

idiot wind 56

*"just another
sodium-brick in the
swimming pool"*

volume 12 number 1

the autumn of 1995

sugar-free, salt-free, guilt-free

(almost) 95 ways windows95 will change your life

not a paid advertisement compiled by kyria
crowley

1. You'll buy your first computer.
2. You can now play Solitaire *and* Minesweeper simultaneously, while you're busy loading Doom.
3. Click on "help" and, instantly, a MicroSoft tech rep shows up at your door.
4. You can finally break down and convert your TRS80 into a planter.
5. You will learn the true meaning of a computer "crash."
6. Notepad has a new feature which converts any text file into pig latin.
7. You will spend all of your time at work trying to find Bill Gates' horse.
8. You will be able to proofread this list better than its writres.
9. During the initial install, a subprogram is launched to clean your apartment.
10. Your computer geek friends shun you for buying into the hype.
11. All the late night shows are scrambled except for Jay Leno.
12. The other programs complain that it keeps stealing their lunch money.
13. Hem lines will go up.
14. Bill Gates has a polaroid of you on his refrigerator.
15. Your 120MHz Pentium runs slow enough to remind you of your IBM PC XT.
16. You must name your first child *Rumplegateskin*.
17. The cat is missing.
18. You begin finding mysterious charges on your phone bill for 1-900-HARD-RIV.
19. When your mother-in-law calls, the computer can now emulate a conversation with her while you concentrate on Flight Simulator.
20. Can finally have the sub-directory "Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious."
21. You'll start to speak English now that you've gotten rid of OS/2.
22. Can finally hold conversations with people who owned a Mac in 1987.
23. Before Win95: the advertisements were irritating because you wanted a copy; Now: the advertisements are just irritating.
24. Airline reservations will get lost in fewer mouse clicks.
25. Must remember to always face the monitor towards the wall before undressing.
26. You start to hum along with your CPU.
27. You know what CPU stands for.
28. Two words: More memory.
29. You begin dreaming in ASCII.
30. You keep finding quarters hidden under the keyboard.
31. Your ATM starts calling you "sir."
32. You can stop blaming TV for making you so stupid.
33. Your Catholic Church has announced plans to implement Bible95 in a few weeks.
34. Free Stones tickets.
35. Those guys on the AOL commercial don't seem so cool anymore.
36. You copied the program from a friend and the next morning found a horse's head on your monitor.
37. Remember: *Never* select "Undo All."
38. Press *Esc-Shift-9* and you'll find out where Jimmy Hoffa is buried.

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about the wealthiest nerd in the world buying out all the rights to this magazine, it simply is *not true*. We are not "in bed" with Microsoft. Just because the baby has my eyes and Bill's glasses, it means *nothing*.

39. You must sacrifice a small hooven animal to Microsoft every two weeks.
40. Bill Gates calls you "just to chat."
41. Nobody pulls you over for driving alone in the car-pool lane.
42. Not only did Microsoft erase any unlicensed programs from your hard drive, but they also took the Beavis and Butthead screen saver, because it's just so damn annoying.
43. Now have a reason to use that little key and lock.
44. You tried to uninstall it and it boiled your bunny.
45. You will be arrested for stealing a loaf of bread and, upon escaping, survive by seeking shelter in the sewers of Paris.
46. That bloodcurdling scream every time you enter DOS.
47. You could have sworn you saw the eyes on your screen saver move.
48. You discover that talking into your mouse will *not* activate your computer.
49. Not only did your hard drive crash, but you also got a nasty rash on your left shoulder.
50. You feel the need to introduce your computer to your parents.
51. Take the software with you into an old attic wardrobe and you are automatically transported to another dimension.
52. Your computer can now read your mind and it doesn't like what it sees.
53. Don't sleep for weeks obsessing over who would actually rent the Win95 promo video from Blockbuster.
54. You thought you saw Bill Gates fleeing the driveway as you pulled in last night.
55. You have to watch "Live with Regis and Kathie Lee" because the computer has a crush on Gelman.
56. Your lawyer called to verify that you recently had Bill Gates added as a recipient in your will.
57. You'll never be alone on Christmas Eve again. Even if you want to.
58. Through a virtual reality error you will have sex with Mike Tyson and slap Cindy Crawford silly.
59. Somehow you just can't seem to get the darn thing unplugged.
60. You had to buy a dog so the computer wouldn't be lonely.
61. You're being stalked by Macintosh.
62. Can't wait to buy Word95, Access95, Excel95 and BOB95.
63. Can now declare Bill Gates as a dependent.
64. You just feel "fresher."
65. Every time you hear a Rolling Stones song, you want to buy new software.
66. You found your Sega bound and gagged in the basement with a note reading "There's a new sheriff in town."
67. Your kids will just love the dental plan.
68. The computer won't boot up unless you sing "You are so beautiful."
69. Financially, Michael Jackson is now considered "middle class."
70. Even though you typed in your name, the After Dark banner still reads "REDRUM."
71. Now when you select "fonts," a monk personally comes to your home and hand-scribes your documents for you.
72. You can't go to sleep unless Bill Gates tucks you in and reads you a line of programming.
73. Finally AOL users will have someone to pick on.

