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"The Catholic woman was screaming at me to lie down on the front lawn ... I heard the British bullets whacking into the front of her house, little bits of pebble–dash spraying over us"



The sound of **MURDER** on a British housing estate

he woman was a young Catholic with three children, her husband trying to explain to me why life in Andersonstown had become unbearable what with the army raids, the IRA demanding money, the unemployment. We had been sitting in her living room, surrounded by children's toys, stained coffee tables, old copies of the Belfast Telegraph, the sunlight filtered through the inevitable fake lace curtains, when there was a sharp, very loud, evocative "crack-crack."

Evocative because I had heard it a year earlier, on the night of internment in the Ardoyne, when the Protestants burnt their own homes, a kind of ethnic self-cleansing because the "Prods" had set fire to their own property to stop the Catholics moving in. Next morning, I had found burnt bedding, furniture in the gardens, bound volumes of a magazine called "History of the Second World War" strewn across a garden. One of the magazines lay open, two pages covered by a single photograph of British troops firing a mortar at Arnhem. I had heard the same "crackcrack-crack" that night in the Ardoyne, the grammar of Ireland's war against Britain — or "England" as the IRA would refer to it with a mind to recall Cromwell and Cornwallis.

But in 1972, in Andersonstown, the matchstick-crack had another meaning. Someone, I knew, must be shooting at the British Army. To the consternation of the Catholic woman, I walked out of her front door to watch a tragedy. **Robert Fisk,** of The Independent, in London, who reported from the start of the Troubles in Northern Ireland until 1975, recalls the tragic spirit of the time in an article published on the morning after the IRA ceasefire

A British Army Humber armored vehicle — a "pig" they called it in those days because of its snout-like bonnet — was driving past the house and a British soldier, an artilleryman holding a self-loading rifle, was collapsing in slow-motion off the back of it, his rifle bouncing and rebouncing on the surface of the British, English road, his body following it out of the back of the "pig."

And I looked to the left and saw a young man — very long hair, like a hippie, like Charles Manson, I remember thinking — taking cover behind a council estate dustbin but still firing at the back of the "pig," his body shaking with the recoil of the sub-machine gun, the empty cartridge cases spinning and skipping across the road. And then the dying soldier's comrades fired back wildly out of the back of the "pig," at anything or anyone that was in their sight.



The Catholic woman was screaming at me, to lie down on the front lawn, and I did and heard the British bullets whacking into the front of her house, little bits of pebbledash spraying over us from the bullets.

That was how I first saw a British soldier killed in Northern Ireland by the Provisional IRA, falling on to the road of a recognizably British housing estate.

I was to go back to Andersonstown in the coming years. In that same house, I remember meeting, months later, the IRA's local brigade commander, Con McHugh, the "Bald Eagle" they called him then because he had no hair, sitting on the sofa with a black pistol beside him, explaining wearily that the IRA's "armed struggle is a long time."

Gradually, as the internment without trial — and initial torture — of Catholics was ended, as the Protestant paramilitaries collected guns and perfected bombs, as Colonel Gaddafi armed the IRA, and the SAS and then MI6 was brought into Northern Ireland, the initial monochrome morality of the Irish war vanished. In the end, deals could always be struck. Protestant and Catholic politicians formed a power-sharing "executive" in Belfast endorsed by London and Dublin which proved to be as fragile as those other post-colonial power-sharing governments in Cyprus and Lebanon. Harold Wilson called the Ulster Workers Council Protestants who broke it "spongers" but his ministers later went on talking to their political leaders. No one was surprised because, after all, a previous British government had flown Martin McGuin-



Bombs, terrorism and armed soldiers — the face of Belfast for the past 25 years. Pictures: Associated Press

ness and other assorted rogues to London for a cosy chat in Cheyne Row about the possibilities of a ceasefire.

How little, in the early Seventies, we cared about Britain's history of oppression in Ireland, or Ireland's history of rebellion. Listening to all those speeches, all those press conferences, all those paramilitary denunciations, one could only reflect — as Elizabeth Bowen did during the Second World War — that the Irish might think less about Irish history and the British might think more about it.

What both sides lacked — what we journalists lacked, I think — was imagination, the ability to project this struggle on to a European, world stage where its integrity could be harassed and picked over and admired and hated for what it was. Does yesterday's ceasefire symbolize imagination? Perhaps. But the longer wars last, the longer they are doomed to continue. I remember flying out of Beirut airport one day during the Lebanese civil war, the runways under bombardment by Christian militia shells. And much later that day, after changing planes in London, I landed at Aldergrove airport at Belfast just as the IRA was firing mortar shells at the runway.

And I remember thinking how much more real — how much more normal — was the war in Northern Ireland. Times had bestowed upon it an obscene integrity. It had gone on so long (courtesy of Reginald Maudling's "acceptable level of violence") that we might almost have missed it if it went away.

A terrible, accusable thought, a blasphemy, an evil meditation, of course, but an understandable one when you count the years. The young man with the Charles Manson hair must have been 18, maybe 20, when he killed the British gunner in the "pig." Today, he must — if alive be in his mid-forties, a has-been in the IRA's military, maybe one of Gerry Adams' peacemakers, as decrepit as the teenage British soldiers who went to Derry/Londonderry in 1969, some of whom must now be in retirement.

Maybe the terrible beauty has grown old. Personally, I doubt it. History does not close down on its antagonists; nor does it grow senile. It just waits for them to realize that there are no solutions—only settlements.

COLDTYPE

PUBLISHED BY THOMSON NEWSPAPERS, 65 QUEEN STREET WEST, TORONTO, ONTARIO M5H 2M8, CANADA

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EDITOR'S NOTES

elcome to the first issue of ColdType, a newspaper devoted to excellence in writing, photography and graphics. ColdType was born from a desire to help journalists improve the quality of their product. For the past decade newspaper people have tended to concentrate on the visual side of their craft, with the introduction of good printing, fine artwork and often-scintillating design. That's plausible, but without a concurrent effort in improving the quality of content, we've produced a generation of newspapers that are often bland and lifeless when the packaging is stripped away. That is not good journalism. Yes, an attractive product is desirable, but we should pay as much attention to the quality of the grey stuff as we do to its packaging.

quality of the grey stuff as we do to its packaging. But, as we planned this new product, we decided that it would be boring, perhaps futile, if we simply published articles explaining in scholarly detail the mechanics of good journalism. Wouldn't it be better to ignore the schoolroom approach and concentrate instead on good writing?

