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ART LINKLETTER AND THE CONTEMPORARY LEGEND:
A Bibliographical Essay

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Recent scholarship has suggested that the term "contemporary legend" covers a plurality of narrative complexes. Some of these form stable networks of motifs and performance dynamics: contemporary satanism scares have much in common with earlier witch-hunts and anti-semitic pogroms, for instance. And modern omens like the doom-saying vanishing angel likewise have a long history. In these complexes, historical research has helped clarify what is "contemporary" about the latest harvest of texts, and what is inherent in the genre.

One subtype of contemporary legend that has not been studied so intensively is what we might call (following Heda Jason) the fabliau legend. These are brief humorous narratives that focus on some kind of intrigue that allows one of the characters to violate some kind of social taboo; often he is, in turn, exposed. The widespread "Nude Surprise Party" might serve as a focus for this legend type: a boss is invited home by his secretary and, thinking she is about to offer herself to him, he strips naked and leaps through a doorway—only to find his family and friends assembled for a surprise birthday party (see Brunvand 1981:140-43).

These might be considered jokes, except that in many cases the literal truth of the story is asserted and a FOAF given as authority, just as many medieval literary fabliaux begin by claiming that the story that follows is really true. But such narratives have proved hard to collect, since they do not emerge in clusters like the rumor-panic or omen types of legend, nor are they related to adolescent rites of rebellion, like "The Hook" or "The Babysitter Upstairs." In addition, their themes—often bawdy or scatological—mean that they do not often show up in sources consulted by folklorists.

A recent query, however, led us to a corpus of material that useful in surveying such narratives. While looking for evidence of an event that "really" happened on one of his TV shows, we examined the published works of Arthur Gordan Linkletter (1912-). After a hardscrabble career as writer, announcer, radio

director, and producer of various fairs and radio series, Linkletter made a hit in 1941 with a syndicated program titled *People Are Funny*. This show turned away from professional acts and established stars by creating situations in which common people could amuse others by having their stories and antics broadcast. The show thus mingled practical jokes in which audience members either participated with informal interviews with children or others. As time went on, Linkletter also solicited listeners to send in "true" stories of their own, often asking for stories of a particular type.

His show, retitled *House Party* by the 1950s, crossed over to television, and Linkletter used the material he got for a series of popular books. After his youngest daughter Diane died in 1969, an apparent suicide under the influence of LSD, he curtailed his media activities and became an anti-drug activist. In recent years, he has concentrated on self-help books and lectures, on career changes and salesmanship.

His books unexpectedly proved an untapped treasure house of narrative types. He was able to skirt the edges of what censors allowed in the pre-1960s media world. So his books contain many bawdy or suggestive narratives that other sources omitted. And his own comments on the material often sum up context useful for putting the history of these narratives in perspective. In hopes that others will examine this material, we give a detailed description of his most important books.

We can't guarantee that we have found *all* the traditional narratives Linkletter helped preserve and disseminate. But the following survey will show the value of his works to folklorists studying the history and the range of the contemporary fabliau legend. Following is a brief essay suggesting one way in which Linkletter's material can help identify and explicate a previously unrecognized genre of 19th-century legend.

1947. *People Are Funny*. Garden City NY: Doubleday.

This, Linkletter's first book, combines autobiography with anecdotes illustrating his rise from an itinerant announcer and entertainer, his several unsuccessful efforts to create audience-participation radio programs, and his eventual success with *People Are Funny* (later retitled *House Party*) in 1941. The book gives behind-the-scene perspectives on the show, which was based on

elaborate hoaxes played by and on audience members. A number of these practical jokes were versions of traditional pranks, and some extended current rumors and legends in ostensive form. One involved a close analog of "The Economical Carburetor" (Brunvand 1981:175-78, 1986:161-63):

The Gasoline Pill: We rigged an automobile with a false gasoline tank. The regular tank which supplied fuel to the engine was switched to a hiding place beneath the hood. The second tank, the false one, was placed in the normal position. We instructed our contestant, a vacationing schoolteacher, to fill the phony tank with water in full view of the crowd assembled at Hollywood and Vine. Next he was to drop a white pellet, "made from energy-giving atoms," into the false tank. He was to stir the mixture gently, start his engine, and demonstrate the results.

Alongside his parked auto was a huge sign. It said: "Guaranteed Atom Pills. Run your car a thousand miles for only a quarter. One pill does the job of 100 gallons of gasoline!"

We were "setting" the trap, you see. And we bagged the limit. Our man sold dozens of plain white aspirin tablets at a quarter apiece. The mob fought for the right to buy them. They jostled and shouted and begged for them.

The big boom in atomic aspirin tablets ended abruptly when an ambulance screeched to a stop, sirens blaring, and out jumped two white-clad interns. They clapped our man in a strait jacket and whisked him back to the program.

Linkletter adds that when an NBC representative told the crowd that they had been hoaxed and offered to return their money, only two or three came forward; the rest vanished into the crowd with their tablets (15-16).

This story type originated in the wake of publicity surrounding Winnipeg inventor Charles Nelson Pogue, who announced in 1937 that he had designed a carburetor that would deliver 200 miles per gallon. Ford of Canada reportedly found the device effective, and the US Patent Office issued patents on its design. But after the initial publicity, the carburetor was never made available, sparking many rumors: the device burned engines to ashes; oil companies were suppressing the device; the whole affair was a practical joke or fraud. In later years, Pogue adamantly refused comment to reporters (Columbo 1988:294-95). For a recent literary use of the "Gasoline Pill" version, see Stephen King, *The Tommyknockers*, chapter 10, parts 8-9 (New York: Signet, 1988):208-213.

A common type of prank involved bugging a spouse and trying to get him to make incriminating remarks while the other partner and a studio audience listened in. In one, a "starlet" with a concealed microphone took a man chosen to be a contestant to a restaurant and asked about his wife. He commented, "...am I glad she isn't here. The old bag is about ten years older than I am, and she watches me like a hawk.... if I had my way, I'd

never go back." Unknown to him, she had been flown to Los Angeles and was sitting in the next booth while his remarks were broadcast. A lawsuit, Linkletter says, was avoided by a "quick out-of-court settlement" (44-45; Cf. a 1969 joke given by Legman in which it is the *wife* who entices the husband, leaves the room while he messages his penis, then returns to tell him "Tonight we're already running *live* on Person to Person" [15.III.1]).

During World War II, Linkletter notes, "the papers were filled with scare stories of spies and saboteurs and dangling parachutists," and he summarizes several panics caused by citizens who reported seeing mysterious parachutes open high above farmland. ("They never saw him land," Linkletter reports was the common ending.) The show had an experienced skydiver jump out of a plane over Los Angeles, while a contestant agreed to be hung up on a tree in a nearby residential section to attract attention. The prank, Linkletter relates, nearly turned tragic when a hunter began firing on the skydiver as he descended (176-80).

Another wartime audience-participation stunt involved a young couple asked if they would be willing to eat a hamburger made of government-inspected horse meat as part of austerity measures. Two burgers were made up, one of them allegedly made of horse meat, and the two asked to test them to see if they could tell the difference (in fact both were regular beef) (186-87).

A contestant was told to drop notes out of a hotel window reading "Am being held by ruffians in Room 617. HELP!" All went well for the show, but one note lodged on a ledge and didn't come down until a few nights later: an unsuspecting woman staying in the room then was terrorized by a squad of policemen who came looking for the kidnappers (189; also *Oops!* pp. 44-45).

The book includes a number of other narratives reflecting traditional themes:

- On their honeymoon, a couple go to bed with the radio tuned to soft mood music and doze off without turning it off. At dawn, the morning broadcaster opens his program with a shouted "Hey you! Get outta that bed!" The groom leaps up and fractures his arm. After the station receives his complaint, the broadcaster opens with "Shhhh ... Don't be alarmed ... It's only me ... your radio" (56-57).
- Thinking his microphone dead, Linkletter cusses at an intruder who disrupts his announcements—but the mike is still live and his expletives are broadcast (58-59; cf. "Bozo the Clown's Blooper," Brunvand 1986:184-85).
- Linkletter presents several stories about how couples first met: in one, a woman terrified by the 1933 Long Beach earthquake runs out of her apartment naked and runs into the man in the next apartment, who likewise has dashed out naked: "And right there, with the building shaking and the plaster falling, I decided he was the man for me." In another, a woman working in a wartime factory was stooped over under an engine being constructed: a man, thinking her one of his buddies, slaps her on the bottom (210-11; "The Unzipped Mechanic" [see below] with a sex change?).
- Linkletter also gives a few stories related to kids

being interviewed, though this is not a major part of this book. Two suggest the "adultery revealed" theme that was developed in later sets of anecdotes: in one, a five-year old says her mother told her that her pretty dimples came from "the iceman" (206-07); in another, Linkletter himself is the culprit when, hearing that the tot's mother was Red Skelton's secretary, comments innocently, "Say! You know *you* look just like Red—" then cuts off as the audience goes into hysterics (240).

1957. *Kids Say the Darndest Things!* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1957.

Pointing out that he had talked to about 15,000 children on his daily "House Party" radio show by this time, Linkletter explains that this book contains the "unconsciously funny, everyday thoughts and reactions of ordinary kids." Beginning in 1941, Linkletter first interviewed his own 5 children on the show, then recruited Los Angeles public school students when it became evident how popular the children were with the radio audience (ix-xi). Pregnancy and parentage are favorite topics for Linkletter in this book:

- A child told to keep mother's pregnancy a secret admits to not knowing what "secret" means and says, "She just keeps getting fatter and fatter every week" (12).
- A child is warned not to tell Art his mother was pregnant—"Because she ain't!" (71).
- A boy asked why he didn't expect any brothers and sisters explained, "Because my mother's not pregnant" (75). [An exchange similar to these three was attributed earlier to Linkletter: When asked by Art what her mother told her not to do, a girl responded, "She told me not to announce that she was pregnant" (Schafer 1953: 125).]
- A child's mother tells all the neighbors he looks most like "The mailman" (81).
- Another child gets her distinctive red hair from "The Milkman" (155). [These two correspond to a faux pas recreated on Kermit Schafer's undated LP record, *The Best of Bloopers, Vol. 1: A Treasury of Radio and TV's Most Hilarious Boners* (Kapp Records, KS-3576): 2:8 ("Children's Program"): "Tell me little girl, who do you resemble most, your mommy or your daddy? —I don't look like my mommy or my daddy, I look like the mailman."]

Other items include:

- A child's account of how her mother met her new Daddy: when she was taking a shower, a man came to the door and asked her little sister to let him see her mother: "So sister *let* him" (47-48).
- After 5 kids, the father says no more because "every sixth baby in the world is Chinese" (143).

Scattered through the book are narratives told Linkletter by parents. These, he says, came to him from many sources but were told "as if they'd just happened to the storyteller's own bright daughter, niece or nephew, because people sense instinctively that a story sounds funnier if it 'really happened'" (184). Examples:

- A father gets his son to confess to pushing over the outhouse by reminding him of George Washington's

truthfulness; then he whips Junior, saying "Washington's father was not up in the cherry tree!" (158-59).

- A child complains of school: "I can't read. I can't write. And they won't let me talk!" (184).
- If we come from dust and to dust return, then under the child's bed "Somebody's either coming or going!" (185).
- A child is given a watch and perfume but told not to bother guests by mentioning them; she tells them, "If anyone hears or smells anything, it's me!" (187).
- A child frightened by a dog tells her mother it was a lion; she is told to ask God to forgive her for lying; God tells her "He thought it was a lion, too, when He first saw it" (189).
- A child finding her father asleep pries open one eyelid to see if "he's still in there!" (193).
- A mother tells her son "whisper" is the code word for "urinate"; the unknowing father later says "just whisper in Daddy's ear" (195; Legman 1.1.3).
- Told there's not enough time to produce a baby brother before her birthday, a girl tells her mother to "Put more men on the job" (196).

1961. *Kids Still Say the Darndest Things!* New York: Bernard Geis.

This compilation, a sequel to his earlier book, is mainly an edited version of exchanges transcribed from sound checks of *House Party* and so has less of interest to legend scholars. Linkletter does include a chapter of jokes sent in by viewers, commenting that such stories "can travel around the globe in far less time than it took the first space man to orbit the earth. I realized this recently when I heard a brand new political gag ad-libbed in New York just before I boarded a jet plane for Hollywood. I told my friends the same joke a few hours later when I reached Hollywood—only to find that they'd already heard it! Some wag on the long-distance phone had beaten me to the punch line" (80).

Many of the items that follow are short exchanges between children and adults, such as the boy, told not to pull the cat's tail, who responds, "I'm only holding it, Mom ... The cat is pulling" (82). The ones that sound most legendary are these:

- A five-year-old tells a phone caller that the only other person home is his sister. Told to get her, he says, "I can't lift her out of the playpen" (84).
- A couple are hanging pictures in the hall, staggering them for better effect. Meantime their 6-year-old tells a phone caller, "My father is staggering up the stairs and my mother is helping him" (85-86).
- A child asks his father where he came from; after a frank discussion of sex, he explains, "the new kid across the street says *he* comes from Ohio—and I wanted to know where *I* came from" (87).
- A boy in Sunday school class is carefully coached a week ahead to say "God made me" for catechism: when the minister asks who made us, another says, "The boy that God made is home sick with the measles" (91).
- A boy tells how Moses crossed the Red Sea on a pontoon

bridge, then called in bombers to blow it up before the Egyptian tanks could cross. Asked if that's what his Sunday school teacher taught him, he says, "if I told it her way, you'd never believe it!" (91).

- A mother runs out of Christmas cards and sends her 10-year-old out to buy more. She sends 7 of these out before realizing that they say "a gift you'll love is on the way" (95).

