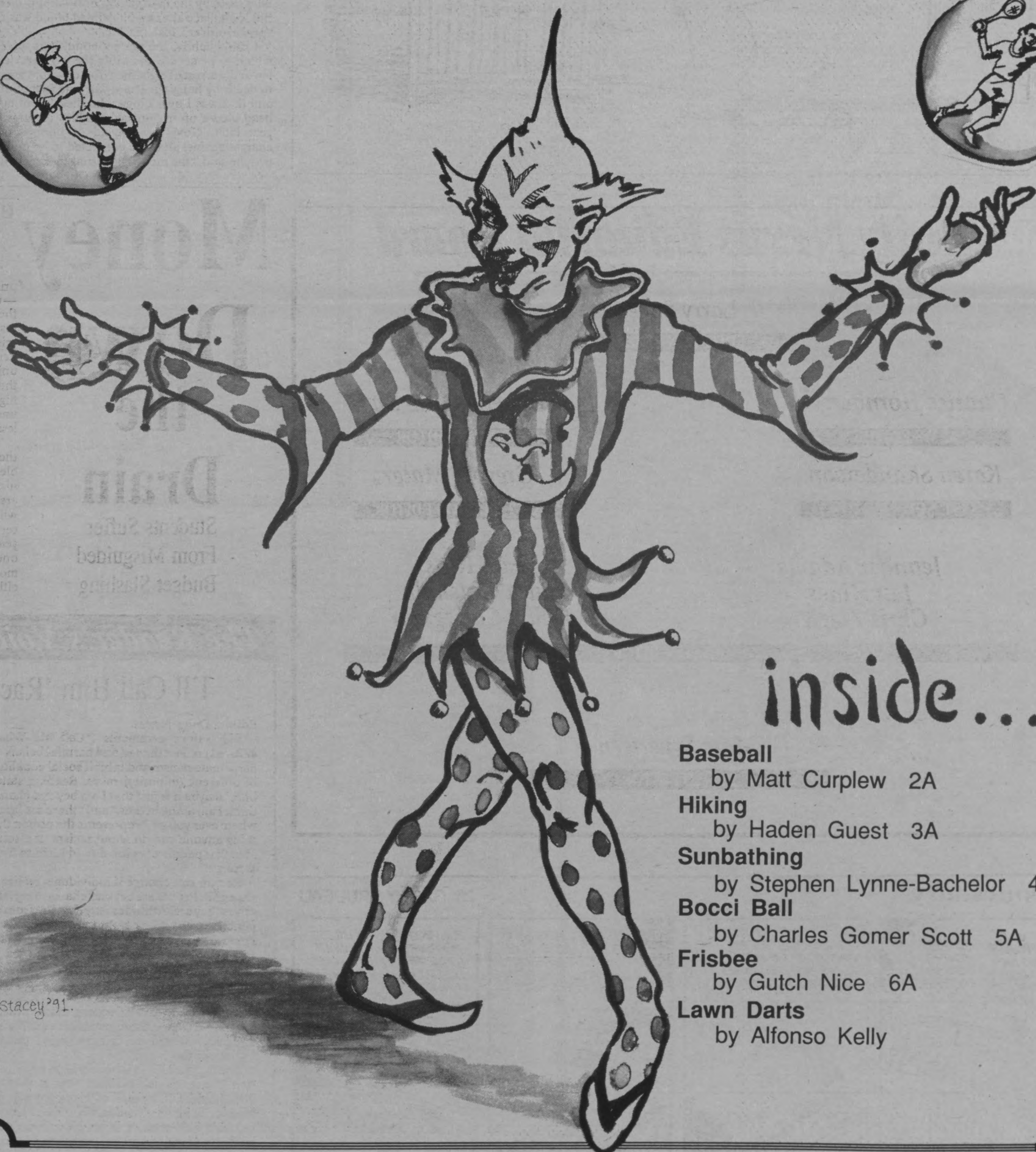


SPRING SPORTS

1991



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Hey! Baseball Fever!

By Matt Curplew

If spring means anything at all—and I think it does—it means expressing a blind faith that your baseball team is going to win the World Series. If you are any kind of baseball fan at all, you hope—no, expect—that your team is going to win every damn game of the season, and you will bet your life on it.

Which is fine and honorable, unless you're like me. For I am a true blue fan of the Atlanta Braves, the losingest team in baseball for the last five years.

I entered this lamentable condition shortly after I moved to Georgia in 1981. The Braves were electric. They won their first 13 games of the season, a record streak. Then they went on to win their division. And I was right there with them, glued to the television, clinging to every last word uttered by Skip Carey, the intrepid Braves announcer.

Those were heady days alright, when Dale Murphy was Most Valuable Player and the name Bob Horner struck fear in the hearts of major league pitchers. When the words America's Team carried no irony.

But those days are, for the most part, long forgotten.

Now, there is no escape for fans of the Braves, who have not had a winning season since 1982. Friends scoff at you and talk about their longtime support for the Cincinnati Reds, who just happened to win the World Series last year. Newspapers have habitually called them "hapless." And nearly every torturous game of the season is broadcast nationally on WTBS, which is owned by the same man that owns the Braves, Ted Turner. Often, the announcers have spoken of a "rebuilding year" less than a week into a new season.

My own family likes to get into the act too, letting me know full well what the score was when their be-



Many enjoy baseball for the team spirit, as noted by UCSB's own Gauchos.

loved Dodgers beat up the courageous Braves once again.

Sometimes Braves fans' only recourse is to boast about the success enjoyed by former Braves who are still active in the major leagues. For instance, you probably know Brett Butler as the God-fearing, nimble-footed Dodger center fielder. Or you knew him last year as the San Francisco Giants' God-fearing, nimble-footed center fielder. Before that, you surely knew him when he played for the Cleveland Indians as, yes, a God-footed, nimble-fearing center fielder. A good one, too.

Gets lots of hits every year, steals bases, drinks milk.

But I know him, now and forever, as a former Brave. Yep, he played for Atlanta. You don't remember? Whoa!