Well, that's what we've done with this first issue of ColdType, reprinting examples of excellent writing from newspapers and magazines from around the world.

Fine photojournalism, like fine writing, is also rapidly becoming extinct in our newspapers. Hence our 8-page portfolio of pictures of the tragedy of Rwanda, produced by Russell Monk for The Globe and Mail in Toronto. Look for more photo essays in future issues.

That's enough from me. I hope you find ColdType interesting, informative and amusing. And if you've done something that you'd like to share with our readers, please send it to me at the address above.

Tony Sutton

P.S. Typefaces used in this issue are Phaistos (headlines), Meno Roman (text) and Bodega (nameplate), from the Font Bureau in Boston (617) 423-8770. "When the ANC speaks about 'redistribution of wealth' it means taking from those who produce and giving to those who govern"

A CLEVER KAFFIR' Nelson Mandela and the battle for the hearts and minds of the new South Africans

elson Mandela in power has this priceless asset: it is impossible to hate him. In prison he was a controversial figure, both adored and loathed. But when he became President of South Africa the controversy seemed to fall away from him. He is the only political hero I know who rouses strong feelings for but none against. My friends in Johannesburg tell me that Mandela is regarded with adulation by the white middle classes. What is more

with adulation by the white middle classes. What is more significant is that here in Richards Bay, a rough industrial town, the white proletariat regards him neutrally, without animosity. His age, of course, is a huge advantage and he uses it well. He appears to the white townsfolk as a sensible black grandfather, a madala.

The morning after Mandela had announced his cabinet, I entered the office of an Afrikaans engineering colleague who is a rabid Boer nationalist and a member of a religious sect that believes Christ came only to save white men. He had told me that the Boers were about to suffer bondage under black rule as the Israelites had suffered bondage in Egypt because they had strayed from the Word. He is a tremendous believer in conspiracy and had studied Mandela's selection of ministers with a gimlet eye, piercing it for plots and significance. I asked him what he thought of the new cabinet. To my surprise, he chuckled and admitted that Mandela was 'a clever Kaffir.' Even he had been won over.

There is, however, a deeper and coarser reason for white acceptance of ANC rule. In public debate we have been persuaded, especially by Marxists, to think of racism in terms of exploitation and apartheid as a system of economic domination. But racism is more natural and bestial than that. The fundamental impulses of racism are the very ones that Andrew Kenny explains the reasons why South Africa's white proletariat have come round to Nelson Mandela

are not expressed publicly. They are to do with smell, bowel movements and copulation. Among South Africa's white workers, always the strongest supporters of apartheid, the great fear was not of a black man sitting on the board of directors but of a black man sitting on the workshop lavatory. They dreaded not black men entering the citadels of power but black men entering their daughters. And, of course, no such unspeakable things happened when the ANC came to power.

My jaw twitches again in memory of arguments against the 'Immorality Act' which forbade sexual intercourse between the races. We liberals argued over and over again that the act was not only repulsive but futile since the races separate naturally. Now, with the fact of a black government and the scrapping of the apartheid laws, the white workers can see that what we said is true. In our workshop there used to be two identical lavatories, one marked 'Whites only' and the other marked 'Non-whites only.' Now we have two identical lavatories with the signs removed and still the whites and blacks defecate separately. So irrational white fears have largely evaporated and our white workers are not about to take up arms against the black government.

Unfortunately, the successful political transition has had little effect on the horrifying levels of violence. 'Political murders,' it is true, declined from 487 in the month before the election to 195 in the month after. Criminal murders, which last year outnumbered political murders by six to one, are showing no such decline. More policemen (148) were killed in the first seven months of this year than in the same period last year (142). The slaughter debases South African society and makes us all either callous or neurotic.

The great economic fear of white South Africans — and this time it was a perfectly rational fear — was that South Africa under black majority rule would follow the rest of black Africa into beggary. The first 100 days of ANC rule have done much to harden this fear. This is not so much because of the falling rand, the lack of the hoped-for foreign investment, the ever declining projections of economic growth, the numerous strikes and the continuing 40 per cent unemployment as because of the first symbolic actions of intent of the ANC government.

In front of the hungry African masses, hoping for the white man's treasure once the white man was voted out of power, the ANC made a swift and highly conspicuous metamorphosis from liberation movement to gravy train. The Melamet Commission, appointed by the previous interim government, recommended that politicians should receive enormous salaries. The incoming ANC government magnanimously accepted this recommendation, and now Mandela's deputies earn more than the British Prime Minister, and MPs earn \$54,000 a year in a country where the average pay for black industrial workers is about \$3,600 a year.

Winnie Mandela, who now bestrides intellectual worlds like a modern da Vinci as the deputy minister of arts, culture, science and technology, has bought a mansion in Constantia (the Knightsbridge of Cape Town) and the tax-payer is required to pay the air tickets and luxury accommodation of her troop of bodyguards. Trevor Manuel, the ANC

COLDTYPE



minister of trade and industry, jets across the Atlantic in the Concord.

Throughout black Africa there is a belief that wealth is to be taken not made. The ANC politicians are demonstrating that this belief is true: look how rich we have become! It is hardly surprising that the black workers, now striking in the mines, car factories and supermarkets, should be demanding more wealth for themselves.

Another African belief is that governments can and must control the economy. Again the ANC government is acting to strengthen this belief. It has produced a Reconstruction and Development Plan (RDP) which is simply a socialist five-year plan of public spending. It has introduced a 'Transition Levy' which is simply a wealth tax. It is constantly advertising for highly paid jobs in government so that government has become the only area of the South African economy where employment is rising significantly. When the ANC speaks about 'redistribution of wealth' it means taking from those who produce and giving to those who govern.

In July, Derek Keys, the respected white finance minister, resigned for 'personal reasons.' Mandela quickly replaced him with another white man with a reputation for conservative financial ideas. He was obviously trying to reassure the easily alarmed foreign bankers. Similarly, there are occasional speeches by ministers in favor of private enterprise and many appeals for foreign investment. The trouble is that all of these seem mere gestures. To make South Africa prosper, the government must remove the great mass of controls and regulations that are strangling the economy, reduce taxes and diminish itself. It is doing none of these things.

