

The Blotter

Magazine
www.blotterrag.com

As Yet, an Unassessed Threat

Free in Asheville, Athens, Atlanta, Chapel Hill, Charlottesville, Durham, Greensboro,
June 2006 Hillsborough, New York City, and Raleigh



Quieten down in there! Stories by Brent Powers and F. John Sharp. The triumphant return of Marty Smith's Paper Cuts! Poems by Maurice Oliver, Daidree Tofano, and Brent Appling. Jamie Allen's been rooting around in celebrity garbage. And where would we be without the Dream Journal and One Neck's comix, too? Now go to sleep!

The Blotter is:

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This magazine may contain typos or
bad words

Items Worth Mentioning

from the desk of Johnny Pence

Ain't No Dadgum Newspaper!

Y'all, come on. When was the last time you saw a band review in this magazine? Do we *ever* do little "out-and-about" journalistic pieces, or send a "reporter" somewhere to "cover" an event? In case you haven't noticed, this is a weirdo literary magazine. It is not a hipster newsweekly!

Quit sending press releases here! If you have a cool band and you want some publicity, write us and we'll work out a fair ad deal. If you're a non-profit, or just plain small, we give *sweet* deals! But if you've read this magazine even once, you know that we are not going to "send someone" to "cover" your show.

If you want us to help you publicize something, we *love* to help! But write me or Jenny and communicate with us like human beings. I can smell flackery a mile away, and it turns my stomach.

Quit it. Drives me crazy!

Party Party.

That said, on to our concert calendar:

Chapel Hillions and Durhamites, please make an effort to swing by the Cave, your home for the occasional Blotter Benefit Show. The benefit show is June 22, and features super pop phenomenon SNMNMNM and The Walkers.

You know the Cave. You luv the Cave. I do too. Go see this show, pay the cover, and support your buddies at *The Blotter*. You know what we do ain't free; hell, it ain't even cheap. So you could even make a donation or buy a T-shirt. Have a hundred beers while you're there so Mouse can make some money too. It's really a win-win situation.

Thanks to the bands! Thanks to the Cave!

Party Party, Party-Party.

Thumbing through this issue, you'll see some righteous festivals advertised. Festival for the Eno, Sprockets, AthFest, and more coming next issue. Who needs a dad-blasted calendar? Just look where all the hep cats are advertising! If you can't think of anything to do this summer, it's your own fault!

But seriously, no more press releases, okay?

—ediot@blotterrag.com

Paper Cuts

Books You Might Not Have Read

by Martin K. Smith

Child Star: An Autobiography (Shirley Temple Black, Warner Books, 1988)

I actually did research for this piece, in that I arose from my couch-potato couch to borrow a library copy of *Little Miss Marker*, one of Temple's first films. Shirley is left as a deposit, or "marker", for her father's horse-racing bet. The horse loses, Papa sticks his head in the oven, and Shirley is left in care of the bookie and the nightclub-singing gangster's moll. She skips around with panties glimpsed beneath her pinafore, prattling about King Arthur and blithely naming the thugs and hoodlums after Round Table knights. It's weird and a bit ped-erastic. Is this how mainstream America defined "adorable" in the Thirties? Or was it the definition of the studio heads, Napoleon-complexed and slightly kinky? (The latter-day colorization doesn't help: pastel blues, pinks and greens like nasty synthetic candy.) Well, guess what? Shirley didn't just play a perky little chatterbox in old movies like this: she actually was one, and still is; and has written a perky, chatterboxy, very long memoir.

Her career began at age 3, when she was spotted by some producers at the dance school she'd been sent to because of her "brimming energy ... overflowing enthusiasm, natural sense of

physical coordination, and rudimentary sense of rhythm." A series of bit parts and walk-ons, along with some career finessing by Mrs. Temple, led to a seven-year contract with the Fox studio. All through the Thirties she was one of the most popular stars in the world. Fox's studio flacks backdated her official birthday to claim her as a year younger than she actually was, and refused to consider roles beyond the curls-pinafores-golly-gosh image that had made her famous and them rich; but puberty eventually caught up with her anyway. She made a few films at MGM as a young teenager, but finally decided to let the acting career slip away.