As did Pascual Perez, the passport-plagued New York Yankees pitcher who previously played for Montreal. And Dale Murphy, the sluggish-swinging Philadelphia Phillie. And even slow-pitch big leaguers Bob Walk and Rick Mahler, quite possibly the ugliest man in baseball. Once in a while I'll even acknowledge that Derek Lilliquist once played for the Braves.

They are all players I love, support and who I know to be Braves at heart, one and all.

This is the fate I'm consigned to. Following the hapless Braves wherever they are traded, where they characteristically bloom into productive players.

Until now. This year is going to be different. Mark my words, they're going all the way.

A Nice Baseball Poem

*In a park a man is sleeping.
He is buoyed by the springy grass.
But when he wakes,
His back will itch.
(I hate that.)*

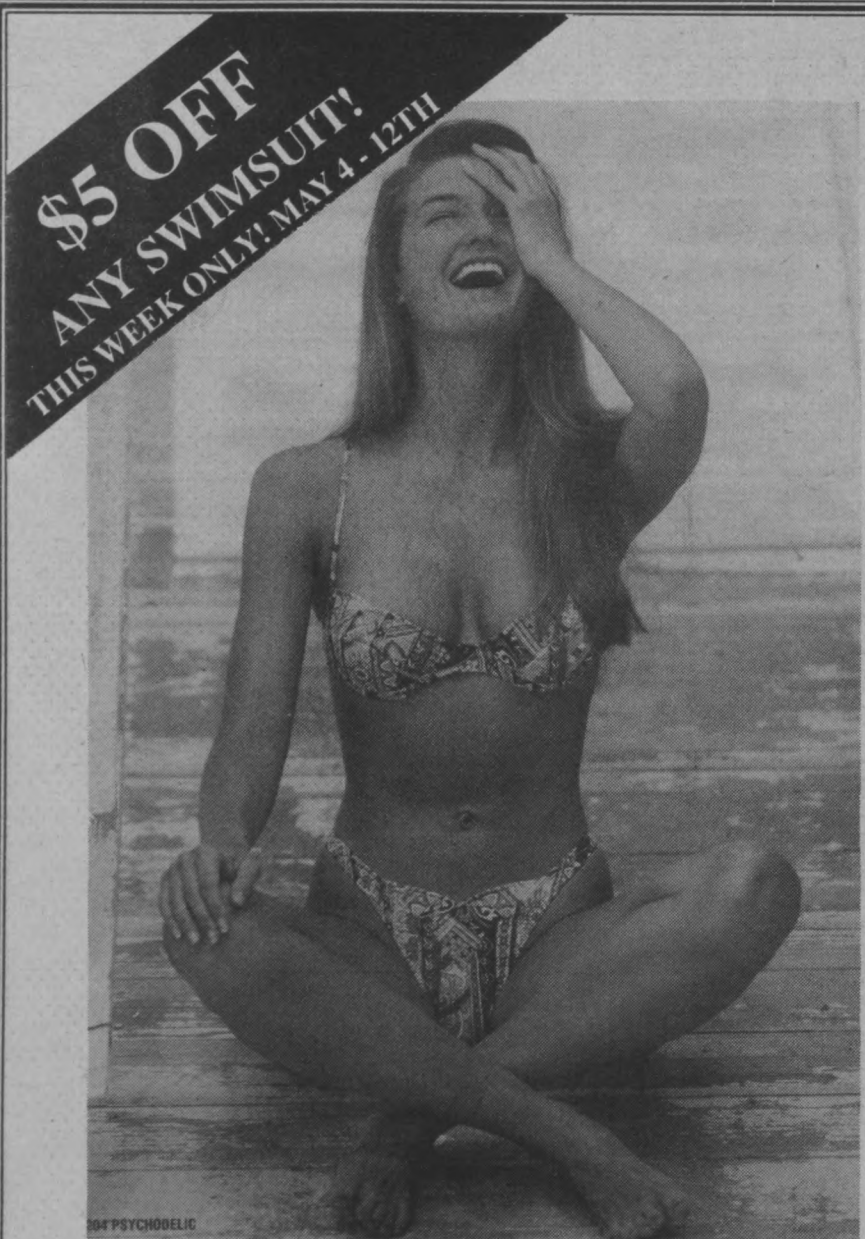
*The man is snoring softly now
As we start playing whiffle ball.
He is lying just beyond second base,
A center fielder of sorts.*

*The bat goes whiff! A swing and a miss,
Whiff again! A wicked curve,
SMACK! A line drive that
Hits the center fielder
In the small of the back.*

