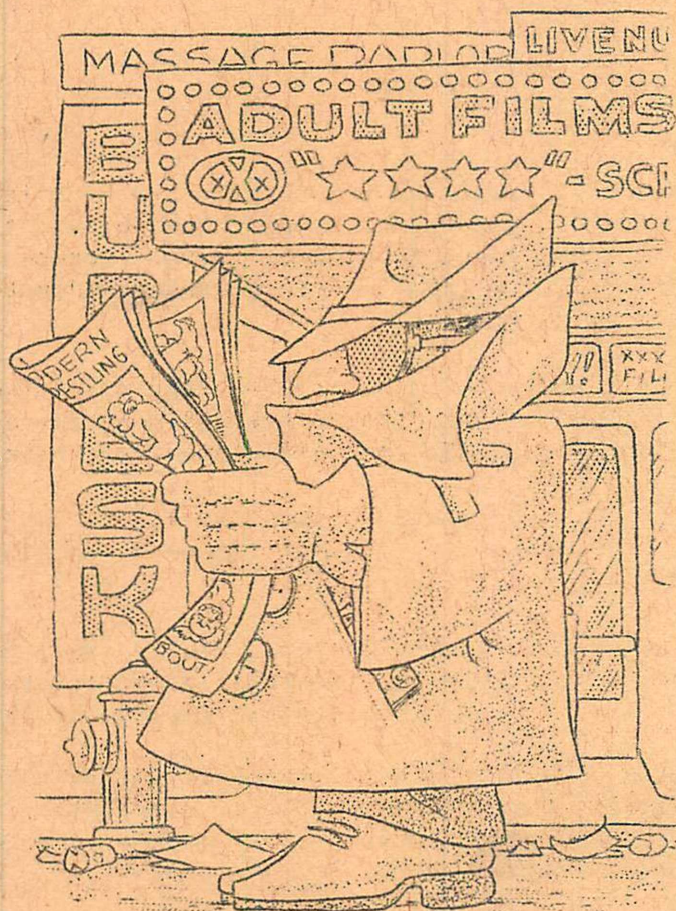
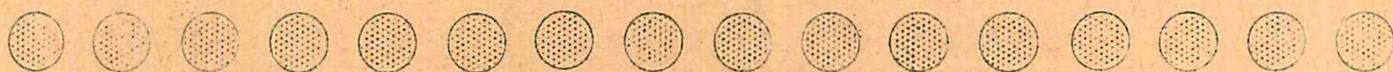


EXTRA #6



RENEGADE CULTURE

★ ★ ★ ★
EXTRA



Four Star Extra, Volume 1 Number 6, is brought to you by that hedonistic-to-the-hilt quartet, Joyce & Arnie Katz (59 Livingston St., Apt. 6B, Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201) and Bill & Charlene Kunkel (85-30 121st St., Kew Gardens, N.Y. 11415). Published monthly, it is now available at \$5 for six issues. Yes, we've decided to start taking subscriptions in response to numerous requests to be added to our mailing list. Monies collected as a result of this "Renegade Culture" issue will be spent on inflatable plastic women (and men). And, no, you can't have a turn. All contents copyright 1978 by Four Star Extra and may not be reprinted without written permission.

Publication Date: October 8, 1978

Next Issue's Theme: Monstermania

Cover: Ross Chamberlain

FOURPLAY ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
RENEGADE CULTURE

Arnie: Before we get down to the high class repartee in this joint editorial, I'm supposed to explain the theme. It's a dirty job, but someone's got to do it. This is the "Renegade Culture" issue, because the four of us have long yearned to publish a flossy offset magazine called Renegade devoted to pop-, mass-, counter- and just-plain-weird-culture topics.

Obviously, this isn't the flossy offset magazine of our dreams. It is, we hope, at least a tantalizing hint of the more exotic delights which might be found in such a publication, should it eventually come into being.

Bill: "No horses," Arnie warned me when I took his place at the typewriter, "and no animals!" Which leaves me nothing to write about except Apartment House Wrestling.

But where, I wonder, can I start? Do I first explain that all the combatants are well-stacked honeys of the feminine persuasion? Or do I inform you that the battles take place only in the penthouse playgrounds of the ultra-rich?

No, I think the first thing to say is that it's not real. Oh, it may be real now, a self-fulfilling prophecy, but it started as just another shtick to sell wrestling magazines. A couple of bikini-clad models, a motel room in Queens, a photographer and -- voila! --Instant Sport.

Fourplay - II

A friend of mine used to write the scenarios -- and were they good! The series began by introducing "Dave Moll," a big mocher in the world of high finance, who was prone to sip expensive brandy and puff Havanna cigars between revelations. Dave thought it would be fun to watch a couple of beautiful girls kick ass on the living room floor, and it turned out he was right!

"I get letters all the time from people who want to come to my house now," 'Moll' exulted during an interview on the "origin" of the sport.

After awhile, they were forced to try some new angles. I mean, how many times can you do the "Girls Strip One Another in Savage Brawl!!" trip? So instead they offered articles like "The Night My Girlfriend Became an Apartment House Wrestler!" which was about a guy in the sticks who gets to watch his girl and her best friend punch the bejeezus out of one another one night. Though it begins like an Edgar Allen Poe story -- "I must write it down now, every detail, while it's still fresh in my mind!" -- it resolves itself in very humdrum fashion. His girlfriend wins, the ladies kiss and make up, and Joe Boyfriend is left with a night he'll never forget!

My personal favorite concerned two girls applying for the same secretarial job. Both were raving beauties, and the poor, rich employer didn't know what to do, since they were also equally qualified.

"You girls both seem sophisticated," he finally tells them. "I presume you've both heard of -- Apartment House Wrestling?"

And, yes, they both have. They proceed to battle it out on the boss' living room carpet.

The descriptions are absolutely florid, the pictures ludicrous and the black strips on all nipples and genitalia completely sleazy. In short, it was one of life's little treasures. In fact, it was so popular that it got its own book, "Battling Girls." But if I go on much more, I'm sure to start mentioning horses.

Joyce: Those black strips are, by themselves, the sleaziest-looking things you regularly see in print. My candidate for the sleaze-of-the-week award, though, is the ad for an inflatable plastic woman which has black strips across the doll's nipples. That isn't just sleazy... that's ridiculous.

Arnie: And what's really outré is when, in an ad for inflatable plastic women, they put a black strip across the doll's eyes. Who's going to recognize the doll in the ad, Barbie and Ken? "Oh, look, Barbie," Ken says in that wimpy, square-jawed way of his, "isn't that Linda behind that black strip? And she's always so prissy, too!"

This talk of grappling reminds me that I just picked up the new issue of my favorite magazine, Inside Wrestling. This monthly has already locked up my vote for the "Best Science Fiction Magazine" Hugo award, and it's also a strong contender for this year's Four Star Extra Order of Merit Citation for Total Crazyness.

Most wrestling magazines print what you'd expect: profiles, interviews, accounts of big matches, news and the like. Not Inside Wrestling. Publisher Stan Weston has propelled his magazine beyond the narrow confines of sports into... who can say? Inside Wrestling has the same degree of reality and decorum as a wrestling card in a Brooklyn gym on "midget girl tag team" night. In other words, they make it up as they go along.

(Continued on page 31)

POWER SQUARE ○○○○ SCUM OF THE EARTH

Overture:

In New York City, the newspapers are on strike. No Times. No Post. No Daily News. And it's been weeks. Big Apple-ites are beginning to waffle. On TV, they've extended the news programs, but with no Times around to act as Point, the media people don't know where to look -- unless it's at the strike, itself. Occasionally, they revive a week old lead item and re-report it with a nostalgic glow, and minimum changes ("I'm here at the scene of last week's West Side Highway collapse, and authorities are still not sure..."). Expanded coverage of shrunken events.

In any case, there eventually comes a point when it becomes necessary to simply read a newspaper. Just to open it up, and smell it, and hear it crinkle, then fold it back and have the newsprint come off all over your hands. It doesn't even have to be in English.

Actually, since we have the Post delivered, we've been getting one of the strike papers pretty regularly. Apparently, media mogul Rupert Murdoch made an arrangement with the Daily Metro, so that some newspaper would be distributed to the Post's home-delivery customers. (This procedure, however, may not work out so well. Consumer Affairs Commissioner Bruce Ratner has said that unless these substitute deliveries are specifically ordered, they qualify as unsolicited goods, and the customer has no obligation to pay.) Which I won't, since the Daily Metro -- do you believe that name? When you walk onto a subway and everybody's reading these papers with names like "The New York Daily Press", you feel like you're in a movie -- is just plain awful. On Primary Day, their coverage from page one was supposed to be continued on page four. Not only wasn't it there, it wasn't anywhere else in the thing, either.

I just couldn't hack it. I needed to read a newspaper, by Crom, not this miserable excuse for birdcage lining! (In fact, as I made my way to the local news stand, I wondered a bit about pet owners in Our Fair City, hit first with a "scoop" law -- applause -- and now with a newspaper strike. These must be lean times, I mused grimly, for the poor soul who's attempting to housebreak a large puppy, or the bird lover with four, five or more cages to keep tidy. However, as we shall see, there was no cause for concern.)

The El tumbled by overhead as I crossed Jamaica Avenue and came in sight of the cleverly-named "Corner News Stand -- 24 Hours", awash in a sea of newspaper. And I suddenly realized that while strike papers, scandal sheets and sexploitation tabloids were enjoying temporarily swollen sales stats, newspaper-starved New Yorkers were finding out, en masse, exactly how much difference there really is between the News, the Post, and the National Star. Readers who thrilled to the soap opera scenario of the Post's "Coma Woman" series -- wherein a catatonic woman gave birth to a living child, usurping, in the process, an entire week on the front page -- must feel strangely at home with the "National Inquirer".

BILL KUNKEL ○○○○○○

I was once an avid reader of the trashier tabloids, and as I flipped through stack after stack of the most sordid pornography and sensationalism imaginable, I felt a sentimental longing creep over me. I soon found myself looking for specific titles -- Inside News, Midnight, Truth -- and fondly recalling great news stories from the past...

There was the one where a shoe salesman went berserk and stabbed three people to death with a pointed, Italian Import, before turning the lethal footwear on himself in a suicide attempt. Or the sad saga of the crazed Tyrolian dwarf who ran wild in the streets of Sicily, stabbing people (for some reason, he used a knife rather than a shoe) at random, pausing only to explain to a reporter that he was "sick of being called 'Shorty'!" And who could forget the one about the Illinois housewife who swore she could hear a high-pitched voice rising from her sink, calling: "help! Let me out!" Finally, doubting her own sanity, she called in a plumber. He disconnected the drainpipe, then stepped back as a plucky little dude came tumbling out. It seems he worked for the Government, inspecting drainpipes ("They like to hire us," he explained. "We dwarfs are very loyal.") He made a wrong turn, however, and ended up in this woman's abnormally huge plumbing. (Don't ask me. I only know what I read in the papers.)

