# THE COBRA'S NOSE

Vol. 11 I hate the living. 15 Oct., 1999

#### The Cobra's Notes...

I gave a hot fresh copy of Vol. 10 of THE COBRA'S NOSE to Audrey and told her there was a theme to it, see if she could guess what it was. I was thinking "Back to School", but she is attuned to the melancholy. "Is it 'Disappointment'?" she asked, a day or so later. Disappointment? There's a hell of a theme. Maybe this month I'll shoot for ennui. I hardly dare tell her I got the amazing new Nine Inch Nails cd The Fragile, because you know she'll be hanging around my desk pestering me--"Please can't I borrow it? Just one disc? Two songs? Come on." I should cut her a break as she has been very helpful about scanning pictures for me. Especially since Vol. 10, in which, as you might remember, the quality of graphics was, shall we say, sucky beyond belief. You see, she is a graphic artist and it pains her to contemplate what sort of atrocious illustrations I might unloose upon the unsuspecting public. That is my theory anyway, for there is much about Audrey I do not understand. For instance, she claims a genuine affection for The Pill. (!?) Mr Enigma also claims affection for The Pill, but he's perverse. I can't begin to imagine what Audrey sees in her.

Speaking of people who annoy me (not you Audrey), I just received the following e-mail from The Pain: Matt called in and he will not be here ill. This is the person who handles my health and vacation benefits.

Anyway, reaction to Vol. 10 was less hostile than I had feared. That is aside from the "Disappointment" thing. For instance, Pat commented, "It didn't suck." Andrew tentatively offered, "It was informative." Leslie wasn't allowed to read it because Shalom was on the front page, and Lauren unerringly singled out for praise the one joke I didn't publicly admit wasn't mine—the "Lushy Slushy" is Pat's invention.

If you're in the market for a hero and role model, may I suggest either my sensational Aunt Toni or renowned gourmand Scott Rowley who both donated stamps to the Cobra Cause. To a lesser extent, you may admire Janet Herman who e-mailed a virtual prostate cancer stamp, which should insure her edition of the newsletter should virtually reach her home. By the way, she did at some point visit the Emergency Room (I'm assuming for purposes of health rather than recreation) and was administered Demerol. As Garrett predicted, she liked it a lot.

The feature of this edition of **THE COBRA's NOSE** is Pat's fa fa fa fa fashion show. The coverage is rather extensive. Usually when faced with an article of this length, Pat rolls his eyes and staggers as if struck on the head with a mallet, then tells me what I need to do is punch up the edition with short, *funny* articles. When he is this prominently featured, however, he's willing to make an exception. Also, I sort of intimated that I'd write about my travels, but found the time is not yet right. My recollections will be seasoned by time, and when I start remembering jamming with Pete Townshend and how I inspired the various Irish factions to just get along, I know you'll want to read about it.

Now, let's get on with it. But catch me on page six for more scraps of news and gossip.



### Fashion Pat and the Funky Bunch

I was sitting in Mr Enigma's cube one day when he said, "I like your shirt. Did it cost a hundred dollars?" Which was sweet of him to say, especially as he has been fearless in the past about telling me when an outfit makes me look fat. But the thought of me paying a hundred dollars for a shirt ranks right up there with my sister Lauren's accusation that I got up in the middle of the night and made bread in her kitchen. Which is to say, utterly ridiculous. The shirt that I personally would pay a hundred dollars for is as yet undreamed of in my philosophy, though I know the opportunity exists because I saw some costly little numbers on display last Friday night at the Fiducia Fashion Show.

And what can I say but Fiducia is not hard to figure out. Oh. the designers may have their eccentric whimsies, like keeping a barber around (Howard Hughes, one may recall, did the same), but they are not a complicated ball of wax. On Friday, they proved that with a collection so purely sexy that when the model Patrique came swinging down the runway in navy polka-dot leather jeans and a matching bikini top, one could almost swear the retail bosses in the front row were lifted right out of their shoes. The grins! Well, all right. Fiducia is one company who knows how to work within a narrow groove--good old corn-fed American sexiness. The thing is, you can imagine people wearing these clothes, I which can't be said of a lot of what goes down a runway. The look is exactly like the clean, racy minimalism seen on fashion editors -- skinny pants, sexy heels. Except Fiducia had the good sense to view it as a woman from the Midwest might--from a safe distance. Okay, I confess: I plagiarized the above from the New York Times coverage of the Ralph Lauren show. But I don't know how to write about haute couture (which means "high sewing," by the way, which could win you about a hundred dollars of Ben Stein's money), and Pat strenuously objected to my characterization of the models' make up as being Oompa-Loompaesque, so I thought I'd steal from a source not likely to find out and print some pictures from a source not likely to mind to give (cont. on pg. 5)

## There Is No Spoon

There is trouble brewing here at IKON PDF, don't tell the stockholders.