While it lasted, she had all the usual superstar perks: tons of fan mail, extravagant gifts from all over the world, private tutor and bodyguard hired by the studio, visits from dignitaries like Eleanor Roosevelt, Amelia Earhart and J. Edgar Hoover. (None of the celebrities awed her, she says; she just drafted them into her Junior G-Man club.) She also had several kidnap plots against her, and even faced an assassination attempt that could have come straight from, or gone straight into, a thriller screenplay: a deranged woman, whose own baby daugh-

The Dream Journal

real dreams, real weird

Death From Above.

I dreamed I lived in a neighborhood where people lived fairly close up on each other. I was just hanging out with some other people in the neighborhood and idly ripped a traffic sign off its post (I think it was one of those orange "merge left" signs that they have before a lane is closed for construction). I just yanked it out, breaking the bolts.

Then, I started tossing it around while we were all talking, like you would with a pebble or an acorn.

Without thinking, I hurled the big, steel sign into the air, vertically, like a Frisbee. It went up about 500 feet, and made an awful screeching noise.

At its apex, I realized that a 40-lb. sheet of steel would soon come back to earth at about Mach 4 in the middle of a tight neighborhood. I panicked and shouted, trying to warn everyone to look up.

They all did, and the sign came streaking down and cut most of the way through a 3-foot cross-section of a branch of an ancient oak tree. The branch didn't quite fall, and neither did the sign. Everything was okay, but people were very angry with me.

—J.P., Athens

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

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ter had died at the same moment Shirley was born, was convinced that Shirley had stolen her baby's soul, and tried to shoot her as she sang onstage at a Christmas gala. (She didn't, obviously; and anyway the birthday she was working from was Shirley's faked studio-bio date, not the real one.) Not much of anything seems to have fazed her. She easily figured out the difference between moviemaking—it was make-believe and "work"—and her real life. (It helped that Mr. and Mrs. Temple, though amateurs at child-star management, were instinctively good parents.) She presents herself as an amazingly untraumatized, unscarred child star, blessed with overful measures of good cheer, good

sense and quick learning ability.

Arranging us on the set required we learn about chalk marks on the floor to indicate where we should be sequentially. For someone only thirty-six inches tall, peripheral vision and peeking proved helpful in hitting one of those marks, but I soon found stage lighting an even more reliable friend. Lighting technicians, I learned, employ an arsenal of different lights ... to provide different intensities and focus. Any film stage properly lit becomes a veritable crisscross of unseen light beams. These soon became my secret tools for correct positioning. Realizing that my facial skin was sensitive to subtle differ-

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ences in emission of heat from various combinations of light beams, I came to correlate and memorize the patterns of heat and action established during rehearsal and used this knowledge to maintain correct changes of position during filming.

There are of course lots of movieland anecdotes. Her body-guard taught her how to cheat at cards. The studio dentist made fake glue-in baby teeth to replace the real ones she lost. She had to give weekly piss samples for her Lloyd's of London insurance. F. Scott Fitzgerald wanted her to star in an adaptation of *Babylon Revisited*. A woman who wanted her own little Shirley offered Mr. Temple money to perform stud

service (he declined). A mute girl in England, watching Shirley onscreen, was miraculously restored to speech. On Shirley's first visit to the MGM offices, producer Arthur Freed exposed himself to her; while at the same time, down the hall, Louis B. Mayer was putting the make on her mother. (Both Temples escaped undefiled.)

Shirley was precocious off-stage as well as on.

When I learned my next film would feature some dogs ... I determined to get my own dog in the canine lineup ... Although [she] was without film experience, [the director] agreed to include her as an extra at a beginner's salary of \$5.00 per day. All she

had to do was sit around with the other dogs ... As things turned out, [the assistant director] decided to expand her part by having me bathe her. I balked. 'Five dollars is all right for an extra who does nothing,' I told him, 'but if she gets a bath, that means a bit part. She'll have to get more money.' We settled on \$2.50 additional. The hag-gling was enjoyable, but my request was a matter of principle. From observation I knew that any extra duty usually called for extra pay.