In many ways, however, the quintessential story appeared -- where else? -- in the Inquirer. It was a single photo, with a short caption/story underneath. This young couple was out riding through Kenya one day, see, when their car was attacked by a lion! They rolled up their windows and put the hammer down, but -- oh, no! -- they were out of gas! And so they sat, and waited for help to arrive. But dat ole' lion was a stubborn sucker, and he waited on them. And eventually, the young couple perished from starvation. The photo, however, showed the couple cringing inside their vehicle, while the lion sat on the roof. The gist of the caption was: "This is an exclusive photo of the couple starving to death, as they wait for help to arrive!" Incredible.

Don't get the wrong idea, now. I want you to understand exactly which trash it is I read. At least three-quarters of the market is hard-core smut, and these are of no interest to me. No, I'm talking about the papers that mix titillation with mutilation, diet tips, gossip and horoscopes. And they've changed a lot in the five years or so since I last checked one out. Emphasis has shifted more toward movie stars and pseudo-science (fictitious eg.: ELVIS CLONE DATING CHERYL TIEGS?)

But the biggest difference was not the content, but the context in which these publications now flourish. Once upon a time, Midnight was a slightly sleazier and considerably inferior version of the Inquirer. It showed no more promise than any of a dozen other middle-level raunch rags. Yet, somehow, when I wasn't looking, it merged with the Globe and became the Midnight Globe, moved into the number three spot, behind the Inquirer (still the archtypical scandal sheet) and the Star, and even runs regular commercials on the tube. Most vital, however, is the fact that it's now sold in supermarkets right along side TV Guide, People and the aforementioned Big Two. They'd cleaned up their covers, I noticed (Midnight used to specialize in bare-breasted women with black rectangles across their nipples), but, astonishingly, it was still pretty much the same rag. Still, if America now thought enough of the genre to let it hang around near food, then perhaps it was time for me to examine these tabloids more closely.

I read through a whole slew of them, and chose three of that number to review in depth, as indicative of the field. Now there is often a fine line between what I consider a good raunch rag, and a straight out sex paper. For all its excellence in covering its chosen subject, I won't be dealing with SCREW. Nor the scores of gay, s&m, waterworks, or even hetero-publications. Yet each of these three papers do traffic in sex, from the tits & ass-kiddy porn level of the STAR to the semi-hard core TRUTH and the absolutely

mind-boggling BLACK CONNECTION. Yec each of these tabloids also possess an air of unreality, of fantasy even, a sort of primal craziness that elevates it above the scores of humdrum sex-specialty sheets glutting the stands.

THE STAR

Used to be The National Star. Rupert Murdoch is the publisher, and it shows. The Star is ultra-slick, uses plenty of color pix, small print, by-lines by real people and *gasp*, even real news. It represents something new in the field, and its roots are closer to the Movie Magazines than to the Inquirer. It was much funkier in the beginning, when it was The National Star, however, and despite the pages and pages of news items, there was really very little that interested me in the more recent issues.

A typical issue features a cover photo of one of TV's jiggle queens, or perhaps the latest plastoid "sex symbol" from an upcoming mini-series. And the headline is something like: "Farrah Reveals Her Private Agony -- 'Love Can Be Worse Than Split Ends'!" (Actually, I'm not being up-to-date here. The October 3rd issue contained not one single mention of FFM.) But if it isn't Farrah's agony, it's somebody else's. Laverne & Shirley's, maybe. Or Fonzie's.

But don't expect any sex. You won't even get any heavy cheesecake. You see, The Star wants your respect. Granted, it isn't easy to take seriously a newspaper that runs a headline like: "Liz Taylor Shows Her First Touches Of Grey" on the front page. Nonetheless, they want to be taken seriously, even if it's only by the Archie Bunker's of the world. And what does Archie want to read, you ask? Well, according to Mr. Murdoch, mostly stories about John Travolta going bald, the heartaches of the stars, and pages and pages about crackpot medical discoveries. Why laitrile really works. Snap shots from the set of some currently-filming movie. The latest fad diet. Do vinyl slip covers cause cancer? Baldness cures. And whatever Linda Ronstadt's into this month.

Again, despite the astonishing lack of nekked ladies, this is a super-seller. Of course, there's always Cheryl Tiegs in a jogging outfit, or a soap opera starlet leaning forward in a bathing suit. But, frankly, it's all very mundane. Plenty of horoscopes, pseudo-consumerism and would-be populism, none of it very interesting. Like waiting around for someone to chart your biorhythms. The Star lacks the fire and life (albeit low) of the sleazier rags, and the outre' lunacy of its major competitors. Aimed right down the throat of Middle America, it's a scatter-gun tabloid that rarely finds any buckshot worth shooting.

TRUTH

TRUTH has, it seems, been taken over by a new outfit since last I perused its putrid pages, and no longer even covers made-up news. The banner head across page one was "The TRUTH About Orgazzing!"

They've also labeled themselves a "Swingers' Guide", but this rag is to swinging as INSIDE WRESTLING is to pro grappling -- reality seldom intrudes. In fact, this tabloid serves more as a primer in perversion than anything else. In a single issue, there were "Everything-You-Always-Wanted-To-Know-About" features on S&M ("Is Sordid S&M Your Bag Of Goodies?"), the Gay Life ("What do gays look for when they go out cruising in gay discos and cocktail lounges?"), masturbation ("Beat Your Meat For Better Sex") and the Wonderful World of Bondage ("The Truth About Those B&D Mamas Who Dig Beating Studs").

TRUTH is running a film review column these days ("If 'Little Orphan Sammy' cums your way one of these days, don't miss it. It's not a piece of shit like so many of today's

porno films.") written in pseudo-Meltzer-ese, two or three advice-to-the-sexually-pitiful columns, and some of the most outrageous ads I've seen in a long time. There's the "Auto-Suck", for example. This baby "operates from your car's cigarette lighter". There's the standard battery of hard-on pills, energizers and hypnotic powder, all clearly labeled "Spurious" (simply hoping, I presume, that no one will know what the word means), as well as the films, 8-pagers and magazines that eternally inhabit this particular corner of the Twilight Zone.

But perhaps the o-ly truly great thing about this particular specimen of scum, lies in its use of language. Let's say you're writing a full page story dealing solely with some model's unusually large breasts (such a story appeared in this issue). Or say you're doing a feature on the world of the homosexual. Granted, there are many synonyms for breasts and gays in our language already, but when the subject comes up twice in a paragraph, you run out sooner than you'd think. And besides, even these schlockmeisters have a yearning, deep down in their souls, to be poetic. Thus, a virtual lexicon of the libidinous has come into being, with such new-and-improved terminology (I use the term "new & improved" advisedly. Certainly, many of these expressions-- such as 'hogans' for breasts -- are old and antiquated, but they were all new to me!) as "midnight men" for male homosexuals, and "twilight tillies" for lesbians. Of course, some of these mutations are awful. The same piece that scored with "midnight men", bombed with "boys-who-would-rather-be-girls". But in a single article -- the aforementioned lady-with-the-big-boobies feature -- her admittedly extraordinary mammaries were referred to as "boobulas", "hogans", "megatits", "bazoombas", "mohungas", "goganzas" and "magonzas". You won't find any of those in Roget's!

There's a lot here for the true gourmand of garbage. Well worth it at 75¢.

THE BLACK CONNECTION

Right up front, let me tell you that this one absolutely blew my doors off. Seems to come from the new publishers at TRUTH -- in fact, these guys have been running house ads for some twenty-five different publications -- but TBC is a long way from even that level of, shall we say, good taste. Published for white males with a preference for dark meat, this masterpiece of muck combines scatology, pornography, and straight-ahead madness, with truly unique results.

The nuts & bolts are all here. The models are first class, and the layout is simple but effective. The Black Connection even has a message. A focus. No, better make that an "obsession". Two headlines tell the story: "Black Sluts Make The Best Lays! -- Ask Any Horny Stud" and "White Women Lust For Black Studs". Everything else is a variation on the theme, with the exception of their How-To features, which are far randier than anything I've ever seen in TRUTH. (Would you believe: "Anal Masturbation: Do It Up Your Own Bunghole!") Everything else is pure, simple, balls-ass-naked B&W Porno -- that's Black & White, ba-bee, or, as TBC put it: "Integrated Poon Is Best".

A sampling of headlines: "Confessions Of A Jaded Slut"; "Black Pride Is Eating Beaver" (wouldn't that make one hell of a bumper sticker!); "Confessions Of A Foxy Black Mama"; and "How Massage Parlor Cuties Make Peckers Potent Again" ("It's what the doctor calls shock treatment," she smiled. "And I must say it works...").

There are an inordinate number of paranoia-oriented features, however, and they are definitely the low point of the issue. Especially weak is "A Candid Camera Could Record Your Sex Life And Blackmail You" by N.X. Torshnest (who is actually capable of much better

(Continued on page 11)

BLUE JAUNT ○○○○○○ ON THE BOARDWALK

As the elevated train drew closer to its destination, the passengers' enthusiasm had already begun to bubble over. Below us I could see Astroland and all the carnival rides, and even from here I fancied I could hear the screams of happy terror coming from the Cyclone. Adults who may not have smiled for twenty years grinned from ear to ear, and kids quivered and jumped for joy, barely able to contain their anticipation. One butter-ball of an eight-year-old particularly caught my eye, as he ran from side to side of the train, trying to see everything, trying to hold it all... A little girl was so excited she began to squeal -- and I felt much the same.

When the city fathers built this subway line in 1920, they gave New York the greatest gift of all -- the beach for just the price of a five-cent token. They even built wide sweeping ramps instead of stairways; everyone can go to the shore. And even though the price of the token has increased tenfold, sooner or later everyone does come to Coney Island.

The fun began before we were even out of the station, since instead of being filled with Danskin and Park Lane Hoisery shops, the subway stop is crowded with souvenir booths and fast food stands and the smells of hotdogs and fries, ice cream, burgers and onion rings, shrimp, shishkabob, pizza, sausages, chicken, corn-on-the-cob, cotton candy, tacos -- a million freshly cooked delicious treats, representing the junk food of every ethnic culture in the City.

I wanted to see the Boardwalk, so we ambled alone eyeing the beach on one side and the businesses on the other. Here you could rent a towel, there you could buy a drink and carry it out, and over there, hero sandwiches. Side by side, every kind of food, every kind of entertainment, all kinds of gaming parlors. And everywhere you looked, laughing New Yorkers at play, and smiling city policemen enjoying their beats while keeping every inch of the area under their watchful attention.

As we walked past, a gypsy girl called out to us, "Read your palm?" and Charlene confessed she had never had her fortune told. We went into the booth, and Charlene sat down at the table in front with an older woman, as I stepped into a closet in the back of the room with the teenaged girl. She drew a curtain over the door, and I looked around. An icon of Jesus and some dried flowers were on the wall, a Bible lay on a shelf, and two straight chairs faced each other. Nothing more. "What kind of reading do you want?" she asked, and I gave her 50¢. She held my hand, gazed into my eyes, and told me I was "a good woman with many sorrows, but a happy future." Not bad for four bits. I walked back out and stood with Arnie and Bill as the older lady finished with Charl. She had popped for a dollar reading, and for her extra half-buck, received a promise that there would be children.

