

Essays and  
Other Diversions  
celebrating the  
lifestyle of the  
IMMORTALS!

# The IMMORTAL Chronicles

"Hell starts on  
January 1, 2000  
when the lights go  
out."

—Millennium Expert

THIS ISSUE: The  
Immortals tackle the  
New Millennium and  
other Y2K paranoia!

Winter 2001  
Volume III / No. 3

Now online at [http://www.geocities.com/immortal\\_chronicles/](http://www.geocities.com/immortal_chronicles/)

## CONTENTS

Y2K Madness	2
Where Immortals Dare! (Homer Tom)	3
Immortal Letters	6
Bang or Whimper? (Bob Westal)	8
Immortal Profiles featuring Bob Westal	9
Where Immortals Gather	10
Y2K + C (by David Gordy)	12
Baby Around Town	13
Signs of the Coming Apocalypse (Randy Reynaldo)	15

## *Celebrating the New Millennium...*



Photograph courtesy of Homer Tom

**ABOVE:** *Fearing the worst as Y2K approaches, Immortal Homer Tom has retreated to an undisclosed location and is preparing to repopulate the earth.*

## ***Immortals Style!***

# The IMMORTAL Chronicles

Volume III • Number 3  
Winter 2001

Each article © 2001 by the respective contributor. All rights reserved. The Immortal Chronicles is published with the coming of each solstice (more or less). No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form without the written consent of the respective author. Printed December 2001.

Send all comments, contributions and hate mail to:

e-mail:  
immortal@wgc.comics  
bobwestal@mail.com

Regular post:  
Randy Reynaldo  
c/o WCG Comics  
3765 Motor Avenue, Suite 471 (PMB)  
Los Angeles, CA 90034

The Immortals:  
Editors & Design:  
Bob Westal (editor)  
Randy Reynaldo (design/editor)  
Contributing Editors:  
Scott Brick Terry Delegeane  
David Gordy Raymond Marcus  
Homer Tom

We welcome letters of comment, contributions, etc., including from non-members. All articles and letters subject to ruthless editing, regardless of personal feelings, the relationship of the contributor to members of the Immortals, or what the author may have actually intended to say.

Selected work from the Immortal Chronicles is online at [http://www.geocities.com/immortal\\_chronicles/](http://www.geocities.com/immortal_chronicles/)

## Y2K Madness...

*"Greetings, my friends. We are all interested in the future, for that is where you and I are going to spend the rest of our lives."*  
—The Amazing Criswell (Plan 9 from Outer Space)

### Time Flies When You're Having Fun Dept.:

Yes, this issue of your beloved *Immortal Chronicles* is late. Very late. Two years late.

To be fair, many of the Immortals submitted their pieces for this issue on time. We had actually laid out about 80 percent of the dangd thing and, after much prodding, several deadline extensions, and numerous promises from delinquent colleagues that their pieces were "in the mail," we waited for the remaining con-

(see *TIME FLIES* on p. 7)

As anyone will tell you, trying to ride herd on the Immortals is the equivalent of herding cats. Cats with poor attitudes and learning disabilities. Deaf, blind, autistic cats who did a lot of drugs back in the hippie days.

Nevertheless, we thought our original deadline for this issue of *September 30, 1999* would be more than sufficient. *Plenty of time for everyone to write their articles*, we thought. *Even accounting for that tiny minority of slackers among us, we'll easily get the issue out well before the new millennium actually arrives even with the resistance of a few lazy bad apples!* More fool us!