1967. *Oops! or, Life's Awful Moments*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

This volume is *the* volume for folklorists to locate: it is the compilation of the best of several hundred stories sent in after Linkletter asked his audience to send in "their own most embarrassing moments." Many of the selections are personal experience stories, but a large number are "friend-of-a-friend" narratives that either were contemporary legends during the 1960s or before, or else are close analogs to legends. He gives early published versions of 4 "canonical" legends:

Caught in the Zipper: If I had to pick one embarrassing story about zippers, my favorite would be about the plump gentleman who had a big dinner, went to the movies, and slid his zipper down to be more comfortable. A lady as plump as he came pushing her way past him. She couldn't get by, so he stood up to allow her to pass. As he did so, he naturally pulled up his zipper. Just then she moved and caught the back of her dress in his fly. In the semidarkness neither realized at first what had happened. She tried to keep moving, and felt herself being held back. He also felt a tug and couldn't figure out why she wouldn't move out of the way. They were both stuck. At last what had happened became obvious, and two very embarrassed individuals began wiggling back and forth. He tried to get his zipper down, but it wouldn't move because its metal teeth had a deathlike grip on her dress. Now everybody in the whole aisle had to get up and go into the main aisle to make room for them to escape. The gentleman and his indignant prisoner backed out and then up the main aisle to the manager's office in a reverse lockstep. There they were, two complete strangers, fastened together by a zipper. It's hard to imagine a longer lasting, more embarrassing situation than that! (58).

Oddly, the other 3 recorded variants come from Belgium (FN 17:5), Denmark (FN 24:6) and Australia (FN 26:11). None is dated earlier than the 1960s but all are quite different in detail from Linkletter's version, showing that the legend had considerable oral vogue. I suggest (FN 24:7) that the story may be a euphemized form of the "Stuck Couple," in which the man's penis becomes trapped in the woman's vagina. Two other stories reported by Linkletter seem attached to each other and to "Stuck in the Zipper" by the common motif that the victim has overeaten and needs to open his/her clothing:

- After a big dinner, a woman loosens her wraparound

dress in the theatre; during intermission she follows her husband out and finds that she has left her skirt behind in the seat (9).

- A young man trying to impress his date takes her to a fancy restaurant; he eats so much that he loosens his belt and the top button of his pants; when they rise to leave, his pants fall down (56-57).

This second also seems linked to Brunvand's "Unzipped Fly" (1981:138-39) where the hero manages to zip himself up but catches the tablecloth in the teeth and so pulls the dishes to the floor when he arises.

The Unzipped Mechanic: A lady who had been after her husband for months to install a garbage disposal under the kitchen sink finally trapped him one Saturday afternoon, and he glumly got to work with his wrenches. Not wishing to listen to his colorful vocabulary as he banged his thumbs, she went out shopping. While downtown she ran into some girl friends and had a few cocktails, so she was feeling very friendly when she returned home. There was good old George still under the sink, working away, legs sticking out into the kitchen. So she bent down, reached under, and gave him a rudely familiar tweak. "Hi, honey," she said. There was a howl of surprise from under the sink and the man raised up and smacked his forehead against the disposal. It was the plumber! Her husband had given up on the job. The plumber crawled out, his forehead all bloody, and the wife ran to phone for an ambulance. The husband helped the attendant load the poor plumber onto a stretcher. "How'd it happen?" asked the attendant as they were carrying the man out. When the husband told him, the attendant began laughing so hard he let go of the stretcher—and the plumber plunged to the sidewalk, breaking his arm. Imagine explaining that one to the insurance company (66-67).

Brunvand prints a text collected by a University of Utah student in 1969 (1981:147-48). This text, however, lacks the "Laughing Paramedic" coda that appears here and in other hilarious accident narratives such as "The Exploding Toilet." Brunvand also notes this story's connection to other narratives involving mistaken identities, especially "Ding, Dong, Dinner Bell," in which the wife reaches into the shower to pull her husband's penis (or so she thinks) (Legman 9.II.2 [from 1940]; Brunvand 1981:147; FN 13:5).

The Poisoned [Pet] at the Party: Since it was a very important dinner party for her husband's new boss, another woman told me she had made some very grand hors d'oeuvres and set them out on a coffee table. A few minutes later she caught her dog gobbling them down as fast as he could. She put him outside and then began welcoming her guests. Her husband hadn't arrived yet because his plane was delayed. Everybody was enjoying cocktails and the remaining hors d'oeuvres for about an hour when a neighbor called over and said, "Your dog is lying dead in the alley."

Horried that her hors d'oeuvres might have been poisonous, she told the guests what had happened. The whole party raced in a convoy of cars to the hospital emergency room, had their stomachs pumped out, and then gamely returned to the party. When the lady's husband finally got home, his first words to his shaken guests were, "Our poor dog is lying crushed and dead out there in the alley. A hit-and-run driver must have got him" (72-73).

Brunvand (1981:111-12) gives an earlier version from a 25 Aug.63 column by Herb Caen in the *San Francisco Chronicle*: here the animal is a cat fed a sampling of mushrooms the family has gathered and plans to eat for supper. Brunvand also gives "the way I heard it," which sets the story at "a grand dinner party." Here the next-door neighbor runs over the cat and then puts "the corpse quietly on the back porch so as not to disturb the party guests." Linkletter's text, the only in which the pet is a dog, seems independent of both versions.

Push-Starting the Car: I can't vouch for this story personally, but I can just see it happening—and maybe it did. A man whose car stalled flagged down a woman motorist and asked if she would give him a push to help get his car going again. "I'd be glad to," she said, "but I don't know how." "It's easy," the man said. "I'll check our bumpers, and if they fit, we'll try it." The bumpers matched, so he told her, "Just get me going in a straight line, and the car should start at around thirty miles an hour." The woman nodded, climbed into her car, and began backing up. Too late the man realized she had misunderstood him. She backed up at least half a block and then began roaring straight at him. As he said later after the crash, "Have you ever watched a car coming at you at thirty miles an hour?" (124)

Brunvand also cites Herb Caen (14 Feb.71) as a source for this "classic" legend, which he says he personally heard "in college in Michigan in the early 1950s" (1984:65). Linkletter's text is similar to both.

Other legends or legend-like narratives are given in abstract below. One is a probable legend included in 4 variants that we might dub *The Unintended Proposition*:

- A woman thinks she hears her little girl's footsteps behind her and says, "Get upstairs, honey, and get into bed. I'll be right there"; it's the meter man (67).
- A mother orders her little boy to take his dirty clothes off for a bath; hearing a knock, she says, "Come on in—and you'd better have your pants off!" It's her daughter's teenaged boy friend (70).
- While in the bathtub, a woman hears her dog bark to come back in; she wraps herself in a towel, opens the door, yells, "Come in, you damned old fool," and comes face to face with her minister (69).
- On a hot day, a woman strips to her bra and panties; a neighbor phones to ask for help in rolling her hair, and the woman tells her to come over; the doorbell rings,

and she says, "Come right in, I'm ready!" It's a policeman with a message from her husband (71).

While accepted as 4 separate stories by Linkletter, the structural parallels suggest that these items are variants of a common legend. Another variant is found in the P.G. Wodehouse/Cole Porter musical comedy *Anything Goes!* (1934). Here Sir Evelyn, a naive Briton, orders a maid to bring a pot of tea, then partially undresses to shave. When the sexy nightclub singer Reno Sweeney unexpectedly comes to his room, he responds to her knock without looking around with a series of unintended double-entendres: "Put it right down on the bed.... I like it good and hot.... I've wanted it ever since I got on this ship." Also relevant to this complex is this item:

- A young wife writes out a routine order to the milkman and a passionate invitation for sex to put in the pocket of her husband's suit; the notes get switched, and that night he comes home with the butter, milk, and eggs; she quickly changes milk companies (72).

Unintended erotic remarks:

- A mother rewarded children by letting them sleep in the bed with her when Daddy was away; once they all misbehaved, and one greeted the returning father with "No one slept with Mother while you were gone!" (16; also *New Kids* 121).
- A woman asks a clerk, "Are you sure it's safe to sleep with my husband under an electric blanket?" (79).
- Linkletter flies back from Europe on an all-night flight with a famous blonde star in the next seat; he greets her next time with "I haven't seen you since we slept together last month" (134).
- A woman on a sleeping car shares her seat with a stranger; next day her 4-year-old asks her "what's the name of that strange man that you sleep with?" (149).
- A little girl finds a "Men at Work" sign and hangs it on the front door of her house (67).
- A woman sits in a chair in a department store and gets up with a tag stuck to her posterior: "Bargain price—\$6.95." (77; See "US Ambassadors' Wives" in this issue.)
- A secretary shows her charm bracelet to an executive in the elevator; getting out, she says, "Someday I'll show you all my charms" (2).
- Linkletter tells a radio audience that on the next show a couple will "consummate their wedding vows right here on this stage": he draws an huge crowd (40).
- During World War II, a defense plant personnel officer returns from her honeymoon and asks an applicant for his "birth control certificate" (47).

Caught Undressed:

- A girl learning to water-ski sees other boats waving at her and discovers that her bathing suit has slipped down around her ankles (5).
- A girl wearing a rubber bathing suit sits on a hot rock; when she leaps up, the seat sticks to the rock and rips off; she keeps going for the water (98).
- At the crack of the starter's gun, a sprinter's gym shorts split and fall off, but the runner finishes the

race (12-13). [These three suggest "The Ski Accident" (Brunvand 1981:181, 1986:117-20) in which a girl lowers her pants to relieve herself and finds herself skiing backward down the slope in front of others. For an earlier rural analog, see "The Naked Bull Ride" (Barden 1991:305-307; Barden 1992:160-161).]

- A girl buys a beautiful white bathing suit but finds the first time she wears it that it becomes transparent when wet (117). [Cf. "The Disintegrating Bathing Suit" (Brunvand 1981:138): here the fabric becomes transparent only in salt water since it was tested inland.]
- A contestant in a 1930s beauty pageant wears last season's woolen suit; when asked to turn around, she finds moths have eaten away the posterior (116-117).
- A high-stepping high school majorette marches in a parade but forgets to put on her tights (3,5).
- A lady can't wait to show her new red nylon panties to her brother and his grown son; saying, "Let me show you all something real pretty I have," she lifts her dress—but she forgot to put the panties on (57).
- A minister visiting new parishioners is told by a little boy his mother is in the next room; he knocks on the door and is told, "Come in and be quiet"; she is in the tub (47).
- Before taking a bath, a mother tells her 5-year-old to tell her when the insurance man arrives; he dutifully escorts him into the bathroom (69).
- A husband and wife agree to a special sequence of doorbell rings in case either forgets the door keys; while showering one day, the husband hears his wife's special ring; he comes naked to the door—but it's the Avon lady (136).
- On her first day, a teacher tells her class she wants to get to know them better; her dress becomes hooked in the blackboard map, which suddenly rolls up and pulls the skirt up with it; one little boy says: "We know you better already" (48-49).
- A guest being rescued from a burning hotel puts on his fat friend's trousers by mistake; they fall down as he is climbing down the fire fighters' ladder. Linkletter notes that this incident got "one of the longest sustained laughs in the history of broadcasting" (56).
- A housewife doing exercises in the nude on the floor of her upper-story apartment is watched by a telephone repairman (65-66).
- A lady in her nightie realizes she had forgotten to feed the dog; when she goes outside, the neighbor's floodlights snap on for "a late party"; she dives inside the doghouse with the pet and stays there until the party ends (107).

Shared Intimacy:

- At a WWII aircraft plant, a young lady gets a forbidden personal phone call containing some "spicy fun," giggles, and secrets; later she learns that the call was plugged into the intercom system and was broadcast to all her fellow workers (52). [In a more recent computer version, a suggestive electronic mail message is inadvertently sent to co-workers (Jennings 1990: 134).]

- A landlord bugs all the bedrooms in his apartment with microphones so he can tune in on sexual encounters (85). [The second of these reflects an early version of "Filmed in the Act," where a honeymoon hotel secretly videotapes couples making love and later replays the tapes on the hotel's "stag movie" channel (Brunvand 1984:139-40). Ernest Hemingway uses another legend in this general category in *The Torrents of Spring* (1926): here a man seduced by a beautiful woman later finds that he has been observed by a paying audience through slits in the wall (see Barnes 1982, Legman 11.III.2).]

Giving What the Other Admires:

- A *People Are Funny* actor pretends to be an East Indian maharajah in a hotel; paying his bill in precious gems, he notes a bystander staring at the stones and gives him one, explaining "In my country ... when somebody sees something they like, you give it to them." The rajah then admires the man's tie, and when he takes it off adds that he likes the shirt too (43-44). [Roger Abrahams (1970:190-92) prints two joke versions of this type, one about John F. Kennedy and Mexican President Lopez Mateos, who expresses admiration of Kennedy's wife Jackie. He suggests that this narrative complex is linked historically to Motif K 77 (Baughman): Dream Contest, where an Anglo and a Native American agree to exchange things the other has dreamed about.]

Hilarious accidents:

- A football coach at an unfamiliar campus gets his team worked up, then sends them out a set of doors; they land in the swimming pool (11).
- A farmer arriving at a World War II defense plant is given his first job: cut a circular hole in the deck of a ship with a welder; he kneels inside the circle and falls with it when he's done (47-48) [A common gag in Warner Brothers animated shorts.]
- Returning home after a long trip, a husband rushes upstairs to the bedroom and leaps into bed without turning on the lights; she has rearranged the furniture and he hits the floor "with a bone-jarring crash" (68-69). [An analog to the more recent "Superhero Hijinks" (Brunvand 1993:38-42)?]
- A child's pet lizard escapes while his mother is driving; it runs into her brassiere; she stops to shake it out; a passing motorist, thinking she is having a seizure, throws her down and tries to pull her tongue out; another passerby, thinking she is being molested, stops and clubs the first; the woman explains, "I was just trying to get a lizard out of my brizzard" (80). [Cf. "The Gerbil- (or Snake-) Caused Accident" (Brunvand 1986:60-61).]
- During the Manhattan Project in 1942, two beakers of plutonium were delivered to the University of Chicago; a janitor poured them down the drain and into the sewers of Chicago; scientists retrieved the plutonium from the sewage, but the contaminated shovels etc. were accidentally carted off by a junk man; the scientists retrieved these, with a huge pile of now radioactive junk, and a US Army squad disappeared with it:

scientists "never learned where the junk went or what was done to it. And they have never asked" (85-88).

