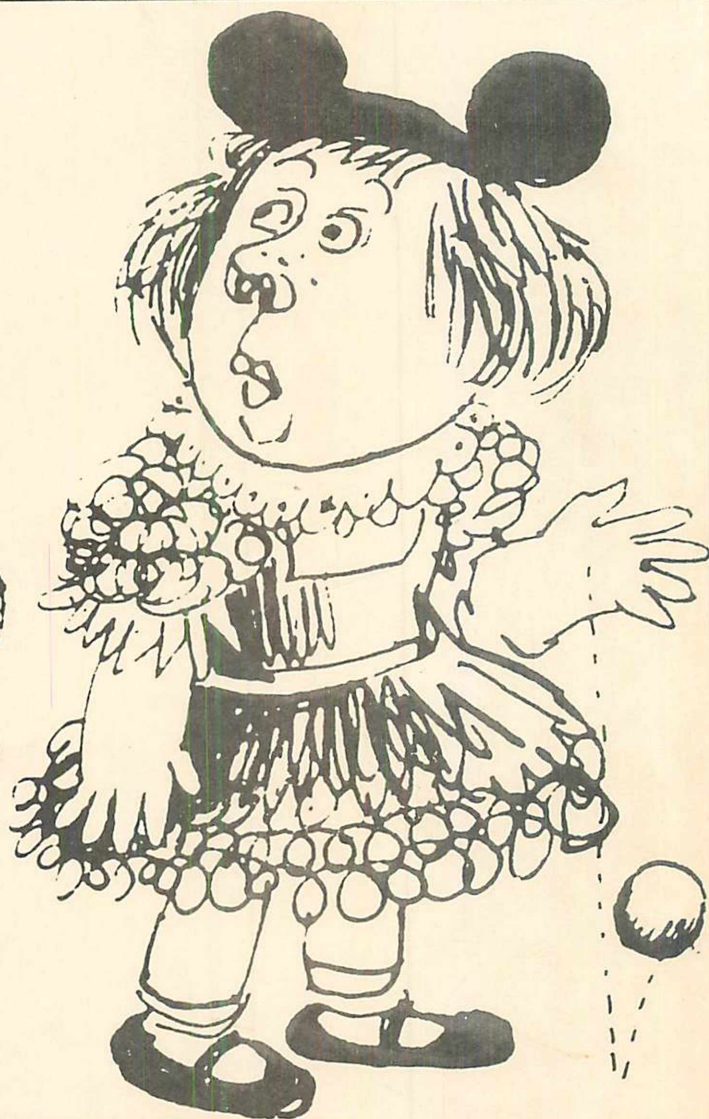


# RATS!



D I S N E Y B O Y S I 9 5 7 J O H N D O W D



- The fanzine of the hour, the fanzine with the power, too sweet to be sour!



BACK IN THE SADDLE AGAIN! Let's see, the date on the logo of the last issue of RATS! This was number 16, and it was published, however after mailing out copies to the contributors and a small circle of friends I ultimately developed a severe case of sickafans and through a malicious combination of procrastination and spite stopped mailing them out. I've since made an attempt to get together all the copies I can find and will mail them out for as long as they last in a big mailing I've got planned for the near future. reads: "Aug. '72" though internal evidence indicates that the final stencils were typed in early January of 1973 and the magazine itself, if memory serves, was published later that same month. It was the only issue in RATS! second incarnation

that wasn't co-edited by Charlene. Matter of fact, she didn't even contribute a column. At any rate, it was pretty obvious to our more astute and faithful letterhacks, contributors and readers generally that it was all over but the shouting. As it turned out, nobody even shouted. Except for my ace letterhack John Leavitt, who wrote a most touching eulogy in response to that last effort. Sooooo, as this issue has no letter column and since, for many of you, this is the first copy of this fanzine that you've ever seen, I want to print John's little farewell note.

Considering I feel like I'm at a funeral, I'm not as depressed as I thought I'd be. Probably the acid I did last night or something.

I've been putting this letter off for two reasons,

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not be reproduced in any form without express, written permission::: RATS! is available for lengthy or at least cogent letters of comment or through pre-arranged trades::Code symbols: (S) Sample; (C) Complimentary; (CC) Contributor's copy; (X) Last copy; and any number indicates the last issue you'll be receiving unless Steps Are Taken. Old friends and new are welcome to a complimentary copy, but financial neccessity makes it impossible for me to give away as many issues as I'd like::: Subscribers are welcome with rates as follows: Single issues are \$1 and a 6 issue subscription (the maximum sub) can be gotten for \$3. Should RATS! fold for any reason before your subscription expires, monies will be returned on a pro-rated basis::: Ghod Save the Queen! :::

- This issue is dedicated to Phil Ochs, to his music and his memory -



Maggie Mae

Natalie Wood

Katydid

the most important being a nearly totally inactive status (which doesn't feel like gaffiation, but whatever, it's starting to wear off) and the second of which is a kind of magical hope that if I didn't write, there really would be another issue. The same thing as when I got ENERGUMEN #14 only not so strong (regarding ENERGUMEN, that is - y'know I really feel silly saying it, like trying to endure the WALTONS or something, but RATS! is my favorite zine, maybe because it was the first place I felt like a real fan instead of a hopeless neo. Maudlin, saccharine - shit, I hate to risk looking ridiculous.). Too bad about Charlene giving up PLOY and fanac in general, cause I'll miss that column, but then since the whole zine is probably finished...