As with the Creamer Crises of last April, the locus of the discontent is managerial tight fistedness. You may think you can relate to this problem. Like my beloved Aunt Jan who was complaining about a miserly official where she works. Now I'm sure in the outside world where you all live and work my aunt's story (sorry, I don't remember the plot, but I think it had something to do with furniture) would stand as a paragon of parsimony, but here at IKON we adhere to a stricter standard of penury. So I told my aunt about the double whammy the high security supply closet absorbed last month when a disposable plastic serving spoon and a kitchen sponge went missing. Now, I like my boss and she has treated me well (and I'm not just writing that because I think a double agent is at large in the building, sharing classified Cobra slander with its targets), but every now and then she goes into full blown Captain Queeg mode.

"A sponge and a serving spoon," she hissed, like Jim Garrison speculating about the grassy knoll, "What do you suppose happened to them?"

"Well, I think the sponge was probably used to wipe something gross and got thrown away," I said, "and the spoon was probably broken by somebody who was using it to scoop ice cream."

"Well, that's a good story," she said dubiously, as if I had just implicated magical gnomes. But she did produce a new sponge. A day or two later, the original sponge reappeared, looking somewhat gray and unsavory, so I tossed it--yes I did, you read it here first—and I will stand by my action. But please don't tell. The serving spoon was never recovered.

This was but prelude to the table spoon troubles.

Here's the story from the top. IKON has a limited amount of metal tableware which is occasionally supplemented with plastic ware left over from catered events or other social functions. Now, with people being what they are (especially if they are Byron), the metal utensils tend to end up sitting in peoples' desk drawers, cars, and homes, while the plastic gets thrown away due to the widespread belief that washing and reusing it is stupid and unnecessary. As a result, whenever more than a few people want to use the utensils at a time, the competition for flatware gets intense, and the conversation regarding the shortages gets catty. Spoons are especially in demand because the employees like to snack on leftovers from the ice cream socials and sometimes bring cold cereal or soup to eat and to splash all over microwave without any thought whatsoever about wiping away the mess, and always to leave the bowls half filled with stinking tepid water in the sink for the kitchen fairies to transport to the dishwasher especially if they are Byron. Now...where was I? Oh, yes—catty conversation.

Most of that is of the typical, "dumb, cheap-ass company" variety in which I'm sure you've all participated at some point in your working lives. Lately, though, a note of activism has crept in to the discussions. "I know what we could do to register our protest," said James the Ectomorph (not those exact words, though he does talk like this) on one occasion. "We could boycott the ice cream social tomorrow!" "No. Absolutely not. I am not willing to do that," was the answer he got from Bob in Sales, who is not a *vive la revolution* kind of guy. Undaunted, James grabbed a fistful of plastic knives (the only plentiful utensil) and threw them in the trash; the one with the open top, not the one with the modest flaps. "You are just asking for trouble, doing that," I told him. "I WANT TROUBLE!" he cried, and pounded his chest like Celine Dion, "Bring it on!"

All right, I made up the Celine Dion part.

The controversy was bumped to a higher level with the arrival of the following e-mail from one of the Cosmo Girls in Sales:

#### Hello All-

There always seems to be a spoon shortage in the IKON Cafe(lunchroom). So, I brought three spoons from my home so I won't always have to try to mooch from the "Ice Cream Social". To my surprise, all three of my spoons, plus some Tupperware, are missing in action (I know, I should have kept them at my desk). I am happy to let others use them but I would appreciate it



"Spoon Tricks," by Brian Kershnick

if they would be returned when finished.

Thanks,

Cosmo Girl B\*

(\*Some names have been changed.)

"Harmless," you may think, "if a bit groveling." It may, however, come to be seen as a revolutionary document on par with *Das Kapital* or *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. It incited a heartfelt reply from a new subscriber to the nose. Because he is Management, and might be compromised by his association with this publication, I shall refer to him only as The Man.