How will South Africa survive economically? This is the fundamental question. A silly reply is that South Africa is

the gateway to Africa; this is like saying that Timbuktu is the gateway to the Sahara desert. South Africa's gold is becoming more difficult and expensive to mine and the gold price is falling. There is a lot of chatter about the need to develop manufacturing industry and to 'add value' to our raw materials. But black workers in South Africa earn about \$300 a month compared with about \$100 a month for comparable, although more productive, workers in South America. Workers in the developing countries of the Far East earn still less and are still more productive. South Africa seems to have the world's most expensive cheap labor. The Far East's road to economic success, which began with lowcost, labor-intensive factories, is not open to us.

Lo compound these problems, there is a deadly malaise — a kind of economic sleeping sickness — throughout the working population, black and white, worker and manager. This year I happen to be working on an extension to our factory under a Scandinavian contract manager. He is dismayed by what he sees on the construction site: not one South African supplier has delivered on time; nobody takes responsibility for any mistake; productivity is ruinously low. I counted 13 men doing a simple rigging job which would be done by two men in Canada. The Scandinavian told me sadly, 'Nobody can be bothered to work in this country.'

This is largely true. Now that majority rule has come, the blacks want to sit back and be recompensed handsomely for the years of oppression under apartheid. Among the whites, any feelings of guilt are limited to a tiny handful of academics and novelists; the vast majority, far from feeling guilty about apartheid, feel aggrieved that they have had to carry the white man's burden for so long. Now that they have laid it down and generously conceded power to the blacks, they expect to sit back and be rewarded. So neither black nor white wants to work. And the mood between black and white is of a truce between enemies rather than an alliance between friends. What is utterly lacking is any sense of common purpose.

As the economy sinks, there are all sorts of pageants and entertainments. This is like any other country in black Africa where the president rides up and down Uhuru Boulevard in a Mercedes and a pair of sunglasses while the peasants starve in the bush. Here we have been treated to international sports tours; innumerable visits by big panjandrums from overseas, including financiers who bring warm congratulations and big smiles but no money; the low theatre of entry into the OAU, the UN and the Commonwealth; and Mr. Bean from British television; so long forbidden to us.

But for all these fears, disappointments and masquerades, something sensible and good has taken place in South Africa. And with the ending of apartheid the scales seem to have fallen from the eyes of the world when it looks at Africa. In 1972 when the Tutsi in Burundi committed a systematic, cold-blooded genocide against over 100,000 Hutu, the international reaction was — nothing. But the tribal slaughter in Rwanda, which reached full horror just after the South African election, has been widely publicized. The outside world has finally recognized Africans as humans who sin as well as suffer. This is an essential first step towards African salvation.

Andrew Kenny is a factory manager in South Africa. This article first appeared in The Spectator, of London. "The baton twirlers' spandex costumes are paint-tight and brief in the legs. The coaches, each with a clipboard, are grim, tan, lithe-looking women, clearly twirlers once, on the far side of their glory now"



Batons fly at the State Fair

'm once again at the capacious McDonald's tent, at the edge, the titanic inflatable clown presiding. There's a fair-sized crowd in the basketball bleachers at one side and rows of folding chairs on another. It's the Illinois State Jr. Baton-Twirling Finals. A metal loudspeaker begins to emit disco, and little girls pour into the tent from all directions, gamboling and twirling in vivid costumes. In the stands, video cameras come out by the score, and I can tell it's pretty much just me and a thousand parents.

The baroque classes and divisions, both team and solo, go from age three (!) to sixteen, with epithetic signifiers the four-year-olds compose the Sugar 'N' Spice division, and so on. I'm in a chair up front behind the competition's judges, introduced as "varsity twirlers" from (oddly) the University of Kansas. They are four frosted blondes who smile a lot and blow huge grape bubbles.

The twirler squads are all from different towns. Mount Vernon and Kankakee seem especially rich in twirlers. The twirlers' spandex costumes, differently colored for each team, are paint-tight and brief in the legs. The coaches are grim, tan, lithe-looking women, clearly twirlers once, on the far side of their glory now and very serious-looking, each with a clipboard and whistle. The teams go into choreographed routines, each routine with a title and a designated disco or show tune, full of compulsory baton-twirling maneuvers with highly technical names. A mother next to me is tracking scores on what looks almost like an astrology chart, and is in no mood to explain anything to a novice baton watcher.

The routines are wildly complex, and the loud-speaker's

This is an extract from a 20-page feature, Ticket To The Fair, by David Foster Wallace, that appeared in the July 1994 issue of Harper's magazine

play-by-play is mostly in code. All I can determine for sure is that I've bumbled into what has to be the most spectatorhazardous event at the fair. Missed batons go all over, whistling wickedly. The three-, four-, and five-year-olds aren't that dangerous, though they do spend most of their

time picking up dropped batons and trying to hustle back into place — the parents of especially fumble-prone twirlers howl in fury from the stands while the coaches chew gum grimly. But the smaller girls don't really have the arm geth to endanger anybody, although one judge

strength to endanger anybody, although one judge takes a Sugar 'N' Spice's baton across the bridge of the nose and has to be helped from the tent. But when the sevens and eights hit the floor for a

series of "Armed Service medleys" (spandex with epaulets and officers' caps and batons over shoulders like M16's), errant batons start pin-wheeling into the ceiling, tent's sides, and crowd, all with real force. I myself duck several times. A man just down the row takes one in the solar plexus and falls out of his metal chair with a horrid crash. The batons are embossed "Regulation Length" on the shaft and have white rubber stoppers on each end, but it is that hard dry kind of rubber, and the batons themselves aren't light. I don't think it's an accident that police night-sticks are also called service batons.

Physically, even within same-age teams, there are marked incongruities in size and development. One nineyear-old is several heads taller than another, and they're trying to do a complex back-and-forth duet thing with just one baton, which ends up taking out a bulb in one of the tent's steel hanging lamps, showering part of the stands with glass. A lot of the younger twirlers look either anorexic or gravely ill. There are no fat baton twirlers.

