

PPSA magazine

July 1994 • Volume 7 • Number 1

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John D. Johnson

editor

PPSA International
Bureau of Printing and Engraving
c/o J. Johnson
505 Oppenheimer Drive #516
Los Alamos, NM 87544
505—662—7725

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mmmm



Date: Sun, 23 Jan 1994 15:53:39 -0700 (MST)

From: "Raman Pfaff, (517) 355 1865"

Subject: NON SUPER BOWL

JJ-

Well, I hope this year no one wins and a blimp is loaded with explosives and eliminates both teams. It is not pretty.

I finally have some flu like symptoms. I knew I couldn't make it the whole year without it. I shouldn't have gotten up today.

Later,
Rp

Date: Tue, 25 Jan 1994 03:13:16 -0600 (CST)

From: "Ray Swartz, Illinois"

Subject: How to Host a Mystery

John,

This Saturday Patricia and I held a "How to Host a Mystery" dinner party. We got the "Star Trek" theme game, where everyone plays a character from ST-TNG. To do this, we tried to get the most exotic looking food possible. We made green lasagna out of spinach noodles, and put gummy-worms into blue Jello (to resemble Klingon "Gaggh" and such. The party was a big success. We even had costumes, which some people improvised and others bought at a costume store. It was a big success.

Ray

Date: Fri, 4 Mar 94 11:49:43 EST

From: "Doug Wilken"

<dwilken@ufnmr6.health.ufl.edu>

John,

I noticed your address in Steve Langer's little monthly electronic newsletter. I am assuming you are the same John Johnson of Dr. Bob fan club fame?

-Doug Wilken (formerly of Michigan Tech)

(I don't usually admit to reading Steve Langer's newsletter, but yes! I was one of the Dr. Bob fan club founders... -ed.)

Letters to the Editor....

Date: Wed, 9 Mar 94 15:22:24 EST
From: "Doug Wilken"

John,

I officially got my Ph.D. degree in Applied Physics in May of 1993. As you no doubt recall, I started at MTU in Sept of 1985, right about when you were finishing your B.S. degree.

I have been a postdoc in the Center for Structural Biology in the College of Medicine at the Uni. of Fl., Gainesville for about 15 months.

With little money to be made in the field of solid state physics, I am trying my hand at medical imaging. Essentially, I am an advanced RF engineer.

Thus, I am doing what I would probably have been doing if I had simply gotten the EE degree in RF engineering that I was considering in 1980. However, with just a BS I would be making more money and have a medical plan.

Makes you think. :)

-Doug Wilken
University of Florida
Dept of Biochemistry
P.O. Box 100245
Gainesville, FL 32610-0245
(904) 392-2332
dwilken@ufthm.health.ufl.edu

Date: Fri, 25 Mar 94 14:59:30 -0500
From: debbie@aps.org (Debbie Brodbar)
Subject: Yes I am going

dear john,

Sorry about not responding sooner. Work has been crazy, hectic here with the APS March meeting. No I didn't go but all the Editors went which left me with a pile of work to do. Work is good. How is work for you?

Yes I will be at the APS April meeting. Won't be arriving till Monday but am planning on staying till Thursday. Will be

staying at the Meeting headquarters since APS is paying. Hope we and Raman can get together for our usual dinner thing or drinks too.

How is the bowling pin?

Hey who else will be at the meeting that I know"? Anyone from MSU what about the U-Penn crowd?

See you soon, Debbie

Date: Fri, 07 Jan 1994 15:28:11 (CST)
From: "Ray Swartz, Illinois"
Subject: Re: Happy New Year!

John,

Happy New Year, and all that!

I will not be graduating soon. I *have* graduated, official a few days ago (when I handed in the paperwork). The defense was a month ago, and went well. There is no news on the job front, but the UI has agreed to keep me on as a "1/2 time post-doc" for a few months.

Ray

(Ray, now it's June... do you have a real postdoc or job yet? Curious readers want to know! Good luck!)

Date: Mon, 23 May 1994 13:05:05 -0400
From: (Raman Pfaff, (517) 355 1865)
Subject: Re: why exist?

JJ-

Oh well, so much for the nice cushy job. Now you should apply to the temporary teaching spot in the Virgin Islands from Phys. Today. You might find a woman in a miniskirt there! I have been doing nothing but cleaning my office today. Junk piles up at an alarming rate. Oh well, back to cleaning. I'll look through my addresses this evening and send you any updates I can come up with. Catch you later. Maybe you should start drinking more often like myself, then you become much more personable. :)

Later, Rp

Dear PPSA Members:

MARLI AND MIKE LEIGH

WOULD LIKE TO ANNOUNCE THE BIRTH OF

THEIR SECOND CHILD,

CONOR MICHAEL MACLEOD LEIGH

BORN ON

FEBRUARY 25, 1994

*(Congratulations!!
And a belated congratulations on their first child, Rowan Leigh, who didn't make it in the last issue. -ed)*

Date: May 1994
From: Steve Langer

PPSA Members:

My sentence in Hell is over. I have accepted a postdoc in clinical imaging at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. It starts June 25 of this summer.

That means that there won't be another issue of the News From Detroit from Detroit. Hopefully, I'll be able to maintain my current computer account, at least until I've got a new one at Mayo. If things don't transfer smoothly though, I want you all to know I've been profoundly proud to have you as readers. The debates, entertainment and personal news has been an anchor of sanity during my Ph.D. penitence in this cultural, moral and intellectual cesspool. I wish all of you the best in your personal and professional futures.

(I'm not sure how many PPSA members were on your mailing-list, but it's great to hear of another ex-MSU person who did well someplace else! Best wishes for your postdoc!)



(Until next time... keep those letters coming! From New Mexico -ed.)

From the desk of The God Emperor

by JOHN JOHNSON



April 11, 1994

The mountains are shrouded in mist, it's the middle of April 1994 and we just had our second snow storm of the week. More are expected. It seemed the winter wouldn't begin and now it hangs on and won't end. When I left for work this morning the tree branches were doloped with snow, as if someone piled the snow so carefully that it actually defied gravity.

It is a week before the Spring APS meeting and I don't think I'll finish the newsletter. At least I finally started. I can blame it on Raman or Ray, or the fact that I couldn't track down Chuck Luckey, but the fact of the



An unexpected April snow storm.

matter is I just didn't feel like it. When I was a grad student (last we spoke) it was easy to spend time that I didn't have and money that I only had because of my latest student loan to publish the PPSA Newsletter (a.k.a. Magazine). This last year I've had an almost real job as a postdoc at Los Alamos National Laboratory, and I've been too bored to actually start writing. I've sent out notices asking for articles and photos, and most of you have ignored them. I think you'll find there are more than enough contributions for a good issue though!

What made me start writing? In part it was the hounding that Raman gave me. In part it was the guilt that I wouldn't have it done in time for the APS meeting. In part it was feeling organized enough in my thoughts after a year of introspection to gather the beast in my mind and spew forth on paper. I hate feeling that I have just thrown the newsletter together to meet a deadline; I hope I've done more than that.

My life, in the city of dweebs, has been fairly uneventful. As I said, I have a lab postdoc at LANL. I hope to convert to a full-time staff member soon. The pay increase should help cover all those nasty student loan payments that I have so rightly earned. It looks like I'll owe Uncle Sam several hundred this year. You should know that moving expenses can be taxed. A lesson learned is a... well it sucks, but they'll get the money when I have it.



Jeff Johnson and I use our instruments to carefully probe Scott Garner for residual radiation before heading to Santa Fe.

Let me run through some of the events since the last issue (many of which are covered in this issue). The last issue was handed out and mailed at the Fall Division of Nuclear Physics meeting in Santa Fe in October 1992. Raman stayed at my slum-pad on Ninth Street and spent time seeing New Mexico in my car. Meanwhile I wrote my thesis, clocked in at just under a month of actual writing. In November I defended my thesis and graduated. November 30th I started my postdoc. I am sure that if I hadn't graduated when I did I would have had to default on a few of my monthly payments.

Christmas came and went and I moved into a condo with a friend. I got the upstairs loft and he took the master bedroom. We had a fireplace that worked well with fake logs, and we had dreams of parties by the pool in the summer. Little did we know that we had moved into a complex that was run by anal retentive old people. Well we should have suspected that, as I have discussed in previous issues this town has more than its share of anal retentives. After several months of testing the rules we knew our boundaries and they knew theirs.

The first road trip of 1993 was to Michigan Tech with Raman. We had a memorable time, but you can read about that later in this issue. That was also when I opened an account with the Bank of Raman, but that's a whole different story.

After Michigan Tech I spent a lot of time developing some projects for work. I think that I was feeling a little depressed and lonely. As you surely know, Los Alamos is not the best place to meet women. Which is so strange, since it is such an ideal place for workaholics and people who grow beards, wear hats and talk to themselves when they walk. I kind of missed not having Tim to pick on too. His dad was having

some kind of mid-life crisis—or a Nam flashback—and decided that I was to blame for Tim becoming a teenager—so he decided Tim couldn't see me. Not that I would have wanted to hang out with old people when I was a teenager either.



Tim in another life.

Well, I found other friends to spend time with—Rex Ivie for one. You may not know of Oedipal Rex, but he moved in that summer and it made life interesting for sure. Rex is a perpetual grad student from Penn who works for Terry Fortune. He was planning on taking thesis data at TRIUMF this year, before becoming an astronaut... but that's a really different story, better left to a different type of periodical.

My little sister Kathy, who is now old enough to drink and do most other adult things (like getting engaged to be married this Fall!), came to visit in the Spring of '93. I helped her set up her new Mac Performa 600. It worked out that she had much of the same software as I did... what a coincidence.



My sister, Kathy, tastes NM.

In the Fall of '93 I took a trip to Monterey, California to give a paper at the Fall DNP meeting. My presentation was brief, but Raman and I enjoyed the boondoggle immensely. We toured the coast, saw redwoods and did a little San Francisco. This was a precursor to the IEEE meeting I had the next week in San Francisco. All-in-all, the two weeks in California proved to be a great if not tiring paid vacation.



Christmas was spent at the Johnson's in Michigan. I used my free TWA ticket to fly to Detroit, and, like I'm bound to do, I got bumped and got another free ticket on the trip. Raman came up for a couple days and we enjoyed the special blizzard that Santa brought. Later in the week I got a ride down to East Lansing with my sister Kathy, and I helped set up for the New Year's Eve party at Raman and Carl's. It was a disco theme and you'll find a lovely pictorial of it later in this issue.

Since Christmas I have a new housemate, Mary Neu. She's promised to introduce me to women she meets at work, but so far she likes all her friends and hasn't brought any of them home.



Mary Neu.

In all seriousness, things are going fine here. I've spent a lot of extra time at work, trying to catch up and secure a job. I've got a couple of new projects I'm working on, and I have a late-night talk to give next week at the APS meeting in Crystal City. In May I am flying back to Michigan for some quality time with little Raman and to attend a symposium for work.



John turns survivalist.

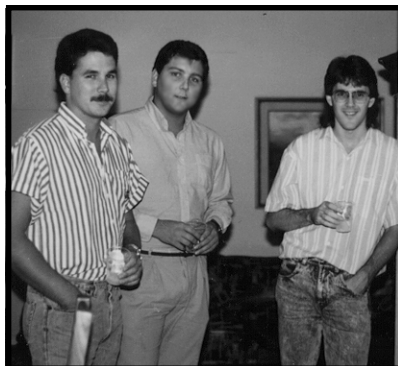
I've kept up on some of my hobbies (time and fundage permitting), such as Mac'ing off (i.e. working on my Mac—although that's been cut back since I sold my IIsi to my sister Jenny.) I've been

playing RPG games when time permits with some neighbors. And I've done some paintballing, when I have the air and the balls.

That's my life story... neat huh? Well, write me and let me know that I'm not the only bored and confused person, ok? Let me know that you're lives didn't quite turn out like you thought they would when you were in High School.

Are you ready for something scary? Compare these two pictures. John and Raman in 1988 at Eric Hoffman's wedding, and John caught in the Pacific ocean last fall.

Before



The young John and Raman in 1988.

After



The old, fat John in the Pacific, 1993..

Postscript:

I'm trying to finish up the newsletter today. It's May and we haven't had any snow for a while. The trip to DC was quite eventful and will be included in the next issue. Please contribute material as soon as you can! Since I'm stuck in Los Alamos; bored, old and lonely, I hope to work on Volume 7 Number 2 this summer.

■■■■■■■

Post-Postscript:

Now it's the middle of June! But I'm close to finishing! Still no job on the horizon. The one I felt I deserved fell through, but I hope to find something this summer!

I have to get back to work on the disco story! Don't miss it!



Oh yeah, if you are going to be in the Southwest stop by and visit, the bed is made in the guest room and the first pitcher of margaritas is on me.

John

PPSA GOD EMPEROR

IF I HAD THE TOP

DR. SEUSS

(WHO MIGHT HAVE WRITTEN THIS IF HE WERE STILL ALIVE)

*The Colliding Detector
was loaded for bear.
They had neutron detection
and silicon flair.
And a great deal of wires
(or current emitters)
and a muonic system
(with a bad case of jitters).
And of course the whole group
really got on quite nicely.
They all worked together
for TOP quite precisely.
And though their detector
was arguably ugly:
"Got a magnetic field!"
they would say oh so smugly.*

*But the D-zero people
were ready, quite plain.
With their huge box of iron.
And unity gain.
Got a transition thing
and their own wires too.
But no magnetic field.
Not the best they can do.
So they bought one!
"Next time we'll have B and then P
and then we'll be the best
on this whole big prairie."*

*And from far far away,
watching all of the thrills
Lived the big DOE
who paid all of the bills.
And they loved both detectors
with hardly a doubt.
But they had to find something
or else they'd be out!
Cause they answered to Congress.*

*The meanest of mean!
Killed the Collider.
Killed it quick.
Killed it clean.
So they said to their lab
from the place where they stood
"Here's the money.
Find TOP quarks.
And please, make it good!"*

*So the CDF group
in their own quiet way
found a one in a million.
Or more! Who can say?
And who cares?
But does D-zero see it there too?
No they don't.
Well not really.
But then maybe they do!
It's such fun to know facts,
which were thought to be easy
but are really quite slippery.
And also quite cheezy!*

*And so there you have it.
The TOP's in the bag.
And so on and so forth
I rightfully brag.
But the TOP quark's still out there.
Could it really be true?
And who'll really find it?
Maybe me.
Maybe YOU!*

a rhyme from your favorite
CDF experimenter...
(Shannon Wells)



A tag-team article written by John Johnson and Raman Pfaff

JOHN:

Where do I begin? It is April 1994, and the Spring APS meeting in Crystal City just ended-however this story is about the Fall 1992 Division of Nuclear Physics in Santa Fe. We must regress in time to a warm October in Santa Fe, New Mexico. I am working hard on massaging data for my thesis, while trying to write it in a month so that I can graduate in November. The V6N2 issue of the PPSA Magazine has just hit the streets. Pete and Paul fly in to present their thesis data. Raman, still a novice nuclear physicist, flies out for some sight-seeing. He was working on making tin targets at the time probably and didn't have anything to present-so that left him a lot of time to bother me.

Actually, I was pleased to have Raman visit. You see, I was having trouble concentrating on my thesis and he was more than eager to bitch at me. We didn't do much with Pete and Paul, since they actually attended talks, but we did pose with some of the local jackalopes and we had a nice meal at the top of the

tramway at Sandia... but I'm getting ahead of myself. I picked up Raman around the second week of October, if memory serves. He flew into Albuquerque on some cheap flight, and we spent the night at my Aunt and Uncle's house. The next morning we headed out for what we thought would be a fun-filled day of watching balloons at the annual Balloon Fiesta. We quickly figured out that this trip would be more eventful than planned when we heard the sound of screeching metal on metal when leaving the relative's house in the morning. We left early enough to see the mass ascension of balloons, but we didn't leave too much extra time for the unexpected. So when we realized that my brake pads were toast, I decided to drive slowly, and, with judicious use of the parking brake, we had a great time watching hundreds of hot air balloons ascend into the heavens.