Cosmo Girl B,

Thank you for bringing this out in the open. I am very emotional about this subject, so please bear with me.

I don't have any of your spoons, however I do share your pain. Although I have never suffered such a loss as you have endured, many a time have I have searched the countless drawers & cupboards of the lunchroom for an eating utensil, only to find that I have to eat spaghetti with my fingers, or slurp soup directly out of the bowl *like a dog*. On some days I simply go without lunch all together.

I believe that our shortage of spoons stems from a general paranoia on the part of administrative management that the employees of this fine organization are prone to pilfering consumable items and utensils because they simply cannot afford to purchase said items on their own. Let's face it--spoons and forks are simply out of reach for the average office worker in this day and age-so many of us are forced into a life of crime in order to meet our need for tableware

There are companies out there which provide FREE soft drinks, espresso, cappuccino, and snacks--not to mention silverware & plates to their employees. Most of the people at these companies take their tableware for granted. What you are asking for is a kind of utopian PD&F in which spoons, forks, cups and plates would flow freely to anyone in need. Unfortunately this is reality, and unsuspecting people such as yourself will continue to fall victim to tableware loss unless we take a stand. Remember--together, we can make a difference. Cosmo Girl B, I'm sure that you will become a IKON icon for your bravery in heading up this movement during what must be a very difficult time.

#### P.S. Do you know where they keep the ice cream social spoons?

This missive was followed by a sympathetic rendering of "Spoon Man", and Cosmo Girl B's thanks. Will Cosmo Girl B and The Man find themselves the Harriet Beecher Stowe and Karl Marx of IKON PDF? I'll keep you posted.

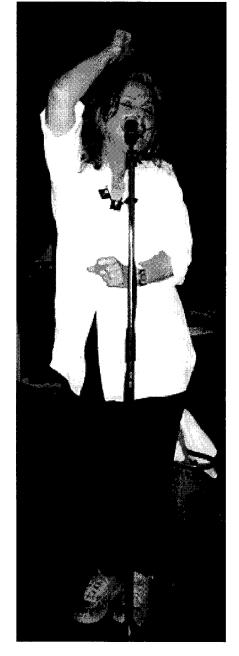
## Are you ever too old to go to rock concerts? No.

You'd think that would be the end of the article--question, answer, let's move on. But you'd be wrong. This entry was composed by Veronica nee Zolotoochin, who recently converted from Z-A so to speak in marrying her long time honey whose last name is Atkins. That she chose to write about a rock concert when she had a wedding impending goes to show that she has her priorities straight. She was a beautiful bride and I'm sure will be a gorgeous wife. -ed.

Are you ever too old to go to rock concerts? No. Especially if the rock group you go to see is older than you are! And when that group is a legend in it's own right, well, 'nuf said! I thought I was done going to concerts when Sharon and I went to the U2 concert a couple of years ago in Salt Lake. It was at the University of Utah's Rice Stadium, and it was great! I thought "there's no one else that I want to see". Never say never. [Okay, I want to insert a story here about the U2 concert. Not about U2, though Veronica was right, they were terrific, but about the invitation. You see, V. called me at work as the person she really wanted to see U2 with cancelled at the last moment. I had just a couple of hours to scramble for a replacement and my first thought was to call my friend and world traveler Sue "Zana" Zierle. After a few rings, she picked up the phone and said that normally she'd be happy to work for me but something just came up. That was fine and I did get that crazy old woman Ruth to work my shift, but the following Monday I thought I'd ask Sue what was so important Saturday night. Turns out she had just cut her finger to the bone on a big knife hidden in dishwater and was on her way to the Emergency Room when I called. She showed me her bandaged finger. Now there's an excuse, but you'd never guess by the tone of her voice that she was bleeding profusely. Maybe it's an East Coast thing, to be nonchalant about pain, to casually mention you have separated ribs would you like to feel the gap? as Mr. Flintstone (from Maryland, jeez a lot of people are from Maryland these days) does. -ed]

It was just a few months ago and my friends Arge (pronounced R-G) and Megan went to DB Coopers to see a local jazz band play. They were playing a lot of their own material. Like any good jazz band, they were tight! [Sister Melanie Calkins is thinking of an obscene joke right now. -ed] Their ability to ad-lib and improvise was seamless and infectious. So infectious in fact we decided right then and there that the three of us needed to go out again. Blondie came up. "Yeah!", "We should go!", "I LOVE Blondie!". We said this after two bottles of wine and a couple of cocktails [following a bout of "I LOVE you, man!" "No I love YOU, man" -ed]. Who remembers the promises made under intoxication? [Once, she promised to give me a hundred million trillion dollars from her bank but she never did. -ed]

