



Picture of the Week: *Philosopher in Meditation* by Rembrandt

## Fast Food Frenzy

By M. Finklestein, Food Sociologist

**H**ot dogs! Get your hot dogs!"

This phrase has been known to excite men (and women) alike for a variety of reasons, and it is this reporter's desire to pursue this phenomenon just as a sorority girl craves a juicy, Johnsonville bratwurst on Superbowl Sunday. There's just something about red meat and heating it up.

But first, in this issue, we'll explore a cultural phenomenon in America—the adoration of fast food.

No other *Babble-ON Interactive Poll* has been as exciting to answer, and no other poll has provoked such varied responses. One participant in the poll said, regarding the "Best Grease" (of Checkers), "When it touches your lips, it's so good." Another participant commented about the "Best Value" (of KFC), "Here's a dollar, give me a bucket." Still another wrote an opinion about the worst commercials (circulated by Hardee's), "I hate those stupid thick burger commercials, can't they just show the burger and leave it at that." As you can see, the question of your favorite fast food is nearly as provocative as "which Beatles' album is the best."

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### Letter from the Editor

It's that time of year. The air is crisp (note: not "crispy" which would imply staleness, as stated last issue), the leaves are changing (unless you live in a tropical locale or Dallas), form-fitting sweaters are back in the wardrobe, and it's the start of the holiday season. Enjoy! And please write some more articles.

Also, I wanted to encourage the tens of readers out there to take pen to paper (or fingers to keys, as it were) and write responses to the many controversial articles they encounter in this publication. You're guaranteed to be included in the next issue!

Dan

## Deep in Dead Ellum: Echos of Juliana Hatfield

A concert review by SJM

To attend or not to attend: this was my question this Wednesday last. After all, DFritz and I had another invite for the evening, and that doesn't happen very often to bed-wetters. However, after much deliberation and a dinner of Mac 'n Cheese, we decided to revisit my past (Dan was listening to Beethoven in the 90s). I make reference to the Evan Dando concert held at Trees, a dive-ish music club in what is known as the Deep Ellum section of Dallas. This venue could not have been more unlike the stadium seating of the Dallas R.E.M. concert (see Dan's article from last issue). It was smoke-filled, it was wooden and rusted-tired looking, there was a leather-clad S & M (note: not SJM) fanatic. BUT—and here's the kicker, folks—the level of enthusiasm, of excitement, of any sort of concert-goer normalcy was, again, sorely missed. Most emotionless attendees of this ex-Lemonhead's gig stood upright, arms crossed, slowly (and with no regard to rhythm) tapping their boots or twitching an eyelid. In fact, the most enthusiastic members of

...continued on page 4...

### Bad Joke Corner

Contributed by Various Readers

#### Joke 1:

What kind of math do you do in the bathroom?



Logarithms

#### Joke 2:

Two nuts walk into a bar.

One was assaulted...

#### Joke 3:

Why was the snowman happy?



Because he heard the snowblowers were coming through.

More next issue...

...Fast Food Frenzy, from p.1...

Fast food is hated abroad, usually because it's seen as a symbol of American economic imperialism. (Some of those dissenters don't know that Burger King, in particular, is a British firm.) Meanwhile, the sheer volume of sales in those countries is a testament to the locals' adoration of the fast food establishment.

Fast food is hated at home. Many a young woman has spurned the idea of entering a fast food building, much less eating there, in spite of the fast food industry's attempts to make food appear healthier and even "vegetarian" (note: veggie burgers, veggie patties, and Diet Coke). Yet there are numerous exemplary late nights of these same people during which they got "the munchies" and gave in to their real desires.

The truth, be that sad or happy, is that everyone loves fast food and everyone likes to talk about it. And in case you need something to talk about at a cocktail party (though who wouldn't have mouth full already?), here's a little fact to spit out: McDonald's total revenue in 2002 was over \$15.4<sup>1</sup> billion. That's over \$2.43<sup>2</sup> for every person on earth. ☒

<sup>1</sup>[www.mcdonalds.com](http://www.mcdonalds.com)

<sup>2</sup>[www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

### Babble-ON Interactive Poll!

Which type of alcoholic beverage do you usually prefer?