After the fiesta we decided that brakes were a good thing to have on a car, so we drove to Santa Fe. This wasn't too bad, since there weren't many required stops between Albuquerque and Santa Fe, but the parking brake was beginning to loosen. Pep boys

fixed my car, just one more debt I couldn't afford, and we randomly met up with Allen Williams-my former roommate-who went out for cappuccino with us while Manny, Moe and Curly worked on my car.

Once we arrived in the bustling metropolis I like to call Los Alamos (I actually have other names for it that I won't mention!) we were visited by Tim Morrison. He was learning to drive so I let him drive us up to the local ski hill. Los Alamos sits on a mesa at 7500 feet, while the base of the ski hill is at least a thousand feet higher, but Raman had no difficulty adjusting to the altitude. In the next week he logged many miles around northern New Mexico, and did some hiking at old indian ruins. I was able to visit a nearby indian reservation with him and Tim, but my thesis was coming due and so I begged out of most of the fun and stayed locked in my room chained to my computer. I did hear about one interesting hike that he took into a nearby canyon. He let Tim drive and it seems my car got left running in a construction area for a couple hours while they explored the ruins.

The DNP meeting came and went, but mostly went. Pete and Paul had a good time, and we met them (actually we raced them to Albuquerque) at the Sandia tram. The tram is about a mile and a half long and winds up at the peak of the Sandia ski area. We underdressed for how cold it was up there, but then we didn't expect to be put on a waiting list for three hours to eat at the High Finance restaurant. I was able to get us an earlier table (only a 90 minute wait!) and we had some rich eatin's. It was at this meeting that the assembled God Emperors decided that the next issue of the PPSA magazine (this one) would have the theme of "Naomi's Birthing Cloth". Needless to say, Paul and Carl Nelson never got together on this and submitted an article. We hope to feature it prominently in a future issue though.

A couple of days later Raman left New Mexico-land of sunshine, for East Lansing, Michigan-land of eternal cloud cover. Raman's comments are included below. All in all, I think it was an eventful couple of weeks. Raman had a good time, and we stuffed ourselves on Mexican food, my car survived, and a couple weeks later I actually defended my thesis and passed! By December I was just finishing up a Phys. Rev. C article and I started work as a postdoc at Los Alamos. We decided that we would meet for Winter Carnival at Michigan Tech, and we planned for another educational DNP meeting in California in 1994. But now let's get Raman's point of view....

RAMAN:

Fall had arrived and that meant only one thing was approaching, the Fall Physics Meeting and believe it or not it was near John's current home town out in New Mexico. Santa Fe that is. Red rocks, balloons, Indians, and emergency brakes awaited.

The trip began out of Lansing as the majority do, on a plane approximately the size of an average pachyderm. Somehow I

made it to Chicago and off I went to Albuquerque. I met John there in the evening and the fun began. We spent the night at his Aunt and Uncle's home out there and the next morning we had to be up at 6:00 in order to take part in one of the greatest hot air balloon festivals in the world.



Raman is exposed to art in historic Santa Fe.

I couldn't figure out how to set my little wristwatch alarm that I had recently purchased so we just assumed John would have no problem getting up in time to wake us. As usual this was no problem since John has a built in clock. I felt more like death on a candle stick. It had been a cool fall evening and we ventured outdoors into the stark thin aired morning. Into John's Berettacus we climbed. As we drove away my spirits were picking up and I was really getting excited. About one minute later we were trying to come to a stop at the bottom of a tiny little hill and the brakes decided to start disintegrating and grinding the front wheel. Being clever car people (sure) we said there was only one thing left to do... proceed to the balloon festival and don't use the brakes along the way. In the plan was the provisional use of the parking brake when necessary. After the festival we would get the brakes fixed and then drive back to John's.

Off to the festival we proceeded. John was not quite used to this lack of brake action and it took him a bit to get used to it. With a few of the cars I owned in Miami I'd gotten much experience in this field and gave him many pointers from an insider.

We arrived at the festival. It was dark and crowded with a feeling of joy in the air. Occasionally we'd hear a blast from a gas jet igniting in a balloon. Many kids were running around looking for good jackets to steal. The first thing to do was get some breakfast at one of the many stands. Of course since I was now

in New Mexico I wanted to eat as much strange stuff as possible so I had a breakfast burrito and a cinnamon roll.

As dawn approached the balloons began filling and I started getting excited. Our picture taking began. Over the course of the next two hours over five hundred balloons filled and left the ground. I was quite amazed by the whole thing and would highly recommend this to anyone that had an interest in something fun. As the last balloon (a giant parrot) was inflating, so was John's bladder due to the large Cokes he'd pounded with breakfast. He went off in search of a toilet and I waited with my awesome five buck camera to get a good photo. The shot finally came and off I went to meet John at the brakeless beast. Off we went in our search for a brake shop on Sunday morning at 10:00.

After a bit of driving down some back streets in Albuquerque we decided we didn't know where the hell to go so the decision was made to drive back to Santa Fe (an hour trip) and find a place there. Since the whole trip was uphill on a highway we wouldn't have much need for brakes anyway. I enjoyed the drive there with nice scenery which was very different than the mundane views in East Lansing. John gave me many details of things in the area to look at while I was around while we cruised along the road.

We arrived in Santa Fe, pulled up to a phone, and started calling around for an open shop that could get to us today. I cleaned my glasses off with my shirt while looking through the yellow pages and we think John did too (this is important later). The only place that could deal with us was the Larry, Mo & Curly Boys. This place sounded really trustworthy but off we drove down the city streets with no brakes - John had gotten the hang of it at this time and I would now call him an expert in the field. After getting to the shop we were told we had at least three hours to kill. We wished to go to the entertaining portions of town and do some sight-seeing so we found out the cab would run us around twenty bucks and we were quite bogged as to what we should do (\$20 was tooooooo much!).

As we stood outside the auto store, along came a savior, John's buddy Allen. He had stopped by to return some strange looking truck part that he didn't need. We persuaded him to take us into

town and kill some time with us. Into the heart of Santa Fe I went.

The city was truly beautiful. Very laid back with Indian structure and many very old buildings including the oldest house in the United States which has the oldest mummy in the US laying back inside it. We made our first stop at one of the finest (I hear) little coffee joints in town. It had a nice "air" to it. Very mellow and intelligent, kind of carved right into the ebb and flow of the blood of the city. After this we started looking through the downtown tourist trap shops which mainly sold Indian type goods. I found a nice small drum (head size) for around \$9000, what a deal. Many things had price tags which were very large in order to hold all those zeroes they slap on there just for fun. Much of the art did have a very southwestern quality and it was very easy to want that sort of thing in your own life on a daily basis.

After a few hours we made it back to the vehicle of misfortune and then took the drive up to John's lovely abode in Los Alamos. It was approximately the size of a large refrigerator but what the hell, it was out West in the real world! The next day was the start of the conference so we didn't party to much that evening - and of course in Los Alamos everything closes by 8:00 PM anyway.

That next day I went off to the conference and John just sat around with his computer

trying to learn how to use his TeX program to write his thesis (he had 3 weeks at this point). I sat in on a few sessions and then back to L.A. I went. This was my first good drive out there on the mountain roads - it was kinda fun. I did a LOT of driving while I was there. Anyway, the weather was beautiful and I wanted to go hiking so John made Tim give me a tour of a local hiking trail where there were Indian ruins. Tim of course was not quite up to a legitimate driving age but... he likes to look cool and drive around town.

We pulled up to the start of the hiking trail and some construction is taking place and it is rather loud. I lock my door and start walking down the trail. Tim is right behind me and gives me the tour guide lecture describing the area. He seemed rather knowledgeable. The hike went quite some time and we saw a bunch of pottery pieces from days gone by. As we got



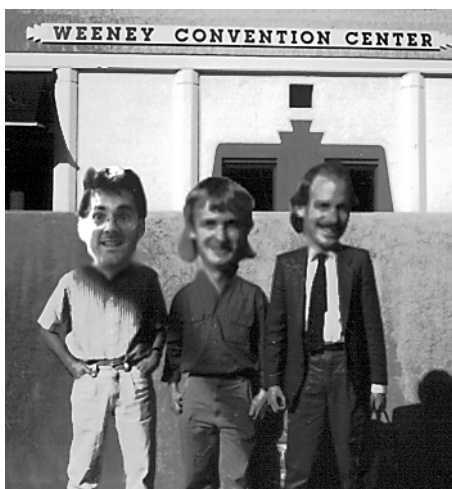
Raman and Tim visit ancient Indian cave dwellings



Raman enjoys some sculptures at Shidoni.

back to the car several hours later, Tim starts wondering about the keys. He doesn't seem to have them. The construction had also ended at this time and I notice the sound of a car engine as I approach John's beast. It seems as though the car has been idling right along for two hours and luckily Tim had left his door unlocked so that we could at least get back into the car. At least no one had decided to drive away with the beast!

Back to John's we went. All Tim could do the whole way back was beg me not to tell JJ about letting his car sit there in that condition. That secret only lasted about an hour after we were back. The vacation continued.



Raman Pfaff, Paul Rutt and Pete Markowitz visit Santa Fe for the Fall 1992 DNP meeting.

The following day most of the gang had arrived in town for the meeting. This included Paul Rutt, Pete Markowitz, and Debbie Brodbar. It was a good reunion of PPSA members who had all sprung into the world from good (lousy) old MSU. We did some of the lunch thing and then some of the dinner thing together over the next few days. One of the nights included a trip to Santa Fe's botanically outstanding areas - the local strip joint. Since us boys (Debbie didn't want to join us) only had \$7 between us, we didn't stay too long. Our final dinner together was in Albuquerque on the top of the tallest thing in the area. It gave a great view of the whole city and would have made a great photo if we'd gotten there 10 minutes earlier - we missed the damn sun. The city lights were gorgeous.

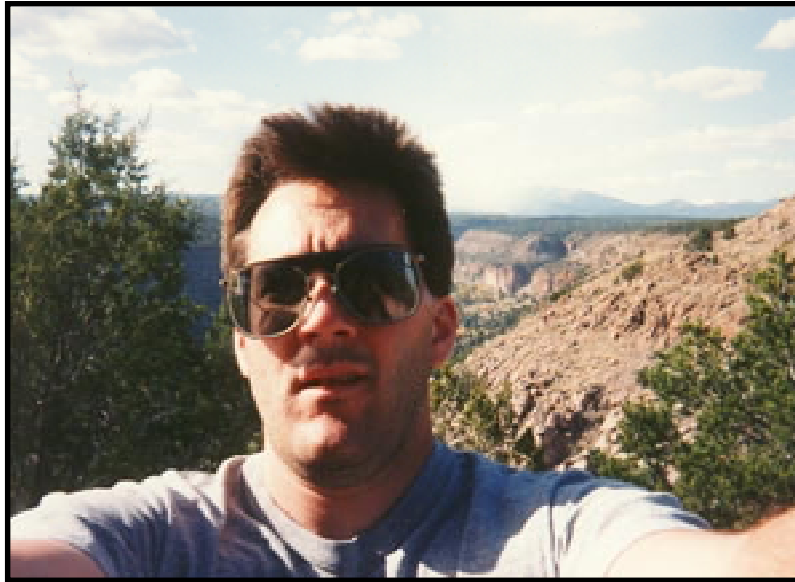
One of the local interests is the supply of natural sauna's which abound in the area. Nice warm water comes seeping out of the earth and forms nice little havens in the middle of the woods where you can just kick back and think about life, liberty, and happiness. The entertaining part about this whole thing is that we really try to get back to nature, i.e. clothes are very optional in these things. I'd heard so much about this that I just had to make it there during my vacation. On the day before I left John, Tim, and I took another nice drive up into the woods and made a nice hike to a pool. Off came the clothes and in we went. The water was WARM. It was certainly an entertaining experience. There were around a dozen other people in the area just kicking back and enjoying nature. What a trip!

This was one of my most educational, entertaining vacations I've ever had. The area is full of Indian ruins, beautiful hiking areas, entertaining architecture, and an abundance of things to do for daily adventures. I put 1200 miles on John's car while I was out there - I had to see everything! The whole time I was out there, John kept saying "have you seen my glasses" and eventually we decided that they had been missing ever since the morning of brake repair. John also spent much of the time playing with his computer and learning how to write a thesis. I left two weeks before he had to have it done and apparently he managed to finish the thing in those two weeks since he now has a Ph.D.

One of the more entertaining things that occurred during this trip is the time when John wanted to visit the local Republican headquarters and wanted me and Tim to go get the car and meet him there. Well, we stopped by the opposition (Democratic office) and picked up a nice Clinton bumper sticker and put it on his car. It took him two days to discover the little ploy, but me and Tim had lots of fun snickering about it for days. All in all it was a great trip and I hope I can get back out to the area again in the future.



Postcards from Over the Edge



RAMAN PFAFF TAKES A SELF-PORTRAIT DURING A RECENT VISIT TO THE WILD WEST.



VISITORS TO HISTORIC SANTA FE ARE GREETED BY THIS LANDMARK WHICH SAYS "WELCOME TO NEW MEXICO" IN ITS OWN UNIQUE WAY.

HEROS OF THE FROZEN PAST



or, A Maalox Moment at MTU

(This is yet another tag team writeup by John and Raman. For some reason, all the other PPSA members seem to poop out when a road trip actually comes around... After reading this article you'll understand how easy it is to get pooped out on one of our trips....)

Prelude

It seems that on every road trip I take, I always try to do everything and see everything. I want to experience it all. I want to live like the natives, eat like the natives. In Washington, DC that means wearing a power suit and eating Ethiopian. In Houghton that means living like a student. Raman and I were determined to crash at Charlie Scriptor's house, and live like we did way back when we were students at MTU. We dressed in sweats, slept on the floor and fully intended to recall what it was like to attend the great engineering institution on a small peninsula jutting out into the frigid waters of Lake Superior. We had forgotten what Dr. Bob taught us though... "Suffering is Part of the Undergraduate Experience."

Tuesday, January 26, 1994

John hurriedly packed and loaded the Beretta. It seems he is always pushing the limits of how late he can leave and still make it to the airport. He thought he had lots of time to drive to Santa Fe to pick up a couple of yummy Carne Adovada burritos at Maria's Cafe. Mmmmm-mmmm-good. If you ever visit Santa Fe (or are wealthy enough to live there) you can't go wrong with a meal at Maria's. Of course the burritos were "to go", since he wanted to take Raman something special as interest on his Bank of Raman loan. The chef questioned his wanting to take burritos

on the road, but he said he was flying up to Chicago and he'd reheat them there. They were awkward to pack, but he took them through security and demonstrated that they weren't drugs wrapped up as burritos. (Little did John know...)

The flight to Chicago was uneventful. John got a meal on the plane, so he wasn't really too hungry for the burritos. But he knew he and Raman would enjoy them the





John and Raman's re-introduction to Houghton—a blizzard.

next day. After all, they would get a nice little hotel room outside of Chicago with a fridge. When John got to O'Hare he stopped at an AT&T tele-terminal to check e-mail. (He had gone a whole 5 hours without logging in after all!) The stupid machine ran on some frigging DOS-like operating system and John crashed it right off. Then he went to meet Raman.

John ended up with a new Taurus from Budget. It only had 6 miles on it. Budget would be lucky to have John be the first to break it in on his voyage to the tundra that was Tech. At first John was a little lost, but he and Raman soon found the highway heading to Wisconsin and blew out of Chicago. They got on 94 north, and figured they'd stop at a hotel somewhere in Wisconsin. The travelers looked for a nice cheap hotel and ended up at a Motel-6, just outside of Milwaukee. Raman and John decided they didn't want to pay for 2 beds (read: 2 people) so Raman registered and didn't mention John. The intrepid pair had a little of their yummy pork burritos and hit the sack, with dreams of snow statues dancing their our heads. (For some reason the dreams seemed more like hallucinations....)

