

a rambling, bi-weekly newsletter that spans the ages!

Letter from the Editor

Issue One was a huge success! After a lengthy conversation on the phone with the Premier of Djibouti, *Babble-ON™* will start going international next issue. With this in mind, keep those submissions coming.... We wouldn't want to disappoint our growing, exotic fan base.

Happy August!

Dan

The God's Honest Truth

By Chad Fritz

The overstatement of the month, and most malicious thing I've heard in a long time, goes to Carol-Ann of Poltergeist, who once said, speaking through a television screen, "Baskets are the best thing to ever happen to humankind." To this statement I say "Hogwash! Bull!" and "Evildoer!" No WONDER this little liar was taken to another dimension by the bad guys.

Talking good about baskets remains on the same level as saying "blah blah blah" to your dog. As a matter of fact, the original first sentence spoken by everyone after the fall of the Tower of Babel in so many languages was about baskets—God's own personal little joke. No WONDER no one understood what anyone was saying!

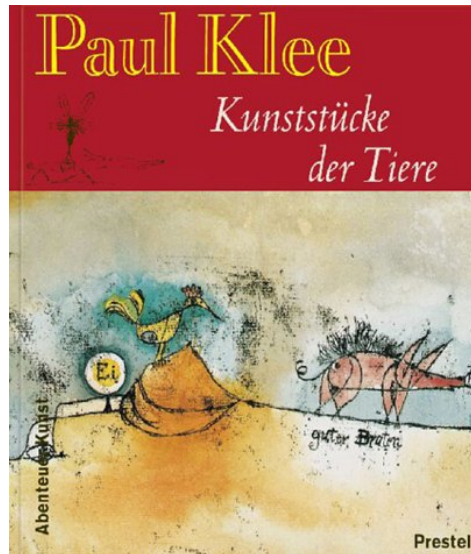
Has any one of you ever really used a basket? If you have, I bet you a million bucks you never told anyone your basket story because it would be too embarrassing. Most of us haven't, but that doesn't mean baskets

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Mature Cinema Review

Finding Ryan's Privates Proves Valiant but Misguided

By Dr. Magnum Cum-Loudly, Ph.D., Ed.D
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Cover painting.: *Wo die Eier herkommen und der gute Braten* by Paul Klee

For those about to snob, we refute you.

By Brett

Before the first shots of this article even ricochet off the collective musical genius that constitutes the Babble-ON audience, I will make a bold and courageous admission. I think Dave Matthews makes good music. Now, snobs, regain your senses and empty your vomit buckets, and I'll explain why your seemingly discerning tastes might make you miss the best aspects of the musical buffet.

What is good music? This question becomes a fascinating and highly contested debate whose answer probably will be realized at approximately the same time that a Palestinian state emerges. So, I like onions, and you don't. Are all the caviar eaters in the world secretly judging me? What about the chocolate lovers?

A long time ago, in a galaxy far far away, a group of men decided that since caviar presents itself in scarcer quantities, and is therefore consumed by only those able to find it, it must be that much better than all other foods. The descendents of these same men currently reside in a hidden California laboratory, where they churn out notions such as, "It's ok to like Radiohead – the musical equivalent to ice cream." These whims change more frequently than Salman Rushdie changes mailing addresses, thereby rendering it impossible to capture the ever elusive essence of cool. After all, if the essence of cool were to be caught, it wouldn't be cool anymore. This inexorably leads me to the question, "Was ist Kultur?"

The answer is: It doesn't matter. The sheep licking out of their Etta James pots have zero grounds to criticize their brethren drinking from Queen Latifah kettles. The same applies to the shepherd listening to Beethoven and his daughter who craves her Steely Dan.

To scale this mountainous argument we'll first need a good foothold, and that starts by demystifying the nature of being trendy. How often have you disliked a band, because you thought too many people (read: too many adolescent females,

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Be a Menace II South Shore Long Island...