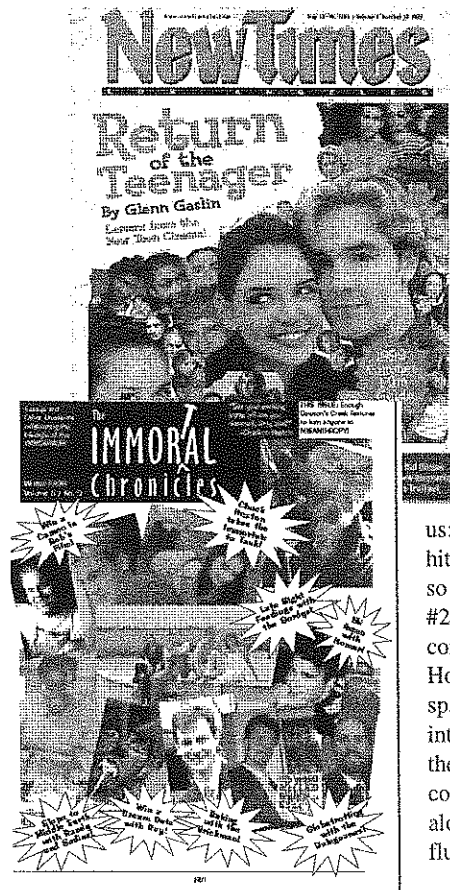
So as you read this issue, keep in mind that some of the articles addressing this issue's theme — the new millennium — may have lost some of their urgency and hard-hitting journalistic edge. Some may even be written in the wrong tense. Others may be totally irrelevant, hopelessly dated, and utterly without worth a mere month after they written. Nevertheless, we stand behind what we print (otherwise we'd have to re-write the whole issue and miss this week's "Dharma and Greg").

In any case, we did have one fortunate realization which came to us as we were, once again, celebrating the passing of the year, a bottle of Martinelli's Sparkling Apple Cider and *New Years Rockin' Eve*, when Dick Clark or Ed McMahon or Al Roker or Posh Spice or someone said something that had never occurred to us. *Mirabile dictu...*the new millennium didn't really start until this year. (We don't really understand why, but we think it has something to do with those monkeys at the beginning of 2001.)

So, here, nearly irrelevant but not quite, is the Immortals' salute to the new millennium and the hope and danger that the future presents us all with.

\* \* \* \* \*

At left is proof that the Apocalypse indeed is upon us: When the May 13-19, 1999 issue of the *New Times* hit the give-away bins, we were stunned. The cover was so similar to the last issue of the *Immortal Chronicles* #2 (both covers reproduced at left), that we immediately consulted our lawyers about possible litigious remedies. However, the legal eagles at Jacoby & Myers (well, legal sparrows) pointed out that given our own rather loose interpretation of the "fair use" doctrine (without skirting the edges of plagiarism, how can we achieve that nice, cozy "lived-in" feeling?), we'd best leave well enough alone. We consider it further proof of our profound influence on the media as members of the cultural elite. ♦



While the idea of roughing it for the average Immortal is a night at the Holiday Inn without a Norm's within shouting distance, there are the few exceptions among this sedentary crowd: following in the footsteps of Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, Robert Edwin Peary, and *Kung Fu's* Kwai Chang Cain, Immortal Explorer Homer Tom has trodden far and wide to distant lands where most Immortals fear to tread. What follows is an account of his latest hair-raising expedition where our Brother Ho and two friends found themselves stuck at 12,000 feet in the snow and cold, wondering whether they would ever see their fellow Immortals again and who among them would taste best accompanied by a tart Pilsner....



# Where Immortals Dare!

## Another Homer Tom Adventure!

Gasping for air at 12,000 feet, I needed to make a decision. One of my hiking partners was getting a bad case of altitude sickness. The sun had already disappeared behind peaks towering almost 2000 feet above us and we had a choice: keep climbing to our campsite or turn back for a two-hour descent in the dark....

How do I get in these situations?