74. After buying the software you were escorted to your car by a strange man calling himself "Rocco."
75. You fight with your computer over the whole Burt/Loni divorce.
76. All that *new hardware* you get to buy!
77. Finally have the motivation to get that back-up tape drive.
78. Soon you'll never have to leave the house again.
79. Even sooner you won't be able to.
80. You'll never throw a stone again (oh wait, that's 95 windows).
81. Can make a woman like those two kids in "Weird Science."
82. "Where Do You Want To Go Today"?...How about into a working Windows program?
83. Figured out that the "95" stands for the number of people actually paying for Windows95.
84. Through the wonder of multi-tasking, you can now watch your program crash, cry, be kept on hold with customer service, *and* tear up the manual. All at the same time.
85. You keep finding "2001" in the VCR.
86. Your blood test reveals 32% Mountain Dew.
87. Already getting itchy for Windows96.



channelling ken

as narrated from another dimension by douglas carroll

ON A RELATIVELY WARM OCTOBER EVENING, I WAS RIDING AROUND WITH THE TOP down and I switched on the radio. Out poured a magnificent piece that made me want to drive faster, to hell with the speed regulations. It wasn't music. It was another in-depth interview on National Public Radio. With a channeller.

Her name has been long forgotten. However, the entity she claimed to channel was, and still is, hard to forget. Was it Albert Einstein? George Washington? His wooden teeth?

No. This channeller's entity was the last entity anyone would imagine a channeller channelling.

Barbie.

As in "Fashion Barbie."

"Slumber Party Barbie."

"Beach Blanket Barbie."

The interviewer was taking this channeller far too seriously, otherwise I would have believed it to be an April Fools' joke. I hadn't viewed many of the sleazy television talk shows to become immune to their effects on a person's willingness to change the channel.

The more this woman went on about Barbie's inner thoughts and feelings about the world and our future on it, the more I wondered what Ken's take on all this might be. Was he as concerned with global warming? Did *he* have any unique solutions to overpopulism and the problems of the environment? Was he jealous of all the airtime *Barbie* was getting here?

The next day I thumbed through the Yellow Pages, having lazy fingers, looking for channellers within my calling area. Under "Channellers," it said "See Psychic Advisors." I

deemed it appropriate that I should search out a male channeller for this task. As I scanned for a "Bob" or a "Ralph," one listing caught my eye:

JUAN CARLOS de la GORMONSKI

Fortunetelling (sic)

Tarot Card Reading

Channelling

LOTTERY TICKETS SOLD HERE

I dialed the number and a burly voice answered. If a voice could possibly have hair this voice would've been wall-to-wall-carpeted with deep shag pile.

"Hello...?"

"Good afternoon. Mr. Gormonski, I presume?"

"de la Gormonski," he replied, in a Brooklyn accent that a lifelong member of that area would have, at the very least, stripped his car for. "And you are?"

"Douglas Carroll. I'm a writer doing a piece on channelling. I found your name in the Yellow Pages. You've been doing this long?"

"Yeah. 'Sa gift. You wantin' ta contact a loved one?"

Assuming this rather distinguished gentleman would perhaps write me off as an uninformed cretin, a crackpot, I revealed merely that I wished to contact a childhood friend (Really a friend of a friend, as I *knew* someone who played with Barbie and Ken dolls). I didn't want to reveal too much of my mission over the telephone. We set up an appointment for the following Saturday afternoon.

"Mr. de la Gormonski? Douglas Carroll. It's a pleasure to finally meet you." My first impression of Gormonski revealed what I perceived at first to be a slight unpreparedness. As time passed I realized this was simply sexual tension. He looked slightly unkempt but, for the most part, Gormonski smelt just fabulous. *Stetson* maybe?

"Please," he replied with Scope-y breath. "Call me Juan."

"It's a pleasure to meet you, Juan," I said, pronouncing his name phonetically, complete with accumulated saliva at the back of the tongue, like network news broadcasters started doing a few years ago. I didn't want to offend him.

There was a slight pause. He told me if I'd follow his assistant, Cathy, into the other room, she'd seat me and that if I didn't follow her, she wouldn't. He awkwardly laughed at his own joke, to which I chuckled out of politeness.

Cathy, a rather plain-looking brunette with drab olive eyes, motioned for me to sit in a comfy chair that looked like it should be sitting in front of a big twenty-seven-inch Trinitron with rabbit ears. Juan, the channeller, sat in a similar chair a few feet away.

The room appeared to be furnished by both the Salvation Army and Goodwill with trashy seventies stuff. Where I was expecting to see a crystal ball, I saw a mirror ball hanging from the ceiling. Instead of a white turban, Gormonski had on a white leisure suit.

"I sense ya request may be somewhat unusual," Juan said, suddenly. "Youse offa'ed no name for dis 'childhood friend' when we chatted on da phone earlia' dis week."

"Well, to be honest, it isn't so much a *someone*, as it is a *something*." He said nothing.

perhaps feeling he was being made a joke of.

"I'd like you to channel *Ken*."

"Ken?" He looked at Cathy. Their eyes grew large for a moment and he turned back to me. "Da doll? As in *Ken 'n' Barbie? Barbie 'n' Ken?*"

I nodded in the affirmative, he shrugged his shoulders and faced forward in his chair.

After a moment, his eyelids began to flutter.

His head jerked backward to face the whirling ceiling fan. I looked up at the ceiling fan, although there was nothing interesting on, or near, the turning blades. When I looked at Juan again, he was now looking intently at the room's exposed floorboards.

There didn't seem to be anything on the floor either.