By James Schneider
see p. 4

Kafkaesque Happiness

(Part Two)

By Dan Fritz

Last issue covered a potential impossibility. If we are to succeed in the face of the complex struggles of modern life, we are somehow to tackle our inherent inertia, counter our frustration in choosing what to do about it, assert ourselves as individuals, and engage in deep, human relationships—all at the same time. *And* we're to figure this out before life passes us by. It's no wonder that Kafka had problems.

Back to the *The Sudden Walk* and *The Metamorphosis*. As you'll recall, the former deals with a certain person's possibility to get up from his chair and go for a walk late at night (thus escaping his family and achieving his potential), and the latter deals with Gregor's possibility to become reintegrated into his family (thus finally fulfilling his true compassionate wishes). I say "possibility," because both cases are not forgone conclusions—they require decisive actions, or they will never be accomplished. Without action you could simply keep asking yourself the same questions over and over again, and you would get caught in a never ending circle. Or you could keep asking the *wrong* questions, and end up like K. in *The Trial*.

Here's a quintessential example of the crisis I'm talking about. In *Passers-by* we encounter a questionable scenario:

When you go walking by night up a street and a man, visible a long way off—for the street mounts uphill and there is a full moon—comes running toward you, well, you don't catch hold of him, not even if he is a feeble and ragged creature, not even if someone chases yelling at his heels, but you let him run on.

For it is night, and you can't help it if the street goes uphill before you in the moonlight, and besides, these two have maybe started that chase to amuse themselves, or perhaps they are both chasing a third, perhaps the first is an innocent man and the second wants to murder him and you would become an accessory, perhaps they don't know anything about each other and are merely running separately home to bed, perhaps they are night birds, perhaps the first man is armed.

And anyhow, haven't you a right to be tired, haven't you been drinking a lot of wine? You're thankful that the second man is now long out of sight.¹

The decision has been deferred (or rather too long contemplated) until the options are irrelevant. How can we be happy when living a life of impossible choices? We could very well end up making catastrophic decisions, or we might end up making no decision. So, where does that leave us?

It leaves us in the same place that Kafka's two apparently contradictory characters have been waiting all along. Each of the characters faces this overwhelming sense of options, and the stories themselves show us that the same philosophy can take us in two different directions. But which one do we pick?

Exactly.

To be continued...☒

¹*The Metamorphosis, In the Penal Colony, and Other Stories*. Translation by Willa and Edwin Muir.

Q&A

Ask Dead
Fantasy Island
Midget



Tattoo—the Fantasy Island midget—lived quite the eccentric life with his eccentric millionaire friend. But what insight has all of this stardom provided our beloved sidekick? Swinton Chumblebrook has the story.

SC: What do you think of all the recent star deaths? Katharine Hepburn? Bob Hope?

T: The day I see a 100-year-old midget is the day that I stop hating God.

SC: You sound kind of bitter about being one of the little people....

T: Look, assface. What would *you* say if it were easier for you to *drink* out of a urinal than *piss* in one?

SC: Okay, that's fair. One more question: could you give us your famous line about 'dee plane'?

T: Kiss my ass.

The interview was broken up here as Tattoo exposed himself and was arrested by nearby security guards. ☒

With Apologies to Walt Whitman, I Argue Concerning God

By Rob Olson

“So, are you doing anything this summer?”

As a teacher, it's a question I'm asked a lot. People ask it for a variety of reasons. Some people don't know me well and they haven't a clue what else to talk to me about. Others ask it in a somewhat accusatory tone - as if to say “Hey you lousy slouch, how 'bout you try working fifty weeks out of the year like the rest of humanity!” In others, I sense a tinge of fantasy. I can see the wheels turning in their heads as they think to themselves “Damn, what WOULD I do with three months off a year?!”

In truth, I'm an extremely busy person in the summer. I drink a lot of coffee before noon. I read the paper. I drink a lot of beer after noon. I read more. I chat. I think. I sleep. The whole process is usually pretty enjoyable, despite some of the frightening stuff I read in the paper from day to day.