Beer

Wine

Liquor

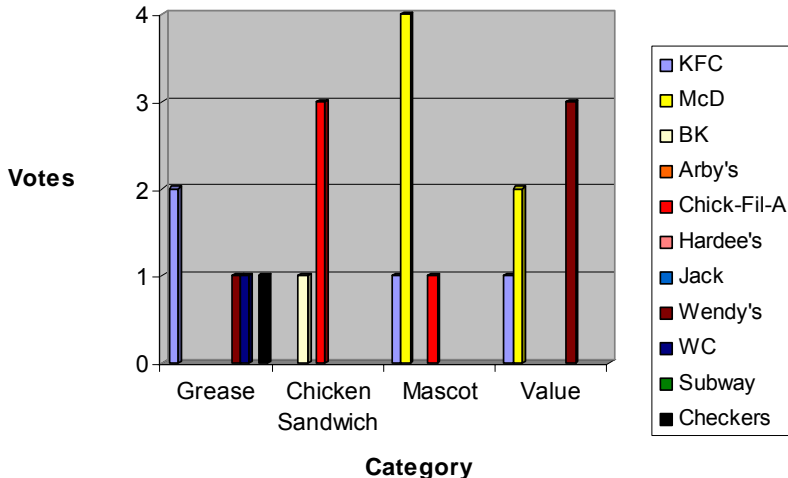
Mixed Drinks

Anything with an Umbrella

None

### Issue 6 Follow-Up!

What is best in each category?



### Dictator of the Month:

Mamma always said...

By Pinochet

Mamma always said, "It's rude to offer the leader of the free world coffee...without cyanide."

Mamma always said, "Beer before liquor, never sicker. Liquor before beer, you're in the clear."

Mamma always said, "You're still, you're still, you're still Pinochet from the block!"

Mamma always said, "Take over small countries, because nobody will notice."

Mamma always said, "Never storm Parliament without clean underwear."

## Letters to the Editor

*In response to “Ex-XX Extreme Psychosis” by S. Meek, Volume 1, Issue 6:*

"Yes, all women are crazy. But am I any less so? I think not."

"What the heck is wrong with emailing someone past 11 o'clock? Not that calling 4 times AND sending an email isn't wacky, just trying to establish that a little...ahem...late-night computer time is all well and good."

The key to successful social interaction is choosing which of the voices inside my head to broadcast to the world. Either that, or I am schizophrenic. While many people suffer from anxiety and dramatic over-analysis, only some worry about everything in public or get all emotional when they think every damn person in the world doesn't love them. Through pained self-exploration (I guess I ate too many raisins), I have come to the conclusion that most people (men, women, whatever) are kinda crazy on the inside, but some of them do a fair job of prioritizing which worries are worth the effort. (I surmise the rest just get lost on the cutting room floor.) Some people freak out about everything, while others worry about nothing. But are the people who freak all the time really crazy or are they just kinda dumb? Aren't some things worth worrying about? Or is the needy ex-girlfriend who thinks I am "the one" selfishly looking for attention and avoiding working on her real problems? Do our stereotypical social templates of how people must act to be successful (or well-liked) help us focus our attention away from the crazy stuff or does our consumerist, media-driven world blind us with an infinite number of possible me's and you's that make us all loony? Oh...the calamity!

—B. Friendly

*In response to “We May Be From Seattle But We Are Not Grunge” by James Schneider, Volume 1, Issue 6:*

Dear Editor:

I would like to respond to one of your publication's frequent contributors, Mr. James Schneider. As much as I usually hoot and holler at the truth and hilarity provided by Schneider, I simply cannot allow him to make the gross error written in last issue's "We may be from Seattle but We Are Not Grunge." In this article, the author mistakenly concludes, "*Dirt* (the Alice in Chains album) arrived in 1992 amidst a Seattle rock scene riddled with Pearl-Jam wannabes."

Wait a second my young friend! I do not intend to sound ageist, but perhaps Sir James was too young in 1992 to appreciate the difference between authentic grunge and what I call "second-wave grunge," both in terms of sound and chronology. Young Schneider may have still been fighting diaper rash, clad in Huggies, while I sported my flannel. Nevertheless, it behooves him to get his facts straight when writing an article geared toward those of us 'aging grungesters' old enough to remember when Pearls Jammed and Stone Temples were first Piloted. In 1992, I was still in the 8th grade, just about to make my way to the high-school scene. At this point, it was still possible to get tickets to a Pearl Jam concert in Missoula, Montana (to pick a random example, since I wish to conceal my identity). In other words, wannabes did not yet have ample opportunity to copy Pearl Jam's (specifically Vedder's) sound. In other words, although I'd like to pinpoint a more exact date, it's safe to say that the "second wave" grunge movement—the "Pearl Jam wannabes" Mr. Schneider refers to—popped onto the scene a few years later. In fact, there are still echoes of Vedder on the airwaves today, however diluted and even more muddled their voices sound. I invite James to think this over while searching for old TAPED copies of P. Jam, and then tell me if you didn't jump the gun a bit.