*He wakes with a start.
"Oof," he says.
"My back itches."*

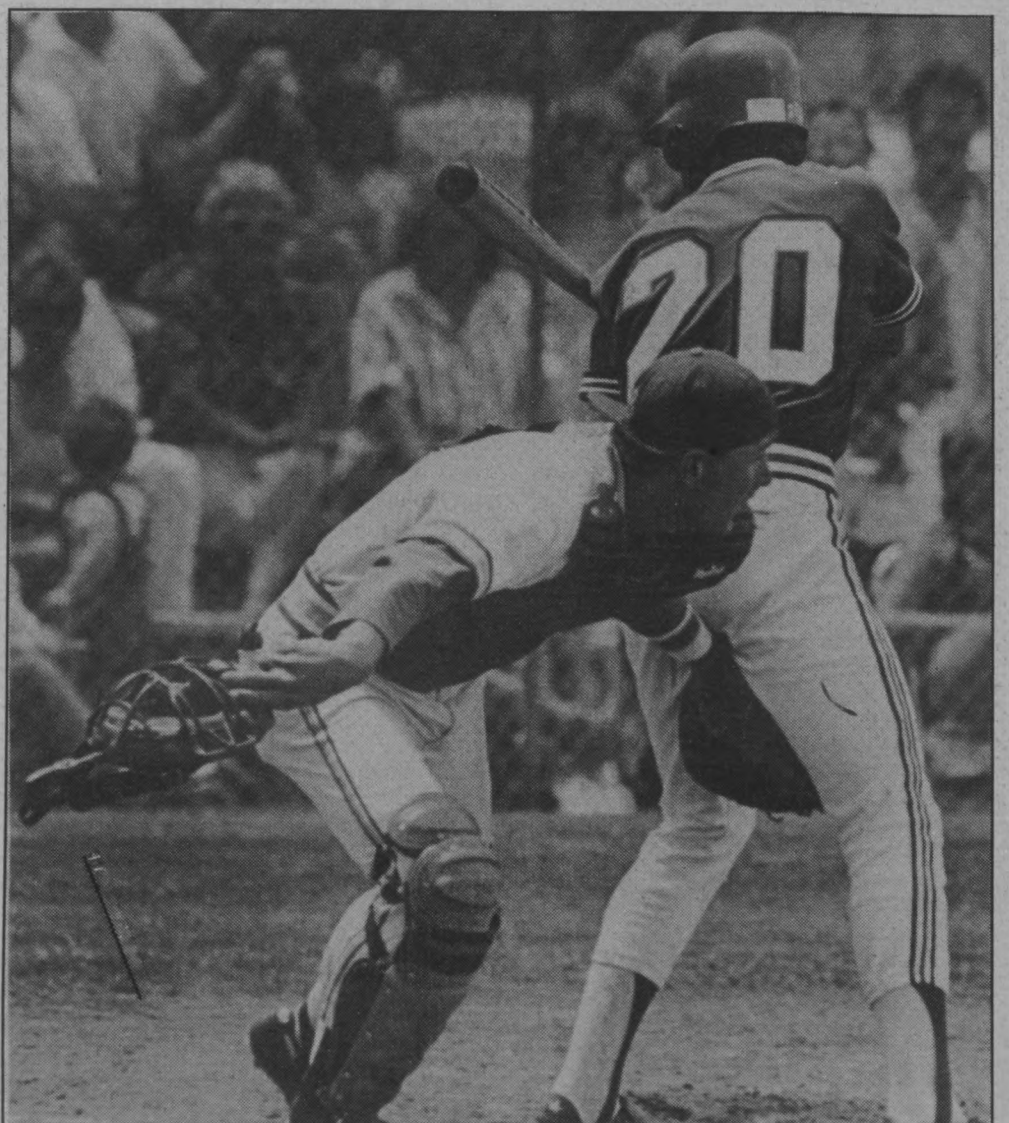
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Baseball is also a good astringent.

I Like Hike: Let's Go!

By Haden Guest

I'm a big advocate of overdevelopment. Pave paradise, put up a parking lot, that's what I've always said. My biggest interaction with the Great Outdoors is going out to the front yard to get the paper in the morning.

A friend has a name for the tendency to pull off the superhighway, step out of your airconditioned car and urinate on the fence post borders of the rest area, thinking "Ah, outdoors!" He calls it "rest-stop nature."

But even I, Haden Guest, man-about-town and bon-vivant, have made a pledge to get out more often, to commune with nature, and if that makes me a communist, well, so be it.

The catalyst for my newfound Grizzly Adams-ness was a recent trip. This weekend I had the good fortune to visit a friend at his pad in Malibu, and while it's always good to check out the permanent-address digs of your college chums, there was an unexpected benefit to the trip.

You see, off behind his house lay Trancas Canyon, which was green and bright — like a detergent commercial. A cool creek ran over mossy rocks and gurgled contentedly. My pal's dog leapt into a still pond, scaring off the water bugs who rested on its surface.

I was out in nature! I felt like Walt Whitman or something, marveling at every stone, every patch of wildflowers, every oak tree leaving shade. For the longest time, I disdained everything that didn't need an electri-



Go hiking and look at the flowers.

cal socket or protective wrapper; I thought doing so made one more civilized.

I've never gone much for the Patagonia-wearing thing because it seemed like such a waste of time. Hike up a mountain? What, are you kidding? I'll drive up to the top and have a couple of beers while I wait for you. Camping? Isn't that what they do at Rocky Horror showings?

But the glow of my computer screen must be affecting me more and more. I catch myself longing for non-florescent light; for fresh air, not conditioned air; and for the ability to romp through a meadow now and then if I damn well

please.

One place I've thought about going back to is the Cuyama Valley. Way, way up Highway 33, where the condors feel at home. I used to go up there every once in a while, to find a place where I could holler at the top of my lungs without worrying about the neighbors or the Foot Patrol. I haven't done this for some time because now, of course, if I get the urge to holler, I'll set up an amp in Yoko Ono Park, and call it "performance art."

There's something reassuring about the idea that our cities have ends, that even exurbia has its limits. Around that next bend of

the canyon does not lie a mini-market or mall, but just a gurgling creek and a good friend's dog.

A couple of years ago, I was walking with my best friend on the faculty club lawn at about three in the morning, when I heard the ocean. I remarked that it sounded like the freeway, and she said I had too much civilization. I thought about that as I listened to the creek wind out toward the multi-million dollar beachfront pads on Malibu Beach.



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Another Fine Baseball Poem

Danny played shortstop,
And it wasn't 'cause his dad was coach.
I'm not just bein' nice 'cause he's dead, either.
He really was good. We all said so.
Especially me and Jimmy, who used to play outfield and
Had a really good perspective from way out there
When he wasn't picking all the dandelions before they bloomed,
Which he liked almost as much the dead ones
Because you can make a wish when you blow on them.
Danny had really thin, wispy hair, kind of like a dead dandelion,
But it always stayed on his head.
Even when he slid into first base.
I played catcher, which I liked because of the mask
And all the pads.
Sometimes, when we were warming up before each inning,
Danny and me would just throw the ball back and forth
While all the other kids kicked the dirt and yelled
"No tea parties!"
We would wink at each other and laugh a little.
But what I liked most about when Danny played shortstop
Was when the ball came straight at him after the big guy
On the other team
Hit it harder than any of us could
And Danny just grabbed it, even if it was off a bad hop,
And threw it to Gerald at first base,
Because then we all smiled at each other while the big kid
Walked back to the dugout.
And then we looked over at Danny,
Who just looked into his glove, which his dad used to use,
And maybe socked it with his fist a couple of times, but
We knew he was happy about it.
One time Danny told me that he wished Jimmy
Wouldn't pick all the dandelions before they bloomed.
That's probably why I liked him best,
Even though I never told Jimmy about it,
'Cause he wouldn't understand,
And maybe he was a little jealous of how
Danny always caught the balls that came to him,
But didn't seem to mind that his dad only nodded but never smiled,
Even when he made the best catches.

