

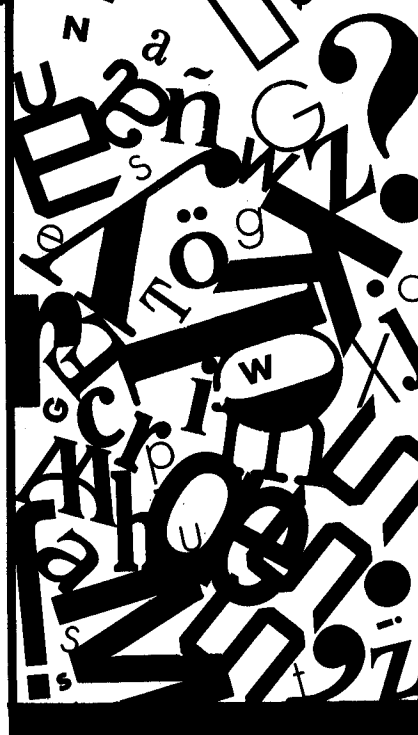
REPORT FROM PHILLY

Dear PW:

What a nice surprise to find #19 in my mailbox when I got home from work yesterday. I put in a lot of overtime (unwillingly, as somehow even the extra money doesn't make up for the lost time) but otherwise I'm still glad to be back in the real world. Philadelphia and the rest of the east seem more and more California, at least to me. There are sushi bars, flower boutiques, surfer sets, all without that particular California attitude though. I'm not sure whether there are fewer homeless people here than in San Francisco. I do know there are a lot of people sleeping, eating and living on the vents, even in summertime. I live in the middle of a downtown area, glacially gentrifying, with the usual downtown mix of transvestite hookers, ancient whites, students, strivers and the boom box generation. People do seem to care. Several women at work cook nutritious meals for the homeless, the whole thing coordinated by local churches. It ain't nothin' like New York, though. Have you ever been to the Port Authority Terminal? *Everything* is happening there, and it's happening all at once, all the time, to all the people.

It was good to hear that you'd gone to Vancouver (for the *Split Shift Conference*), that you've developed the nonprofit thing, and that you're planning more issues. I suppose you get the usual number of groans that *PW* is getting too slick. The fiction is definitely improving, and improving in an era of the nearly-dead short story.

Being back is still a treat, work the worst part of being here. But that would be the same anywhere. I used to miss the summer thunderstorms and the smell of the rain-washed streets, the east coast sensibility ("yo," as a greeting and goodbye) and the hustle generally. You can buy everything at discount here, so everything seems cheaper than in California. The streets are filthy and littered, lots of abandoned buildings. On the train going through North Philadelphia (the original ghetto, reputed to be one of the worst), the landscape looks ruined and depopu-



HEALTHY REACTIONS TO WORK



PAIN IN THE NECK



DIZZINESS



PAIN IN THE CHEST



SEVERE SWEATING

lated. Nearly all the heavy industry has left including the giant steel works. You can imagine what the sight of this does to my interior landscape. Maybe, as Bellow says, that life was never meant to last, although I don't know what he means by that. I'd rather that the affluence wasn't meant to last. Double-parking in Harlem is institutionalized now, and there are no lanes on the approach to the Lincoln Tunnel. Everyone just piles up and attempts to merge. In some places there's triple parking.

Best regards, B.C.—Philadelphia

A CANADIAN DOCTOR...

Dear friends,

Some of my poetry deals with my life as a member of the house staff—medical student, intern, resident—and some as a G.P. This is like graduating from slave to massa, and becoming a resident is like returning to slavery, and now as a G.P. again I'm back in the big house. It's very weird. The system of running hospitals with slaves by holding out the carrot of the big house later on is a system for keeping you a kid till you're thirty-five. I got fired from my residency after three years of killing toil (for addressing the staffmen with insufficient servility) and now as a G.P. they have to be civil to me or I don't send them any patients. And I have lots of referrals to make. The one fellow who was sweet to me when we were residents together (he's a specialist now) gets thousands of dollars a year in work as a reward. The rest get my abortion patients. Tee hee.

