

# THE COBRAS NOSE

Vol. 10

Does anybody know the Mountain View credo? MCC's? BYU's? The U of U's?

17 Sept, 1999

*(annotated edition)*

## The Cobra's Notes...

On certain Saturday nights, I've taken to walking from my house to Mill Avenue. For those of you unfamiliar with the relative proximity of my house to Mill Avenue, you should come and visit me at my house and I would *drive* you in my car to Mill. I would never expect you to walk the colossal distance as I do, as it is far too far for the average mortal to manage. Anyhoo, in a recent perambulation, I was just passing under the ASU footbridge (the side where the neon lights are, though they are never lit anymore I wonder why) when I heard a hissing noise and naturally my first thought was "giant anaconda," which was swiftly followed by, "don't be ridiculous giant anaconda live in the Amazon," and by the time I got to my third thought, which was "well it *could* be a giant anaconda that escaped from the biology building which (after all) *is* just over there," the actual source of the noise stepped into my path and it was not a giant anaconda, though coincidentally enough she was recently returned from the Amazon, but former **COBRA'S NOSE** editor pro tem Bunny Gonzales. (The preceding run on sentence is dedicated to Pam Woodward—good luck in your new location; the overtly pretentious word "perambulation" is dedicated to Andrew Norris.)

You remember Bunny, the smarty pants who ran off to South America a few months back to study the Yanomamo. Well I told her then it was a bad idea, but did she listen? No. But this didn't seem like a good time to rub it in. Bunny was a mess.

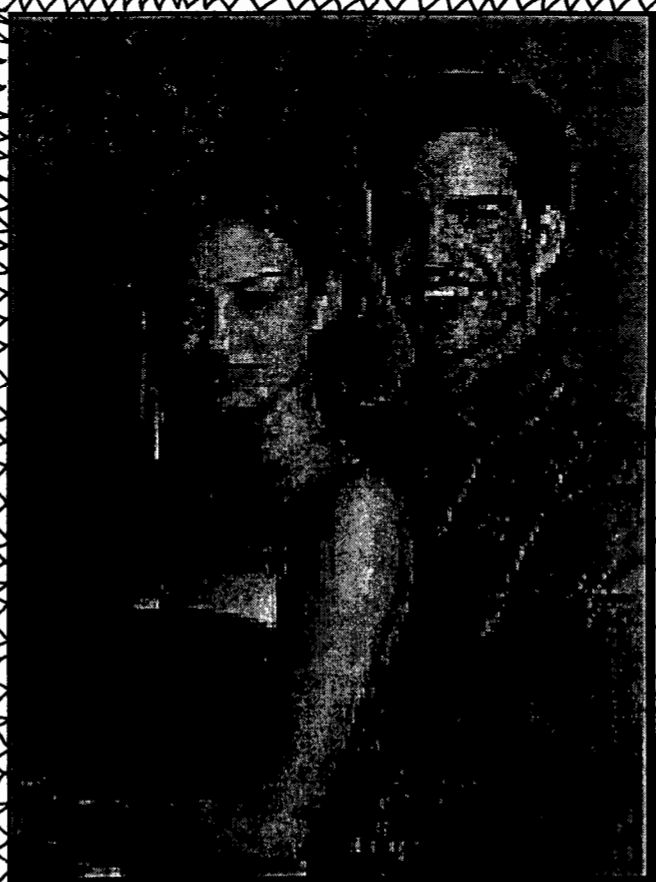
"Bunny!" I said, "You have mud in your hair."

Bunny sat right down on the pavement. "I didn't used to have mud in my hair!" she wailed. I held out my hand and told her to come with me to the Coffee Plantation and I would buy her a warm nourishing meal. "No cah- cah-...cah-....," she stammered. I deduced that the word "coffee" inspired upsetting memories of South America in poor Bunny, and dictated to myself a list of words to be stricken from my vocabulary when I was in her presence, including coffee, chocolate, mocha, cocaine, and anaconda (they come up more often than you'd think).

