASHIER, SHEILA.

SHEILA WAS A QUIET, INTROSPECTIVE GIRL WHO HAD MARRIED AT 16 & NOW HAD 2 LITTLE GIRLS & A HUSBAND IN THE NAVY. SHE WAS ABOUT MY AGE BUT FOR OBVIOUS REASONS SEEMED MUCH OLDER. MR. DIXON FIXED HIS RHEUMY GAZE ON HER RIGHT AWAY. I DON'T THINK THEY KNEW EACH OTHER, ALTHOUGH THEY WERE FROM THE SAME NEIGHBORHOOD. IN FACT, MR. DIXON LIVED JUST A FEW BLOCKS AWAY.

HE SHARED A HOUSE WITH HIS TWO ANCIENT SISTERS WHO I IMAGINE WERE GLAD TO GET HIM OUT OF THEIR HAIR FOR A COUPLE HOURS EACH DAY.



FINALLY, PEACE AND QUIET!



USUALLY HE WOULD COME IN AFTER THE LUNCH RUSH WAS OVER, AROUND 2 OR 3. SHEILA & I WOULD BE WORKING ALONE. HE WOULD USUALLY LURCH UP TO THE COUNTER & CRY OUT,

"HEY, WHITE GIRL! GET YOUR UGLY ASS OVER HERE, I WANT MY CATFISH PLATE!"



THEN HE WOULD START IN ON SHIELA, ONLY HE DIDN'T FIND HER UGLY IN THE LEAST.



"GIRL, WHY DON'T YOU COME HOME WITH ME? I'LL GIVE YOU A SCREW YOU AIN'T NEVER FORGET! YOU A SWEET YOUNG THING - YOU KNOW YOU WANNA SUCK MY DICK, GIRL. I BET YOU WOOD, TOO!"



WHEN HE ATE, AT LEAST HE SHUT UP.

WITH TAILS!



"WHERE YOU AT, UGLY? I WANT MY CATFISH PLATE!"

AFTER A WHILE I REFUSED TO WAIT ON HIM.

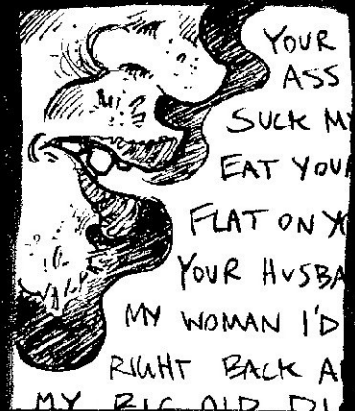
FINALLY THEN, THE MANAGER LISTENED TO OUR PLEAS AND OFFICIALLY BANNED HIM FROM THE RESTAURANT. WE DIDN'T SEE HIM FOR A WHILE, AND IT WAS LOOKING GOOD, BUT OF COURSE...

GIRL, YOU AIN'T EVEN HEARD WHAT HAPPENED!

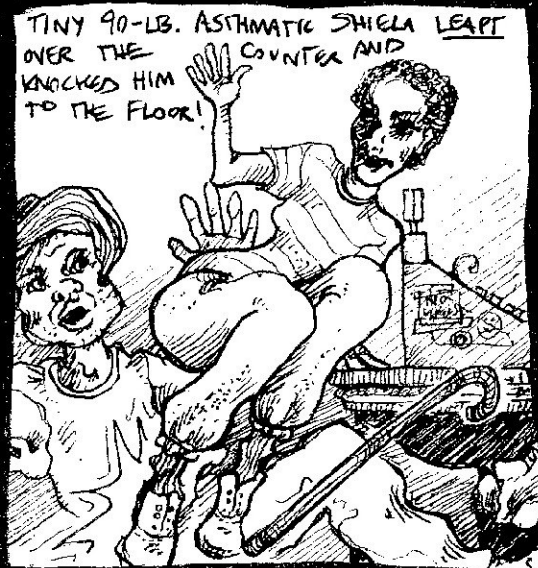
THAT WASN'T THE LAST WE SAW OF MR. DIXON!