Wednesday, January 27

They awoke at dawn, after an unrestful night. They showered and packed the rental and found a McDonald's for breakfast. Raman chose a Big Breakfast from the menu and then John ordered. Soon John heard Raman asking him to bring extra napkins. He took 3 napkins and used them to remove as much grease as possible from his sausage. John had forgotten how polite a diner Raman could be.

They hit the road and soon ended up in Madison. Perhaps traveling by memory wasn't the quickest way to get to Houghton. Raman thought he knew the way, since he had gone to an SPS meeting in Madison a decade ago! John thought they were traveling a little too far West, and as it ended up he was right. After confirmation of this fact, they continued the drive North. This time with a map.

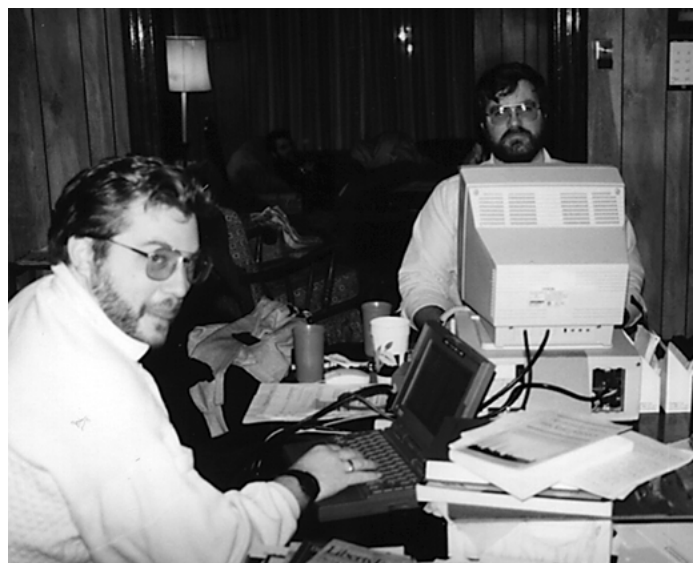
The two amigos began taking bathroom breaks within about 2 hours of

leaving Madison. They were, as yet, clueless as to why they were feeling all this turbulence in their nether regions. A thought sprang to mind.

"Could it be the pork went bad?," asked Raman.

"No," answered John as he finished off the last burrito, "They taste good, so they must be fine."

After stopping for an emergency porcelain inspection at the Copper Country Mall, they drove to Charlie Scriptor's house. Langer was there shoveling. The boys used Scriptor's bathroom, met his roommate Will, and then went out to dinner at the Library. By this time Raman and John were fervently keeping track of who had the most bowel movements. At least it kept them occupied.



Steve Langer and Charlie Scriptor at Scriptor's place.



John meets up with Dr. Bob after 8 years, Dr. Bob is obviously thrilled.

The whole gang walked down the street and had fishbowls at the Ambassador. The drinks tasted great when mixed with Immodium AD... then they were off to see some snow-statues being made. Our heroes really wanted to lie down, they were thinking that maybe this pork burrito thing was getting out of hand. But they braved the subzero winds so that they could observe the statue building ritual. With sphincters clenched, they proceeded to walk around campus giving advice to the novice sculptors. The night was long, not only did John and Raman get their exercise by taking dumps all night, but Charlie and the gang stayed up 'til about 3 A.M.. The tired travelers would have liked to sleep, but between Charlie's partying and frequent prayer sessions in the downstairs bathroom there was little rest to be had.

Thurs, January 28

The weather was a tad blustery on Thursday. John and Raman bought sweatshirts at the student union and saw that for all the changes on the MTU campus, much remained the same as when they were students. Then they paid a visit to Dr. Bob at Fisher Hall. John remembered to bring his Dr. Bob fan club pin, and Raman forgot. Dr. Bob was glad to see the long-lost and somewhat wayward products of his

teaching. Dr. Bob was sorry to see these founding members of his fan club leave. They brought back memories of the good days when his students cared enough to hire three sorority coeds to sing to him on his birthday. Students really respected their professors back then. Sure they weren't able to copy John's homework without getting caught, but they had shared something special with Dr. Bob when he first came to Michigan Tech. He did more than torture them with mechanics homework, he taught them an enduring philosophy-that suffering is part of the undergraduate experience.

After reminiscing, Raman and John headed back to Charlie's to rest. Chuck fixed them some pasties, then the gang went out to the Ambassador and the

Library again. John felt healthy enough to grab a pickled egg at the Dog-House on the way back to the car.

Friday, January 29

Today was the day to view snow statues. The weather had broken and Raman pulled out his new camera. He and John walked around, feeling somewhat better than they had the past couple days. In fact they felt good enough to have lunch at the student union. John even had chili. They returned to Charlie's place, but were locked out, so they drove around Hancock for an hour. Deciding not to wait for the house to be opened, they went out to dinner and then off to the big hockey game. Michigan Tech lost by one, but it was fun to watch. After the game, they went home and straight to bed. The God Emperors were feeling

good and healthy, but tired as fuck!

Sat, Jan 30

At about 4 AM the gang showed up, with Rooster. They prevented John and Raman from getting much more sleep that night. When John and weary old Raman had eventually decided to get up, they quickly showered and



Scripter's bathroom holds a fond place in our hero's hearts.



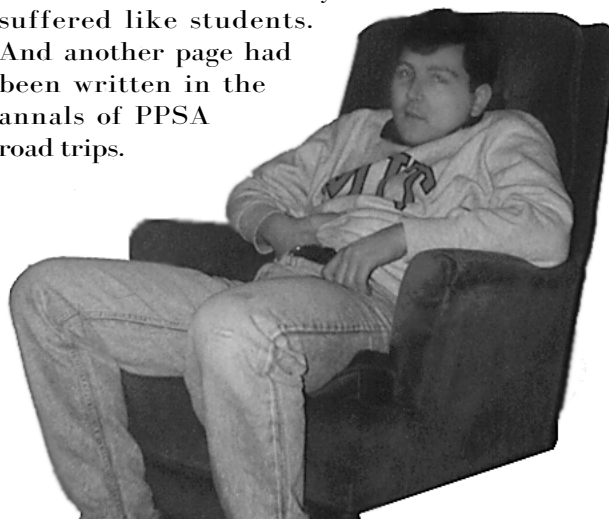
John was especially moved by some of the snow statues.

packed and left Charlie's at about 8:30. John bought pasties in Houghton and some sweetrolls in L'anse. Then the travelers were really tired, but after about six hours of driving they stopped at John's parent's house, just south of the Mackinaw Bridge. By that evening they were in East Lansing at Raman's. Raman got a good night's sleep, but John slept on the ill-fitting couch. It was uncomfortable, but at least no one kept him

up with late night partying... and the pork poisoning had subsided.

Sunday, January 31

John left early and flew out of Chicago. That night he was back in Los Alamos. Raman didn't do much that day, and he didn't get around to unpacking from the trip for a few weeks. This adventure had come to a close. The God Emperor's had returned to the birthplace of PPSA. They lived like students, they suffered like students. And another page had been written in the annals of PPSA road trips.



John is seen here feeling especially student-like.



You notice that they don't say "Physicists"

In Memoriam

RICHARD M. NIXON

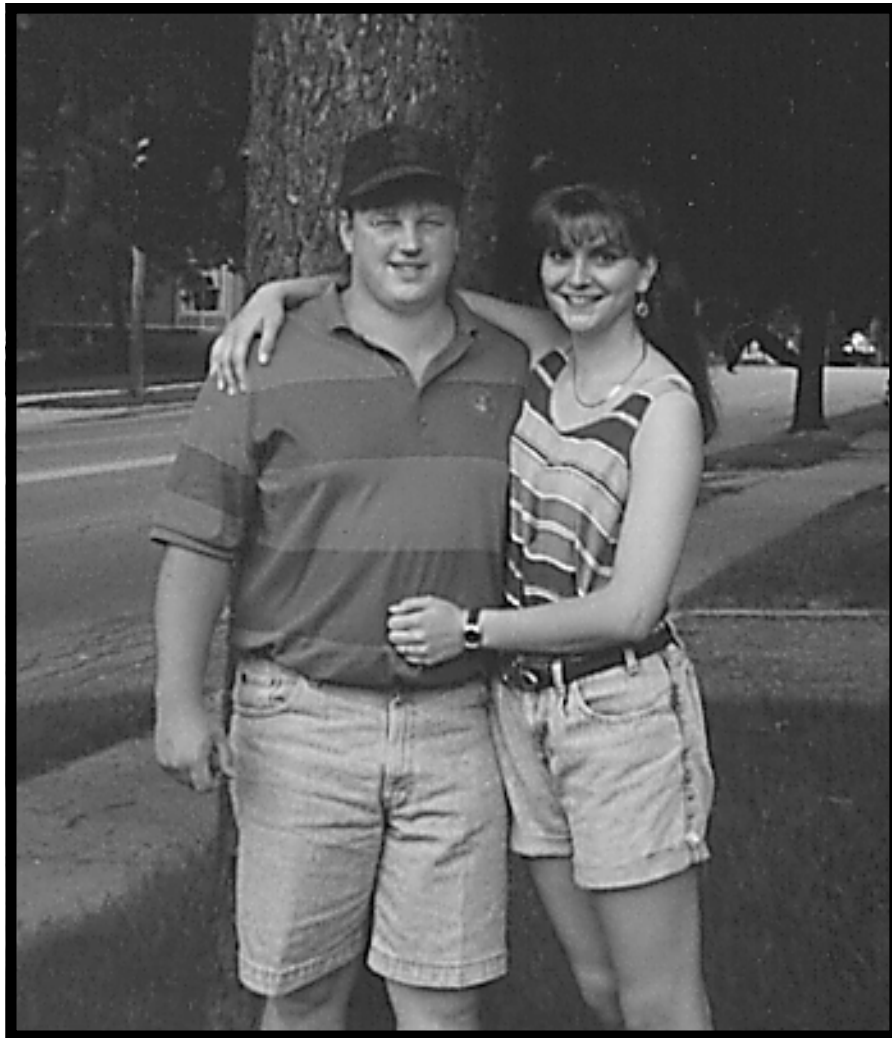


“Never keep notes”

For inspiration in writing the PPSA Constitution

Congratulations!

Kathy & Chad



on the announcement
of your Wedding
September 17, 1994



FERNALD

by John "Radman" Johnson

Fernald, Ohio isn't a place I'm likely to forget soon. It ranks right up near the top of my "I'd rather be neutered than live there" list. This is a place that I flew to on business in August last year.

I went to Fernald to test out a detector I'd built. I actually stayed in Harrison at the Quality Inn. Me, Scott Garner and Jeff Johnson spent our days working at the DOE's Fernald site, where much uranium had been processed in the old bomb production days. [The WSJ recently had an article on Fernald-FYI, and there is currently a \$100 million lawsuit pending for killing workers with radiation.]

Scott and I arrived a couple days before Jeff, who was driving cross-country to Los Alamos from DC. He thought he'd make money, but LANL screwed him anyway. The weather was about a million percent relative humidity while we were

there. (Relative to my tolerance level!) When it wasn't pouring rain, it was blazingly hot and muggy.

The long-range alpha detector worked well, except for the time the electrometer acted up. Then we just went the hardware store to buy kitchen utensils (which we used in the toaster oven sized detector). A couple of hours later the detector was working swell. We worked long past closing time, and our host Larry "I'm wired for cable" Stebbins expected us to arrive for work at 7 AM. That was 5 AM New Mexico time! Let me explain about Larry, he was a nice guy, but Fernald had it's workers stressed out and in fear of losing their jobs. Larry, therefore, carried two pagers, a cellular phone, and a walkie talkie just to keep ahead of the axeman! I heard he has a satellite up-link now!



A raucous riverboat ride at King's Island.

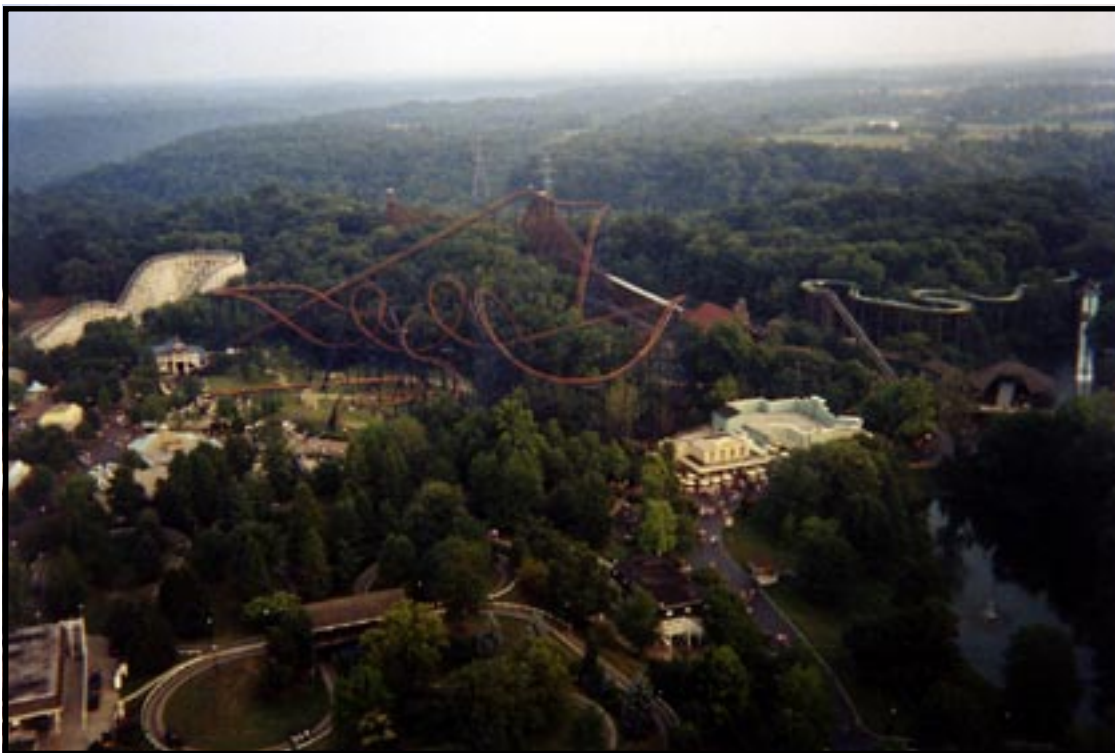
*"I'd rather
be neutered
than live
there..."*

The weather was horrible, as previously mentioned, the work sucked... but, there was one bright moment during the trip. No, not the food at the Beer Garden restaurant, where the waitress said, "Just 'cause we have a German name doesn't mean we have to serve German food." And, no, it wasn't the speed trap I got an "end-of-the-month quota" speeding ticket in. It was in fact the day the three of us spent at King's Island, an amusement park and water park run by Paramount.

Raman and Scott rode roller-coasters for 10 straight hours! Jeff and I enjoyed getting our brains pummeled for the first 8 rides, but we decided to spend the afternoon at the waterpark. We got sun, and had lots of fun. The waiting for RP and SG to take the very fucking last roller-coaster ride of the night (10 PM), when we had agreed to leave at 8 PM, wasn't the most fun, but for a while we even forgot we were in Southern Ohio.



The Beast!



A bird's eye view of King's Island from a scale version of the Eiffel Tower.

Cappuccino Cafe

Another bug on the wall

by Raman Pfaff

I've begun to live here.

I'm just another bug on the wall. Not making much noise. No one really notices me unless I buzz a bit or someone thinks I'm annoying. Early afternoon. It's pretty quiet. The sun feels pretty good. I sip on things here and there. Lots of people coming and going. Not many stick around to long. Why? Are there places to go, things to see? I don't know. The people behind the counter start to seem so familiar after a while. I love listening in on conversations that people are having.