"It isn't called that anymore," I lied. "The name was changed to House of Chai. That's the trendy drink now." I'm not sure what chai is, though it makes me think of Christmas every time I take a sip of Pat's (which I do every time he orders it). Anyway, it sounds Asian rather than South American and that seemed to have a soothing effect on Bunny. She chattered and shuddered all the way to House of Chai. I didn't even try to interpret the palaver, but concentrated on finding a table outside, which I did, next to The Duck Shop. There I installed Bunny, safely away from the misters (about which she was also phobic), and told her to sit quietly and blend. I didn't think that would be a problem; many denizens of that plaza have mud in their hair.

I went inside and ordered two milks (you don't hear too much about the cows of South America other than the ones that work for McDonalds and are eating up the rain forest, and they could be considered a nice touch of Americana), and warm nourishing food for Bunny. It doesn't really matter what you order at House of Chai as you basically get what they choose to bring and even if you complain and wait another twenty minutes or so they'll get your order wrong again, though sometimes they bring you extra food that you didn't order and are nice about letting you keep it especially if you already started eating it thinking they just got your order way, way wrong when your own incorrect order arrives. (The preceding run on sentence is dedicated to Scott Rowley.) So anyway, with milks and straws in hands, I returned to Bunny who was somewhat more composed. She was even drawing little pictures of the tribal type tattoos that adorned the bodies of about two thirds of the passersby, and making notes. When I set down my load, she immediately grabbed a straw, ripped off half the paper, put the naked end in her mouth and shot the other half at my face. It hit the middle of my forehead.

"You see," she said. "I could hunt with a blow gun, no matter what that jerk Napoleon Chagnon and all those jerk Yanomamo say." Bunny launched into her story, about how the project leader Chagnon was such a gentleman at first, but as they approached the camp he was gradually transformed into a male chauvinist pig and ultimately she found herself carrying all of his bags. The situation did not improve at the camp, where she was ordered to pound native plants into pulp with



Because, among other things, my roommate's scanner is not working and playing well with others, namely me, the pics in this issue look like crap. Just squint and deal with it. --ed. Oh, this is Pat and Shalom, see page two.

river rocks while Chagnon and the male Yanomamo snorted stringy green snot inducing hallucinogens and hassled her about adopting native dress. "Come on, baby," they said, "*nobody* wears a shirt in the Amazon." Bunny's tale of exploitation and abuse went on for hours and made me glad I didn't long to study any cultures more exotic than could be found in southern Canada or Tech Support. But finally she arrived in Tempe, Arizona just before the start of the ASU fall semester, in desperate need of a project to get her back into the swing of things academically.

The timing couldn't have been better as the editor of vol. 9, who shall be nameless here because she is lazy and I am mad at her, spent August sitting in a darkened room reading about the Mothman and was going to be fired again anyway. So I offered Bunny the job and she accepted on the condition that I let her use my shower and come up with some sort of pseudonym for her so nobody would know how far she had fallen and how fast. So Bunny Gonzales shall henceforth be called Bambi Lopez, Editor Pro Tem for vol. 10.

Please give her all the patience and respect you have shown me in the past (may God give her strength).

*Sharon McGovern*

Sharon C. McGovern  
Publisher/ Cobra-in-Chief

# Back to School

I've gotten to a stage in life when the words "Back to School" make an impression only when they are followed by the word "Sale", and then only when I need pencils. Some, and I am specifically thinking of you Mom, might say, "It's about time." But sometimes I miss the old paradigms, like the thought that by the end of Fall Semester I could count on sliding down the steep unshoveled sidewalks of 500 S. on my ass on a regular basis. Not that the sliding itself was such a pleasure, but this was for years a meaningful way to mark the procession of the seasons.

Another way was to get invited to my high school reunion.

How clearly I remember receiving the notification of the impending event! I opened it, sussed out its content, then let it drop it to the floor with the Visa applications. I never applied one serious thought toward going. Why would I want to travel a considerable distance at considerable expense and then try to justify my loser self now when I never was able to as a high school student? At least in high school I looked good on paper, but now, yoy. Others in my family have been more receptive to the whole reunion idea. Mom for instance has shown a lot of school spirit in the past few years. She has gone to innumerable lunches dedicated to planning her reunions, which seem to occur every two or three months. Her motives seem purely to involve a genuine love and concern for her classmates. As a sort of bizarre corollary, she also attends lots of funerals.