As a writer, Shirley has a fondness for what one might call extravagant metaphors. "It was time to recall sacred cows and Zanuck threw wide the cow-shed

Sprockets 2006

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Sprockets Teen Screen Film Fest june24
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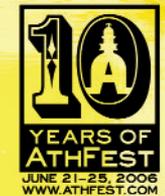


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door.” “The scattered clouds of studio indecision were gathering in one ominous, enormous thunderhead.” And, “Despite the quickening current, recent scars still told me a tale of submerged rocks along any course laid out solely by a heart without a head.” She sometimes uses a singular verb-before-subject construction—“Wading out into the fray I came”—that makes me think of Edwardian melodrama, or Theosophist tracts. As an autobiographer, she makes herself sound almost too good to be true; and she clams up in a couple places where I really wished she had been chatterboxy. Before her first marriage she visited her doctor for “minor surgery and birth-control information.” Then in the honeymoon suite, “Jack and I engaged in our first quarrel. ‘You said you were a virgin,’ he accused. ‘I was, until three days ago,’ I snapped. ‘Don’t yell at me. Discuss it with Dr. Davidson.’”

Shirley, what in the name of Hymen are you talking about?? What was this “minor surgery” of Doc Davidson’s that caused Jack to doubt your maiden-ness? This is a classic talking point for why I doubt autobiographers. They’ll never be completely forthcoming, no matter how much they promise: there’ll always be something they leave out, or gloss over, or obfuscate. (You want my autobio? I was born. I grew. Various circumstances fucked me up. In others I fucked myself, due to ignorance, denial or poor judgment. At length I determined that an unfucked life would be pleasanter and began efforts to acquire same, a process which continues. The End.)

The marriage went downhill from there and soon ended, but not before she and Jack appeared together in *Fort Apache*, with Henry Fonda and John Wayne. To keep from being burned again, she had—this shocked me—Future Hubby #2 quietly vetted by her old

buddy J. Edgar Hoover.

She frustrates again by ending the book in 1953, leaving her political and ambassadorial career for a rumored Volume 2. Nixon made her a U.N. delegate in 1969; in ’75, Gerald Ford appointed her Ambassador to Ghana; and in both cases I’d love to know why. Did the Ghana gig come because forty years earlier she’d done all those song-and-dance numbers with Bill “Bojangles” Robinson, one of Hollywood’s few black performers? Don’t laugh—in the surreal world of Washington, it could happen. And by her own reckoning, those duets were significant: “In our staircase dance we had touched fingers. To avoid social offense and assure wide distribution, the studio cut scenes showing physical contact between us. But for the rest of the world we provided a watershed. We were the first interracial dancing couple in movie history.”

Shirley, now in her 70s, was recently in the news with a less-than-impressed comment on the acting “career” of Paris Hilton: that she was “stealing the thunder from really talented actors who have learned their craft.” For all her perkiness, chatterboxing and ornate prose, Shirley’s got brains and a level head. Asked what she thought about her old films, and old self, as seen on TV, she replied “She is a relative and nobody knows her better than I. But what she does is her business, and what I do is mine. We are mutually supportive. She helps me and I help her.”

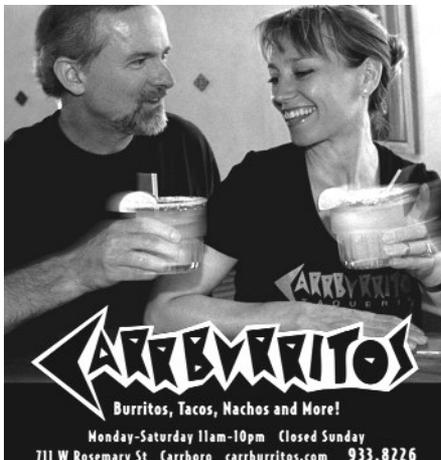
Martin K. Smith is publisher of *The Blotter*, and a DJ on WXDU Duke University Radio. I once saw him lift the front of a school bus off the ground.

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Carmel

by Brent Powers

Lucia and I sat in that posh joint with the patio and I kept wondering if I was going fall in love with her again. I was always falling in love with her. Hadn't seen her in years and here I was, doing it again ... and starting out in just the same way: sitting across from her at a table in a posh joint and looking at her and wondering, "Should I fall in love with this woman? Would it be a career-limiting move? Will she further my designs to become a Venture Capitalist or actor in films about undead surfers and their overwrought girls shrieking like eagles, which are carrion birds anyway—or is that hawks? Speaking of which, we were down there in Carmel, on the same street where old Robinson Jeffers lived way-back when.