JOYCE KATZ ○○○○○○

Blue Jaunt -- II

We left the boardwalk and cut through the midway toward the Cyclone. Bill and Charl wanted to see the water flume, so we stood a minute and watched log-shaped boats shoot through a canal of water, down rapids, and around curves where sprays of water were flung through the safety wiring.

A flying saucer ride caught my eye. The spinning disc rose sedately into the air, gradually increasing in speed. When it was high above our heads, it began to slowly tip even while whirling ever faster, until it was at a 180 degree angle to the ground, and all that held the passengers in place was centrifical force and a safety belt.

We all stood and stared at the ferris wheel for awhile. This one was made up of gondola cars shaped like trams that go between mountain peaks. As the wheel turned, each car rolled and turned independently, and we all agreed to leave it for the stronger-stomached.

I watched the prancing ponies on the merry-go-round, but no one else wanted to ride, so we wandered on.

"Come try your luck, only 50¢," a grifter called to Arnie, and offered him a chance to throw three baseballs into a bushel basket. "I can't believe I missed all three," said Arnie, and tried again, and then yet again, then cheerfully shrugged and walked to the next booth.

"Guess your age?" invited the man, and Arnie pushed me forward. He looked me over carefully and said, "It's pretty hard to tell." I obligingly took off my sunglasses, gazed into his eyes, and he guessed me two years younger than I am. I smiled conspiratorily, and gave him a quarter. He gave me a pink rubber large-tailed creature he got at a carnival supply store for a nickel, and we were both happy. Though Bill insisted it was a squirrel, I disagreed and christened it Roscoe the Beaver.

We reached the Cyclone, surely the king of all roller coasters. Bill and Charlene rode while Arnie and I listened to the screams as the cars whizzed past where we stood. When Charlene got off, she smiled brightly and calmly, and said, "It wasn't bad at all." Then she added, "and next time I'll try it with my eyes open."

As we walked on down the midway, we noticed a crowd of people gathered around one booth, and walked over to see what had prompted such interest. At a test-your-strength device, a young black man was just bringing down a sledge-hammer with a mighty crash, to scattered applause and cheers from the onlookers as the clanker was forced almost all the way to the top. Unwilling to stop when he was so close to ringing the bell, he ponied up another 50¢ for a second swing. But the brunt of his strength had been broken by his first herculean effort, and his showing was less valiant on the second try. He shrugged and laughed and handed the hammer back to the concessionaire, and we walked on.

I was fascinated by the bars, no more than elongated booths fronting the sidewalks. At night, the owners pulled down sliding steel panels to secure the business in their absence. But at this hour the panels were out of sight, and the bar stretched down the length of half a block, completely open to the crowd passing by.

The long row of barstools were mostly filled with men who seemed to be having an endless conversation about the area, remembering how it used to be a decade ago, a month ago, or perhaps only yesterday. A fiftyish woman sat huddled with her husband, and one lone hooker sidled up to a lanky cowboy leaning against the bar. As I swirled the gin around in my elegant papercup, the two walked out heading toward the Surf Hotel further down the block, "\$2 the night, a bath on every floor, and clean sheets once a week."

The evening was wearing on, and the beach was glowing in the sunset. All the mothers with their strollers had gone, and the senior citizens were beginning to drift away, to be replaced by couples wearing tie-dyed jeans and fancy teeshirts, out for an evenings' entertainment.

We walked into one of the arcades which also boasted a large shooting gallery. As Charlene and Arnie headed for the pinballs, Bill and I started plunking away with the guns. Each target had a small bull's-eye, and if you hit it square-on, the target animated. Ducks floating on a pond would, when hit, swim in tight little circles while emitting raucous quacks. The mannequin at the player piano put his hands to the keys and played a few bars of The Sting. A raccoon sitting beside the pond would thump his tail noisily, and beer cans would shoot into the air, then settle carefully back to ground. The toughest shot was the swinging pendulum of the clock; when you hit it, the bird inside would pop out and cuckoo for you.

Having each unloaded a few quarters on the guns, Bill and I moved into the electronic game room to try our skill with the machines. This gaming parlor was T-shaped, and the large shooting gallery represented only the serif-base of the letter. For some 60 or 70 feet, the narrow room was lined on both sides with electronic games, with another row down the middle. At the rear of the room were pinball machines lined along one wing of the crossbar of the T, and on the other side, skee-ball alleys.

A crowd was gathered around one of the newer games, so I stopped to watch. A glass enclosed cube, it was filled with quarters precariously balanced on a ledge. The object of the game was to drop quarters through a slot onto the ledge in the machine in such a way as to dislodge one or more of the balanced coins, causing them to fall into the payout slot. Of course, gambling is illegal in New York, and even if you were successful in this unlikely maneuver, what you would receive were 25-point tokens, redeemable for prizes.

Most games at Coney Island now cost 25¢ to pay and this is universally true of the arcades located right on the boardwalk. However, by looking around a bit, you can still find some 10¢ games operational in the parlors off the boardwalk. There are various fortune telling games, IQ tests, the arm-wrestling machine, fishing, and even a few shooting gallery machines that still can give you a thrill for a dime. But, the best bargain for your money when you are lucky enough to find machines still playing for dimes, is SkeeBall (or nine-ball, as it is called in some playlands.)

The object in skeeball is to roll an apple-sized wooden ball down the lane, trying to hit one of the scoring cups at the end. The scoring cups are graduated in size, with the largest giving you ten points and the smallest fifty. You have, of course, nine shots to win prize coupons based on your score. At only a dime a game, you can get a lot of value out of a buck spent here.

I settled down for some serious skee-balling, and pretty soon Bill and Charlene and Arnie joined me for a tournament. Modesty of course forbids me to say who won.

Deciding we'd better get something to eat before starting for home, we wandered on down the block until I saw a shishkabob stand. The woman cooking this evening was young, dark-haired and blue-eyed, wearing a lovely three carat diamond wedding set, and demurely dressed in a cotton jumper and blouse. As she slid chunks of lean beef onto a wooden pick, alternating with pieces of green pepper and sliced onion, she eyed me in a friendly fashion, and while she roasted the meat over a charcoal grill, we fell into a conversation.

I inquired, "Do you always work here?"

She grinned while expertly splashing barbecue sauce onto the meat. "In this dump--all winter? No way. We go to Lauderdale and don't come back 'til after Easter."

When my beef was roasted, I walked on down the block to catch up with the others, who were lining up for hotdogs, fries and sodas from the original Nathan's Famous. As we headed for the subway, I remembered my pocket full of prize coupons, so ran back to the arcade to cash them in.

I eyed the toy soldiers, the menagerie of glass animals, the plastic shoe horns, until finally I spied my choice -- exactly the thing to commemorate my excursion into the renegade culture of Coney Island. For 85 coupons, I received a deck of 52 miniature playing cards printed in Taiwan, each of which boasted a nude lady directly from the pages of Playboy.

Who could ask for more?

-- Joyce Katz

POWER SQUARE ●●●●●

work than this.) Also in the issue was a piece on blow-job queens who rip off their johns by R. Gazum, and a story by Chester DeSade that asks the musical question, "Will A Black Cut Your Nuts Off?"

As I'm sure you've already picked up, TBC uses only the most respected writers in the field. Also appearing in this issue were Hershey A. Naille on Anal Masturbation, John Lurker on getting phone numbers off bathroom walls, and Rex Random on black tongue control.

CODA:

Initially, I was astounded to discover America reading MIDNIGHT, but now it's all quite clear. The supermarket tabloids are vapid -- gossip, quackery and soft-core T&A. Still, they cannot entirely escape their origins. The format, the tradition, the roots of a sheet like the INQUIRER run too deep.

America, however, remains obsessed with jiggle sex. Laminated ladies leaning lasciviously low, as Stan Lee might put it. Foam rubber "moganzas" and air-brushed genitals. Well-scrubbed flesh and squeaky clean hair. Teeth that glisten like mother of pearl, and a tan that's more than skin deep. It's all there. Jogging outfits. Bouncing bazombas. Runner's legs. Styled hair can cause sterility. There's a new diet where you eat nothing but army-surplus K-rations. And Gamma Rays can turn you green.

Personally, I wish the dwarfs were back in the drainpipes, and six foot goldfish were swallowing little boys. I used to especially enjoy the old INSIDE NEWS, which provided pictures for even the most preposterous of its news yarns. You see, INSIDE NEWS had a much wider scope than a tabloid like TRUTH, for example. That worthy could cover their most off-beat stories with pix taken in a motel room. But not IN, which once ran a story headlined "B-Girls Sell Themselves To African Nations!" Where do you get a photo depicting unemployed bar girls moving to the Congo? Why, you cut a little piece from this picture, then that one, then you paste them, and crop them, and if your file is big enough, you can do anything. Alas, the various figures and backgrounds are seldom in correct proportion. This results in the ladies (both of whom were clipped from a ca. 1942 pin-up) looming three times larger than the natives from the Tarzan still who sat in the rear.

Of course, times do change, shifting the clouds in heaven as surely as the scum of the earth.

-- Bill Kunkel

GAS GIANTS ○○○○○○○○○○ LETTERS FROM THE LOUD CROWD

NED SONNTAG has big ideas

I became an iconoclast at a very young age and take guff from nobody. I have an erotic fetish which some find screamingly laughable, and others find disgustingly disturbing. I'm 27 years of age -- and I look 19. I weigh less than 120 lbs. I have long blond hair. I've been called effeminate by some and "Miss" by others. Yesterday, the mother of the guy in the next apartment asked me to get my husband to help her open the door!

O.K., there's nothing unusual about that these days. But I'm not gay. I love women. And the women I love best are in the 250- to 325-lb. weight range. Mull that over for a minute.

Right now I am seeing a 104-lb. lady in an attempt to inject some sanity into the proceedings, but in the past 2½ years I've had affairs and one-night stands with 11 enormous women. One was just under 400 lbs.

In my 2½ years of membership in the National Association to Aid Fat Americans, I met a lot of little guys who liked big ladies, but never a woman of average size who went there looking for a fat boyfriend. They just threw me out of the aforementioned fat people's club, because of the filthy interview I gave to Cheri. This article was what prompted the mention of me in the "Summertime" issue.

I'm a high-strung cartoonist-illustrator who needs lots of mothering, but I've found that big fat women are, themselves, too childish to do the job. To thin women, mothering comes naturally, but sexually, I'm very passive with them. A fat beauty will stimulate me from a block away. I'll actively seduce her if possible and afterwards feel a horrible guilt and a desire to escape.