But you crafty bastard, you ensured you'd get that last loc out of me, didn't you? Faithful Spot, fetching a loc. One of the best moments I ever had, thanks.  $\angle$  This is in reference to a comment I made in #16 about how it was letterhacks like John that made publishing worthwhile. It was, and still is, true. BK7

After you two, I'll miss Ray Nelson most, because he he sort of defined the nature of RATS!





power square -- III

Ella Fits Gerald

Dan I

I liked the first "In Concert" too, but since then only the Allman Brothers have moved me to watch. And "Midnight Special" - yech! [See how times change. Bill] I couldn't get into "Tom Brown's School Days". I wasn't able to get into the habit of watching again until the final chapter or "The Golden Bowl" at which time I became hopelessly infatuated with Jill Townsend - did you see her in that movie with Sid Caesar, "The Spirit Is Willing"? To think she developed

from that to Maggie Vervner since '67. Y'ever read FLASHMAN by George MacDonald Fraser? Dear Fwashie's memoirs, Vol.1. Very Good. I'm still looking for the second book, ROYAL FLASH. [After I got this letter, John, I trotted 'round to our little local library and, while I couldn't find the first volume, ROYAL FLASH was sitting right out in the obvious. I loved it. Now I'm trying to track down the film version, which was released in a real "flash" of hype and immediately disappeared. Bill]

Gee, how innocent the world was a couple of months back! You wrote: "I also think it's good the war ended. Things were getting pretty esoteric, I mused, after hearing of a protest being staged by the "Gay Vietnam Veterans Against the War." You wanna talk esoteric, with Skolnick talking about in-flight air piracy by the Sarelli mob and Carl Oglesby getting into decades-long conflicts between the super-secret power structures with Howard Hughes running the Johnson/Nixon/Connally/etc side through the CIA. I expect someone to break the story that it's really Fu Manchu fighting it out with Prof. Moriarty with the deros ready to wipe out the winners via their telaugs. [Gee, how innocent the world was when you wrote your letter! BK]

I'm afraid I can't concentrate enough to really do a loc right now. Besides, what in hell could anyone say about Meltzer? [Oh, you'd be surprised! Bill] I can just say that if you hadda quit, this was a good issue to go off with.

Say goodbye to Charlene for me.

AND SO  
IT WENT

See, John, it really happened after all. I came back. In the next few issues I'll be gradually covering just what has been happening since I last appeared on the mimeographed page. I'm still a professional musician, in fact, I'm just now in the middle of a



power square -- IV

long article detailing the history of My Life and Times as a rocker/punk and it's running in SWOON. It's all about the world of garages, amplifiers, studios and record companies.

So, yes, I'm still a professional musician. But since departing this micro-cosm four years ago I've also become a professional photographer and writer as well. Which is to say that I make my living as a freelance writer, clicker and musician. I'll have more to say about my newly acquired skill with a camera at a later date, but now that I earn money from the things I write, I have to say that it's affected my entire outlook on everything I write. I've sold comic book scripts, movie reviews, wrestling articles, trade magazine news pieces and I'm currently halfway through the first draft of a novel I began some six years ago. You know, when I used to write for fanzines, I had a bad attitude. It was like, I knew I could write, and I knew a second draft would make whatever it was I was doing read lots better. But I wasn't going to be bothered. I was just beginning to get paid for my work and my feeling was sort of, shit, nobody's paying me, I'm not gonna sweat it. Just a lark. Something you fungo toward the outfield, but if it winds up a ground ball, so what? Maybe a hundred, two hundred people max are reading it, and of that group I give a damn about, maybe, a quarter of them. But now it's a craft. I looked up and saw I had a lot to learn. Arnie was a fantastic help, and still is, to the point where even the stuff I turn out for the trade magazines I take care with and if I do it right, there's a satisfaction. Of course it's just a hobby, fandom. But turning out a good product is more fun than turning out slapdash.

So maybe you won't notice any difference, folks. Maybe it's all in my head. But I believe that if I really work, on even the smallest thing, if I do it better, do it the best I can do it, then that smallest thing is going to be a success. At least to me. Jesus, I think I'm starting to sound like Peter Parker!

Anyway, I'm 25 years old, and it's four thirty in the morning, and I feel very good. I hope you like my magazine.

DIALING FOR DOLLARS      I am a confirmed television addict. Once the set is turned on in the morning or early afternoon - depending on how late I was up watching the tube the night before - it takes true strength of character for me to turn it off, even with deadlines creeping closer and the only things on are "Let's Make A Deal" and the "Curse of Lartu" (and on channel 13, the PBS station, they've got "Lilias, Yoga and You" cooking away). I've even watched test patterns.

But, as with all addictions that have come into my sphere of experience, they eventually lead you to a sordid cul-de-sac, where they then abandon you to your tears and the shakes.