A week later, Megan e-mails me that she has bought the tickets for the three of us and Arge wants to take us out to dinner. "What can I do?" I ask. Nothing it seems. These two crazy broads were treating me to a very early birthday present. My birthday isn't until the end of October. [I'm thinking this is some sort of a hint.—ed.] I arranged to take the next day off work as I intended to stay up all night partying [not what you think, Mr Enigma.—ed] with the ultimate golden-haired girl. (cont. on pg. 6)





### The Stories of the Feet...Well, I'll tell you it's been

something of a blur. Football games just keep coming and coming, ceaselessly. I'm hoping they'll trail off by Thanksgiving because I'm tired of the lousy parking around the Coffee Plantation on game days. Also, Tech Support has been filled with tension. Mr. Flintstone, whose team the Cowboys (you may know them from *The King of the Hill*) was victorious a few weeks back in their match against Mr Enigma's team the Redskins (you may know them from any number of protests against political incorrectness in sport), hung a picture of some members of his team in Mr Enigma's cube. This picture was taken from grass level, and one of the guys has a foot raised as if he means to squash the onlooker, in this case, Mr E himself. Uncowed, Mr Enigma took a fat black marker and drew arrow coming out of the men. At the end of the arrows were the words "FAT," "UGLY," "NUMBNUTS," and...you get the idea. As hard as you try to annoy Mr Enigma, he always finds a way to be more insufferable than you ever imagined possible. This is his special gift. Anyway, when the season ends I'm sure we can look forward to more substantive debates, such as whether purple is a girl color and whether a shirt can be gay in a literal sense.

In a nearby cube we find King James, the recently promoted Ectomoph. I now have even less idea about what he does around here than I did before, but it seems to keep him busy. Call him with any question you have about any product anywhere. He is a veritable Entire Foot of in the Know. He knew right away that I misnamed prancing goatee boy in Vol. 10—it should have been The Mad Hatter of Spastic Chatter. I think he should have been happy with "Mindless" Chatter, because the two m's gives the phrase a third poetic aspect, but oh well. Before his illustrious ascent he and ace nicknamer Steve Haveron made some new designations to the Spice family group. Mr. Flintstone was named "The Anti-Spice," Mr Enigma "PolterSpice," and myself "Just Answer the Damn Phone Spice." I will inform you of our tour plans as soon as they become available.



## Sharon Buys Art—Christmas Gift List Decimated

Just so you know, a boring and pretentious article about the above lithograph was originally scheduled to appear in this space, but my compute rejected it and five other pages of text from Vol. 11. Never let it be said Sharon cannot take a hint. I will trust you to gaze upon the picture (which Audrey so thoughtfully scanned), marvel at its beauty, and think, "Gee...!'Il bet Sharon would let me see that in person it I ever visited her in her new apartment." You would be right about that if that's what you were thinking. —ed.

Wayne Kimball will deny this if you ask him, but when I introduced my brother to him at BYU one day he shook Pat's hand, said, "Hi, I'm Pam Kimball!" and walked away. We still don't know what to make of this. I've never known what to make of his work either. It is almost surreally meticulous, of a quality rarely found in this day and age; but that craftsmanship serves strange, private, inexplicable jokes. The combination gives his art a unique weirdness that is positively profound.

While in Utah, my arranged an audience with the artist because I was determined to buy some of his work and too cowardly to call him up myself. He gave me a fabulous deal on three lithographs and a collage, but my paycheck being what it is (I just got one today and it is as insignificant as ever) those of you who thought you might get nice gifts for Christmas from me this year should brace yourselves for lame gifts, those who thought they might get lame gifts will get cards, and so forth. But look again at the picture above, and I'm sure you will agree it was worth while.

(cont. from pg.1) you an idea about the clothes.