When I was a medical student I worked 40 hours a week plus up to 50 hours on call for nothing. I paid fees to the university. When I was an intern I worked 50 hours a week plus up to 50 hours on call for \$120 a week. When I was a resident I worked similar hours for about \$250 a week. This was in 1981. Now as a G.P. I work about 30 hours a week in the office and 12 to 50 hours of very light call plus maybe 10 hours in the hospital at night doing births, and I gross \$60,000 a year and take home \$27,000. What a system! The most weary-

ing, endless, stupid, heartbreaking, physically tough and emotionally deadening work has the longest hours AND is the lowest paying. Interns have to tell people their loved ones are dead, pronounce strangers dead, take responsibility for keeping desperately ill people alive, sweat blood over making mistakes that harm people, stay up all night as often as every other night, hurt people, frighten children, stick needles into babies, not eat, not sleep, and on top of all that, learn medicine or else—all for less pay than the mailroom clerks.

They grow up to be greedheads.

I can think of no better way to brutalize people than to work them like slaves by promising them plenty of prestige and money at some future date.

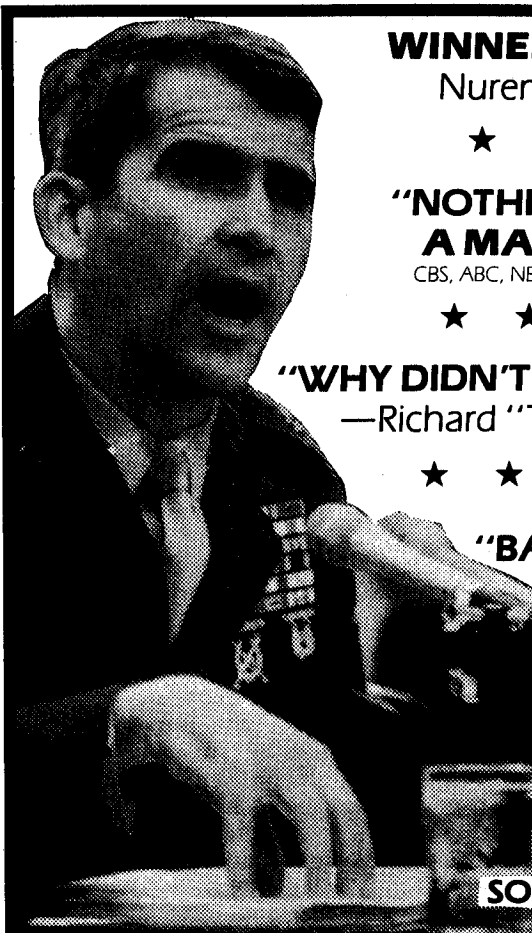
Canada doesn't have the final brutalization of private enterprise medicine. The province runs an insurance scheme with small premiums, taxes the citizens and pays the hospitals and doctors. Only the improvident few who neglect to pay their government health insurance premiums (when I was student it was \$5 per month—now it's about \$40) have to pay their bills directly. Every patient gets exactly the same care. In fact, we waste money, using overpriced antibiotics when cheap ones will do, because the patient doesn't get billed.

We doctors do, however, bill the provincial medical plan on a fee-for-service basis. This encourages greedheads to see patients as fast as they can, and punishes slow workers like me. I can barely get through fifteen patients a day when others see forty.

Recently there was a doctors' strike in Ontario. Allegedly they claimed they should have the right to set their own fees (meaning they wanted to be allowed to bill the patients a bit extra for each service). The people howled, and the strike was lost. Naturally, the people didn't want to pay rich doctors more. On the other hand, it's the old trade union truism...if what you have to sell is your labour, and your only employer won't pay you what your labour is worth, what do you do? Take what he'll offer? Year after year? Me, I don't believe in essential services...if the teachers are that essential, if society will be wrecked should they strike, why don't we pay them enough to keep them on the job? if what the cops and firemen have to sell is their labour and we consider that labour essential, why don't we pay them so much that they don't have to strike? And so I have always supported the nurses' strikes I was involved in, even when it meant I had to get up all night long to start I.V.'s and work eighty, ninety, 100 hours a week for less pay than the nurses got for forty hours.

When is a person so rich that he doesn't deserve a union?

yours, K.E.—Vancouver, B.C.



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Graphic by Jay Clemens

'ICE-MINUS' SABOTEURS' COMMUNIQUE

Processed World:

We are proud to claim responsibility for the May 26 '87 sabotage of the Tulelake ice-minus experiment. Having exhausted all legal means to stop the test, we were left no choice but to take uncompromising direct action in defense of ourselves and our mother, the Earth.