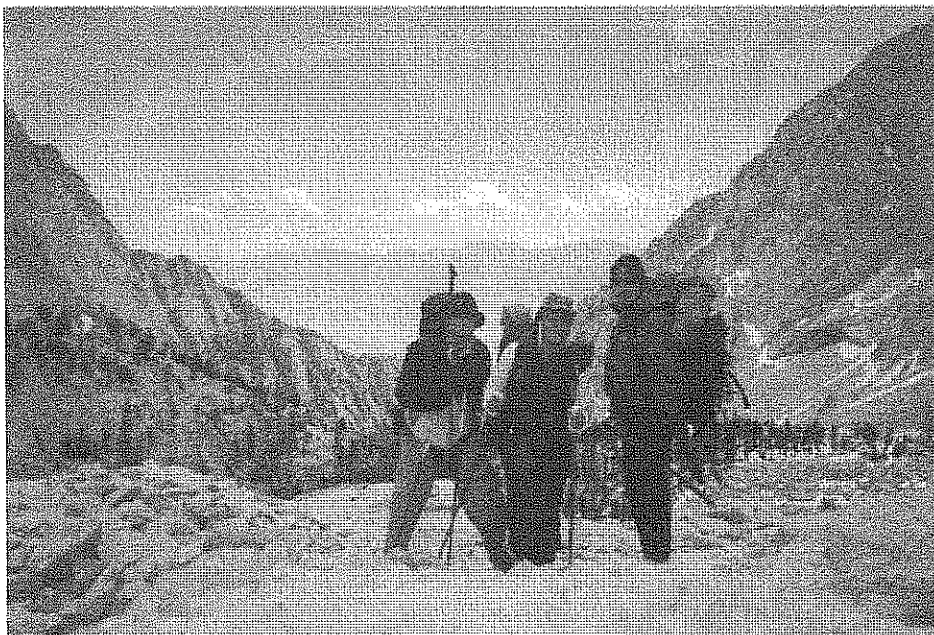
### The Dream

At 14,496 feet, Mount Whitney is the highest point in the continental United States. For years I have driven by it on my ski trips to Mammoth, each time wondering what it would be like to look down from atop that mountain. I never seriously considered climbing it, although I have become an avid hiker in the last year. Each week I would go on hikes with the Sierra Club where I met a wide variety of people united by a love of the outdoors. Many of them have climbed Whitney before and, as I listened to their stories, I began to wonder if I could make the climb. After all, many of them were much older than me and didn't appear to be in much better shape. One fellow hiker even mentioned how his 60-year old mother summited Mt. Whitney! That was all I needed to hear. I decided that, one day, I would climb to the mountaintop.

While camping this past April, the subject of Mt. Whitney came up again. Sitting around the campfire, the discussion turned to places we would like to visit or things we wanted to do. When I brought up Whitney, it turned out that several of us shared this dream. I suspect the combination of our natural setting and several bottles of wine made a few of us really latch onto this idea.

We began planning how we would do such a trip — how many days it would take, what kind of food and equipment to bring, how to get the hard-to-obtain camping permit and the training needed to attempt this climb. We discussed other adventures like hiking the Inca Trail to Machu Pichu in Peru or taking a road trip through Alaska, but each time returned to Mt. Whitney, concluding it was probably the easiest, shortest and cheapest to do. Despite this I still had doubts this would happen, especially any time soon.

A few weeks later I got a phone call from John, one of my fellow campers that drunken night. He had told a co-worker about this who also jumped on the idea. He was super gung-ho on this and would organize a trip if John and I would go with him. Great, I thought, but when would we go? Camping permits are required from late May through mid-October and are distributed by lottery each spring. I knew of people who have tried for years but failed to win this



**ABOVE:** The climbers in a lighter moment shortly before their slow descent into madness.

All photos accompanying this article are courtesy of Homer Tom. Many of the photos can be seen in full color online at [http://www.geocities.com/immortal\\_chronicles/](http://www.geocities.com/immortal_chronicles/)



particular lottery. How would we get one? "Simple," John said, "Let's go the day before camping permits are required!" I looked at my calendar — that would be in three weeks! I realized it was time to put up or shut up. Not allowing myself to worry about a million different things I answered, "Let's climb Whitney!" I was committed.