- One woman swallows two buttons on her nightstand, thinking them aspirin; another offers two aspirin to a stranger, and later realizes that she had instead given her tablets from a bottle of house plant fertilizer (94). [Cf. "The Baby Headache" (Brunvand 1984:132) in which aspirin is substituted for birth control pills.]
- A lady buys an old vase at an antique sale; finding it unusually dirty, she scrubs it well; then a neighbor asks her "whose ashes are in it?" (94-95).
- A man shaves his legs, puts on toenail polish, and dresses in a wig and fancy dress to go to a Halloween party as Cinderella; there he falls ill and is rushed to the hospital for an emergency operation; for days the hospital staff peek at "Halloween Harry" (97-98).
- A woman takes a Red Cross course on mouth-to-mouth respiration; one day he sees a man face-down in a flooded gutter; she turns him over and gives him the treatment; he says, "What do you think you're doing, lady? I'm trying to fix this drain" (101).

Rule-breakers exposed:

- "Back in the days of Prohibition" a lady tries to smuggle whiskey from Canada in her brassiere; on the streetcar, the cork comes loose and the liquor gurgles into her lap; as the odor spreads, passengers sing "Show Me the Way to Go Home" (3).
- A woman tries to smuggle a watch through customs in her brassiere; agents announce that one of them is carrying drugs, so all passengers will be searched; the dope dealer is found directly in front of the woman in line, but she has perspired so much that the watch is ruined (143-45). [Both these are related to "The Shop-lifter and the Frozen Chicken" (Brunvand 1986:143-44, 1989:178-79) and to earlier analogs in which stolen butter heats up and drips, exposing the thief.]
- A family keeps illegal beer in the cellar, if a bottle blows its top while neighbors are visiting, the children are instructed, blame it on "the cat prowling around"; so a child says, "Hey Mom! Another cat just blew up!"
- A lady smuggles her pet Chihuahua into a motel that doesn't allow pets by wrapping it in a pink beach towel and pretending it is her baby; when it barks, she explains "Oh, the little devil has laryngitis again" (147-48). [Possibly a modern version of the medieval fabliau reflected in *The Second Shepherd's Play* of the Wakefield Cycle, in which a stolen lamb is disguised as a baby, with similar comic consequences.]
- Two old ladies peek under the coat of a college founder's statue to see if it is hollow; an undergraduate sees them and wags his finger saying "Naughty, naughty!" (107).
- When a woman visits the ladies' room of a fancy restaurant, she finds a nude statue in a fig leaf labeled "Caution. Do not touch." When she does so, an alarm sounds; she is assured that "Much older ones than you" have also fallen for the prank (149-50). [Motif H.1554: Test of curiosity.]

Unintentional theft:

- A lady in a restaurant sees that the man at the next table has left a chop on his plate and takes it for her dogs; the waitress tells her he had just stepped away for a phone call (3).
- A lady follows her husband into a movie theatre and begins eating from his bag of popcorn; when she hears a meek voice ask, "Save some for me, will you, lady?" she realizes she is in the wrong seat (9).
- As part of a prank, a *People Are Funny* staffer goes to a restaurant and, on a pretext, samples food off diners' plates; despite obvious uneasiness, nobody protests (42-43). [These three relate to "Lunch Date"/"Packet of Biscuits" (Brunvand 1984:191-93, 1986:137-40).]
- A woman goes to a jewelry store to window shop, enjoying the sensation of running her fingers through the gems; in another store three valuable pieces that had lodged in her coat sleeve fall out (78-79).
- A family travelling through a small town decides to call on a cousin; they find the front door open, use the bathroom, raid the refrigerator, and watch TV; when they call the cousin's office, they find that he had left town three months before (98).

Appliance and automobile mishaps:

- Anxious to try out her new washer, a housewife takes off all her clothes and puts them in; the bakery man calls; she takes out her wet dress and puts it on; he comments, "Lady—you're supposed to take off the dress before you put it into the washer" (70). [Cf. The "Nude Housewife" who leaves her clothes in the washer but dons a football helmet (Brunvand 1981:139-40).]
- A new bride complains that her refrigerator is defective: she has had her first cake in the freezer for 3 hours "and there isn't even the slightest bit of frosting on it yet" (73).
- Told to use a timer to help her boil an egg, a bride puts it in the boiling water too (73).
- Gladiolus bulbs are mistaken for onions and cooked for dinner (73-74).
- A husband eats leftover dog food and praises it as "the finest meat loaf you've ever made" (76).
- A housewife licking frosting from an electric beater gets her tongue caught (76).
- A woman returns from shopping to find herself locked out of the car; the parking attendant helps her break in with a crowbar; then she discovers she has the wrong car; the owner refuses her offer to pay for the damage: "I own a garage, and I can fix it. Besides, I'm happy to find somebody else has a wife as dumb as mine is" (78). [The misogynist ending is reminiscent of the ending of AT Type 1384, in which a disgusted husband sets out on a quest to find three persons as stupid as his wife.]
- A wife driving a new (second) car for the first time forgets where the brake pedal is; by chance she hits the other family car (121-122).
- A officer's wife borrows her husband's unmarked police car; she stalls and pushes what she thinks is the starter button; it's the siren (122). [Cf. "The Arrest" in which a drunken driver drives home in a police

cruiser (Brunvand 1989:101-03).]

Saying the Wrong Thing:

- A boy is coached to say the right thing to his sick uncle; when he says, "I'm lying at death's door," the boy responds, "I hope they pull you through" (18).
- A little boy in dancing class is told to go dance with a girl; she slaps him when he tells her, "For a fat girl [you] sure didn't sweat much" (27-28). [Later adapted for the TV comedy *Gomer Pyle PFC.*]
- While emceeing the 1965 Miss Universe pageant, Art's son Jack coaches the foreign contestants to give memorized English answers in a certain order; then he drops the cue cards and asks the questions out of order: "Do you like United States men?" "Two brothers and three sisters" etc. (45-46). [Cf. AT Type 1698.]
- A housewife buys expensive guest towels for a party and puts a note above them telling her husband, "If you use these towels, I'll kill you"; she forgets to remove the note until after the party (67-68).

1978. *The New Kids Say the Darndest Things!* Aurora, IL: Caroline House.

This book includes "the best from my first KIDS SAY book [plus] some brand new sparklers from recent interviews [and] some gaspers told me by parents, teachers, and youth leaders" (viii). The most significant of these additions is this:

Mommy Sleeps with Uncle Bob: Perhaps the most remembered bombshell was dropped during World War II when I was talking to a young lad whose father was overseas in military service. Hoping to console him for his Dad's absence I said, "I know you're lonesome for your Daddy, but don't worry, he'll be back home soon, I'm sure, safe and sound." The six year old corrected me promptly and effectively: "Oh, no, I think it's great. I get to sleep with Mommy every night except Wednesdays when Uncle Bob comes over!"

That story has been repeated to me by more people over the years than any other, and it's amazing how much the stories vary, with every kind of imagined frills added! I thought it was startling enough in its direct, right-on-the-button approach (120-121).

It is odd that this story is absent in Linkletter's earlier books, which include similar suggestions of adultery by children. However, the story was published 25 years previously about a lesser-known show:

On "Strike It Rich," popular television program produced by Walt Framer, Warren Hull, Master of Ceremonies, interviewed a five year old child whose father was in the United States Army serving in Korea. She wanted to Strike it Rich for an apartment where she would have her own bedroom; whereupon the surprised Hull asked: "With Daddy away in Korea, isn't the apartment you live in with Mommy big enough?" The child's reply was, "During the week I

sleep in the bedroom with Mommy, but on the weekends, when Uncle Charlie comes, they make me sleep on a cot in the kitchen. Anyway, he's not really my uncle (Schafer 1953:15).

The story may have originated about this show and gravitated in oral tradition to Linkletter via the Goliath Effect. Better than 30 years after it was supposed to have happened, it may have been so firmly linked to him that he saw no harm in appropriating it. More recently, this legend has circulated in France and Italy attached to TV shows that include interviews with children (see " 'Piccoli Fans': La Puntata Fantasma" [The phantom episode of "Piccoli Fans"], *Tutte Storie* 5:16-17). Jean-Bruno Renard is preparing a study of these European versions of the legend.

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US AMBASSADORS' WIVES:

Nathaniel Hawthorne and a Contemporary Legend Type

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In 1967, Art Linkletter published an anecdote about a lady who by accident walks around with a sign on her backside saying "Bargain price—\$6.95" (*Oops!* 77). In his collections, it represents one of the many ways in which the stereotypical innocent housewife could be labeled as a sexual object—through "accidents" like this, through linguistic slips, through remarks by equally "innocent" children, or through the many shifts by which they can literally appear naked in public, even in the "safety" of their families and homes.

But both the anecdote and the genre it represents are at least a hundred years older. The "bargain price" anecdote is a variant of a story written down on 23 Mar.1854 by Nathaniel Hawthorne. His version:

Mr Bright¹ told a funny story of the lady of a former American Ambassador to England. In London, one day, she went into a cheap shop, where the articles are ticketted [*sic*], and bought a shawl, which she wore pretty extensively about town. She had not taken care to remove the ticket from the shawl; so that she exhibited herself to the eyes of the metropolis with this label—"PERFECTLY CHASTE 15/S"—certainly a moderate valuation of perfect chastity (1962:55)

Hawthorne may well have taken interest in this story as an ironic reversal of his "Scarlet Letter," a different sign, worn by intention, that signals Hester Prynne's lack of chastity. But the writer also had an interest in folk narrative and often used his *English Notebooks* to note contemporary gossip or story types. In this case, he found the story worth noting because it illustrated what he soon found was a genre of anecdotal stories that circulated about ambassadors' wives, who were prone to "exhibit themselves to the eyes of the metropolis" as coarse and prone to sexually charged remarks.

In the same notebook entry, Hawthorne adds a second narrative that evidently followed the first in conversation:

Also, another of a blunder of hers with regard to a son of Lady Palmerston by her former husband²—there having been much scandal respecting the connection between Lord and Lady Palmerston, before her first husband's death. "There is no mistaking him," quoth Mrs ——— "He is the very image of Lord Palmerston!—" This being just what scandal said he was, though what he had no right to be; and therefore a somewhat astounding announcement to be made to Lady Palmerston (1962:55).

This narrative seems a cousin to the "got my dimples from the iceman" type of story frequently reprinted by Linkletter as "real" children's statements. The Palmerston story particularly resembles the blooper in which Linkletter says he described a child as the image of his mother's employer Red Skelton (*People Are Funny* 240), though, as before, "he had no right to be."

By 25 Aug.1855, Hawthorne was familiar enough with the genre that he could allude to its main features. He was visiting Smithell's Hall, a Lancashire country home with an indelible bloodstain that attracted his curiosity, when his host's wife told a brief anecdote:

Mr. Bancroft,³ while Minister here, was telling somebody about the effect of the London atmosphere on his wife's health. "She is now very delicate," said he; "whereas, when we lived in New York, she was one of the most *indelicate* women in the city!"

Hawthorne comments:

And [she] had the face to tell this foolish story for truth, and as indicating the mistakes into which Americans are liable to fall, in the use of the English language. In other instances, I have heard stories equally ridiculous about our diplomatic people, whom the English seemed determined to make butts of, reason or none (1962:197).

Again, the story is linked with other legends. Like the previous story, it shows an ambassador's wife by accident labeled as "indelicate" in the same sense that a story frankly discussing sex would be censored as "indelicate." Mrs. Bancroft is exposed in London society by her husband's ignorant remark as coarse, perhaps sexually free. It thus fits with Linkletter's genre of unintentional erotic comments, such as the several children who make careless use of the idiom "sleep with" to label their mothers as adulterous.

Finally, on 15 Mar.1856, Hawthorne noted this story:

Among other queer stories (doubtless, in many cases, fabulous) about our Ambassadors and their wives, the English tell the following of Mrs. Abbot [*sic*] Lawrence.⁴ She was asking an invitation to a ball, or some favor of that kind, on behalf of Mrs. Augustus Peabody of Boston, and to show the lady's position in society at home, she observed—"On our side of the water, Mrs. Peabody is much more accustomed to grant favors, than to ask them!" (1962:281).

The story may criticize arrogant Boston society figures, like the Peabodies who, like the Cabots and Lodges, proverbially "speak only to God." But the idiom "grant favors" also implies "allow oneself to be seduced," thus commenting unintentionally on Mrs. Peabody's sexual licence. Linkletter's secretary who offers to show her boss "all her charms" (*Oops!* 2) implies promiscuity through the same sort of linguistic ineptitude.

Certainly this is the way that Hawthorne took this odd set of narratives. The use of specific names indicates that these were more than jokes but "really true" social gaffes. The writer's cautious gloss that these stories were "doubtless, in many cases, fabulous" confirms that they were told him as sober truth and that he could not immediately dismiss *all* of them as fiction.

But he could confront the prejudice they implied. After calling the "indelicate wife" anecdote as "a foolish story," Hawthorne continues:

It is very queer, this resolute quizzing of our manners, when we are really and truly much better figures, and with much more capacity of polish, for drawing-room or dining-room, than they themselves are. I had been struck, on my arrival at Smithell's Hall, by the very rough aspects of these John Bulls in their morning garbs, their coarse frock-coats, gray hats, checked pantaloons, and stout shoes. At the dinner-table it was not at first easy to

recognize the same individuals in their white waistcoats, muslin cravats, and their black coats, with silk facings, perhaps.... but, after awhile you see the same rough figure through all this finery, and become sensible that John Bull cannot make himself fine, whatever he may put on. He is a rough animal, and incapable of high-polish; and his female is well adapted to him (1962:197).

Whatever the justice of Hawthorne's reaction, he speaks within a long-lived tradition in which Americans and Britons accuse each other of covering up a coarse, sexually aware nature with a veneer of respectability. And his language points to the same naked/clothed contrast that motivates many of Linkletter's fabliaux.

For Hawthorne, though, it was the artifice, the clothing, that was ridiculous, not what lay underneath. In a contemporaneous letter, he praised Fanny Fern (Sara Willis), an early feminist, for writing "as if the devil was in her" and noted that when female authors "throw off the restraints of decency, and come before the public stark naked, as it were—then their books are sure to possess character and value" (*Centenary Edition* 17:308). Hawthorne's journals, if searched carefully, may well reveal that his understanding of contemporary legend goes far deeper than "The Bosom Serpent."