I looked at Cathy, who returned a look that either said "meet at the motel six at 11 tonight" or "stop mocking my employer you silly person."

Juan, suddenly, was staring straight ahead, eyes open, slightly glossed over. Slowly, his head turned to face me.

"Juan?" I asked.

"No," he replied in a deeper and slightly raspy voice that was not Juan's. "I am Grativan, Juan's spirit guide. Whom do you wish to contact?" He was being a little melodramatic, but who am I to criticize his art?

"Ken. The doll?"

"Doll? Dolls have no souls. He is not here."

"Well, *Barbie* is there. I heard some woman channelling her on National Public Radio."

"*Damn* those investigative reporters," the guide said under Juan's breath. "Hold on a minute. I'll page him."

Suddenly, Juan's mouth opened wide and an instrumental version of Barry Manilow's "I Write The Songs" emanated from within. As this continued, I turned to Cathy.

"Does this always happen?"

"Weekends tend to be rather busy days for the spirit operators and sometimes the guides have to double-up," she explained. "When Grativan comes back, tell him you enjoyed the music, even if you didn't. Sometimes it helps."

After nearly five minutes, the music stopped as Morris Albert's version of "Feelings" was coming to a close. "I'm connecting you now," the guide stated in a relatively monotone, slightly exasperated voice.

"The music was nice," I said quickly. "I enjoyed it."

"Must be Saturday," said a new voice. "Who are you? What do you want? Time is money. I'm a busy doll."

"Douglas Carroll. *Idiot wind* magazine. I'd like to ask you a few questions. You're Ken?" Who *else* could it have been?

"I ain't no Power Ranger, Bubba. Wait a minute, I'm on the 17th hole. Par four. Thank God for cellular spirit guides. I'll be right back with you."

Juan's mouth opened wide again and Cathy and I distinctly heard the sound of a club striking a golfball, followed by a golfball splashing in a water hazard.

"Damn him!" The squeaky voice sounded more comical than angry. "That would've been a perfect shot. Damn that Obi-Wan and his 'force.'"

"I'm sorry. I'm sure it would've been a lovely shot."

"I was so close this time," he said, ignoring my donation of sympathy. "Damn *action figures*. What did you want?"

"I'm doing a story for *idiot wind* magazine. I'd like to interview you."

"What's your circulation?"

"A hundred or two."

"Great. Barbie gets NPR. I get *idiot wind*."

"*idiot wind*," I corrected.

"Whatever. What do you wanna know?"

"Well, firstly, why do you sound like one of David Seville's Chipmunks?"

"I'm only ten inches tall, schmuck! How'm I s'posed to sound?"

"Okay, right. My mistake. I wasn't taking that into account. Sorry again. Do you have a surname? A lineage? A heritage?"

"Yeah," he said back sarcastically. "I'm part of the Hitler clan. Come on, man! *I'm a doll!*" He was growing hostile. Cathy was looking a little worried, fidgeting nervously nearby on a footstool. I wasn't sure why. If he got too rambuncous, I figured I could just hang up.

"Sorry. What's your take on the various decades: fifties, sixties, et cetera?"

"What the... What kind of question is that?! *I'm a doll for Chrissakes!*"

"Well, what would you prefer I ask you? Surfing questions? Clothing questions? Polyethylene vs. wax?"

"Why don't you ask me how I feel about being *second banana* to a fashion plate like *Barbie*? Or if I've ever lusted after *P.J.*, Barbie's little sister? Or what it's like going through life and beyond *without the benefit of genitals?!?*"

This was starting to get ugly. I turned to Cathy, now visibly tensed on her seat. "Perhaps we should end the interview," I whispered to her.

But Ken overheard. "I'm not finished," he ranted. "You think things are simpler as a doll? Maybe it's not so bad when you're a *Barbie*, but I'm a *Ken* in a *Barbie world*. I *have* no place!"

"Is there *anything* we can do?" I said to Cathy. "Disconnect him? Pull the *plug?*"

"What plug?" she replied as Ken continued to rant in the background.

"If we walk away, will he *follow* us?"

She shrugged, unknowing. "Why not?"

As we walked toward the door, we could hear Ken droning on in the background. "...and Barbie always got the big fancy cars and party trailers and, *hey! where're you going?! I'm not finished yet! Come back here!*"

Closing the door behind us, we could still discern the plastic, high-pitched voice screaming obscenities unbecoming a Mattel product. "Is he going to be okay?" I asked.

"There have been reports of hostile spirits taking over the bodies of their channellers. Naturally, I'm a little worried. You see, Juan is my fiancé. I'd rather not discover I've pledged my love to someone who happens to be permeable in high temperatures."

"Understandable."

I paused. "Listen."

She looked at the door. "He's stopped."

We rushed into a room devoid of channellers. "Where'd he go?" I asked the walls, the ceiling, the comfy chair. Juan was nowhere in sight. Cathy panicked, systematically running from room to room, opening closet doors, searching for any trace of her lover.

the top eleven worst on-line services

11. AOL
10. AOL

9. AOL
8. AOL

7. AOL
6. Hitler-Net
5. AOL
4. AOL

3. AOL
2. America Online
1. AOL

I walked over to the chair so recently occupied by the doll's channeller, not sure what I was expecting to find. Ashes? A slimy stain from beyond?

"Uh, Cathy?"

From the bedroom, a faint "...did you find him?" could be heard.

"I think you better come see this. I'm not quite sure what to say."