*** Your letter breaks new ground for Four Star Extra in more ways than one. Not only do you acquaint our hedonistic-to-the-hilt readers with a sexual possibility they may somehow have overlooked, but you're the first reader who has attempted to write on the theme of the current issue rather than comment on past ones. Could this be a new trend? We'll see when the letters to be printed in our "Monstermania" issue start arriving. -- Arnie

::: 1427 York Ave., New York, N.Y. 10021

TIM MARION sifts the sands of time

I hate to say it, Arnie, but I have always deeply despised, hated and loathed baseball. This is not a hatred picked out in particular, however; my hatred also extends to

basketball, football, kickball... you name it. In the earliest grades, I was always good at sports, but I preferred to run away to the sand pit with my friend Brian to build sand castles and drive our Matchbox cars around them. If the teacher found us, she would make us go play kickball or whatever with the other kids. When this happened, we both did pretty well, but I would have rather been playing in the sand.

**** Of course, you realize that getting channeled into more "sociable" pastimes by well-meaning teachers, counselors and other, similar adults is a common childhood experience. It may even be universal. I wonder if "planned fun" doesn't create about as many misanthropes as it prevents. -- Arnie
::: 113 Deepdale Rd., Strafford, Pa. 19087

LEE HOFFMAN offers a mini-mystery

I did want very much to send along some of my own reminiscences after the "World of Kids" issue, but at this point am left only with a single query: Do any of you know the rest of a kids' chant that went, "Machine Gun Kelly with the pasteboard belly"? I can't help but feel there must be more. However, that's all I can remember and, as far as I can recall, all I ever heard.

**** I've never heard that chant, but it sounds wonderful already. Anyone got an answer for Lee? -- Arnie

The "I Love a Mystery" issue is all good stuff. I wish I could figure out just how much of it to take seriously, and how much with a liberal sprinkling of salt. I also wish I'd been able to see more of the BBC Peter Wimsey stuff. I have trouble getting PBS in Port Charlotte and only got to see "The Nine Tailors," but it turned me on to Dorothy Sayers' books.

Ah, yes, I remember listening to "Johnny Dollar" long after the rest had faded away. But for many years during my youth, I was an avid fan of "Casey: Press Photographer" (later he got promoted to "Casey: Crime Photographer") as played on radio by Staats Cotsworth and on T.V. by Darren McGavin. Years and years after that, I saw a production of something or other by Shakespeare in Central Park that featured Staats Cotsworth. I looked him up in the phone book and sent him a very late fan letter for those old shows

**** "Casey" is, indeed, one of the classics. Recently, Joyce and I have been watching a few episodes of some old television chestnuts which had much of the flavor of the radio dramas, right down to the (unnecessary for T.V.) windy voice-over narration -- "Sgt. Preston" and "Public Defender". Our local shoestring T.V. station, channel 68, is running the two series each night, sandwiched around the ever-weird "Uncle Floyd" show. -- Arnie
::: 350 N.W. Harbor Blvd., Port Charlotte, Fla. 33952

ROY TACKETT has just one more question for Lt. Columbo

"I Love a Mystery," eh? Well, I did 40 years ago, but tell me where, today, is the mystery? There isn't any. What we get are "suspense" stories which usually have very little.

Take "Columbo". Bang! Right away we are knowing who is killing whom. Is there any mystery there? There is no mystery there. What I am wanting is a mystery. A chance, as it were, to match wits with the detective.

Gas Giants - III

As was mentioned in the opening of "The Cheap Detective" /by Bill Kunkel/, we ought to bring back the days when murder was respectable. Nowadays what do you have? I'll tell you; you have a lot of assaults and muggings and no class. Put the blame on Spillane.

**** Sneer at today's non-mysteries as you will, but touch not that sainted icon of renegade culture, Mickey Spillane. I ought to turn your mouth into a box of chicklets and pump six slugs from my trusty .45 into your belly for that one, punk. -- Arnie

::: 915 Green Valley Rd. NW, Albuquerque, N.M. 87107

HARRY WARNER loves some mysteries

My knowledge of crime and detective fiction isn't really extensive, but I was able to enjoy virtually everything in this issue, except when I felt ashamed at my ignorance about the fiction which was being parodied.

I'm something like Joyce in that I don't enjoy the crime and detective stories which are populated mostly by poor white trash. I also dislike plots which center around a crooked policeman or a policeman who appears to be crooked until the final denouement or incompetent policemen, so I don't pay much attention to most of the current crime series, which seem solely devoted to that sort of theme.

So most of my reading has been the less violent, less profane kind of mystery fiction: Rex Stout, Ellery Queen, Agatha Christie and so on. Curiously, I have next to no experience with Sherlock Holmes, although I keep promising myself to pick up a copy of a one-volume complete Holmes edition the next time I run across one in a second-hand store or flea market.

! **** If you enjoy the more sedate mystery writers, there's one TV show that might be your type of thing, "Quincy," on NBC. Although I feel the program does get excessively anguished at times, it is definitely not just one more rehash of the hardboiled school of 'tec fiction (which I, incidently, prefer). -- Arnie

Charlene wrote entertainingly about the Sayers stories, although I'm handicapped here by having read only two of the novels. I disliked "Five Red Herrings" thoroughly and I admired immensely "Clouds of Witness," so it's hard to say how I'll react to the other Lord Peter books I've put into the backlog of reading material. I didn't watch the television versions, because I dislike the indelible images of fictional characters that television can leave in my brain. The images confuse me when I'm reading more stories in those series and what I remember of the telecasts fails to jibe with the descriptions of the author.

**** I often find changes made by television adapters unsettling, and not just in the mystery field. Only a regular reader of comics could fully appreciate how childish and inaccurate the "Wonder Woman," "Hulk," and "Spiderman" adaptations on CBS really are. Why should a television show be less adult than a comic book aimed at 12 year olds? -- Arnie

::: 423 Summit Ave., Hagerstown, Md. 21740

MIKE GLICKSOHN is slightly mystified

I guess the main mystery to me, with regard to this "I Love a Mystery" issue, is how you could write about the field without mentioning my own favorites as determined by my limited exposure to the genre. Holmes, of course, is among everyone's favorites; I expect

my interest in snakes could be traced to my enjoyment of "The Speckled Band" at about age eight. And I'm sure I would never use "singular" as often as I do if it weren't for Doyle. Wimsey, too, is a recognized star, quite justifiably so from the one or two books I've read. But what of Agatha Christie, who gets merely a passing accolade or two? For "Murder of Roger Ackroyd" alone she deserves a place in the pantheon, surely?

And there is but one reference to Nick and Nora, surely two of the most delightful detectives ever to grace the Hollywood screen. Any man who drinks three martinis for breakfast is my kind of sleuth! In the realm of tough private investigators, how could one ever overlook Travis McGee, one of the best -- and best-selling -- series heroes ever? Still, it'd be impossible to cover such a broad field as mystery fiction in such a slim publication.

**** I think you've cleared up your own mystery with your final comment, Mike. If Four Star Extra were five times the size -- speed the day -- we still couldn't have scratched the surface of the mystery genre.

In case you were wondering how we do Four Star Extra, this might be a good place to provide an explanation, since we've been gaining readers at a rapid rate since the first issue. Periodically, the four of us pick a theme for an upcoming issue. Then we ruminate until we each have a topic within that theme. Anything not specifically connected with one of the four articles, we use as grist for the editorial, "Fourplay."

::: 141 High Park Ave., Toronto, Ontario M6P 2S3 Canada

Winning the big war with BILL ROTSLER

There's this place in the movie Patton where he has a huge map with the date, signifying that this is the situation as of that date, above it. The Battle of the Bulge is on. I'm watching the movie, but that date kept nagging at my subconscious. Why was that date important?

Then it hit me. That was the date I went in the Army! When the Bulge started, there was the feeling that the goddamn war was heating up again, that Germany was going to go on and on fighting and, naturally, that they were going to need more warm bodies. At 18½ I was warm, a rancher and healthy.

But I can't smell, I told them. "You have no sense of smell?" one of two captains asked. I said yes; they looked through a huge book, hummed and muttered, and passed the buck to two majors. The two majors looked through a smaller book, listening with half an ear while I said things like, "What about a gas attack? I'd never know. All my training would be wasted. I'd go like (insert finger-snap)." They did the bureaucratic thing and passed me on to two colonels who looked through a thin booklet.

Then, with the utmost casualness, considering it was my life they were dealing with, one of them said, "Oh, take him."

So I go on with the processing and eventually wind up at the desk of an amiable non-com who pleasantly asked, "What do you want, Army or Navy?"

Now at this point in the war, some people were getting drafted into the Marines, a situation fervently to be avoided. The reason they were taking draftees was that they were using up so many at the other end. However, my 18-year-old thinking was: The Navy works dry, has hot food and isn't out there all the time.

"Navy," I said.

The non-com picked up a rubber stamp, went wham and handed me the papers. I took them and turned away, thinking, "I'm in the Navy." You must remember, this was the Great War, the now high-status, adventurous war against All That Is Evil, the Nazis, Hitler, every bad guy in sight and the slant-eyed monkeymen. (A short time ago, my lady, Sharman DiVono, pointed at a picture of Hitler on the tube and said with some indignation, "He tried to kill you!" But I didn't take it personally, not back then.)

So there I was, a Boy in Blue. Almost. Casually, I looked down at the papers. Stamped across them was ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES. (THat's the draftee army; the "real" army is the United States Army.)

I was nonplussed, whatever that means. Did the non-com pick up the wrong rubber stamp by mistake, thereby dinging my life into an alternate universe? Was it some cruel joke he played, just to enliven the boring, rubber-stamped day? Was Fate taking a hand in the cardgame of my life? (Again.)

I stood there a second and then made perhaps the first Real Decision of my life. To go with it. Go with the flow. Take the cards as dealt. Don't give him the satisfaction of protesting and getting the standard "Tough shit" or "Don't you know there's a war on" cliché.

I mean, I knew about quotas. My high school chum who had come to the Pacific Gas & Electric Building in downtown Los Angeles from far-off exotic Oxnard had been processed in the morning and had gotten his choice, the Navy. But me and my purely decorative nose had delayed things. If the non-com had said, "Sorry, the quota is filled," I would have understood. Quotas and rationed this-and-that were common enough and well understood.

So I went with it. I just started walking on to the next inspection post, whatever it was. But I still remember, 34 years later, the speckled linoleum, the nothing-colored walls, the muffled din, the people who passed as I stood there, casting the dice of my future.

Perhaps in some alternate universe the "right" rubber stamp was used, and I drowned somewhere or got laid in Sydney or Manila or Tokyo, or served with great distinction or in total anonymity. Perhaps. As it was, I served with near-total anonymity in the Army, receiving perhaps one of the few sword wounds of World War II, and never doing much of anything.

Oh, the sword wound? (I knew I gotcha on that one!) Well, it was really a "sword" wound. I was in advanced radio school, and this guy and I used to duel, a la Flynn and Rathbone, with the collapsible aerials from the radios. With the buttons on the tip, we were able to "strike home" and seem to put the "sword" right in the other person.

Well, in the last duel, I apparently knocked off his button. I plunged home the rapier, and he threw his arms wide, tossing away the sword. The tip flicked my face. I didn't even know I was "wounded" until someone said there was a little blood on my face.