I CAME IN ONE AFTERNOON AND DARLA, THE HEAD WAITRESS, PROCEEDED TO TELL ME THE TALE OF IT ALL: MR. DIXON'S LAST STAND! APPARENTLY, HE HAD COME IN THE MORNING BEFORE AND STOOD AT SHIELA'S COUNTER TALKING TRASH TO HER AS USUAL. THIS TIME, THOUGH, HE WAS IN FOR A NASTY SHOCK!



YOUR ASS SUCK MY EAT YOUR FLAT ON X YOUR HUSBAND MY WOMAN I'D RIGHT BACK AT MY BIG OLD DI



I NEVER SAW MR. DIXON AT THE DINER AGAIN, AND STOPPED WORKING THERE THE SUMMER AFTER I GRADUATED FROM COLLEGE. I FIGURED HE WAS PROBABLY AT HOME DRIVING HIS 2 SISTERS CRAZY WITH HIS CULINARY DEMANDS.



Gamma Male

by G. Kay Bishop

T*urk Dangos, ex-army*
If—hell of a word, huh?—if I'd been more alert—if the test results had been less secret—if the support staff and technicians had not been mostly women—if any of us regular guys had had a frigging *clue*—the whole thing would have been a lot different. It never would have got out of hand the way it did. We could have cleaned up the whole mess in a jiffy, just like *that*. As it was, it cost us a lot of trouble, you better believe. If the psyche boys had been less shut-mouth about their findings, everybody would have seen it, not just me.

Leslie Allen Johns-Wickley, ex-banker

Throughout human history men have achieved the greatest things by standing *together*—pitting themselves against a common enemy or a common prey. Men who threw personal safety to the winds and sacrificed everything—everything they had to give was subordinated to the achievement of some higher purpose. In work, on farms, in war, male bonding has been the *core* the central fact of every advance in human culture. I tell you—in all seriousness—that the greatest thing humans have to offer the universe is the concept of war. There *must* be conflict for any rise above the common level. Struggle—hardship—competition. It is not merely an idea—it is a law of nature.

Robert Arthur Relzner, former professional athlete

No, I'm not sorry, not a bit. It had to be done and I did it. Yeah, I like him fine. I mean he's okay. It was nothing personal. Turk, he said it was our duty, and I think he was right about that. I would do the same thing again, yessir. Yes ma'am, I mean. I don't know what to call you folks. It's all so different now. I wish my Gramma would have lived to see it all. She used to have dreams about it, really she did. Granpaw always said it was a load of—he said it was a bunch of rubbish, but I think she really did see them things. I wish I could talk to her—show her them spaceships. She would have got a big kick out of seeing it all come true.

Well, about that business at the Center. It was great at first. At least I thought so. It was a lot of fun. Yes, a whole lot of fun. We all got along so good together. It was like being with my family only better. Well, I don't know how better—it was like ... I don't

know. We had a lot of laughs. We played a lot of games. It was good, win some, lose some, not like being in a real game, but just for fun, you know? And nobody could be a sore loser, it wasn't nothing serious to lose one of them silly games. We was just having fun. It was like—a dream. Like they do on TV, you know? When everything is going good just the way the guy likes it and then he wakes up and it was all a dream? Well it was kinda like that. Except we was awake. It wasn't no hypnosis or drugs, don't be thinking that. It was for real.

Dr. Carol Ann Harrington, MD, Ph.D., Professor of Psycho-Genetics, Melbourne University

It was an accident, really. One of the many fortuitous events in the history of science. They didn't even call me in on the case until halfway through the project. The original team were only interested in his double-jointed thumb. Amazing? Well, only in hindsight. You must understand that in those days, only the most narrowly focused research had any chance of being funded. If you were sponsored by an industrial consortium to develop new levels of human dexterity, by God you researched human dexterity and none of this psychological bull-shit! You didn't have time or attention to give to the facts! So what if levels of aggression were subnormal even for hedonistic primate species, and who would connect an extra finger joint with the humorous misfortune that you kept losing lab technicians because they were all getting pregnant? It wasn't an isolated case either, though from the reactions of the media—afterward, of course—you would have thought he was the Lone Stranger. Not all of the new types had external markers, either—fortunately as it turned out.

