

L.A. WEEKLY

L.A. WEEKLY August 10-16, 1984

Letters

Symbol Crash. Applause.

Dear Editor:

Jay Levin's "How the Democrats Can Beat Reagan" [*L.A. Weekly*, July 13-19] is unfocused. Levin, while dismissing Jimmy Carter as a flea, has a gnat's-eye perception of the economy. His "Seven Points for an Improved Economy" sounds like a hodgepodge Huey Long might have created had he had to inventize his "Redistribute the Wealth" slogan.

Mondale and Ferraro will beat Reagan and Bush because Americans generally reject ideologues. They are straightforward Democrats and represent blue-collar constituencies on a national level at least. Congresswoman Ferraro brings enormous strength to the ticket. Her presence there is more than a recognition of the gender gap; it is a symbol of unity against President Reagan's Social Darwinism. Former Vice President Mondale shows boldness and wisdom by recognizing the importance of political symbols. Moreover, he has the necessary experience at the state, national, and international levels to be an effective President.

The Democrats already have a winning ticket. In an era of hucksterism, the best strategy — the strategy of Mondale and Ferraro — is for them to be themselves.

—Richard Thompson
West Los Angeles

Lights, Camera, Affirmative Action!

Dear Editor:

It was the expressed hope of the LAOOC that the camera crews chosen to film the 1984 Summer Olympics would reflect a cross-section of the working population of Los Angeles — men and women alike. Unfortunately, the crews hired for the official Olympics film are almost exclusively white males. The token employment of minorities and women is not sufficient representation.

Behind the Lens represents highly qualified camerawomen in all categories: directors of photography, film and video operators, assistants, loaders and still photographers. We call your attention to the existence of this pool of talent in the hope that all groups will participate in future events, and that women and minorities will not be overlooked.

—Alexis Kraslovsky
Assistant Secretary for Behind the Lens
Los Angeles

Orange Herrings

Dear Editor:

Steve Meiss' article ("The Strangeness Next Door," *L.A. Weekly*, August 3-9) might better have been titled "The Strangeness Within." Though interesting and well-written, the discussion of Orange County is at best marginal; a focus only for the various tangents of this writer's general sense of malaise. The piece seems really to be about an unacknowledged sense of defeat, of being trapped in a life that perhaps has the superficial trappings of "success." Reworked as such, the piece could be made much more valuable by really examining the chords of discontent familiar to many. As it stands, however, it is almost a rip-off, shying away from the real issues raised. The *Weekly* does its



Josh Westman

readership a disservice by presenting the material under the guise of "reportage," factual or otherwise. It reads like Tom Wolfe, without the journalistic responsibility that underlies his work.

—Rex Curtis
Los Angeles

Art Buddies

Dear Editor:

The exploits of Walter Hopps are indeed legendary, and it is hard not to warm up to this topic when skillfully coaxed by Hunter Drohojowska ("Car Hopps," *L.A. Weekly*, August 3-9). Everyone who ever dealt with Walter was put through incredible changes. Recounting emotional roller-coaster rides and scrapes worthy of a Marx Brothers movie, is not the same thing as being a "detractor" of Walter Hopps. He taught me what a commitment to art really entails and how different are the cosmic visions of an artist from ordinary reality.

I purposely avoided digging out the "Walter Hopps will be here in 20 minutes" buttons during Walter's recent visit lest people assume some animosity exists between us. Phil Leider was the originator of this button, by the way. He and Walter and other important voices for art in the '60s are long gone from the L.A. art scene. Some people like it that way, but I am not one of them.

—Hal Glickman
Santa Monica

Rubber and Glue

Dear Editor:

I am a member of the Church of Scientology. I have been so officially since I took my first course in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1971. I find your article ("Did Scientology Defraud Members?" *L.A. Weekly*, July 20-26) rather disgusting — which is a personal remark, so I won't spend column inches indulging my repugnance.

So, to go right to the point. The Church of Scientology as a group and as it represents the applied religious philosophy of L. Ron Hubbard has done more to contribute to a safe and sane world than any other group extant today. Scientologists all over the world break their fannies to help others, and I find it rather

typical and disgusting that some criminal types who inveigh against being found out regarding their own revolting crimes get your attention. Those "former officials" are not nice people. They are liars of the finest sort. I guarantee you that in order for those "former officials" to be bellowing about fraud, they have been quite fraudulent themselves.

As for your much-heralded Michael Flynn, he is a lawyer who will probably be disbarred in the not too distant future. You failed to include his sordid history with deprogrammer Ted Patrick. You know good old Ted. He's the kind of guy that tries to deprogram devout Roman Catholics from believing in God or any religion at all. Well, they are "partners." They go about drumming up business . . . and there's precious little of it.

If you don't think Ron was a war hero then don't read the published accounts from the War Department about his experiences in World War II. Are you so paranoid as to think the whole Department of the Navy is in on the scam?

The real criminals name themselves; Kima Douglas and Howard Schomer are two. They have stolen money from the Church and they have violated the sacred trust of parishioners. Why don't you look at them, find out who they are? As newspapers are devoted to mining garbage, finding out about them ought to be real fun.

—Leslie Siltos
Los Angeles

I Remember Mammon

Dear Editor:

Thank you for your article re Scientology defrauding its members ("Insights," *L.A. Weekly*, July 20-26). I am glad the corruption inside this decaying militaristic bureaucracy is finally being exposed.

I was one of many who spent thousands of hours and tens of thousands of dollars in pursuit of the spiritual freedom and powers promised by the organization. We were told we were building a new civilization "without wars, criminals, and insanity," but nobody knew where these huge sums of money were going. I left disillusioned several years later.

There are hundreds of hard-working, sincere people in the organization working for next to nothing because they are convinced they are mankind's last hope, but

instead of being used as an instrument of social betterment, the technology of Scientology is used to create a vast power base and amass huge sums of tax-free dollars. The highest paid people in Scientology — the registrars and field staff members — possess an innate talent for selling and a rather high degree of unscrupulousness. They skillfully find out how much money you have, how much money you make, how much money your family has, how much money you can borrow, and what property you own that could be used as collateral.

Virtually every Scientologist I knew was in debt to the organization. At one point, a registrar tried to get me to borrow several thousand dollars from an organization of Scientologists that loaned money at a 50 percent annual interest rate.

There are several hundred disaffected Scientologists presently trying to get their money back from the organization. Scientology promises a full refund for any service the person is dissatisfied with, providing it is asked for within 90 days, as well as repayment of any money on account that is unused. In many cases, including my own, we put several thousands of dollars on account for a particular service and were later told that we were considered ineligible for that service. The Church is using every means possible to get out of paying off these refunds and repayments (they now total in the millions). Any help you could give us as far as exposure of this situation would be greatly appreciated.

—A.F.I.
Los Angeles

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