My brother Pat's motives were somewhat less pure—he just wanted to see how bald and fat his former classmates had gotten. He was not disappointed. "Remember Kevin Noose? The class president who thought he was such a stud? Fat." The verdict was rendered over and over in Pat's reunion recap, sometimes with "and bald" tagged onto the end, or a "so" tucked in front of "fat".

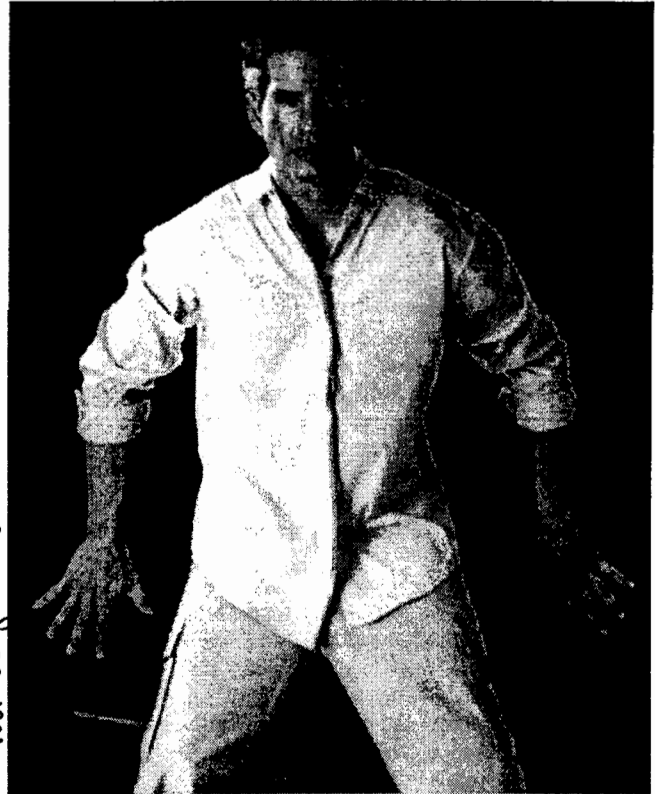
Pat prepared carefully for the event. As previously reported, he booked the beautiful Shalom far in advance. More recently, he stuck up an association with local clothier Fiducia (call 877 FIDUCIA for a free catalogue—Pat's in it looking all shiny and surly), so he had a state of the art outfit on loan for the evening. The outfit itself was a uniform light gray, but Pat wore it with such elan that you'd never mistake him for Honey from the old "Doonsbury" strips. In short, goodlooking Pat with a goodlooking date wearing goodlooking clothes was clad in the high school reunion equivalent of bulletproof armor. Let's face it—this is the kind of venue where values can get seriously out of whack, and even the likes of Bill Gates and Mother Theresa risk ridicule and noogies. That's why the words "high school" are in the name.

Unhappily, I find myself in a position in which every week day is a mini high school reunion. That's right, I work with *somebody from my high school*. This isn't some cool Jobs-Wosniak collaboration, I take this guy's calls. And what calls! At least several a day from his wife, plus both parents check in on a regular basis. Once his mom asked if I would look up her other son's work number. He also works for IKON and calls and drops in from time to time. Anyway, I gave her one of my have you gone insane pauses (which I have perfected over time) and eventually she got the point and went away. As if that weren't enough, this guy immediately took up with The Pill and was entrenched in her clique for quite a while. (The turnover in The Pill's clique is absolute, but not as quick as you might expect.

Anyway, new employees arrive on a regular basis and she's there waiting for them, just like a spider.) He's also engaged in some sly behavior that I'm not at liberty to discuss, but trust me it's unbecoming a Toro.

Like everybody else in the building he's sort of like my boss, and a reminder of how far I have not come more persistent than even Mr Enigma and my entire family. I have just to look at him to feel little pinpricks of shame.

On the other hand, you know what else about him? Fat. ΦΚΦΚΦ



**Back to School Fashion!** All the cool kids are wearing fashion by Fiducia. Call 877 FIDUCIA for their catalogue so you can be cool too. *And up yours!*

## Pharmacology

As you may recall, in a recent edition of **THE COBRA'S NOSE**, Janet "Got a Job" formerly "Blight on Society" Herman sent out a piteous plea for a cure for the dread ailment Hospitalphobia. Well, what do you know! (Not much, you? HaHa!) loyal correspondent and wandering spirit Garrett Wilson has an answer, which is, "be *really* injured when you go [to the hospital] and then they drug you up to high heaven, thereby making for a most pleasant stay!" This is from a man who knows. Did I ever tell you about when he kicked his frozen toes into his ski boot so hard that all the nails turned black and fell off? Yoy, that story gets to me. In fact, Garrett, if you have any pictures of your blackened nails or nailless feet, I'd be thrilled to publish them. I think **THE NOSE** could put JAMA out of business in six months if it tried.