Notes

1. Henry Arthur Bright (1830-84), one of Hawthorne's closest British friends; see Woodson 1987:45-49.
2. Historians agree that Lady Cowper and prominent politician Henry John Temple, 3rd Viscount Palmerston (1784-1865) did indeed live together before Lord Cowper's death allowed them to marry. Her second son, William Francis Cowper, later added "Temple" to his name and inherited Lord Palmerston's estate. Palmerston was Home Secretary at the time Hawthorne noted this story and was soon to become Prime Minister.
3. George Bancroft (1800-91), a political friend of Hawthorne's and Ambassador to Britain 1846-49; his wife was the widowed Elizabeth Davis Bliss.
4. Abbott Lawrence (1792-1855), Ambassador to Britain 1849-52; his wife was Katherine Bigelow. Hawthorne's wife was a Peabody.

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THIS MAY BE THE LAST ISSUE OF FOAFTALE NEWS

And the Spirit said to Philip, "Go up and join this chariot."...Then Philip opened his mouth, and ... told [the driver] the good news of Jesus ... the

Spirit of the Lord caught up Philip; and the [driver] saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing (Acts 8:29-39).

THE FRACKVILLE ANGEL. Early on the bitterly cold morning of Monday, 31.Jan.94, Sgt. Barry Reed, station commander of the Pennsylvania State Police Station at Frackville, began to receive odd phone calls. A motorist on the way to work along State Route 61, just south of town, stopped to pick up a hitchhiker, whom he described as "a tall, thin man with long dark hair and wearing a long dark coat." After getting into the back seat, the man told the motorist, "I am here to tell you the end is near." When the driver looked into the back seat, the hitchhiker was gone. Reed initially took the call as a prank, remembering that ten years ago he had heard a similar story circulating in the Lancaster County area.

But he was mystified when this call was followed by similar reports from apparently reliable, credible sources. Between 6 and 7 AM, 4 vanishing hitchhiker calls came in, 3 from Rt. 61, and one from Interstate 81, which bypasses Frackville. One call came from a woman who told Reed that she had never picked up a hitchhiker before, but that in this case she had felt "compelled" to stop and help the tall thin man. "All of them were scared and appeared to be telling the truth," Reed later told a reporter. "They were from different towns. I have no reason to believe they could have gotten together to make something up.... I don't know what to make of it.... My personal belief? There's a lot more on heaven and earth than science can explain."

By Friday 4 Feb., when a local paper reported the incident, "unofficial" versions were already being phoned in. These said that the hitchhiker had also made comments "about the weather, the turbulence of society or the Angel Gabriel 'tooting his horn for the second time,' " Others said the hitchhiker had warned "Jesus is coming! Jesus is coming!" before vanishing. Sgt. Reed, however, insisted that "I am here to tell you the end is near" were the mysterious man's exact words.

The 4 Feb. clipping was widely photocopied and circulated in this area; it came to the attention of Sister Adrian, principal at Holy Spirit School in Mount Carmel, where "All the kids were talking about it." She forwarded the clipping to Tom Kutza, host of a radio talk show on WISL Shamokin. He made the story the focus of one of his shows and received additional reports, now calling the mystery man "The Angel of Frackville." [Rosanne M. Hall, "Bizarre Tales of a Mysterious Hitchhiker," [Shenandoah, PA] *Evening Herald* (4 Feb.94):1, 19; Leon Bogdan, "Angel or Fable? Hitchhiker Warns 'The End Is Near,'" [Bloomsburg, PA] *Press-Enterprise* (16-17 Apr.94), C; Kathy Roland, Leon Bogdan.]

Soon after, a local reader explained that this disappearing hitchhiker story was not the only one present in the area. "Do any of you old timers remember the old lady who walked the back road into Frackville?" she wrote. "The woman wore felt boots and sympathetic drivers picked her up because it was cold and uninhabited. When they got to their destination the

woman had simply disappeared, leaving behind a felt boot. It was a scary stretch of road in the night and you could not have paid my daughter enough money to drive that road after dark." She also noted that in nearby Bucks County, a car of high school students returning from a prom had slipped into a lake, drowning one of the girls. "Anyhow, every year on the date of that prom night, at midnight, when the accident occurred, a lovely girl in an evening gown, dripping wet, is picked up by sympathetic drivers, many of whom are truckers, only to find themselves left with nothing more than a wet seat in their vehicle." [Doris Cohoon, "If You Believe in Ghosts, Read On," [Shenandoah, PA] *Evening Herald* (4 Mar.94):4. C: Kathy Roland.]

The story resurfaced over the next weeks in the Lancaster area, with the hitchhiker now described as middle-aged and neat-looking. According to various sources, he and the motorist begin talking about the weather. "You think you've seen a big storm, wait until you see the next one coming," one version went; another has him saying, "it's going to be a very bad snowstorm, up to the second-floor windows of homes." Often the hitchhiker gave 13 Mar. as the specific date for this storm. Then the guest vanishes; the motorist "pulled alongside the road because he was really freaked out. He looked around the car and the guy was gone." A police car appears, and the motorist tells his story: "The police officer got very disconcerted. He said, 'You're the third person that's said this to me.' "

This story circulated actively during the first days of March in the area, being told at Bible studies meetings, local restaurants, and over a weekday radio feature RadioTalk on WLBR Lebanon. However in this case reporters' inquiries could locate no one who actually knew the officer or the motorist involved. Pennsylvania suffered an unusually harsh winter this year, with many areas' snowfall records significantly bettered; and last year on 13 Mar. a blizzard did drop as much as 3 feet of new snow. "You have the gigantic snowfall of last year, given that it came on the tail end of a very mild winter, that almost seemed like a supernatural event," the talk-show host commented. "This year, everyone is so gunshy about getting one more big snow. Remember the big rumors of snow of 3 or 4 weeks ago? I think we're having a blending of anxiety here and the almost supernatural snow and a tried-and-true supernatural story."

Not everyone took the hitchhiker reports seriously, however. One Lancaster resident in a letter to the newspaper joked about picking up "a middle-aged man in a white suit" walking along the road one night in February. They discussed "vast and terrible storms in the future," and the man asked the driver whether he was saved. "I answered, 'Yep!' He looked at me and then glanced out the passenger side window. When he looked back ... I was gone!" [Cindy Stauffer, "The Vanishing Hitchhiker: Lancaster's Latest Legend," *Lancaster [PA] New Era* (14 Mar.94):A-1, A-4, David C. Keller, "The Vanishing Driver," *Ibid.* (16 Mar.94):A-11, "Urban Legends': Infamous 'Hitchhiker' Tale Surfaces Again," [Shenandoah, PA] *Evening Herald* (16

Mar.94):13, C: A. Earl and Joan Mays.]

Back in 1980, a similar story had indeed circulated in the area. A Shippensburg editorialist said the story was "the talk of the town" during the last week April. On 26 Apr.80 a lady in Newville told Mac Barrick that the incident had happened along I-81: the hitchhiker was a woman who, when asked where she was going, said only "Jesus is coming" and disappeared. A state policeman stopped to investigate and commented, "You're the 7th car that's happened to." Yvonne Milspaw also was told of a young couple who found an old man walking in the rain along the Pennsylvania Turnpike. At one point in their conversation, the man suddenly said, "The Lord is coming soon!" then vanished, leaving behind only a damp spot on the back seat. ["Fact or Fiction Is Undetermined," [Shippensburg, PA] *News-Chronicle* (28 Apr.80):16; Yvonne J. Milspaw, "Folklore Is Part of the Modern Era," [Harrisburg, PA] *Evening News* (28 Oct.80):25. C: Mac Barrick Collection, Center for Pennsylvania Culture Studies, Penn State Harrisburg]. [BE & AEM]

And in California. "A friend tells the following story: His girlfriend's mother was driving in Los Angeles the day after the earthquake. She usually does not stop for hitchhikers, but saw an old man with a flowing gray beard, impeccably dressed in a dignified suit. He looked so dignified that she let him in. To start the conversation, she asked him his name. 'I am the angel Gabriel,' he said, 'come to toot my horn!' OK, she figured, he's crazy, I'll just be quiet for a while. But the next time she looked back, he was gone" [Bram Boroson, alt.folklore.urban, 6 Feb.94].

And in Ohio. "There is a story going around in SW Ohio ... about mysterious hitchhikers foretelling the Apocalypse. In 2 of the stories I have heard from a believer, a female driving alone sees a male hitchhiker on the highway. Although the woman would not normally pick up a hitchhiker, she feels 'compelled' to offer him a ride. When he is in the car, he tells the woman, 'the trumpet's about to blow,' or 'he's putting the trumpet to his lips.' The woman becomes so distracted by the news and by the powerful presence of the passenger that she starts speeding. She is eventually pulled over by a policeman. As she offers her explanation she notices—surprise!—the hitchhiker has disappeared" [Lucio Benedetto, alt.folklore.urban, 9 Apr.94].

And on the televangelairways. A casual viewer of Oral Roberts's television show tuned in during the last week of April as he was relating the story of a hitchhiker "who upon entering the car, had confided to the motorist, '... His lips are near the trumpet,' and then vanished without a sound.... The incredulous police officer let the driver off without a ticket. Seems as if this motorist was the sixth one that night to have had the same experience! Roberts was obviously moved, and confided to all ... that the incredible wonder of it all had nearly brought tears to his eyes." [Carl Gundlach, FOLKLORE @ TAMVM1.TAMU.EDU. Jim and Tammy Bakker gave a similar hitchhiking angel report in their book of daily devotions, *The Lord Is on Your Side* (Charlotte NC: PTL Television Network, 1980):29 March. C:AEM.]

NEW VANISHING HITCHHIKER SONG. The bluegrass music group the Seldom Scene has just released a sequel to the vanishing hitchhiker song, "Bringing Mary Home," which appeared on a Country Gentlemen album of the same name [*Bringing Mary Home* (Rebel, REB 1478); see also Brunvand, *The Mexican Pet* (1986):53]. Entitled "I've Come to Take You Home," the new song is on the Seldom Scene's album *Like We Used to Be* [Sugar Hill, SH-CD-3822]. The song describes of a man on his deathbed who recalls an incident that happened 40 years earlier as he was driving home one rainy evening. Seeing a small girl dressed in white along the road, he stops to give her a ride home, and, as we know from the earlier song, she disappears from his car before he gets to her house. Now, as he lies dying, he's comforted by a vision of the little girl, who tells him, "My name is Mary, I've come to take you home" [C: Henry Koretzky]. [AEM]

When [the Lamb] opened the sixth seal, I looked, and behold, there was a great earthquake (Revelation 7:12-13).

GLOBAL ALERTS. On 17 Jan., the day of the California earthquake, Clarence L. Thomas IV, a computer systems administrator at Andrews University, a Seventh-day Adventist school in Berrien Springs, MI, sent an electronic mail message to over 1200 Usenet newsgroups and e-mail discussion lists that reached thousands of people throughout the world. Titled "Global Alert For All: Jesus is Coming Soon," the message interpreted recent world events as heralding the end of the world: "The earthquake in Los Angeles, California, the flood in Europe, the seemingly unstoppable war in the former Yugoslavia, the devastating fires in Australia, the flood in the Midwest of the United States of America, the devastating fires near Los Angeles, California, the rapid and appalling increase in violence in cities, towns, villages all over the world, the famines, the diseases, the rapid decline of the family unit, and the destructive earthquake in India (in 1993) are signs that this world's history is coming to a climax.

"The human race has trampled on God's Constitution, as given in Exodus 20:1-17 (King James Version Bible), and Jesus is coming to set things right. These rapidly accelerating signs are an indication that Jesus is coming soon (Matthew 24)". Explaining that "Jesus is the only One who can rescue us from the slavery, misery, and death Satan is causing us," Thomas urged readers of his e-mail missive to "directly call on Jesus and ask Him to intervene in your life." Thomas appended to his message a copy of the Ten Commandments and a list of readings that includes publications by Seventh-day Adventist Ellen G. White.

Andrews University officials apologized for the inappropriate mass e-mailing of Thomas's note and temporarily suspended him from his job [C: Fay Ann Youngmark; see also Michael Hirsley, "To Many, Quake Is Spiritual Wake-Up Call," *Chicago Tribune* via [Harrisburg, PA] *Patriot* (29 Jan.94):Religion sect. 8]. [AEM]

"Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the close of the age?" And Jesus answered them, "Take heed that no one leads you astray.... you will hear of wars and rumors of war; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end is not yet" (Matthew 24:3-6).

APOCALYPSE (S)NOW. Aside from Gabriel's warnings, the harsh winter weather and recent natural disasters in the US and elsewhere heralded a coming apocalypse. After floods hit the midwestern US last summer, anti-abortion protest leader Randall Terry offered his opinion that "without a shadow of a doubt...these floods are the judgement of God upon our nation because of the sins of our people" [Martin E. Marty, "Natural Disaster Always Brings Talk of God Punishing Sinners," *Philadelphia Inquirer* (13 Aug.93):A23]. Similarly, Bishop Abraham Urquhart of Philadelphia's Holy Temple Holiness Church interpreted this past winter's terrible weather as an indication of things to come. "We are approaching the end-time," he said. "It doesn't necessarily mean tomorrow. But we are definitely approaching the return of the Lord" [William R. Macklin, "Signs That the End Is Coming Soon," *Philadelphia Inquirer* (29 Jan.94):B1, B4].

In England, Sister Marie Gabriel warned that Halley's comet (astronomers say a different comet) will collide with Jupiter in July as a sign of God's anger with humans' waywardness [Rachel Kelly, "The Prophetess of Doom Sees Stars," [London] *Times* (10 Feb.94):14].