The views of the world just seem to be everywhere. I don't hear everything but with so much going on, it's really tough to pay attention to it all. Three women discussing sexual fantasies. What did they say? Something involving leather and an animal. Hmm. The other table - what'd they say? Something about the show coming up at our local stage. This is fun. Time for another cap.

I think I'll glance over a paper for awhile. The sun is getting lower. A few people seem to be planted at their tables. It looks like much thought is going on in some of their minds. Books abound on the tables. Microeconomics. Industrial Environmentalism. Gray's Anatomy. I bet my body isn't mentioned in that one, I'm only a bug. Evening rolls on. It kind of thins out a bit. Lot's of people think food is important so off they go for some dinner. The newspaper that someone left seems more interesting to me. Hanging out on the walls for so long starts making the employees get used to you. Things start getting cheaper for you. That's really good. It makes me want to hang out for a few more hours.

The after dinner crowd starts rolling in. People start sticking around for longer periods of time. Many just sit there by themselves. As hours pass friends drop by a make a pit stop with the people that were alone. A quick update on what's going on in their lives passes between them. Listening to all this is like watching a dozen soap operas on the tube simultaneously. People breaking up with others, taking different classes, new jobs, personal finances, and a large assortment of everything from the mundane to the perverse. It doesn't really mean much to me - a bug on the wall.

Background noise. It's hard to think about but it's always there. Without it the place would be alien. Glasses rattling around occasionally, two dozen voices droning to a melodious hum. Chairs sliding in and out. A drizzling from the rain that has started falling. Besides noise there is the lovely background odor. Beautiful scents of chocolates and coffees, and a bitter odor of caffeine. People come and people go. A world must be

moving around outside. Why would I want to go out there? Everything of interest from there can be overheard just sitting around in here. New cable TV rates, peace in Israel, the new movies playing, etc. If you can hear it all here, why leave? A local jazz quartet is setting up. A little music for my enjoyment. It's time for another cap.

A discussion of a persons life is going on at the table next to me. She thinks her life is going to slowly. It took her more than two hours to get to this point in the discussion with her friend. Maybe it is going to slowly. I don't know. They really seem to be discussing life. A guy next to me is telling tales of beer drinking. He can drink twelve beers before feeling a buzz. His story continues for twenty minutes. Several of his companions are not looking too excited about it all. A woman on the other side of the room just used the word prostate. What could that mean? Jazz is rolling along. The rain is falling. It has really cooled off outdoors now. Nights like this are more like a dream. Here I am sitting on a wall. It feels good. After a quick trip off to my nest I think I'll come back tomorrow. What will I hear? I won't know until then.

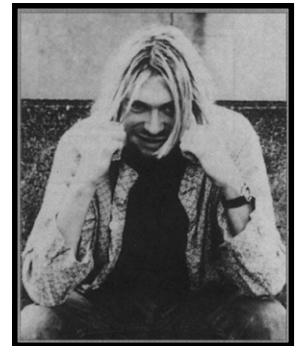
The rain hardens.



"I'm a much happier guy than people think I am,"

announced Nirvana's 27-year-old lead singer, Kurt Cobain, in a recent interview. Considering Kurt's broken-home history, marriage to controversial singer Courtney Love and much-publicized drug use, he had held the title of teen angst poster boy since Nevermind's 1991 release. But last year's album, In Utero, seems to have signaled an upswing for the Seattle-based singer/songwriter/guitarist. In 1992, for example, his and Courtney's baby daughter, Frances Bean, was taken away from the couple briefly after reports that Courtney was using drugs during her pregnancy. But these days, the three are back together, and Kurt and Courtney say they're drug-free. Kurt also may have undergone an attitude adjustment. His life seems nearer nirvana, he told Rolling Stone, because of "my family, my child...just little things that no one would recognize or care about. "And it has a lot to do with this band," he acknowledged. "I'm really thankful, and every month I come to more optimistic conclusions." The only downside? "I just hope I don't become so blissful I become boring."

Yet should you be concerned that the anger that once fueled Nirvana's music has gone, leaving Kurt with nothing to write songs about, he assures his fans, "I think I'll always be neurotic enough to do something weird."



EDITORIAL FROM HELL

by Raman Pfaff

This article may be harmful or fatal if swallowed. Do not insert this article into the ear canal. Not responsible for injuries due to reading this article while showering.

*Prolonged inhalation of fumes from this article may result in nausea, dizziness, convulsions, and death. Do not operate a motor vehicle, heavy equipment, or power tools while reading this article. Dispose of this article in a responsible manner when finished reading. No warranties expressed or implied. May *not* be suitable for children under 32. Discontinue reading this article if skin rash appears, or vision blurs, and consult a physician.*

Hey there all! It's been quite awhile since a newsletter has made it to the publication stage and I'm sure John would be willing to tell you that this is highly due to lack of submissions. This is clearly becoming a problem as we get older and busier with our day to day lives of trying to earn enough money to stay off food stamps. I know life is tough but hey, if you want the excitement you feel when a PPSA Newsletter arrives at your door, you should really try to keep up with your life occurrences and get them to JJ. Enough of that (I myself am dreadfully behind in all that I just said and hope that I too can keep up with life). Well, what's up with the world? I really don't know 'cause I live here in East Lansing but I could tell you what's going on here.

My fine institution of Michigan State U. has been trying to find a new President ever since the last one got a better job and left two years ago. The process has been going on forever and finally there were four people left from whom our president would come. One quit out of the blue. Another (Florida State's current President) was shot down in a scandal when papers were found which quoted him as claiming that blacks are better

athletes than whites. (There is a rumor that Raman's tainted affiliation with FSU had something to do with this too.) This of course is not politically correct and thus he took so much bad press that he quit also.

Then there were two. One was a woman who really wanted the job and another was an Asian dean from Purdue. The dean decided to quit due to the fact that he felt the whole thing was rigged and the choosers really wanted the nice WASP guy from FSU (the fourth original guy was black - just look at the final four: a black, a woman, an Asian, and Mr. Nice Whiteguy—who can't jump). In any event, that left one.

When the board of choosers met, they decided that, rather than choose the one candidate who had survived the entire process, they would start the selection process over again. Really smooth. I don't know how things in our society should work, but if this is any indication of modern society, I would say we're all doomed. Maybe the meek (who shall inherit the Earth) will not make decisions in such brilliant ways.



et's migrate a bit wider in our wanderings. Jurassic Park. Need I

say more? Some people have been saying that this movie was tremendously over-hyped and that the commercial advertising for it were a bit excessive. Compared to what? All I have to say is that every year our society is more and more dependent upon media and commercialism to the point that promotion on such a high scale should have no effect on a human life.



was recently watching the tube (what's new?) when a fine Colgate

commercial came on. All the people were on a beach and had just used some of this lovely toothpaste. This caused them all to be horned up and start necking all over the beach. The advertisers clearly believe that the average American will honestly believe that if they use the product that they too will be sexually satisfied as lovely creatures jump all over them. Jesus Christ, who would believe that? Why would the commercial make you want to do anything? After watching "The Park", did you walk out of the theatre and say "that movie really sucked" or did you say, "that was sweet?" I said the latter. After watching the movie I was so excited that I ran out and bought myself a tube of Colgate. I guess the tube is happy cause it's been squeezed a lot lately. I don't think I feel much better though. Maybe that nice new baking soda toothpaste would do it.



Baseball. Does it ever end? Playing 162 games a year is not quite enough. The players now earn so much money that the teams are having a very difficult time balancing the books. Thus they request that the contracts with the TV networks pay them loads of money. For this to occur, the networks decided playoffs would be a good idea cause average

people just love the thrill of the tension filled PLAYOFFS. All I've got to say is, "who cares?" I think that baseball should reduce the season to the same number of games as football—only a mere 16 and then playoffs which only last for a month. One hundred and sixty two games are not necessary.



Life. Is this really meaningful? Or was it just a vicious rumor? I have begun to believe that it is just a rumor. There certainly isn't much to it. What can you really do with it—it's just something that hangs around and meanders about. Nothing really seems to make much sense after a while. I just run through a desert among many dinosaur bones and leap about through large circular objects. My life is just like a loose interpretation of the original. Oh no! That's a Levi's commercial. Were those Jurassic dinosaur bones I saw in the desert for sale? It just goes on.

'YA KNOW WHAT I MEAN?

Warren Wells, Master of Nomenclature August 18, 1993

The lovely wife and I had a wonderful time vacationing in scenic Hyannis Port, MA. We were just in time to drop in on the charming Rose Kennedy as she and the clan celebrated her 93 birthday. (Jackie O has looked better though.) We went out to Martha's Vineyard and rented Mopeds and toured the Island—did you know the bridge at Chappaquidick no longer even exists? They say it got washed out in a storm. Uh huh.

The summers going by rapidly here in Green Bay, and Mary Margaret and I are working hard. As a contract electrical engineer I do most of my work for Kohler Company. I'm a controls engineer on some of the most advanced automation in the world for the production of cast iron tubs, sinks and urinals.

How was the annual pilgrimage to MTU's winter carnival? Mary Margaret and I are going in '94, is anyone else planning to visit?

(Warren will be providing Top Ten lists in future issues!)

Member Updates

Pete Markowitz, Master of Baiting Tue, 10 Aug 1993

Hi John,

Actually you caught me out of the country. I am at PSI in wonderful Villigen Switzerland right now. And here I shall remain, until my funds run out or my ticket home comes up, whichever comes second. Hmm....

Anyway, we are doing a 7Li(pi, 2p) polarized target experiment here, running until the end of the summer. I am here for a month or so of it, returning JUST in time for the annual Markowitz "someone gets married every Labor day and thank god it isn't me this time" party. [Quite a mouthful. Just try saying that while something big and bouncy is down your throat. No really. Try.]

Anyway, this is my third trip to Europe this year, and it looks like my 4th will most likely be in December (although if I am in the states, I understand E143 at SLAC is looking for people to man shifts on the week between xmas and new year's — all week, 24 hours a day, it's up for grabs. First come, first served.

So anyway, I expect to get back just in time for a trip to Boston as well, for the experiment which was originally, five years ago, going to be my thesis. And yes, it was to run in a few months then too. Hmm..... You don't suppose my advisor SHAFTED me do you? DO YOU? WELL? the little greasy sonofa.....

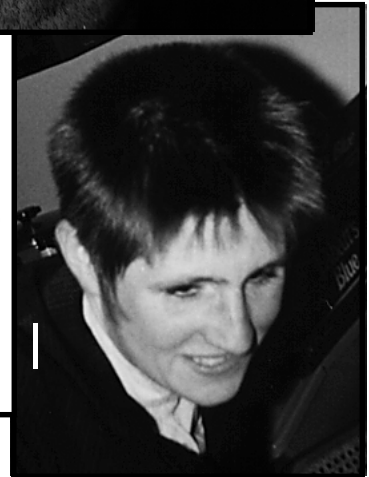
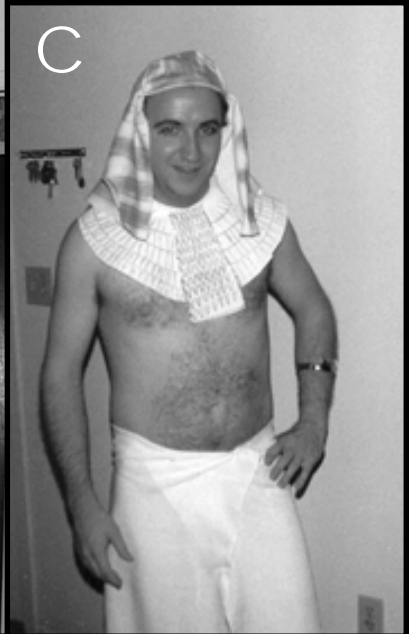
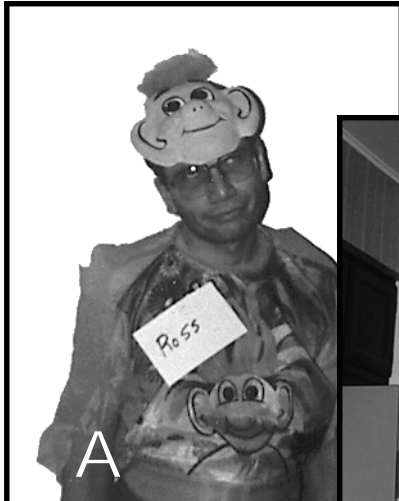
Well, in other news, sure to be near and dear to your heart John, Judy and I are refinancing. Then we intend to move. Yes, we too will be slumlords. Just as others forced us to part with our meager coins in return for a nights shelter, so too shall we. We're buying a house (supposedly) in Williamsburg, but a much nicer house in a much nicer area. Where none of my neighbors will know me. For a while.

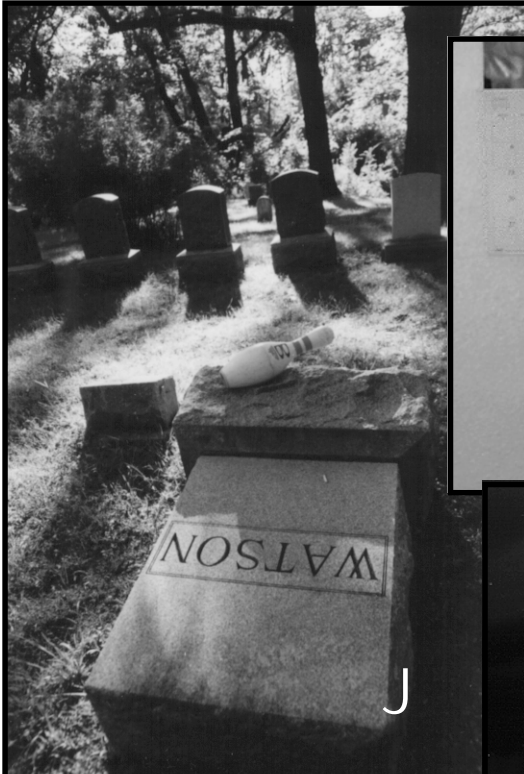
So my job is going fine — after 6 months I asked for a job performance evaluation, and was told they don't do them, but they did decide they better give me a raise. And somehow (don't ask, I ain't sure either) they are scared someone else with a big NEW shiny lab might be interested in hiring me away. Maybe I'll get an even bigger raise next time... Of course I know a shiny new lab isn't interested in me. Boy DO I KNOW. But UMD doesn't. That's about all from me now, I have to go on shift and play "Rodent's Revenge". Oh yeah, don't tell UMD that they are stuck with me. (It's sort of a surprise. Yeah, that's it, a surprise.....)

*A Photo Layout of
Life at Michigan State*

Can you name all
these people and
events?

See inside back
cover for answers.