Leslie Allen Johns-Wickley

I wasn't exactly afraid of him but he did inspire me to keep my distance. He *smelled* wrong. Not bad, I don't mean that. Just—peculiar. No, please don't ask me to define it, you try defining smells and see how far you get. There aren't any words for that kind of thing, not among our species. Perhaps somewhere out near Rigel they have an encyclopedia on olfactorial analysis, but not here. Right then. You just take my word for it. He smelled different.

That odd smell, that was my only clue at first. Until I started observing his behavior very, very closely, he seemed quite like everyone else. No, that's not true, that was not my only clue, there was another thing that made me suspect, and it was only after *that* that I noticed the other things. Here is this fellow,

do you see? No smarter than any of us. We were all of above-average intelligence, but he did not stand out with any especial brilliance. He had areas of better or worse ability, quite like the rest of us. He was competent but not stellar in math—a slightly keener degree of spacial perception and fine motor manipulation—good but not superior in verbal aptitude, and so on.

It had nothing to do with who he was and everything to do with his genetic origins. Gradually I came to see that I consistently deferred to him. No, deferred is not quite the right word either—perhaps *yielded* is a better way to say it. I'm not an especially gifted speaker, myself. Yes, that's it—I yielded to him as if I were stopped at a road sign where he had the right of way. I didn't quite understand it. For a long time, I couldn't even think rationally about it. I couldn't dwell on it in my mind. I was too shaken.

Turk Dangos

It was me, Relzner and Johns-Wickley—you know, the big banking guy? We called him Skipping John, or just Skip. Did you know he climbed Mt. Everest alone? You never heard of Mt. Everest? The tallest mountain on the planet and you never even heard of it? Oh, that's what they call it—you mean the bastards had the nerve to rename—oh, the old name. Chomo-what? Okay, well then Mother of the Winds. Whatever the motherf—ing hell you want to call it, it's the biggest on Earth and Skip climbed it. By himself. Yeah, I guess he had them. Sherpas, perpahs, I don't know, but that's beside the point. I was telling you how we were the only ones to do anything about the problem. Nobody else would lift a finger against this guy. It was just us against him—him and everybody else he had under his slimy little double-jointed thumb. No, I know his thumb is the same size as ours, it's just a way of talking. How come you are always contradicting me on everything I say? Don't you ever listen?

Leslie Allen Johns-Wickley

No one ever challenged him—openly or in private. Even more significant, no one ever *contradicted* him—not for long, anyway. It was too uncomfortable to set ourselves against him. We—all of us—felt lost, dizzy, panicky if we did not do precisely as he said. Whatever the task was, to be done, we did it *his* way—even if it wasn't the best way. We found out later that was one of the experiments—to see if we were following him out of superior intelligence on his part or if something else was motivating us. It wasn't the brains. It was the something else.

In short, I became aware that every event centered on him. As Turk said, he was invariably *the boss*. Looking back now I am astonished. No one even *thought* of questioning his leadership.

Linda Ann Bunker, RN, MPH, MBA,
Director of Camberwell Laboratories, Santa Juana, PR

Yes, I was employed there for about five years. I only took the position because the funding for the project I was interested in was cut and it was easier than looking for another job. Yes, it was a cut in pay and in 'status' if a lab technician has any status in a place like that. No, I was not angry about it, I was grateful to have work. Times were tough, then. Very tough.

No, I consider myself to be bisexual. At that time, yes, I had been living with a woman partner for several years. Why are you asking these questions?

