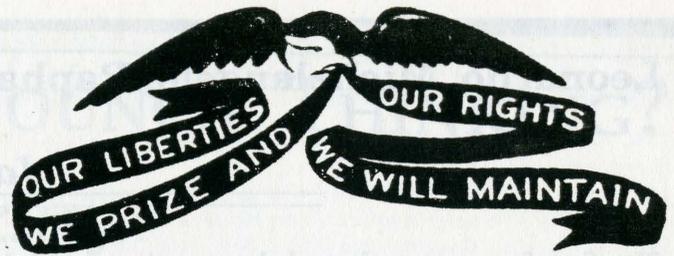


THE PRAIRIE PROGRESSIVE



July 1990

A NEWSLETTER FOR IOWA'S DEMOCRATIC LEFT

Prairie Dog's Summer Reading List

Summer in Iowa. Farmers pray for rain but forget to put in a stop-order. Paul McCartney comes to Ames but Nelson Mandela gets no closer than Detroit. Congress debates a flag-desecration amendment to the Constitution but no one introduces an amendment to house the homeless or feed the hungry.

What's a prairie progressive to do, except to grab a few books and head for the riverbank, the reservoir, or the fire escape? Herewith is Prairie Dog's recommended list of (mostly) current books, designed to help you stay cool, no matter how heated the rhetoric gets.

BLOODSHOT by Sara Paretsky. Detective Victoria Warshawski comes face to face with her own mortality as she eludes a vicious hitman on the streets of Chicago.

THE BURNING SEASON by Andrew Revkin. Murder, Third World intrigue, and the heartbreaking collapse of the ecosystem.

FOUCAULT'S PENDULUM by Umberto Eco. Deep dark secrets hidden in cool dank vaults.

I DREAM A WORLD by Brian Lanker. Dramatic photographs and interviews of 75 black women - from Althea Gibson to Barbara Jordan to Angela Davis - who changed America.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IN AMERICAN INDUSTRY: CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS by

Lipsky and Donn. Ever argue with a conservative about agribusiness, airline monopolies, professional sports, or the automotive industry? Here's the substantive data you need to support a vision of economic empowerment. It will also help you understand why you have two phone-books.

MALARIA DREAMS by Stuart Stevens. Ski-bum from Mississippi makes fun of Africa.

WALTER WINCHELL by Michael Herr. Screenplay-style bio of the superpatriot columnist who launched J. Edgar Hoover's career. The father of journalism-as-showbiz.

JOKERMAN by Aidan Day. Bob Dylan keyed the summer in Davenport and he'll end it at the State Fair on August 26. Disciples can brush up on his lyrics with this clever, albeit humorless, analysis. He did it in Las Vegas and he can do it here.

THE WORST YEARS OF OUR LIVES: IRREVERENT NOTES FROM A DECADE OF GREED by Barbara Ehrenreich. What else do you need to know?

A BLUE FIRE: SELECTED WRITINGS by James Hillman. So you think your longing, loneliness, and neuroses are due to what your family did to you 30 years ago? Surprise! The real cause of your unhappiness is that you're not a part of any kind of political community that makes sense.

THE DOG-EATERS by Jessica Hagedorn. The hippest book about the Pacific Rim, by the Johnny Rotten of the Phillipines.

GOING TO CHICAGO: A YEAR ON THE CHICAGO BLUES SCENE by Stephen Green. Photos of and comments by Koko Taylor, Buddy Guy, and other master chroniclers of urban culture.

PARSNIPS IN THE SNOW by Staw and Swander. Two Iowa Writers' Workshop grads cruise the Midwest looking for story-telling gardeners - and find them.

ON WINGS OF SONG by Thomas Disch. Iowa in the 21st Century: a repressive, God-fearing, prosperous police state where singing is against the law.

DELTA OF VENUS by Anais Nin. Classic sentimental erotica for singles sweating their way through the summer. Safe sex, and more satisfying than a night with the Republican at the end of the bar.

HOLLYWOOD by Gore Vidal. America's greatest historian reminds us that politics-as-showbiz began long before Reagan.

IN DEFENSE OF AMERICAN LIBERTIES: A HISTORY OF THE ACLU by Samuel Walker. A history of America in this century, from the Espionage Act to surrogate parenting. As Grandma always said, "sooner or later, everybody needs the Bill of Rights." ♦

Leonardo, Michelangelo, Raphael, Donatello, and Schwarzenegger

by
Jae Retz

The first four names above belong to the so-called Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles; the fifth is what - with turtles as role models - little boys in the movie houses all over the country are rapidly becoming.