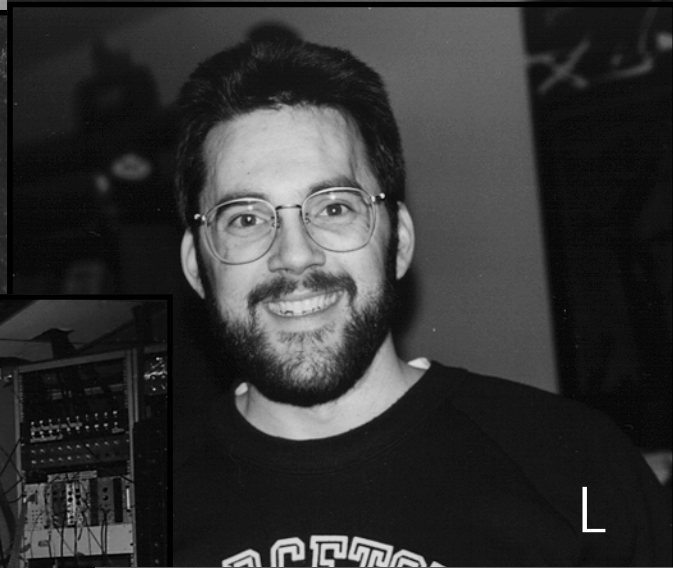




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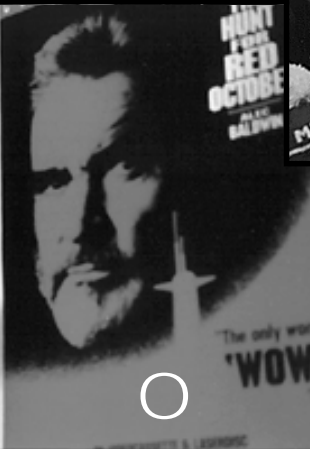
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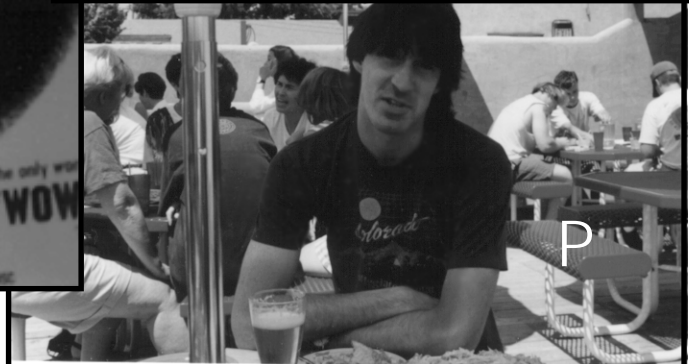
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December 1993

Hidiho Friends and Family!

It's been kind of a busy year, so sorry if we've been a little self absorbed. Here's the catch up on the Cleveland Leigh family. We've survived our daughter's first year. She turned one in August. What a lot of changes! I know a lot of you already know how this works, but the transformation from total helplessness to total terror is pretty amazing. No, Rowan is still an adorable and well behaved child. There's a mouthful of teeth and a big appetite. She is working hard at learning to talk and will actually do small things for us (Take this to Mommy, please). Her walking has progressed to almost a constant run and she is trying to climb everything. The significant event in this skill came with an unfortunate meeting with a window ledge. She tripped and ended up with four stitches above her right eye. After that she decided that she needed to take walking more seriously. She also loves books and incessantly asks to be read to. Of course, we can't take her to movies like we did when she was an infant. Then she would just sleep through the whole thing. Our second child is due in mid-February 1994. More changes on the way. Marli's doing great with this pregnancy too. She actually forgets about it quite often.

Marli's been working part time for about the last six months. The food co-op she shops at was installing scanning cash registers and needed someone that could do some programming and understood the computer end of the project. It's worked out quite well and she's really enjoyed it.

The timing for that job worked out quite well also. Mike got caught up on the wrong side of a force reduction with Clorox and hit the job market running. The company got a new CEO about a year ago and had been making some noise about downsizing ever since. Interestingly, they eliminated all quality control positions at the manufacturing plants. 'Nuff said.

After a three month campaign, Mike had three offers and a couple of more in the wings. Nice to have a choice. He is now Quality Systems Manager for Steris Corporation in Mentor (just a little east of here). They make a sterilizing system for use in clinics, hospitals, and dentist offices. It's a low temperature, faster alternative to autoclaves or gas systems. They are growing quite rapidly, adding new products and plants, so Mike is developing quality assurance and compliance systems for the company. Quite a good move whether it was his choice or not. It's also a closer and easier drive and nobody thinks you have to work fourteen hours a day to be dedicated or effective.

The week before Mike left Clorox a big storm blew through Euclid. We had 100 mile-per-hour winds, hail, and rain for about twenty minutes. That left us without electricity for five days and \$1100 damage to the Acura. The power outage was actually kind of fun. We had been doing some camping anyway... diaper laundry was the only real inconvenience. In the summer, we get our electric bills down around \$10 a month anyway so we didn't miss it. Mike's still gardening, brewing, and woodworking. He made a pretty nice stereo cabinet that matches the rest of the furniture in the back room. He's working on a cradle now. The garden was quite successful; yielding lots of greens, tomatoes, peppers, fennel and hops. The compost pile even volunteered up a few potatoes. Marli's still baking bread, (was) making baby food, and tempeh and yogurt. She's also been sewing and started cross-stitching (which I'm sure several of you have found out). Marli's brother Kyle lived with us for the third summer. He'll be graduating this year so we expect he'll be moving on next year. He has been an enjoyable addition to the household.

Traveling got very difficult at about Rowan's sixth month point. There's a definite limit to how long she will sit in the car seat. We still made several trips anyway: Winter Carnival at MTU, Easter at the Leigh's in Kansas City, Memorial Day at the MacLeods in Sault Ste. Marie, and several shorter trips in Michigan and Ohio. Mike now understands why his folks left on trips at midnight.

We still enjoy the Cleveland area immensely, even though our perspective has changed a bit in the last five years. If you are ever in the area, our door is always open (needs to be fixed) so stop by and say hello. There's usually a bed available too. Local folks come-over for a beer or coffee.

Hope everything is well with you.

Peace.

Mike, Marli, Rowan



Baby Rowan Leigh

LIFE AFTER...

by Raman Pfaff

As I sit here in the local coffee joint listening to a little jazz by myself, I write this and realize that I've now reached the pinnacle of my being—I'm over 30, single, and a graduate student. What more can there be? Let me think about this. Singleness. Alone. Iconoclastic.

ONE. It's a sad story but needless to say it looks like I will only have to buy **ONE** headstone for my near future (we'll get back to that).

I guess I should look at the fact that I will save money only having to buy **ONE**. I also only have to buy **ONE** dinner when I go out to Broadway shows by myself (of course having two tickets in hand). And **ONE** book to read. **ONE** cake for my birthday. **ONE** Christmas present for myself (the **ONE** being). Just **ONE** small little turkey for that lovely family holiday—I of course am a family of **ONE**. Just **ONE** pumpkin to carve to my single minded standards. Do you get the

point? I'd say there is only **ONE** point... The jazz is pretty good—lot's of the old stuff.

There are lots of people here that look like they're having a great time. But, for some strange reason, all the women are having a good time with their significant others. Why am I the only **ONE** here without a significant other? There is only **ONE** reason for all this. I am clearly insignificant. It is the only explanation... As I celebrated my thirtieth birthday this past summer I really enjoyed going out to dinner with my most significant other—my roommate. I put the bill on my credit card. It was a lovely evening. I drank a lot. Then we went home and I watched TV. A typical day. But now I'm thirty... almost thirty-**ONE**.

I haven't been carded in years. People call me Sir. And for some strange reason everyone in this city that is single is also below the age of twenty. Should I try dating some **ONE** that has just graduated high school and has not yet found out how miserable the world is? I think not. In any event, age is rapidly deteriorating my body and mind. The shins can't deal with aerobics. The

stomach keeps expanding—maybe due to many mint mochas while sitting here listening to great jazz. At this age the ability to learn has decreased dramatically. If the new software is not trivial to operate it gets ditched. Carl still has this mystery software that he installed that makes noises from time to time. He doesn't seem to know how to fix the problem, so he doesn't. Maybe he should just throw his computer away and get a new **ONE**. Perhaps the lack of ability to learn is what causes singlehood.

If I want to meet some **ONE** I must learn skills that I have no knowledge of after three decades of life. However, three decades have lead me to the point of having to worry about the inevitable—lying in dirt for an extended period of time—at least until a new mall gets built. Thus I must worry about buying a lovely little plot of land for myself. I'm sure **ONE** of my many credit cards could handle this with no problem. The jazz rolls along. Graduate school also does. The only problem is that after this many years it is no longer school. It has become a meaningless continuation of ludicrousity. What's new. Life just rolls along. Soon the jazz will end. Single. Alone. **ONE**.

Images

by Tyrone Green

Dark and lonely on a summer night
Kill my landlord, kill my landlord
Watchdog barking — do he bite?
Kill my landlord, kill my landlord
Slip in his window, break his neck
Then his house I start to wreck
Got no reason — what the heck!
Kill my landlord, kill my landlord
C-I-L-L My landlord.

Curious Raman... goes to the movies

by Raman Pfaff

I don't know if Raman is still curious but he still enjoys the movies. Without a doubt this was one of the best years for the theater in a long time. I know my list won't be complete but I'll mention at least a few of the ones that stick in my mind. Several of the flicks were based on true events that just boggle the mind about the condition of our society (both past and present). These include **Malcom X**, **In the Name of the Father**, and **Schindler's List**. Others just made me feel good. Movies such as **The Fugitive** and **Jurassic Park**. And others had such quality sewn into them that I will not soon forget them—**Much Ado About Nothing** and **Remains of the Day**. The most recent one I saw was **Reality Bites**. The story of my life.

This movie is supposed to be based on the typical feelings of **Generation X**. I don't know exactly who that is (the paper says it's 16-32 year olds) and I'm not exactly sure what the term refers to but after seeing the movie I definitely believe that they have pointed out the problems with our generation rather well. This movie is really a superb work of art that no one should miss. **Winona Ryder** does an outstanding job portraying a typical person of today. She is an outstanding college graduate who gets out of the classical schooling system and then realizes that in today's world hope is becoming a very difficult thing to find. The current belief which pervades our social mainstream consciousness is that doing well in school leads to a good job, a nice home, and all the good things that go along

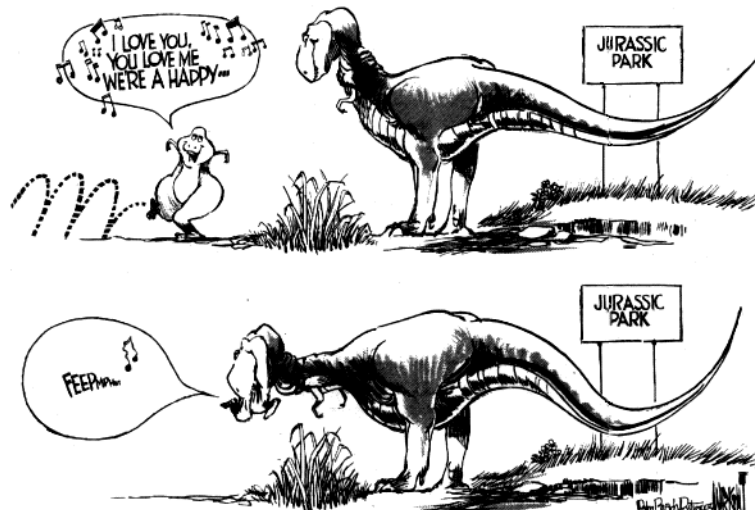
with life. As many of us now realize, that is not how things work. The movie really portrays life well in it's representation of our thirty second culture. Significance is no longer a pertinent aspect of our being. The movie thoroughly shows how "**MTV**" has altered the way humans view life around them. It pokes a lot of fun at the standard knowledge which has been gained by our generation—we know a lot about information. Carl (a.k.a. Spike) and I actually think we live at the end of the information super highway—the info superdump. The flick is full of laughs (including a mention of **Melrose Place**—the ultimate TV show of the Spelling dynasty) and also touches on many of the darker sides of life today including cancer, AIDS, and 1-900 numbers (Spike knows about those). The only gripe I had with this movie is the ending. It was just a bit to good as far as I was concerned. Reality bites and that's how it should have

ended. One word of warning though, don't leave when the credits start rolling cause they get one more good jab in at our society.

Another movie from back in the summer was **The Fugitive**. This was a beautiful remake of the old TV show that ran for many years on NBC. **Harrison Ford** (as usual) did a great job of portraying a vibrant character full of life with a sharp mind and driven ingenuity. The movie kept you sitting on the edge of your seat for parts and your mind constantly working during other segments. It was a great suspense-action-adventure-thriller. If you are just in the mood for a good flick and don't want to deal with any concerns of society—then this is a good one to see. I think it just came out on video recently.



Another flick which came out during the summer was **Jurassic Park**. This of course is



the new highest grossing movie of all time (replacing E.T.). **Steven Spielberg** did a great job (more on him later) throwing dinosaurs at us in this dino-mite action flick. Many felt this movie was too scary but relative to driving downtown in the evening, this was nothing. The special effects were superb. The dinosaurs looked real to me and I enjoyed the humor that was thrown into the script when least expected. After all, getting chomped by a T. Rex is always fun when on the john.

Now, back to reality (I heard it bites). **In the Name of the Father** was another well crafted movie. **Daniel-Day Lewis** performed at Oscar level in this one. The film was based on a true story which shows how societal beliefs can alter people's lives. **Emma Thompson** truly shows her talents but was used sparingly—I could have lived with more of her in the flick. The man playing Lewis' father deserves much credit for his portrayal. The emotions shown by the characters really came across well. In one scene Lewis was essentially on his last remaining grain of sanity and stepped across it. It was a powerfully performed scene and will stick in my mind for a long while.

Malcom X was another movie showing what has occurred in this country. **Denzel Washington** does a superb job in the movie. This movie was a bit on the long side and did seem to drag a bit but was worth seeing. Another movie which had both **D. Washington** and **Emma Thompson** was **Much Ado About Nothing**. **Kenneth Branagh** does a fantastic job both directing and acting in this film. **Emma Thompson** shows that she is truly one of the best actors of our generation (see also **Remains of the Day**). **Michael Keaton** does a great job with his character and really seems to enjoy it. As the poster declares, this flick has everything in it: romance, mischief, seduction, revenge, and it is remarkable. The dialogue keeps your ears perked up for the entire movie. The soundtrack is marvelous. The ending of this movie makes you feel so good about life. If you want to be cheered up,

this is a good one to rent. Maybe there is hope after all. **Emma Thompson** also showed up in **Remains of the Day**. She teamed up with **Anthony Hopkins** again (**Howard's End**) with the same production team to produce one of the best movies of the year. The acting in this movie was truly the best I can remember. The on screen tension between Hopkins and Thompson was portrayed to a hilt. The movie truly shows that you really only have one chance at happiness in your life and if you miss it you'll be regretting decisions which you made for a long time. The movie was a bit long but the integral quality of this movie keeps life flowing along throughout the entire picture. I would not miss this if I were you.

The other movie I wouldn't miss is **Schindler's List**. **Steven Spielberg** directed this one and will most certainly win the Oscar he deserves. This movie is the story of one man who had a large influence on many lives during the horrendous holocaust of WWII. The movie was done in black and white. Color was not necessary to show the events and emotions which took place at this time. This movie will remain a classic and easily stand the test of time. The acting was solid. Spielberg did such a superb job directing this movie that the acting was really subdued by the story being shown to us. The story was truly remarkable. As I'm sure you've probably all heard, you'll need to bring kleenex to this one because it is hard not to cry. It is also difficult to find much wrong with this picture. My only minor complaint was that it did drag a bit in just a few scenes, but perhaps that was a good mental break since this was such a powerful movie.

I now think of a few other movies that I wouldn't miss from this past year. I didn't mean to leave them out and I certainly suggest you see them. **Like Water for Chocolate** was a brilliant film which I would highly recommend. Also **Age of Innocence** was well done—I did have a problem with the ending though; the main

character's last line in the book was not said in the movie. I thought that line really was the most significant line of the book. **The Piano** is a movie which I unfortunately missed (it was only here for about four months) and so I can't wait till it's out on video since I heard it was superb. I also have not yet gotten to **Philadelphia** which I've also heard is worth not missing.

I'm sure I've forgotten to mention a few others so I'm sorry about that but as I said, I think this was one of the best years ever for going out to the movies. As far as the **Oscars** go, I would give the director to **Steven Spielberg for Schindler's List**. I would give **Emma Thompson and Anthony Hopkins** the Oscars they deserve for **Remains of the Day**. By the time you read this that will be decided so we'll see how well I did with my pick. I wouldn't skip seeing any of the movies that I've mentioned here. Curious Raman must now go back to the movies (maybe I'll go see Blue)

— hope to see you at the movies —

[In the next issue, Curious Raman reviews the eclectic Belle Poque—and hot summer flix of 1994. -ed]



In the next issue... "Is television stealing their ideas from PPSA?"

