



Buckminsterfullerene - The Meat-Ass Cat Story

Through the night the tires hummed on the highway and the sickly illumination from the headlights disappeared in the distance. Alternating between elation and exhaustion, Kelly and I were traveling north to Maine in a car that had somehow become Dr. Who's TARDIS, packed beyond its capacity with all manner of bric-a-brac, books, and baubles. I feared that one of the bumps in the highway might upset the delicate balance and set into motion a chain-reaction. Starting with a low, subsonic flutter—like the flapping of thousands of butterfly wings underwater—everything would unfold like an exploding clown car: balloon animals fleeing with elephantine noises to the four winds and red noses popping through chinks and arcing through the air as if on a mission until the car's capacity is met with a slight onrushing sound of air and the poor occupants, crushed against windows the thickness of diving bell ports, burst like so many beautiful roses.[§]

Amongst the maze of material threatening our lives was a cat. Not much over two feet long and crawling in and about my feet, this creature of fur and purr thought it was a very good, a very good idea indeed, to hunker down between the clutch and the brake, and occasionally rest his large posterior against the gas pedal to help us along in our journey. Like the Kraken rising from unknown depths, the cat made his way onto my lap somewhere between Albany and the border of New York and Vermont (not that the Kraken gets onto my lap often while going to Maine, although you never can be sure just what will pop into existence in my car. What I meant was to compare the emergence of the cat from under my seat to the Kraken surfacing from the... oh, just forget it). Convinced that the hands on the wheel of the car were there for his (the cat, not a cephalopod) benefit, he began to force them to lavish attention upon him. Facing the on-rushing road and his destiny, his fundament was subsequently aimed more or less toward my face.

Sniff—

"Jesus, Bucket! What did you do under my chair? Kelly, get this fucking meat-ass cat outta my face. He smells like old ham!"

<musical interlude>

Come 'n listen to my story 'bout a cat with a head

Such a stinky butt it smelled like he was dead.

Found it out one day when we were going for a ride,

Stuck his ass in my face, I very nearly died.

From the smell, you see. Bologna! Old hamburger!

Ah, Bucket. A loud, purring cat when things went feline-wise. Bucket, but he was rarely called that to his mug. Depending on the situation, his more technologically oriented groupies (hereafter referred to as monkeys) referred to him as Buckminsterfullerene, Buckminster, and Bucky Ball. Others, ironically, tend towards the more obscure, such as Bucket from Pawtucket and, more recently, Meat-ass.

[§] Come on, you know you've imagined this kind of disaster occurring, probably some sort of wishful thinking involving Snuff-TV. Well, we'll visit this idea again. I promise.



**Gracies
Dinnertime
Theatre™**

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Rushed

His original nom de plume, Bucket, came from his tenure under the questionable protection of a Miss Heather Danielson, a one time GDT member and all time Eeyore. With Heather, Bucket's life can best be described as surreal. Imagine yourself as a four footed, fuzzy-as-all-get-out creature whose protector moves fairly often and every change of address means another serious visit to "Trip-Out-City". At some point in the dim past, a vet had wisely counseled Heather that every time she had to transport her kitties, they should be drugged first. Of course, if you've got a degree, you know what you're talking about, so Heather would set old Bucky Boy up.

Imagine, if you will, that you are a large, gray, long-haired feline, just enjoying your day. You find yourself enthralled by shafts of light playing along the hardwood floor, the sound of running water in the distance, and—oh yes—the sensation of your protector shoving what appears to be a very small wind-up mouse up your prat. Highly delusional and lacking motor control, you're whisked to a new home. When that happens to us, we call it alien abduction and have a tendency to freak out to a greater or lesser degree. Bucket tended toward the "greater" end of the spectrum.

The most infamous wig-out story that Bucket tells his buddies, after particularly long nights involving dubious quantities of catnip, old socks, and purple Manic Panic™, deals with the time he woke up in a new apartment after a pleasant day and a half in "La-La-Land" and...well, Bucket tells it better.

"So like you know how it feels when you first wake up after being drugged for a long trip, right? You know, your ass kind of feels all screwed up and it feels groovy just to move your head back and forth and back and forth.... Anyways, I'm thinking to myself that like all in all life is pretty cool, right? When all of a sudden I realize that like nothing around me is mine. So I'm sitting around wondering where the hell all my stuff went, I mean I couldn't even smell myself *anywhere!* I was still under the influence of the drugs so I couldn't like claim anything, and on top of all that, the bitch was no where to be found. I mean you can't find good Feeders these days, am I right? And then like these lumbering clods came up to me. You want more story Monkey-boy, make with the head-scratching, and how's about another sock of catnip over here?"

