

Columnist waxes weird and wonderful

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Capital Times Staff

Music doth set the mood. If you have a 45 rpm record (yes, truly final vinyl) of Murray Head's "One Night in Bangkok," plop it on your anachronistic phonograph, spin off and seize the column. If you don't have this classic plastic, then buddy-up with the gender of your court-ordained choice who does. It's going to be *that* kind of vertical print today.

Your campus fourth estate, blatantly famished for filler, has indirectly beckoned me to reappear by publishing several of my premiere paragraphs in the last issue. (Our agents never did do lunch, but I'm a rare magnanimous Teuton so this gratis guru of ambivalent guffaw modestly responds.)

Glean the cube! An Elvis aficionado in the White House, inheriting some messy situations (not pertaining to lips on ships). Don't you get the occasional feeling that certain lurking economists, OBM and/or CEO phantoms are actualizing the adage that what this country needs is a good five-cent scrap like Grenada, Lebanon, Kuwait, Somalia, Yugoslavia? War has been shots--un-pun--in the malnourished arm of recovery. And your erstwhile scribe has experienced another limited, savior commitment in a jungly horror called Vietnam that claimed 58,000 yearbook photos. This perennial pen can relate; there's a history of death in my family tree.

Maybe it's just my Germanic heritage of losing "so many civilians, so little time" or normal 20th century paranoia.

Dashes of neuroses are healthy. They make you study for exams and attach your seatbelt when an alabaster Caprice swings into your rearview mirror. They're adrenaline rushes, like huffing Drano or Nu Finish. Neurotics can save lives too, you know.

Arthur, a workmate of mine, was in a war 26 years ago. He's a pseudonym and a caricature--a diminutive, staggering, though amicable, ex-jarhead whose 5-foot-nothing height makes him indigenous to Jupiter. He has a curious coiffure, wrought expensively by Steve Scissorhand saloning in a neighboring hamlet, of strata-like cuts reminiscent of an archeological dig. It dichotomizes him. From astern, Arthur appears to be 20, but about-face, his true age and predilection are revealed. His ruddy, creased complexion denotes a fortyish man who has sought more spirits than Edgar Cayce and W. C. Fields.

So, do his habit and nickname "Yo Ashtray Face" from his nightly stool prowess of bobbing for Marlboros. I can attest that the man is genuinely tavernetic. Wherever he spins and falls, he always points toward a bar.

Arthur is a colorful persona, the black sheep born with the silver spoon of a successful family and enhanced most mornings with railroad crossing signal eyes. This epithet, swiping Dudley Moore's screen character of equal heritage, height and thirst, recently bought a new car. He traded in his plebian, cancerous Escort from hell with its thundering floor mats of drained Coors cans for a Plymouth Laser "t'git wimmin," he forecast.

It's a metallic-hued, Enterprise, torpedo-looking vehicle with little headroom and no rear seating. "I'll still git wimmin," Arthur vowed--the pontification of the perpetually inebriated and the involuntarily abstaining. Arthur also has locks on both sides of his bedroom door.

Nocturnally, he serpentine across blurred galaxies of parking lots named Gingerbread Man, Chi-Chi's, GTO Club, Croc'n'Berrys and J.P. Mallard's revving his f.i. horses and wagging his rear window wiper--the hypnotic metronome of a rutting male whom few females can resist. Infrequently Arthur and his "Laser T'Git Wimmin" attract one of the few willing ladies of his identical stature, blood-alcohol, back of bobbed haircut and head scruples. She's usually a member of the sexagenarian or Just My Size crowd. The next morning he'll shuffle in grinning froggishly and slurring, "Hey, some woman got lucky last night. Why not? My car's got AWD. I can go where no man has gone before!"

He's Everyimbiber, but you've got to like a man who grocery shops at an Exxon station. Where I work, we speculate what Arthur might've become if he had evolved, like Michael Jackson, beyond the neo-Lowenbrau period. Concerned about his unabashed, amnesiac utilitarianism, I initiated a contest to derail his futile destiny by offering \$100 to any employee who could formulate *one* reason against Arthur's scheduling an appointment with Dr. Kevorkian.

"Think how you'd improve your life," I told him, "freed from demon rum, paternity suits, AIDS scares, raging

husbands, hangovers, your family's continual chagrin and posted bails, your sore neck and embarrassment caused by someone taller in every taproom cluster demanding a Munchkin impression. Trust me on this; Dr. K. could make a new man out of you. Try it. You don't like it, hey. Be epicurean, bud."

"What's he drink?" Arthur asked, rubbing his chin. "Well, you're the man. I'll think about it tonight at the Marriott."

We're such heathens at the workplace. Arthur knew this and he didn't succumb. But conversely, there were no resurrecting suggestions either. Arthur procured his wheels, inadvertently saving his own life, and now handles rejection with 5-speed grace. He's a great leitmotif, however, and so is another co-worker, Friendly Fred, an affable, Mr. Bean-faced, Liberace-voiced man of unflappable demeanor, infection and asexuality. We'll plummet into his traumata and psyche in a later episode.

Don't misconstrue. We're sympathetic and discerning, but we all have the occasional instinct and conduct of a badger (roughly Kierkegaard), and Arthur and Fred love the attention. It's all they get. As our workfloor rubes, they're given character and status rarely found in ashtrays or one-handed poker. Arthur attains a Dean Martinesque facade--the slushy, bon vivant, harmlessly ribald and leering partying parvenu--and Fred, he assumes an aura of testosterone. Why, the other morning, we enhanced him so diligently that he nearly swore.

Lift the needle, shut it off, jacket the record.
F7 till later.

BASEBALL SCHEDULE - SPRING 1993

April 13	Philadelphia Bible	3:30 p.m.	home
17	Gallaudet University	1:00 p.m.	home
18	Beaver College	12:00 p.m.	away
21/22	Lancaster Bible	1:00 p.m.	away
24	Wilmington College	12:00 p.m.	home
27	Dickinson College	3:00 p.m.	away

May 1	Wilkes College	1:00 p.m.	away
2	Phila. Pharmacy	1:00 p.m.	home
8 & 9	District 19 Playoff	TBA	TBA
20-22	Area 8 Playoffs	TBA	TBA

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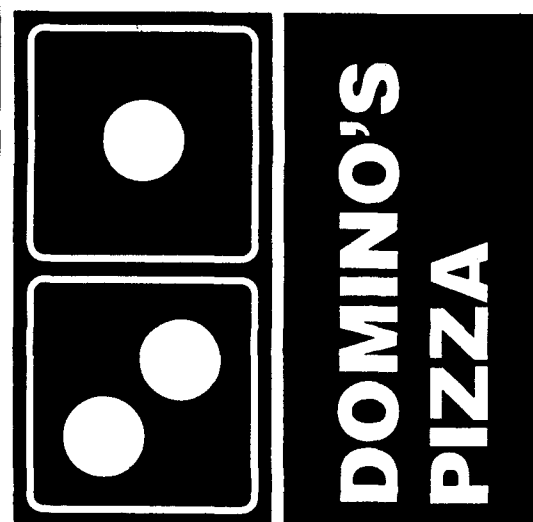
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