Ntessa Waheed Sotolongo Napangala, home-maker, mother

Oh, but yes, I remember it well. How can I forget? The ones who die, even those I do not forget, how can I not remember the little one with the big smiles and long crooked thumbs? Everyone in the village, everyone in the next village all the people on the salt flats, yes, yes, I tell you, he brings blessing everywhere. Never, never for one minute do I feel sorry he has come to me. My husbands they are gone so quickly, I am a widow and my children they take away to work in the mines, I have no one but him, this little one. He is so good. So very good.

Robert Arthur Relzner

He didn't act bossy, no, it was just that nobody ever gave him any lip. No backtalk. Yeah we argued now and then, but he settled it if somepin got out of hand. That was why it was so great. Everybody knew who was who, who was on top and it was all okay. But Turk, he showed me why it was bad and Mr. Skip he explained it all to me too. If you don't have no losers then you don't have no winners and that's pretty bad. If there's no winners then the whole game is over—the whole human race game woulda been down the toilet and we couldn't let that happen. We had to do something about it.

Turk Dangos

He wasn't stronger or better in any way that I could see. He wasn't better-looking—he sure as hell wasn't taller—but right off the bat—I only noticed it later, y'understand—right from the start I gave in to him. Damn his goony eyes. Why should I treat this ordinary-looking, nobody kind of guy like he

was—well, like my superior officer? But not my superior, more like—my older brother. I *admired* him dammit. Still do. I can't help it. I would hate his guts if I could but they won't let me.

I'm *not* crying dammit can't you see I choked on my drink? Hope to God you aren't around when somebody needs the Heimlich maneuver. You'd be sitting there peering into the guy's face with big soulful eyes saying, "Can I help you sir? Is there anything I can do to help you?" Pisssshah! Get away from me you goopy-skinned creep. Just keep your hands—if that's what you call 'em—to your own damn self. I'm telling you the story aren't I? Well then, just listen for Godssake and don't be interrupting all the time.

Leslie Allen Johns-Wickley

The Coracle Group, the Constellar InFormation Commission—none of them had the slightest concern in the matter. Another minor episode in the great cosmic dance of Sentient Being, tra-la! It was nothing to them that a whole way of life was in danger of dying out.

Turk Dangos

See, there was nothing *special* about him, nothing different, nothing that stood out. He would have made a damn good spy. I guess he *was* a spy, now that I think about it. A Goddamn alien spy. So what if he is a mutation—he was still a Goddamn alien to me. All those whatever-ya-call 'em—that big bunch of yaddity-yas in the sky—they took him on fast enough and that's as alien as you can get. They sure ain't from New Jersey!

Dr. Carol Ann Harrington

About that incident, yes, I do regret it. I will always be ashamed that I did not see it coming—did nothing to stop it. I regret it very deeply. It was unprofessional. It was wrong. I who pride myself on knowing the mind at its most basic levels, failed to understand human nature. It is ironic—and frankly, it is still painful for me. I'd rather not discuss it.

Linda Ann Bunker

Afterward—after it was too late—the media ranted and raved. Ha! They called it "the pink market." Even then, they got the facts all wrong. They were such stooges. Hand puppets of the military-pharmaceutical industries. None of our people knew he was not the only one. Not at our level. They probably did higher up, but nobody told us. How did he *smell*? I haven't any idea. You'll have to ask the people from PT. Or the ones who slept with him. I never did, I worked in

Refrigeration. No, I didn't say anything. Why should I?

Leslie Allen Johns-Wickley

The women smuggled him out. Not just one or two, but *all* of the women were in on it. Not one of them was loyal to the species as we know it. There are a few true women left, God bless them, but the half-breeds are beyond numbering by now. Not only did they get him out of the building, they got him out of the country. On the lab's money, if you want to know. That secretary, what's her name, Joan, did that. Oh, yes, and not just him—they sent his frozen sperm to God-knows how many sister labs, with special instructions. In six months, there were nearly 30,000 women pregnant by him. Some incredibly minute amount of his sperm was mixed other men's in fertility labs around the world, *and his won out every time!* Even his bloody *sperm* were superior. The girls, the women, they treated him like he was some kind of god. No, they didn't. They treated him like he was their favorite baby brother. They coddled him and protected him and gave him everything—and I do mean everything.