"Now, not only were these jerks not mine, but they

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"Never doubt the power of a few dedicated individuals in a basement to change the world while you watch TV upstairs all weekend long. Indeed, that is all that ever has."

-Not Margaret Mead

were like acting like a pair of dolts, sayin' 'Hey there, kitty. Here kitty, kitty, kitty.' Does anyone ever really buy that crap? Damn it! We were Gods to the Egyptians for chrissake. We don't have to take that. I'm done talking to you. Go away, I'm going to ignore you now."

Well, to finish the story, Bucket found a hole in the wall of the bathroom of the apartment and promptly deposited himself into it for a month. In the end, a desperate Heather had firemen tear the wall a second ass and set Bucket, desperately trying to void his own colon,^μ free.

He was scared when he went in there. Imagine how he felt when big men in yellow rain slickers wielding fire axes whispering, "Here kitty, kitty, kitty," came for him.

Without food or water, Bucket wasted away to resemble a Jewish kitty circa WWII, or a feline Gandhi. Apparently, this starvation diet damaged his nervous system; to this day Bucket can't quite keep his balance and tends to fall over backward in confusion while beg- I mean demanding- treats. He's also been known to run headlong into faucets when he jumps up to drink from running water.

All in all, Bucket has special needs.

Deciding that Heather was...well,

bored with him, Bucket came to be a ward of ours. Despite his needy nature (a side benefit of having grown up under the watchful eye of an emotionally crippled woman) and tendency to try to sleep on your face, Bucket and his special needs were a joy to have around. For a time this

was fine, but as summer wound down and the grass settled into a healthy brown, the times they were a-changing. I was moving down to Baltimore to continue my education, and Kelly lived in a house full of birds.^œ We thought through our options and decided that sending the little bugger to live with my family in Maine was the best one.

So there we found ourselves, sealed in an automobile with a cat whose ass smelled like, for lack of a better descriptor, meat. The imagination can only

begin to fathom the true horror one feels when one is stuck in a vehicle with an emotionally needy cat whose ass smells, um, well, delicious.

Hollering at Bucket for the state of his hinder, all I could think was that I had left an all beef patty with special sauce, lettuce, cheese, pickles, and onions on a sesame-seed bun under my car seat and that Bucket, investigating with his investigating feet, had found it



The cat in question.

^μ But he couldn't because he had no food or water in his system with which to void said colon.

^œ Three of the winged kind and two of the thumbed kind.

and decided that there could not be a finer thing in the whole world to perfume his posterior with. Bucket, the poor soul, was so embarrassed by the whole thing that he banished himself into the mysteries of the back of the car, much to my relief.

Soon we arrived in Maine, dropped off the contents of the car, and introduced my family (Henry Byron, Susan Francis, Matthew Casey, Oscar Meyer, and Lady Valentine; a father, mother, brother, cat, and dog, respectively) to Bucket. Still smelling of meat, Bucket hid himself in my mother's closet (thereafter referred to as Pawtucket by my mother for reasons best understood only by her) and we didn't see him for the rest of our stay.‡

The smell of his tochus bothered us for some time, however. So, upon our return to Rochester, we fired up the Hell's Kitchen super computer (a Vic-20 networked to an Amiga through a 9600 baud modem. We're state of the art, I tell ya) and contacted Hell, Inc. After dealing with the customary signs and countersigns, we were finally able to

enter all the available information. Enigmatically, our contact at Cronos Corp would only say, "It was that pound and a half of ham he ate."

For weeks this meant absolutely nothing to us. We thought that, for the first time, Hell Inc. had failed us. After that weird post card they sent us in October, we didn't know what to think.

But in the end they came through in what has been known as the SHI§ among temporal mechanics (Okay try it now! Now! Okay Now! Oh, it was one of the Johnson brats, try it now.) and researchers: Subsequent Ham Incident. What we forgot to consider when interpreting the answer from Cronos Corp. was that their time is not ours. They're busy flitting in and out of time, sending squirrels into the past and rats into the future. All in all it's a very busy lifestyle. Not taking into account our lack of

craftiness, the answer to our question dealt with what was going to happen and failed to consider that we had not read ahead in the syllabus.

Suffice it to say that, once he recovered from his embarrassment and began



‡ The boy is not entirely truthful when he states this last bit, for there were a couple of occasions that I was fortunate to see Bucket again before we left. Every night Buckminster would enter my sleeping quarters and lie upon my head until I couldn't breath anymore and would wake up screaming. Next night he would be back for more. No wonder They™ say that cats steal children's breath.