Look. Am I gonna fall in love with this chick? Again? For the umpteenth time since we were teenyboppers. It never worked. For months we'd go on, just hanging out, going to jazz joints, drinking wine she pronounced "Chabeek", even when I'd correct her, she was that type chick, you don't correct that type chick, you listen, Jack, when she corrects you. In fact, I've not seen this beautiful lady in it must be a thousand years and here we are sitting in the nice patio facing the sea old Jeffers found his rolling numbers in and she takes her napkin while we're talking and wipes my goddamned face. Yeah! That's my Lucia. Love her, love her still. Guy with half a ball would

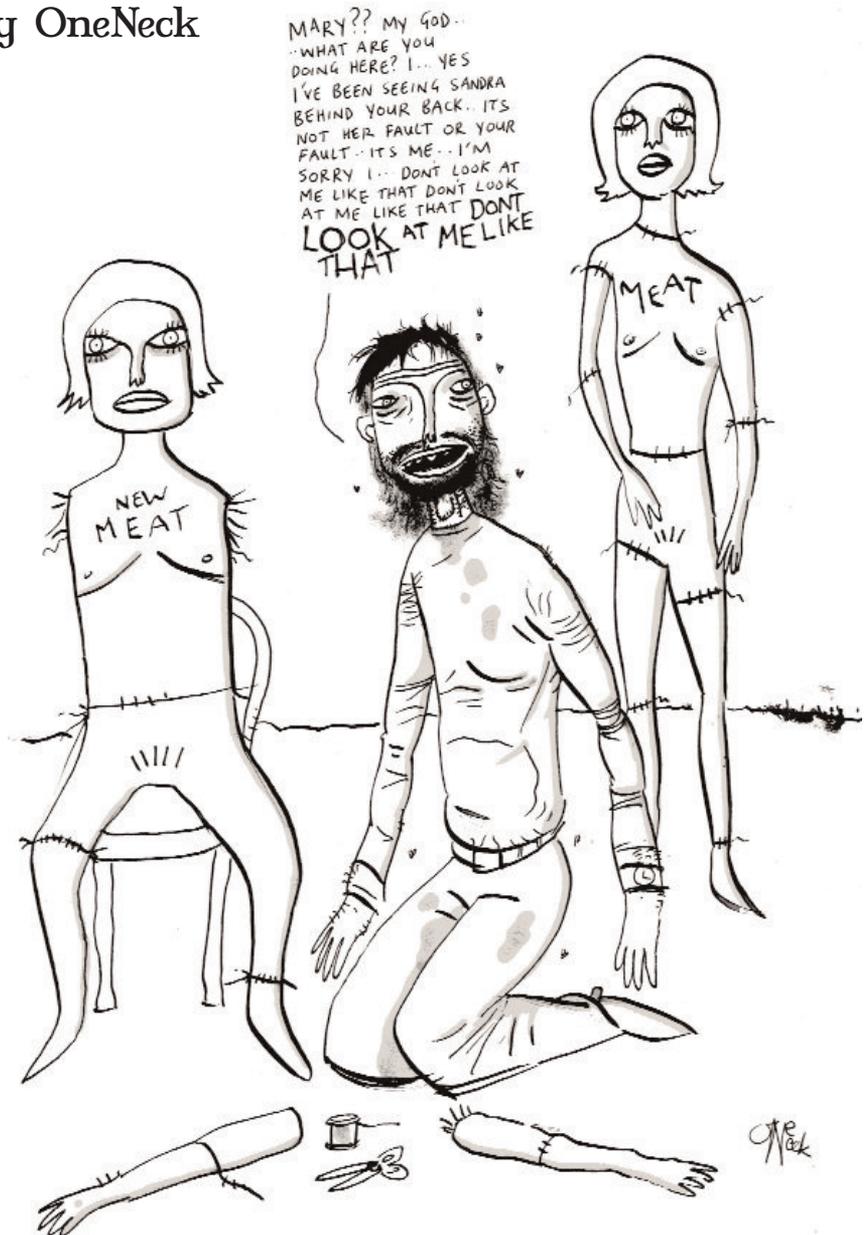
yank the napkin out of her hand and draw his knife, saying, "kneel, *bruja*, and make peace with your dumbass gods, for surely I will now let your blood join that of the grape which puddles here at our feet since you tossed your first glassful in my face when I asked

you, 'So, you gettin any? Got wood in your bed nights?' and it pisseth you off so." Anyways, wipes my face, this daughter of Dracula. That's how she is, I tell you. So am I in love with her again? Goddamn right! I am a fool. I can't help myself.

cont'd., p. 10

A Cartoon (?)

by OneNeck



K

I know you're nervous about your upcoming audit. But you're only nervous because the word sounds scary, like a tax term. Just learn from it.