As I stared in amazement at what I saw, I felt Cathy enter the room, walk over to the chair and I swear I heard her jaw drop a full five feet and hit the floor with a thud. "I don't believe it...it's impossible," she said, almost inaudibly. "A Juan doll?"

"I really hope Juan's life insurance policy covers polymerization."



day of the barney ii: aftermath

written by our pbs children's programming correspondant brian bull

chapter four: pendulum

BARNEY THE DINOSAUR APPEARED ESPECIALLY MERRY THAT EVENING, HIS DANCE carried a heavier step and bounce than usual and his singing more jubilant than before. Were he to realize that Jeremy Phillips was back that night, he may have been less exuberant. In fact, were he to know of the destruction of his secret nursery, the mass extermination of the Loved One infants and especially the death of Baby Bop, Barney would not be happy at all. One would suspect he would fly into a murderous rage, though the very thought seemed absurd...

But for the moment, Barney reigned triumphant. Hundreds of children danced in mindless abandon around the flanks of the fat purple reptile, while the cloaked musicians huddled in the center of the cavern, playing flighty melodies on rusted instruments. The whole scene was a chaotic sea of purple and green, and the air resounded laughter and singing. Were anyone to venture back out into the outer plaza above the cavern lair, they would be astounded to see the former White House shrouded in flame and smoke.

"Hey kids, isn't this some fun?" giggled Barney. "Playtime is always a good time. It's like having a circus in your very own home!"

Acknowledging the cue, the Loved Ones in the band picked up their instruments and began playing "A Circus In My Home," while Barney donned a ringmaster's hat and coat. The children watched in amazement as the dinosaur began juggling and singing of the wonders under the Big Top.

Outside the cavern entrance, Jeremy Phillips rechecked the shotgun and adjusted the sheath containing a serated hunting knife. He pulled the ragged purple and green cloak over his head and hands, then began making his way down the stairwell. His pistol lay with Fran, who he had instructed to stay behind outside the main plaza. While she did not care for the heavy firearm, they both agreed she may need protection.

Jeremy ran a few movie scenes through his head, movies that featured a lone warrior against an overwhelming foe. He had particularly liked the Rambo movies, though his

top eleven signs your computer doesn't like you

11. You can't get the "Tommy" soundtrack out of the cd-rom.
10. Sabotages your resume by sticking the phrase "llama licker" at the end of every paragraph.

9. Razor slashes on your fingertips whenever you try to remove a disc.
8. When playing "Doom" you notice all of the characters are beginning to resemble members of your family.

mother lectured him heavily about the needlessness of violence. His uncle showed him the entire series when he spent a weekend at his apartment once. Jeremy knew he was nowhere close to Rambo and he wondered what the stoic war-veteran would've done against a fat purple dinosaur who smiled a lot.

The cavern echoed with the chanting of children. The torch-lit shadows covered the walls with eerie figures and shapes. In the middle of this pranced the Purple One himself; inciter of riots, killer of children, father of monsters, maker of a world marked by terror and insanity.

Jeremy had feared that the closer he got to Barney, the weaker he would become. But as the weeks progressed, he had felt stronger than he ever had before. It was the lack of Barney-videos, the absence of his plush purple doll and blanket and the time spent away from the Purple One's songs and false displays of affection that brought the boy to his senses. But maybe it was more than that; what if Barney's power only extended to young children? What if impending adulthood, with its major physical and mental changes challenged the control he wielded over the minds of the young? It would certainly explain the need to kill children on the brink of adulthood. Was it this that impelled Barney to kill Cameron and almost kill Jeremy on their thirteenth birthday? Could Barney simply be afraid of a child's change of life?

Jeremy had little time to ponder these questions for, as he cleared the landing, he came across a Loved One. The creature paused for a moment, confused. Jeremy, hoping his human features were not visible to the bloated, dwarfed monster, bowed his head and froze. The Loved One responded by gurgling out a few inaudible commands and motioned Jeremy to follow. The two of them cleared another landing and entered the circle of musicians playing for the children. Jeremy sat at the edge of the circle, terrified. What did they want him to do?

The Loved One who led Jeremy to the circle lifted the lid to a rotting old trunk and produced a flat, tightly-bound drum. He gave it to the boy and motioned for him to sit down. Jeremy sat between two Loved Ones playing the banjo and lute. He began to pound in rhythm with the music. It was a song about eating a balanced diet and its hypnotic monotony began to entrance Jeremy. He managed to shake it off, though, for he kept thinking about Cameron and what lay in store for the rest of the children.

The folds of the cloak hid Jeremy's hands completely, though he knew that he looked extremely undernourished compared to the plump, blubbery creatures around him. On occasion, he caught the Loved One across from him staring, as if it was suspicious. But as long as he kept still and kept playing, Jeremy knew he'd be okay. He began to notice an odd texture about the drum and, upon closer inspection, saw several fine hairs protruding along the surface. In the upper corner of the instrument was a navel. The disguised boy swallowed hard and kept promising himself he'd be alright.

Jeremy lost his self-assurance when he saw Fran making her way down the stairwell.

She was still clad in her purple and green pajamas and had wrapped herself in a Barney blanket. Jeremy could not believe it. Was she reverting back to her unquestioning devotion to the Purple One? Hadn't she believed what he had shown her in the cellar?

"Why, look everyone, it's Fran!" Barney hollered.