By Bunyan Tom

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Fun in the Sun with Your Skin!

By Stephen Lynne-Bachelor

When my grandmother was growing up in the 1880s or the 1930s or whenever she was growing up, it was cool to be tan. To be tan was really "the cat's pajamas." And I'll tell you what, my grandmother could really make the scene. She was tan.

Back then, people didn't have much to do. They just sat around all day in the sun singing "Ain't We Got Fun?" until the stars came out, and then they would all go down to the speakeasy to show off their tans and their funny hats. They had time to work on their tans. My Grandma was really tan. If someone had called her a "tan woman," it would have been an accurate description. She looked like a medium-well steak. She only wore white dresses so she would look even more tan, like the well-seasoned and charred meat patties that my grandfather enjoyed so much.

Grandpa's tan wasn't so good. This was due, but only in part, to the amount of time he spent indoors eating well-seasoned and charred meat patties. But when you



Baby-soft skin deserves a little show and tell.

include the amount of time he spent outside at picnics and beach barbecues, as

well as the time he spent trying to convince my grandmother to go inside and cook him a number of said meat patties, he was not entirely colorless. But in those days, the 1890s or the 1920s or whenever it was, men had to wear those crazy striped bathing suits that covered the then-taboo chest, torso and knee regions.

Uncle Cliff, on the other hand, had a mean, mean tan. He was a truck driver, though, so his savage tan was restricted to his left forearm. He dreamed about going to England and driving around all day just to indulge his right forearm for awhile, but he later became a mailman and his problem was solved.

But things change. People change.

Grandma is retired now, although she still has a job. She comes home and sits on the porch, as secluded from the sun as possible. Her skin is a muddled and marred

mess of melanoma madness that breaks into huge, tissue-ripping shreds with little notice, like when she slightly bumps into blunt objects. Her doctor will not allow her to go out in the sun.

Uncle Cliff has had a number of operations and grafts and other bad skin-oriented, doctor-supervised procedures on his forearms.

Still, sunbathing is, undeniably, fun. You have but to look around on any sunny day to find large sums of fun people sitting, slouching, standing, lounging, hunkering and just plain laying out in the sun. And these days, they're being safer.

They've got so many different ground looking like sad dogs with ear infections who have to wear big plastic cones on their heads. Gone ferent squeeze-bottles of

sunblock lotion out there that, odds are, someone, somewhere is smoothing a fair amount of it on right now. Serious.

Gone are the days when the hedonistic melanin buffs would lather up in a big vat of greasy, greasy, hey, hey, greasy sun tan oil and baste themselves all day, smoothing more and more of the viscous oil over their tanned buttocks and breasts. Gone are the days when they would get one of those silvery cardboard reflector deals and lay on the are the days of the chic St. Tropez tan.

Sunblock is the thing now. It comes in different levels of protection and different colors, flavors, scents and prices. Some are relatively cheap, compared to the more expensive ones.

Since God has hung his

holy "Out Of Order" sign on the ozone layer, you can't be too careful. It is time to realize that if we don't care for our skin, we won't have it anymore. They'll have to invent fake skin. There'll be forms to fill out. They'll make you list "Next of Skin." Skin flicks will take on new meaning. You won't ask somebody to give you the skinny on something because they just might. When somebody says, "It's no skin off my nose!" they'll mean it!

So take care of your skin. Sure, go out in the sun, but be careful! And remember, beauty is only skin deep.

Oh, and Grandpa? Well, he still eats a lot of well-seasoned and charred meat patties. It's just that now he washes them down with light beer.



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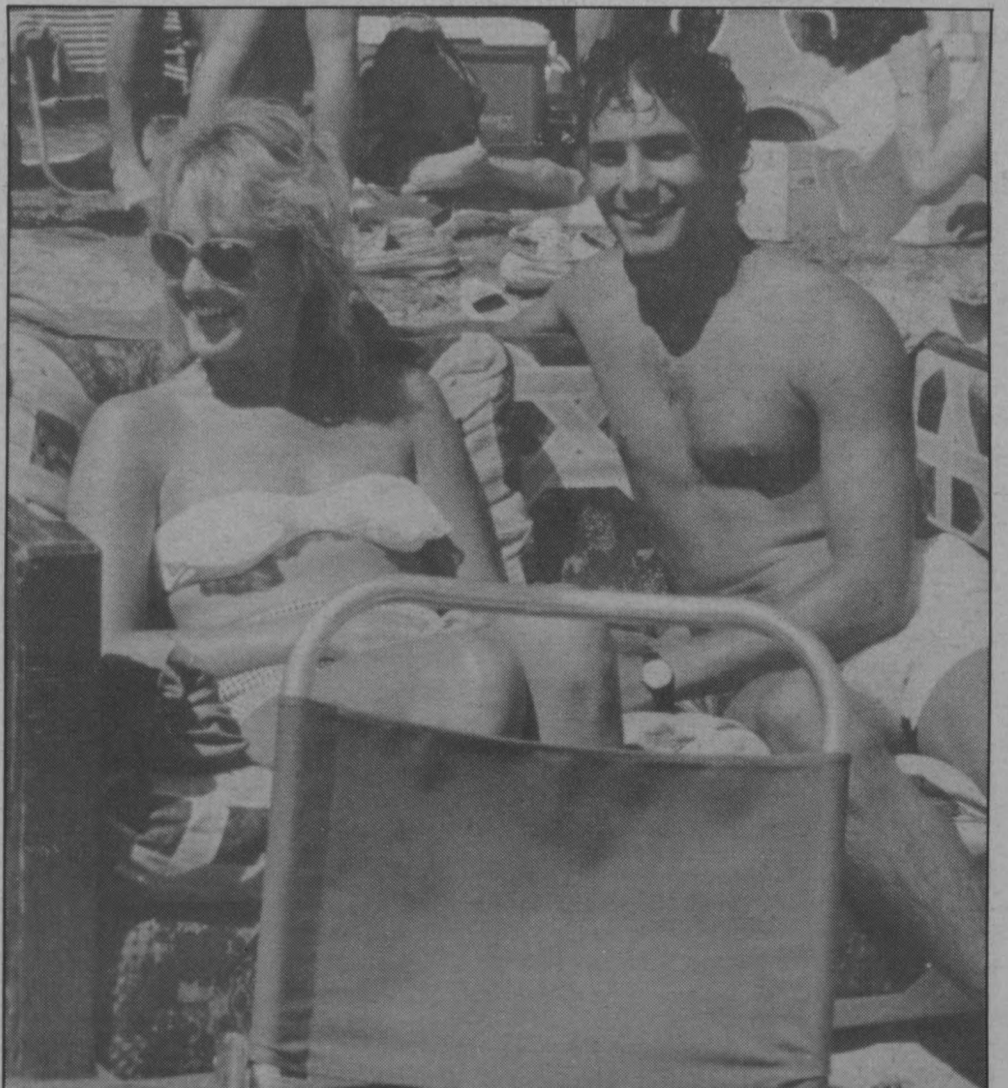