A team of ten-year-olds in the Gingersnap class have little cotton bunny tails on their costume bottoms and rigid papier-mache ears, and they can do some serious twirling. A squad of eleven-year-olds from Towanda does an involved routine in tribute to Operation Desert Storm. To most of the acts there's either a cutesy ultrafeminine aspect or a stern butch military one, with little in between. Starting with the twelve-year-olds - one team in black spandex that looks like cheesecake leotards — there is, I'm afraid, a frank sexuality that begins to get uncomfortable. Oddly, it's the cutesy feminine performances that result in the serious audience casualties. A dad standing up near the top of the stands with a Toshiba video camera to his eye takes a toma-hawking baton directly in the groin and falls over on somebody eating a funnel cake, and they take out good bits of several rows below them, and there's an extended halt to the action, during which I decamp. As I clear the last row of chairs yet another baton comes wharp-wharping cruelly right over my shoulder, caroming viciously off big Ronald McDonald's inflated thigh.

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David Foster Wallace's new novel, Infinite Jest, will be published next year by Little, Brown. "I'm a creature of comfort and the Wonderbra is not meant to be worn for 10-hour work days — at least not at my present salary"

Wonderbra — it's cleavage or bust

By LISA COOKE AND JOAL RYAN

e're journalists, not exotic dancers. In the thoughts that consume our daily lives, cleavage ranks somewhere below oven cleaners and Pog. But in the interest of science (and maybe a little morbid curiosity), we volunteered to have our chests transformed by the 56 design elements of the one-and-only Wonderbra, a lace confection sweeping New York lingerie departments.

This purported marvel of modern bra-making, featuring the all-important "three-part cup construction," won't be available on the West Coast until August or September. (There must be a lingerie time-zone difference at work here.) But the folks at Sara Lee — the makers of really great fudge brownies and underwear (we don't get the connection, either) — were only too happy to let us "road test" their product. They're quite proud of the Wonderbra it had, after all, given visible cleavage to Uber-Waif, Kate Moss. (Or so she swears to Vanity Fair magazine.)

What follows are excerpts from our diaries documenting Operation Wonderbra.

DAY ONE

LISA: I slip into my blood-red Wonderbra. Well, not actually "slip." There's more of a shoe-horning process involved here. (Who knew having breasts was so complicated?)

Yowch! It's tight! Bra comes off. I let the straps down an inch. More shoe-horning, but the result is less cleavage. Here's my dilemma: Endure moderate discomfort for significant cleavage or sacrifice bodaciousness in favor of breathing. I opt to endure the pain.

Ĥead to the closet to get dressed. Discover I do not own appropriate Wonderbra clothing — i.e., blouses that flaunt cleavage, dresses with low-cut bodices. After a 45minute search, decide on a scoop-neck leotard and hit the road.

Halfway to work become alarmed at choking sensation. Discover that shoulder harness of seat belt refuses to stay across chest — keeps slipping up around my throat. Decide to tuck strap under my arm.

Get to work. Passing co-workers nod hello. Catch a few men as they shift their gaze from my eyes to my chest. Feel kinda sad, like I'm not one of the fellas anymore.

Lunch time: Purposely dine a "businessmen's haunt" in Irwindale in hopes of baiting some poor guy into saying something salty. No such luck. Upstaged by a noontime "Naughty Nighty" lingerie show where leggy women model undergarments that make my cleavage about as appealing as a bare elbow.

Back to the office. What started as moderate shoulderstrap discomfort has escalated to serious pain. Race home and jettison. Wonderbra in favor of big, white T-shirt.

At night, have disturbing dream about life preserver that won't come off.

JOAL: It's "Take Your Wonderbra to Work" day. I grimace. I had, you see, given this thing a brief trial run during the week-end. It was then I first experienced the lung-crushing, chest-hugging, organ-squishing hell that is the Wonderbra. Why so grouchy? Because after strapping myself into this medieval contraption, I discovered the secret of this unholy piece of underwear — it's a padded bra, people. A padded bra. For this I must suffer when Charmin will suffice?

Because I'm plucky that way, I tried my Wonderbra out at dinner that night. My husband and I agreed the thing did make me look fuller, but it didn't change my ordinary-busted life as it was, except for the pain part. In fact, during the course of the evening, the only one of us to be the subject of catcalls from a unruly and admiring populace was my husband. Go figure.

Well, anyway, it's Monday morning and I've got to put the Wonderbra on again. I look for the lowest-cut thing I have. In my closet that usually means a mock turtleneck, but I luck out and find a scoop neck T-shirt.



I go to work. Discover that Lisa's pronounced cleavage is the buzz of the office. My bust line goes unnoticed, except for the occasional comment that I look unusually perky. Lisa's cleavage starts to make me feel inadequate. Decide this experiment is out of control as Lisa's cleavage never threatened me before.

Make a mental note: I hate Wonderbra.

DAY TWO

LISA: Same problem with the closet. Select a shapeless jumper (under which I usually wear a blouse or T-shirt) with a scoop neck. Grab a sweater for security — er, in case it gets a little cold. Eating my cereal over the sink, accidentally drop a Cheerio. It bounces. I swear it bounces off my chest and onto the floor. Wow.

I place two wads of tissue under the shoulder straps to ward off angry red marks on my shoulder. Later, female coworker comments that isn't where most women usually stuff bras. Har-har. Sympathetic male co-worker asks if my new dimensions make me feel powerful or sexy. I confess that what I feel is ridiculous. My clothes don't fit right and I feel less athletic...or something. This girlishness doesn't really suit me. Rest of workday is relatively quiet — except for creaking sound bra makes whenever I twist in my chair. JOAL: Awake with new resolve to make my Wonderbra work for me! From discussions with colleagues at work the previous day, I realize I'm not wearing the undergarment properly. (Gee, guess next time I'll take the UCLA extension course.) You see, I had let the straps down in the interest of comfort. HA HA HA HA HA HA!!! The Wonderbra's not about comfort!!! It's about chestiness through prolonged squeezing and squooshing of your vital parts! So cinch up them straps, baby! Cinch 'em up!!

And like magic — whoomp, there it is — cleavage! It feels like it's up around my ears, but there it is. Boy, this is exciting. Lookie at all that extra storage space! I put on a blousey V-neck tunic and head to work.