But the wound got infected, and I ended up in the hospital with a great swollen face and the doctors thinking I might die, because a clot from the infection would be so close to the brain. One day I looked at it in the mirror, touched it, and it exploded blood and pus. I had hardly ever felt anything so good as it drained. Then I had to go back to shaving, drat.

Gas Giants - VI

My other World War II stories involve a Secret Mission in which my chief function was to carry the luggage, and stealing smoke grenades to ruin my high school. And punching a drunk and having a fight with a soldier who had a 50 IQ. Then there was the time a pigeon in the park left a sudden deposit in the right eyesocket of a buddy, filling it suddenly from eye to glass lens.

And...

Well, we won the war, didn't we?

**** In light of this country's rightward drift -- and general intolerance for diverging lifestyles and attitudes -- I've begun to wonder about this exact point quite a bit, lately.

Since I only have one functioning eye, I avoid swords and similar sharp, pointed objects like the plague. The only hilt in which I have any interest is the one up to which the four of us are unflaggingly hedonistic. -- Arnie

::: P.O. Box 3780, Los Angeles, Ca. 90028

A letter full of worry from HARRY WARNER

Your "World at War" issue brings me square up against a matter which has been worrying me more and more. That's the propriety, the ethical implication, of doing anything which gives enjoyment from an activity which has caused so many millions of humans to suffer and die and starve since civilization created mass warfare. It really began to worry me the day I went to the original movie of "M*A*S*H," laughed my head off, and then the instant I came out of the theater I felt I'd been behaving sacrilegiously, to find so much pleasure in a film based on a hospital which features callousness to human suffering. I've never watched an installment of the television series based on the movie.

I have never been much of a game-player, so I couldn't decide to stop enjoying games based on warfare. I think it's doubly wrong to collect war relics, because that involves not only an armchair, safe method of getting close to a real war, but also profiteering from the sale of relics.

I didn't feel as angry about the Civil War centennial events as some did, because I felt that the programs conveyed some important messages about what war does to a nation, amid the commercialism and shambattle orgasms. But living only 40 miles or so from Gettysburg, I've never gone over that battlefield, because of the suspicion that battlefield-trotting builds up a bad mental habit in people: most battlefields are so beautiful and peaceful today, and there must be a tendency to imagine that the battles couldn't have been so bad in such scenic surroundings.

I've had to write considerable about war in the course of my job with the newspaper. This has caused me to feel some guilt for profiting by the misfortunes of the armies, but I've decided that if I didn't do it, someone else might do it instead in a way that would be more warmongering or prettified than I've done it.

Right now, I'm principally concerned with the morality of reading fiction based on wars. Tentatively, I've decided to limit myself to stories that are realistic about the miseries of war, like Kenneth Roberts' novels, which I've recently been glorying in. And yet there's no doubt that such novels give me something akin to pleasure, and it doesn't seem right.

**** We pondered the wisdom of our "World at War" issue before starting it, and we
(Continued on page 30)

PLAY DIAL-A-WORLD

You're all, I'm sure, familiar with the scene, having viewed it in a dozen old movies - the lonely soldier boy bluffing his buddies into believing that he has a sweetie waiting for him via a torrid (or, at least, gooey) phone conversation. Everything is going just swell, and he's jabbering away sweet nothings at a mile-a-minute, until some smart aleck sneaks close enough to the payphone to hear "at the tone, the time will be 6:05 *beep*."

Well, that tired film convention may have (thankfully) disappeared, but the time recording remains. Here in New York, as a matter of fact, some 125,000 folks still make that call to find out if the kitchen clock is right every day. But if our poor doughboy were to make a 70's reappearance, he'd have many an alternative to that cold beep - indeed, the hour of the day is no longer even the most-called of the public service numbers. That honor has moved with the times.

Proving, I suppose, that the appeal of vices is ever-increasing, the Off-Track Betting results line is now the most popular of all the New York dial-a-numbers. Attracting 150,000 callers on an everyday basis, the recitation of what horse won what race is interspersed with exhortations to "come on out!" to the track. Late scratches, track conditions and the like are also included on the tape.

The remaining member of the "Big Three" numbers in New York is, predictable enough, the weather. Tying with the time for number of callers on an average day, during a heat spell or snowstorm those numbers can more than double. In the "happy news" style, the new male announcers now end the reports with a chirpy "have a good day, weather-wise and otherwise" or another such pleasantry..

What if you're here in New York, you've called all those numbers and found out that it's a beautiful day, your horse won, and the evening is still young, what are you going to do about it? Well, you can always dial the New York Report. Besides updating you on what's happening in the world while we're still hit by the newspaper strike, it will tell you if the air outside is passable for breathing, and even let you know what Broadway shows have tickets available for their evening performances, and advise you of the number for the Broadway Hot Line in case you need more details. And, happily, the Hot Line is even manned by a real, live person.

But if it's results of the World Series games you really want, Sports Line is there to answer your prayers. I suppose it's a sign of the times that in addition to scores, it also gives you news of the latest contracts being signed, as well as telling of the most recent decisions handed down in court cases.

Children in need of entertainment can always ring up Dial-A-Story, where a grammar school charm - will dramatically recite, say, the Cinderella story, and even add a

CHARLENE KUNKEL

Ploy -- II

few new twists - for instance, making the ball a two night affair, and having Cinderella find husbands (noblemen, of course) for her sour step-mother and step-sisters. at the end (personally, though, I feel that's carrying goody-goodyism too far).

Want some advice? You have two choices - the new addition to the numbers, Dr. Joyce Brothers, and horoscopes. Dr. Brothers takes an informational approach, telling you, for example, how to tell if someone is an alcoholic, what types of alcoholics there are, and what general type of treatment is best for each category. She also covers the pseudo-psychological topics - body language was one she spoke on last week.

The horoscope craze of a few years back has shown itself to have had a strong core group, as evidenced by the fact that Jeane Dixon's readings (written by Ms. Dixon, but read by someone else) have survived, while such other numbers as Dial-A-Plant and Dial-A-Consumer Hint have bit the dust. The continuing success of the horoscopes is even more remarkable when you consider that it requires not just one number, but twelve. Actually, the readings themselves make their success seem downright inexplicable - or maybe they explain their popularity, after all. Far from being mystical or even as predictive as the average newspaper horoscope column, the approach here is more of a "Dear Abby" one. For example, a recent call brought me the advice that I should get my mate and children to help with household chores by not representing them as chores. No, I take it back; "Dear Abby" is actually more sophisticated than that.

And, of course, there's always Dial-A-Joke. The first thing you have to understand about Dial-A-Joke is that it is not funny. Never. Even the canned laughter doesn't help. Since they lost Henny Youngman, who for some unknown reason worked very well as a purely verbal comic, in a money dispute, Dial-A-Joke has never managed to discover a successful telephone comedian. Perhaps it's because they won't pay the kind of rates necessary to attract the really talented audial comics - for example, Lily Tomlin - or consider others, such as Proctor & Bergman, too generally unknown. As for those they do see fit to hire, it may be that that particular generation of comedians is so dependent upon the visual aspect of television and live appearances they they simply cannot put their acts over by phone. Working on this theory, I feel that they should introduce a sort of Dial-A-Classic-Joke, using routines by the greatest of the radio funnymen. Say, some Jack Benny or Burns and Allen bits. I'd certainly rather hear Abbot and Costello doing "Who's on First" than listen to Will Jordan. Or how about a selection of Mae West songs? Even excerpts from best-selling comedy albums would be an appealing alternative to the present sad state of affairs.

And let us not forget that venerable grandad of phone messages, Dial-A-Prayer. Striking out boldly against the tide, recently, for example, it prayed for help in dealing with aggressive people, while every bookstore in the nation is jammed with folks snapping up a variety of guides to being more aggressive.

It's reasonable to conclude that it's become a Dial-a-World. Such innovations as paying your bills by phone may be fairly recent, but the simple fact that the really important things, like astrology and horse racing, are already being handled via the phone wires shows that the nuts and bolts part of life will soon follow suit. After all, life's only a call away.

-- Charlene Kunkel

KATZENJAMMER ○ ○ ○ ○

SMUT NEW YORK

I was dressed in an impeccable dark blue chalk-stripe three-piece suit, set off by a crisp yellow shirt and a blue silk tie in the now-fashionable 3½ inch width. My admittedly longish hair was, however, faultlessly arranged, and even my moustache had gotten into the proper spirit by plumping out attractively.

I was looking good. I was looking like a dashing young publishing executive on the go -- and going places. In short, I looked like a solid gold mark.

This was quite appropriate in view of my mission: to venture forth into Smut New York and bring back stories of, at least, its more innocuous aspects for Four Star Extra. I say "more innocuous aspects," because a long conversation with my delectable (and strong-willed) wife had clearly established the guidelines under which I was supposed to operate.

"No sex, and no touching," was about the way Joyce phrased it. This suited my purpose well, since I had no intention of paying for an inferior and mechanical version of what is so abundantly free at home. Possibly old-fashioned for a supposed hedonist-to-the-hilt, but there you are.

Armed with a liberal amount of research money, I squared my shoulders, took a deep breath and, as they say on the cop shows, hit the street. Before daring the world of major league smut, I decided to tune up by visiting Court Street in the Borough Hall section of Brooklyn.

When they call the roll of the world's sinful thorofares, don't be surprised if Court Street is missing from the list. I once half-read an "Executioner"-type pulp paperback set partially in the stews and dives of Court Street, but the carnival of debauchery into which the macho hero waded with such relish had no existence outside the author's imagination.

An abstract design of blue, yellow and red swirls totally opaqued the store's big front window. Only a slender border of neon lights--and a sign on the door reading: "No Minors!"--hinted that Pandora's Books might be something other than an oasis for the literati.

"No Minors!"---ah, the memories that come flooding back! How many such warnings had the older-looking-than-his-tender-years Arnie Katz flouted in the misspent days of his youth?

I wasn't even a teenaged smut-glutton; I just liked the idea of going somewhere -- anywhere -- intended for Adults Only. Of course, adulthood sounded more charismatic to me at 16 than it does today at 32, possibly because I still thought I would instantaneously become wise, witty and mature on reaching my thirtieth birthday.

ARNIE KATZ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

When you're only 16, visiting a porno book store is even more exciting than sneaking into a bar. After all, just about everyone drinks. So if you're caught with a Beefeater Martini straight up with a twist in your mitt, the most they can do is accuse you of jumping the gun by a couple of years. Boys-will-be-boys and all the rest of that double-standard stuff.

But Sex, as all right-drinking Americans know, is Evil. Pornography, which is the graphic depiction of sexual acts for the purpose of arousal, is Even Worse. So I knew that if I was caught loitering next to the rack of "Dears and Rears" magazine, it would be Public Humiliation and Nameless Torture Time.

With the stakes so high, a trip to a genuine Times Square smut shop became a real adventure of a teenager. As you sauntered through the door, attempting to radiate a reassuring aura of "adulthood", it was vital to keep your face averted from the steely gaze of the cashier. He'd spot your peach-fuzz mug in ten seconds, if given the chance, and then you'd have to leave the store. So you tried not to look in his general direction. But you could feel the shopkeeper's eyes on the back of your neck, weighing down your shoulders until you shambled like an arthritic old geezer.