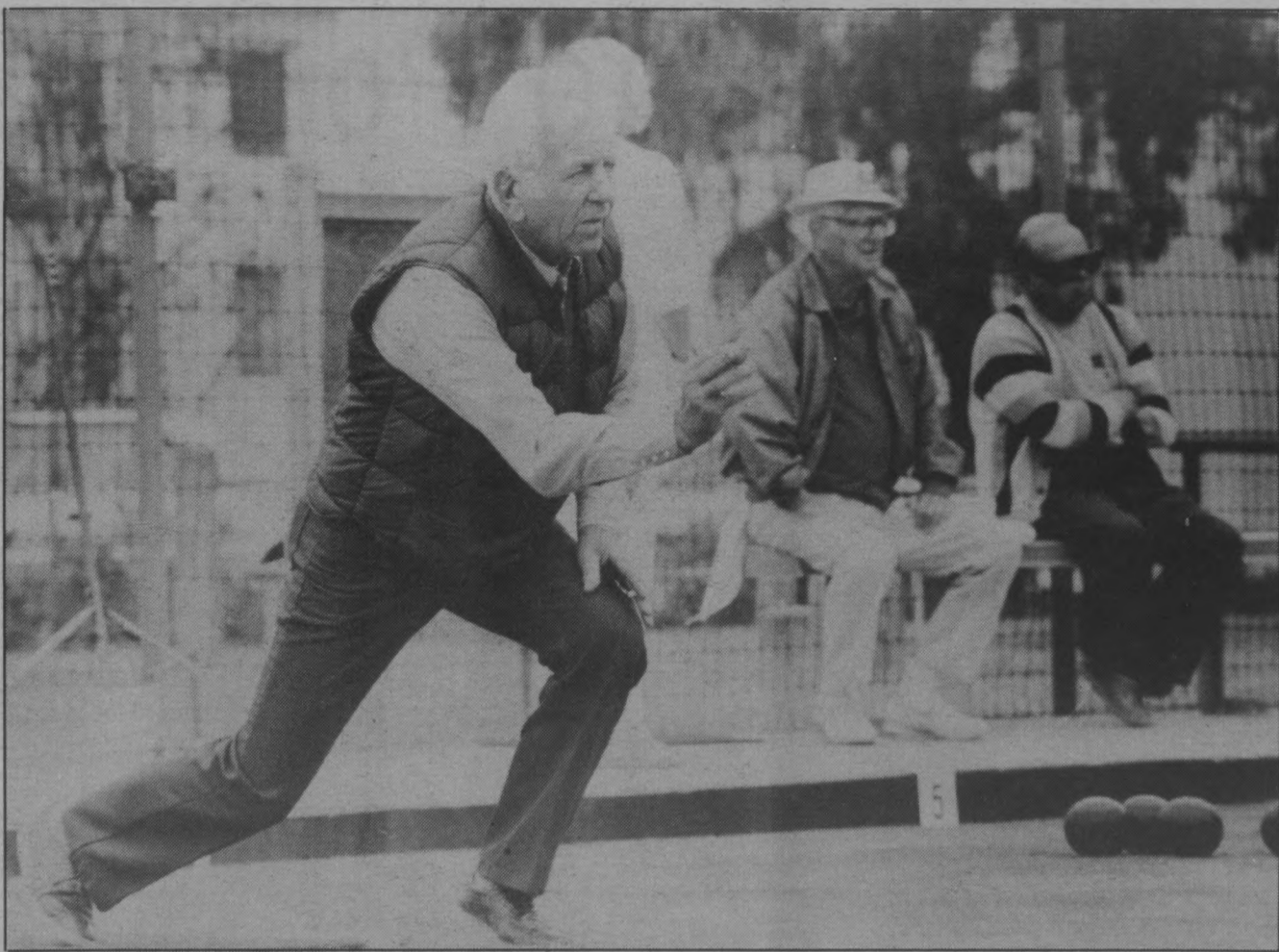
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This is not bocci ball. It is lawn bowling.

Bocci: Have a Ball!

By Charles Gomer Scott

"You what?"
 "I didn't mow the lawn in the backyard. What, are you deaf? Stupid? How are we gonna play Bocci?"

Bocci? Yeah, Bocci. Or Bocci bowls. Or Bocci bowling, even Bocci Bowl.

Whatever you call it, Bocci is how everyone in my family spells F-U-N.

For those of you not in the know, Bocci is the novice's version of lawn bowling, or maybe it's the cheapskate's way to get his (or her!) outdoor-bowling entertainment kicks. In either case, it's a far superior game.

Unlike its famous ancestor, the ancient English game of bowls, Bocci doesn't call for fancy balls imported from England that cost at least a few hundred bucks. Nor does it call for a huge complex of manicured greens and alleys.

My experience with lawn bowling is that you need a bunch of wealthy retired people to play. So, if all your grandparents have moved to Florida or Palm Springs, or just "moved on," if you know

what I mean, you can still Bocci without them because this game don't call for no old people neither, no way, no how.