By laboriously uprooting several thousand potato plants in the dead of night, most of which were targeted for open-air spraying with the genetically altered bacteria on Wednesday, we have effectively halted (for this year, at least) the plans of the biotechnology industry to rush their little-understood product onto the market.

The determination of U.C. scientists in Tulelake (like their A.G.S. brethren in

Brentwood before them) to go ahead with the spraying in spite of the sabotage clearly illustrates that they're more interested in setting a precedent for open-air releases than they are in achieving valid scientific results. One cannot "patch together" the scientific method, and any test results at this point will be meaningless, despite scientists' assertions to the contrary.

Almost nothing is known about the effects of ice-minus bacteria on humans or the environment. Closely related strains have been known to cause disease in a variety of plants, and are reputed to affect the human immune system, though no studies have been done to confirm or deny this. One female lab technician who worked with ice-minus in Oakland has been repeatedly hospitalized with serious



KEN JOHNSON...

sinus problems. Farmworkers will end up being the human guinea pigs if "Frost-ban" products are ever used commercially.

Plant pathogens like ice-minus can travel hundreds of miles by wind, and can reproduce normally like any other bacteria. We know nothing about its effect on cloud formation, the wintering cycles of other plants, or the hydrosphere. Ice-minus is disturbingly similar to the ice-nine of Kurt Vonnegut's novel *Cat's Cradle*, and we have no way of knowing that fact won't follow fiction.

Like nuclear power in the 50's, genetic engineering is being touted as a cure-all for a variety of society's problems. Yet like other high-tech "solutions" in agriculture, ice-minus and related products will benefit only the largest agribusiness concerns, and do nothing to help small farmers, much less feed people. A revolutionary change in our social and economic priorities must precede any successful efforts to feed the hungry on this planet.

Genetic engineering is just now emerging as a force to be reckoned with, and ice-minus is just the tip of the biogenetic iceberg. Scientists are also tinkering with human DNA molecules, and are proceeding with questionable research in the area of human reproduction. Using live tissue cultures and women's bodies as their testing ground, these mad scientists refuse



AND JUST A FEW OF THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE SCREWED HIM OVER

to look at the practical and ethical questions raised by their research. Unless people make a stand now against this foolhardy and unnecessary industry, a Pandora's box of genetically altered substances will soon be loosed upon the world, with unpredictable and potentially cataclysmic results.

If ice-minus is such a threat to humans and their environment, then how, you may wonder, did we justify exposing ourselves to the bacteria by tearing the stems from the spuds? Rest assured that we took tremendous precautions to limit our exposure to the bacteria, and to prevent its being removed from the test site.

The genetic engineering industry is only the most recent example of this civilization's (sic) drive to subjugate nature to its own ends. This world view has resulted in unprecedented attacks against the ecosystems we depend on for life. We need to evolve beyond the worldview that pits humanity against nature, and which is a product of the conjunction of patriarchy and capitalism.

We hope that our actions will be an inspiration to others who share our concern for the earth and our frustrations with the legal system, just as we were inspired by the actions of the Brentwood ecoteurs. No compromise in the defense of Mother Earth!

—Anonymous

BIKE MESSENGER TRANSIENCE

PW:

I read with interest "Work's Diminishing Connections" in the "information-age" electronics industry with its wandering workforce transiency. I consider bicycle messengers to be the street component of the geography of information-age work circuits. Until there's an affordable technology to replace us, we're the best bet to hurl letters, packets of paper, architectural plans, film, etc. across midtowns.

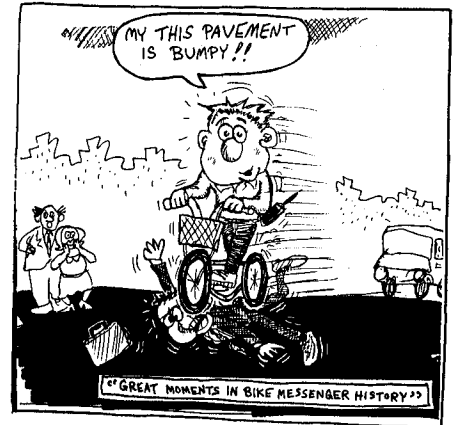
NYC messenger activists are getting constant reports of bike messenger industries popping up in major North American and European cities. It is a relatively new and expanding business (although I've read that Chicago has had a biking

scene for decades). What we share with the new electronics workers is the on-the-road transiency, lack of organization, a certain "independence" and relative easy mobility from one company to another.