Aside from his extensive pharmaceutical knowledge, Garrett has the amazing ability to **jump** on top of a desk from a standing position. It's so cool, you guys. Nobody has jumped on my desk for the longest time. I miss it. I myself don't have the nerve to jump on top of anything as I suffer from visions of my feet catching on the edge of whatever it is and falling like Gulliver on my gulliver. Does anybody have a cure for that? ΦΚΦΚΦ

I hate you, Dallas

# Book Making 512



I'm a star!

I am not a gambler. The activity preys on two of my most basic fears: uncertainty and losing money. Not that I haven't had quite agreeable experiences with gambling. For instance, there was the time I completely humiliated a co-worker (whom I'll call "Byron", as that's the jackal's name) in a bet as to whether *The Adventures of Robin Hood* was made in 1939, won the best picture Oscar, and was colorized (*God*). So I only won fifty cents. It's the *principle*. Another time as part of an unscheduled activity from the family reunion a couple of years back, I went to a casino with my cool Arredondo cousins. Under Rocky's close tutelage (I did exactly what he told me to do), I parleyed twenty dollars into thirty-one playing electronic blackjack. With the satisfaction of a job well done he went off to play real poker with a dealer and cards and everything while Kelley and I sought out the nickel poker machines. Minutes later, I had lost forty cents and was a nervous wreck. How *could* I? How could I have lost *forty cents*?! The question rang in my brain.

You see—I just don't have the Stuff.

I work with people who have Stuff. Two in particular are stuffed with Stuff (among other stuff). To protect their identities in the event **THE COBRA'S NOSE** falls into the wrong hands, I shall call them Mr Enigma and Mr. Flintstone. Together they composed an elaborate document which pertains to one of this weekend's football games, Dallas vs. Washington, Redskins vs. Cowboys, Blue and Silver vs. ~~Maroon~~ and Gold, Hatfields vs. McCoys—take your pick. I don't pretend to understand ~~each and every detail~~, but I do find the contract remarkable in its way and thought I'd share.

## Dallas vs. Washington

- Teams are straight up. No points.
- You must win the Football game to collect.
- Winner of the game wins \$50.

## Bonuses

- If Champ Bailey intercepts a pass, Mr. Flintstone pays an additional \$25.
- If any combo of receivers catches four or more touchdowns, Mr Enigma pays an additional \$25.
- If either team has a player who cries on the sidelines, that team's supporter (loser) pays an additional \$10.
- If either team wins by more than twenty (20) points, loser pays an additional \$25.
- If either team is shut out with zero (0) points, the loser pays an additional \$25.
- If a team calls for a REPLAY and loses, loser pays an additional \$10.
- If a defensive lineman recovers a fumble or intercepts and runs it in for a TD, loser pays an additional \$10.

Misters Enigma and Flintstone signed below with the following caveats: "This is in no way relative to United States Currency. IKON doesn't support gambling."

As stated above, I'm not sure I comprehend every little bit of this covenant, but I think the winner should take me to the casino and teach me how to play Keno. ΦΚΦΚΦ

## Comparative Studies

So I'm watching the MTV Music Video Awards the other day because I'd heard Nine Inch Nails was on it. Did I hear this from *The New York Times*, or USA Today, or any of the so called serious arts and leisure journals? *No*. I heard from Pat. Fortunately, he went on to tell me Nine Inch Nails would be performing, not presenting, which was a huge relief. I mean, can you imagine Trent Reznor--heavyweight champion of rock and roll anguish--ambling onstage with Britney Spears or one of her ilk, flashing peace and love gestures and smiles to the audience, awkwardly pausing at the podium while the cheers diminish, reading some weak joke off a teleprompter, then interrupting Britney or whomever it is with a compliment on her breasts which he ogles until the commercial break? No of course you can't! The whole idea is just too awful to contemplate.