Jeremy felt the world falling apart. His sister ran down the stairs and into the crowd of children. "Oh Barney, I've missed you so!"

"Why I've missed you too, Fran. Say 'hello' to Fran, everyone!" said Barney, who cradled

7. Refuses to print anything but the lyrics to the "Mr. Belvedere" theme.

6. You get a bill for \$900.00 from 1-800-Flowers on-line, and a thank you note from your sixth grade gym teacher.

5. DOS prompt flashes "MS-DORK."

4. Someone drew a moustache and horns on your gif.

3. The only newsgroup you can access is *alt.fun.Tori_Spelling*

the young girl between his fat, stocky arms. The mass of children all waved and smiled. The young girl hugged the purple dinosaur, a tear rolling down her cheek.

"Barney, are you really doing these terrible things to us? Why must so many of us die?"

The bloated reptile paused for a moment. In the somber lighting of the cavern, one would be uncertain whether the dinosaur's coloration changed to a vibrant shade of scarlet or not. He relaxed his grip on Fran.

"Why Fran, I have no idea what you're talking about. I bet you just had a bad dream is all. Don't you know how much I love you? I wouldn't hurt a hair on your head or anyone else's? I think you'd better get back to sleep, you need your rest!"

Fran stepped back from Barney. "Jeremy never went to China. He said you killed Cameron and tried to kill him. Only because they turned thirteen. Then I saw those things in the nursery, the Loved Ones, and then I saw the girls who were made to bear your—"

"Get this kid to bed!" stammered the dinosaur, his head twitching nervously. "She's obviously had a real bad dream and that gives me a great idea for a song! Off to bed, Fran, goodnight!"

Jeremy watched as a Loved One rose from the ensemble, the one who had been staring at him since he'd joined the circle. It pulled a set of chains from under its cloak, an iron muzzle hanging from the end. It was going to take Fran back upstairs, back to the White House cellar, where it would see the fire and the dead charred bodies of its kin and suspect that perhaps it was her doing...

...and maybe—

Jeremy stood up and blocked the Loved One's path. It halted and Jeremy flung back his cloak, revealing his human features. It was long enough to surprise the creature while Jeremy slid out the shotgun and fired.

The explosion blossomed into the darkness, splattering the Loved One's ichor against the rest of the musicians. It happened so suddenly that it never issued a scream. It merely flung backwards upon the cave floor and twitched for another moment. The rest of the Loved Ones in the ensemble scrambled away into the crowd of children, who screamed in terror and surprise. Taking advantage of the moment, Jeremy slid another cartridge into the smoking chamber and reloaded the shotgun.

Unfortunately, Barney had seized the moment as well. When Jeremy turned back to face the Beast of Purple, the reptile had seized Fran and clamped his talons along the base of her fragile neck.

"Why Jeremy, what a wonderful surprise! I think you know everyone here, why did you shoot my friend, the Loved One? Don't you know that guns are dangerous? Put it away, Jeremy, and Fran won't be hurt."

"No," replied the boy. "You let her go first. I don't want to kill you Barney, but I'll shoot if I have to. You aren't going to kill any more of us."

Barney giggled. "Look here, everyone. Jeremy is threatening *me*, your old pal Barney. I've done nothing wrong or bad. It's *him*, shooting my friends and he'll probably kill us if we're not careful!" The dinosaur's voice was strained and quivering.

"Let her go!" yelled Jeremy. He looked at the mass of children, huddled in fear on the

2. The screen keeps flashing "Error Abort...nahhh just kidding..."

1. You find Windows 95 installed on your hard drive.

the top eleven least accessed internet sites

11. The World Wide Web Weasel

10. The best of the Tom Spelling flame wars

9. alt.fan.Osmond.Donny

cavern floor. Many clutched their Barney dolls and looked at him with pleading wide eyes. Jeremy hesitated for a moment, then recollected himself as he pictured their delicate skulls littering the back plaza of the White House outside.

Fran struggled, but Barney had a firm grip upon her throat. "I have an idea!" said the plump lizard, "let's sing a song we all know and love. Maybe that will make you feel better, Jeremy." He motioned for the cloaked musicians to come back. They slowly picked up their instruments and began playing an all-too familiar melody.

It was the Barney love song.

"Stop it!" cried Jeremy.

Barney had chosen the song for several reasons. Mainly, it was the most recognized and entrancing songs he could arrange. But it was also sufficient to distract Jeremy while a Loved One who was previously guarding the back entrance came around from behind the boy.

I love you...you love me...we're a happy family...

The entire crowd of children joined in while Barney swayed in rhythm, his hands still clasping Fran's neck. Jeremy was completely disoriented. As he listened to the music, he wished to liberate his sister and the rest of the children, but at the same time, he wanted to join in and sing a chorus himself. Harsh reality awakened the boy when the Loved One grabbed him from behind and clutched for the shotgun.

"Yes, yes, get the gun away from the boy!" commanded the chubby reptile. In his excitement he released his grip from Fran, who ran over to the aid of her brother. The three struggled for control of the weapon while Barney conducted the body of youngsters who were entirely hypnotized by the music and the dinosaur's swaying.

Fingers clutched for the trigger while the barrel rocked crazily in many directions. The Loved One kept hitting away at the two children, who were steadily wrenching the gun out of its grasp.

With a great big hug and kiss, from me to you...won't you say—

In a desperate attempt to reclaim the shotgun, the Loved One yanked hard, the trigger meeting flesh and slamming the hammer. The three fell backwards as Barney's right arm exploded at the elbow.