Our transiency is quite wild. The PW article mentioned a 26% turnover rate in the electronics industry as compared with a 13.2% rate in workplaces as a whole. No one's done any studies about NYC messengers, but from experience I'd say a 70% turnover rate may be conservative. Reasons for this are dangerous and fatiguing conditions plus a complete lack of worker rights, since we're often technically "self-employed" and not "employees" (total bullshit—but that's another story). Another is that it's a wide open type job where one can more or less come and go as you please—and we do!

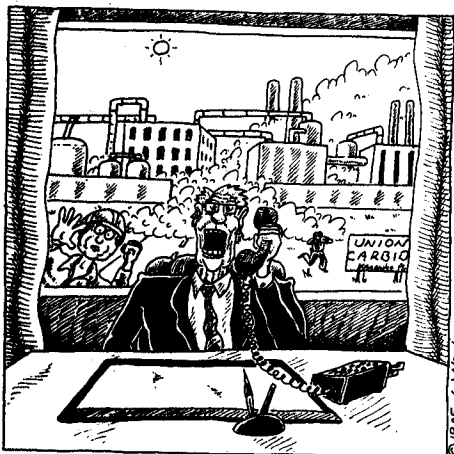
It would seem an impossible trip to organize. Almost, but not quite. For a few years now NYC has had the Independent Couriers Association (ICA). It's been successful by acknowledging the limitations of organizing; that there is simply too much apathy and transiency to keep a group going by being based on traditional shop rep, committees or unions. While the latter is a nice fantasy, for most of our existence we've been a city-wide group of individuals working for generalized causes. Our "wholeism" has also helped. While we've gone against the companies for not providing workers' compensation insurance, we've also hit the city for regu-

BACKWORDS LOGIC by Ace Backwords 0-15



lating us and police harassment, plus we've linked up with groups promoting bicycling and alternative transportation/energy schemes. Our work in all areas gives us added purpose. While the transiency in the industry is reflected in the ICA—members come and go constantly—the ICA has hung on because a few interested people stick with it. So organizing among transients is possible.

The ICA would love to be in touch with other messengers or those that know of other messenger organizations. For instance we've made friends with Philadelphia bikers who said they'd write for our newsletter. In return we'll print them up

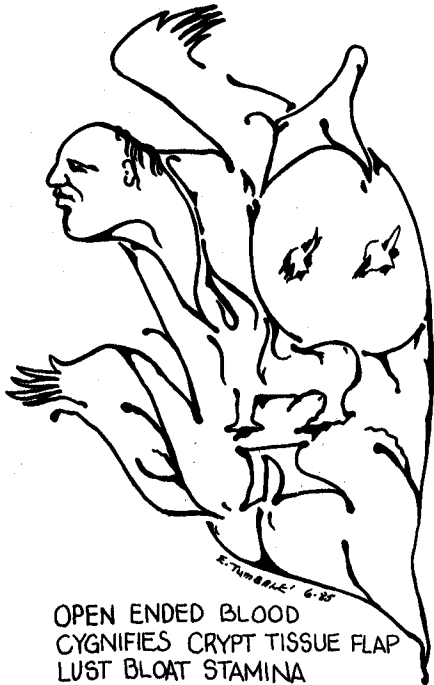


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INTELLECTUAL CATERING?...

Dear Editors:

I continue to be impressed with *Processed World*. I feel that it is an important effort toward elevating the level of social consciousness.

I believe "Ace Backwordsssss" letter in No. 19 hit the nail on the head. I tend to agree that the problems occurring within our modern society stem from spiritual bankruptcy.

I also believe that there is a danger in disassociating ourselves from the symbols we've created to represent the corporate monster. If we fail to see how we are related to the monster, then it is a simple matter to split it off from ourselves and believe that it is someone else's problem and not our own.