Before we moved to our new address, a lovely duplex only a block from our old apartment, I had sunk to a new low. I had moved the black & white into the bedroom just as soon as we got our color set, and a gradual inertia began to set in that left my muscles atrophied and my body generally useless for purposes of locomotion. I just laid in bed, all day long, crapped out, never even changing the channels. I woke up at nine or so, switched on

power square -- V

channel 5, and went back to sleep, drowsing through "Hazel" and "Green Acres" and usually not coming to full awareness until "The Andy Griffith Show" hit the airwaves at 11:00 or so.

Then, as morning faded into afternoon and I watched with some subliminal interest as the sun's umbra crept up the venetian blinds, the afternoon movie came on, with the "Dialing for Dollars" motif running throughout. The way this went was: they let the movie run, but when time for a commercial came, they'd flash to Fred Scott, who had this great giant swish cage full of names and telephone numbers taken supposedly at random from various NYC telephone books. He would then let the camera flash to a board which listed the "count" and the "amount". The former was, I believe, based upon the number of people already called who'd had a chance at the current jackpot and blew it. Each time somebody fucked up, the "amount" - the moolah in the kitty - was increased by a C-note. So what happened was if they called you, which they did near the end of the movie, you had to rattle off the "count and the amount". You really had to be watching to know, it wasn't the sort of thing you could take a wild guess at, so I figured since I wasn't ever getting up anyway except to go down and collect my unemployment checks, this was as good a way as any to make my fortune.

Well, I'd been watching the show for a few months, and I began to get this strange feeling of certainty. I started to know that I was going to be called. Don't know why. Just a feeling, you know? Anyway, before the call, they'd always tell you what borough the lucky stiff lived in who was about to be buzzed, so that all Staten Island, or wherever, could clench their teeth and wait. Soooo, anyway this particular day they were running "Last of the Mohicans" and Uncas had just been offed by Bruce Cabot when they break for the big call.

"Today's lucky number," Fred announced, "is in - QUEENS!" I shuddered. I clenched my eyes momentarily, rechecking the count and the amount with myself, then, secure and warm, I waited. He began to dial. SHIT! Seven numbers! Just like in our phone number! I just knew it was me he was calling. I just KNEW IT!

I was suddenly calm. I was ready. I bit down hard, and then, yes - THE PHONE RANG! I shot up toward the ceiling, scrambling over the sheets and blankets.

"It's ringing!" Fred told the audience.

I KNOW IT'S RINGING!! IT'S MY FUCKING PHONE!! I was stricken with an attack of the clumsies. It was like a dream, running and running and just not moving. It rang once, twice, three times, finally I lurched across the bed and knocked the princess phone off its cradle and onto the floor (they only gave you five rings).

"Somebody's picked up the phone!" Fred trumpeted.

I KNOW! I KNOW!

I tumbled out of bed, spilling onto the floor, awash in comic books and mail and grabbed at the receiver.

power square -- VI

"The count is 'four'!" I blurted into the phone, "and the amount is \$800!!"

I was shaking. Sweat formed on my arms and along the palms of my hands. My eyes flashed from the tv to the telephone.

"This is your mother," came the voice finally, from the other end of the line. "Your grandmother just died."

CLASSIE BLASSIE I was leaning up against the wall at about 7:00 PM in the locker room corridor of Madison Square Garden. It was still early and I was taking my time getting my cameras ready when Freddy Blassie approached me with a grin malevolent beyond description gracing his kisser.

"Hey Bill, got any film in that camera?" he asked anxiously.

"No," I explained. "I was just getting ready to--"

"Good!" he cut me off. "You know that little fuck, that Larson?" He was referring to Pinky Larson, a camp follower and member of the ring crew who wanted to be a wrestler worse than anything. Even the fact that he was without equivocation the most inept grappler I've ever had the misfortune to see in action didn't deter. He just loved to go in that ring and get the crap whipped outa him. I sensed one of Fred's cruel jokes, and was therefore eager to participate.

"Sure, I know him," I answered, smiling. "What's up?" Freddy explained that he was going to call Pinky over and announce that he was his newest protegee. They'd pose for pictures, which I would take with an empty camera, and Fred would go into his Wicked Manager routine, promising that the "Pink Powerhouse" would destroy Bruno Sammartino and win the title within a matter of weeks!

Shaking my head, and laughing out loud, I agreed. I got the flash ready and Fred soon spotted his victim. "Larson!" he called. "C'mere!"

Pinky approached slowly, and with great trepidation. Not the sharpest guy in the world is our Pinky, but well he knew how cruel Classie Freddy could be. "Uhhh," he said, "what is it, Fred? You wanna coke?"

"A COKE?!" Blassie thundered. "You're my new champeen! I got the star cameraman from MAIN EVENT here to take our pitcher! You're my new champ-eeen! Come on, whatsa matter?"

Pinky froze. Then he started to backpeddle. Scared to death, he suddenly turned and bolted down the corridor as if the devil himself was on his ass.

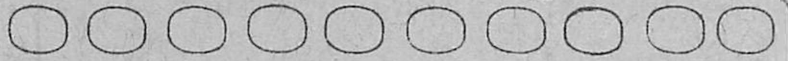
Needless to say, Fred was disgusted, but he took it philosophically.