I did come to the Fiducia show somewhat prepared having previously met some of the participants. I had met Stefano, the head designer for Fiducia. "DO NOT CROSS YOUR LEGS," he said to me when my cousin Laurelyn and I sat next to the floor-level catwalk, then "STAND STAND STAND STAND," when we moved back a row. His motives for saying these things remain unclear. I had also met the other designer and former Toro (not fat, though) Khoa. I don't remember him ever saying anything. I had met the make-up and wardrobe pit boss (and independent designer for Minimal clothing). She was the hostess of the party where I met Stefano and Khoa and some others. She said, "Hello, you," and I was relieved because I couldn't remember her name either. Later, Pat reminded me that it's Nicole.

Nicole's brother David is sort of an unofficial Fiducia attaché. His real job is with the Arizona Prosecutors' Office, and if you ask him what you think the prospects are of so-and-so winning such-and-such a case against the state he will say, "They will lose." He will say this with regret, as if it were a sad fact unrelated to Justice. Given his leftist druthers he would rather release people from jail, but apparently Fate did not intend him to be a Public Defender at this time. He will go on to ask your opinion as to whether Attorney General Janet Napolitano is a lesbian. At least that was his m.o. at the party. He also said, "Oh my God can I wear your pants?" to a surprising number of girls, at least one of whom relented. After the Fiducia show, he got drunk and foolish enough to start asking strangers how old they thought he was. Shelly, whose hair is cut by the woman who was the stylist for the show (we are all connected in the Great Circle of Fashion) guessed thirty four. David is thirty one. If you were wondering what that howling was last Friday night, that was it. He licked his wound until she left for the evening, then screamed, "DIRTY %^#\$^!! WHORE!" I bade him relax, he was very youthful looking. He said I wouldn't understand and skeptically asked how old I was. I told him I had recently celebrated the fourth anniversary of my twenty seventh birthday myself (yes, you all forgot except for Mom, Pat, Lee, and eventually Pam; my personal budget for birthday gifts and cards is going to be very small this upcoming year), and he made a big deal of seeming comforted and relieved. "Because," he said, "you look sooo much older than me." "DIRTY %\#\$\!! WHORE!" I screamed. But I digress.

The show was held at Radius, which is conjoined with Axis, which is where Pazport plays every Tuesday, which is Pat's home away from home on that night. Actually, several of the Fiducia crowd were at Axis a couple of Tuesdays ago including Stefano and Khoa. That was when I met Giovanni, a friend of the designers and (this is really cool) the person who animated all of the sparkly bits of *Anastasia*. He insisted I dance with him, an error he won't be repeating anytime soon (though I understand he's recovering nicely). For the show he sculpted six or seven knee high wire "doodles" which were circumnavigated by the models on the catwalk, and a couple of larger pieces made of curved metal tubing that stood beneath the stark, black on white Fiducia sign. Before the show, he told me how nervous he was and wore a house shaped digital clock pin on his shirt collar. Did I mention he is Italian and makes floppy gestures with his hands? Well, he is and does.

Nearly all of the models in the show were new to me. Pat I knew, and this other guy who was in the catalogue whose name I think is either Pat or Chris. Let's go with Chris just to make things easier. Maybe it's Steve. Anyway, the one I was curious to see was Marco, who had been described as looking like Pat (our Pat, not that other one), only younger, taller, and better looking. I found only the first two applied. Marco has a nose like a parrot's beak, but it works. At the beginning of the show, he had this baffled, wide-eyed look like Patrick Muldoon in *Starship Troopers*. Eventually he settled into the groove of the show, adopting the blank as a coat hanger look characteristic of

most runway models. Pat (our Pat) never quite got this look, remaining watchful and maybe a little testy. Could it be he is too intelligent to model? Almost certainly. Still, it's a nice contrast.

Well, let me take that back. Not the Pat (our Pat) is intelligent part, but the implied connection between looking blank and being blank, because Lee gets that look on his face sometimes while riding the bus or subway and I wonder to myself, "Where did Lee go?" Then he turns to me and asks if I noticed that the woman sitting across from us is reading *Tom Sawyer* in Parsee. This is the kind of thing I never notice because what if I accidentally made eye contact with the woman, my goodness wouldn't that be awful. So I suppose some people just take in loads of information and process it internally without registering it facially and that's what these models were doing. In their heads they could have been curing cancer just as easily as thinking, "heel toe, heel toe, heel toe."