According to Harold Camping, a 76-year-old Christian radio broadcaster with the Family Radio Network in Oakland, Calif., the world will come to an end in Sept. of this year. Camping bases his belief on a detailed numerological analysis of the Bible, which he presents in two recent books. Typical of his simpler calculations is $1+9+9+4 = 23$, which Camping identifies as a number indicating "judgement." "On September 6 there will be signs in the heavens, the sun will turn dark, the moon will cease to shine," he warns. "There will be earthquakes, islands will move, and the stars will fall from Heaven. There will be no more possibility of being saved." The world will finally cease to exist on 27 Sept. after Christ's Second Coming, which will occur sometime between 15 and 27 Sept. [Susan Jimison, "World Will End Sept. 27, 1994," *Weekly World News* (8 Mar.94): 3; Harold Camping, *1994?* (New York: Vantage Press, 1992), esp. p. 535 for the 1994 calculation and pp. 378 and 527-31 for summaries of his numerological analysis; Harold Camping, *Are You Ready?* (New York: Vantage Press, 1993), C: John Syphrit]. [AEM]

Subscriber Rev. Michael Allen Gates comments: Harold Camping, host of radio program "Open Forum" has for the last two years been predicting the return of Jesus Christ for his church in the year 1994. In his book Camping gives the dates 15-27 Sept. as the period of time in which Christ will return to the earth.

Camping claims to have found information that has been previously unknown to the rest of the world. He states that he alone has figured out the date of the world's creation and the true date of Christ's birth.

These in turn, along with some hidden clue he has found in the Bible, have led him to the 15-27 Sept. window.

The Bible clearly teaches that Jesus Christ will return to the earth some day. It also expressly states that "of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matt. 24:36). If this verse is not enough to convince us, then maybe Matthew 24:50 is: "The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of."

Camping is involved in a hoax. Whether it is one meant to take profit from the gullible, or one he has played upon himself by seeing in Scripture what is not there, he will be disappointed come this September.

For more background, see "Rapture Date Set—Again," *Christianity Today* (23.Nov.92); "Apocalyptic Fever," *Ibid.* (14 Dec.92); and the Summer 1993 issue of *Christian Research Journal*.

Ted Daniels (of the Millennium Watch Institute) reports as we go to press on 26 May: I'm not sure if the material I got this morning is strictly FOAFale or not, but it certainly comes to me the right way. I got it from the American Patriots Fax Network (Friends Faxing Friends for Freedom). They (702/433-9916) got it from people called Roger and Loretta Inman in Jacksonville. They got it from Gary Hunt. The report is that there are rumors afoot to the effect that all the large cities in America have their police and rescue services on full alert. This is said to be definite for Dallas and Houston. The Wyoming National Guard has been moved out to make way for 300,000 Soviet troops arriving by air. An unnamed Navy man says all the Navy Reserves weapons are being shipped to Virginia, and that the Army Reserve is doing the same. However, the feds can't order the guard to do that. So it must be the Army Reserves.

Firemen around Cape Canaveral have been ordered to arm themselves, in connection with the comet impact on Jupiter, and NASA engineers there have been ordered to move north. The new money may be issued July 1, at a 1 to 10 exchange rate. [Publisher, Millennial Prophecy Report PO Box 34021, Phila. PA 19101-4021 V: 800/666/4694, 215/662-5677; F: (215) 386-6306]

"When [the disciples] heard this they asked [Jesus]: 'Where, Lord?' He said, 'Where the corpse is, there the vultures [or eagles] will gather' " (Luke 17:37).

BIRDS OF PREY GATHER. This winter, in Maryland and Virginia, residents in newly constructed, pricy housing developments woke to find dozens of black vultures sharing their turf. One counted 52 vultures "lined up" on the fence surrounding his high-priced home. The invasion happened, naturalists said, partly because the projects had been built on territory already claimed by the birds, partly because the severe winter had reduced the amount of available road kill. Many complaints were understandable: vulture droppings closed an outdoor cafe in Virginia and caused high tension electric lines to short out. Vultures also ripped up vinyl upholstery in boat seats and outdoor furniture, apparently because the

smell and texture of the plastic reminds them of animal hides. And dozens of the birds settled in a Virginia cemetery, perching on the gravestones and scaring mourners. Adding to residents' frustrations, vultures are protected by the US Government, and home owners cannot kill them without first obtaining a permit.

The resulting media flap focused on the threat vultures posed to family pets and even to children. In Appomattox, VA, one woman complained to a federal agency that a flock of about 60 vultures had chased her dog into its doghouse and then crowded around the entrance. On 19 Feb. Lynn O'Hara Yates, a resident of the exclusive Kings Grant development near Washington DC, likewise claimed to have seen vultures "herding" family pets, the flock extending their 5-foot wings to prevent the animals from escaping. The vultures attacked dogs and horses, she said, and one had seized her neighbor's cat Stripe by its tail, carrying it 100 yards in the air before dropping it. When O'Hara-Yates went to rescue one of her own pets, she told a *Washington Post* reporter, one of the birds had buzzed within 3 feet of her head. A similar attack occurred, she said, when she went to videotape a flock circling over a group of children leaving a school bus. O'Hara-Yates also appeared on a local TV news program, holding a shotgun and expressing fear that her children would be attacked next.

Authorities differed sharply over whether these fears were in any way justified. Protests of media coverage were led by Gary R. Graves, curator of birds at the National Museum of Natural History and Craig Tufts, chief naturalist of the National Wildlife Federation. These described the media coverage as hysterical and inaccurate, stating that no credible records exist of vultures attacking live humans and that the birds are far too small to carry off house pets. Vultures normally roost in large flocks, especially during winter months when food is scarce (see Patricia Parker Rabenold, "The Communal Roost in Black and Turkey Vultures—a Communal Information Center?" in Sanford R. Wilbur and Jerome A. Jackson, eds., *Vulture Biology and Management*, 303-21 [Berkeley: U of California Pr., 1983]). "Children, livestock and family cats have more to fear from misinformed reporters than they do from hungry vultures," Graves concluded.

Other sources were less sure: one Virginia agency said studies of vulture pellets (clumps of fur and bones regurgitated by birds of prey) found that 40% contained dog or cat hairs; it was not clear whether these had come from living pets or road kill, though. Bob Thomas of the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services said vultures did attack newborn calves: "I've seen them standing in the fields by the dozens, walking around the cows, just waiting." Horses, lambs, and pigs were also regular victims, and he added, "I would not be comfortable with a 2-year-old child playing around them. ...When they're hungry, meat's meat." And a game warden supposedly warned O'Hara-Yates, "whatever you do, don't lie down." [Erik Larson, "If Your Neighbors Act Like Vultures, Perhaps They Are," *Wall Street Journal* 12 Jan.94:A1, A4; Marylou Tousignant, "Now Preying in

Stafford: The Birds," *Washington Post* 19 Feb.94:A1, A13; "These Birds Wouldn't Harm a Cat" (letters protesting the story), *Washington Post* 5 Mar.94:A17; discussions on Birdchat, an e-mail bulletin board for bird-watchers. C: Monica Gregory, Hank Brodtkin, and AEM.]

The *Washington Post* story was reprinted widely, even showing up translated in *Lidove noviny*, a Czech paper (with the term "vulture" oddly replaced by the Czech word for "raven"). By the end of March the story had been paraphrased more luridly in the tabloids *National Examiner* (15 Mar.94:44) and *Weekly World News* (29 Mar.94:45). Fuming naturalists blamed the media interest on the coming broadcast of a made-for-TV sequel to Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds*.

But the story in fact is part of an international folk tradition about pet/raptor conflicts. Last spring, residents of Northcliff, a suburb of Johannesburg, South Africa, were sure vanishing cats were being eaten by spotted eagle owls living in the area. Such birds were not big enough to take anything larger than a rat, experts claimed, but one resident said she saw "an owl in our driveway stalking our cat at dusk." The bird was chased away, but next day the cat vanished. Another said, philosophically, "at least it's nature taking its course and not something sinister like Satanists who steal and torture cats." [Jo Kozma, "Local Cats Disappear," *Northcliff & Melville Times* (30 Mar.93):1. C: Arthur Goldstuck.]

The earlier form of this tradition focused on children as the victims of raptor attacks. A Lancashire historical legend dating at least to the 1700s describes a baby being singled out as a child of destiny by being abducted by an eagle and later rescued unharmed from the bird's nest (Katherine Briggs, *Dictionary of British Folk-Tales* B.2.42-43). (This legend may owe something to the Greek myth in which Ganymede, chosen to be cupbearer to the gods, is flown to Olympus by Zeus in the form of an eagle.) A number of other detailed accounts survive of babies or small children snatched up by birds of prey, then released unhurt. These range from a 3-year-old German girl carried 1400 feet by a eagle on 12 July 1763 to 10-year-old Marlon Lowe of Lawndale, Illinois, carried 40 feet by a monster bird with a 10-foot wingspread on 25 July 1977. Tabloids keep this tradition alive: as recently as 3 Aug.93 the *Weekly World News* headlined a story (with amazing photographs) in which a 2-year-old Argentine boy was snatched from a meadow by a harpy eagle and dropped safely "several miles away."

A less cheerful but widely publicized account told of 5-year-old Marie Delex, who in 1838 was allegedly abducted and killed by an eagle in the French Alps. Her story inspired "The Vulture," a narrative poem that appeared in Benjamin Dudley Emerson's *The First-Class Reader* (1839), a collection of poems for public declamation. The Hutchinson Family, an influential singing troupe, set the poem to music in 1843 and frequently performed it during their tours. The song in fact passed into oral tradition as a ballad, and Tennessee folk singer Dee Hicks sang it as the climax of his performance at the 50th anniversary celebration of the

Library of Congress's Archive of Folk Song. (A recording is available on *Dee & Delta Hicks: Ballads & Banjo Music*, County 789 [Floyd, VA: County Records, 1985]:B7.)

Since no eagle, vulture, or condor is known that is capable of picking up anything weighing more than a few pounds, cryptozoologists attribute such incidents to "thunderbirds," mysterious animals that may or may not be part of the natural world. North-central Pennsylvania is one of several areas rife with such sightings: since the 19th century hunters there have reported birds of prey with wingspreads of up to 80 feet able to carry off young deer. [For surveys of these and similar reports, see Janet & Colin Bord, *Alien Animals* (London: Grenada, 1985):109-12, 131-33; and Jerome Clark, *Unexplained!* (Detroit: Gale Press, 1993):370-75.]

Jack Hubley, Outdoors Editor of the *Lancaster* (PA) *Sunday News*, used such traditions as the basis for an 1 Apr.90 story, in which he reported sightings of a "South American dog-eating eagle" with "a wingspan approaching that of a Piper Cherokee" [ca. 32 ft.]. The eagle, Hubley said, had already snatched up a pedigreed Cairn terrier named Pookie, as it was being walked by its owner, "prominent Lancastrian Millicent Hockenbower." Lost with the terrier was a diamond-studded collar and a designer "Doggie St. Laurent raincoat": total value \$4,800. Hubley added that local day care centers were prepared to cover outdoor play areas with heavy netting and that naturalists concerned about the area's overpopulation of deer were "exploring the possibility of a dog-eating eagle introduction program."

The paper and local humane societies were flooded by calls from pet-owners and parents, and Hubley was forced to apologize and explain that the article was an April Fools' hoax. It was part of a series of gags begun in 1986 when he published "a tall tale about the Pa. Game Commission's clandestine tiger introduction program aimed at controlling the prolific deer herd." But many readers were entirely taken in: one day care center in fact did install netting, and another parent called in to say, "I was afraid to let my dog out. I called my sister and told her to keep my nephew in the house. I've heard stories that eagles can carry off animals and kids. Well, you can replace a dog, but you can't replace a child." [Jack Hubley, "World's rarest eagle seen locally," [Lancaster PA] *Sunday News* 1 Apr.90:C8; *Ibid.*, "The eagle has landed," *Idem* 8 Apr.90:C1, C5. C:AEM.]

Australian Bill Scott reports pelicans swooping down to abduct miniature dogs, linking them with a yarn about a husband who becomes jealous of his wife's devotion to her Chihuahua. He buys the largest tomcat he can find, who then eats the dog thinking it a rat. ["Galloping Chihuahuacide," *Talking Folklore* 1:3 (Sp.87):58-60.] The jealous husband motif does not appear in Scott's pelican stories, but it does show up in a 1993 AP-distributed story attributed to a Valdez, Alaska, gas station attendant. An unnamed couple from Georgia pulled their RV in, the story goes, and the wife let her Chihuahua out to run around. When a bald eagle snatched up the dog and flew off with the yelping dog, the horrified wife put her hands to her face, saying "Oh, my God!" But the

husband, moving around the trailer so his wife couldn't see him, cheered the bird on, shouting, "Yeah! Yeah!" "It was the damndedst thing I ever saw," the attendant said. [AP 20 Jun.93 via *Fortean Times* 71 (Oct./Nov.93): 6; *Weekly World News* 27 Jul.93:33. C:AEM.] This same story was told by "a FOAF whose brother was stationed on Adak Island": here the dog was a poodle, and the man first consoles his wife, then walks "around the RV where she couldn't see him [to] exclaim 'YES!' with all the attendant victory gestures." [Bex, alt.tv.northern-exp.]

This legend may have inspired a scene in the 16 May episode of the prime-time television series *Northern Exposure*, set in Alaska. A character owns a Harris hawk named Taylor, and while he is hooded and being shown off, Chi-chi, a miniature yappy poodle, runs up and barks at him. The owner mutters something of a threat, and later the dog turns up dead, apparently killed by the hawk. [C: Erik Wilson, alt.tv.northern-exp.]