MISTER KNOWITALL

Each issue, Mr. Knowitall gets you the low-down on social and cultural events. No rock is left unturned. Myths debunked.

This month, Mr. Knowitall debunks some urban legends that have been around for awhile. First, he will tackle the story of **ALLIGATORS** living in the sewers of **NEW YORK CITY**. There are certainly unique creatures in New York, but alligators? Next, “Did **TYCHO BRAHE** die for lack of a potty break?” Mr. K finishes up by getting to the bottom of the “**TOOTHBRUSH BANDIT**” stories.

[Tastes like Chicken...]

In Victorian London there was a scare about savage black pigs living in the sewers. For years there have been stories about alligators living in the sewers of New York. Fact or Fiction?

A wealth of detail on the “alligators in the sewers of New York City” legend is detailed in **The Vanishing Hitchhiker** by Jan Harold Brunvand (more abbreviated versions are in **More of the Straight Dope** and **Rumor!**).

Anthropologist Loren Coleman checked out “unusual phenomena and events” and especially animal lore in the United States. He found over 70 such reports from 1843-1973 but only one pertaining to sewers.

In the February 10, 1935 **New York Times**, there a report of kids in the East 123rd Street area who were dumping snow into an open manhole. Salvatore Condulucci, 16 yrs old was watching near the rim of manhole and would direct his friends to dump more slush in as the level went down to ensure that the sewer wouldn't be overly clogged. Then there were signs of clogging 10 feet down where the sewer connects to the Harlem river. He saw something black moving and then shouts to everyone, “Honest, it's an alligator.” The story is summarized in the Times' headlines as:

ALLIGATOR FOUND IN UPTOWN SEWER

Youths Shoveling Snow into Manhole See the Animal Churning in Icy Water

SNARE IT AND DRAG IT OUT!

Reptile Slain by Rescuers When It Gets Vicious—
Whence It Came is Mystery

The reporter speculated that the alligator came from a passing boat from “the mysterious Everglades.”

Separately, Robert Daley in **The World Beneath the City** writes that there was apparently a problem with alligators in the sewers in the 1930's. Former Commissioner of Sewers Teddy May personally inspected the sewers and told Daley that he found alligators with an average length of 2 feet. He then commenced on an eradication campaign and announced that all were exterminated by 1937. These two points then seem to form a pretty good basis for the enduring legend.

Daley's writeup of his talk with May was published in 1959. Brunvand includes a fantasy-parody of the alligator story in the 1974 **New Yorker** and also mentions that Thomas Pynchon's 1963 science fiction story **V** contains one of most detailed treatments of the legend. Brunvand speculates that Pynchon may have been influenced by hearing of Daley's discussion with May.

If the accounts are true, then perhaps the “alligators in the sewers” legend is true. I'd say that anything that could survive in New York City is tough; if there be gators in the sewers we be doomed!

[I Gotta Pee... bad!]

This is the story that I remember hearing. Brahe went to a state dinner, but he forgot to go to the bathroom. Well, since it was considered impolite to leave the table before the king, and the king was taking his sweet time eating and dining, Brahe's bladder “exploded” and he died.

True? Probably not even close. Carl Sagan has deduced that Tycho Brahe was at a dinner given by the Baron of Rosenberg. After consuming much wine he resisted the urge to leave the room ahead of the Baron. As a consequence, he developed a urinary infection. His condition worsened with time due to his refusal to heed advice to temper his eating and drinking habits. He eventually died of complications due to the infection.

Yes, but Sagan doesn't give any references. In **Coming of Age in the Milky Way**, Timothy Ferris repeats the bladder explosion story, which was postulated at the time of Brahe's death and remained in circulation long enough to be quoted as fact in **Martyrs of Science** by Sir David Brewster in 1874. However, the notion that Brahe up and died right off the bat is something of a mutation—not even Brewster claims that, but Ferris does.

Ferris quotes as a reference “Dryer, 1980, p. 386” but unfortunately, no such work exists. He is attempting to refer to John Louis Emil Dreyer's 1890 work, **Tycho Brahe: A Picture of Scientific Life and Work in the Sixteenth Century** (ISBN 0-8446-1996-5), long considered the definitive biography. Page 386 is in the appendices, and contains an excerpt from Brahe's observation log (the last entry, I believe, and in Kepler's handwriting). Alas, it is in Latin, and my High School Latin years have faded into obscurity.

It is translated in **The Lord of Uraniborg: A Biography of Tycho Brahe**, Victor E. Thoren, Cambridge University Press, 1990 (ISBN 0-521-35158-8) as:

[Brahe] accompanied Councillor Minckwicz to dinner at the home of Peter Vok Ursinus [the Baron of Rosenberg]. Holding his urine longer than he was accustomed to doing, Brahe remained seated. Although he drank a bit overgenerously and felt pressure on his bladder, he had less concern for the state of his health than for etiquette. By the time Brahe returned home, he could no longer urinate.

This was on October 13th, 1601. The log indicates that he spent the next 5 days in sleepless agony before finally urinating, thereby finding some small relief. Still, his strength was spent, and he spent 5 more days in increasing delirium. The night before the 24th, he was repeatedly heard to call out words to the effect of "he did not wish his life to have been in vain," which have since often been attributed as his deathbed words. On the 24th he died a peaceful death.

At some point his death was attributed to kidney stones, but when the body was exhumed in 1901 (and found in excellent condition, considering), no kidney stones were found, though a search was made (Thoren refers to Edvard Gotfredson, "Tyge Brahes sidste sygdom og død", **Fund og Forskning** 2(1955): 32-5). Modern theory attributes his death to "uremia due to hypertrophy of the prostate" (Thoren, p. 469 n.). Also worth noting is that John Allyn Gade in **The Life and Times of Tycho Brahe** seems to believe that Brahe suffered from a recurring bladder condition which he frequently consulted with physicians about, only to ignore their advice. He also repeats the "bladder bursting at the table" story, but gives no references for either, remarking in essence, "Everyone says so, so it must be... oh, nevermind."

BTW, regardless of what Timothy Ferris may think he read in Dreyer, the text itself agrees with the story in Thoren, adding only that he was "seized with illness, which was aggravated by his remaining at the table." That's a paraphrase, I'm afraid.

[Don't Forget to Brush]

It goes like this: this nice American family of four goes to Paris, France on vacation. They check into a hotel and go sightseeing and all the other touristy things. A few days into their (until then) pleasant, normal vacation, they go for lunch at a cafe. They return to find that their hotel room has been broken into. Fortunately, it seems to have been a rather surgical strike and very few of their possessions are stolen or even out of place. Two displacements however, strike the family as odd: their four toothbrushes are strewn around the sink, and their camera is set out in the open on one of the beds. The hotel management is apologetic and blames the bellboy. The bellboy, who had seemed so nice, if unnervingly suave, to the family upon their arrival, had just quit his job on the morning of the break-in. The Americans get the missing portion of their American Express Travelers' Cheques refunded, check into a new hotel, wind up the tail end of their trip, and head back to America. (or alternately, nothing in the room is disturbed or stolen. They have only returned from an evening on the town to find the camera and toothbrushes on the bed. They shrug and continue the remaining small portion of their vacation and fly home) In America, they develop the pictures in the camera. Half are of the family in front of the Eiffel Tower, but the other half of the pictures in the roll feature various

views of the bellboy, smiling deliriously, with the four family toothbrushes stuck up his bootie. (People who hear this story cringe as they visualize the implications of the unsuspecting family brushing their teeth with the toothbrushes after the incident.)

Over the summer, "Gallery" magazine published a version of this in their "strange, but true news stories section." In that version, it was a yuppie couple on a campout in the Rocky Mountains, and a grizzled old miner appearing on the developed film.

A friend's mother told the classical story of the lady whose family went for a vacation to Mexico (Mazatlan, Mexico to be precise), had their room burgled but had nothing taken, and later when they developed the film there was a picture of men with the family's toothbrushes stuck up their rear ends. My mother-in-law-to-be said that the victim was a nurse working in the same hospital ward that she worked in. Not wanting to make this into a federal case, I arranged things so that my friend and I could stop by the hospital during the lady's shift en route to a movie.

The timing went well, and I met the lady, who has a good sense of humor and keeps the photo in her purse. Indeed, there was a pretty good shot of three Mexican men, one with a very broad smile at the camera and pointing to his friends' derrieres. The two other men indeed had one toothbrush each shoved rather far up their rears. The man facing the camera looked about in his mid-twenties. The lady (who would like to remain anonymous) said that after the robbery, the husband had used one of the "contaminated" toothbrushes for only a second, for it had a smell/taste that he felt "uncomfortable" with but blamed it on the Mexican water system at the time. Only when they got back to the states and had their film developed did they find out the fate of their toothbrushes.

So, the "legend" about the toothbrushes are, indeed, real! I feel quite lucky to have been able to view the photo and be able to report back to PPSA about it! Be careful to hide those toothbrushes next time you are traveling-seems like a popular trick to play on tourists.

until next time....

PARTY!!

WHERE? steve langer's
WHO? everyone!
WHY? steve's moving!
WHEN? June 1994

Steve's new address is:

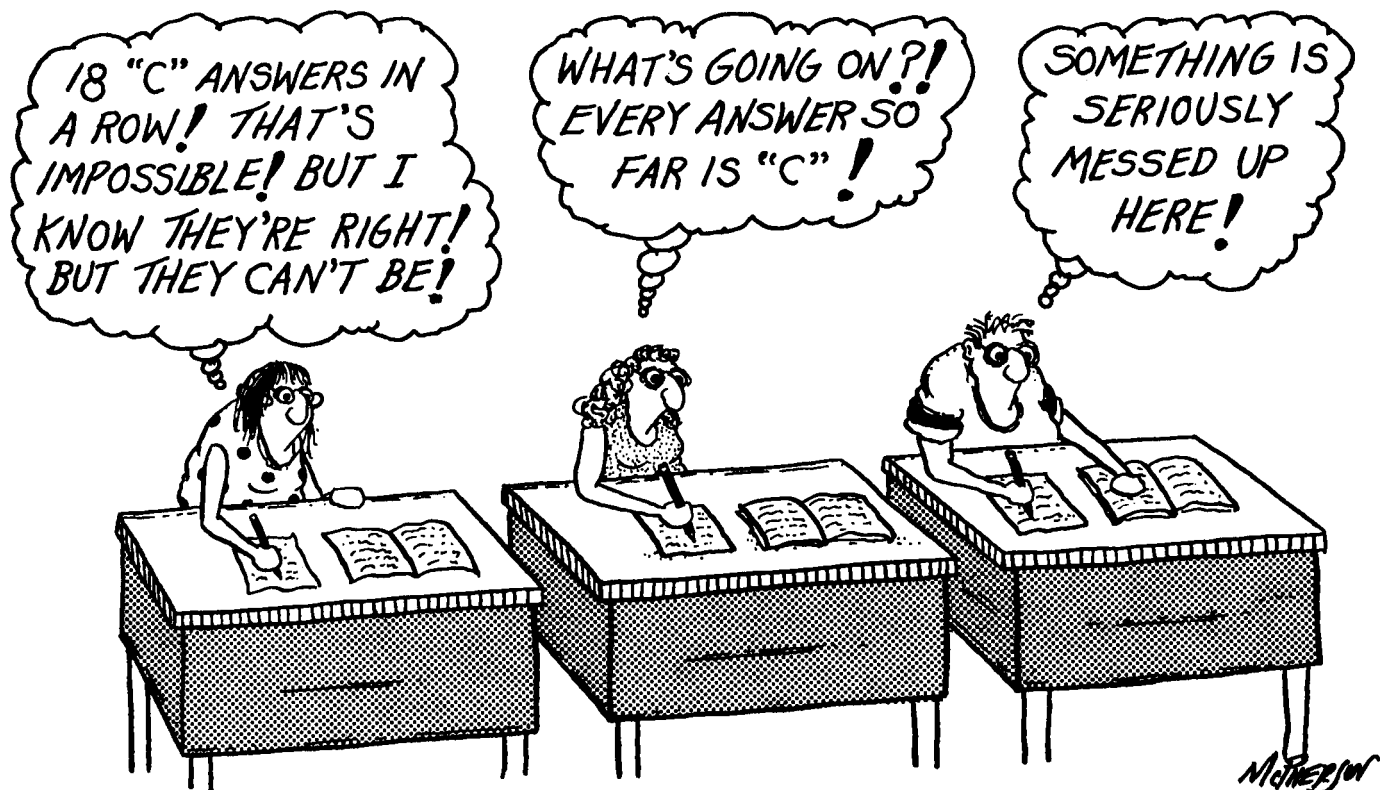
**1505 41 NW F-6
Rochester MN 55901
(507) 281-4484**

"Bring your own ammo"

Remembering: An historical moment from Saturday Night Live
(with Jane Curtin and Dan Ackroyd)

Jane: Dan, there's an old saying: behind every successful man there's a woman; a loving, giving, caring woman. But you wouldn't know that, Dan, because there's no saying about what's behind a miserable failure.

Dan: Jane, you ignorant slut. Bagged out, dried up, skunk meat like you and Michelle Triolla know the rules. If you want a contract, sign on the dotted line. Oh, but let's all shed a tear for poor Michelle Triolla. There was only testimony that she had sexual intercourse over 40 times with another man while living with actor Lee Marvin. But I suppose that sort of fashionable promiscuity means nothing to you. Someone like you, Jane, who hops from bed to bed with the frequency of a cheap ham-radio. But hell hath no fury like a woman scorned, and Michelle Triolla like a screeching, squealing, rapacious swamp sow is after actor Lee Marvin's last three million dollars. I guess what you and Michelle are saying is, that when you're on you backs, the meter is running. Well please spare us gals, and tell us the rates at the top. Then we can choose which two-bit tarts and bargain basement sluts to shack up with.



The year the S.A.T. creators decided to mess with student's minds.

PPSA takes over the Pacific Coast

by Raman Pfaff

[To anyone over thirty (who is not a grad student): This story is entirely fictitious and should not be believed. Please feel free to skip right over it. PPSA does not promote or condone the views expressed within.]

As a physics graduate student the one thing we always look forward to are conferences. Travelling to scenic locations, big cities, and faraway lands are the entire point of physics (I guess). Just as Magellan explored the world in his day—I too seek to find the essence of the world through travels. The 1993 Fall DNP

(Division of Nuclear Physics for all you smart people who wisely chose to not major in this field) Meeting was scheduled for Asilomar, California—the land of gold.

Asilomar is located a few hours south of San Francisco, adjacent to Monterey (read *The Cannery* by J. Steinbeck) and just slightly north of Carmel (Clint Eastwood's home.) This is by far one of the most beautiful areas in our entire country. I bought my plane ticket with one of those credit card deals so that I could save my institution of higher education some money by buying early. The plan was to meet John in San Fran and then drive down to the conference and we would room together there. Things looked like they were going well until it was decided I really didn't know enough to give a talk (no arguments from me) and thus I wouldn't get paid to go to the conference. Well, as long as I already had the plane tickets there was no point in letting it go to waste! So I packed up, planned on meeting John in San Fran (hopefully with no food from New Mexico) and it was off to California—Beverly Hills that is...swimmin' pools, movie stars.... (OK, so it was really Monterey.) I

brought with me all the basics—a credit card, my camera, and a ream of film.