I know, you're still unsure. "Just what is Bocci?" you're asking. So I thought up a little rap to explain:

"Listen my friends, it's gonna be hot, talkin' 'bout the favorite backyard game of the Family Gomer-Scott.

First my bro' would mow the lawn, and Dad'd set the picnic table, then Mom would start a-cookin', just as fast as she was able.

The bar-b-q'd get goin', and we'd not know what to do, and along would come my uncle, whom Dad called "old you-know-who."

When talking to my mom in the middle of the night, hoping us kids weren't listening to his ugly tales of the sight

Of my uncle as a veteran, and his two tours in the Nam, and he never was the same, at least so said my mom.

But when he'd come on over to that little New York house, I never saw

him crazy, just a mean ole louse

When playing me at Bocci, just rollin' them Italian balls, and I was always willing, despite my bro's guffaws.

First we'd roll the hit ball and hope to set it good, and then my uncle'd send one, and if all went as it should,

One ball he'd send on at it, and then I'd follow that, and then he'd knock me outta there, and I'd scream, "Hey, tit for tat!"

And then we'd keep on rolling, turn by turn and ball by ball, and usually I'd lose, despite my loudest calls

Of "Bocci!" when I'd hit him, or even when I missed..."

Getting the picture? The whole idea behind the game is competition. Knock the other son of a bitch's balls as far out of the alley as you can, and then get yours as close to the hit ball as possible, and never let the other guy have a chance.

Anyway, that's why my family loved Bocci so much — the spirit of competition involved. And it

always gave my dad a reason to yell at my brother too.

"Mow the lawn! We're gonna play Bocci," he'd yell, and boy would my bro' get to it.

I could go on all day about how great it is to be out in the backyard with your family, listening to steaks grilling on the grill, a cold soda in one of those styro-foam holders on the picnic table just an arm's reach away, before the mosquitoes really start zapping ya in early spring, but if I went on about all of that you wouldn't have time to go buy a Bocci set and get to it.

And that's what you really need to do.

It is spring, and Santa Barbara may not be a base-



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ball town, and sure, there's far too few places where you can go ride a horse in the early morning dew, but there's a ton of stores selling Bocci bowl sets. Go get one today!





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Spin Cycle! Frisbees are Popular!

By Gutch Nice

Yeah, so it's starting to warm up again, and that funny energy that makes you want to run outside and strip naked in a field is in the air. And, as most of us know, running naked through fields is not always the best way to deal with Spring Fever. I mean there's laws and stuff, and as fun as it would be to run out there in the grass over on Storke Field and strip down in front of some unsuspecting gym class, you might get thrown in jail for it and that, my fellow spring revelers, is not what you — or I for that matter — need.

So, as I've established a clear problem — what to do about Spring Fever — I feel obligated and, moreover, compelled to provide a solution.

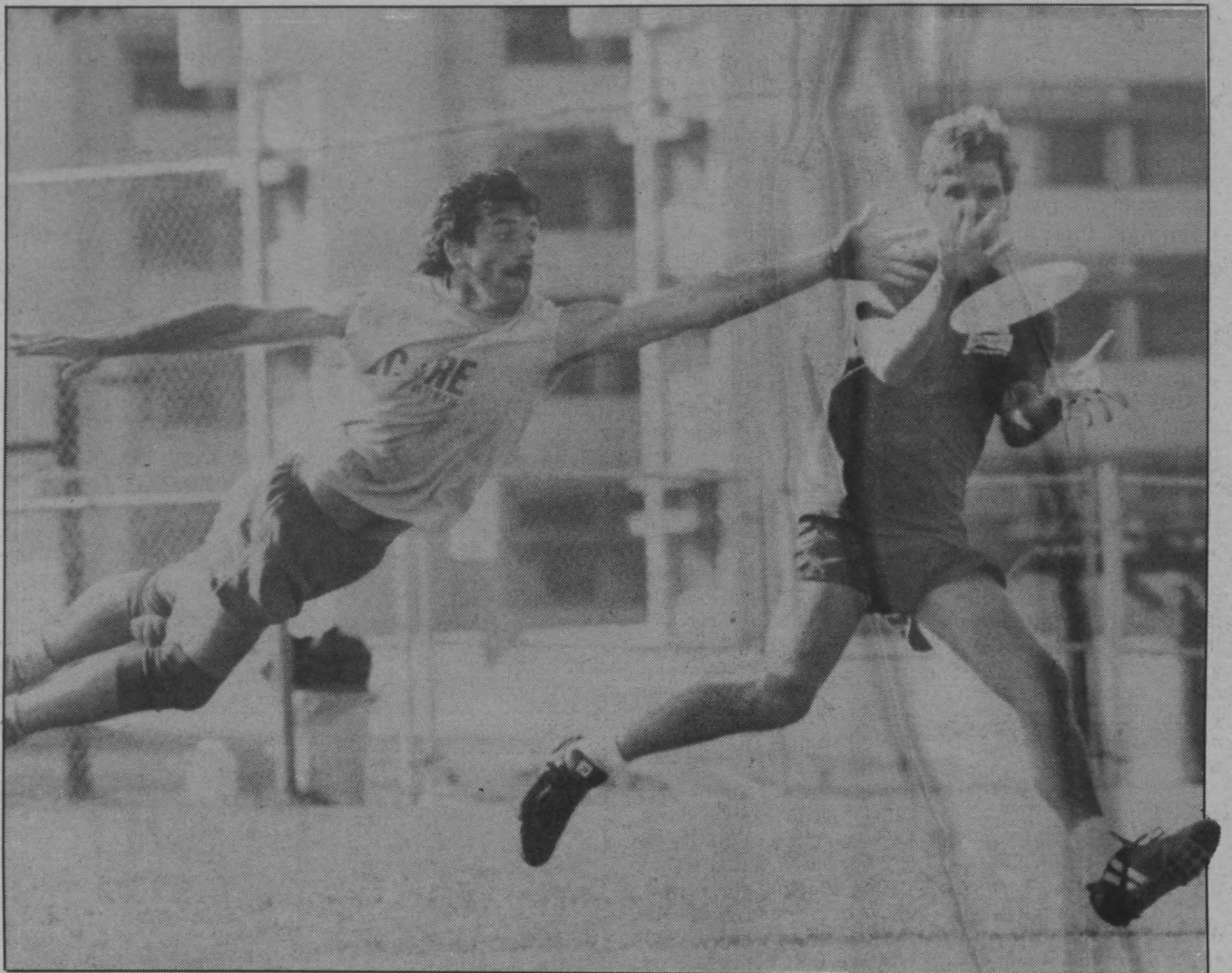
It's round, it's flat, it costs about \$8 and, minus the neat little logos and funny neon colors, you might just