A few days ago I read about Pat Robertson's new “prayer offensive.” It turns out that Pat is pretty fired up about the Supreme Court's latest ruling regarding sodomy, in addition to the court's ongoing implicit approval of abortion. Pat is SO fired up, in fact, that he has called on all of his followers to engage in a twenty one day “prayer offensive” asking God to remove three liberal judges (John Paul Stevens, Ruth Bader-Ginsburg, and Sandra Day O'Connor) from the bench so that they may be replaced by more conservative judges. Pat's fire warmed me up a little bit too - not about politics - but about God.

Here's the deal: God's a pretty unknowable entity. Sure, many feel a close, personal connection to God, but as close as any of us may be to God, there are still a whole lot of unanswerable questions regarding the nature of God. Contrary to popular belief, some questions about God can't even be answered with any certainty by guys with pointy hats OR guys with their own TV network.

We don't know how (or if) God created the reality which we currently experience. We don't know how God is keeping score of our actions. Is a little sin as bad as a big sin? If I think that my neighbor's wife has a nice ass, will I be damned in the same way that a really nasty murderer is? We don't know if God can intervene in the world. However, if we are to assume the answers to some of these questions, we really ought to be somewhat logical in the paths we take from those assumptions.

I haven't had the chance to chat with Pat lately, but I'm going to assume that he thinks God not only created the world, but also reserves the right to intercede whenever God sees fit. Okay, that may very well be the case. In fact, it's just as likely as the alternative as I calculate the possibilities.

But I'll tell you what's not likely. It's not likely God needs Pat Robertson's advice. I mean really, am I to assume that God is such a capable being that she/he/it can create the whole damn universe, carefully orchestrate all of its machinations, but then has to consult Pat freaking Robertson on whom to place on the Supreme Court?!? Should I assume God was consulting Pat when it was decided just how bad my gas would smell after I ate my last bean burrito? Because that was pretty God-damned nasty....

Even if God did take requests, I would think God would be more down with the whole “Dear God, please cure my dying mother of cancer” routine than political patronage. Hell, I'd bet some 14 year old kid would have better luck praying to finally get laid than would Pat and his prayer of no confidence in the court.

The utter nonsense of Pat's whole offensive prayer makes me wonder whether he truly believes any of his own rhetoric, or whether he's just trying to manipulate people's religious beliefs for his own political and financial interests. I began to wonder if Pat prays for any of the more regular stuff, like good health and getting laid. I checked out his website (yeah, I've got A LOT of time on my hands in the summer) and found the following:

“Where does Pat Robertson get the powerhouse energy to do the things he loves and keep up with his day to day tasks?”

Aha! Prayer, right? He prays for powerhouse energy just like you and me! Doggonit, he is a normal guy!
Nope.

“Pat's secret to keeping his energy high comes from taking his age-defying protein shake and his age defying antioxidants!”

Sorry God. We just can't trust you for our powerhouse energy - but I've got twenty bucks riding on the Eagles in the Super Bowl. Can you put in the fix? ☒

Be a Menace II South Shore Long Island...
While Doing Practically Nothing but Abusing Gnomes and Their ilk
By James Schneider

“Time to kick ass and chew gum. But I’m all out of gum”

I’ve had the tall thing going for me for quite sometime. Oddly, though, I’ve never commanded the presence (or fear) normally accorded to someone at 6’3”. I pensively groped for the answer and decided that if I were stronger I could menace with the best of them. A strong menace wherein seeing me most ne’er-do-wells would quake in their boots and be stone dead forever before they had the chance the wipe the poop from their pants. When I totally lose control...I like it. But, as always, I digress.

I began an intensive weight training program aimed at turning my fragile frame into a lean, mean, ass-kicking machine. The words, “Don’t fuck with me” emblazoned across my rock-hard pecs, a six-pack where 40’s normally reside, and the clever gag, “Have you bought your tickets yet...” and “...to the gun show!” tatted respectively on each meaty bicep. Hey, we all got dreams.