Similar expressions of hostility appear in other discussions of alleged pet/raptor encounters. After the "dog-eating eagle" hoax, one caller told the Lancaster *Sunday News*, "We have a Cairn terrier across the street, and I was kind of wishing the eagle would swoosh him up." And one of the Birdchat networkers commenting on the Virginia Vulture Flap concluded, "Actually, I was hoping some of the Killer Vultures would come to my neighborhood and take care of some of the loose cats. (Oops, that wasn't "PC.") No cat flames, please..." A personal experience story told by a Pennsylvania raptor expert makes a similar point:

"He tells a story of having a smallish hawk tethered in his yard when the neighbor's German Shepherd comes over and attacks and kills the bird. The neighbor shrugs it off with 'That's the way German Shepherds are, what're ya gonna do?' The storyteller immediately goes home and tethers a Golden Eagle in the same spot. The dog shows up, the eagle dispatches it quite handily, and at the dog owner's hysterical reaction he shrugs and says 'That's the way eagles are, what're ya gonna do?' " [Bex, alt.tv.northern-exp.] [BE]

EYE ON SATANISM

VERDICT IN MARTENSVILLE. Early in February, the longest criminal trial conducted in Saskatchewan came to an end with a mixed verdict. The case began in Martensville, a suburb of Saskatoon, when in Sept.91 Const. Claudia Bryden was asked to investigate a case of child sex abuse at an unlicensed babysitting center. Ronald and Linda Sterling ran the center in a small blue building that doubled as a coffee shop for the 5-member local police force. After finding that the report on a previous child abuse complaint had disappeared, Const. Bryden suspected that her co-workers were conspiring to shield the Sterlings. She moved her files to Saskatoon and enlisted investigators there, who charged the senior Sterlings and their son Travis with sexual assault.

The case intensified in Apr.92, when one of the former police officers was also charged with child sex abuse. The following month the Sterlings and 7 others

were implicated with 107 counts of child abuse and terroristic threats. By this time, press accounts say, the case had inspired a welter of speculation about satanic rituals. Both official and unofficial charges centered on a blue Quonset hut outside of town locally nicknamed "The Devil's Church." Local teens held that "cult stuff" went on both there and in "Monkey Hills," a spooky region east of town. According to the children's testimony, they were drugged, then taken to the shed and made to watch animal sacrifices, blood-drinking, and bizarre sexual rites. Child pornography photographs were also taken during these sessions, testimony alleged.

Martensville mayor Robin Friesen said of the rumors, "I have no proof, but I don't dispute them. If you get people abusing children in groups, this grouping part suggests there is more to it than sexual abuse." Henry Gossen, pastor at the local baptist church, also endorsed the satanism link, noting "stories of cats and rabbits being skinned alive and their entrails eaten" and adding that he had himself seen satanic symbols on cars driven by residents. "It has to be organized," he told reporters. "There is a lot of demonism involved and talk of people bonded together in satanic worship."

Prosecutors convicted one young woman in the case, but received a setback in June '93 when three children failed to identify police officer John Popowich, forcing them to abandon their case. The Sterling case, the centerpiece of the case, focused on 32 counts of sexual abuse documented largely by the testimony of children, who were from 2-9 years old at the time of the alleged abuse. Defense lawyers attacked the way in which Bryden and her associates had conducted the investigation.

Maggie Bruck, professor of psychology at McGill, reviewed videotapes of their interviews with the children. She found many leading questions and instances in which rewards were offered for the "right" answers. At times, children were not allowed to go to the bathroom until they had properly answered questions. "Under these circumstances," Bruck said, "kids can provide very detailed accounts of things that never happened.... The evidence was so tarnished that we'll never know what went on in Martensville."

David Raskin, professor of psychology at the University of Utah, was even more scathing in his analysis of the "intense interviews" of children. Some alleged victims were interviewed as many as 60 times, and police repeatedly asked one child "where else" the suspects had touched him. Characterizing Bryden and Moor as poorly trained and biased, he called the case "one of the worst investigations I've ever seen....it's not an investigation, it's a witch-hunt." Even the judge expressed reservations, noting during his summation that the prosecution had found no physical evidence to link the children or the Sterlings to the "Devil's Church."

The jury acquitted the elder Sterlings on all counts. Their son Travis was convicted on 8 charges including sexual assault. The elder Sterlings planned to appeal these convictions and sue prosecutors for defamation of character; prosecutors in turn said they would proceed with the next trial, charging another police officer

with 13 counts of ritual abuse. [Kim Hazelwood, "The agony of Martensville," *Western Report* 22 Jun.92:20-23; John Howse, "The Martensville Scandal," *Maclean's* 22 Jun.92:26-28; Tom Fennell, "The Satan Factor," *Ibid.*, 29; D'Arcy Jenish, "End of a Nightmare," *Maclean's* 14 Feb.94:10-12. C: Robert Hicks, Jeff Victor.]

BRITISH OFFICIAL SRA REPORT. After public furor caused by the collapses of the Rochdale and Orkney Islands investigations, Jean La Fontaine, professor emeritus of social anthropology at the London School of Economics was commissioned to write a study of alleged satanic ritual abuse of children. While not yet officially released, late in April excerpts of her finished report were released to press.

The report defines "satanic abuse" as "Rites that allegedly include the torture and sexual abuse of children and adults, forced abortion and human sacrifice, cannibalism and bestiality.... Their defining characteristic is that the sexual and physical abuse of children is part of rites directed to a magical or religious objective." La Fontaine was given files from 84 cases investigated in Britain from 1988. In three of these, she concluded, there was substantial evidence of rituals combined with child abuse. However, she added, these were secondary to the sexual objective of the abuse, and the ritual performed had no resemblance to those alleged in the other 81 cases. As for the rest, La Fontaine concluded, satanic abuse "was not happening and is not happening."

Young children's testimony about such crimes were "influenced by adults," either investigators or their mothers, she found, and interviews were too frequent, poorly conducted, and contaminated by leading questions. "As a result of the way in which it was collected, recorded and transmitted, the evidence said to represent children's disclosures was unreliable and misleading. What is defended as 'what children say' may be nothing of the sort." The report also criticized evangelical Christians and expressed doubts that self-proclaimed SRA specialists, both in Britain and the US, had credible credentials beside "experience of cases."

Reaction from British child care workers was critical. The director of a Birmingham clinic for sex offenders said, "Of course men with satanic beliefs have abused children, that is not for debate." Conceding that such people may act individually rather than as part of a "cult," he maintained, "It doesn't really matter.... The effect on children is just as damaging regardless of whether the abuse is performed by an individual or an organised group."

And the director of Childline Scotland warned that the report's conclusions might frighten children subjected to real abuse from disclosing what they knew: "We sometimes have children calling us and talking about things which are sometimes quite difficult for us to understand.... They speak about being given funny drinks which make their heads feel funny. They also talk about being made to wear funny clothes and go to places where there are other adults." [Rosie Waterhouse, "Government inquiry decides satanic abuse does not exist," *The*

Independent on Sunday (24 Apr. 94):1; Sarah Wilson, "Living nightmare or horror fiction?" *The Scotsman* (26 Apr.94). C: Sandy Hobbs, W.F.H. Nicolaisen.]

Meanwhile, the parents of the Orkney children who were removed into protective custody in 1991 prepared to press claims for civil damages totalling £1 million after failing to get their case heard before the European Court of Human Rights. [David Ross, Orkney parents' civil claim forced by Euro-court hurdle," *The Herald* (25 Feb.94):2. C: Sandy Hobbs.]

THE NETHERLANDS: THE YOLANDA VAN B. AFFAIR. On 11 Feb. the parents and former husband of a young woman identified only as "Yolanda van B." were convicted in Zutphen of performing a series of sadistic abortions on her. The case, while primarily focused on memories of incest and rape, has been characterized widely in the press as one of "ritual abuse," and some SRA elements have emerged in it. Yolanda, moreover, has become a media figure because of her sensational biography, *Yolanda: Mijn Verhaal* [Yolanda: My Story], co-authored by Bob Snoijink. This was published with an appreciative postscript by MPD hypnotherapist Onno van der Hart, an influential member of the growing Dutch SRA network of investigators (see *FN* 31:7 and 32:8). The book is set to be televised as a 4-part mini-series, and the rights for musical treatment have also been purchased.

In it, Yolanda describes being beaten and raped by her father and sister from the age of 8; later she was used by the family for prostitution and taken to "SM parties" to participate in orgies. When she became pregnant, the family performed forced abortions in a variety of grisly ways, sometimes with a hot poker. However, the only link to satanism that emerged here was a vague memory of parties at full moons, in which rich sadists came to watch babies being murdered. After each murder, she said, her mother smeared herself with blood, singing "Glory Glory Hallelujah!" and Yolanda had to eat a piece of the child's flesh. But, since she had been hypnotized, she could not remember any more—at present.

Likewise, van der Hart's contribution does not directly mention satanic abuse, but he repeats many common themes. The Yolanda case, he argues, illustrates how western cultures have previously denied the horrific acts of abuse. In 1980, he notes, experts felt that incest cases appeared in only one out of a million families; now studies suggest that 15% of Dutch women have had incestuous experiences. He concludes, "the borders of our belief have to be changed: it is not only possible that parents abuse their children sexually, but that they can do much worse."

Yolanda's testimony was corroborated by her sister Evelien and a friend, Teunie B. But the case was complicated when Willem Albert Wagenaar, professor of psychology at Leyden, was retained by the prosecution to help prepare the case. Wagenaar became suspicious when he found that the three witnesses' testimonies could not be reconciled with each other, and that some of Yolanda's claims could be shown to be factually untrue. In a 138-page report, he and an associate suggested parallels between this case and American SRA cases such

as the 1988 Ingram affair. The confessions, they argued, were "strongly stereotypical" and could have been derived from media accounts of similar abuses. Hence, they argued, they might be "monkeyburger stories" (a Dutch term for "urban legends," derived from Ethel Portnoy's 1978 book *Broodje aap: de folklore van de post-industriële samenleving* [The monkeyburger: folklore from post-industrial society]). [Ton van Dijk, "The Epe incest affair has been turned into a media battle," *De Groene Amsterdammer* (9 Mar.94).]

The trial judges partially agreed, acquitting the defendants of charges they ritually murdered babies. But when Wagenaar published a lengthy defense of his report the day after the verdicts, he became the target of an intense media debate over Yolanda's story. Feminist groups hailed the verdicts as a victory for silenced incest victims, and one psychiatrist took Wagenaar to task for suggesting that satanic practices were imaginary, saying, "Such a statement is bad when a layperson says it, let alone for someone who passes himself off as a behavioral scientist. A scientist of all persons should be familiar with the now very extensive literature on incest, early trauma, dissociation, post traumatic stress disorder, multiple personality disorder, and so on.... The claim of Wagenaar that a client or social worker thinks up something like [the kinds of ritual abuse now being revealed], is devoid of any grounds and is a malicious slur." [Ton Coffeng, "Wagenaar of all people should know the facts," *de Volkskrant* (19 Feb.94).]

On the other hand, Peter Burger compared such stories to the baby-killing atrocity claims urged against the Iraqis on the verge of the Desert Storm conflict: "Horrible, but as it turned out, false." Even though some of the charges against Yolanda's parents have been sustained, this does not prove that all her claims about ritual can be believed. Summarizing the dubious progress of SRA investigations in the US and Great Britain, Burger concludes: "Credulous researchers like van der Hart think they can act in the interest of their clients. Because they are 'assisters' [a literal translation of the Dutch word for 'social workers'], we can understand their attitudes; but when they naively accept satanism stories, they risk their reputations as scientists. In the end, incest victims gain no advantage either from such credulous defenders. The insistence of van der Hart and his friends on ritual abuse undermines the credibility of victims of 'ordinary' abuse." ["Satanists as scapegoat for porno and incest," *de Volkskrant* 3 Mar.94.] [BE]

Sherrill Mulhern and Dr. Jan W. Nienhuys have provided me with English translations of these and related articles, both in hard copy and as electronic files, with instructions to share with other qualified researchers. Please contact Bill Ellis if interested.

STOP ME IF YOU'VE HEARD . . .

BODY PARTS PANICS IN GUATEMALA. On Christmas Eve, American John Shonder was visiting with a local

friend near Guatemala City, discussing how the new shopping malls there were as tiring to visit as in the States. "Oh, but it can be much more dangerous here," his friend said. "Didn't you hear what happened not long ago at La Pradera? It seems that a woman went shopping with her little boy, and in that crowd of people, she lost track of him. She just turned her back for a moment and he was gone.... The woman spoke to the guards, and they closed all the exits, locking everyone inside." [Security guards at this mall routinely carry automatic rifles, Shonder notes, as Guatemala is still undergoing civil war.] "The guards finally found the child in a bathroom ... his hair had been dyed blond..."

"And the kidnappers had dressed him as a girl?" Shonder asked, recalling a parallel story he had heard in the Chicago area years before.

"No," his friend replied, "like a clown!"

Shonder adds that this story merges with another belief: "Guatemalans *absolutely believe* that there are networks of kidnappers who steal children from villages and off the streets of the capital. Many of the children are adopted by couples in the US and elsewhere, but more ominously, some are killed so that their organs can be transplanted into the bodies of rich gringos.

"These stories are so gruesome—and sound so much like legends—that I don't want to believe them. It seems that if there were any truth to the rumors, some crusading journalist either here or in Guatemala could make his or her whole career by exposing it. I have read stories in the Guatemalan press about clandestine hospitals being discovered in the interior, but since their press is even less believable than our own, I just don't know." [alt.urban.folklore.]

Guatemala's Public Ministry claims that 6 children go missing every day, and rumors holds that if they don't die for organ transplants, they end up in Brazilian snuff films or in Middle Eastern harems. Some evidently do end up in "crib houses," where Guatemalan baby-snatchers and corrupt lawyers negotiate their adoption to American families. US Adoptions from Guatemala have in fact caused anxiety for some time: Department of State statistics show that in 1993 this small country exported more children for adoption than any other Latin American Country. Francisco Goldman, author of *The Long Night of White Chickens*, a novel about a woman accused of stealing babies, said he had visited one of these crib houses while pretending to be a desperate American looking for a child. He concluded, "Everything about the baby-parts story is true, except for gringos and baby parts.... Children get stolen all the time in Guatemala. But not for their organs and not by foreigners." The US Embassy in Guatemala City recently estimated that in about 30 cases per year, the supposed "birth mother" releasing the child for emigration proves an imposter.

But Guatemalan rumors describe more dramatic cases. Early this year, a rapid-spreading rumor held that 8 babies had been found with their bellies cut open and vital organs removed. Found inside was a US \$100 bill and a note (in English): "Thanks for your cooperation." Guillermo Carranza Targena, a high-ranking official in

Guatemala's Public Health Ministry, endorsed rumors that Americans stole children for their organs, and *Prensa Libre*, Guatemala's most popular daily, published an article titled "Purchase of children for mutilation has become frequent." Citing "official documents," the story said the going price for organs was US\$150,000 for a liver and US\$100,000 for a heart or lungs.