Before actually going into Pandora's Books, I quickly glanced around for a sight of the band of muggers, junkies, bums, whores, pimps and winos which Concerned Citizens had assured me would be lying in wait, crouched menacingly around entrances to such establishments. I couldn't find even one lowlife character, unless you count the guys who work the counter at the pizzeria next door.

Vowing to catch sight of the exotic throng later, I zipped through the door. People have as many ways of going into a pornographic book store as they have of combing their hair or making love. A few, like me, stride boldly through the lurid portals, challenging any passerby to raise a voice in puritanical protest.

Most prospective patrons, however, slip into such shops with a stealthiness even the Shadow would admire. It's as though they expected to be stopped and questioned by their saintly mothers just as they cross into forbidden territory. Or maybe they're afraid that the Daily News' "Inquiring Photographer" will snap their photo and ask their opinion about sexual freedom the minute they put one little toe across the threshold.

There are many time-tested methods of entering a smut shop undetected, but several have, by now, attained a sort of classic status. One old reliable I saw used by a man even as I was jotting down a few notes for this article is the "hairpin turn". The practitioner walks down the street, seemingly oblivious to the presence of the book store that is his goal. He struts along at a good clip, barreling down the sidewalk as close to the curb as he can get. Then, when he is positive no one is looking, he executes a 90-degree turn without breaking stride and rushes through the door before anyone could possibly notice. Timing is everything. Sometimes "hairpin turn" men will have to plod up and down in front of the store of their heart's desire for a couple of hours before there is a lull in pedestrian traffic sufficient to allow them to Make Their Move.

But my absolute favorite method is the one I call, "the census taker". You can see these men on every sinful street in America. They walk down the sidewalk very, very slowly in their cheap baggy suits, checking the numbers on each door and estimating the set-back from the street of every business they pass. They often carry little notebooks or scratch incomprehensible symbols in the gutters at irregular intervals.

You may have thought these men were city employees. I can understand how you were fooled; they certainly look indolent enough to be on the public payroll. No, these poor

souls are actually timid would-be porno shop customers. They amble along, periodically checking their watches and making imaginary measurements, until they reach the door of their dreams. Then they dart inside unobserved.

Once I entered, I found myself in the front righthand corner of a well-lit, though sparse, room measuring 15 ft. wide by 40 ft. deep. I was facing two open doorways on the back wall, each leading to a clutch of movie machines. A rectangular wooden table completely covered with gaudy magazines filled up most of the floor space, leaving a 4-ft. aisle all the way around. To the left of the door, a pair of young men in teeshirts sat on stools behind a highrise counter. Just about all porno book stores have something equivalent to this high perch lest a patron caught in the throes of horniness attempt to slip a \$2.50 paperback up his coatsleeve.

Not only did the elevated counter give the manager and his assistant an unobstructed view of the whole place, but it put any customer settling his bill eyeball-to-whatever with a selection of dildoes, vibrators and knobbly rubber sleeves for use in conjunction with either or both. A glassed-in display case near the door on the right held the larger items, wrapped up in cellophane like fat pink sausages.

A quick scan of the counter turned up another interesting fact. Everyone knows about Germany's economic rebirth in the post-war era, but it may have escaped the notice of many that Deutschland is now Uber Alles in yet another industry once dominated by one of its erstwhile conquerors. Oh, France may still have it all over Germany when it comes to vintage wines, but the Boche are now absolute masters of the French tickler market.

There was a whole box of these appliances next to the cash register, each more imaginatively shaped than the last. Some of them looked so baroque that I had to laugh at the thought of some benighted couple struggling to get their money's worth from such a purchase, but finding themselves unable to coax one of these unwieldy gizmos past the pearly gates.

It was obvious at a glance that much thought had gone into the way the shop displayed its books, magazines and such -- or "numbers", as I learned most owners term their merchandise. Everything displayed on the big table, and on the wire racks which hung on most of the wall space, was neatly shrink wrapped and segregated by topic.

Putting on my journalistic hat, I struck up a conversation with the manager and asked him about his merchandising strategy. "You see, there's more than one porno customer", he explained between bites of pizza. "The guys who buy the fuck and suck books, they don't wanna even see the gay numbers. And the guys who come in here once a week to pick up a copy of Screw, we could lose them by putting the paper with the S&M stuff."

I passed a small compliment concerning the cleanliness of the store and the generally soft sell atmosphere, and his face lit up. I guess managers of porno stores don't get interviewed much, except by the cynics on the court beat.

"The business ain't like it was," my new acquaintance lamented. "Used to be, you'd buy a film for maybe two bucks and sell it for \$25. Now we sell a film for \$18, and we might have to pay \$10 for it." He went on to explain that this change has created a black market in bootleg films. "I won't touch them" he swore. "The quality is shit, and we depend on repeat business."

As I browsed through the store, I was amused by the magazine titles. I suppose that when you're about to publish your 200th magazine full of large-busted ladies, you've really got to exercise the old imagination to come up with a name for it. Some of the best titles

I saw were: "Lez Be Friends" (gay female softcore); "Stocks & Bonds" (restraint); "Water & Power" (enemas and golden showers); "Hard Times" (oral sex), and "Busy Bodies" (Hetero hardcore).

Feeling more confident by the minute, I decided it was time to hop aboard the Lexington Avenue subway and get on with my raunchy romp through the Big Apple. Despite what you may have heard, the IRT is not, itself, part of Smut New York, but it did convey me speedily to my first destination: the topless bars on Manhattan's east side.

Playgirls East -- there's no Playgirls West, incidently -- just off Lexington on 56th Street, was my first stop. The bar's narrow front window was a bit more hard sell than Pandora's Books, but it was still reasonably sedate. It featured colorful cartoons of dancing girls and was decorated with balloons, streamers and other party accouterments. The door was opaqued to discourage the idly curious -- and, no doubt, to prevent a bust for indecent exposure.

Beyond this gateway lay a long narrow room, which was surprisingly well-lit for a New York bar. That suited me fine. My night vision is awful, and I'd had fears of my fragile savoir faire crumbling as I blundered through a room packed with the leering and the leered-at. I needn't have worried. The bar was bright enough for me to navigate, and there were so few patrons that I'd have had to be able to see much better to have even a slim chance of bumping into one.

I walked past the small, traditional-style bar at the front, not neglecting to smile at the two ladies in leotards sitting on the only occupied stools. In truth, their looks did not encourage me much -- both were pinch-faced and a little scrawny for my taste.

I'd barely passed them when a third woman in similar attire slithered up to me. It was the same leotard, I suppose, but this woman certainly filled it much more tightly. Her enormous breasts threatened to burst free of the plunging neckline and head skyward at any moment. In a husky voice, she welcomed me to the establishment and asked where I'd like to sit.

It wasn't the hardest decision I've ever had to make. Let the wimps -- and the androgynes left over from the glitter craze -- tell you they don't enjoy looking at women. I pointed to one of the little round tables abutting a low-rise stage on which a heroically proportioned woman undulated beneath rosy pink lights. The juke box was playing "Night Moves", and I'm sure Bob Seegar would have wholeheartedly approved the use to which his music was being put. The dancer's writhings and posturings were reflected in the huge mirror which formed the back of the two-foot-deep rectangular stage.

"What would you like to drink?" the lady almost in the leotard murmured as she bent toward me.

"Scotch on the rocks," I replied. You can't go wrong with scotch and ice, I always say.

"Gee, honey, I'm afraid we don't have scotch." No scotch? My mind froze at the idea. I finally managed to ask what the bar did serve. "We have a selection of non-alcoholic mixed drinks, fruit juice and colas," she told me.

New York's State Liquor Authority is responsible for this unusual selection of potables. Not content with handling the licensing of retail outlets and restaurants, the SLA is hip-deep into the morality business. For some reason, they have gained a say over what

happens in establishments in which spirits are served, and they had turned thumbs down on the combination of strong drink and naked woman. Operators of the topless bars, however, knew what was important. They 86'd the booze and stuck with the skin.

While I settled in my seat, checked out the entertainment, and waited for my cola to arrive, I wondered how a bar like Playgirls East could make money selling orange juice, bloodless marys and soft drinks. I found out when a different waitress brought my cola and said, "That'll be \$3.75, please."

She set a glass of ice and a can of cola down in front of me. I slid a fiver onto her tray, and she hurried off to get change. It wasn't even a name brand cola. I observed my original waitress seating a well-tailored executive in his forties who looked even more like a mark than I did. He seemed, well..."lonely" is the word that comes to mind.

I turned back toward the stage. "You're very pretty," I told the dancer, "but I'm a writer, not a gynecologist." She gave me a big smile and switched to a more aesthetically pleasing style. She wasn't quite a perfect physical specimen, but she moved with a supple rhythm that undoubtedly made her a center of attention on every disco dance floor.

We'd exchanged names, and Angela was telling me about the novel she hoped to sell, when the waitress returned with my change on her tray. I knew a tip was appropriate, but I wasn't sure how much to give. Sensing my dilemma, the barmaid attempted to give me some assistance. "I usually get a dollar," she said, trying to arrange her sharp little features into a more pleasing cast.

"That's wonderful for you," I said as I scooped up the dollar bill and left the quarter. She asked if I'd like to buy her a drink. I replied that I wouldn't, and she left. I gave the leftover dollar to the dancer as a tip, since she hadn't asked for one though I knew it was customary.

I explained that I was doing a story, and she volunteered quite a bit of information about the topless bar world. She was a veteran of the circuit, despite youth which even an excess of makeup could not completely hide. A high school graduate, she had decided that dancing was easier than secretarial work and had worked off and on at it for five years.

According to Angela, most dancers get jobs through central booking agencies. They play a club for one week, working on-and-off 30-minute shifts for an average of \$25-\$50 a day plus tips. Some bars force the performers to hustle drinks, but the only sex available is the voyeuristic kind. "There used to be a couple of places downtown where the girls, you know, did things with the customers from the edge of the bar," she confided, adding that she had never worked such a dive herself.

I pointed to the lonely executive, whom the ripest of the waitresses was leading toward the darkness at the back of the bar. "You mean," I asked incredulously, "that guy is getting nothing?"

"Yeah, isn't it unbelievable?" the dancer marvelled. "To go back there and sit in a booth and talk to her, he's paying \$60 for a bottle of champagne." Then it was my turn to marvel. For \$60 that executive could have spent a whole hour in his choice of sexual activity with one of the lovelies who advertise in the back pages of Screw. He must have been lonelier for simple human companionship than I had thought.

Like many such women, at least as portrayed in song and story, Angela had her own golden dream. While she absent-mindedly gyrated to the heavy beat, she spun out her little tale

of woe with an ingenuousness that was probably at odds with her self-image of a sophisticate who "goes to Plato's Retreat because I like the music." There was a guy in Florida she wanted desperately to move in with. Except that he was already living with someone. This was no obstacle, however, since both she and the object of her affections greatly enjoyed threesomes. Unfortunately, the guy's current lady did not. Angela almost seemed to drift into a reverie as we talked there. She painted a picture of her ideal existence with this fellow from the sunshine state. She would keep house for him, and maybe dance a little to get bread and work on her novel of searing passion while the sun beat down on the sparkling sands. "You seem like a bright guy," she said to me. "Do you think I have a chance, huh? Do you think I do?"