Well, needless to say, all this takes time. After about two months of almost daily exercise I can say a few things with confidence. I’m visibly stronger, slightly shapelier, and most midgets, dwarves, hobbits, and leprechauns back off when I’m about to throw down. At least, I hope that should I encounter one of these little fuckers that they’ll step off...whaaat? I may also say that I’m excited for another Fantasy Football season and for the wedding of Steve and Marisa. S&M. Sorry, I couldn’t help it.

The Napoleonic complex strikes at the heart of the “little guy.” Everyone sees their diminutive stature and bronze sculpted physique and winks knowingly at their neighbor while whispering, “He’s clearly trying to make up for something!” “Hans and Franz will (clap) pump **you** up.” Being that I’m tall and unashamed, I feel no desire to bulk up like the little guy. I don’t want to be a bodybuilder, a wrestler, a gymnast; you name the stereotype.

I’d also rather not adhere to the skinny weakling/runner/starvation victim thing that best suited me throughout high school and until I met my dear friend Jim Beam. Ah, how I love him like he was part of me. I have never been fat, but I have lost some tone through repeated encounters with some Olde English chap and So-Co, my Asian guide.

On the other end of the spectrum, the strong and truly menacing Navy Seals, Army Rangers, and hard-nosed mercs make everyone in the room gasp at them. If you thought twice about crossing these tough guys, you are probably already a stain on the bottom of their steel-toed work boot. Best show some respect.

Even though it was just a movie, I thought it was insanely cool when Nicolas Cage did handstand pushups in Con Air. It’s something to aspire to and an admirable goal that is possible with dedication and perseverance. Steroids, Creatine, or someone holding my feet out of the camera view being other means of attaining such glory.

So, with all this in mind, I reevaluated my strength-training goals. Not content to be a sideshow performer, and not yet ripped (strength-wise...) enough to be a hired tough guy, I have begun training for a task that’s near and dear to my heart. The goal: Be a menace to South Shore Long Island. But, I’m not really trying.

It helps that it’s been almost a week since my last dose of malt liquor. It helps that I don’t have a job, and since I’m not exhausted I’m able to do a few sets of curls and benchpress everyday. And, it certainly helps that I have my eyes on the prize. If all else fails, I’ll just move to Texas and get a gun. Then people really won’t fuck with me. ☒

Happy Humphrey’s
 August Fortunes



<p>First name starts with A-M:</p> <p><u>If your age is an even number:</u> You will find happiness pursuing a hobby that you have previously postponed.</p> <p><u>If your age is an odd number:</u> You will find happiness in realizing your wishes.</p>	<p>First name starts with N-Z:</p> <p><u>If your age is an even number:</u> You will find happiness in the arms of a loved one.</p> <p><u>If your age is an odd number:</u> You will find happiness in new adventures.</p>
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Patrick Kayser the Sex Geysler

A Column by Patrick Kayser

Dear friends, I am here today to talk about signs - signs that men who wish to score should not miss, but often do. Women are fickle creatures that enjoy the game of dating and use signs as tests of the male intuition. Frequently, women deign us men with only one or two chances to catch and act on their signs before they write us off as buffoons who are unworthy of their subtle, intricate presence. It is one's ability to recognize these signs that separates the Lotharios from the guy wearing a paper hat at Burger King.

Just the other day, a good friend of mine told me about a date of his where the girl invited him up to her apartment to, "look at my view," and he didn't do anything!! He went up there, accepted a drink (a drink! She gave him a drink in her apartment!), and stood by her goddamn window admiring the city. He didn't even kiss her! What the fuck, dude? This absolute flouting of basic dating rules is what inspired this article and is what leads me to penultimate sign number one: when a girl invites you into her apartment - under any pretense - she wants one of three things: to kill you, to rob you, or nookie. Which of these three depends on the caliber of woman you have chosen, but rest assured, as long as the chick isn't on parole, she probably wants some man candy. She has literally and metaphorically opened her door to you - don't be a dunce and look out her window - she wants you to pay attention to her. To do otherwise is to insult her and convince her that you are an ape who wouldn't know sensual if it bit him in the ass. Now, I am not saying that she wants to have sex with you if she invites you up. I am saying that she is interested in some preliminary physical attention and it is a mixture of the situation and how you play your cards that will determine how far the night will go.