As Fran pinned the Loved One against the floor, Jeremy pulled out the serrated hunting knife and slid it firmly under the Loved One's chin. It cleared it's oral cavity and the blade tapped the inner surface of the creature's brainpan. The half-human/half-reptile creature gurgled and died immediately.

The multitude of children screamed as Barney slouched forward, clutching his shattered limb, which was spraying pink blood violently upon the floor and himself. The creature fell to his knees, reeled back, and let loose an unearthly howl that echoed frighteningly against the ceiling of the cavern. It saw the childrens' fear and realized his power was endangered. With great effort, Barney collected his composure and desperately pleaded with them.

"Children! Please! Don't be afraid! It's still me, your old friend Barney! Don't cower away! Don't you know I love you?" He paused and grimaced in agony, then stood up. "Why, I'll take myself to a doctor and fix me up...remember our songs about doctors, kids? They're our

8. <http://www.lint-net.com/~LINT>

7. The Poor Man's James Brown

6. *all.sex.Roseanne*

5. #AOL_is_Great

4. Netscape

3. <http://www.nothing.com/~blankscreen>

2. #Algebra

1. <http://www.io.com/~mtbandit/iw/twind2.htm>

friends...like I'm your friend..." The children cowered even further when he leaned toward them, his hand clumsily clenching the broken, bleeding end of his forearm. "Dammit, you worthless little bastards, come back to me! Come back to me!" The creature hissed and growled at the children in frustration, then shifted his gaze upon Jeremy and Fran, who were watching in horrified astonishment.

"You sniveling little brat-bastard! It's your fault! You came to rob me of my precious children and murdered my spawn! I'll kill you and your slut-sister!"

Jeremy gaped in terror as he looked at the squalid purple creature, gasping in pain and hate. Barney's eyes had taken on an evil, reptilian look and his teeth, once clean and smooth-edged, were now jagged and yellowish. The creature rose on its haunches and plodded towards the boy. Jeremy instinctively raised the shotgun, leveled it at Barney's face, and pulled the trigger.

The round sputtered and smoked. The cartridge was a dud.

The next moment the purple monster lunged upon Jeremy, his thick talons sinking into the boy's chest and legs. Jeremy screamed and thrashed wildly, trying to keep the dinosaur's teeth away from his soft stomach. The creature cursed and began muttering guttural phrases and sounds. The boy frantically hit at Barney's eyes and snout, while the reptile thrashed away at his clothing, tearing away the cloak and dousing the child in pink, pasty blood.

"I'm going to rip every ounce of flesh from your bones, boy! I'm going to break your spine and eat you alive. I'm going to take your lungs and wrap them around my—"

The next instant a clap of thunder broke through the frenzy. The fat dinosaur's body shuddered and froze. It rolled off of Jeremy and fell upon its back. A thin trickle of blood seeped from its nostrils and its entire body slumped. Jeremy staggered back upon his feet and saw his sister standing before him, clutching the pistol he had given her earlier outside the White House plaza. Thin blue smoke rolled lazily out of the barrel.

"I shot Barney, Jeremy," said Fran. "...I shot Barney."

Jeremy put his arms around her and gave her a firm hug. They stood there for a moment in silence. Then they both turned and cautiously made their way over to the fat, blubbery body of Barney.

The creature's breathing was faint and raspy. Tears flowed from the corners of his eyes. Blood seeped from underneath him and his body was getting cool and wet. It cocked its head towards the children, fixing its gaze upon the two, and muttered sadly, "Why won't you love me anymore?" The next instant it was dead.

Fran dropped the gun to the floor and leaned against the cavern wall. "I want to go home."

Jeremy examined his wounds and looked back upon the crowd of children standing in silence. "We'll go home," he said. He motioned the rest of the children to follow him and his sister up the rocky stairwell.

As dawn broke over the desolate horizon, Jeremy led the children outside of the caverns. The children huddled in awe and amazement. Many hadn't seen the light of day for years.

epilogue

IT WAS FIVE YEARS AGO THAT JEREMY AND HIS SISTER FRAN KILLED THE PURPLE ONE. BARNEY, PROPAGATOR of lies and false love, had met his fate at the hands of two children on the verge of adulthood.

the top eleven ways to get kicked out of a star trek convention

11. "Picard? Kirk? Oh please! What about Captain America?"
10. Ask William Shatner about *Barbary Coast*
9. Comment "Oh yeah, I can't stand that 'R' guy either!... 'S'?... 'T'?... 'U'?..."

Now the world was returning to normal.

Jeremy sat at the window of the coffee shop, sipping hot chocolate and watching the cars drive by. In the distance he saw the familiar silhouette of the Capitol building, which was now restored to its pristine white and cleared of the horrors that lay within. The White House, though completely destroyed, was being steadily rebuilt since the cellar had been cleared of its ghastly debris.

The waitress came by with the check, he placed a couple of dollars upon the table and left, waving to her and smiling. Though he had not learned her name, she and her husband had been among the first of adults they had met when the children left the caverns. It had been an awkward encounter. It seemed that the adults were as fearful of the children as they had been of them. But as time passed, life resumed its rightful path and many families were reunited. While many adults had been killed during the Great Act of Love, many more had escaped the onslaught by prowess, chance, or in many cases, mercy. Barney's influence had destroyed many adults, but several had seen the evil early and prepared for the holocaust.