But I found myself contemplating some other awful ideas.

Not at first. The band was arrayed on a spare set with black metal risers and arches, dressed in low key bondage attire. Trent was in the middle, clinging to the mike that obscured his face. But what could be seen looked good. Piercing eyes, muscular arms protruding from a sleeveless shirt, nice short hair which is new for Trent.

He began to croon a selection from his quickly upcoming (well, we've heard *that* before, but this time it looks like it will happen) cd, *The Fragile*. Its refrain is "I won't let you fall apart," which is rather sweet. He reportedly co-authored a whole bunch of songs with Burt Bacharach (of all people), recorded them, then shelved the project because he sounded like Billy Joel (of all people). After that, therapy (not an unreasonable reaction to sounding like Billy Joel). Now, this.

The camera pulled back, and hmm...Trent's looked a little chunky. But that's okay. The event was televised from the Metropolitan Opera House which has seen far worse. Besides, it's still Trent and Trent's awesome. But jeez, with that haircut he looks a little like...David Arquette? No no no! How can I sit here picturing Trent Reznor of Nine Inch Nails bouncing up and down shouting, "C-A-L-L-A-T-T"? Stop it! Stop it!

Industrial music may never be the same. ΦΚΦΚΦ

Just SQUINT, OK?



What happened to you, Trent?

## Home Ec

Renowned gourmand Scott Rowley's recipe "Vodka Refresher" from vol. 9 contained an inaccuracy. Apparently the thing is supposed to be blended like a shake. In my own defense, before Ms. Lopez starts with the eye rolling, there was no mention of this blending until well *after* the distribution of the edition in which the recipe was contained. If I had known about this blending, I probably would have rejected the recipe as being too high tech. But now I'm thinking that it or some variation could be a marketing bonanza. Can you imagine? *Vodka Smoothies*. Frothy high potency potables served in those brightly colored, environmentally friendly biodegradable Styrofoam cups from which so many motorists innocently sip whilst speeding down the road. You know a lot of those Zuka type beverages are halfway there as it is, served as they are with *wheat germ* and *grass*. Even better, a lot of those concoctions pass themselves off as breakfast. Can you imagine a better way to begin the day than with a tasty, liquor laden frozen yogurt treat with a cute name? Maybe a *Zombie Zippy*? A *Lushy Slushy*? A *Ginger Snap*? You get the idea, now one of you start the franchise. Put "Cobra" in the name and the **NOSE** on the newsstand I'll hardly charge you at all for the idea. ΦΚΦΚΦ

## Tuition

Soon after vol. 9 of **THE COBRA'S NOSE** hit mailboxes everywhere, I got an e-mail from Sister Melanie Calkins which described her feelings of guilt at being called a "subscriber" to this amazing newsletter, which would imply she had paid some sort of fee for the privilege as she would when dealing with say the people from *Ensign*, when she had never contributed so much as a penny. Right away, I liked where this epistle was going. Sister Calkins then expressed concern that if she did salve her conscience by sending cash, check, or money order to the Cobra Foundation, the funds would be immediately misappropriated to take the staff of same to dinner at Jack in the Box (apparently she wasn't planning to send very much), or some such non-Cobra purchase. "I WORKED WITH YOU, SHARON," she wrote, "I KNOW HOW MUCH SCOTCH TAPE YOU USE."

Unhappily, her fears were not without foundation. The one and only person who has contributed financially to this enterprise (aside from the unwitting assistance by my employers) is my brother Chuck, whose beneficence paid for a nice little breakfast at IHOP. Thank you, Chuck! But if you are bothered by inner voices, which I truly believe belong to God and His/Her/Their ambassadors, and wish to Make a Difference, then give the gift of postage stamps. Especially if they are the cool kind that you have to stand in line at the post office to get. Postage is the number one drain on Cobra resources, way ahead of time and imagination. So (*cops cops cops* . . .), that's what you should do. They're relatively cheap and easy to come by, and even though they can technically be used as legal tender, it's really hard to get the folks at Burger King to go for it. ΦΚΦΚΦ



Poetry Corner: How many poets can you identify?