Sign number two is eye contact. Somehow, the same friend from above managed to get another date with the same girl. Clearly, my friend has some things going for him other than his density, but on this date he missed perhaps the most basic sign there is: prolonged eye contact. Quite apparently, my friend and his date had a moment that consisted of an embrace and roughly ten seconds of eye contact, yet he failed to kiss her. Now dude, this is just poor. Ten seconds of eye contact is like her tattooing "kiss me!" on her forehead. Eye contact for any length over a millisecond is a universal signal to grab it and go. Man up for Christ's sake! Urgh! I am disgusted. ☒

Mature Cinema Review

Finding Ryan's Privates Proves Valiant but Misguided

By Dr. Magnum Cum-Loudly, Ph.D., Ed.D

I must begin this new column with the disclaimer that many bourgeois inhabitants of this planet enjoy the raw power and action of "Mature Cinema" but fail to see the allegory and symbolism hidden deep within. It is only when you realize this true beauty and meaning that you will be satisfied with your viewing experience. Much like the artists of the nineteenth century (e.g. Van Gogh) who languished in a disinterested and unappreciative world, the works of today's Mature Cinema directors will probably be recognized for their true genius ONLY after their deaths.

When I rented *Finding Ryan's Privates* from Butch's Video Hut and Tackle Shop, I expected a journey into the psyche of the war hero, traumatized but somehow more wise and worldly. What I found was a beautiful love story that misses some key moments to transmogrify this love to a broader societal message.

This sweeping epic relates the story of Ryan, a hapless army private with a penchant for the company of army nurses. While stationed in France (although it DOES smack of my parents old basement), Ryan catches the attention of a sweet, innocent nurse who is tending to his leg wound (a genius premise fraught with antanaclasis such as "It does feel stiff!"). It is clear that the two are attracted on a spiritual level, something we the audience capture through EVER so subtle signs (like the nurse's tongue touching her own nose to woo Ryan or Ryan's tongue's witty reply between his pointer and middle finger). This exquisite moment of delicate non-verbal communication begins a tryst brimming with symbolism. As Ryan begins to wildly peel her outer layer of clothing off, we feel as though he is also "peeling" layers from his own personality, letting us see the true soul of the soldier. We watch captivated as he explores her skin, though we cannot help but assume he is also exploring his "inner skin" to "feel" the subconscious as well as the conscious. The eventual nakedness that ensues practically smacks us in the face with the metaphor of their true nakedness to the world (almost as hard as he smacks the nurse's ass).

While I believe that this exchange is steeped in some of the best allegorical moments in cinematic history, I cannot help but recognize the missed opportunity to relate this tet a tet with the broader social setting of war. It is inferred that Ryan is probably also grappling with his feelings toward Germans, and yet many opportunities to connect this struggle to his struggle within himself are foolishly missed. For example, the anal beads that the nurse uses could be likened to the Nazi's retreat, and yet they are simply used to portray personal release. Another great place to ingratiate this macrocosmic level thought would be in the oral pleasure scene, but, alas, this too is all for naught. While the nurse clearly has the ability to dislocate her jaw and accommodate two privates' privates, she simply remains with Ryan, leaving the viewer to wonder: Will there ever be peace amongst nations? This film does not offer an answer. It does, however, please on a microcosmic scale, as we are able to enjoy the personal journey undertaken by Ryan. The satisfaction Ryan experiences in the end (punctuated by the release Ryan feels both emotionally and physically) is worth the rental fee. It truly is War and Piece. I give this movie three Butt Plugs out of five. ☒

...For those about to snob, from p. 1...

too many wannabe punks, too many poser frat brothers et al) were into them? This attitude embodies the foundation for being a music snob extraordinaire. I won't lie, I've done it before too, only to later break my ankles pursuing the distant bandwagon that eventually drops all the unsavory passengers off at TRL boulevard.