As Jeremy walked down the sidewalk, he was greeted warmly by many of the shopkeepers and businesspeople, it was widely acknowledged that he had played a major part in the Purple One's downfall. His sister Fran had her share of admirers too, in fact she still received invitations to this function and that, along with the occasional wedding proposal from men she had never even met.

While Jeremy and Fran had yet to discover what had happened to their parents during the Great Act of Love, they remained hopeful that one day they would be reunited. But for now, the two lived together in a comfortable duplex on the east side of town. Checking his watch, Jeremy waited at the corner and boarded the bus a few minutes later that would take him home. The bus was filled with adults and he took comfort in that.

Were it not for some of the rubble and missing adults, it would almost appear Barney never even existed. Then again, city ordinance made every step to make it appear so. Once the government was refounded, it was unanimously decided that all Barney and Baby Bop paraphernalia was to be promptly and completely destroyed. The color purple would never quite be a popular color again, unless it was a distinct shade different from that of Barney's.

Then there was the question of the Loved Ones. It was hoped that many were killed during the destruction of the nursery. It was also hoped that most were in the caverns at the time it was sealed off by carefully arranged explosions last summer. A bounty was placed for any Loved One captured, dead or alive. A few had been taken in, but they were always dead and cold by the time they were brought in. Most hunters couldn't take the sight of the creatures and destroyed them out of a sense of loathing. It was also reported that some parents were telling their children Loved Ones still survived in the city sewers and, if they were bad, the creatures would come at night and take them away. Jeremy didn't know what to make of that.

The bus arrived at a cool, shady intersection and stopped. Jeremy stepped out and made his way home.

Upon unlocking his door, Jeremy was met by an unusual sight: two birthday cakes sitting on the table, their candles lit and shining bright. On the other end of the table sat Fran, smiling.

"Happy Birthday, Jeremy."

8. Keep asking "When's Darth Vader coming?"
 7. Use only the middle finger when making the sign to "Live long and prosper"
 6. Set phasers to "This is so lame"

5. Ask "If Picard is out in space, how does he get back every year to do *A Christmas Carol*?"
 4. Yell out "I didn't say the Enterprise should be *hauling* garbage...I said it should be *hauled as* garbage!"

He laughed. "It's not our birthday, what are you—" He paused. There were thirteen candles on the cake.

"I thought it was time for a real celebration. Then maybe we can plan to send you to China for real," she said, pushing the cake towards him.

Jeremy sat in silence. Words escaped him. He looked back at her, made his wish, and blew out the candles. A moment later, she did the same. The two siblings looked at each other and laughed.

"Thirteen," she said.

"Thirteen," he answered.



yabba dabba don't

carved out in stone by regina dancy

If politically incorrect cartoons were made today:

Pepe Le Pew would receive a restraining order and a lawsuit from the black cat with the white stripe for stalking and sexual harassment.

Wile E. Coyote would be given a 50-yard headstart on the Road Runner because of learning disabilities and physical limitations.

Woody Woodpecker would be protected as an endangered species regardless of his threat to society.

Tom & Jerry would be hailed as pioneers and role models for same-sex domestic partners. Later, Tom would be shunned as a facilitator of domestic violence.

Wilma & Betty, champions for women's rights, would work at the gravel pit while Fred & Barney stayed at home to care for Pebbles & Bamm-Bamm. The "Grand Poobah" would be a woman of Native American descent.

Mighty Mouse would be called "Strong American Rodent of the Vertically-Challenged."

Yogi Bear would be brought up on charges of criminal misconduct, then found "not guilty" by a jury, sympathetic to his years of forced hibernation by the park ranger.

Mickey & Minnie Mouse would be on a talk show entitled "Males With Feminine Voices and the Persons They Can't Make a Commitment With." We'd hear about his fear of commitment due to the struggles of rearing his three nephews as a single parent.

"Josie and the Pussycats" would be called "Jo and the Lionesses."

3. Keep snatching Spock's ears
2. Say "You know why they call him *number one*, don't you?"
1. Accidentally let it slip that you have plans to go out on the weekend

the top eleven rejected Meatloaf song titles

11. *You Can Lead a Horse to Water (But You Can't Make Him Drink)*

Foghorn Leghorn would be ostracized for his reluctance to date the female chicken because she had a nerdy son out of wedlock.

Fred would finally have to choose between Daphne and Velma. Shaggy would have to break up with Scooby for a human relationship. Fred, taking note of Shaggy's hip "grunge" thing, would lose the ascot and sport a tie-dyed shirt. Shaggy, recognizing his addiction for Scooby snacks, would join a twelve-step program where he would come to terms with his jealousy of Fred.

Jane Jetson would get a job. Judy would stop dating rock stars and find she doesn't need men to be happy. Elroy would tell his dad about his obsession with Rosie, the robot maid. Cogswell Cogs would be the victim of a hostile takeover by Spacely Sprockets, where an African-American CEO would run the operation.

Sylvester would finally get to claw the old woman's eyes out and eat Tweedy Bird (All right, it's not politically correct but is it wrong to dream?)

Elmer Fudd would get therapy for his lisp and join an animal rights group. Bugs Bunny would finally come to terms with his desire to dress as a female. Daffy Duck would find acceptance amongst his peers despite his inability to form meaningful and lasting relationships.