Sincerely,

Ageing Grungester X

(discover my true identity by matching my home state with this state bird: Meadow Lark)

☒

## Police Subdue a Tiger in Harlem Apartment

By ALAN FEUER and JASON GEORGE

Published: October 5, 2003, www.nytimes.com

To the sounds of enormous jungle roars, a police sniper rappelled down the side of a Harlem apartment building yesterday and fired tranquilizer darts through an open fifth-floor window to subdue — seat belts, please — a 350-pound Bengal tiger.

The daring, and creative, bit of sharpshooting helped end an episode in which the New York Police Department, unaccustomed to bagging big game, nonetheless managed to sedate the beast. Officials planned to send the tiger, temporarily being held at the Center for Animal Care and Control on 110th Street, to a conservancy in Ohio.

What the tiger, along with a four- to five-foot reptile called a caiman, was doing inside a cluttered apartment in the Drew Hamilton Houses at Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Boulevard and 141st Street remained a mystery yesterday.

In a news conference at the scene, Police Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly said the police became involved in the case on Wednesday when the apartment's resident, Antoine Yates, called to say he had been bitten by a pit bull. When the police went to investigate, Mr. Kelly said, Mr. Yates met them in the lobby. He went to Harlem Hospital with bites on an arm and a leg.

On Thursday, the police got an anonymous tip saying a wild animal was somewhere in the city. On Friday, another call directed them to the exact address. On Friday night, the police found no one home, but talked to a neighbor who complained of large amounts of urine and a strong smell coming through the ceiling, Mr. Kelly said. The neighbor said her daughter had seen the tiger.

Yesterday, the tiger's existence was confirmed after a hole was cut in the apartment door.

Mr. Yates checked out of Harlem Hospital early yesterday, prompting an inquiry into his whereabouts. But investigators said last night he had been located in Philadelphia, where he was being treated at the University of Pennsylvania Medical Center. How Mr. Yates got to Philadelphia and the nature of his injuries were unclear. The police said he faced charges of reckless endangerment.

The caiman also was taken to the Center for Animal Care and Control shelter, the police said.

"This is an only-in-New-York story," Mr. Kelly said.

Getting to the tiger, a male, was no simple task. From an apartment on the fourth floor, the police first eased a pole-mounted camera out the window to keep track of him. Meanwhile, on the seventh floor, they prepared a team to rappel down so they would have a clearer view when firing tranquilizer darts to subdue him.

The police also called in animal experts, including Dr. Robert A. Cook, head veterinarian at the Bronx Zoo. Dr. Cook, visibly angry over the cramped conditions in which the tiger prowled, said keeping the creature in such a setting was "crazy."

"If he had escaped it would have been a very bad thing," he said.

It was shortly before 4:30 p.m. when the police sniper, Officer Martin Duffy, armed with a dart gun and a rifle with live ammunition, began to rappel down toward the window. He fired one dart a few minutes later, which drew a knee-shaking roar from inside the apartment.

After a few more minutes it was determined that the tiger had been hit, the police said, but was not yet fully sedated. So Officer Duffy fired another dart.

As hundreds of onlookers gathered on the street, some began to wonder if this urban big cat would get along so well in the less cosmopolitan reaches of Ohio.

"My concern is that the city cat won't make it in the country," said Lynnette Braxton, 49. "He's going to have no jazz, no hip-hop. He's going to miss the Harlem Renaissance." ☒

### ...Echoes, from p. 1...

the crowd were AARP card carriers whose illegitimate children most likely introduced them to the band back in their flannel shirt phase (and believe me, I know what I'm talking about, since many an F-shirt hangs in the SJM wardrobe archives).

So, as all ten of the other concert-goers continued to exhibit church-caliber behavior, I let loose, singing along with Evan and his band mates, occasionally heckling to Mr. Dando, "Hey, Scarecrow dude, eat a sandwich!" Seriously, he was looking skinnier than Moby on the Atkins diet (whatever that means).

To make some sort of point in reference to this title (because above all else, this is the article writer's duty), I must comment on the gaping hole in the overall sound of Evan and friends. The mysterious but recognizable chirping of Juliana Hatfield was missing!! I mean, I kept tapping Dan on the shoulder with whaaahhappened-type desperation written on my face. And, although I would have gladly climbed on stage and filled in for her, her presence would have still been missed.