"After all," he told me, "you can't make bullets outa shit."

STATEMENT OF EDITORIAL POLICY 3543 I know it's something of a standing gag that RATS! has always run at least 6 of these in each issue. But all I gotta say is this: I'd be greatly appreciative if fan and pro publishers could mention or review RATS! Cuz gang, we need money to make this fmz work, and all help will be remembered.



# CHARLATAN

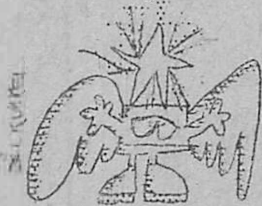


TIME, TIME, TIME Well, it's certainly been a long, long time since I last found myself before the typewriter, pounding out a column for RATS! Mostly what I've been pounding out lately has been mailing labels and replies to letters that ask where you can write Bruno Sammartino, and the like. As I'm sure you've all heard, we've been playing wrestling publishers, and produced ten issues of the best bulletin wrestling has seen, or is likely to see in the future.

What, you may well ask, are wrestling fans like, anyway? Well, they actually cover quite a range. I think I've met them all, though, from the cliché little old Italian men to the young hip fans (who usually figure a way to make money out of it). My little old Italian man was one of the first patrons I ever had a conversation with at a match - a very appropriate beginning, really. He had been ill for some months and I gave him a rundown on what had been happening in the area while he was laid up. Finally, the match he had really come to see came on - it was, needless to say, the main event featuring Bruno Sammartino. I'll never forget how, as Bruno and his opponent (one Butcher Vachon, brother of Mad Dog) engaged in a test of strength, he turned to me and said: "watch how he breaks it!" and as Bruno did so - almost on command, it seemed - he announced reverently: "See? He's made of steel!"

Another highlight in my parade of wrestling fans was a fellow who had recently landed a job as investigator of all UFO reports on Long Island. His position seemed to be quasi-official, as the police were required to notify him, day or night, upon the receipt of all reports. He would then zip out to the scene and "investigate". His position also allowed him to obtain a handgun permit and carry a pistol. "After all," he explained to me, "one of these guys from outer space might come out and try to zap me with a ray gun."

But, there have been the perfectly nice, apparantly sane people as well. One guy told fascinating tales of his advance work in New York City for the McGovern campaign. We also heard harrowing tales of working on the wrestling crews out in the small, midwestern towns, where a blizzard might leave you doing everything from taking tickets and announcing, to putting on the tights yourself. Wrestling is a strange, convoluted world of its own. As a publisher, it can make you a little crazy, but if you can hang on, there's more than enough laughs, too.



CHARLENE KUNKEL

charlatan -- II

AS YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED this RAIS! comes to you from a new address. We moved about a year and a half ago. My mother converted her rather large house to a two-family, and we are currently occupying the top two floors. Currently, and barring unforeseen circumstances, permanently. Bill swears that only fire or the wrecker's ball will get him to move again, and all he will take is the cat and his coat.

Personally, I'll always be awed at how three rooms worth of stuff will not fit into six rooms. But the move has given Bill his own room (where I sit now, surrounded by amps, guitars, electric piano, assorted tape decks, speakers and other related equipment, along with more assorted papers and magazines than I'd care to count). And we also got a brand new, modern kitchen and a dining room.

Of course, what this all leads to is decorating. What I should be doing, if it weren't for the fact that I should be doing this even more (and that I know Bill can take me two out of three falls if I put this off any longer) is working on the bathroom. This was the first room in the house to fall prey to my schemes. Incidentally, if you are ever tempted to wall-paper across ceilings - particularly over glass-enclosed corner tubs - DON'T DO IT! Oh, is it bad!

The very hardest part of doing all this, for me, is resisting the temptation to leave the bathroom for a while and start on, say, the hall. Already I've bought the paint for the hall ceiling - a mistake in itself. Now I find myself chipping away at the paint around those fine cracks and pulling out the spackling. So far I've resisted the temptation, but who knows for how long...

AS I MENTIONED EARLIER we're surrounded here by piles of magazines.

A good many are comics. Which brings me to the sorry state of one of my past favorites, Captain America. I find myself no longer able to read it, and I'm sure I won't pick it up again until I hear that Jack Kirby's hands were run over by a truck, or some such appropriate punishment. I can't believe what that man has done! Waltzing back to Marvel after gracing DC for the past several years in what has got to be the pits in art work, concept and (ha!) characterization, Kirby has proceeded to lay waste with one fell swoop all the painstaking work done by Steve Englehart in his long tenure as Cap's scripter. In only one issue, Kirby wiped out the brilliant and sensitive characterization of Cap as well as the fascinating establishment of the Falcon's many-sided personality, and turned them back into cardboard characters in the finest Kirby tradition.

For sure no one ever accused the "King" of subtlty. He's a sledgehammer. Unfortunately, he's no longer a sledgehammer with talent. Falcon is a chocolate Bucky and Cap's been turned into OMAC.

Who's OMAC? That was Kirby's kiss-off at National. The full title was: OMAC, the One-Man Army Corps ("they call me Omac! That's because I'm a one-man army corps!"). Now no one can deny that the man made considerable contributions to the field in years gone by, but you can't eat last week's dinner tonight, no matter how good it was when you cooked it. The job he's doing today will certainly blacken his name for all time.



charlatan -- III

BACK TO THE WONDERFUL  
WORLD OF WRESTLING...