On March 7, American tourist Melissa Larsen came to Santa Lucía Cotzumalguapa to sketch the area's pre-Colombian ruins. When local officials asked for her identity documents, residents thought she was being detained as a baby-snatcher. After a mob gathered outside the police station, nervous police had her evacuated to the provincial capital for her own safety. Learning this, the town decided that she had bought her freedom with a bribe and returned to burn the police station. Larsen was released unhurt, but army units had to be brought into the village to restore peace.

Less fortunate was June Weinstock, another tourist who came to San Cristóbal Verapáz on 29 March to see the village's colorful Easter decorations. She attracted suspicion after she photographed several children in the marketplace. The *Prensa Libre* article on mutilated children was taped to the wall on a local store. Suddenly, Macaria Yat, a local woman, saw that her 8-year-old son was no longer by her side. She screamed, and a crowd mobbed Weinstock, preventing her from boarding a bus and accusing her of having the child's organs in her suitcase.

The village's justice of the peace called for help, but not even the safe reappearance of the child stopped the crowd. They surrounded the police station and, after a 4 hour siege, broke down doors, dragged Weinstock outside, and beat her unconscious. When the police chief pronounced her dead (falsely), they allowed her to be taken away to a Guatemala City hospital. Evacuated to the States, she remains in a semiconscious state.

The day after the attacks, the US State Department warned Americans "to defer nonessential travel to Guatemala at this time.... We urge that US citizens who remain in Guatemala avoid crowds, avoid traveling alone, and exercise utmost caution." Americans already resident in Guatemala were urged to come to the US Embassy for further security instructions [Bulletin No. 94-013]. This last instruction was underscored when on 11 April a gang riding in a Jeep with tinted windows stopped a school bus and abducted Georgina Robbins, the 7-year-old daughter of a wealthy American industrialist living in Guatemala City. She was found 4 days later "in fairly good health" in a poor suburb of the city, and US diplomats claimed no link with the rumors. But the Embassy had previously received an anonymous phone threat saying that American children would be targeted in retaliation for the alleged body-parts abductions. And on 13 May yet another resident American was mobbed when she boarded a Guatemala City bus with her 6-month-old (legally) adopted baby. Passengers followed her to her home and surrounded it, shouting threats, until US Embassy security guards took her to safety.

[George Gedda, "Rumors rock Guatemala's cradle of

fear," AP (30 Mar.94); AP (31 Mar.94); William R. Long, "Rumors hurt adoption efforts in Latin America," *Los Angeles Times* (17 Apr.94); Trish O'Kane, "Dangerous Rumors," *Time* (18 Apr.94): 48; "Rumor and Rage," *People Weekly* (25 Apr.94):78-79; AP (12 Apr.94); Reuters (12 Apr.94); Reuters (16 Apr.94). Fiona Neill, "Adoptive Mother Is Assailed," *Philadelphia Inquirer* (16 May'94): A3; William Booth, "Witch Hunt," *Washington Post* (17 May '94):C1-C2. C: Joe Goodwin, Bernard J. Sussman, AEM.]

Meanwhile, in Germany. "Every couple of weeks," *Der Spiegel* reports, "a man takes the same circuitous route to the basement of the city clinic in Kassel, Germany... He enters the so-called coffin room, where patients who die in the hospital are prepared, after autopsies, to be transported away. 'Good morning,' he says to the hospital staff. 'I am here for the pickup.'"

"The staff know what he means: The man has come for carefully selected body parts that the head of pathology has set aside, labeled 'refuse.' The goods are ready, packed in brown cardboard cartons stamped 'B. Braun,' with the corporate logo of that pharmaceutical company on the side. As the man prepares to leave, he pulls out a wad of cash, leaving some [1200 marks or] \$750 for the load. 'So long,' he says, 'see you next time.'"

As legend-like as this scenario seems, *Spiegel* reporters found that it is substantially accurate. A major money-maker for Braun is Lyodura, a medication used in skin transplants. This is manufactured from meninges—membranes surrounding the brain and spinal cord—taken from cadavers. The company defended its procedures, saying that, so far as they knew, the membranes they received came from legal autopsies performed in Germany, Austria, and the Czech Republic. However, they also conceded at times they paid for such materials in cash without receipts. Sources at the Kassel hospital said these payments formed a petty-cash "coffee fund" used by members of the pathology staff. Another source paying into this fund was the anatomy faculty of Marburg University, who pays 4 marks [\$2.50] for a human brain, no questions asked. Bones, other organs, pituitary glands, and even corneas are routinely removed and marketed by pathologists.

Strictly speaking, doctors say, such removals ought to occur only when the deceased or their families have authorized medical use of the cadaver. But even when no such specific agreement has been made, the family's consent to an autopsy is often taken as tacit permission to strip the body of marketable tissues. One prominent pathologist argued that there "is no insult to human worth so long as the shell of the body remains intact." Braun likewise noted that leading pathologists "have accepted our criteria for the removal of tissue without reservation." [Trans. as "The Body-Parts Trade," *World Press Review* 41:4 (Apr.94):38-39. C: AEM.] [BE]

THE CUTTING EDGE

BOOKS AND MONOGRAPHS

Jack Santino, ed. *Halloween and Other Festivals of Death and Life*. Knoxville, TN: U of Tennessee Pr., 1994.

pp. xxviii + 280, introduction, 12 essays, notes, bibliography, index. ISBN: 0-87049-812-6 (cloth); 0-87049-813-4 (paper). This volume gathers information on the beliefs, customs, and material culture of Halloween, the Day of the Dead, and Guy Fawkes Day. Legend scholars will be interested in Bill Ellis's essay on new traditions ("safe" Halloween parties, x-raying candy) created in response to sadism legends. But many other essays study the holidays' evolution, particularly Steve Siporin's analysis of implicit rules governing vandalism and Tad Tuleja's history of trick-or-treating as the establishment "answer" to another relatively recent "Halloween problem." Well illust. and documented.

JOURNALS AND NEWSLETTERS

Dear Mr Thoms... A "folklore miscellany" focusing on contemporary folklore. **No. 33 (Feb. '94)** features Sandy Hobbs's history of "Hanging the Monkey," a blason populaire legend about a village who executed a monkey from a shipwreck, thinking it a French spy. Bill Scott collects parodies, many obscene or scatological, of "Mary Had a Little Lamb." Jacqueline Simpson reprints a legend about a person who attempted suicide in a variety of ways simultaneously, leading to a hilarious failure; analogs dating to Norse and Celtic folklore are noted. Xeroxlore, Computer "smilies," Lorena Bobbitt, bosom serpents, Gillian Bennett's feature review of Carol Burke's *Vision Narratives of Women in Prison* with emphasis on her attack on David Hufford.

No. 34 (May '94) includes Bill Ellis on more multiple suicide/executions in world religions and Johan Hopkinson's results on a survey of corporate rumors current in Scotland. An extract surveys historical legends associated with lice and fleas, and Jacqueline Simpson relates horrific ficts from her childhood (if you cut the flesh between your thumb and fingers, you'll die of lockjaw). A Devonshire "Mrs Doubtfire" carries a carving knife in his handbag; SRA debates; Vanishing angel hitchhiker; photocopy lie-detector; lights-out gang initiation; Paul McCarthy's "death"; xeroxlore. Entertaining, well-edited, and useful. Ed. Sandy Hobbs and Gillian Bennett; irregular; ca. 6 issues £7.50; Subscriptions: 28, Brownsville Road, Stockport SK44PF.

Fortean Times. International news accounts and reports of anomalous phenomena, often with photographs. **No. 74 (Apr./May '94)** contains feature articles on spontaneous human combustion by a former police officer and on "ice circles," perfectly round plates of ice found slowly revolving inside a narrow, usually ice-free thawed ring. An interview with London prophet Benjamin Creme discusses his belief that "Maitreya," a mysterious figure in the Pakistani-Indiana community in Britain, is the Christ. News items include protests following a Paris fashion show featuring a sexy dress decorated with Arabic characters from the Koran ("God" fell across the model's prominent right breast). Also noted: bleeding statue, escaped kangaroos and wallabies in Britain, Belgium, and the US, poisonous spiders naturalized in Worthing after being brought in with fruit, Colorado mystery helicopters, surges of heat, and green balls of

fire [but no cattle mutilations??], Jesus Christ speaks to a Kenyan crowd in perfect Swahili, correctly predicting a heavy rainfall after his disappearance. Expeditions for Noah's Ark, odd news from China, a "skinhead scare" from 1973 (similar to the "Chelsea smiler" panics [FN 15:1-2]). Extensive reviews, letters. Ed. Bob Rickard and Paul Sieveking; 6/yr.; 6 issues £12.00; £15.00 or \$30.00 overseas; address: FT, 20 Paul Street, Frome, Somerset BA11 1DX UK.

The Journal of Psychohistory has devoted its Spring issue to a 130-page report, "Cult Abuse of Children: Witch Hunt or Reality?" from 12 psychotherapists on the clinical and physical evidence of cult abuse of children, including:

- How Roland Summit investigated the McMartin preschool and found the tunnels that police couldn't find; then *People Weekly* said he hadn't found them after all.
- How when Matt Johnson, a midwest therapist, treated a cult victim, he began receiving threatening phone calls and faxes with cult symbols hourly, daily.
- How Sandra Bloom of Ft. Washington, Pennsylvania discovered the influence of pedophiles on the False Memory Foundation.
- Lloyd deMause, editor of the journal, tells why cults torture and kill children and why cultic rituals usually include such bizarre acts as putting children in cages and tunnels and making them drink urine and eat feces; why they tie them up, drink their blood and kill them. He also describes how while putting together this issue he received phone calls from dozens of therapists saying they had treated cult victims but were afraid to write about them because the cults had threatened to harm or kill them and their families if they did.

For \$24 one gets a one year subscription plus copies of this special issue and one on "The Sexual Abuse of Children." Address: Association for Psychohistory, Inc., 140 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10024-2605.

Magonia. Britain's premiere journal for skeptical investigation of UFOs and claims of the paranormal. **No. 48 (Jan. '93)** contains a detailed reexamination of Donald M. Johnson's often-cited essay on "The 'Phantom Anesthetist' of Mattoon" [*J. of Abnormal & Social Psych.* 40 (1945):175-86] by Willy Smith, who finds Johnson's work faulty in theory and methodology. An article reprinted from *Just Cause* 36 (1993) compiles evidence that in Summer 1952 the US Air Force manipulated the public into reporting UFOs by encouraging sympathetic media handling of the subject in mainstream magazines such as *Life*. John Rimmer recounts an acquaintance's "lucid dream" that, while not including any paranormal elements, might represent a state of mind in which such elements might seem real. Reviews, letters. Ed. John Rimmer; 4/yr.; 4 issues £4.00, US \$10, Europe £5.00, other countries £5.50; address: John Dee Cottage, 5 James Terrace, Mortlake Churchyard, London SW14 8HB UK.

Millennial Prophecy Report, formerly *Millennium News* or *Times*, the newsletter of the Millenium Watch Institute, tracking ephemera produced by prophets of various sects, including Christians, New Agers, Jews, UFO cults, hollow-earthers, etc. **Vol.2:9 (Mar. '94)** begins

with an additional comment on Atty. General Janet Reno and FBI Director William Freeh's total ignorance of millennial movements and predicts that the Waco holocaust will be replicated unless someone counters the "fatal ignorance" of "anti-cult" literature. Daniels solicits suggestions on a short handbook cheap enough to sell or distribute to law enforcement agencies. Also included: Sam Wilson (Church of Everlasting Light, Mesa AZ) gives a detailed view of the Apocalypse; prophecies from Rev. Sun Myung Moon; warnings from the "Committee on Decency in USA (Milford IN) that "Christianity is the greatest indecency on the planet" and that when the Messiah comes they will be cast out.

Vol.2:10 (Apr.94) focuses on conversion experiences related by prophets, which show "near uniformity": after an uneventful youth, they suffer crisis, during which they receive a message from God that mobilizes them to devote their lives to spreading the news. Sample narratives are summarized from new-age channelers and fundamentalists. Also given are visions of hell (Satan's punishment is to give orders continually, which everyone ignores), and of the coming tribulation, which will include a 2-year's famine leading to cannibalism, huge earthquakes artificially triggered by a "necklace of bombs" artificially planted beneath Calif., Antichrist addressing the UN on 30 Apr.94; nuclear attack on NYC on 2 May. Information on the continuing publication of the prophecies of "Sister Thedra" (a.k.a. Marion Keech); info on the formation of a Religion-Crisis Task Force under J. Phillip Arnold to serve as an objective data source for the US Government on alternative religions. Ed. Ted Daniels; 10/yr.; \$30/yr; address: PO Box 34021, Philadelphia, PA 19101-4021.

News of the Weird. Bizarre news item summaries. **No. 27 (4 Feb.94):** A suicide's body is undetected by Realtors showing the house for sale; guests stay in a motel room for 4 days unaware that a body is stuffed between the floor and box spring; 2 tourists posing by the Grand Canyon step back for the picture and fall in; Mexicans worship Pepsi; 20,000 college grads apply for 70 openings for rat catchers; US will say how much plutonium it stocks today but not how much it had 10 years ago; after a mother reports her 3-year-old girl missing during a shopping trip, an extensive search ends when she returns home and finds that she had never taken the toddler with her.

No. 28 (5 Mar.94): Lorena Bobbitt copycats; skin transplants using foreskins from circumcised infants; 12 women burn 85% of their bodies by using a psoriasis drug to accelerate tanning; Mr. Pluto assures schoolchildren that plutonium won't be scary "if everyone treats me with a peaceful and warm heart"; Barney is satanic; Blue Cross won't cover exorcism to treat MPD. Ed. Chuck Shepherd; irreg.; 7/\$10, \$11 Canada, \$16 foreign; Address: P.O. Box 8306, St. Petersburg, FL 33738.