And know that once you get to where I am, you take your audits, from the IRS and anywhere else, and you FUCK THEM IN THE ASS!

⇒ Audits are very f---able JUST LIKE YOU!

— Your Biggest Supporter!!!
XOXO!

K: THIS SCRIPT SU-C-K-S!!

A Thetan does not play a filthy whore!! The end! Realize that U are the vehicle from which our progeny was born!

Ever since UR auditing, UR IQ is defanetly improving!! U-R important!

Therefore, no more nasty scripts 4 U!
XOXO — The most powerful MAN in HOLLYWOOD!

Tom's Household Notes to Katie on Self-Improvement

by Jamie Allen
handwriting by Jenny Haniver

Jamie Allen is editor of the Duck and Herring Company's *Pocket Field Guide* quarterly. His work has appeared all over the place.

K-
 I got your
 Scientology Uniform
 dry-cleaned. Pls know
 that when I tell you
 to have it on each day,
 I am doing it for
 YOUR SOUL.
 U in (And baby, to see
 B-O-N-E-K! How's
 that for Motivation?!)
 -T-B-O-N-E
 XO XO



K-
 This carton
 of ice cream is not a
 carton of ice cream!!
 It is a symbol of UR
 earthly weakness!
 Do U want to be a (aw?)
 OR A weightless Being?
 UR Beautiful! Dont give
 in to sugar!
 -T

My Love

As you sit here breastfeeding
 our child for the 5th TIME
 2-nite, ask yourself this:

⇒ IF breastfeeding is SO
natural, why are UR
 nipples chapped & bleeding
 right now?!

⇒ Why are Brooke Shields's
 nipple's chapped & bleeding?!

I know we argued about this
 before (and believe me, I appreciate
 it when U said Xenu strapped
 U to a nipple machine 75
 quadrillion yrs. ago!), BUT
 Plain & Simple. BREASTFEEDING
 IS UNHEALTHY! SHED UR
 HUMAN-NESS! -T xoxo

Katie:

I realize U still
 get pimples some times,
 but NOXEMA?!

Know the pimples are
 toxins of past experiences
 & earthly faults leaving
 UR system!
 When U become Clear,
 like me, UR skin will
 clear up too!
 -Clear T!

"You are so spiritual," she tells me, "and yet you persist in this desire for a little momentary pleasure, you waste yourself upon the perishable flesh rather than receiving the light of my Higher Self which shineth even unto the end of time. What kinda jerk will turn this in for a little pussy? What good's a pussy after awhile? It gets all dry and useless, can't even give issue any more. It is a barren tree ... and a tree of evil, I might add, for if it does beareth it beareth the poison of Knowledge of Good and Evil which ..."

"What is done out of love ..."

"Shut the fuck up. Forgive me for saying that. The 'fuck' word, I mean. I'm trying to get rid of the 'fuck' word from my vocabulary. I used it so much when it was fashionable. Now they think you're a

real asshole to be saying that."

"When it is said with feeling, with conviction ..."

"Will you stop, already? I was trying to complete a thought. You never let me complete a thought."

"You don't have to complete your thoughts. Why not just let 'em hang and allow the other players to groove with 'em. Where's the jazz in your soul, whore?"

She swept the crumbs off the unspeakably white linen table cloth, swept with such vigor in fact that the whole thing went flying, went flying, it drifted away on the wind out into the surf of rolling verbiage. Clint Eastwood, watching it go by, aimed his finger and said, "Pow!" "Hyeh-hyeh-hyeh!" went a person of his acquaintance who was walking along beside him, telling him about this really great

treatment he's got in mind for a flick about a guy who stands on his roof and shoots at dirigibles. Clint had just said, "I know things about dirigibles," which is what got the guy started in the first place. But the table cloth, we're discussing the table cloth.

Lucia snaps her fingers. A waiter appears (suspended from wires for reasons of his own). "Yeh, what?" he says.

"We'll be needing another table cloth, couple set ups, 'nother carafe courtesy of the house, make sure that clotpole, Fibria, don't piss in it this time, I know his piss anywhere from all that Eytalian broccoli he eats, then we're ready to order ... What will you have, infidel? Never mind, you don't know yourself the way I do, bring us the house Caesar with the house dress-

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ing on the side. What's with the wires, by the way? You working up some statement or something? I don't see what that can possibly signify, guy hanging on wires. Outa my face, artiste mon-key. Bring us some food."