Because you like the music doesn't mean you have to model yourself after the majority of the fans. This shouldn't be a novel concept for you snobs, since you remain vigilantly guarded against acquiescing to poserdom anyway. If the music tempts our ears then we should listen to it. Suppressing your tastes makes you no better than Catholic Cathy who secretly desires Jimmy's johnson but never admits it. Wasn't Cathy a bitch?

When did it become hip to be anti-hip? Unfortunately now that anti hipsters parade college campuses and coffee houses in droves, they've caught themselves in a dreadful paradox. By being un-trendy, they've rendered themselves to that very trend. Ridiculous, right? Thus unfolds the destiny of a genuine music snob. It won't end until that goofily eccentric emo boy croons and cries to no other audience but you, having been abandoned by his fifteen other fans, who found out before you that some 12 year old in Idaho owns the scrawny geek's album.

To wholly reject a band, because it sounds similar to a band you find superior represents yet another tenet of snobhood. Because I listen to both The Clash and Green Day with indistinguishable fervor, am I somehow committing some royal sin against the punk rock snob Gods? Though *Rolling Stone* prefers one over the other, I can still enjoy both equally. Denouncing a band in order to praise another leads nowhere except to Snobville. It is akin to extolling the virtues of Camus by proclaiming that Sartre was a shithead.

While listening to the Doors the other day, the thought occurred to me that Jim Morrison sings the most awful shite. The Doors ascension to their present status as classic rock icons is a tribute to the hallucinogenic excess of their respective time. With that being said, we can throw out all the music reviews in the world. Those brief nuggets of unfounded opinions might have our kids listening to the Limp Bizkit in thirty years – which will be about the time that three dollar bills begin circulating. Seriously, a review symbolizes nothing more than one person's opinion, which, while probably stylized better than you could ever hope to articulate, is still less important than your own opinion.

So snob on if you want. I know you love being a music snob. You become sexually aroused when I designate you thusly. But do me a favor and break out your old Third Eye Blind CD. I bet it makes you happy. That's what music means. That's what it's all about. If it's good to you, it's gotta be good for you. Critics may have you listening to crawling cockroach music, but I for one will escape their jeers. You can find me hiding under a sheet in a dark closet quietly listening to my new album, "Under the Table and Dreaming". ☒

...The God's Honest Truth, from p. 1...

haven't influenced our lives in a very detrimental way. Baskets and basket ownership has produced consequences few of us realize.

In 1993, ASALR conducted a study on the correlation of babies who were placed in baskets and their grown-up counterparts who ended up in prison: the finding suggests that 64% of convicts had once been placed in, and/or carried in, a basket as infants.

Beyond this, baskets have been found to actually survive intact for up to 30 years on average. When you look at a basket, the first thought can easily be, "Oh, how cute!" But really, however practical you believe a basket to be, you have to admit first, that no one uses them more than once a year, and secondly, that they are almost impossible to get rid of. Their so-called "cuteness" is their lure, and it is the same reason that paid-for warehouses of baskets exist underground that few know about, transferring dusty inventory from place to place so as not to feel guilty of trashing them. After all, baskets do not rot.

Basket-guilt is a huge issue. People typically go on picnics once a year because they feel bad about the basket not being used. But if you ever decide to actually carry a basket anywhere, be it on your bike or in your hand, you better have a damn good excuse.

In the end, I recommend that you keep baskets out of your house. Torch them, smash them, or crush them under your car; just don't keep them, that's exactly what "they" want. For a parting piece of logic, let me give you this to ponder:

Because: Baskets= Christina Aguilara
 And: Chrisina Aguilara=Shiz-Nit
 Then: Baskets=Shiz-Nit

Therefore, let your battle cry ring out "Baskets Shiz-Naskets!" ☒

Suggestions for Submissions

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

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

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.