We met as planned in SF and since John was getting paid to go to this conference he picked up a rental car for us and we headed on south to Asilomar. The trip down was right along the coast and the scenery seemed spectacular (relative to East Lansing anyway.) I began having a bit too much fun taking pictures and every mile down the road I would see something even more interesting than the prior mile and I would tell John to stop (yet again) and I'd snap another roll of film. Driving from one place to another really seemed to take much longer than anticipated. We eventually got to the Asilomar Conference Center which is located in a rustic

setting right along the coast. It has many small cottages for housing and a lot of conference rooms for those exciting physics talks. It really reminded me of a sort of camp site place for kids. Once a long, long, long, time ago my whole sixth grade class (including myself) went up to northern Michigan to go camping for a week and "learn" things about nature. All I learned was that the little concession store closed at 6 P.M. so if I bought lots of candy bars then I could sell them for double the market price by 9 P.M. Kids will be kids!

Anyway, John went in the main building to check in while I hid in the car. He got the room key and we migrated to our cottage. The last remaining problem of the day was... the roomie. I really didn't feel like spending the whole week

in the spacious back seat of the car so it was necessary to convince the unseen roomie to let me crash on the very small bed with John. The roomie wasn't in so we scouted the things he had left in the room to try to determine if he was a big shot physicist or a mere grad student. The evidence (as O.J.'s lawyer recently said) was not conclusive. John guessed that it was a student, because of the knapsack and textbooks. We waited around and eventually the mysterious professor from the east arrived. East of the Mississippi that is. He was from some Ivy leagueish sort of school so we went with the story of how my institution couldn't afford to support me on the



*Lombard Street: the least straight street in America.
[no, on second thought that would be Castro Street - ed]*

trip so could I please stay with my buddy John for the week. Being a true physicist at heart he saw no problem with that. The adventure had begun. We then went to bed, since we were tired. Did I mention the bed was really small.

The next morning as our roomie awoke at his usual time of 6:30 A.M.—except of course for the minor fact that we were in California and it was only 3:30 in the morning, Michigan time. John and I just moaned. He made a bit of noise and went out running. He then came back and made more noise as he showered and prepared for the many talks he would attend that day. Eventually he left and then we worked on getting up. Did we then rush to make the first talks of the morning? I don't think so! Off to go sight-seeing—after all, this was California. Every morning of the week was essentially just like that except for the one morning John had to present his talk. That was the only day we made it to a talk. His was the first of the morning. We walked in. John talked. We walked out. It was a very productive and informative ten minutes. Then off we went again. Since I can't remember the exact order of all the fun things we did I'll just describe all the ones I can think of.

Monterey Aquarium: This is one of those typical science museums where there is lots of hand on stuff and neat stuff to look at. This place is centered around a three story tall aquarium where a diver goes in every few hours and feeds all the fish inside the big tank. That includes everything from barracudas to sardines and also such fun things as seaweed and other unknown things. All the spectators are always hoping the barracudas will attack the diver and we would get to see a Jaws sort of thing but alas, nothing like that occurred. There was also a petting zoo sort of area where we could pet various things like eels and slimy stuff like that. Me and John really didn't feel like doing any of that sort of stuff if you know what I mean. Maybe someday when I'm really rich I'll get myself one of those three story aquariums. That would be kind of nice in my mansion. Oh - wait, I'm dreaming again. I must remember I'm in physics. Oh well....

17 Mile Drive: This is certainly one of the most beautiful seventeen miles of real estate in the United States. It features such things as The Lone Cypress, Seal Island, and the Pebble Beach Golf Course. It costs a few bucks to get on this road but it is more than worth it. We got up there once during the day and twice at sunset. During the day you can see such things as hundreds of sea lions out on Seal Island—those suckers really do a lot of barking and it is amazing how much noise they all make. The sunsets were amazing! While looking over the Lone Cypress the sunsets were just a blaze of lovely color, with the ocean waves rolling on in on the side of the cliff that we were looking out over. Amazing colors. We don't get many evening quite like that one here in East Lansing. I shot a whole roll of film during one sunset, along with hundreds of other people that had really good cameras (like Hasselblads). If your ever in the area you have to go out on this drive! Once, when we were pulling out of a photo stop area I said “watch out for that hole” and needless to say, John never saw it. We

bounced pretty hard in that big hole and later that day I noticed a dent in the side of our rental machine. It looked like someone had run in to the front end but after awhile we realized that the hole had made the front end of our cheap American car sort of buckle in when we had our impactfull meeting with the dreaded hole. Oh well, that's what you get with an American car. Oh, well... it was a rental.

Walk of Death: Another fun thing we did was one of those silly things you do when you're out sight-seeing in a strange location. We did the “Path of History Walk” in the old part of Monterey. We had a lovely little map that described all the old famous houses we saw including California's first theater, their first brick house, and Robert Louis Stevenson's old house. They just don't make things like they used to his was a fun walk with lots of old adobes to look a. It got rather hot and sunny that day and it sort of did us in.

Carmel: As most of us movie fans know, Clint Eastwood has a little restaurant in the lovely little city of Carmel. This is one pricey little city but it is rather quaint and well worth a visit. As long as we were there we had to eat at Clint's place. It was sort of like an expensive **Peanut Barrel** with lovely food items such as the **Dirty Harry burger** and the **Good, the Bad, and the Ugly platter** (whatever that is). John had a few cokes with lunch and those things of course are about three bucks a piece (as they are in most all of California for some strange reason). John also had us move three times until we found a table with less smoke, more clean air. I didn't mind this a bit, though. It's funny that these Californians who are so environment conscious, and concerned about their karmas would smoke so much. We walked around looking at all the little expensive stores up and down their main strip and the city sort of had a Santa Fe feel of pretentious artsy people. We also went to a really expensive mall on the outskirts of the city. This mall is sculpted into a hilly area and has tons of flowers planted all over the place. There are loads of tourist taking photos here, including John and I. Another thing I found at this mall was a bathroom. For some strange reason I really needed to visit the little boys room and I unfortunately manage to put too much of a strain on the engineering capabilities of the toilet, and the sucker got a bit on the plugged up side. No plunger was in sight so I made a run for it. A few minutes later we heard a page for the janitorial staff. At this point we left, just in case security came looking for me. Let me just point out that in California they are very concerned with water conservation so the toilets are truly designed to minimize water usage by having very small pipes and an exceedingly small tank of water that 'flushes'. Of course, I hadn't actually gone to the toilet in five days... Enough said on that! On to the next event....

Blown off: As at most conferences, some of us old time MSU people tend to get together and go out for drinks. John and I made our plans with an unnamed editor who once spent some time at MSU and planned to meet that evening. As we sat around in the camp center waiting for Debbie we started getting a bit bored. After an hour of hanging around

we haphazardly glanced at the message board. There of course were no phones in any of the "rustic" rooms where we were staying so this was the only means of communication with our physics buddies. In any event the message said that she was going to go out with some people from Penn rather than us Spartans. Needless to say we were bummed out so off we went to have our own drinks. We found a nice expensive little bar that had all glass walls and was hanging right over the Monterey Bay. A very scenic and nice little bar with a big open fireplace right in the middle. We had some nice inexpensive seven dollar drinks and then met two young women who wanted to go sight-seeing at Asilomar so off we went... Oh wait a minute, that was just my dream that evening. Such is life. We drank and then we came home and crashed. Another typical night for a couple of physicists. Only John shared the sheets that night (actually, we each got our own sheet and wrapped up in it).

Swimming adventure: Asilomar was right on the beach and we walked over across a few sand dunes and planned to go swimming (at least John wanted to). Remember all those movies back in the sixties where everyone in California was always surfing? Well, there were some damn big waves out in the surf and John went wading on out in the cool water (it was October after all). There weren't to many people out swimming but there were enough of us tourist types to plunge on it. Locals all thought it was too cold of course, except for the crazy local surf-kids, who had nerve damage from too much cold water. Me—I just got my camera out and started getting a few pictures of the waves hitting rocks along the shore and a few of John. And speaking of John, he looked sort of like St. Nick on a vacation in the tropics after Xmas. He had a great look of fear on his face as 10 foot waves came rolling on in and landed on him. John certainly had his fun, he seemed just like a little kid on the beach for the first time. At least the water was a bit warmer than Lake Superior used to be (at least I guess it was).

Redwood Forest: John and I were eager to go see the redwoods so off we went to one of the parks located near San Francisco. We got there rather early in the morning and it was very cool out down in the valley where the **trees** were. We got one of the lovely little maps the park service provides and off into the wilderness we ventured. We chose the one hour path (we planned to be in San Fran later that day) and off we went. If only there had been a few T. Rexes kicking around it would have felt just like Jurassic Park. Since I'd seen the redwoods last time I was in California I knew what to expect. John had not seen the beast-like trees before and had the usual first timers reaction to the things. I, of course, was still quite amazed by the whole thing. Those trees are not quite the same as that 24 foot pine in my backyard (or should I say the landlord's backyard). In any event we hiked along and only had to take quick glances at the map when we came to intersections. In retrospect perhaps the glances should have been a bit longer since before long we were entirely lost. We just kept walking. We ran into some more people at one of those dreaded "I'll take the high

road, you take the low road" intersections and they asked us if we could point out where we were on the map. Needless to say that didn't make us happy. We gave them directions and that made them happy... for the time being. We took the high road 'cause it was warmer up there than the valley. Eventually the path started heading back down into the valley and we figured out where we were. John of course had to show **God's Gift** to the humongous trees along the way as a troop of girl scouts came out of nowhere. After three hours of hiking we returned to the car and continued our adventure to the Big City. It's always worth a trip to the redwoods whenever you make it out to California!

San Francisco: This is one big city that is loaded with famous landmarks. One of the places we went was Fisherman's Wharf where all the tourists are. Along with tourist came lots of beggars. We tried to avoid them but one of them came up to us and started telling us a lovely little story. He performed a magic act, and used the word "penis" several times. At that point John pushed a few bucks on him and we ran for our lives. John felt that it would make a good story and so he decided the fellow deserved to be compensated. That never happened to me in East Lansing—at least not since long island iced tea nights at Olga's, but then it was me using that "P" word so that was OK I guess.

We also drove all over town looking for some gigantic used book store that John just needed to see. As we drove all over the city looking for this place we got into a seedier and seedier part of town. We saw the place eventually but at that point we had all the windows rolled up and the doors locked and there was no way in the world I was going to get out of the car. So we just kept right on driving. We of course had to go to the Golden Gate Bridge and as usual I shot a roll or two of film. Up on one of the big hills that overlooks the bridge is an old military development where they put a long tunnel in a mountain and they had planned to launch missiles out of the thing to destroy war ships out in the bay. The plans never went through but it is now another thing to see when in the area. It looked to us that the missiles probably would have landed right in San Fran, so that is probably why the military gave up on the idea. Oh well, typical government productivity.

All in all it was a great little vacation in a beautiful area. If your ever there one thing you should really do is catch breakfast at the **Lighthouse Cafe** in Monterey. It is a great little cafe with some great home-cooking sort of food that really fills you up for an adventurous day ahead. It's a great joint to just eat your breakfast and read the news every morning—if of course you can afford to do that in California. Another thing to remember is that the locals (and thus the businesses) don't get up until about 10 A.M. on work days. So you shouldn't be surprised to find the barber shop doesn't open until 11 A.M. (this can be important when you're trying to find activities so you can avoid boring physics presentations!) One thing for sure, I'm looking forward to my next trip to California!

My Trip to the Shaky City (or, "I Left My Cash in San Francisco")

by John Johnson



It had been less than a week since my trip to Asilomar, California for the Fall 1993 DNP meeting. I thought that I had reached my limit for sight-seeing, but I was surprisingly enthusiastic to return to California. Maybe it was the desire to return to moist sea air from these parched mesas of New Mexico. Maybe I actually thought I'd meet babes (it was an IEEE meeting after all, not Physics!) Whatever the case, I actually got to the airport early that day.

It was the day before Halloween, and Scott Garner (my roommate) and I were flying Southwest in to San Fran. The stewardesses were dressed in costumes and passed out candy on the flight. I must say that I was pleased the pilots weren't in costumes as well. After a short flight, we landed in the City by the Bay. The sun was shining and all was well in the world.

The day continued to go well. First, we were upgraded from a Taurus to a Lincoln Town Car. Next, we found the hotel in downtown San Francisco. It was the Sheraton Palace, in the heart of the financial district-and boy was it ever a palace. High vaulting ceilings, glistening brass railings, many large crystal chandeliers, a courteous staff... all that and only \$150 a day plus \$20

parking a day. (This is actually VERY cheap!)

Scott and I had a class with Glenn Knoll on Sunday and Monday that was about detectors and very good. Scott had a poster session that went well, and I had a presentation Thursday. This was the big yearly IEEE meeting, so we attended several good talks. Scott left Friday, 'cause he missed New Mexico (I was certainly confused), but before he left we had a chance to see (and walk) through the hills of San Francisco. We visited Fisherman's Warf-we actually saw the "penis" man again, but avoided him. We took a boat over to Alcatraz Island, and ate seafood and Moroccan at a place with a belly dancer. Unlike the 1992 trip to DC, John got into the act this time!



The advantages of flying Southwest.



Alcatraz Island.



The opulent dining area at the Sheraton Palace.

I took out the town car and visited much of the greater San Francisco area, including Berkeley. I went to landmarks like the Golden Gate Bridge, Lombard Street, Telegraph Hill, and the Golden Gate Park. I spent a whole afternoon in the Golden Gate Park, it was beautiful. The Japanese tea garden, the lakes and flora and fauna, and I ended up at the ocean, where I kicked off my shoes and walked in the surf.

By the end of the trip I had logged many miles in my new tennis shoes, snapped many artistic pictures and deepened my credit card debt. The city was great, and, despite the pollution making my throat sore, I hated to leave. Then again, it was nice to get back to work so I could get some rest.

[I made this article short so I could inundate you with my artistic photos of San Fran!]



John, mistaken as an inmate, plans his escape.



A beautiful day at Golden Gate Park.



John enjoys himself at the Moroccan restaurant "Marakesh".



Chinatown.



A dispute between a hippie and a preacher draws a crowd at Berkeley.



An interesting look at the vertical growth of San Francisco.



It was a good thing that Scott and I left our work at home!



The view of San Francisco, from high on a hill.



Japanese Tea Garden in GG Park.



The Coit Tower.



Scott Garner stares out at the Bay.

*A unique view
of
San Francisco
from this
photographer's
perspective.*



The Fantastic Journey... **Back to the 70's**

The holidays were upon us, and I decided to take TWA up on their offer of a free flight. I was leaving Los Alamos on Thursday, and Christmas was on Saturday. The airports were filled with holiday travelers, burdened with presents and waiting for delayed flights. It was to be expected that I would have the opportunity to get bumped and get another free travel voucher, and that's exactly what happened in St. Louis. I ran to the check-in counter and volunteered to fly standby. This meant, however, that Raman wouldn't be able to pick me up in Detroit-because, as everyone knows, Thursday night is a sacred night in the Pfaff household. What with Seinfeld, et. al., on the tube....



The airport in St. Louis was crowded that day.

I arranged a rental car for drop-off in Petoskey, the lovely town on the shores of northern Lake Michigan. It was a tourist trap, for wealthy tourists, that barely had air service, and NEVER had cheap rental cars. I however sold my soul and got a rental (upgraded to a Taurus) for \$50 one-way.

I was a bit insane, nothing unusual about that, as I drove through the blizzard singing to myself. I arrived at the Johnson Sr.'s house at about 1:00 AM and beat on the door like a drunken Indian. My parents found it very amusing, as an actual drunken Indian had done this years before.

Raman drove up Friday in the Blue Beast, the door wedge he likes to call the Subaru. It was on Friday that the

real snow started. By Christmas morning we had another 3 feet of snow. We probably dusted a good 4 feet of snow off of the birdfeeders that weekend. And Raman was in no hurry to drive back to East Lansing. He said the cyclotron would wait.



Raman braves a blizzard in the intrepid Subaru.