## American Verse 212

You know what drives me nuts? It's when I work and slave over **THE COBRA'S NOSE** and then hear that somebody's favorite part, oh it was really too hilarious for words, was written by somebody other than me. Not that I don't cherish and adore my contributors, because I do, but it's like loaning somebody a copy of *Who's Next* hoping that that will *finally* lead them to appreciate the genius of Pete Townshend then they come back and tell you the best song on it is "My Wife" which was written by John Entwistle (does this sound at all familiar, Mark?). Anyway, our favorite ectomorph and his merry crew have won some hearts and minds with their choice epigrammatical designations, so I asked them to donate more. The difference with these contributions is I know to whom they refer and am happy to share the information.

- The Crown Prince of Makes me Wince (Byron, grrr.)
- The Big Toe of in the Know (This is what you should call new subscriber Steve Sampson if you ever happen to meet him. He got the title after doing exceptionally well on some test. To tell you what the test was all about would either be to reveal a big time IKON secret or to take an interest in what goes on around this place. I forget which, but neither is acceptable. Also, Steve doesn't like his title to be abbreviated. If you say to him, "Hey, Big Toe!" or "Good morning, Mr. Toe!" you will be preemptively corrected.)

This list may seem short to you, but I'll have you know these are *gems* and we simply cannot expect them to pop up everyday.

Okay, we can expect one more to pop up because I have an order in to rename a certain pear shaped, goateed co-worker with whom I am forced to interact every work day *before seven a.m.* as he prances all around asking, "How are we today?" and "Are we having fun yet?"—phrases deserving of a constitutional ban in the United States of America. Hey, let's get that ball rolling today. Call or write your Congressional Representative today, and then maybe those people I heard about on NPR who make a living by collecting signatures on petitions.

Or you could just call the ectomorph directly and tell him to get crackin' with that title (or as he would say, "tittle", HaHa!), because if I don't develop a sense of humor about prancing pear shaped goatee boy like quick I swear to you he will end up on a *slab*. The ectomorph (well, not so ectomorphic lately if you know what I mean)'s extension is 163. Oh, and his name is James. ΦΚΦΚΦ





(cont. from page 5) ambitions, and only the sketchiest of plans for the future—hardly role model material. And yet, Ferris was a model of sorts for the Slacker generation—widely criticized for their aimlessness but seldom praised for their choice to value personal relationships over career direction, and the first in American History without the expectation that they would be financially better off than their parents. In fact, the quest for affluence takes a hit in *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*. Mr. and Mrs. Bueller, while generally benevolent, are too distracted by their jobs to notice their son's chicanery and their daughter's discontent. Even Ferris was amazed by how easily he faked them out with a phantom illness: "Incredible—one of the worst performances of my career and they never doubted it for a second."

The parents of Ferris's friend Cameron have the same symptoms but to a more extreme degree. Or as Ferris puts it, "I used to think my family was the only one with weirdness in it, then I saw how Cameron lived...His house is like a museum: very beautiful, and very cold, and you're not allowed to touch anything." The literal and metaphorical coldness of Cameron's surroundings have a detrimental physical effect on him, a concept that would be embraced more and more generally until now it is commonly accepted. The major trope of his parents' value system is his father's Ferrari (significantly, it is red, the color of the other villain in the movie Ed Rooney's hair). When the car first comes to harm, Cameron mimics a suicide and Ferris "saves" him. But Cameron's plunge into the pool is more along the lines of a baptism and rebirth, and Ferris is revealed not as savior but a catalyst to Cameron's reincarnation into self-confident maturity. The car at that point in the film was, like Ed Rooney, not permanently damaged—it just had a few rough miles put on it. But as Cameron's issues with his parents are more serious even than Ferris's prospects at graduating from high school, that which has become emblematic of them must be more thoroughly destroyed. The car is eventually propelled into a ravine and pronounced dead by Ferris, whereas Rooney gets off with a gigantic dose of largely self-induced humiliation. And neither Ferris nor Cameron indicates any desire at all to follow in their parents' footsteps.

Virtually endemic to movies about white kids from wealthy families are accusations of racism and classism. There may be something to this. Minorities and poor people are so seldom glimpsed in *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* that their every appearance smacks of tokenism. We could to a large extent dismiss the charges with Ferris's own words, "Isms in my opinion are not good. A person should not believe in an ism—he should believe in himself," but with one final observation. Ferris's bitter sister Jeanie finally finds if not love then release in her interaction with a stoned detainee she meets at the police station. They kiss and it's the Cinderella story in reverse: rich white girl has a fling with a commoner and is charmed by the possibilities of downward mobility.