Both the Turtles movie and Arnold's latest, Total Recall, are making huge profits from tie-in products as well as ticket sales. Ninja Turtle items are expected to bring in \$1 billion in 1990, and the list of products named in the credits of Total Recall is nearly as long as the list of stunt players. But what these movies are really selling is the notion that violence is fun and entertaining. Fighting becomes like dancing as the butt-kicking sewer turtles do their ninja thing with an MTV-like score as background music. If the demand for real turtles as pets has escalated, can the desire to learn the fighting skills be far behind?

Turtles mutated by nuclear contamination into fighting teenagers - we never considered that horror. Anybody interested in contemplating the depths of the decline of western civilization conjured up by the name association must make the leap from the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel to the sewers of New York, or from "The Last Supper" to a craving for pizza.

A 10-year old Iowa boy defended Turtle violence in a letter to the Des Moines Register by saying: "The only message I got from the movie was that crime doesn't pay and to stay out of trouble." Is it really that cut and dried for today's younger moviegoer? On the set of Total Recall, one of the villains, while being fitted with a fake-blood device in preparation for the bowie knife that would soon bisect him, was heard to cry out: "This is what we're showing our kids!" He went on to say that his eight-year-old son identifies with the bad guys, "because they do the most interesting stuff. He's asking for guns and ammo."

The one message I got from Total Recall is that the American moviegoer's tolerance for on-screen violence is apparently boundless. This movie is a skull-piercing, neck-breaking, throat-slashing, groin-crunching, front-back-and-side-splitting assault on the eyes, ears and stomach. It's all there, you blood-thirsty gore junkies. Go suck it up.

The special effects are pretty amazing, and the fantasy-reality theme is intriguing enough, but how can you enjoy them through a hail of bullets and blood-splattered glasses? And the plot is as shot full of holes as everybody in it.

The movie does have one redeeming irony: Arnold Schwarzenegger, the champion of conservative causes, is on the side of the little people fighting corporate greed. He is pitted against the ultimate capitalistic nightmare - a corporate head who controls the very air that the people breathe. And this movie controls our minds for studio profits just as the mind of his movie character is played with to make sure those corporate profits keep rolling in.

To place Arnold's role in this movie within a social context, the worst that can be said is that he symbolizes America's obsession with mindless violence; and the best, that he brings oxygen to Mars.

A local reviewer excuses the film's violence with, "even when the camera lingers on someone's death throes, it's too cartoonish to elicit any kind of emotional response." That's the standard defense: cartoon-like violence is harmless. But Roger Rabbit lives, and these two movies are further evidence of the vanishing boundary between fantasy and reality in this country. Their sell-ebration of violence should send a chill down the spine of anybody who is truly alarmed at the level of violence in this country.

Every list of Hollywood's highest-grossing movies forces the conclusion that America loves violence the way other nations love music, or wine, or dance. So, mothers and fathers of America - unless you want your daughters to end up with a ninja-kicking, nunchucking, Schwarzeneggerwannabe, it's time to wake up and fight the fad. ♦

"Lorenzo's attempts at Eastern Airlines to break our union is only one example of corporate greed and irresponsibility. The solidarity among workers in response to Lorenzo shows a renewed fighting spirit — the type of spirit unions will need to resist these attacks. Being a member of DSA makes you a better trade unionist. I urge my brothers and sisters in the labor movement to work with and join DSA."

**— GEORGE KOURPIAS, president,
International Association of Machinists.
Kourpias is from Sioux City.**

TIME TO RECYCLE COUNCIL THINKING?

by
Karen Kubby

Everyone is talking about "solid waste management."

The local focus of the solutions to our waste problems has been the residential waste stream. Nationwide, only 15-20% of the volume being dumped at landfills are from our homes. The greatest percentage of the garbage problem locally, nationally, and globally comes from industry and commerce. Within this category lies the more toxic wastes and huge volumes of recyclable and non-recyclable materials.

Yet local legislation focuses on the residential waste-stream. There are good reasons to start at this level, but sole focus in this area can seemingly reduce the responsibility of industry and commerce to share in the task of reducing volumes and toxicity of their wastes.

Some reasons for the focus on the residential waste-stream:

1) The state has mandated those items no longer allowed in Iowa landfills, and has imposed deadlines for each item. So far, this has included yard waste, lead acid batteries, waste oil, and tires. The city has pledged to continue its policy of providing alternative disposal methods for those items, regularly created by residents, that are no longer accepted at the landfill. The city also has alternative disposal options for appliances, paper, and plastic. The paper and plastic programs were started by City Carton and Environmental Advocates. These items are currently being collected by the city due to the infeasibility of these organizations continuing fully in the programs.