At the office, my new attitude wears down quickly. I spend half the day tugging at my shirt and the other half counting the hours until I can take off the blasted bra. Cleavage schmevage. Wonderbra is on my nerves in a big way. I've never spent so much time thinking about underwear in my entire life. I surmise that if everyone had to wear one of these

things — men included — society would come to a standstill. We'd all be obsessing about our bust lines.

Later, Lisa and I go drown our Wonderbras sorrows in free happy-hour munchies at a Pasadena cantina. The purpose of this visit was to gauge the reaction of unsuspecting males on our cleavage. Except when we get there we have no desire to let our prows lead. We're tired. We're dispirited. We sit in a corner and slump.

DAY THREE

LISA: White flag. I surrender. I simply can't find anything revealing to wear to work. More significantly, I don't want to. Any sense of adventure or fun has evaporated.

I am a creature of comfort and the Wonderbra is not meant to be worn for 10-hour work days — at

least not at my present salary. Nobody notices

when I slip off to the women's restroom to switch into my sportsbra. I notice, however, immediate relief.

JOAL: Grrr. Time to face another day — or in this case — half-day of Wonderbra dreariness. Defiant in the face of cleavage, I put on a mock turtleneck and pack a back-up bra in my purse.

People at the office now seem immune to the powers of Wonderbra. No one stares. Not even Lisa.

So it comes down to this — at noon, I cloister myself in a stall in the women's restroom and change into a comfortable little underwire doohickie. (The Wonderbra, mind you, could never be dismissed as a "doohickie.") The false cleavage is gone, but so is the crushing weight of what seemed to be 8,000 rubber bands around my chest.

Gone, too, are my Wonderbra worries: Is any lace showing? Are people staring? Why aren't people staring? Will I do damage to my organs if I tighten the straps any further?

So, I've got my normal chest back. I look the mirror. No stains on my shirt. No wrinkles in my pants. No cilantro in my teeth. I'm neat. I'm presentable. I'm color-coordinated. And for the first time in two-and-a-half days, I'm happy. Stuff that in your Wonderbra.

otun that in your work

Lisa Cooke and Joal Ryan are writers with San Gabriel Valley Newspapers *in California.* Britain is famous for its eccentrics and loonies but this year's crop is even wackier than usual. **Phil Jackman**, a refugee from those cold and crazy shores, presents a half-term report

Masterpiece theatre of the absurd

f there is one area in which Britain still leads the world it is surely in producing bizarre news stories. Proof of this can be found by scanning the international wire services on any given day. While other countries wrestle with trade deficits and rebel incursions, the reports out of Britain tell of sex-change vicars and budgies that sing Mr. Wu's a Window Cleaner Now.

Why this should be so is not entirely clear. Perhaps it's because we still harbor a Victorian image of Britain as a strait-laced and proper society, so when things become unlaced and improper, matters are thrown into sharp comic relief.

Maybe it has something to do with the British sense of the absurd (what other country would worship Mr. Blobby?) or the national affection for eccentrics (where else would the longest-serving political leader be Scream-

ing Lord Sutch of the Monster Raving Loony Party?). Or perhaps it is because the British journalist is keenly aware that a couple of paragraphs about Brigadier Basil Phipps-Boothroyd riding to hounds in women's underwear is guaranteed to grasp the attention of a jaded and fickle readership.

Whatever the reason, 1994 is shaping up as a banner year for British looniness. So much so that, rather than wait until December to produce a year-end roundup on "those wacky Brits," we've decided to write a halfterm report on Britain's annus ridiculus. The events, from Jan. 1 to June 30, are as follows:

JANUARY

A businessman who took his bank manager out for lunch discovers he has been charged \$220 on his bank statement for the man's time. A spokesman for Barclays Bank is unrepentant: "Our manager had to read up on the file before lunch and spend a lot of time doing paperwork afterward." Says lunch-buyer Chris Reddall, who runs a printing firm in the southern seaside resort of Brighton: "It is a total cheek."

■ Plumbers are ordered to stop using sexist terms such as "ballcocks" and "stopcocks." Failure to comply with new guidelines in The Model Water By-Laws Book, issued by the Water Research Association, could land plumbers in court. An enraged Allan Richardson, director of the National Plumbers Association, says: "This is political correctness gone mad.... This is the most pow-erful document in plumbing and all our members have to obey it." The guidelines say a ballcock should be called

a "float-operated valve" and a stopcock a "stop valve."

FEBRUARY

■ A Scottish bank robber is caught because he is too law-abiding. Derek McFadden, 30, holds up a small bank near Glasgow and speeds off in his getaway car with \$5,000. Despite being pursued by police, he stops at a red traffic signal and is arrested.

■ Bert Stevens, aged 80, wins Britain's latest literary title - Poet Inebriate. His entry in the competition, sponsored by a West Midlands chain of 14 pubs, was written after three pints of ale at the Half Moon pub in Crawley, Sussex. Contestants have to drink at least three pints of beer or six glasses of wine before settling down to write. Judges must consume a similar amount. Says Mr. Stevens, a retired precision grinder and former waiter at the Ritz: "The beer provides my inspiration — especially if I happen to have won at darts."

■ An eccentric Englishman who

already has a 4.3-metre-long fiberglass fish bolted onto the roof of his home in south London is ordered to remove a replica Spitfire plane keeping it company. Lord Justice Stuart-Smith says John Gladden, 44, clearly put the plane on his roof "solely for the purpose of teasing the local council." Mr. Gladden is fighting the council planning department over the replica cast from a 360kilogram marlin that also graces his roof. Since the battle began he has added a Centurion tank and a nine-metrelong replica of a missile.

A leading Scottish bank says it will allow transvestites to use two of its new check-cashing cards - one with a photo of the holder dressed as a man and the other as a woman. However, a Royal Bank of Scotland spokesman says it is easier when clients operate separate accounts in their male and female roles.

MARCH

 \blacksquare A man is found guilty of having sex with a dog after a video he made of the act is inadvertently shown to speechless wedding guests expecting to see a replay of a marriage ceremony. The 59-year-old man lent his video recorder to a friend to film the wedding, but forgot to erase from the tape scenes of himself in sex acts with a neighbor's bull terrier named Ronnie. The man says the 10-minute film was an attempt at trick photography and features only simulated sex acts.