Turk Dangos

If he wanted a babe all he had to do was smile at her in that way. It didn't matter if she was married or engaged or in love, or what, she just went to him. I don't know how many he got to that way. I don't know about any lesbians I never asked, okay? I don't want to think about it. Whores. I suppose the women can do it back by now—they can make any man of us come to them if and when they want us. But they don't want us. Who knows what they want? Whatever it is, it's always something you ain't got!

Funny thing, though—he never seemed to pick the best-looking babes, not that I could tell. I don't know what they saw in him, or what he saw in them. Maybe alien mutations aren't too fussy about where they poke their thing, but it makes no difference now.

Dr. Carol Ann Harrington

That's right, all the traits are fully transmissible and they are not sex-linked. Both female and male offspring have the same psychogenetic traits: the friendliness, the aggression-damping sphere of affiliative influence, the acute spatial perception and high dexterity—plus the full range of somatics—immunity to joint inflammatory disorders, and all that. No, I've never wanted children. You know, to this day, I am still convinced that those women weren't intending any harm. They were simply trying to

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Prophetic Visions Induced by Dumpster-Diving

L. Haywood Coffey started painting in 1996 on a lark. He's since turned out hundreds of paintings and had enough shows to forget many of them. He first scavenged canvases and other materials from yard sales, but has since discovered the richness that is the county dump. Now, almost all of his materials are rescued, but he does buy some. He let us give titles to the works you see here, and that was fun.

www.lhaywoodcoffey.com





Opposite:
Top, Herpetology.
Bottom, Pi Snake

Above: Twinsies
Right: Red Witch



The Blotter Dream Journal

real dreams, real weird

In a clothes store and some lady pushes her baby to me. I am forced into holding it. Then I notice she only wanted to divert my attention so she could steal my purse. Suddenly, I am in this huge lobby-area trying to order an onion salad.

—J.L., Raleigh

I am walking through a quiet neighborhood. I accidentally step on a cat. It shrieks and then lies there. The young woman who lives in the nearest house talks to me about it. A voice as of an unseen veterinarian says that three of the cat's legs are broken but two of them will heal. The woman says that she will make it her house cat. She says, "It will be better off than my previous 95 cats."

—R.G., Raleigh

Please send excerpts from your dream journals to Jenny at mermaid@throughthemoon.com. If nothing else, we love to read them. We won't publish your whole name.



help out their friends, clients they cared deeply about.

Linda Ann Bunker

Yes, I knew something funny was going on. Supplies missing, samples I never labeled showing up on the racks, little stuff like that. No, I didn't say anything. I didn't know who it was, no. I had my suspicions, but I never tried to find out. Why should I? It would only have made *me* look bad—probably I would have been fired, not them. Trained educated lab techs were a dime a dozen, but really good support staff were worth their weight in gold.

Besides, they weren't doing anything unethical—nothing to harm the protocol. Stupid little adolescent games. Giggling and giddy like girls. They were all married and childless. No, not all of them were in their twenties—quite a number were past forty. When that one secretary—she was 52—started showing and turned in her notice, that was when all hell broke loose. They sent for that Ozzie team and by then it was too late. The samples were dispatched before the airline tickets arrived. Those gals were certainly efficient, you have to give them that! Ha!

Niessa Waheed Sotolongo Napangala

The elders they come to me, they say how do I dare to give the milk of our race to this demon child? Why do I not see he is a devil's spawn and kill him at once? I tell to them they are wicked, wicked bad-hearted men! I call that sweet, sweet child—this blessed son—so full of all, all that is good—I call him to stand before the elders and I say to them:

"You who say this little one is not your brother, *you* tell him why he deserves death—and then *you* take his life." He stand before them, so silent, so peaced. No fear, only sad eyes and pity—pity for so bad these men! Long time, they look and say nothing and then they roll in the dust and beg Allah to forgive.