2) Local government traditionally has had more legislative ability to provide opportunities for waste management to individual citizens rather than industry and commerce.

3) Becoming aware of the "post-consumer" aspect of our garbage by source separation, is a necessary step towards changing our individual consumption habits. My household of twelve adults has reduced the volume of garbage taken to the landfill by two-thirds as a result of recycling and by becoming conscious shoppers.

We, as individual consumers, control how industry creates products and what is produced by continually "voting" with our dollar. By purchasing only environmentally sound items, we can shift market forces. The definition of "environmentally sound" includes not only the reusability, recyclability, and toxicity of the product itself, but the waste created by the production of the item.

For example, recycled toilet paper (let's get down to basics) is available in many local grocery stores. This toilet paper is bleached. One by-product of the paper-bleaching process is dioxin. Dioxins are then dumped into surface waters surrounding production sites. Dioxins are one of the most dangerous carcinogens and take hundreds of years to be naturally cleansed from our environment. Buying recycled, unbleached toilet paper in paper instead of plastic wrap, gets at the what and how of production.

Financially, The City of Iowa City is investing hundreds of thousands of dollars for residential waste collection

and drop-off points. You and I pay for these programs through taxes and volume-based fees. All this, for only 15% of the waste-stream.

I believe strongly in grassroots movements. I participate as fully as I can in creating markets for environmentally sound items. But government has the duty to protect the health and welfare of its citizens in the area of solid waste. I believe this could include creating opportunities for industry and commerce to explore different means of production.

As the operator of the landfill in Johnson County, Iowa City could implement a varied tipping fee scale based on the type of waste being delivered to the landfill. To the best of my knowledge, those businesses who have special waste authorizations do not pay a greater per ton tipping fee than any other user of the landfill. The tipping fee helps pay for operation and maintenance, as well as closure and 30-year post-closure costs of the landfill. These special wastes require the most monitoring over time for possible leakage into our groundwater.

One business's waste is the starting material for another. Bartering systems can be initiated with the help of local groups and/or government.

There are creative, innovative ways of reducing and reusing industrial and commercial wastes. It is time for our local government to look at this part of solid waste management. Everyone is talking. Who's left to listen? ♦

— *Karen Kubby is a member of the Iowa City City Council*

GAY RIGHTS VOTING RECORD: NAGLE UP, TAUKE DOWN

Ever wanted to know where our elected officials stand on gay and lesbian issues? The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force just issued its report cards on Congress.

Last year Senator Tom Harkin voted with us 75% of the time, compared to 62% the year before; Senator Grassley voted with us 25% of the time last year, down from 31% the year before. In the House, Representative Dave Nagle was 100%, up from 87%; Neal Smith was steady at 86%; Jim Leach was a big disappointment, dropping from 88% to 50%; Fred Grandy fell to 38% from 65%; Jim Lightfoot dropped from 60% to 38%; Tom Tauke nearly fell off the scale, dropping from 53% to only 13% last year. You can thank them or chastise them by writing Senators at U.S. Senate, Washington D.C. 20510, and Representatives at U.S. House of Representatives, Washington D.C. 20515.

It is interesting to note that the entire Iowa delegation, with the exception of Neal Smith who was absent, voted for the Hate Crimes Statistics Act. Harkin, Nagle and Leach even co-sponsored it. Gay and Lesbian Democrats of Johnson County sent surveys to the Democratic candidates for Governor. Only Don Avenson bothered to answer. And they were pretty good answers, too.

Last fall Tom Harkin told a gathering of Johnson County Democrats that "the last frontier for civil rights in this country is to end discrimination based on sexual orientation." He also stood fast on retaining protection for people with HIV/AIDS in his Americans with Disabilities Act. Harkin is showing promise of becoming the courageous progressive voice he claims to be.

Heroes in the legislature include Ralph Rosenberg, Linn Fuhrman, Tom Mann, and especially Tom Jochum. In the lobby: Michael Current, Iowa Lesbian and Gay Political Caucus; Dave Congdon, Iowa Rainbow; and Mark Lambert, ICLU. And many others.

Want to know about the Iowa Lesbian and Gay Political Caucus? Call (319) 351-2423 or (515) 274-4736, or write us at Box V, Des Moines 50311.♦

— Linda J. Yanney, Co-Chair
Iowa Lesbian and Gay Political Caucus

THE PRAIRIE PROGRESSIVE is edited by members of the Iowa City Local of The Democratic Socialists of America.

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