think it's a plate or something. The object of which I pontificate to you is none other than perhaps man's simplest amusement ever — the frisbee. Known by experts as the disc, the plate, the friz, the bee, the frisbee, the ho-ho-lanny, the speedy round go-go, the platter or the saucer, this little sugar-honey might just surprise you.

I mean it's really an oxymoron and stuff because it's so simple and anyone can do it, and yet, for the pros, it gets real complicated. They've got about 50 different weights, sizes and shapes (mostly round) for these flying wonders, and they all have some special purpose.

But that's not what I'm here to tell you because mainly I don't know anything about it. What I do know is that when you want to run naked out in a field because it's spring time, and you're not too hip on doing quality time in the cooler or something, this Magic Flying Orbital Unit (M.F.O.U.) is about the best damn thing around.

You can just go out there with as many of your friends as you want and run around like crazies. That's the beauty of a frisbee really; it gives you a great excuse to run around in a field. I mean me and my friends go out there and sometimes — I'll be honest with you — we don't even come near where the frisbee is flying. We just throw it and all start running around like mad men.



In frisbee, exercise is often "catch as catch can." Explain.

Damn, it's fun.

But the point is, for those of you readers who are more self-conscious, you can play with rules, too. There are a million games like Ultimate — where guys run around

and pretend the disc is a football — or even frisbee golf, where you can play 18 hole with a chicken dinner platter! Can you believe it? I sure can.

Another really cool thing

about the ol' Friz is that you can involve your animals. Slap a bandana on that pup of yours, throw the disc, and I tell you what, that little pooch will run just as much as my friends do, (except the

dog will probably get a lot closer). See, that's it really; the frisbee doesn't leave anyone out in the spring time. So seriously — don't get left O.U.T. on the M.F.O.U.!

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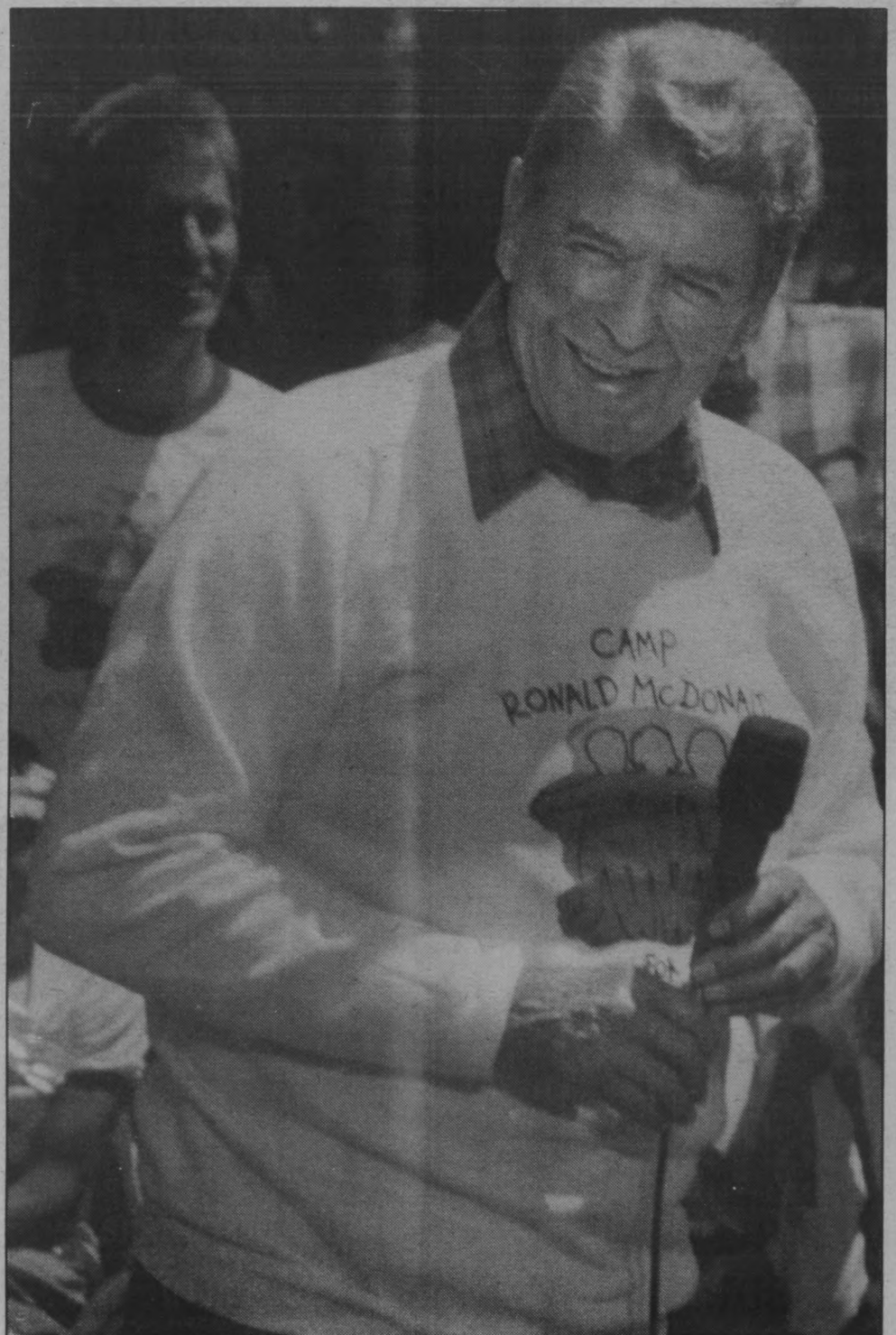
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Fiction About Lawn Darts! C'mon!