Like Michael Stipe, Evan's voice was as clear and as on-key as his Lemonhead recordings. Of course, he crooned out a few new unmemorable numbers about lost loves and his fear of the outdoors (which made me blush, although the guy now sports a wedding ring!), but I had to wonder how much extra time was left for talking crap about the silent Texans. There were certainly no encores to be heard (what with 10 hands clapping), and by the time we returned home, the spiral-shaped Mac 'n Cheese noodles I had forgotten to put away before we left were still warm enough to eat. ☒



## Car Owners' Hero Dresses for the Job

By SARAH LYALL

Published: October 7, 2003, [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)

LONDON, Oct. 2 — As is so often the case, the trickiest part came when he had to explain himself to his family.

"I got kind of a lukewarm response," said the masked Englishman who calls himself Angle-Grinder Man and who has been trawling London for four months dressed in a homemade superhero outfit, complete with gold lamé underpants and cape, removing the security boots from people's illegally parked cars.

"Any parent who gets a phone call from his son saying, 'Oh, you might see me in the newspaper; I'm a superhero wheel clamp vigilante' — it might take them a little while to formulate their views," he said in an interview.

As a one-man vigilante force, Angle-Grinder Man, who takes his name from the boot-destroying circular saw he wields, has made only a modest impact: by his own estimates, he has freed about 20 cars so far (he does it only part time). But his campaign against the city's effort to immobilize cars for parking violations and other infractions has touched a nerve in a city of strict parking regulations, zealous traffic police officers, ubiquitous speed cameras and car owners increasingly aggrieved at what they believe is mean-spirited law enforcement.

Although he hardly melts into the background, particularly when he switches on his noisy machine, Angle-Grinder Man has so far managed to elude the authorities by a mixture of luck, cunning and quick work: once he gets going, he can liberate a car in less than a minute. He does not accept money and says his main motivation is "anger at how politicians in this country treat people in general, but particularly in regard to motoring regulations."

Needless to say, the police are not amused. "Both Angle-Grinder Man and the owner of the vehicle could be charged with criminal damage if the driver admitted they consented to the act," a Scotland Yard spokesman told *The Evening Standard*.

Interviewed in the London office of *The New York Times*, Angle-Grinder Man was coy about his civilian identity. He said he had been threatened and harassed, mostly by private outfits that charge for removing the clamping devices. He is currently unemployed, but living on the savings he has accumulated from jobs that have reportedly included office clerk and entertainer at children's parties.

Long-haired and lanky, he is becoming well known in some parts of south London. About a month ago, 25-year-old Petite Tendai arrived home to find a boot on her illegally parked car. ("There were no signs saying 'no parking,'" she declared.) She had barely begun to rail at the injustice of it all when Angle-Grinder Man suddenly appeared.

"Basically, he jumped out of his car in his outfit and said, 'If anyone can, Angle-Grinder Man can,'" Ms. Tendai said in a telephone interview. "Then he just started sawing it off. It was wicked." He was gone almost as quickly as he came. "It was just a 'good luck,' and what-not, and then he was off," she said.

Angle-Grinder Man was spurred to activism when his car was booted and he was told that it would cost £95 (a little over \$150) to free it. "I was fuming inside," he said. He rented a circular saw for about £30 and did the job himself. He taped a photograph of the sawed-up clamp to his windshield, along with a note saying, "Please don't clamp me because I've got an extremely sensitive nature."

The sign proved a hit, although he had to remove it, he said, "when a guy on a motorbike in traffic nearly fell off his bike, he was laughing so hard." But Angle-Grinder Man knew he was on to something. "There was so much injustice out there," he said.

It took him some time to hone his look, and he rejected a number of color schemes before settling on blue and gold. "There's no school you can go to to learn how to be a superhero," he said. Perhaps most crucially, he found the perfect roll of gold lamé fabric at a flea market ("I had to hold it up and ask the girl how much did she think I would need to make a cape," he said).

For the boots, he spray-painted a pair of cowboy boots gold. The underpants are a pair of bikini briefs covered with the flea-market lamé. The gloves came from a piercing-and-fetish shop. Angle-Grinder Man designed the logo himself, proudly gluing the letters "AGM" onto the costume. "I wanted to have a balance between the political side and the comedy side," he said.

His Web site and his hot line for distressed car owners have drawn hoax messages, threats and dozens of fan notes, including one from a man who noted approvingly, "It's time we had a gay superhero."

For the record, "I'm a heterosexual superhero," Angle-Grinder Man said, "although I have no problem being a gay icon."

After the interview was over, Angle-Grinder Man strode into the street in full regalia, wheeling the suitcase full of civilian clothes he planned to wear on the train home later. Watching his gold cape glitter and swirl heroically in the afternoon light, Judith Smith, a sales clerk who said she had been following Angle-Grinder Man's exploits on his Web site, pronounced herself a big fan.