Another model I liked a lot was named—get this—Thor. I know a joke about the god Thor, but as it is of a questionable nature (and dubious humorous content), I will make it available only upon request. Thor the model bore no resemblance to Thor the superhero (I will not speculate about his resemblance to Thor the god as it could lead to an ugly religious controversy and I can't afford to get my funding cut), but rather looked like a weedy little mod. I could easily imagine him plunging over a cliff with a Vespa scooter. I didn't get to meet Thor, but Pat (our Pat) says he's a cool guy. (cont. on pg. 6)



(cont. from pg. 3)The day of the concert came, and we met at Arge's house. From there we went across town to the E-Center. We stopped at Chili's for some drinks and a bite to eat. Arge and I couldn't really eat, so we munched on tortillas and such. Then came time to grove to the enchanting sounds of Blondie! We walked across the street, noticing the parking lot was not really all that full. Now worries, we thought, it was still the opening band, Big Fish. [They sing songs about lesbians, you'd like them. -ed] We purchased our beers and proceeded to find our seats. They were in the front row of the bleacher area, dead center of the stage. WOW! They [the Nazi security types Utah favors -edl allowed us to move to the floor, back to ours seats, back to the floor, and so on. [This is amazing. The Fourth Reich has been super uptight about the audience leaving their seats, even to dance next to them, since the AC/DC trampling incident a few years back. -ed.]

Big Fish ended its gig and the arena was not even full! The seats on the lower level were only about a thinrd full, while the upper bowl was completely empty. The folks around here just didn't know what they were missing, which was one hell of a show. Ms. Harry was a little older (aren't we all), but nonetheless the best dancer this side of Josephine Baker. She shook it, moved it, whirled it. Her sound was clean and powerful. The band either couldn't see that there weren't that many people, or they didn't care, 'cause the played as if they were playing the Coliseum. The new material was, wel, new. It was definitely Blondie, updated. And the old stuff, well, rocked. The only complaint I have is that we didn't get to hang with them after the show. [She had the same complaint after the U2 show. -ed] This should be my last concert. Unless I can get back stage passes to a Sting concert or something.



Sharon with Stefano, Khoa, and Pat or Chris or whatever his name was after the show.

(cont. from pg. 5) I didn't get to meet any of the female models. They were all perfectly expressionless, and I thought moved around the catwalk rather well. Although one who wore an especially prohibitive skirt shuffled like a geisha. Laurelyn (biologist, model, future police woman, and cousin) wasn't fooled for a second, though. "Untrained," she would sniff as they passed.

The show ended with cheers and champagne...and scandal. It seems that sometime last week, the president of Fiducia, Khoa's brother, fired Stefano. Khoa immediately resigned in a gesture of designer solidarity. So what happens to a fashion firm that has just lost its fashion designers? Well, that remains to be seen, but for some reason Pat became a hot commodity and could be a vice president before you know it and will probably try to make us all call him sir.

Mean while, Laurelyn was harassed by a drunk on the dance floor. It could have been worse though—this guy was picking girls up, not like hitting on them…he was picking them up. Then, that guy joins this other guy, Pacho, who had us evicted from our table because he is a regular. That was rather devastating to David who had become quite attached to that table in the preceding hours, and was in fact forming a conspiracy to steal it. He was enticing Laurelyn, who can bench press 265 lbs. and has biceps like a VW Bug, and Pat, who has a truck. He was working on getting other guys to help out (David, you see, is tiny) when Pat, Laurelyn, and I left for Club Mecca. That is where Barry works. Barry is hands down the coolest guy in the Valley. He is the Phoenician Fonz. When he went to New York for a few months this summer the cool quotient in the area dropped dangerously low. We're suffering 100+ temperatures in October as a result. Anyway, we headed out to Mecca, but Pat left his keys on the seat of his locked truck after changing into his shiny silver shirt. We decided this was a bad omen. Laurelyn headed home, and I went to charm the Mecca bouncer out of a wire hanger. By the time I returned with it, Pat had destroyed the antenna from my car and my umbrella trying to get them out. Men.

End Nose...

Sharon C. Mdovern CIC Croher fabrilous Mother Lkhdovern 1235 NSunnyvale #98 Mesa AZI 85205

clenowable Non are timberg: Dies End Nose section works even worse than usual. Well, all tellips, all lost five pages of Cobras Nove today and couldn't time of a single reason why you have a short supported the news of was about whire instead. The news was about babies and hay the way they'd keep.

I am going to be moving in a couple of weeks, so if you want to write to me before them, belove use my Monis address, and/or the following e mails showcavern a iron com or the solvanose and you call me at work (hey it free) 800 406 2656 pyours of the mally is. I haven