By Alfonso Kelly

No one needed to look at the calendar when Lawndart Lester came soaring off the roof, spinning into the swimming pool, flipping and twisting out again and bounding like a frisky Clydesdale to the Bar-B-Que.

He'd wrap his brawny fists around bubbling hot dog franks — still steaming — and force them down his throat, bellowing an awesome, guttural squawk from his behemoth-ish chest.

"Oh," Liza would say, "Lester's frisky. It must be spring."

And it was.

After the heavy months of precipitation, model airplane tally-wackation, feeding his dog Ken-L-Ration and "combing his hair-ation," Lester was out of the house and ready to swallow anything hot thrown his way.

I think those weiners wound up in his lungs.

But if they did, you'd never know it from his lawn dart score.

Lester would squirt a pint of mustard in his mouth, swash a handful of relish around in his cheeks, swallow, sling three giant darts from his hip, squawk again and rip his shirt off when the three of them came streaking down from the treetops and grouped in a four-inch pattern slightly to the top of the ring.

"I like putting them a little north of center," Lester

would say, swaggering back to the food like a Cro-Magnon cowboy in an adolescent skin flick dissolve montage.

It was spring all right, but every time I think of it, it seems like an afternoon free from temporal or meteorological distinctions.

For me it was an episode defined entirely by moral and legal terms. But that was just for me.

We — and by we I mean my mom, my dad, my sister Liza and my friend Lester — had just tossed another passel of weiners on the grill and Lester was lubing his lawn darts ("I can get a lower trajectory with this stuff" *slurp*).

But right when Dad was pulling the mustard bottle away from Lester again, a helicopter rose from behind our backyard wisteria hedge, police guys with guns so big I was jealous came running around from the front yard and a loud-speaker from somewhere said, "Drop those darts, Lester! You're all under arrest for lawn darts!"

Liza grabbed the nearest chair and tried to throw it at the cops, but one of them was on top of her before she could let out the word "pervert."

I froze up in the commotion and was quickly brought to my knees by the glimpse of a night stick. But as I fell — gravity style — to the grass, I saw a lawn dart soar up out of the yard, tumble over the fence and straighten just in time to



STACEY TEAS/Daily Nexus

Backyard fun is not always as strange as the writer of this story. Why or why not?

knock the stabilizing rotor off the helicopter, turning it into a big, black Quisnart that exploded in the trees behind the swimming pool.

Then the cop on top of me was taken down by a lawn dart to the temple, and

my dad was able to toss one of the cops in the pool after the poor guy was distracted by a lawn dart in his foot.

But we all got arrested anyway, all that is, except Lawndart Lester. We never saw him again, and I don't

think the cops ever did either.

But sometimes I think back to those days of innocence, before shakedown and jail-yard scuffles. Before I developed a penchant for whirling licence plates

across the print shop like deadly frisbees from the DMV.

I like to drift back to that spring afternoon when I learned about how cold handcuffs could be. I learned about my right to remain silent, and we all learned that Lawndart Lester could hit moving targets.



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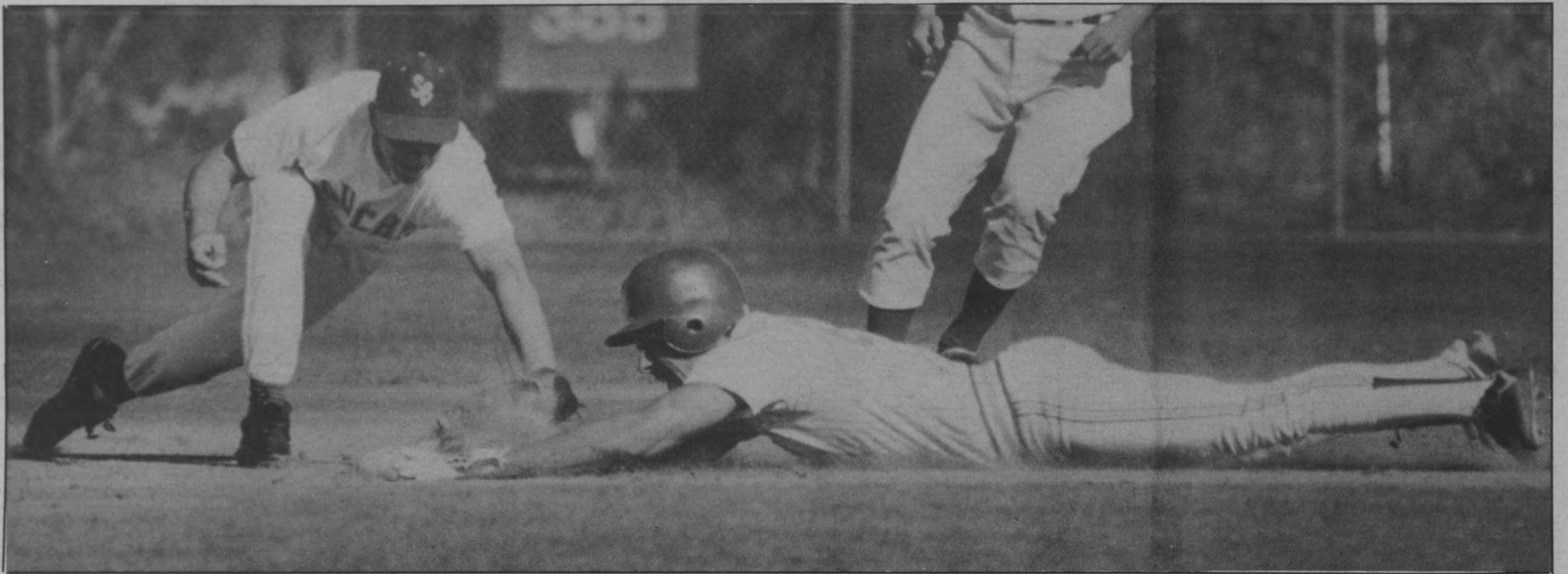
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