One of the most amazing things about the slick wrestling magazines (and heaven knows there are many strange things about them) are the ads they run. Many of you, I'm sure, have seen ads for inflatable girls in the past. Well, they've changed now. Take "Greta" for example. She's Adult Import's "Play Girl". "Greta" comes six ways, from "Deluxe Greta" to "Ultimate Greta". Now "Deluxe Greta" isn't really very deluxe, since she comes simply "with built-in female parts". This is the \$9.95 model, which I'm sure they market simply to be able to use price in the headline. And frankly, I shudder to think what the "female parts" are built into. Ahh, but "Ultimate Greta" is something else! She features not only "open mouth deep throat action, Greek features, extra large breasts and remote control electronic features" but "electronic hands and fingers" as well. Oh yes, Ultimate does cost a bit more - \$49.95. But after all, as the ad points out, her "tight, flexible cheeks can hold an object as small as a pencil in her mouth" and you can dress her anyway you like, including leather.

The illustrations are about what you'd expect. This is just about the most outrageous ad they run, but the others are no pikers. There's the "Spy Eye" for example. See, you drill a hole through your wall, floor or ceiling, insert this device originally built so that you could see who was knocking on your door without opening it, and get a bird's (or worm's if you stick it through your ceiling and stand on a ladder) eye view of your neighbors private live's. It's almost illegal the way this ad panders to their intended market - young teenage, and pre-teenage males.

I WAS RIDING IN THE CAR

when I first heard the news come over the radio. Phil Ochs, 35, had been found hanging in the home of his sister in Far Rockaway. A family spokesman said that he had been very depressed for a long time because the words "just weren't coming" for new songs. Later, the television news did a photo montage while they played "Bound for Glory", and he got a nice write-up in the Times.

I can think of only a few performers whose work seems to speak very specially to me, whose songs move in paths that seem familiar and yet exciting, who are able to say the things I wish I could say, and who are talented and innovative and frequently moving. Phil Ochs was one of those performers/artists. Starting out as simply a writer and singer of excellent and topical songs, he proceeded to grow and develop in a unique way. At every phase of his development he produced work that was different, challenging, and had that indefinable quality that made it seem to be just exactly the path to be taking at that time. I can't say how much I'll miss following the trails he might have blazed, but with a writer like Phil, it's impossible to avoid feeling a certain kinship, and though I'll miss the performer, I also feel like I've lost a very close friend. I only wish my pain could bring him back, for surely no one could ever take his place.

- Charlene

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"It seems there are no more songs..."

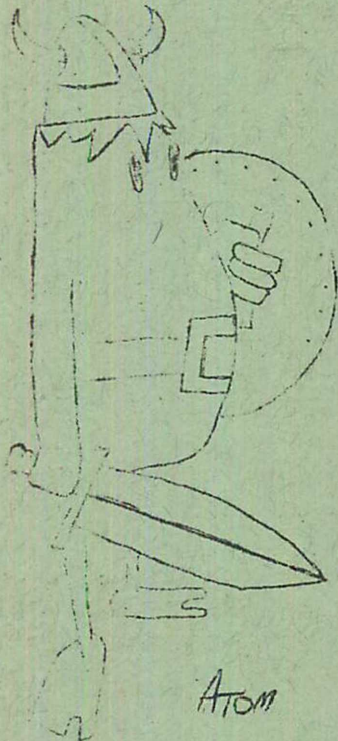
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Ochs



# OUTLAW BLUES

- GREG SHAW -



o o o

[Editorial note: This issue's "revolving columnist" - see editorial - is Greg Shaw, Big Time rock'n'roll Pro and one of the nicest guys in fandom. I had intended to try and extract something new from Greg for this RATS! but Time and the Dreaded Deadline Doom prevented me from doing so. So, what follows is an untitled piece that appeared in RATS! 16 - the issue that was published but nobody ever got cause I stopped mailing them after the first few dozen copies. This too is further explained in the editorial, but in any case it's the piece I decided to use. The title comes from an earlier piece Greg had written for RATS! 13, and which I took the liberty of utilizing as an all-purpose column-type title. It's worth reprinting, anyway, and I'm sure you'll dig it. So less get it on...Bill]

o o o

If there's one thing all fans share its an appreciation of mail. To a fan, the postman's arrival is the day's supreme event, and a delivery that brings only bills, advertisements, or even letters from relatives, is a depressing thing indeed. You can imagine then how delighted I was to discover that the world of the rock and roll writer holds even more postal surprises than that of the fan.

Not only are there free records galore, sent by fourth class, first class, airmail, UPS, and even Special Delivery, amounting sometimes to as many as fifty albums in a week, but there are also press releases, which are often accompanied by the strange artifacts known as "promo gimmicks".

I don't know how long the record industry has employed these gimmicks; probably a long time, as the practice is a natural outgrowth of the occupation of record publicists, whose jobs consist in large part of dreaming up new forms of amusing diversion for their colleagues in the business. But it was with the coming of rock as the dominant force in music, accompanied by the emergence of a new medium - the rock press - which has eclipsed the trade magazines BILLBOARD and CASHBOX as the focus of advertisement, that brought the promo gimmick into full flower.