"I think he's extraordinarily attractive," Ms. Smith said. "Especially the golden knickers." ☒



**WANTED:** One Atari game system and Q-Bert game. Will accept broken or worn-out system as long as Q-Bert is available. Also on the lookout for A-Team poster with solo shot of Mr. T. Willing to trade 'T' for slightly ripped Farrah Faucet action figure. Contact: Gnome C. @ 888-555-1212 or [dimin@jeffsmom.org](mailto:dimin@jeffsmom.org).

## Quote Corner

### Quote of the Week

By Ryan Meyer

“Please provide the date of your death.”  
—IRS letter

### Name that Quote

By Frank Waterhouse  
(see the answer below)

“There’s nothing more exhilarating than pointing out the shortcomings of others.”

### Åsa Say...

By Asa Hadsell

“Tell people what they want to hear,  
And they'll love you for a while  
Tell people what you think,  
And they'll hate you for a bit  
In the end its short lived,  
So don't worry, just smile  
Because either way,  
In the end it's as relevant as a grit.”

### Andy's Soundbites

By Andy Wilkowski

Andy: "When did you sleep today?"  
Tom: "Every waking moment"

## Word of the Day

By Alan Fishman  
Beef

Name that Quote Answer: Clerks.

## Suggestions for Submissions

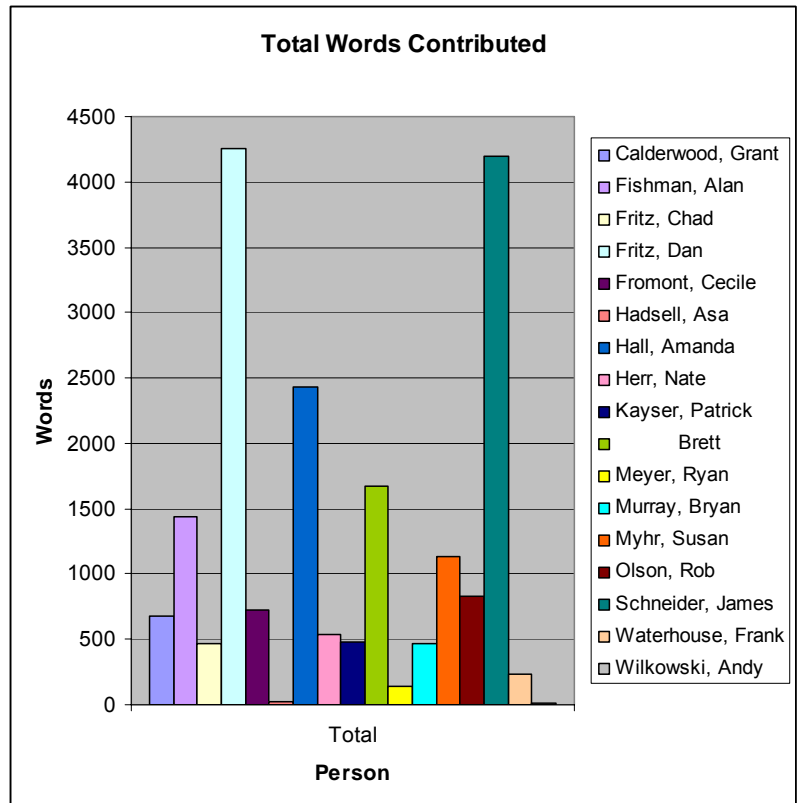
Your contribution can be anything you can fit onto a sheet of paper. Here are a few ideas:

<b>Editorials</b>	<b>Reports</b>	<b>Philosophy</b>
<b>Reviews</b>	<b>Ramblings</b>	<b>Rants</b>
<b>Comics</b>	<b>Puzzles</b>	<b>Jokes</b>
<b>Quotes</b>	<b>Polls</b>	<b>Trivia</b>
<b>Drawings</b>	<b>Poetry</b>	<b>Recipes</b>
<b>Photographs</b>	<b>Short stories</b>	<b>News</b>
<b>Predictions</b>	<b>Advice</b>	<b>Graphs</b>

Take some time to think about it. Publications go out every other Friday. Please send all of your submissions two days in advance to [dan@fritzcomics.com](mailto:dan@fritzcomics.com).

## Babble-ON Stats

These are close approximations. This does not include image/picture contributions.



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for the October 10, 2003,  
Volume 1, Issue 7 edition of  
Babble-ON™

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