One thing that worries me is that *Processed World* seems to cater to the intellectual and as such merely vilifies the intellectual's own feelings of superiority. The question is: How can publications of this kind infiltrate the nonthinking sector and have any impact? Or is it realistic to suppose that the best any publication can do is suckle that small, elitist yet necessary group of people who bother to reflect and feel responsible? I don't have the answer myself so unfortunately I can't offer any suggestions. Maybe the important thing is just to keep people thinking and not worry about whether the affected group is small or large. Perhaps small groups do have an impact.

Good luck to you with future issues.

Best wishes, R.B.—Glendale, CA

Dear World,

I have come up with one teensy weensy part of one solution to the burning question of "How can I abolish the wage slave system, meet the needs of my family and get back at these bastards while on the job?" Well I, for one, take every opportunity, on company time of course, to read *Processed World* and compile mental lists of handy sabotage techniques just in case I get mad enough to use them. Sad to say, this doesn't happen often because, (un)fortunately, I like my job. They pay me enough, I work unsupervised, I eat food, drink drinks, listen to my music,

GONZO RECYCLINGISM!

take naps, make small decisions, big phone calls and dress unfashionably. They love me.

I have also spent excessive amounts of time at work thinking about What I Want To Do With My Life. I've come up with a temporary solution that will not only remove me (sort of) from the corporate world but will also do some good for people-kind—I'm gonna start a huge recycling business. Now we're not just talking your typical passive recycling here, the kind you see parked next to Safeway or in some vacant warehouse lot, their meek little signs beseeching you to "please recycle". NO! This is gonna be Gonzo Recyclingism!

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Graphic by L.M. & P.P.M.

We'll storm into corporate headquarters after dark, cornering trash and collaring wastebaskets where they gather most—by your desk! You lazy corporate types (if any of you have the sense enough to read this mag) won't even have to struggle with the moral dilemma of what to do with all of those empty diet (insert your favorite soft drink's name here) cans. And good news for those of you who already do recycle; no more messy heaps of newspaper on the back porch! No more stinky bins of bottles in the kitchen!! We'll barge right into your home and personally inspect each and every trash can—in your office, too! This is especially for all you Financial District types who think nothing of sacrificing the lives of 10,000 or more helpless little pieces of paper in the name of advancing capitalism. And if you act now we'll give you, free of charge, our

special child- and nuclear-resistant bins for those of you who still want to separate your rubbish from your rugrats...!!

This is the kind of stuff that occupies the more important spaces of my brain while the other cells house useless corporate America. Thanks for letting me share it with you all.

T.O.E., a wage slave, almost willingly

MORE ON POLES 'N HOLES

Dear Process Servers,

I've been reading and hearing bad things about your magazine for a few years now, so I recently decided to try it, particularly upon noticing that a recent issue was devoted to one of my favorite subjects (sex). So far, I like the "Chaz Bufe" piece best, except for the part about women exploiting men for money the same way men exploit women for their

bodies; it made me think that perhaps Mr. Bufe is ugly. And his point about white collar women not flirting with blue collar men I also found goofy. Why, here in Minneapolis, many of our bicycle messengers double as gigolos. Well, not really, but...I read in *USA Today* once that today's up and coming career gal, eschewing commitment because it interferes with career, *Does* indeed like to have one night stands with working class studs. So who am I to believe? *Processed World* or *USA Today*?

Anyway, I publish a small free paper here entitled the *Heathen Science Monitor*. Oh, I like the Holly Near date piece too, but I'm not so much qualified to say that because I know the author and I'd already read it in its original, more typographically modest, form.

That's all.

J.H.—Minneapolis

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T A T E
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Dear PW:

I read "Poles 'n' holes" by Chaz Bufe in the *Processed World* #18. I would like to offer an in-depth critique, but time does not permit. Here a few thoughts though.

First of all, "the number of reported sex crimes" in Denmark "dropped" because the statistics were tampered with (see p. 196 of *Take Back the Night*). Incidences of rape are thought to have increased. SEcond, it was largely the "Danish experience," based on highly questionable data, that led the Presidential Commission to conclude that "there was no link between pornography and sexual violence." Since when is an arm of the patriarchy considered a reliable source anyway? The patriarchs at the top alternate between *suppressing* sexuality and encouraging pseudo-"free" sexuality of the Penthouse variety. Third, while there are dangers in making pornography a central focus of one's work, there is nothing intrinsically wrong with starting work where one feels a sense of personal outrage and then pursuing the connections wherever they might lead. It seems that women are always being told what *they* do is a "diversion," but it's O.K. for male leftists and *Processed World* to focus all attention on slagging off *the workplace*, as if that were intrinsically more radical.