It was back in 1967 that I first began to get on the various record company mailing lists. The promo men were still mostly middle-aged in those days,

## outlaw blues -- II

but I can still recall a few unusual devices that came along with the records. From one company, a box arrived containing a miniature bonzai plant in a polyethelene bag, along with instructions for its care and feeding. Suzy and I were thrilled, and did our best to succor it, but the poor thing died after a couple of weeks. But our sadness was alleviated by the arrival of another mysterious box, this one holding several bags which contained such items as feathers, balloons, beads and imitation flowers. These accompanied a recording of "Hair" by the original cast - several months before anyone had heard of the play, I might add. I gave it away after a few "what'll they come up with next?" remarks. The plant, in case you were wondering, heralded the release of the Evergreen Blues Band.

Other gimmicks I remember for that year include a kit for Moby Grape's first album, a deluxe velvet-covered box with the album, their five singles, balloons, buttons and bumper stickers all engraved with the name of the band. Quicksilver Messenger Service's first album came with a necklace, a steel replica of the astrological sign of Mercury on a silver chain. A special Kinks album came with similar buttons, bumper stickers, post cards, and a jigsaw puzzle, all with the message: "God Save the Kinks!"

In 1968 I was removed from most of the lists because of inactivity...as a matter of fact the magazine I was publishing had folded before most of the companies even began sending records! When I was reinstated earlier this year as a result of new efforts in the field, I found the art of creating promo gimmicks had advanced considerably.

The first time I met Ed Ward he was still working at ROLLING STONE, and his office was a hodgepodge of record company ephemera old and new. There was a kite with pictures of the Flying Burrito Brothers; a fancy cigaret lighter in the likeness of a telegraph terminal from A&M Records; an inflatable "Led Zeppelin", an actual replica of the Graf Zeppelin with the band's name printed on it. The first one I got for myself came with Pink Floyd's Atom Heart Mother album - an inflatable pink udder, suitable for hanging from the ceiling (where it remains today alongside the Led Zeppelin in the homes of most writers I know). An iron-on shoulder patch with his image stitched on enlivened the arrival of Link Wray's new album, and Sticky Fingers came with similar patches featuring the famous protruding tongue. Being as underpaid as they are, rock critics usually employ these patches to hold together their disintegrating garments.

Next to buttons (Jefferson Airplane Loves You; Good Ol' Grateful Dead; Cocker Power; Rock Critic - a great idea from Buddah, tee-shirts have been the most fertile field for creative promotion. I missed a lot of them, but in the last few months I've received a blue one with "ELP" and a white dove from Atlantic; a bright orange one with a crowbar and the legend "I've got bad manors, baby" from Paramount (in honor of Crowbar's album Bad Manors); a four-color job heralding the movie "Medicine Ball Caravan" with "We have come for your daughters" emblazoned across the front; and another saying simply "Junk", above the image of a pile of methedrine. Tee-shirts are nice because not only do they give writers something to wear, but they provide a constant source of advertisement for the companies. Of course, in the more fashion-conscious centers of the industry



outlaw blues -- III

such as Hollywood and New York, each shirt is worn only until the new one comes out, after which they are either thrown away or placed carefully in ever-growing collections of record biz status symbols.

The very best promo device I ever got, though, came from Capital Records, who found the perfect answer to the problem of choosing something to send out that would be used and noticed for the longest possible time. It came with an album of Buck Owens singing Simon & Garfunkel songs (a terrible album, amusingly enough) - an actual wrist-watch with Buck Owens' picture, actually a cartoon of him holding a guitar and his name underneath, with a five year guarantee.

I've worn that watch ever since, and so has everyone else who got one. It is one of my most prized possessions. And it is something that fandom could never have provided. Even Bob Tucker never got a watch, and he passed the 25-year mark while I was in Kindergarten. Which just goes to show how much he missed by not becoming a rock critic.

- Greg Shaw (1972)

-----  
I doubt he could cope with success - he has a rough enough time handling anonymity...  
-----

- Arnie Katz

"The Bionic Woman (Channel 7) - Jamie's mother supposedly returns from the dead with bad news."

-NY Sunday NEWS

"(7) THE STREETS OF SAN FRANCISCO - Crime Drama

Fired for inflicting corporal punishment, a mentally unbalanced teacher (Maurice Evans) kidnaps students, chains them to chairs and force-feeds them history lessons. Mike Stone: Karl Malden. Steve Keller: Michael Douglas. (Repeat; 60 min.)"

-TV GUIDE

"Terry Brooks of Brighton, is a short, fat, middle-aged shipping clerk earning about \$85. per week. But last week it was revealed that, in the brief span of six months, he managed to seduce 40 of the town's best looking young girls.