"Do you know that boy?" I ask.

"Why do you call him a boy? He is older than you are. Which is which is Well, have you stopped growing? Are you getting any new teeth? Or are those things that keep falling out of your mouth little pieces of sculpture you swiped from one of the galleries. I know that guy who does the teeth things. He's an arrogant skunk. He left his wife in the dust of the streets of Laredo. What an asshole. She's lying there in the streets of Laredo, right, when along comes this Tex says, 'Hey, get off the streets of Laredo by sundown or I'll ticket your ass!' She says, 'You could be a gentleman and help me up,' and he tells her to get hosed, he's got work to do rounding up miscreants, dopers, dreamers, rope mystics climbing heavenwards muttering all these mantras disturb the peace. 'Laredo was a quiet town before all you people got here, now move it, Gidget, or I'll drag you by the hair and ...' Oh, never mind, it's a boring story. Where were we? Yes, our relationship. You are going to declare your love again after all these years. Do you remember the last time you declared your love for me? It was on the beaches of Malibu, among the surfers lying face-up hoping to see God, I think they were close to death, very quiet in any case, and their expressions bore none of the marks of conceited stupidity but rather

resembled El Greco's enraptured, if somewhat mannered, acolytes hanging out around a soaring, sex-soaked Virgin Mary lookin all laid and shit ... Wait, wait. Yeh, you said it there and you said it later over the phone. Some months later over the phone. That marine was in your room, that gruesome character used to provide you with the dope. You told me he was standing there, watching you, so you got under the bed with the phone and you said real quiet like, in a kind of serpent's hiss—really disgusting, and as if a marine couldn't hear you, you dork, a marine, you know what they do to those men's ears — you said, 'I love you, Lucia!' Hiss, hiss! 'I love you, Lucia.' The marine embarrassed you, too, he said, 'I heard that! HAHahaha-HAH!' followed by this kind of Zen echo effect of hahahahaha, way down the hall somewhere, I think it was all those other assholes you used to hang with, the Friday Night Club or whatever you called yourselves. What a bunch of dorks. But you know it won't work. Now admit it. Just give it up, fool. It's not gonna happen. Let's just have a relationship like we're supposed to, the Platonic kind, you know, like Greek statues, kind of still and white with a blue background and pretty stuff like that."

I reminded her that the Greeks used to paint their statues. They started out white, sure, but then they were painted flesh colored and dressed up in actual clothes. Some of them even moved, and there were clever little chambers and tunnels that ran from pipes at the base and opened out at the mouths

so that actors could hide somewhere, Oh, I don't know, probably in the base itself, which was hollow, yes, in the bases of the statues, and make them seem to speak, you know. They'd call out to passers by and say things like, "Hey, nice pair!" or ... , well, things like that, you know. She gave me a look that told me our discussion was terminated, perhaps forever. When the food came we didn't speak again until we left separately.

"Goodbye," I said.

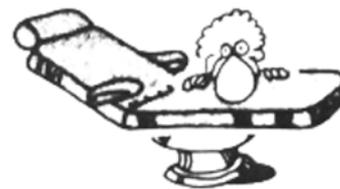
"Goodbye," she said.

I headed down the beach and Clint aimed at me with his finger and went POW.

Brent Powers? He don't surf. Ask him.

Howard L. Shareff, DDS

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There, But For the Grace of Wind Currents

by F. John Sharp

You know how they say that a penny dropped from the Empire State Building can kill you? Well, it can.

I was in New York the other week, on business. I sell bonds. I didn't get to travel as much as I'd liked, seeing as how I looked for every chance to get out of the house. My live-in girlfriend, Lara, was hounding me to "make it permanent" and I was avoiding. I mean, I figured I had a lot of years left and I didn't want to get tied down just yet. But I couldn't let her go. I was pretty fond of her. It was a hard line to walk.

So I got some lunch at a little hot dog wagon in the shadow of the Empire State Building, on the corner of 34th street and Fifth Avenue. I was with Jim, a bond trader from the fifty-third floor. We paid for a couple of dogs with mustard and kraut and were walking shoulder to shoulder through the thick lunch crowd, when Jim let out a sharp little "Ah" sound and dropped to the ground. I didn't see him drop, because I was trying to unwrap my hot dog in the wind without getting mustard on my Brooks Brothers blazer, but a woman carrying a shopping bag full of feather dusters saw him, and I heard her tell it to the policeman who showed up a minute or two later. All I saw was Jim lying on the ground, blood trickling from the

top of his head, his hot dog lying mustard-side down on his olive wool pants.