■ An 80-year-old widow in Lyme Regis confronts three masked raiders in her home and talks them into handing back the money and valuables they intend stealing Lillian Cole describes the raiders as "sweeties" after she gets them to see the error of their ways.

A wild-west showman living in Exeter in southwest England blows himself up when he tries to make blank bullets in his garden shed for a charity cowboy show. Bob Hammon, a member of a wild west group called Rooster's Rangers, sets fire to himself and is doused with a garden hose by his wife. After the incident, Rooster's Rangers announce they are hanging up their guns for good.

■ Lyndon Hawkins confesses to stealing two squares of chocolate from under his scoutmaster's pillow at camp — in 1926. Hawkins, 78, has spent 68 years feeling guilty. When he finds out that the scoutmaster, 90-year-old Father David Kee, is still alive, he sends him a letter of confession and \$100.

■ It is revealed that the Bank of England subscribes to a new magazine, The Money Laundering Bulletin.

■ Environmentalists announce a plan to fit cows in a village in northeast England with fluorescent leggings to stop motorists hitting them. The cows have been straying onto the road from a common pasture. Residents are asked to adopt a cow for \$6, which will be used to buy yellow-and- white leggings that show up in car headlights.

■ A landscape-gardening company announces the world's first transportable garden, enabling people to take their treasured lawns and flowerbeds with them when they move house. The garden is created on four-foot-square wooden pallets joined together. Fountains, ponds and paving can be added at extra cost. An average English garden would take 25 pallets and cost about \$2,500, the company says.

■ A pair of Queen Victoria's black silk stockings sells for \$2,250 at auction to a man who plans to display them in his pub. "Although the stockings are unusual, it is by no means rare to see items of Queen Victoria's clothing being offered for sale," says Sotheby's costume expert Kerry Taylor. "Her chemises, nightgowns and knickers quite often turn up."

■ Firemen use breathing apparatus to revive two canaries overcome by smoke in a kitchen fire in Newcastle, northeast England. The firemen attach oxygen tubes to the beaks of the two birds — called Billy and Snowy — when they are found unconscious amid the smoke.

A man turns up for jury service at a Lon don court clutching a can of lager beer, with another can stuffed down the front of his pants. Court ushers confiscate the beer and Judge Michael Devonshire orders John Butler to the cells, saying he is too drunk to listen to the case. Mr. Butler makes a grab for a confiscated can as he is led away but the judge grabs it first. The two wrestle over the can until the 63-year-old judge retrieves it. "I just felt like a drink in the early morning and I must have had a drop too much," Mr. Butler says after spending a day in the cells.

An amateur historian who spent 30 years tracing his family tree is told by a relative that he is adopted. "It was 30 years work for nothing," says restaurant owner Ian Lewis, 43. During his research he travelled all over Britain and met 2,000 people he thought were relatives.

■ A judge jails a man for four months for demonstrating against a new motorway and adds an extra week in prison because the man stripped to his boxer shorts and a garter belt during an earlier court appearance. Graeme Lewis clenches his fist and shouts, "Jail won't stop us" as he is led away.

Sixteen families lay claim to a stray cat after an animal sanctuary advertises that he has been handed in. Sanctuary staff are sworn to secrecy over the details of the cat, Jasper, to help weed out bogus claimants.

MAY

■ A dead sheep in a glass tank displayed as a work of art in a London gallery is vandalized. An unidentified visitor pours black ink into the formaldehyde-filled tank, which has already been sold to a collector for \$37,380. Sculptor Damien Hirst's exhibits in previous exhibitions have included a rotting cow's head and a pickled shark.

■ About 500 thirsty British workers from a Lancashire coal-miners' club prove to be the world's most avid consumers of the elegant French liqueur Benedictine. Many of the workers' predecessors served in the East Lancashire Regiment, which in both world wars was stationed near the Normandy town of Fecamp, where Benedictine

is made. The Burnley Working Miners' Men's Social Club is Benedictine's biggest retail outlet in the world and consumes 1,200 bottles every year — 30 per cent of the Benedictine sold in Britain. "We drink it with hot water. It's a nice, sweet, soothing drink we call the Bene 'n

Hot," says club secretary Alan Kennedy. ■ A derelict saved by Princess Diana from drowning in a lake in central London says she is a "miracle lady" straight out

of the pages of a fairy tale. "To be saved by a princess is beyond the dreams of a tramp," says Martin O'Donoghue. The Princess of Wales was returning to her London home by car after jogging in the park when her chauffeur was stopped by group of tourists who had seen the tramp falling off a bridge. Diana rushed to the edge of the lake in London's central Regent's Park to help pull Mr. O'Donoghue from the water. A Finnish student then gave him mouth- to-mouth resuscitation. Diana later visited the Irish-born vagrant in hospital. She smiled, touched his hand and said: "God bless you, Paddy." He offered her a gypsy blessing. Mr. O'Donoghue, who lives in a park shed, says he jumped off the bridge to avoid a dog that had attacked him. He aimed for the bank but because he was half-drunk he fell in.

JUNE

■ It is revealed that a married couple was paid more than \$25,000 to have sex three times a day for three weeks for a BBC television documentary series that filmed the acts from the inside. Wendy Duffield, 31, had a stainlesssteel camera the size of a ballpoint pen and equipped with a miniature light fitted inside her. For some shots, her 38year-old husband, Tony, also had a tiny camera strapped to his penis. "The crew would expect me to perform again after a five-minute rest but my body had other ideas, I'm not superhuman," says Mr. Duffield.

■ An ancient stone frieze from an Assyrian palace that could be worth up to \$2-million turns up on the wall of a school confectionery — or tuck shop — in southern England. The 3,000-year-old slab remained undetected for decades; staff at the school, housed in the former home of an antiquities collector, assumed it was a plaster replica. Generations of pupils at Canford School threw darts at a board hung next to the slab. It received only minimal damage.

■ Pepsi-Cola offends the Church of England when its logo is laser-beamed onto an Anglican cathedral to promote a nightclub act. "I'm astounded," says the Very Rev. Derrick Walters, the church's Dean of Liverpool. "It was never meant as any offense. It was a light-hearted stunt," says an apologetic Pepsi spokesman.