Linda Ann Bunker

All over the world. Egypt, all the parts of Africa that had been so depopulated by AIDS, Central and South America, Malaysia—what was left of it—other parts of Asia. Not China though. We found out later that they had their own mutations, remarkably compatible blood types with the European strain. How many fertility clinics were there? Goddess alone knows. Every big city had hundreds—maybe thousands in each service region. The company had far-flung operations, not all of them had to do with human genetics. There were lots of ani-

mal clinics where the samples were distributed under the table. Find out why your chickens were off their feed and get an illegal baby in the same trip. Ha! Did you know that not one of those women experienced morning sickness? Not here in the Center, anyway. I wonder if it was true for all the others.

Leslie Allen Johns-Wickley

If only we could have infected him with AIDS or better yet SIDS-alpha. Oh yes, you know it perfectly well, don't play coy little games with me. Our labs are still working along that line, don't think we aren't. We are not going to give up without a fight. We may be going down, but maybe we can still take the bastards with us.

Robert Arthur Relzner

He can't be assassinated. What do you mean how do I know? Because I *tried*, that's how! Me and lots of other guys. We can't do it. Every time we got close enough to make a hit, we just—stopped. Yeah, that's right you heard right, we just stood there and cried like babies. Tried to wire his car once, and I felt so sad I couldn't think what I was doing. Just stopped fiddling with the wires and put the bomb down and went home. I dunno why. It was like—it was real bad. I hadda dream, too, my Gramma she shook her finger at me and Granpaw looked so disgusted at me. I never seen them look like that even when they was still around. Funny, huh?

Leslie Allen Johns-Wickley

We put the most dedicated, hardened men who ever wiped out their brother men on the case—insensitive, psychotic—we even recruited from the mob and—nothing! *Pfft!* You would think that they could have handled it would you not? But no. Everyone of them is now feeding orphans or something equally inane—no, absolutely true. I heard about it from—never mind who, but you can rely on the source. Mobsters tending babies—wiping up diarrhea and vomit—it is beyond all belief. The entire Organization simply toppled under his influence. They worship him, literally, I think. I've heard of rituals where they actually cut off their own—but don't report that. That's just a rumor, sheer gossip. You can't depend on everything those Latins say, even in these modern times.

Turk Dangos

The Pope—the *real* Pope, not that jerkoff they put in his place—he tried to stop it, and the Cosa put out a contract on the Pope instead of him! Nobody could touch him. Nobody *would* touch him. Complete

lack of will-power. The more you try to hurt him, the more he puts out that *vibe*—that whatcha call it "field of affinity."

And he's gone, he's offworld. Went to that Great Big Board Meeting in the Sky. He's *supposed* to have saved the world from being exterminated as a bad risk, but you will, I hope, notice that *we're* placed under Detrimental-Exfluence Quarantine but *he's* on the other side of that little D-E fence. Besides, he's not the only one anymore, it's too late. They're everywhere now, you would never notice them if you weren't looking for them. I'm looking, believe you me.

Leslie Allen Johns-Wickley

I see it everywhere—even in baby boys. Come to think of it, *especially* in baby boys. Five years ago, as little as five years ago there was one of them for every ten-thousand of us. Then, after the—the you-know, what they call the Warm Wave—disgusting, horrible, frightening! That women of our race could behave that way! But so many real men had died in the environmental disasters and the neutro-radiation raids had sterilized so many people, there wasn't a great deal of choice, I suppose. At any rate, after that it was fifty-fifty, but now...I could stand on a busy street corner in New York or Tokyo or—*or* London—if any of those big cities were left, I mean, I could stand there and watch the whole day and not one human man or boy would pass me. It's the beginning of the end for us.

Linda Ann Bunker

Yes, I already told you I knew people were sleeping with him. Back then, everyone was wild. It was a crazy time. Women were desperate to have babies. They slept around a lot—it was ... overlooked. So many men were sterile—from the radiation, from the artificial estrogens in the world's water supply. No! Of course women did not put it there! It was from farmlands, runoff water carrying chemical fertilizer. It breaks down into synthetic estrogen. If you must blame somebody, then blame farmers. Blame the *men* who ran the chemical industries. Always looking for a way to blame women—still! It defies all reason. Are you done? I have work to do, you know.