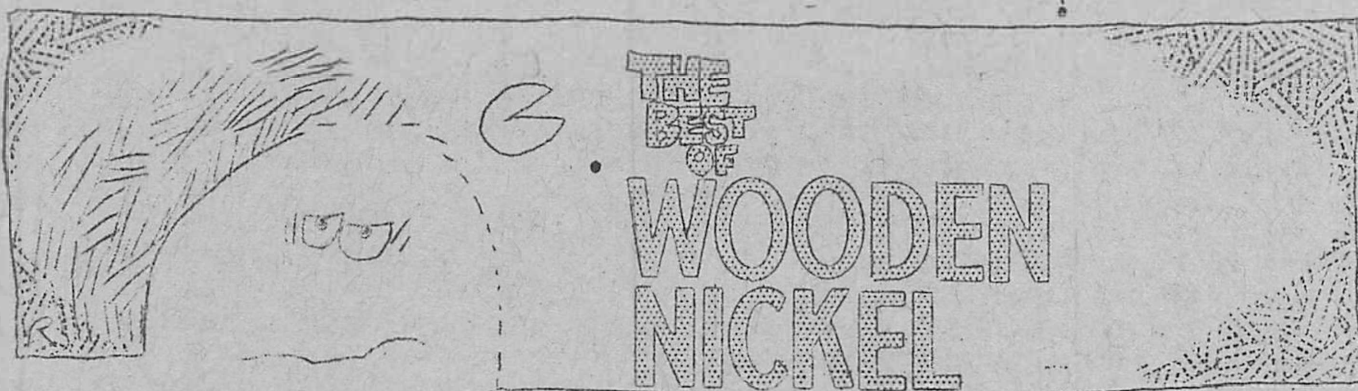
"Terry's technique was simple. He appealed to the girls' sympathies, telling them that he had a strange disease and only sex could save him."

-INSIDE NEWS

"We were notified by certain fans that they had no identification and were proud of it. Well, they have more courage than I do. It is without a doubt one of the most foolish things a person can do, venturing hundreds of miles away from home without something in his pocket telling who he is or where he belongs. The charity ward and Potter's Field are full of people like that."

-John Taylor, MIDAMERICON PR #4





Ah, those magic days of 9th fandom! It was the early 70's and the fannish Golden Era that those John the Baptist fanzines (METANOIA, NOPE, MICRO-COSM, etc.) told everyone was coming actually came. Really. Every week-end Charlene and I made our way to Brooklyn Heights to help with the work on FOCAL POINT or POTLATCH or CIPHER or our own RATS! And this, in turn, sparked fans the world over and these nice little fannish personalzines began to dominate the scene. It was fun, but like all good things, it eventually ended. Still, we were stubborn and slow in our dying. By 1973 the writing was on the wall and what fannish efforts still breathed tended to be short breaths. HOT SHIP, WASTE PAPER, DEAD FLOWERS were all one, two or three sheets to the wind fanzines that came out with remarkable frequency, yet even they were on their way out. The last such fanzine of this type, and in many ways, the best of these fanzines, was WOODEN NICKEL, a 2 sides of a page mimeographed near-weekly by Arnie Katz kept the spirit of those golden days alive with some of Arnie's best material. I'm no fan historian, and WOODEN NICKEL explains itself better than I ever could, so for the next few issues, as a sort of warm-up for Arnie taking over the reigns with a regular column of All-New material, we decided to print this "Best of - " here in RATS! This was originally scheduled for Frank Lunney's SYNDROME, but I just never got around to it & Frank fell into a pizza oven and hasn't been heard from since. Uh huh. Anyway, here we go, part one complete with Secret Origin, of "The Best of Wooden Nickel" - in my opinion, anyway. Uh huh. Bill.

PORTER STARTS NEWZINE      Andy Porter, the Brooklyn-based fanzine entrepreneur, came to the Insurgent meeting tonight armed with the first issue of his new faanish newszine, chronicle.

We here at 59 Livingston Street don't think Brooklyn should be a monopoly city insofar as fan newszines are concerned. No, indeed. We believe each and every one of you out there (up to our circulation limit of 50, that is) deserves the right to make a choice. (The other 50, as mentioned earlier, can eat their little hearts out.) Ah, but you fortunate 50, you happy half-hundred will be able to make a choice. You may either read (and for all I care, even believe) the lies and falsehoods by omission churned out by the pro-establishment, cold, machinelike and soulless An-

----- ARNIE KATZ -----

the best of wooden nickel -- II

drew Porter publishing cartel, or you can revel ("hedonistic to the hilt," I always say) in the free-spirited, if typ-ridden Truth as dispensed by WOODEN NICKEL. Are you going to believe a fanzine that tells you that Bob Tucker has long hair and wears bell bottoms or are you going to believe WOODEN NICKEL? That is the question as I see it.

Dating, as it does, after the hey day of 9th fandom, Arnie served a most important function in keeping people abreast of the goings on in ever-fascinating New York Insurgent fandom. With his historian's eye, he chronicled (sorry about that) the doings of a group of totally listless gaffiates with uncanny precision, giving the Outside World a glimpse of the wild-eyed crazies that ramed within his sphere of influence. -Bill

TV TIMES As we sat watching "Mary Tyler Moore" with the Kunkels, we got into a desultory conversation about the way the Saturday evening TV schedule could be improved to make it even more suitable for stoned viewing than it already is.