■ A court clears two corgis of biting the bottom of a passer-by after hearing the dogs cannot jump high enough. Rosemary Rodell, 48, tells magistrates at Honiton in southwest England that corgis Solo and Jess bit her backside as she walked past their home with her own dog. But their owner, Jane Walker, said the dog can jump no higher than seven inches off the ground. The court finds Ms. Walker not guilty of failing to control dangerous dogs.

▲ A farmer who uses the sound of charging elephants and inner-city riots to scare birds from his land says he will ignore protests from neighbors who want him to stop. Arthur Vaughan, who farms near the southwestern English town of Taunton, uses a machine that plays 25 different bird- scaring noises. Apart from sounds from the African bush and urban mayhem, the machine can also play the sound of a cat being stepped on and songs by pop star Bob Geldof. "It does a marvellous job. If you come and live in the country, you have to get used to the noise," says Mr. Vaughan.

Philip Jackman, who writes for The Globe And Mail, in Toronto, immigrated to Canada from Britain in 1975. He became a Canadian citizen as soon as he possibly could. Sources: Reuter, The Daily Telegraph, The Times, The Guardian, The Mail, The Star, The Daily Mirror, Today. "They want the right to define morality for all of us. In other words, these people would love to see America become a theocracy. They envision a pious and orderly America — something along the lines of Iraq or Iran"

Phundamental phooey

By IRV OSLIN

hy is it my crap detector goes off every time I hear someone mention "fundamentalist bashing"? This hot new catch phrase is all the rage among certain conservative Christians — and those who cater to them. And why not? For a group of people who habitually respond to complex problems with simplistic answers, this is a godsend. Now they can counter any criticism just by saying: "I know you are, but what am I?"

This reminds me of something I heard several years ago from a local First Amendment advocate. It seems he and several like-minded individuals — would go down to the Garden Theater on North High Street whenever the fundamentalists showed up to protest pornography. (Evidently pornography was the root of all evil at the time. Of course, that would later be supplanted by abortion, then Outcome Based Education, then secular humanism and, most recently, homosexuality.) At any rate, when the counterdemonstrators would attempt to engage the antipornography protesters in philosophical debate, the fundamentalists would start "speaking in tongues."

What a great ruse. I can almost hear the leaders instructing the anti-pornography crusaders: "Now, don't argue with these heathens, because they'll only make you look like idiots. Just start babbling incoherently, instead."

I'm sure the ploy worked well in that situation. Although, to the average passerby, it probably sounded as though the counterdemonstrators were good Samaritans trying to teach a bunch of people with speech impediments how to talk. Be that as it may, the speaking-in-tongues shtick has its limitations. For one thing, incoherent babbling doesn't translate well into print. So, you're probably



not going to see a whole lot of letters to the editor saying things like: "Regarding Joe Pagan's blasphemous letter to the editor (July 6), all I have to say is begeezlgork canuter gleer flit in ze frazenglop. So there."

Besides that, speaking in tongues is not going to play well on radio call-in shows. Every time the caller started babbling, it would sound as though he were talking on a cellular phone while submerged in water. The moderator would probably say something along the lines of: "I'm sorry sir, but it sounds as though you're talking on a car phone from the bottom of Lake Erie. Please dry off and call us back from a pay phone."

So now, in lieu of talking in tongues, some conservative Christians have resorted to a new tactic to exempt themselves and their ideas from scrutiny. If anyone dares criticize them, all these people need say is "You're bashing us."

Which isn't surprising. After all, if anyone knows a thing or two about bashing, it's the fundamentalists. Lord

knows, there are conservative Christians who have worked diligently — and often covertly — to reduce every other element of society to second-class citizenship. For years these people have hammered away at homosexuals, atheists, feminists, liberals, moderates and anyone else who doesn't subscribe to their brand of Christianity.

It would appear as though religious conservatives who have been griping about "fundamentalist bashing" want it both ways. They seem to feel that exclusion is a wonderful idea — except when it applies to them.

Not that fundamentalists are being excluded from the political process. In reality, conservative Christians have as much right as anyone to practice their religion, to vote, to hold office and to speak their minds freely.

Unfortunately, for some of them, that's not enough. They want their religion to be everybody's religion. They want the right to define morality for all of us. In other words, these people would love to see America become a theocracy. They envision a pious and orderly America something along the lines of Iraq or Iran.

It upsets these people no end that the rest of us aren't absolutely thrilled at the prospect of God's gestapo confiscating our CD collections or bulldozing our satellite dishes. They can't understand why we're not piling onto their little bandwagon in droves. It blows their little minds that Americans aren't falling over one another, saying, "What's that? A religion obsessed with telling other people what to do? Count me in!" So, the next time you hear someone whining about "fundamentalist bashing," tell him this: "Excuse me while I reset my crap detector — because you've just pegged the needle clear off the dial."

Irv Oslin is a columnist with the Columbus Guardian, *an alternative newspaper in Ohio.*

This, believe it or not, is the text of an editorial that appeared in a Canadian daily. The names have been omitted to spare the blushes of the editor responsible

Let them eat their pets

ith people going hungry in this town, it is time to drop the taboo that prevents us from eating dogs and cats. The idea of getting meat from unconventional sources was explored in a recent newspaper story on rabbits. The story reported there are about a dozen rabbit breeders who want us to eat rabbit meat. They say it is higher in protein and lower in fat than beef, poultry or pork. And, it apparently tastes great.

Some people might flinch at the prospect of eating bunny burgers or wabbit weenies. Perhaps they are still entrenched in the childish concept of the Easter Bunny. But we must be realistic. Cute cottontails are a source of meat protein and we must not be reluctant to butcher bunnies if we need to eat them. The same openness should apply to eating dogs and cats. In this town, some people might hesitate to eat dogs and cats because they are often family pets. But the choices of which animals are eaten in which part of the world should be viewed as cultural conventions. For example, dogs are commonly eaten in the Phillipines and eating cows is taboo in parts of India.

The reason we freely eat cows but do not eat dogs is a result of the North American culture in which we were raised. So why should we bother changing our cultural tastes? Because people are going hungry while scores of dogs and cats are available to be eaten.