Fourth, contrary to Bufe, the anti-pornography movement is not one monolithic "thing." A woman I know uses those very same splatter films as the starting point for her work. Fifth, as anyone who's been "objectified" at work knows, objectification is not a "vague" and "metaphysical" charge any more than it's a vague and metaphysical experience. Objectification (of women by men, and of "subjects" by bureaucrats) predates the "bottom line" of capitalism by a few millennia, and, as Susan Griffin points out in *Pornography and Silence*, the grotesque objectification of women in pornography is an apt meta-

Graphic by Lucius Cabins

GENE-MART!

We lost our lease!

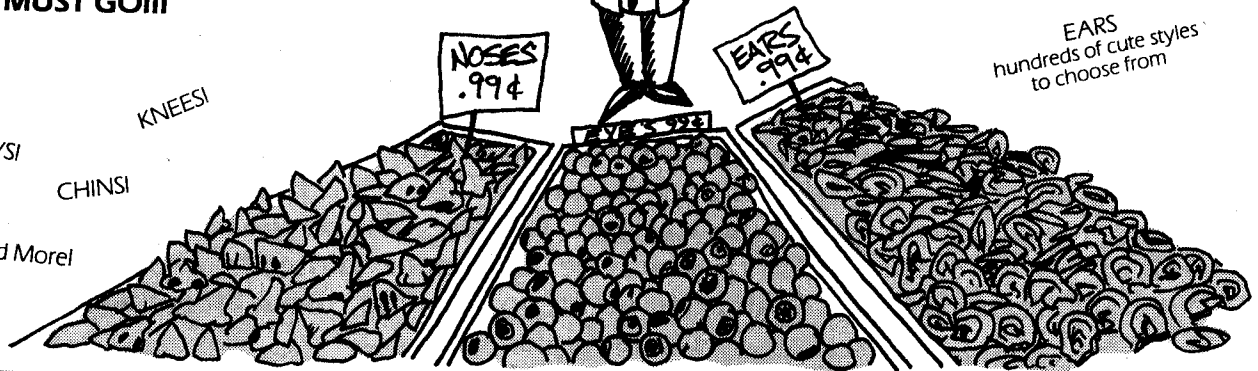
**Hurry Hurry Hurry to Gene Mart's
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Graphic by Dave Bread

phor for the deeper malaise afflicting our culture as a whole. Sixth, while women have been socialized into the values of the culture just as men have and, as feminists, can be quite classist, it's a gross generalization to say that what all women

want is men with money. I feel badly for you if that's your experience, but it's certainly not mine.

Seventh, how can you generalize that anti-pornography activists are motivated by puritanism. The above-mentioned

friend isn't, nor is Nikki Craft, founder of the one-time California-based "Preying Mantis Brigade." Eighth, your assertion that pornography is, at worst, "harmless" and, at best, a means for increasing sexual pleasure, ignores the fact that men are profoundly affected by the view contained in pornography that women *want* to be the sexual playthings of men, and generally enjoy being used and abused. I'm not trying to argue any "slippery slope"—that using pornography inevitably leads to violence against women, but it is a known fact that *violent* porn (and, to one degree or another, *all* porn) legitimizes abuses against women and can, at times, serve as the inspiration for actual deeds.

Sincerely, R.H.—Toronto, Canada
p.s. apart from that, I found Bufe's article to be a somewhat useful contribution to an ongoing debate.

Dear PW-ers:

Nice mixture of desperation and defiance in the Sex Issue (#18). Chaz Bufe's piece ("Poles 'n' Holes") struck a nerve with its explication of the social invisibility of the minimum wage-earner, the best piece of rabble rousing I've read all winter. I talked my boyfriend into buying a copy, and while nothing he's told me of his reactions to it indicates that devouring *PW* makes us both feel dangerously sane, it sure helped pass the time as we waited for our blood test results to come back.

Sincerely, Squirrel Bates—Oakland, CA

"Here it comes... it's...
another computer operator!"

"Well Doctor, I guess we've fulfilled
our quota for the workforce
of 2008, eh?"



Graphic by Lucius Cabins