The holiday proved to be very restful, and I avoided bumping into old High School friends. Raman left for East Lansing on Tuesday-he was going to take thesis data or something (that didn't end up working out.) Kathy (my baby sister) was kind enough to drive me to Pfaff's on Thursday so I could help set up for the big New Year's Eve party. This year's theme was the 70's, but it ended up being a disco extravaganza. After a bite to eat (they still don't have green



The old garage is strained by the weight of too much snow.

chili in Michigan) at La Seniorita, Kathy began her return trip North.



Turkey preparations at the Johnson home.

The Party: Boy this was interesting. Raman and his roommie Carl Nelson (a.k.a. Spike) make it a point to spend more each year than the year before. Of course, I was there for the previous party too, even though I was sick for that one (I was Father Time, and passed out at Midnight.) This year was to be a tribute to the 1970's. We therefore felt the need to drive to a second hand (or third, or forth) store and buy actual clothes that someone wore (and hopefully washed) in that decade.

The polyester was hung with care, and we put it all on Raman's credit card. He of course took notes and billed me and Carl on Quicken when he returned home. We met a couple women from MSU while we were there. Seems disco parties were big because of some show on 9010203, or some other teen-angst soap opera that Raman watched. We felt that there should have been tighter security, so our theme didn't leak out. Maybe next year. Anyway, these women were pretty



Lily helps Raman with his hard drive.



After eating, it's time to watch football!

good looking, and we suggested some appropriate apparel for them. I think they trusted us because we looked like we actually were alive in the 70's. (I doubt they were out of their strollers when we were in High School.)

The party preparations included setting up the bar, fixing the food, and getting the IBM into the living room so Carl could run a bartender program. Carl was a good host, but this year he didn't mix drinks. We were busy showing off the polyester, so everyone helped themselves. This led to quite a bit of insobriaty however. This year I wasn't sick, but I drank a great deal, and disco'd until I dropped.



Just when I figured the party was over and I was ready to go to bed (couch), Carl decided we should all head to Deja Vu- the local strip joint. You see, Carl had just spent \$50 talking to some girl on a 900 number. Of course, we thought it was funny to put it on the speaker phone, so we heard the whole thing. Spike is the only guy who can get rejected by a women paid to be seductive on the phone. He asked her what she was wearing and she said, "clothes". Not to seductive.

He asked her to talk dirty, and she told him off. What a rip! So we piled in the car with the Bartley's (Dave and Cheryl were there to protect us, as we were still dressed like we just came off the Saturday Night Fever II set.) Deja Vu made us buy drinks, and we were watching the stage show when

we realized that Spike was missing. Had he left? No. He was on his 3rd couch dance in a corner booth. Alas, it was a good thing that V wasn't here (his woman).

We closed the strip joint and went to bed. It was a long holiday and we did a little cleaning up Saturday. Then I flew back to New Mexico. It always seems that these trips take more out of me than a vacation should...



Shigeru and Raman have had too much to drink.



Dave and Cheryl aren't sure what to think about this!



Two wild and crazy guys!





Right: The
Conversation

Bottom Right: Eric
and Lily dance?



Above: Disco John

Right: Crazy John

Below: Happy! Happy! Joy!
Joy!



THE FINAL WORD.

A BRIEF COMMENTARY ON LIFE AND EVENTS
by JOHN JOHNSON

This is probably just another excuse for me to ramble. I will never finish, I just want to cover pondering that are bouncing around in my head. You know—those voices... I mean, um, thoughts... yeah, that's the ticket.

Where do I start? I guess it's important to point out that last year (the year we didn't have a newsletter) was the tenth anniversary of PPSA. From the perspective of ten years of college, that seems like an eternity ago. Yet, some things seem as clear as if they happened only yesterday.

I remember, it was the Fall of 1993, I was a sophomore, and I had just acquired housing in the form of a nice big house at 209 Clark Street. Me and the Nor were roommates from day one in the Wadsworth Hall dorm. We moved to a suite as sophomores, but we wanted our own place. This house became known as the Polkinghorne Palace, because of a plaque on the wall behind the Jeffrey Jones barnwood-bar, which proclaimed Wilfred Polkinghorne as a distinguished professor. The Nor and I were writing the constitution for the Michigan Student Collegiate Coalition—and we decided to form our own club at MTU. The PPSA Constitution became a work of art. I will admit the Nor had his good days. The club went on to show films on campus. In fact PPSA broke ground with the decision to show porn on campus. We were the first and only group to show Deep Throat at MTU. Of course, PPSA went on to do other things of great import—but we will never forget our humble beginnings.

Has the world lived up to our expectations? Back when we were in High School, and then College, we had high expectations. We demanded what was right; justice—and we knew good from bad. We had a clear vision of the future, and how great it would be. Black was black, white was white, and there was no gray area in between. We would finish college, get great jobs, have a great family and become famous and rich along the way. Maybe we were a little naive. I sure want a house and a great family. Hell, I'd like to start out with a woman who loves me. I want to be kind and loving and have her return that love to me. I want to take trips, and have great adventures. I want to publish two newsletters a year. I hope these expectations aren't too high. Of course, in another 10 years I'll have to reevaluate it all and only then, with the benefit of hindsight, can I decide.

We've all had heros. When we were kids we saw great sports stars, and film stars as bigger than life gods. I never paid attention to O.J. Simpson at the time, but I think he's a good example of how we make our own idols, and below the surface come to realize they are just people too.

O.J., Michael Jordan, Pete Rose, Ronald Reagan.... The media and even political parties, for that matter, deify our leaders and role-models. They are placed on the same pedestal as great philosophical ideals. To shine as a light, to live as an example—but eventually we see that they are only human. History, however, will doubtless restore our heros and leaders to their former status. At some point, after a number of years, a few buzzwords will be all that remains. Lincoln was a great president, but this generation sees him through the rose-colored glasses of history. Will O.J. be remembered as a great sports icon, or as a man who was accused of (and may have committed) a heinous crime? Does it really matter?

I photograph to remember. My view of the past, my method of preserving history—as I have seen it—is to write the PPSA Magazine (a.k.a. the Newsletter). I have taken many dozen photographs since getting my new camera last Fall. I am amazed at how few pictures I have of my family from when I was growing up. I think that as a person gets older they mellow out and want to remember good times, at least this has been the case for me. I don't think my good times have ended (although Los Alamos might make me think that at times.) I want to plan great PPSA road trips, and have untold adventures. I don't take pictures so that other people can look at them when I am dead and say, "That's what his life was." I do it so that I can figure out who I am. Now and tomorrow and ad infinitum. I don't want to forget. I want to relish the mistakes and the bad times, as well as the good. I want to come to terms with them so that I can grow as a person. In some ways it is a very cathartic thing to do. But basically, it keeps me on course. I realize that I don't have the same goals as when I was a kid, but I don't want to forget what I liked and what I did and what I thought as I grew up and became who I am at this moment. It's all important.

I've gotten older and fatter and more confused at just who I am and what I want to be when I grow up. Didn't you think that when you were 30 years old that you'd have it all figured out. Life would be well defined. I don't know what the next move is in my search for a real job. My career path is all messed up. I know that I don't want to take the traditional path that most physics grads do. In fact, if I want a job, I can't do that—since there are no jobs in physics. No, I like science, but that's not me. I want to be more creative. I want to be in a great town or city where I can really live. Maybe I can meet a great woman and lose a few pounds (not necessarily in that order) and start to do a little growing up. Then again, maybe no one ever grows up. They just seem to from the ever changing perspective of a child. I'm certainly mellowing out, taking it easier, enjoying myself. I am relearning social skills and redefining my priorities. I still get mad at people who speed up when they're going downhill and slow down when they start to climb a hill. But I'm trying. Maybe I'll know better when the 10th anniversary of the newsletter comes around in 1996....

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ADDRESSES

BARTLEY, Dave and Cheryl

(ex-MSU)
3744 W. Britton Rd.
Perry, MI 48872
517-625-4463

BENNIS, George

(ex-MTU, ex-Montana St., Ark.)
GE University of Arkansas
PO Box 2713
Fayetteville, Ar 72701
501-582-4765
gbennis@uafsysb.uark.edu

BIRKHOLZ, Matt

104 Coolidge Hill Rd #14
Watertown, Ma 02172
birkholz@crl.dec.com

BRODBAR, Debbie (ex-MSU)

Editorial Offices
Box 1000
Ridge, NY 11961
debbie@aps.org

DORSEY, Paul (ex-MSU, ex-NU)

2000 Huntington Ave.
Apt. 1223
Alexandria, VA 22303
703-329-7228

FAUERBACH, Mike (MSU)

MSU-NSCL
East Lansing, Mi 48824
fauerbach@nsl01.nsl.msu

FLYNN, Kevin (ex-MSU)

7749 LeMoyne Lane
Springfield, Va 22153

GAFF, Sally (MSU)

MSU-NSCL
East Lansing, Mi 48824
gaff@nsl01.nsl.msu.edu

GATES, Vanessa L (ex-MSU, UM)

3324-D Trappers Cove Trail
Lansing, Mi 48910

GAY, Dave (ex-MTU)

The Royal Institution
21 Albermarle St.
London, W1X 4BS U.K.
dgay@ricx.royal-institution.ac.uk

HENDRICKSON, Erik (ex-MSU)

4716 Kappus Dr.
Apt. 4
Eau Claire, WI 54701
715-831-0074
hendrije@cnsvox.uwec.edu

HILL, Sue (ex-MTU)

P. O. Box 461
Alfred, NY 14802-0461
hill@bushbaby.alfred.edu

HOFFMAN, Eric & Marcia

(ex-FSU)
16323 NW 5 Street
Pembroke Pines, Fl 33028
305-431-9379

HOWARD, Nelson

GE Greater Miami
6419 SW 17th St
Miami, Fl 33155-1911
305-266-2048

JEFFERS, George (MSU)

Department of Physics
Michigan State University
Lansing, Mi 48824
jeffers@msupa.msu.edu

JENKS, Bill (ex-FSU, Vanderbilt)

GE Vanderbilt
2140 Acklen Ave
Apt #16
Nashville, TN 37212
jenks@livstate.phy.vanderbilt.edu

JOHNSON, Brent

(see Jala Pfaff)

JOHNSON, Jeff (UNM)

2290B 39th Street
Los Alamos, Nm 87544
505-662-4731
jppjohnso@godiva.lanl.gov

JOHNSON, Jennifer (CMU)

Box 20
Conway, Mi 49722
616-347-5136

JOHNSON, John

(ex-MTU, ex-MSU, ex-U.Texas)
The God Emperor, PPSA
505 Oppenheimer #516
Los Alamos, Nm 87544
home: 505-662-7725
work: 505-665-4054
fax: 505-665-3657
jjohnson@lanl.gov

JOHNSON, Kathy (ex-CMU)

4318 Pickerel Lake Rd.
Petoskey, Mi 49770
616-348-6903

JOITKE, Paul & Becky (ex-MTU)

1611 South Warner
Bay City, Mi 48706
517-893-4739

KARN, Jeff (ex-MSU)

CEBAF
12000 Jefferson Ave
Newport News, Va 23606
karn@cebaf.gov

KELLEY, John (MSU)

MSU-NSCL
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Mi 48824
kelley@nsl01.nsl.msu.edu

KRAUT, Kainani (ex-MSU, UI)

305 N. Goodwin
Urbana, IL 61801
kk3213@coewl.cen.uiuc.edu

LANGER, Bob (MTU)

?somewhere in Arizona?
rrlanger@fsh.mtu.edu

LANGER, Steve (ex-MSU, ex-OU)

1505 41 NW F-6
Rochester Mn 55901
507-281-4484
sglanger@Vela.ACS.Oakland.Edu

LEIGH, Marli and Michael

(ex-MTU)
140 East 207th Street
Euclid, Oh 44123-1012
216-383-9481

LEVINSKY, Ninamarie (ex-MSU)

(Erik might know?)

LIDDIARD, Kevin (ex-MSU)

PO Box 249
Crown Point, NM 87313
505-786-5657

LINNINGTON, Dave and Emily

(ex-MTU)
GE Alumni Affairs
1394 Aline
G.P. Woods, Mi 48236
313-886-2544

LISA, Mike

MS50D-119
Lawrence Berkeley Lab
1 Cyclotron Rd.
Berkeley, Ca 94720
lisa@csa5.lbl.gov

LONG, Steve (ex-MTU, OSU)
GE Ohio State
1414 Ombersley Lane
Columbus, Oh 43221
614-486-6976
long@mps.ohio-state.edu

LUCKEY, Chuck (ex-MTU)
????

MARKOWITZ, Pete & Judy
(ex-MSU, ex-WM)
123 Devonshire Dr.
Williamsburg, Va 23188
markowitz@cebaf.gov

MCCANN, Lowell (MSU)
MSU Dept of Physics
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Mi 48824
mccann@msupa.msu.edu

MCCONVILLE, Paul "Rooster"
(MSU)
Physics Department—MSU
East Lansing, Mi 48824
mconville@msupa.msu.edu

MEIXNER, Eric (ex-MSU)
89 Dalton Ave #1
Staten Island, NY 10306
718-667-0780

NELSON, Carl (MSU)
VEOF MSU
6150 Cobbler's Drive Apt 104
East Lansing, Mi 48823
517-337-7772
nelson@msupa.msu.edu

OLSEN, Jim (FSU)
Physics Department
Florida State University
Tallahassee, Fl 32306

PFAFF, Jala
3535 28th St. Apt 302
Boulder, CO 80301
303-499-3764

PFAFF, Raman
(ex-MTU, ex-FSU, MSU)
GE Michigan State
6150 Cobbler's Drive
Apt 104
East Lansing, Mi 48823
home: 517-337-PPSA
work: 517-355-1865
fax: 517-353-5967
pfaff@nsl01.nsl.msu.edu

RAMAKRISHNAN, Easwar (MSU)
MSU-NSCL
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Mi 48824
ramak@nsl01.nsl.msu.edu

ROBERTSON, Dave (ex-NU)
10.5 Elliott Place
Middletown, RI 02804
401-841-3354

RUTT, Paul (ex-MSU, ex-WM)
GE Rutgers and New Jersey
2303 Sugar Maple Ct.
Monmouth Jct., NJ 08852
home: 908-422-8267
work: 908-445-4742
fax: 908-445-4343
rutt@ruthep.rutgers.edu

SACKETT, Don (ex-MSU)
40 Jamaica Way #10
Boston, Ma 02130
617-277-2379

SCHWARTZ, Tari (slave)
35330 Drakeshire
Farmington, Mi 48335

SCRIPTER, Charlie
(ex-MSU, MTU)
GE Michigan Tech
811 Summit
Hancock, Mi 49930
906-482-8683
cescript@phy.mtu.edu

SHORE, Erin (ex-MSU)
1186-F2 River Valley Dr.
Flint, Mi 48532
810-230-7547

STEINER, Mathias (MSU)
MSU-NSCL
East Lansing, Mi 48824
steiner@nsl01.nsl.msu.edu

SWARTZ, Ray "Radiator"
(ex-MTU, UIUC)
GE Univ. Illinois
1110 W. Green
Urbana, Il 61801
work: 217-333-6505
rls@uihepa.hep.uiuc.edu

UMLOR, Mike (MTU)
Department of Physics
Michigan Tech
Houghton, Mi 49931

WELLS, Shannon (UNM)
Department of Physics
University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, Nm 87131

WELLS, Warren and Mary Margaret
(ex-MTU)
Master of Nomenclature
2041 Spring Creek Circle
Green Bay, Wi 54304
414-465-1869
70254.723@compuserve.com

YOKOYAMA, Shigeru (MSU)
MSU-NSCL
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Mi 48824
yokoyama@nsl01.nsl.msu.edu

ZIERATH, Dan
(ex-MSU, ex-UWM)
900 Country Club Dr SE
#E301
Rio Rancho, Nm 87124

*Please send any additions
or corrections to:
John Johnson, editor PPSA Newsletter
505 Oppenheimer Drive #516
Los Alamos, Nm 87544
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