Turk Dangos

I wouldn't trade a lukewarm turd for anything they pull off in the next gazillion years. They have a lot of nerve calling themselves human beings. Nothing but a bunch of mealymouthed, namby-pamby, oh-everybody-so-happy-go-lucky, all sweet brotherhood *friends!* They're no friends of mine, let—me—tell—*you!* I piss on all of

them. They'll never conquer a damn thing.

Yeah, Relzner and me, we keep coming back to the Center. I don't know why, really. Nothing much else to do, probably. You get tired of sitting in the Goddamn leafy park watching the piss-ant squirrels run around. The TV they put on these days—God what a waste of time! Educational this and 'deeply stirring emotional drama' that—a load of old horse piss, if you ask me. Not that anybody asks.

Y'know Relzner—he was the *best*—he was so outstanding. They got tapes here of him on the field—sometimes I go and watch them again, but after a while it just gets to me. No more football—ever again. It's a Goddamn shame. I just can't believe this is happening to us. The human race, wiped out by that—I don't want to talk about it. Hell of a world.

Robert Arthur Relzner

No I don't date anybody not anymore. They gotta coupla nice ladies at the Center they call 'em CT's. That's the kind of therapy I like, ha! ha! ha! I dunno I never thought about it. Maybe Turk knows, you could ask him. What would they want with our sperm anyway? Nobody wants us. Nobody's ugly to us, I don't mean that, but it's just not the same. It's just a bunch of guys in the same room. It doesn't feel like a family anymore.

Leslie Allen Johns-Wickley

So there you have it—no more great achievements—no more striving—no more pyramids built at tremendous cost in human suffering for the lasting human glory.

Everyone knows that aggression is what built the Pyramids and created modern medicine and sent us to the moon and—oh God! Hundreds of thousands of the best inventions and victories of human existence! Whatever this ungodly—yes I do call it ungodly and unnatural too! This mesalliance of weaklings—male and female alike—whatever they dredge up in the way of culture will be a pitiful offering in the light of history. They will never achieve the least prominence among the range of known species. The day of our glory is past.

I can easily predict the future for what you might—by a long stretch of courtesy—call the human race. It will get fat and lazy and luxurious and be wiped out by a worse tribe of barbarians than anything we ever dreamed up *chez nous*. Let them try to work their "telekinship enhanced dopamine cascade of excitation" on a race that gets their jujubes from killing other Sentient Saps.

Yes, I try to keep reading books—the *old* books, you know—the classics. Stories

about *my* race, my people. But it's no use. Rubs it in worse. We're what your people call lame ducks. Sitting ducks. Dead ducks! Ha, ha. They might as well shoot us and get it over with, don't you know. No, I have nothing else to say. That's all. *Good* day. I'm sure you won't mind finding the door yourself.

Dr. Carol Ann Harrington

Out of control! That's a mild understatement. You would have thought the Center had the last world supply of narcotics. A week after the news report there was a sea of seething humanity surrounding the compound. Have you not seen the old videos? Oh, sorry, I forgot, you all do not perceive in that light range. Well, anyway, I had to get to and from work in an armored vehicle. Mostly women of course, but a surprising number of men, too. Men of property—men of religion—men who were just as desperate for a male heir as they have ever been. Lord! It was a crazy time. I had forgotten so much. How quickly we have adapted to the changes. It may be the most remarkable human trait, after all—adaptability. We have so much to learn.

Ntessa Waheed Sotolongo Napangala

We have water now—water that does not make the belly cramp. We have fine fields, many gardens. Not our village only! All the tribes and nations. And it was he—the little one—not so little now. He it was who gave to us. We praise him. We praise him. May Allah go with you.

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Lisa Albinger

"All the Girls are here
Some in the Darkness
Some under the Light"

Lisa Albinger is from Phoenix, AZ, and found us online. She says her paintings, which she calls "The Girls" despite some male subjects and masculine energy, always just take shape as she does them; they don't start with sketches. She uses paper towels and cotton swabs instead of brushes.