Porky Pig would be called Big-Boned Slob.



the fly on the tip of one's nose

swatted to a bloody pulp by h. turnip smith

CONSIDER THE FLY—ITS NURSERY WET NEWSPAPER FULL OF ROTTING HAMBURGER IN A garbage can, it begins life a wriggling white maggot that gives way to adult improbability. Equipped with an eye that would rival the mirrors of Mount Palomar and able to jump airborne and sideways at the blink of an eye, the fly with its ability to scale walls in defiance of gravity is truly a magnificent creature. Not edible mind you with its four hairy legs and fat, blackish-green abdomen, but certainly evidence of God's sense of humor, the fly was put on earth to plague mankind.

I yield to no one in my reverence for life, but when an aging hummer slowly circles my bedroom in October or worse yet takes up occupancy on my proboscis, the murderous instinct in me is unleashed. The problem, however, is how to eliminate a miniature Olympian that has inexplicably taken a shine to one's nose.

I can already hear the snickering of the smart-alecks among my readers. Banishing a fly from the nose is simply a matter of a wave of a hand. However, that's the type of naive attitude that so often frames social policy and fails to demonstrate a basic grasp of

10. *The Shortest Distance Between Two Points Is You*
9. *Like a Mouse Out of Purgatory*
8. *Maybe I Will (And Maybe I Won't... (And Then Again... (No, Wait a Second... (But Now That I Really Stop To*

Think About It...))))
7. *If You Want Me Half As Much As I Want You, That Means I Want You Twice As Much*
6. *An Apple a Day (And Twice on Saturdays)*

reality—the psychology of the fly. The fly understands its position in the universe to be the harassment of humanity, no more and no less. A hand brushing a fly away has merely aroused the fly's competitive instincts and sounded the battle alarm. Though the fly will temporarily depart one's proboscis, internally he is vowing to return again and again, and if at all possible to nest in that nose.

Thus, to grapple with a fly, man must be prepared to make war. An acquaintance of mine of a philosophic turn of mind won the struggle with his fly by icing his nose until it turned scarlet. The defeated fly, like a New Yorker wintering in Florida, at length departed for warmer climes. Others have tried immersing the nose in water for up to an hour. Some success has been reported with this method, but it is not a U.S. Coast Guard-approved procedure inasmuch as some non-swimmers have drowned escaping their fly. A more proven method of eliminating flies has been to journey to a gallery of modern art. Flies have an acute aesthetic sensibility and very few can endure a steady dose of non-representational painting or performance art. Picasso, in particular, has caused many a fly to vacate a nose, but Jackson Pollock and Piet Mondrian have been equally successful.

However, should the debased art strategy not wreak havoc on a persistent fly, sterner measures are in order. Perhaps, the man with his nose encumbered by fly should look at the larger picture. Has not the fly as much entitlement to a landing strip as the greatest 747? Who gave the man the right to govern the fly's freedom to land where he chooses? What the beleaguered man should do is abandon his murderous attempts to control the universe and maim the intruder, and instead reconcile himself to communal sharing with the fly. Marcus Aurelius' *On the Nature of Things*, if read carefully, would help such a nose-scratcher to take a more reflective view of the situation and adopt a non-capitalistic willingness to share territory with the fly.

If, however, good intentions and philosophy at last give way to the normal human desire to rid one's nose of an itchy, hairy-legged bastard, then the time for real action has come.

Certainly, dynamite will not do. The object is to eliminate the fly, not to blow oneself to smithereens. Thus, man must muster all the guile and craft of centuries of his own evolutionary struggle in order to defeat the fly sans Pyrrhic victory.

Now should the fly be so bold as to take up residence within one's olfactory cavity, this is an emergency situation. Procure a Colt .45 and, inserting the barrel up the offended nostril, fire several shots at an angle designed to clear the eyebrows and most certainly the forehead. This almost always dislodges the fly and, as a side benefit, if executed in springtime, has been known to unclog the sinuses as well.

But finally, though, if all attempts to tolerate the fly fail, the exit of the fly can best be engineered by the use of a large, hand-held mirror. Positioning the mirror at a suitable angle to gain full view of the offending beast, the beset must swing a ping-pong paddle at high speed, approaching the fly from directly overhead with Stealth-like efficiency to neutralize the fly's uncanny radar. The ensuing splat of fly flattened on bridge of nose will be an experience long remembered and so gratifying that a week in intensive care to repair a deviated septum will seem the smallest of prices to pay for establishing once and for all exactly to whom the human nose belongs.

5. *Love Spelled Any Other Way Would Be a Different Word*
 4. *I Like My Women Like I Like My Coffee (2 Creams and No Sugar)*
 5. *I Would Eat Anything For Lunch (But I Won't Eat That)*
 4. *When You're Early To Bed, I'm Early To Rise (Healthy, Wealthy & Wise)*

3. *I'm On My Hands and Knees (But I Still Can't See Up Your Dress)*
 2. *Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious*
 1. *Look, I Don't Write These Songs (I Just Sing Them)*

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Mr. David Coble of Pensacola, Florida, gets the award for being original in his request for a copy of the magazine. Along with his request for a copy of this fine magazine, Mr. Coble included two stickers, one featuring a quote from Ashley Parker Owens and one that said "Let's Trip the Light—Fantastic"; a faux hundred dollar bill featuring someone named "Frank"; a faux stamp of Otto Schrade; and, among other strange items, some sort of string firework thing that no one around wants to pull.

idiot wind

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