"You gotta hope," I told her. "Good luck." I stood and left.

The dancer had recommended a visit to Winks, a bar three blocks down Lexington Avenue. I took the advice of an expert and headed in that direction.

Although Winks had only been open a month, its location was no stranger to the skin trade. Once upon a time, the same block had hosted two -- count 'em! -- topless bars. The more famous was Jax Three-Ring Circus, which gained its notoriety by becoming the election-year target of then-Mayor Abe Beame. Like a Jewish Carrie Nation, the mighty mite of Big Apple politics had burst through the doors of this temple of depravity and put the vestals to rout. Unfortunately for Abe, some voters felt that the manpower used in this operation could have been better allocated to fighting major violent crime. The mayor's losing campaign followed the closing of Jax Three-Ring Circus by a matter of weeks.

The mayor's action was spurred by the fact that the bars had the temerity to be located across from the side entrance of the Citicorp Center, a new skyscraper with an underground arcade of shops and restaurants. When Mr. Citicorp looked out the window of his new executive suite and saw the bars, the drive to uproot them began in earnest.

Citicorp appeared to get its way initially, but the former owners of Jax are now getting their revenge. They've poured a million dollars into a three-unit strip including a bookstore (Peeps), and X-rated movie house (Variety 53) and a topless bar (Winks). The three stores' white pearlescent fronts are the very antithesis of the lurid displays most people associate with porno palaces, so the businesses will be a lot harder to expunge under public nuisance laws.

Winks is infinitely classier than Playgirls East, from its mirrored vestibule to the rich red carpeting in the main room. If New York's shopping bag ladies find a way to breach the outer door, they're going to think they've spent the night in a miniature Palace of Versailles with all those mirrors.

Winks gimmick is that it is not just a mundane topless bar, but an exclusive club for the worldly. At least, it's exclusively for any of the worldly who can afford a \$4 instant membership, which includes a genuine membership card and a "free" non-alcoholic drink.

I wasn't exactly anticipating another fancy expensive cola, but I couldn't see turning back once I was approached by a pair of smiling greeters. They took my money and invited me to sign Winks' immense guest book. I never knew there were so many New Yorkers named "John Smith". Just to be different, I signed "Bill Kunkel" instead.

A hostess led me to a ringside seat next to one end of the long, irregularly shaped bar/stage which filled much of the room. Men sat attentively on all sides, while no fewer than three women at a time strutted their stuff simultaneously.

And what "stuff" it was. If the performers at Playgirls East were "cute" and "pretty", most of these dancers were absolute raving beauties. There wasn't an ounce of fat among them, and they were all turned out in the latest makeup and hairstyles. They disco'd energetically on the purple velvet-covered platform beneath phalanxes of pulsing colored lights which made Winks look like one of the sets from "Saturday Night Fever". All it needed was John Travolta -- and, of course, some extra clothes.

The guy sitting next to me, obviously a construction worker on an afternoon break, added an incongruous note to the proceedings by ordering -- and eating -- a late lunch. It was ludicrous to look at the provocative dancers with one eye and with the other check out my neighbor putting away the remains of a roast beef on rye with a half-sour pickle on the side.

The place must have been a goldmine for tips. Each performer wore a garter, and some had perhaps \$40 in ones tucked in there. The older patrons seemed to delight in slipping their offering under the elastic themselves. I guess it was as close as they could get to touching one of these fine looking young women.

Leaving behind a tip for the dancer closest to my seat, I left the bar and walked across town. Turning left onto Broadway, I headed for the undisputed capital of Smut New York: Times Square.

When I reached the 40's, I noticed that the Pussycat Adult Center was doing a brisk business. Mindful of my steadily shrinking supply of expense money, I decided that this would make the perfect capper to my lewd tour.

Adult centers -- the Americanized, sleazoid version of Europe's sex supermarkets -- take a "one-stop-shopping" approach to merchandising porn. A sex fiend who's pressed for time no longer need visit a dozen stores to see a full line of x-rated goodies. Instead he can drop by an adult center and shop several floors filled with vicarious sex in all its varieties and permutations.

The main bookstore in the Pussycat Adult Center was crowded with men silently shuffling up and down the aisles. The porno shop hush was punctuated only by the bray of the squat little shop owner, who ceaselessly chanted, "Pick 'em out, gentlemen, pick 'em out!"

This phrase -- "pick 'em out, gentlemen, pick 'em out!" -- is as much a part of the sex store trade as "Fill 'er up, sir?" is of the gasoline business. Sometimes I get the feeling that sex store customers enjoy this type of bullying. Societal conditioning is not easy to escape; porno buyers may subconsciously believe that they deserve the proprietors' incessant, petty harassment as punishment for stooping to patronize such an establishment in the first place.

Whatever the reason for the docility of dirty book store customers, you're unlikely to see a better behaved group of men anywhere else in the city. Oh, if only everyone was as polite and well-mannered as a porno shop customer, what a civilized, frictionless world this would be. I've never heard so many "please"s and "thank you"s delivered in such well-modulated tones as in the Pussycat Adult Center.

Of course, those who hold a less sunny view of human nature would attribute all this courtesy to nothing less than total terror. And there's certainly no denying that the stench of fear -- fear of exposure, fear of strangers, fear of the forbidden, and several other types of psychiatrists haven't gotten around to naming -- hangs heavy in the porno shop atmosphere.

Well, everyone knows that anyone interested in looking at, much less buying, explicit sexual materials is a dangerous devo. Mom taught us how to deal with crazy people, right? Talk softly, give them whatever they seem to want and, above all, don't get them angry. That's how customers treat each other in dirty book stores. Although each patron knows that he is an ordinary, sane person who happens to like an occasional jolt of sexual titillation, they seldom bother to extend this charitable evaluation to fellow browsers.

The Pussycat Adult Center also featured an imposing display of hardcore films for home presentation. If your only contact with dirty movies was at a frat party or smoker 15 years ago, be advised that things have changed. As I scanned the densely packed rows of film boxes, I didn't see even one which featured a guy in black socks and false nose frisking with an elderly hooker in a single room occupancy hotel.

The silent hardcore loop, or "200-footers", is the mainstay of the sex film business. The latter name, incidently, grows more inappropriate by the year; "200-footers" average 150-160 feet these days. Each comes in a box illustrated by a photograph from the movie, and, frequently, a synopsis of the action. Most of the packages bear pre-printed prices of up to \$100, but no one pays anything close to that in Smut New York. The center's price of \$20 per film with a two-for-one trade-in option on used reels is typical, though some stores sell loops for as little as \$16 each.

A few stores still sell black and white movies, but the Pussycat Adult Center stocks only full-color, with many titles offered in both regular-8 and super-8 formats. One of the leading film makers recently introduced a few sound movies, but these, like the video cassettes which have also hit the stores this year, remain a tiny segment of the market.

Most people are apt to think twice before spending \$20 on a film they can't preview. Therefore, retail stores like Pussycat give the lion's share of the display space to series of films. Some series concentrate on one particular form of sexual activity, others utilize a company of actors and actresses in various combinations and settings, while still other series are unified by little more than consistency of technical approach.

"Swedish Erotica" is the most popular and extensive series, with more than 190 films in distribution. Despite the name, I assume that these cinematic triumphs are shot on the West Coast, since the well-known John Holmes is the male lead in most of the films in the series.

I next headed for the adult center's peepshow department to see if the loops delivered what their packages promised.

Peepshows are a lot different than I remember from my boyhood, when I used to sneak into the little amusement arcade beneath the Port Authority Bus Terminal. Mixed in among the pinball machines were a few movieolas which showed grainy black and white prints of pleasant women taking some of it off in time to unheard music. It was tame stuff; a big finale might include a flash of almost-but-not-quite bare bosom. Irrationally, I often found myself wondering what songs the women in the films were using. Whatever tunes they were, they didn't do much to inspire these early peepshow stars to heights of erotic ecstasy.

The peepshow machines themselves have mutated at least as much as the movies. Once, the customer just hunkered down over an eyepiece like the periscope in one of those torpedo target games. Nowadays, peepshows are more booth-like, with elaborate ones boasting lockable doors and reasonably comfortable bench seats.

Naturally, the proprietors of the Pussycat Adult Center don't want their customers to

get too comfortable amidst all this luxury. Accordingly, they've hung signs in strategic spots with words to live by such as, "No loitering!" and "Only one person in booth at a time!" I suppose it's necessary to keep all the sex on a high theoretical plane to prevent the police from turning the place into a multi-level parking garage.

Something almost that bad happened to one huge pornography shop a year or so ago. The owners lost their prime Times Square location directly across from the Allied Chemical Tower when their building was taken by the city as the site for a new police station.

The main thing which put me off a lot of porn as a kid was the frequent use of the "sin-guilt-retribution" theme. This was especially prevalent in sex novels. Everyone was always so ashamed of their participation in sexplay, and the more they enjoyed what they were doing the guiltier they were about it. Or else they were Nice People forced to do wicked things. In either case, you could count on a series of calamities overtaking the revelers right after the last big sex scene.

This was just too moralistic and downbeat for my taste. But I'm pleased to report that, as an inveterate fan of happy endings, I saw little to protest in the parts of the various films I saw at the peep show. (I didn't watch any movie all the way through. Six parts at 25¢ per part is a little rich for my wallet.) All the participants at least gave the impression of enjoying their romp before the cameras, and smiles have replaced the classic, vacant look affected by porno actresses of earlier generations. The filmmakers weren't quite ready to challenge Ingmar Bergman -- or even Woody Allen -- but their technical competence was surprisingly high.

For the completely uninitiated, loops don't have plots as such, just starting premises. In "Sports Challenge", for example, a female reporter is interviewing a couple of black football players. The writer soon becomes more interested in the guys than her questions, and the trio moves on to the inevitable fun and games. Other stock premises include: the Delivery Boy Meets the Horny Housewife; College Girls Satisfy Their Curiosity; the Rock Band Gets It On Before, After or even During the Big Gig; Two Couples Get Stoned and Swap; and After Hours at the Bar/Pool Hall/ Beauty Parlor.

The world, as viewed by makers of loops, is a fantasyland almost childlike in its simplicity. All the ladies are comely, all the men are handsome, and anytime is the right time. You've got to have stamina to live in a world like that.

I got a little tired of the movies -- or, at any rate, of watching them alone -- so I went downstairs to the next thrill, the live peep show. To my left, as I stood at the foot of the stairs, was a U-shaped bank of peep show booths. And to my right... Well, to my right was a set-up straight out of photos I've seen of the Reeperbahn, the famed red light district of Hamburg, Germany.