It is a fact that people are hungry. If you doubt this, ask the people at the Food Bank and the several city soup kitchens, who can't get enough meat to meet demand. Ask the Good Samaritan of A street, who daily serves biscuits and soup from her kitchen, sometimes to more than a dozen hungry townsfolk. Meanwhile, the local Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals regularly kills hundreds of dogs and cats for which they cannot find homes. They then dispose of the bodies of the dead dogs and cats. This is a shameful waste of protein. The young, tender meat of puppies and kittens would be particularly tasty.

I am not suggesting we should eat family pets. After all, live pets benefit people in many ways. For example, caring for pets can teach responsibility to children and pets can provide much-needed company to lonely people and shutins. But, we must take action to make more effective use of dogs and cats which are not wanted as pets.

First, we should stop neutering our dogs and cats. Let them breed at will. The resulting population explosion of could be regularly collected and taken to a butcher. The meat would then be distributed to the hungry. This plan to feed the hungry might seem unconventional at first, but socially-conscious people will soon realize our responsibility to feed hungry people takes precedence over a silly cultural convention that allows the waste of needed meat. "You may have noticed that obituaries are often followed by at least two afterthoughts, of which mine is usually the first and the false one, and the other is the second, authentic and boring"

Obit writers always have the last laugh

By MILES KINGSTON

t was sad to hear of the passing of Edwin Vavasour-Smith, who probably featured in more obituaries than any man alive (or, now, dead) and yet who will probably not be given an obituary of his own. This was because Edwin Vavasour-Smith was the man who specialized in adding postscripts to obituaries.

I have never worked in an obituary department myself, but such a man must be the bane of your life. You frame a completely waterproof and sufficient obituary for a person, the person dies, the obituary is printed, and just when you have forgotten all about him and gone on to the next famous dead person, the postscript comes in. "Those who knew the late Jack Yarwood well," it says, "will be surprised to find no mention of his pioneering work on Assyrian cuneiform," or "No account of the late Jack Yarwood will be complete without a brief account of his scholarly investigations into the origin of Punch and Judy."

Many of these were written by Edwin Vavasour-Smith. The first were genuine, but he was so attracted by the ease with which he could insert these afterthoughts that he was rapidly seduced into supplying notes which sounded authentic but were in fact totally fictitious. He once showed me the first fictitious afterthought he had printed. It read something like this:

"JWK writes: His many friends will be sad that in your account of the late General Arthur Yarwood's life, you did not mention his brief but extraordinary cricketing exploits in the desert. The legendary Christmas Day football match in the trenches of the Great War is well known; less well known is the 1943 Christmas Day cricket match between Yarwood's tank corps and well meaning men from Rommel's crack troops.



Grave

This represented the ideal afterthought, Edwin told me. It read interestingly — usually more so than the main obituary — and could not by its nature be easily checked. It became something like an obsession to add details to obituaries, often signing himself merely with initials, as in "JL writes" or Mrs GT notes."

"I frequently had to compete with genuine afterthoughts," he once told me. "If someone called, say, Lord Rosburgh died, and they printed the usual dreary obit saying that he had been under-secretary to some government office, they would be bound to omit some other dreary part of his life like his work for an animals' charity. So some ancient relation, usually an aunt, would write in and say: "It is not widely known how active Lord Rosburgh was on behalf of animal organizations, and how much money he raised behind the scenes blah blah blah...'

"But I, meanwhile, would be working on my afterthought. So, while the old aunt was penning her tribute to his charity activities, I would be writing: 'HL writes: It is not realized even now how much interest Lord Rosburgh took in the ballet, an interest which he sought to conceal from his more active shooting and hunting brethren, and there are many prima donnas alive today who owe their first advancement to an early interest shown in their careers by his Lordship.' Usually mine went in first and the aunt's second. You may have noticed that obituaries are often followed by at least two afterthoughts, of which mine is usually the first and the false one, and the other is the second, authentic and boring."

Edwin Vavasour-Smith was a regular soldier for most of his life, reaching the rank of general in the Gordon Highlanders. When I asked him why he had entered a Scottish regiment, he said he insisted on joining one named after a famous gin, and the Gordon Highlanders fitted the bill. He added that he had tried to join the Beefeaters, but his physical condition was too good to gain him entry. When I asked him if there were any truth in this story, he said that there was absolutely none at all and that I was so gullible I would make a good obituary editor.

Miles Kingston writes a daily humor column for The Independent, of London. This is one of them.

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Andy — long distance cartoonist



A day is a long time in politics: President P.W. Botha forgets the lessons of history as Ian Smith, Rhodesia's last white leader stands in the shadows.



Reluctant change: P. W. Botha accepts the inevitability of change, but refuses to meet the ANC, choosing instead to deal with servile homeland leaders.



Change is imminent: But can Mandela and De Klerk really work in harmony or will the peace process be derailed yet again?



Problems at the ballot: More people turn out than expected, leading to huge delays as the votes are counted.



Uneasy lie the heads: Mandela and De Klerk toast the future, but some don't share their optimism.



But some things never change: Politicians see the Press as a toothless hound, but when they get into power, the mutt suddenly looks different.

s a cartoonist, Dave Anderson (Andy) is probably unique faxing two editorial cartoons each week to South Africa's biggest daily, *The Star*, of Johannesburg from his base halfway round the world in Toronto, Canada.

Before emigrating to Canada in 1990, Anderson, 42, had been The Star's cartoonist for five years. He previously worked for The Sunday Times and Rand Daily Mail in Johannesburg and the Pretoria News.

His hard-hitting cartoons were a feature of those newspapers during his years in South Africa and he has continued in the same vein since settling in Canada, where he also has a thriving business as a freelance artist. His work is syndicated worldwide through the Cartoonists & Writers Syndicate in New York and in Canada through Miller Features.

Andy's cartoons on his page show the shifting political climate in South Africa over the past few years as President P.W. Botha reluctantly acknowledged the inevitability of the demise of apartheid. He made way for F.W. de Klerk who, after working as the prime architect of change, stepped into the shadows as Nelson Mandela's Government of National Reconciliation took the reins of power. This issue also contained a 12-page photo-essay by Russell Monk (originally printed as pages 7 to 14 of this issue), of the refugee crisis after the civil war in Rwanda. Unfortunately we are unable to reprint this essay – which was short-listed for a Canadian National Magazine Award – because we don't have the original page files.