§ Kelly: SHEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!
 Sean [concerned]: What?
 Kelly: SHEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!
 Sean: Oh. Well, that's a footnote.

to journey out from Pawtucket, Bucket ate a pound and a half of ham, under questionable circumstances. Somehow, the effects of eating that massive amount of meat made its effect felt backward in time. Thus his ass smelled of ham BEFORE he actually ate it. I could lie and say we understand the intricacies of non-linear time mechanics, but I won't. Anyway, our Hell Inc. contacts assure us

that the trauma produced on the digestive tract by a pound and a half of ham could surely produce the same effect on anyone, let alone a 15 pound cat.

Warning: Gracies Dinnertime Theatre does not endorse eating a pound and a half of ham under any circumstances. If accidental ingestion occurs, flush repeatedly with water and contact a physician immediately.



Howard's Happy Hour

By Howard Hao

"But silence, like darkness, can be an act of kindness; it, too, is a language."

-- Hanif Kureishi, "Intimacy"

Inspiration

A delightful, warm feeling;
A sense of security;
A knowing of pride;
A shiver through your heart,
That gives you strength,
And keeps you focused...
Makes you want to win!

Retreat

Sometimes the weight of the world
Collides with one's psyche,
Crushing ideas and upsetting stomachs.
Smothering in a sea of depression
And trashy newspaper articles...
In such a dire time, one needs
A means of escape. To a place
of solitude, of comfort, of concord.
Not exactly to the domain of Dream,
But to a place where one can
Consciously reflect.
And within these closed-up, secret
Worlds nestled in the very din of
Modern everyday life, one finally
explores a spiritual healing.

Partner in Crime

- for Lloyd Samplawski

He just up and Gone ta Texas.
Then ta Philly. What am I gonna
Do without that tubby bitch?

Post-Halloween Syndrome

Dentists everywhere
Dance and shout in glee
As children sow cavities.

The Painted Face

Trickles slowly away with
The tears of the mime
As he silently weeps.

19981117

by Pat Fleckenstein

Hi. My name is Pat. When you first meet me face-to-face, one of the things that you'll notice right off the top is that I am male. You'll notice it before you even have time to think about it. That's the scary part. What inferences will you make about me in the first thirty nanoseconds that you know my sex? What inferences did I make about you when I learned your sex?

As far back as age four, I can remember frustration with being a member of my sex. I was never really caught by any desire to be a different sex. I am sure that I would have had corresponding frustrations in either, both, or neither sex. And, at age four, even if I had wanted such a thing, I didn't think that Santa Claus could have handled it. No, what I really objected to is that I was automatically lumped into this big category of attitudes and behaviours that weren't really mine. I didn't want to be a Norman Rockwell icon of a boy—frog-in-pocket, slingshot-in-hand, gangly dufus. I wanted to be me. I still do (albeit, a different "me").

As I grew older, the frustrations piled up. I had no interest (in fact, an anti-interest) in defending myself with force. I had very little interest in baseball. I enjoyed reading about math in the encyclopedia. I was an idealist and a romantic at heart. And, I was troubled greatly by the whole way that fifth grade boys and girls interacted. What sense did it make to mock those you were trying to impress? What sense did it make for those to be impressed with your mocking?

Puberty only made matters worse. Since then, I've been bombarded with "men are such pigs", "all men think about is sex", "she's got a hell of an ass", "men don't love like women do", "Women are from Venus", "women aren't good at math", "men don't cry", and countless others. Women and men both sustain these deplorable generalizations. Many men use these myths as chest-thumping symbols of virility. I just don't get

it. Can anyone seriously think the benefits of these sweeping judgements could possibly outweigh their cost? Or, is it part of the all-too-human quirk to drag things down to us instead of lifting ourselves up to them?

Sex-based roles are a huge part of our society. And, by and large, sex-based roles are completely arbitrary. How odd is it when you hear of a female doctor or a male nurse? How odd is it when you hear of a working wife and home-making husband? If I pointed across a restaurant to a man and woman at a table and said "Hey, that's my lawyer over there..." at whom would you think I was pointing?

Why? Why? Why? It's the way we were raised. It's the way our parents were raised. It's the way their parents were raised. We're making big improvements, but... It's been 15 years since *Mr. Mom*. It's been 25 years since *The Doris Day Show*. It's been 68 years since the nineteenth amendment gave women the right to vote. And still, it's ingrained in our every breath.