Doors, alternating between glass and recently painted metal, lined three walls of a half-lit room. Behind each of the glass doors was a brightly illuminated cubicle about two feet square. And inside each of those tiny cubicles was a luscious young woman in a wisp of lace that enhanced, more than hid, her charms. There were blondes, brunettes and red-heads, short and tall, whites, blacks and latins -- something for every taste. One or two were content to sit on their stools and smile lasciviously at the knot of milling men, but most postured, wriggled and gestured with wild abandon, even leaning out of their doorways when the spirit moved them.

One model, grown restless in her display case, suddenly flung her door wide and began an impromptu exotic dance. The waves of her glossy black hair cascaded over creamy white

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skin as she writhed against the frame of the open door. Up and down, up and down she slid one inch at a time, while every male eye traced the twists and ripples of her catlike body. Slowly, sinuously, she rubbed against the frame, growling and moaning with synthetic lust when she thrust her hips again and again at the door jamb gripped tightly between her alabaster thighs.

To give the uproar she caused a chance to subside, I wandered over to the live peep show area. Several years earlier, I'd invested a quarter to see such a performance, and I found it hard to work up much enthusiasm over the prospect of watching a bored model lie back on a lazy susan and spread her legs.

"It's for the good of the article," I told myself as I closed and bolted the door to my booth. It took me an agonizingly long time to grope around for the coin slot in the pitch dark, all the while fearing that an enraged attendant would batter down the door and haul me out if I didn't get the machine into action quickly. Miraculously I found it, slipped the quarter into the slot and waited for the shade in front of my glass viewport to lift.

When it did, I saw, not one bored lady, but four frisky ones. All were black, ranging from cafe au lait to dark chocolate, and all of them made Tina Turner look like a boy. Management had wisely put the rotating table out to pasture, so the models were free to roam as fancy took them within their enclosure.

Whooping and hollaring like a bunch of third-graders on the last day of school, the four beauties rushed from window to window in response to the raising and lowering of the shades. I saw a 6 ft. tall black amazon coming my way. Then she was leaping through the air to crash against the front of my booth. There must have been handholds on her side of the flimsy wall, because the next thing I knew, we were face-to-mons veneris. Blam! Blam! Blam! The whole booth quaked every time she smashed her crinkly-haired pussy against the window. "What if the damn glass breaks?" I wondered as I backed away from the window toward my door. Mercifully, the little shade started to slide down.

"Come on, honey, let me show you more, more, more!" she yelled through the glass just before the shade covered it completely. I couldn't imagine what she had in mind for an encore. I didn't stick around to find out.

A busty blonde in a black lace shawl beckoned to me from her booth in the "Reeperbahn". I walked into the cubicle next to hers, a similar 2 ft. by 2 ft. room. She closed the blind on her door to shield herself from the onlookers outside, and I closed and locked my door, too.

My cubicle had only three features of any consequence: a wall-mounted black telephone; a device like one of those coin-changers which accepts dollar bills, and a floor-to-ceiling window on the wall between her booth and mine. A shade covered the glass on her side.

The pay slot sucked in my dollar, and the shade rose to reveal the blonde. She immediately sat down on her stool, put one leg on each side of the window so that her toes were braced against the common wall about a foot above my head, and picked up her phone. I took mine off the hook and put it to my ear.

"Hi there," I ventured inanely.

"Hi, honey. My name is Angela, what's yours?" I think they're all named "Angela" right now, except for the ones still clinging to "Farrah".

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"Arnie," I said.

"Do you like my pussy?" she asked, exhibiting considerable muscular control over her labia in a bid for my approval.

"You're very pretty," I said. "And I'll bet your boyfriend just loves that little trick you're doing."

"What do you mean, 'boyfriend'? They all love it," she replied. "Would you like to take out your prick and show it to me?"

"No, not really." My mind filled with the ridiculous image of me standing there in my impeccable dark blue chalk-stripe three-piece suit -- not forgetting the crisp yellow shirt and the blue silk tie in the now-fashionable 3½ inch width -- waving it around in the breeze. "In fact, I'm positive that I don't want to. Listen, is this all there is?" I asked.

"Gee, don't you like me?" She formed her lips into a sexy pout.

"You're gorgeous, Angela, just gorgeous," I assured her. After all, I hadn't meant to insult the woman, just convince her to drop her line of inquiry.

I feared that the farrago would drag on forever, but it couldn't have been more than 90 seconds from the time the curtain lifted until it finally, blessedly, lowered to end the session.

After I left my cubicle, I glanced back to see the blonde waving to me from behind her door. I answered with a good-bye wave of my own and, as I climbed the staircase to the street, I knew it was time to bid adieu to Smut New York and head for home.

-- Arnie Katz

GAS GIANTS ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

reached a different conclusion than you did. War is part of human existence; it's hard to imagine an artist ignoring it. That would be like saying that we should avert our eyes from hate and greed and other less savory aspects of the human condition.

I think it's important to separate writing (or reading) about something from the thing itself. I'm sure you've written stories about rape and child abuse, too, yet you abominate both those crimes. Pretending that it doesn't exist is not going to end war any more than averting our eyes will wipe out disease or poverty. If war can be reduced to something for the history books, museums and game tables, it will be because people have come to fully understand it in all its grisly, many faceted horror. When the memory of the last war fades, the next one is just around the corner.

And then there's intent. I don't think "M*A*S*H" will convince anyone that war is a good idea and a desirable end. I feel we can say the same about Four Star Extra. -- Arnie

::: 423 Summit Ave., Hagerstown, Md. 21740

FOURPLAY ○○○○○○○○○○○

(Continues from page 3; still Arnie at the typewriter...)

Inside Wrestling's approach leads to some unusual things. Not the least of these is wrestling's only villainous associate editor, Dan Shocket. Others eulogise the fan favorites and call for strictly scientific grappling, but Dan champions only the most dastardly doers of devilish deeds. Here, for example, is what he wrote about hero-turned-heel Spiros Arion: "Arion's abilities are now honed to perfection. He is the artist of the ring, controlled fury at its most savage. Let the fans moan about rules and regulations. If they can't appreciate greatness, to hell with them!"

The other columnists are just as fascinating. If you think the four of us are bizarre, what would you make of Randy Gordon? Each month this twit describes (presumably imaginary) adventures in which he dons oh-so-clever disguises to play juvenile practical jokes upon mat villains in their dressing rooms.

Or what about this from the column of Michael B. Kape, Inside Wrestling's managing editor, explaining why he's leaving the magazine to assume the chairmanship of the "powerful IFM, the Institute for Fairness in Wrestling," as Peter King terms this non-existent group in the same issue's editorial. Says Kape:

"Many of my colleagues have asked me to reconsider my decision to become IFW chairman. They pointed out to me the virtues of being a wrestling reporter -- the glory, the travel, the commitment. But I feel my mission for the future of wrestling takes precedent over all other concerns. I do love what I have been doing, and I will miss it. But there comes a time in everyone's life when he must make a major change, must exert his influence to make this world the best of all possible worlds. By joining the IFW, I feel I am doing my part."

Finally, could you accept that I wasn't making it up out of whole cloth if I quoted this bit from a column by Matt Brooks? I doubt it, but here goes:

"Toronto: Larry Zbyszko is like a tune you can't identify but can't get out of your head. In almost every respect, he's the picture of a scientific wrestler. But each time I see him, something looks wrong. I should trust him, want to trust him, but can't. When no one's looking, he has a mean and hungry look. The boil of ambition is about to burst."

Human, I wonder what would happen if I sent my name and photo to Inside Wrestling's penpal column?

Charlene: I've replied to enough letters from old Main Event subscribers to have an idea of what that would be like and, let me tell you, it's not pretty. But I don't care. I'm still fond enough of wrestling to wish, upon viewing a hologram at a GE open house, that they'd get down to the important stuff and invent hologram wrestlers you could have in your own home. Bruno Sammartino and Cowboy Bob Duncum -- a classic bout! -- slugging it out on your living room rug.

But I guess that, for now, we'll have to be satisfied with video games, and most satisfying they are. The Katzes have a new Atari, and I'm pretty sure that at this very moment Bill and Arnie are dropping depth charges on those submarines. Or shooting down an invasion force of assorted planes, jets, helicopters and even observation balloons. Or trying to blow each other's tanks to kingdom come, otherwise known as the far side of the playfield. It isn't hard to figure out why video games have become so popular that Nielsen is even rating them in some parts of the country.

Fourplay - IV

Joyce: I guess many people are playing their T.V. instead of watching it, as the ads say. Which may be all to the good, judging by what I've seen of this fall's new lineup. "Battlestar Galactica" may not be the only bright spot, but it's surely one of the few. How I long for big screen T.V.! Not only would "Battlestar Galactica's" special effects be super spectacular, but think what a kick it would be to play video games on a screen that size!

Arnie: When you mention big-screen television, video tape recorders and the like around me, you're into the realm of hardcore greed. I want this stuff. I can be bought; inquire this magazine.

Bill: Yes, massa, dat's right. But he don't go 'less'n you buys de other t'ree stahs, too.

Junk food looms large in renegade culture consciousness and, as it happens, Arnie and I have just returned from MacDonald's, where you can now buy a "McFeast," look at ridiculous framed photos of the Pacific Northwest and play Menu Money Mania. Except that the counter-girl wasn't giving out the game tickets. "It's a stupid, fuckin' game," she explained.

When a crowd came in, one of the two waitresses split to do her nails. This left one waitress to deal with nine impatient New Yorkers in the throes of Big Mac Attacks. The remaining McSap proceeded to drop packages, foul up orders and endure much ridicule. As we were about to leave, her partner returned, saying, "I can't touch anything, my nails are wet!" The newcomer made a face. "I'm not making any of those Big Macs," she asserted. "They stink!"

Charlene: When it comes to junk food, MacDonald's is not my idea of heaven. I was thrilled when Nathan's bought out the Wetson chain and made those great hot dogs, knishes and shrimp platters available outside Coney Island. And those fries! Keep your pathetic shoestring fries, MacDonald's; I'll take Nathan's' plump, thick, greasy ones! Best of all, you don't even have to look at Ronald MacDonald while you're eating!

Joyce: A little-discussed category of renegade junk food is that which can be bought on the sidewalks of New York. I'm particularly devoted to pushcart hot dogs cooked in a tub of hot water and served up with sauerkraut, mustard and onions stewed with paprika.

The most unusual vendor is located at 6th Avenue and 53rd Street. He makes hamburger chop suey in a wok and serves it on a bed of boiled rice. His pal sells lemonade, and they have a thriving business feeding office workers, who sit on the ledge in front of the CBS building. Down the street in front of ABC, a lady fries falafel, and across the street from her, you have a choice of ice cream or frozen yogurt for dessert. And if that doesn't fill you up, you can head over to Park Avenue, where a cookie vendor will give you a choice of molasses, sugar, raisin or chocolate chip.

Arnie: Since all four stars are busily jamming every speck of junk food in the house into their mouths, there's no one left to slave at the typewriter. So I guess it's time to deflate the plastic women (and men) and start getting ready for next month. See you all then.



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