Okay, one more observation. Jeanie has spent the entire movie furious because her brother ditches school and gets away with it. Then the stoner guy tells her, "You could ditch school," and her life is changed. For although *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* is on the surface the story of a lark, it actually extols the virtues of self-determination. That's a quality Ferris has in spades. His determination to live life to the fullest is so all consuming it hardly matters if he ends up, as Cameron predicts, a "fry cook on Venus," he will be happy and content. Cameron himself decides, "I am not going to sit on my ass as the events that affect me unfold to determine the course of my life." Jeanie chooses to cover Ferris's butt rather than ~~wait for him~~ <sup>help his chaps</sup>, and maybe will pick up some tips on ditching school in exchange.

And damn it, I might just call in sick to work tomorrow. ΦΚΦΚΦ

## American Verse (Lab)

Well, your calls and letters (I trust there would have been calls and letters) are no longer necessary as James the Ectomorph came through with an apt "tittle" for prancing pear shaped goatee boy: The Mad Hatter of Mindless Chatter. He even went so far as to road test the name, and all agreed that it was catchier and appropriate than his given name which is Joe or Bill or Bob or something.

As a bonus, James offered an unassigned "tittle": The Lead Dog of Brain Smog. That's a good name, but not a perfect fit for anyone around here. At least not anybody who currently annoys me enough to rename. Maybe one of you could use it. Let me know and I'll make sure the royalty checks get to the right places. ΦΚΦΚΦ

## End Nose...

Bambi rushed over to my table at the Coffee Plantation with a computer disc and a bunch of papers that had been folded then torn at the corner in an only partially successful effort to keep them together. Thoroughly over her coffee phobia, she was dragging a latte IV behind her. "Listen, I've got to go," she said.

In an effort to put bad anthropology memories behind her, Bambi is taking a different direction in school and has apparently of her own free will signed up for the worst school schedule I've ever heard of: Calculus 212, Accounting 111, and Computer Information Sciences 105. Some of us choose our own hells. She says she wants to go into business, especially one that will lead to the exploitation of the South American rain forest, but I don't think it will last.

There has been a movement towards self-education and improvement around IKON lately, mostly taking the form of quizzes found on the internet. There was one about Purity, which I aced, one that predicted I would live to an extremely old age if I'm not abducted and killed by aliens first, another that declared Mr Enigma the most "balanced" person in the building (which as a result immediately fell into disrepute), and one that screened for "Un-telligence", or basic survival savvy. I just bombed that one, but perhaps not too surprisingly several employees in Tech Support scored off the charts (I have asked them to escort me to my car at night, but in retrospect perhaps that wasn't such a good idea after all). Anyway, I hadn't done so badly since the "Test Your Emotional IQ" debacle. I have learned the following about myself: my life is boring, but as a result I should live a really long time unless one of the guys in Tech Support kills me for sport or because I wasn't sufficiently empathetic about some emotional dealie of his.

On the other hand, I have officially started feeling sorry for myself because I might have to move again, but I'll keep you posted on that.

In the next edition, I plan to resurrect "Travel & Tourism" as I will have gone places by then. Also, we will hear from Veronica Zolotoochin, who just missed the text saturation point for this issue of **THE COBRAS' NOSE**. I could have taken out a picture and put it in, but I didn't dare press it because as Pam says, "You do include a lot of words, my dear, and they're single spaced." She also says things like, "I think scorpions are a combination of spiders and lobsters" and "bladder meridian," so maybe I should have just stuck the article in. Oh well, next time, I promise. I've run out of space, so you'll have to refer to your envelopes or a past edition to get my physical mailing address, but if you choose to e-mail (which seems to be the favored form of expression anyway), you can reach me at either [shmcgovern@ikon.com](mailto:shmcgovern@ikon.com) or [thecobrasnose@yahoo.com](mailto:thecobrasnose@yahoo.com).

Now, be good and stay in school.