On occasion, I wear a skirt in protest of some of the most arbitrary sex-based roles. I have had high school guys yelling taunts at me to impress their peers (apparently with decent effect). I have had people concerned for my soul. I have had many discussions with people that the skirt was in no way a statement about my sexuality (that's a different statement altogether).

I've had all kinds of experiences in that skirt (*wink, wink, nudge, nudge* (just kidding)). The only one that struck to my heart was a two-year old in a mall saying "Mommy, why is that man wearing a dress?" I felt a flood of social responsibility and irresponsibility. How was she going to answer him? Was she going to tell him that men in skirts are evil? Was she going to tell him about freedom of expression? Was she going to tell him that he was to be the ultimate master of his destiny? Was she going to tell him that Jesus doesn't like it when I do that? But all of that social-responsibility paranoia faded into: How is it that a two-year old already understands that "that just isn't something

that men do”?

So, I've complained at length now about the arbitrariness of sex-based roles. There are thousands of arbitrary limitations out there that we place on ourselves and each other, but I see the sex-based ones pop up every day. Every time I see them, they scare me. They scare me in and of themselves, but they scare me mostly because I have no way

to tell how many of them I missed. I have no idea what inferences I made about you when I learned your sex. All I can say is that I am and sorry and that I will try to overcome that first impression. The biggest wrench we can throw into this machinery of stereotypes is openness. Spread the word, your word. Let me see who you are shine through the caricature I have of you.

Good Girls Play Good Chess

by Adam Fletcher

A shout out to my peeps: The two kids that showed up to the chess club a few weeks ago (I'm sorry about the trash talk, it was uncalled for. I'm an asshole.), and to Derek "Ram-Man" Ramsey for submitting the correction to last issue's column.

“The line is:

1...Ng1

2. Rd4

2...Kf3?? loses because of

3. Rh4!! Kg3

4. Rxh2 Kxh2 followed by white queening a pawn and winning.

A correct line for black would be:

1...Ng1

2. Rd4 Kg3

3. Rd3+ Kf2

4. Rd2+ Ne2+!

5. Kc2 h1/Q”

Thanks Derek. Anyway, this week's article is a lesson, not a problem. It's a lesson in how to send me money so that I can go on a date with Judit Polgar, the world's highest rated female chess play-



Grandmaster Judit Polgar: a better person than you.
<http://people.delphi.com/daveh47/Judit03.jpg>

er (which means she is also the world's most attractive female chess player). So, I'm announcing the Send Adam On A Date With Judit Polgar fund. Send money, chess problems and digital clocks to:

The Send Adam On A Date With Judit Polgar Fund
c/o Hell's Kitchen
472 French Road
Rochester, NY
14618



TOURIST'S MOVIE REVIEWS

PRESENTS

"THE BIG CHILL"

Howdy sweethearts. Sorry you've been without my services for a while, wow, almost a month now. I apologize. I've been rather busy. I bought a gun. Anyway, as you may or may not know, one of the greatest ensemble drama films ever produced has been recently released in theatres once again. This year marks the 15th anniversary of "The Big Chill", a fantastic film about the coming of age that occurs twenty years after the normal coming-of-age-film takes place. You wanna see what your parents were doing in the 80's? Go catch it before it leaves the big screen. Starring Kevin Kline, Mary Kay Place, Glenn Close, Tom Berenger, William Hurt, Jeff Goldblum, Meg Tilly, and JoBeth Williams, the quality of the cast is only perhaps matched by the quality of the soundtrack. Those of you older folk who purchased the cassette tape back when it first came out KNOW that you can't be without it (most of these cassettes were worn out long before the dawn of grunge). The plot is exactly like Steven King's "It". Several

friends come together after a long time apart to take stock of their lives over the course of a magical weekend, except they do a lot of drugs, have a lot of sex, and aren't trying to stop a deranged spider-like creature that lurks in the sewers and takes the form of a monstrous clown to lure small children to their doom. When viewing the film, feel free to stand up and dance to all the unsurpassed Motown classics. It's ok. The other audience members will understand. Also, take special note of JoBeth Williams, who smokes a big joint in the film. Strangely enough, she smokes a big joint in front of her daughter in "Poltergeist", and smokes another big joint before she offs an abusive womanizer in "Switch". It seems that her film career ended with her drug career. How peculiar. Anyway, the best way to see this film is on the big screen with a tight-knit group of your friends, then go back to a quiet living room, curl up with a bottle of high-octane alcohol, and do some heavy bonding. That way, when you're having your own "Big Chill" twenty years down the road, you'll have something memorable to bring up. Thumbs up.

Next week, as promised:
Tourist's Practical Guide to Hell



LINUX



The choice of the GNU generation!