Pennsylvania Folklife. Founded to document the lore of Pennsylvania Germans, this journal has now been reorganized to include material on a variety of ethnic and racial groups. **Vol.43:2 (Winter'93-'94)** is a special issue focusing on "Cultural Tourism." Featured

is Susan Kalcik's "The America's Industrial Heritage Project: A Model for Cultural Tourism" (50-59), a report on a new National Park effort to coordinate museum and local history efforts in economically depressed regions such as southwestern Pennsylvania. Also included: a survey of "The Quest for Authenticity in Tourism and Folklife Studies" by Regina Bendix (67-70) and Mindy Brandt and Thomas E. Gallagher's "Tourism and the Old Order Amish" (71-75), a discussion of cultural and interpretation issues raised when former homes are used to exhibit contemporary Amish practices. Numerous, well-reproduced illustrations. Ed. Thomas E. Gallagher, Jr.; 3/yr, \$15/yr, single copies and back issues \$5/each. Address: P.O. Box 92, Collegeville, PA 19426.

Skeptical Inquirer. Leading American journal for the skeptical/humanistic point of view. **Vol. 18:3 (Spring 94)** contains two "Perspectives" on Jeffrey S. Victor's *Satanic Panic*, a "Personal" one by Peter Huston (280, 285-87) describing rumor-panics in upstate New York and a more formal "Sociological and Historical" review by Terence M. Hines (281-84). Also included: Ted G. Goertzel's "Measuring the Prevalence of False Memories" (266-72), a critique of the "Roper Survey" of anomalous experiences such as sleep paralysis and "lost time" with new statistical data; Robert A. Baker's comments on Spanos et al., "Close Encounters" [*J. of Abnormal Psych.* 104 (1993):624-32], which falsified the "fantasy prone" hypothesis of CE3/abduction experiences; notes on the 1947 Roswell "UFO crash," on therapeutic touch, and on optical illusions related to "Gravity Hill" sites). Ed. Kendrick Frazier; 4/yr; \$25; single issue \$8.00 ppd. Address: PO Box 229, Buffalo, NY 14215-9927 USA.

Strange Magazine. Fortean research reports with an emphasis on cryptozoology. **No. 13 (Spring '94)** focuses on rumors and belief systems centered on Mars, particularly the "Face" and "the Great Galactic Ghoul" responsible for the failures of the Russian Fobos 1 and 2 probes and, more recently, the disappearance of the US Mars Observer. A new detailed Bigfoot photo is traced to Ray Wallace, owner of the Wallace Construction Company, whose employees first spotted evidence of the ape-man in Northern California in 1958 and coined the term "bigfoot." Puerto Rican Fortean Scott Corrales links santería, UFOs, and animal mutilation; Nigel Watson continues his history of the British airship scare to a "zeppelin" panic in March 1913. Shorter reports present black dogs in Georgia, giant serpents in the Russian Far East, UFOS and wolfmen from Latin America; Loren Coleman gives new reports of not-quite-extinct Tasmanian tigers and reports of pumas from New England. Barney the Purple Dinosaur is satanic, Brazilian ants eat pets, a ghost shows up on a security video, cattle mutilations and mystery helicopters in NE Alabama. "First Person" (memorates from readers) includes an account of meeting the legendary "Green Man" of Western Pennsylvania, whose skin was transformed by an accidental jolt of electricity. Book and Audio reviews. Ed. Mark Chorvinsky; 2/yr.; 4/\$17.95, UK £13.50, other countries \$22.95, single copy \$5.95 (£3.75). Address: PO Box 2246, Rockville, MD 20847 USA.

View from the Ledge. Ridiculous news items and headlines, many in facsimile. **No. 49 (4 Feb.94):** it's illegal to smoke frogs in Calif.; North Korean soldiers were ordered to shave their heads, which the South took as a sign of an imminent attack; police kill a man threatening suicide; Quayle ponders '94 presidential bid; a woman returns home to find her furniture rearranged but nothing missing; Child abuse manual issued; a Chinese restaurant in Hazleton PA specializes in "Human Cuisine." Ed. Chuck Shepherd; irreg., free with every 2nd copy of *News of the Weird*; Address: P.O. Box 8306, St. Petersburg, FL 33738.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

We are interested in publications on any topic relevant to contemporary legends, especially those in journals or from publishing houses not usually read by academics in the US and the UK. Forward references or offprints (if convenient) to Alan E. Mays, Heindel Library, Penn State Harrisburg, 777 W. Harrisburg Avenue, Middletown, PA 17057-4898, USA. For work in foreign languages, English abstracts would be appreciated.

Items starred (*) are housed in a file in one of the editors' office and can be made available to qualified scholars for reference. Books and articles from major publishers or standard journals are not normally starred.

Adams, Cecil. *Return of the Straight Dope*. Ed. with an intro. by Ed Zotti. New York: Ballantine Books, 1994. [Ed Zotti as Cecil Adams answers questions, many of them legend-related, posed by readers of his newspaper column.]

- * Agent X. "Oh ... THAT Secret Base!: How to Spy on Area 51, Your Government's Stealth Site That 'Doesn't Exist.'" *The Nose* 21 (1994):26-28. [Secret aircraft and UFOs at the classified US military site in Nevada.]
- * Akosah, Kwabena Sarpong. "Aids: The Controversy Goes On." *New African* 319 (May'94):18.
- * Allen, Arthur. "Holocaust Can't Be Denied, German Court Says." *Philadelphia Inquirer* (27 Apr.94):A14. [German court ruling against Holocaust deniers.]
- * Ankomah, Baffour. "Aids: More Revelations." *New African* 319 (May'94):9-11. [AIDS rumors.]
- * "Are Bert and Ernie Gay?" *New York Times Magazine* (6 Feb.94):8. [Gay Muppet rumors.]
- * Baker, Ross. "Fast-Food Conspiracies." *American Demographics* 16 (May'94):22-23. [Humorous speculation about fast-food rumors.]
- Barber, Malcolm. *The New Knighthood: A History of the Order of the Temple*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- * Berendt, John. "The Hoax." *Esquire* (Apr.94):60. [Legendary pranks.]
- * Binder, Amy. "Constructing Racial Rhetoric: Media Depictions of Harm in Heavy Metal and Rap Music." *American Sociological Review* 58 (1993):753-67.
- * "Boniface Who 'Killed' Hundreds." *New African* 319 (May'94):16. [Zambian boy claims he killed people using witchcraft.]

- * Bower, Bruce. "Sudden Recall." *Science News* 144 (18 Sept.93):184-86.
- * _____. "The Survivor Syndrome." *Science News* 144 (25 Sept.93):202-4. [Recovered memories and child sexual abuse.]
- * Bratt, L. Erik. "Sweetwater Students Vote to Keep Red Devil as Mascot." *San Diego Union-Times* (5 Nov.93). [Sports mascot comes under attack as satanic.]
- * Brindle, David. "'Milestone' on satanic abuse dismissed by criminologist." [Manchester] *Guardian* (24 Feb.94):12. Bill Thompson is cited in a skeptical review of Valerie Sinason's *Treating Survivors of Satanist Abuse* (below).]
- * Brown, Stuart F. "Area 51--Home of the Aliens?" *Popular Science* (Mar.94):57. [Alleged UFO sightings at the secret military base in Nevada.]
- * Burbank, James. "Yenaldlooshi: The Shape-shifter Beliefs of the Navajos." *The World and I* 8 (Nov.93): 264-71.
- * Burket, Roger C., Wade C. Myers, W. Bradford Lyles, and Frank Carrera III. "Emotional and Behavioral Disturbances in Adolescents Involved in Witchcraft and Satanism." *Journal of Adolescence* 17 (1994):41-52.
- Campion-Vincent, Véronique. "Bébé en pièces détachées: une nouvelle légende latino-américaine." In *Le Réenchantement du monde*, ed. Patrick Tacussel, 191-214. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1994.
- Clements, William M. "The Senath Light: Varieties of Legendary Experience in the Missouri Bootheel." *Southern Folklore* 50 (1993):231-40.
- * Cockburn, Alexander. "And Yes, NAFTA and Satanic Abuse." *The Nation* (29 Nov.93):647. [Allegations of satanic abuse in Mexico.]
- * "Court in Russia Issues Historic Ruling: 'Protocols of Zion' Anti-Semitic Forgery." *Martyrdom and Resistance* (Jan.-Feb.94):4. ["Protocols of the Elders of Zion" was written by czarist secret police.]
- * Dai, Jihong. "Chinese 'Economic Miracle' Is the Subject of Legend in China and the U.S." *Folklines* 3 (Mar.94):5.
- * Daniel, Missy. "John E. Mack." *Publishers Weekly* (18 Apr.94):40-41. [Mack's book on alien abductions.]
- Davey, Gwenda Beed, and Graham Seal, eds. *The Oxford Companion to Australian Folklore*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1993. [Entries on legends, modern legends, chain letters, reprographic folklore, etc.]
- * de Jager, Peter. "Countdown to Systems Disaster." *Journal of Systems Management* 45 (Feb. 1994):32-35. [The year 2000 will spell doomsday for computer systems unprepared for the date change.]
- * DeLeon, Clark. "Craig to Earth: No Mas." *Philadelphia Inquirer* (21 Apr.94):B2. [Craig Shergold card appeals.]
- * _____. "On the Other Hand . . . A Stunt That Will Not Die." *Philadelphia Inquirer* (6 May'94):B2. [Craig Shergold.]
- * "Documentary: Has Elvis Following Become Religion?" [Carlisle, PA] *Sentinel* (29 Jan.94):B5. [*The King and Me*, a British TV documentary, examines Elvis worship and the belief that Elvis is still alive.]
- * Doyle, Larry. "To Tell or Not to Tell." *Folklines* 3:7

(Feb.94):2. [A folklorist who moonlights as a small-town police dispatcher (or vice versa) receives a report of a black limousine tailgating a woman and flashing its lights; he debates whether to dismiss the incident or send an officer out to investigate.]

* Dvorak, John. "Trust Congress? Not with This Unbelievable Lair of Slop." *PC/Computing* 7 (Apr.94):88. [This April Fool's article spoofing U.S. government regulation of the Internet (cf. the legendary FCC modem tax) sparked indignant reactions from readers (see "What's Next" below).]

* Elliott, Dorinda. "Feeding Russia's Rumor Mill." *Newsweek* (4 Apr.94):35. [Rumors that Boris Yeltsin is ill.]

Emery, Robert A. "Was Susan Fenimore Cooper a Revenant?" *New York Folklore* 19 (Summer-Fall'93):103-5.

* "Fake in the Lake." *People Weekly* (28 Mar.94):109.

[Famous 1934 Loch Ness monster photo is a hoax.]

* Fedarko, Kevin. "Headache of State." *Time* (4 Apr.94):62. [Rumors about Boris Yeltsin's health.]

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* Foster, David. "Probably Only Mailbox Knows If Luck Is Linked to Chain Letters." *Hazleton [PA] Standard Speaker* (12 Feb.94):19. [St. Jude chain letter.]

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* Frean, Alexandra. "Hollywood Couple Advertise to Say Their Marriage Is Happy." [London] *Times* (6 May'94):1. [Richard Gere and Cindy Crawford take out a full-page ad (p. 12 in this issue of the *Times*) to refute rumors about their marriage and sexual orientation.]

Friedman, Jerome. *The Battle of the Frogs and Fairford's Flies: Miracles and the Pulp Press during the English Revolution*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993.

* Gaines, Patrice. "Armed with the Truth in a Fight for Lives." *Washington Post* (10 Apr.94):B5. [The daughter of African-American surgeon Charles R. Drew fights rumors that her father died after being denied medical treatment on the basis of race.]

* Gottschalk, Jack A. "Witchcraft and Other Supernatural Forces in American Justice." *UWLA Law Review* 24 (1993):119-45.

* Guido, Daniel W. "6-6-6 Is Devil of a Big Payout." [Lancaster, PA] *Sunday News* (27 Feb.94):A-1, A-4. [State lottery hits satanic number again.]

* Gwin, Marshall D. "Tales of the Rails: Workday Humor from the C&O Line." *Goldenseal* 20 (Spring 1994):56-60. [Jokes and humorous legends about railroad workers in West Virginia.]

* Harrington, Richard. "Long Live Paul-Is-Dead." *Washington Post* (9 Mar.94):C7. [Reviews a forthcoming book on the Paul McCartney death rumors.]

* Harris, Roy J., Jr. "'Earthlings Welcome' in Tiny Nevada Town Where Mysterious Aircraft Often Fly Overhead." *Wall Street Journal* (28 Dec.93):B1, B2. [Secret aircraft and UFOs at Area 51.]

Healey, Phil, and Rick Glanvill. *The Return of Urban Myths*. London: Virgin Books, 1993.

Hertenstein, Mike, and Jon Trott. *Selling Satan: The Tragic History of Mike Warnke*. Chicago: Cornerstone Press, 1993.

* Horne, John, and Alan Kramer. "German 'Atrocities' and Franco-German Opinion, 1914: The Evidence of German Soldiers' Diaries." *Journal of Modern History* 66 (1994):1-33. [Atrocity rumors during World War I.]

* Hubley, Jack. "Can We Put This Coyote Thing to Bed Now?" [Lancaster, PA] *Sunday News* (9 Jan.94):C-6. [Animal-release rumors.]

* Huyghe, Patrick. "The Great High-Rise Abduction." *Omni* (Apr.94):60+. [New York UFO abduction case.]

* _____. "Maine Event." *Audubon* 96 (May-June 1994):18,20. [Mountain lion sightings in Maine.]

* Irwin, Harvey J. "Childhood Trauma and the Origins of Paranormal Belief: A Constructive Replication." *Psychological Reports* 74 (1994):107-11.

* Isikoff, Michael. "Conspiracy Theorists Find Foster Case Hard to Resist." *Washington Post* (13 Mar.94):A10. [The suicide of deputy White House counsel Vince Foster raises speculation over who else might be involved.]

* "Jail for 'satanic' murder youths." *The Scotsman* (10 Feb.94):9. [3 teens in Mühlhausen, Germany, murder a classmate who threatened to expose their "cult."]

* Jones, Malcolm R., Jr. "Speaking of the Devil." *Newsweek* Apr.94):59. [Review of Lawrence Wright's book (below).]

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