Dictator of the Month: Follow-Up
Pol Pot Dating Faux Pas!

Number 1: “I’m only calling you, because I have weekend minutes.”

Number 2: “...Because your mother was a political dissident, Jeanine. That’s why.”

Number 3: “Put some of this Khmer Rouge—I mean—rouge on your cheeks. What? No, I don’t only think about myself.”

Number 4: “Ta Mok is just a friend. Really.”

Number 5: “Of course I wasn’t in Bangkok last weekend. That’s in Thailand, baby.”

Things I’ve learned
Reminiscences by Pol Pot

- *Steel Magnolias* isn’t so bad.
- Pop Secret is much sexier than Act One.
- Don’t murder her family if you want to get in her pants.
- A dictator has no time for day spas.
- That ‘my mom’s on the other line’ line only works so many times.
- Chicks *don’t* dig house arrest. They *do* dig matching electric shackles.
- Batdambang is not the romantic getaway it looks like in the brochure.
- Billy Big Bass is *not* a good Valentine’s gift.



Contributors:

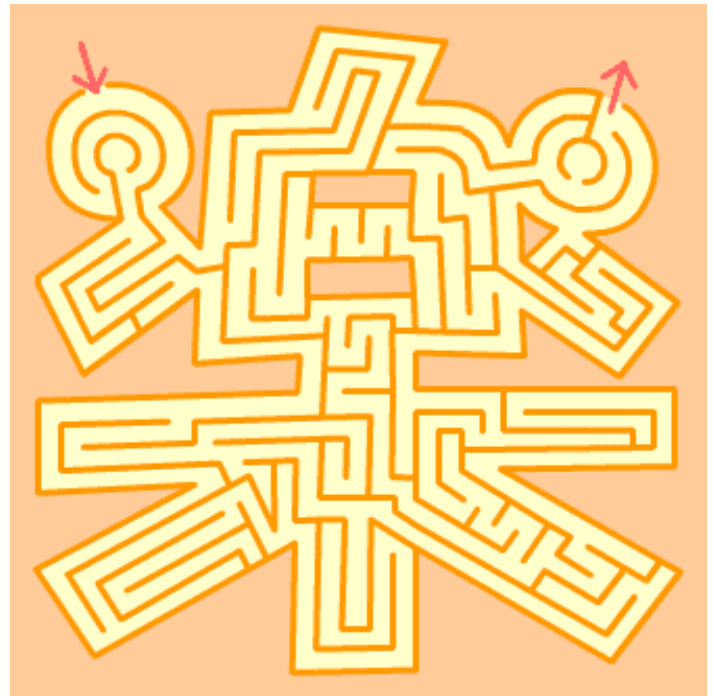
Chad Fritz
Dan Fritz
Amanda Hall
Patrick Kayser
Brett
Ryan Meyer
Rob Olson
James Schneider
Frank Waterhouse

Compiled by:

Dan Fritz
in Dallas, TX
for the August 1, 2003,
Volume 1, Issue 2 edition of
Babble-ON™

Submissions are the intellectual property of the contributors and have been provided out of each contributor's free will. Where indicated, some materials have been borrowed from other sources.

Puzzle Corner
Solve the Maze!



Name that Quote
By Frank Waterhouse

“You fool! You fell victim to one of the classic blunders! The most famous is never to get involved in a land war in Asia. And only slightly less well known is this: never go in against a Sicilian when death is on the line!”

(see the answer below)

Quote of the Day
By Ryan Meyer

"He who conquers others is great. He who conquers himself is mighty."

-Alexander the Great

Next Issue...

- “Kafkaesque Happiness: Part Three”
by Dan Fritz
- New Dictator of the Month!
- Letters to the editor
- A “Grant Rant” by Grant Calderwood

Name that Quote Answer: From The Princess Bride, said by Vizzini right before he drinks the poison.