Opposite, Top Row:
After Moon, Denise

Bottom Row:
Field Pass, Ike

Right:
My Native

www.lisaalbinger.com



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7:30 Celia Rivenbark: *We're Just Like
You, Only Prettier* | Thurs., Apr. 22,
7:30 Jane Yolen: *The Radiation Sonnets*

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that color looks great on you!

A Keen Wind by Ava Morgan

A keen wind came, and
Blew my house away.
It shook my shutters,
And jolted my ice;
I thought the world
Had come to an end.
The wind howled and
Moaned in rapid confusion;
It spit on the windows,
And toasted the red brick.
I laughed at the wonders,
As nature sat down to lay an egg!
The wind pulled me up,
The wind pulled me down,
I ran both left and right—
At the same time, trying to
Escape the pressure of its twine
Pulling the last thread off my
concubine.
The school of meteorology
Had been wrong before
But not as wrong as the
Keen wind that sucked:
"Life out of its Earth"
Placing me in another time

A Sight by William Cannon Purdy

Thin sturdy legs
converge to support
a supple torso
bent awkward
half turned and leaning
refrigerator light
shadows smooth nakedness
hair hangs messy with
composure
left hand scratches left buttock
while right hand
moves milk to get to
the pickles

El Rodeo by Amy Ritchie

it was hot and dry, like
west texas in spring

sheep carcass bouncing
on a flat bed truck

road armadillo
road red cardinal

road signs to break the view
along route 277 blue

aura beaming from her
strange/her flesh he said

so then the signs made sense
the .22 rifle made sense

lord knows, he said
sucking a toothpick

lord knows
where your daddy's people
come from planting
mesquite trees
in the desert,
just a little shade

All This Issue's Writer Bios on One Page:

Seoda Duffy's "Dixon's Last Stand" (pp. 3-5) is one of those submissions that came in with a note about how the artist had to screw up her courage to send it in. I know I get sick when I read in the car, but I liked it so much I read it while my wife drove us to Wal-Mart and was sick for half an hour. It was totally worth it.

G. Kay Bishop's "Gamma Male" (starting p. 6) came in with enough other stuff in the envelope to make me think she (I'm assuming Kay is a woman's name, although King Arthur's brother was named Kay) was a scary graphomaniac when Ignatz passed it off. Maybe she is, but she's good enough that I ain't scared no more. I've got a couple-dozen of her poems on file. You'll see more.

Ava Morgan lives in Raleigh, NC with her guinea pig, Imagery. Besides writing, she enjoys acting in plays and watching local bands perform. This is Ava's first publication and she's flattered by all the secret admirers who keep sending her roses.

William Cannon Purdy just seems to be a good poet and a darn fine fella in general. I think he's a businessman of some sort, although that's not entirely clear.

Amy Ritchie is a Virginian lady, schooled at James Madison University and subsequently at the academies of San Francisco and Brooklyn's hipster poet scenes. She's published a bunch and likes to read her stuff for audiences. She recently moved back to Richmond, VA, to the woods, to write and grow things.

Mikey Brandon is a displaced Chapel Hillian away at school in Boston. His folks mail him current issues of *The Blotter* when it comes out, and I hope those packages also contain cookies ... got that Mom? Cookies.

Its Raining by Mikey Brandon

The evening trees all draped in electricity,
stand like stars or frozen stoic gods.
And there's that same man,
with that same hand,
that curls like cigarette smoke up onto his chin.
He'll sit on splintered city bench,
and think real still watching the building of funeral goodbyes.
And here come those black umbrellas.
They shuffle slow with melancholy stride.
They spread onto the sidewalk and get all swallowed by the night and stillness and sorrow.
Its raining,
and he'll think real still
about his goodbyes
and those trees that got lost in time and someone built a city around them too

H[⚠]A[☢]Z[⚠]M[☢]A[⚠]T

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