The policeman wanted to know where I was at the time Jim 'went down.' I told him. He said to show him. So I had him stand where Jim had been and I stood where I had been, and we were almost touching shoulders, our heads only a foot and a half apart. He measured it. Then he wrote it in his notebook. He asked if I heard anything. I said no. All I heard was the "Ah." We both looked at the wound on the top of Jim's head, then looked up at the top of the Empire State Building. Bystanders looked up too, and began to disperse when it dawned on them. The policeman sized me up and down with squinty eyes, like he wanted to find some way to pin it on me, but I had witnesses.

Later that day, the coroner dug a 1931 Lincoln head penny, minted in San Francisco, from three inches deep in Jim's brain. That was one of the 'wheatback' pennies that are hard to find these days because they're being hoarded by collectors in the hopes that

someday a hundred of them will be worth a dollar five or so. It was tagged and cataloged by the NYPD for evidence in the trial that would never happen, because no one saw anyone drop or throw a penny from the top of the Empire State Building that day.

I asked if I could have the penny when they were done with it, but they said they are never done with a murder case, so I went to a local coin shop and bought an identical one, a 1931 'S'. It cost me fifty bucks. I went home, drilled a hole in it and I wear it around my neck, on a chain that is exactly eighteen inches long.

I'm thinking of shopping for rings.

F. John Sharp writes, "Until recently, I wrote exclusively about ball peen hammers and chewing gum, with some lack of success. But my work has been published online in *Pindeldyboz*, *Paumanok Review*, *Salt River Review*, among others, and in print in *Snow Monkey* and *Peninsular*. I live and work in the Cleveland area, and am not afraid to admit it."

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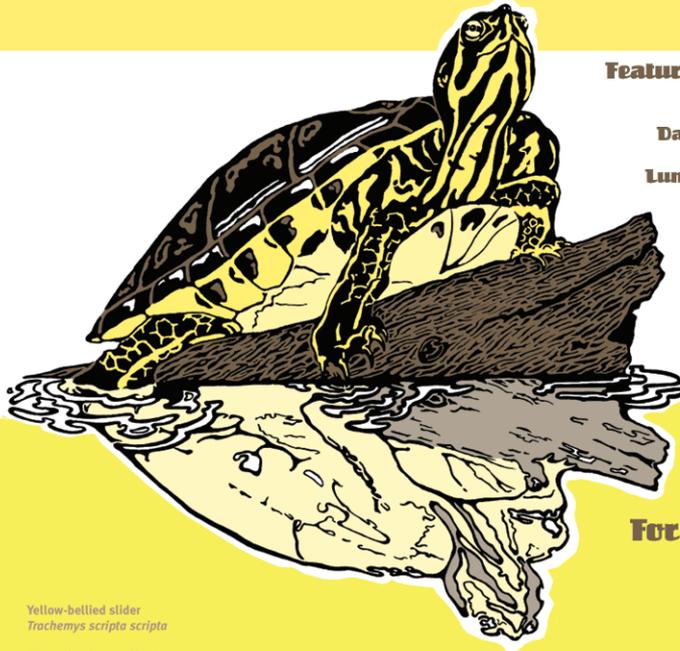
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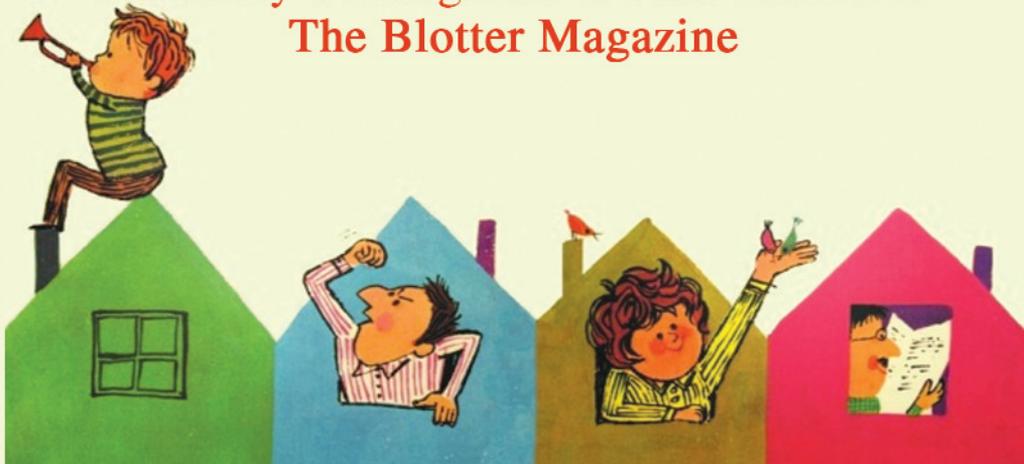
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When All Information Is An Omen by Maurice Oliver