Right now, things open with "UFO", a show only the Kunkels and Katzes seem to like. After a few rounds of vaporous refreshment, the exploits of Cmdr. Straker and company take on a depth and meaning which only the most devoted (and zonked) UFOphiles can perceive. "All in the Family" follows the space opera, accompanied by more rounds of herbal enhancer. I think the show regained some of its zip this year [1973], and episodes such as the one which presented an incident in alternating scenes representing the viewpoints of Archie and Mike are as good as the best from the first season. "Bridget Loves Bernie" has the next time slot. At the beginning of the tv season, critics said that even readings from the phone book could be a smash if scheduled between "All in the Family" and "Mary Tyler Moore". Despite the fact that Joyce and I identify with the program somewhat since ours is a mixed marriage, I'd say "Bridget Loves Bernie" validates this statement. At the rate of several megatokes per half hour, by the time Bob Newhart's show goes on after "Mary Tyler Moore", it seems absurdly funny, even when it isn't.

The first improvement the four of us decided we'd make is one CBS has already scheduled for this fall, replacing "Bridget Loves Bernie" with something better, in this case "M\*A\*S\*H". This removes the psychic let-down that comes when Archie Bunker has bid goodnight and Rhoda Morganstern is not yet on the scene. That's one terrible half-hour in the homes of stoned tube-watchers all over America, I'll bet. What unfathomable questions of the soul are loosed during the frequent lags of interest caused by "Bridget Loves Bernie"? The nuthouses are full of flipped-out hippies who couldn't cut Bridget's brother, Mike the priest.

The next change, quickly ratified by all four of us, was reviving "The Now Explosion" to begin immediately after "Bob Newhart". If you never had the pleasure of watching "The Now Explosion", with its blend of intelligent top forty music and psychedelic film clips, while in an exalted state, you really missed something. They could've played more Stones, Who, etc., but the movies, ranging from go-go dancers and spacey camera effects to scenes



the best of wooden nickel -- III

of country car drives and pretty girls cleaning house, were a complement to being stoned unparalleled in the history of television.

"I'd like a horror movie," Bill suggested after we'd firmed up the rest of our ideal schedule. "Nothing like a good horror movie."

"I think I'd put it on right before 'UFO'," I ventured, unwilling to admit to even such good friends as Bill and Charl that I had toyed with the notion of putting "Celebrity Bowling" in that very spot.

"Before 'UFO'?" Bill seemed shocked. "I'd want it after 'Now Explosion' to cap the evening."

"I hate to admit it," I said, admitting it, "but I prefer 'Now Explosion' at the end. It, well.. it gets me horny. After that show, all I want to do is go to bed."

"Don't horror films get you horny?" asked Bill Kunkel, maven of the macabre.

**PEEPING TOMMAINE** Bill and Charlene Kunkel have a Peeping Tom or, more accurately, a Peeping Tom has them. Charl was lying down in the bedroom of the Kunkel's first-floor apartment when she heard rustling outside. She looked up and there, in the half-dark on the other side of the screen, were the burning eyes of her newf and admirer.

Bill went to check and found a cinder block surrounded by suspicious footprints directly under the bedroom window. The stranger returned several times that night, even though the police prowled around the building for a while. Bill and Charl's landlady moved the cinder block away the next morning, but a new one reappeared under the window that night accompanied by a fresh set of tracks.

I'll say this much for the Kunkel's Peeping Tom, he's a persistent son of a bitch. When the Kunkels put up blinds to reduce their unwanted visitor's field of vision, he switched to peering at them through the whirling blades of their window fan. Even moving the cinder blocks to a safe hiding place didn't stop "Tom"; he just started bringing his own block with him each night.

The Kunkel's original determination has given way to a detached resignation as the days and weeks passed. "If he's gonna look, he's gonna look," Bill





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the best of wooden nickel -- IV

said when I asked him about it.

"You mean you've quit trying to stop him?" I asked.

"There's no way," Bill said. "Besides, I'm saving the cinder blocks he leaves behind each night to build a spare room."

CALL ME TRIPON My boss came up to me and asked if I'd be willing to do him a favor. Well, it never hurts to do the boss a favor and, besides, I like him even if he is a lot older than his 33 years. I asked him what it was I could do for him.

"My wife asked me to get her a copy of PLAYGIRL and well, uh,.... I'm embarrassed to buy it." He blushed, shamed by the confidence he had shared. "I don't want the news-stand guy to think I'm a faggot," he explained. I told him this was an admirable wish and tried to bolster his flagging self-confidence. I told him to go out there and get his wife that PLAYGIRL!

He sidled up to me again a few hours later. "I got it," he said. I said I was proud of him for being so brave. "I looked through it first," he blurted. "I wanted to make sure that none of the guys in the magazine had a bigger one than mine." His chest swelled with manly pride. "None of them did."

Next Christmas, I'm buying him a John C. Holmes movie.

- Arnie Katz

ART CREDITS: Cover by John Dowd...  
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Bill Kunkel. Design for "Power Square"  
by Dan Steffan...

Next Issue: More of Wooden Nickel, more from Charlene, BK on his life and times in the Comic Book Biz in a special Comics Salute Issue! A new John Dowd cover and a special surprise! Till then, stay happy...