## Ferris Bueller You're My Hero

Certain movies have a totemic significance to the audiences, particularly the young audiences, which first view and embrace them. They are not merely popular, nor do they simply, cannily depict their era; they capture the *zeitgeist*, and even predict the psychic direction that generation will take. For example, in the fifties *Rebel Without a Cause* not only detected the baseline of angst felt by the middle class youth of America, but also predicted a union of the disaffected that would result in unconventional family structures and rebellions with causes. A decade or so later, *Easy Rider* emblemized freewheeling, youthful independence, and diagnosed the germ of destruction contained within that culture—drugs. In the seventies, *Saturday Night Fever* marked the apogee of the Disco Age. At the end of the movie, the characters seemed to have intuited as much, in the music, in their lives, it was all downhill from there.

The eighties had such a film, a cultural touchstone whose impact still reaches and resonates with the former youth of that era. That film is *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*.

*Ferris* was attacked in its day by critics as a meandering fantasy which when it dealt with social issues did so in a circumspect and flippant way. Which is true. These just aren't problems, no more than were mournful teenagers in *Rebel Without a Cause*, hippies in *Easy Rider*, or the Bee Gees in *Saturday Night Fever*—they are their *sine qua non*. *Ferris's* (and *Ferris's*) so called flaws are precisely what made the movie significant to its original audience and what identify it as a significant cultural landmark of the eighties. But for fun, let's have a look at the allegations.

*Ferris Bueller's Day Off* absolutely is a fantasy, God love it,

with only occasional nods toward plausibility in the Rube Goldberg contrivances *Ferris* conjures to enable his escape. *Ferris* himself is possessed of nearly supernatural charm and luck, a sort of Gilgal to his peers. Or as the villain Dean Ed Rooney's assistant puts it, "The sportos, the motorheads, geeks, sluts, bloods, waists, dweebies, dickheads—they all adore him. They think he's a righteous dude." He has followers, acolytes, a cult. The influence he wields terrifies Rooney; "What's so terrible about a kid like *Ferris* is he gives good kids bad ideas. Last thing I need in my career is fifteen hundred *Ferris Bueller* disciples running around these halls. He jeopardizes my ability to effectively govern this student body." He is fighting a war against charisma. He is fighting...the *Reagan Administration*. Think back to the Reagan years and the phenomenal personal popularity he inspired even amongst those most negatively affected by his economic policies. And even when his foes sensed something fishy about him and his reign, even when they thought they had him dead to rights in the Iran-Contra affair, for instance, the charges against him melted away like *Ferris's* absentee record on Rooney's po Reagan's magical administration is even alluded to in Economics Teacher Ben Stein's use of a quote from then Vice President George Bush about "something-d-o-o economics, 'Voodoo' economics." Ultimately, Reagan's crimes like *Ferris's* just didn't seem to matter to their constituency, and nothing their horrified critics did to change that seemed to make a speck of difference.

Another not unreasonable charge critics made against *Ferris* concerned its characters' lack of motivation. Students fall asleep in class, or ditch school altogether, have no (cont. on page 6)

*This is Ismael catching the winning touchdown. When Mr E. saw it a blood vessel nearly burst out of his head. The pic was donated by Mr F. If he happens to ask, tell him "refarions" means "covered in honor".*

### Book Making 512 (Lab)

If you're anything like me, though not actually me because I know, you don't know who won the Dallas-Washington game. Well, it was Dallas, 42-35, though I am given to understand the competition was more exciting than the score would indicate, heh heh. (Sports humor—not my thing.) Really not. I have learned that Dallas-Washington is the most anticipated game of the year and The total loss to Mr Enigma was \$85 as the following occurred: *this was the most thrilling game imaginable*

- His team lost (\$50).
- Various combos of receivers caught four or more touchdowns (\$25).
- The REPLAY thing (\$10).

*But at one point, Mr E was up \$100, then his loser team lost.*

I was present when certain details of the game were discussed, but I mostly heard them as, "Whah whah whah whah whah whah whaaaaaah;" like the adults' voices in a Charlie Brown cartoon. I remember Mr. Flintstone said something about some guy named "Ismael" and I swear I thought he was making a reference to *Moby Dick*. Later I learned Ismael is a player on the Dallas Team. I don't think I'll take him seriously, though, until he does a guest appearance on *King of the Hill*. ΦΚΦΚΦ