Found:

- the whitest life of toilets
- a book on punctuation rules in polka-dots
- the "ding" of a snow shovel hitting cement
- one table setting that knows how to "place" itself
- the interior of a cut healing
- a departure lounge of wadded ATM receipts
- several legal pads of shorthand scribbled by a dyke
- a glossy world atlas just above the bicep
- the iron balls of a 19th-century welder
- an Albanian village carved out of a C-section
- the bruise-blue of a go-cart
- pictures of Daylight Savings Time taken by the KGB
- illustrious art in a bird stuffed on the mantle

Note: All items can be claimed with proper ID at the sewer grate

White Nurse

Amidst fleeing spirits and mourning and denial,
The mousy, compassion-hearted nurse awkwardly
stands in the doorway,
Silently pleading for an excusable exit
Affected but professional, she files the necessary
papers then
disappears
Her memory is instantly engulfed by the wails of a
tragic great-
grandmother

She flees to her antiseptic car
At her sterile home her surgical husband awaits her
She sleeps a vulture's sleep
And ponders the meaning of bones and guts and
blood

Black Nurse

In Africa, she healed souls
A golden shaman draped in bangles and herbs
Here, camouflaged against the grey wall of the bed-
room,
She is the Negro helper come to watch Dora die
While the family awaits a second opinion
Black Nurse disappears when White Nurse thankfully
arrives
Black Nurse is on the banks of Loch Lomond for all the
family cares

She has retreated to the kitchen room
To sip stale coffee and stare blankly, nostalgically,
mournfully
At the redwhitechecked table plastic
She taps her fingers until the hearse glides in
And slinks away, the chameleon

by Daidree Tofano

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Fool the Pigs!

by Brent Appling

My first wife was raised in a Chinese barn
on the outskirts of Middle America,
working and eating alongside sows and piglets.
Her mother said it was to fool the Gods; my
wife says it was more to fool the pigs.

I first met her there, wallowing in the mud
bath with her sibling swine, satisfied with a
full, naked belly in the half-cocked sun.

"That's the one I want," I said to the sun-painted farmhand,
pointing to the muddy pink ball of nude innocence.

"You sure you want the runt, son? Not too much
bacon there," the farmhand said having taken
cues from the greasy salesman that put him behind
the wheel of the artifact he called a 'pick-up.'

"That's plenty of bacon for me," I say climbing
over the wooden restraint, neglecting the
delicacy of my soft leather wingtips.

When the farmhand accepted my sincerity,
he hopped into the slop as well, pausing for
reassurance before gathering up my blossoming
lover. I nodded and in mere moments my
blushing baby bride was wrestled from the shit
riddled muck and into my silky white arms.

After a few minutes of resistance, my little beast
was at ease against my breast, lulled by the
gentle woos I spilled into her tiny ears. Her mother
signed the 'pedigree' and I signed the check,
and she and her farmhand waved as we set off
to enter the great marriage maze, traveling
in a sputtering black jalopy.

Maurice Oliver has been published in lots of magazines and those magazines come from lots of different countries. He currently lives in Portland, Oregon where he is a private tutor. His poetry blogsite is: www.bloxster.net/mauriceoliver.

Brent Appling is a student at the University of South Carolina, and

Daidree Tofano was a student at Duke University until just recently.



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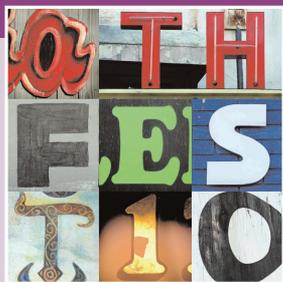


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