### Training

I had to get in shape. Over the next three weeks I hit the gym or hiked four times a week. Going to the gym was easy enough since I could go at lunch or right after work, but the hikes were harder to fit in. I did my regular Sierra Club hikes slinging a backpack loaded with 25 pounds. These hikes lasted two hours and covered five miles with a few hundred feet in elevation gain. I did two weekend hikes covering no more than eight miles. John joined me on one of the hikes and also frequented the gym. Todd, the third member of our team, trained by himself. We never took an overnight hiking trip to test our gear nor our conditioning. I never climbed more than 1500 feet on any of my training hikes. Our trek would be a three-day, 18-mile round trip ascending 6000 feet. On top of that, there would be lots of snow since we were going in late spring.

I began to worry. Last year, I spoke with a seasoned backpacker who told me of his many trips to and around Mt. Whitney. I especially remembered him telling me of the time he had to be airlifted off the mountain because of a sudden and debilitating bout of altitude sickness. This brought back memories of John Krakauer's *Into Thin Air*, the best-selling account of a fatal Mt. Everest climbing expedition. The author goes into gory detail describing the effects of High Altitude Pulmonary Edema.

I decided to see my doctor. What medicines could he give me? He listened to my story without comment then gave me a prescription and advice. The prescription was for an inhaler like those used by asthma sufferers. This would make sure my air passageways wouldn't constrict when my lungs were being exerted. Sounded good to me. His advice: drink plenty of water and take lots of aspirin. This, too, sounded prudent, and my confidence returned. His final piece of advice: take along a cellular phone.

### Final Preparations

We arrived at Whitney Portal on a Thursday night to set up camp at 8000 feet, spend one night getting acclimated to the altitude, and try to get a good night's sleep. We had eaten a huge steak dinner in the tiny burg of Lone Pine, our last chance for real food before eating freeze-dried meals for the next few days. The weather report sounded mild: highs in the 70s, lows in the 30s and a slight chance of showers to the north in Mammoth. We spoke to a ranger who said the

**BELOW:** "You know, after the first couple of bites, human meat starts to grow on you!"



snow was patchy at the lower elevations, deep in some spots higher up, and because it was late spring, the snow would be very soft midday but passable.

In any case, we came prepared — maybe a little over-prepared. In addition to our regular backpacking gear we each had ice axes, crampons\* for our boots, and ski poles. We had two water filters and a four-day supply of food and snacks. John brought a Global Positioning System (GPS) transmitter that could pinpoint our precise location and altitude to within 10 feet. Todd brought his cellular phone and a spare battery.

Sitting around the campfire, we reviewed our plan: Six miles the first day to Trail Camp at 12,000 feet. Get up at dawn to take the summit and return to Trail Camp before the snow got too soft. Spend the rest of Saturday basking in victory and back down to Whitney Portal on Sunday. Convinced we had a fine plan, we went to sleep that night confident of success.

### The Climb

The next morning we finished packing and prepared to set out. After filling our water bottles and strapping on the climbing gear, our packs weighed over 40 pounds! Realizing this was a bit much, we all ditched a few items (including the GPS) and put them in the car. We set off at a deliberately slow pace to get warmed up and take

in the incredible view of the Owens Valley below us. The steep trail, altitude and heavy packs soon had us huffing, and we stopped frequently to drink water and catch our breaths.

At 10,000 feet we started to see patches of snow on the trail. It wasn't really snow, more like runoff that melted and refroze each day. The morning sun was shaded by trees so the snow was still firm and we traversed these patches easily. Then we hit our first steep canyon that not only was covered in snow, but it was a deep powder covered by a thin crust of ice on top. With each step, your boot might break through the crust and you would sink in up to your knee.

We broke out the ski poles for stability. I passed my inhaler to everyone. Following the trail was easy since the hikers before us left either footprints or deep holes where their boots had fallen in, called "post-holing." Each step became a decision to either step into a posthole — slow and exhausting — or step on unbroken snow and risk plunging through. We cleared the snowfield dripping and aching.

Fortunately, we soon reached our lunch stop, Outpost Camp. John complained of a headache and didn't eat much. We made sure he took aspirin, drank water and rested for 90 minutes before setting off again. John maintained a good pace at first but with the first deep snow he slowed down again. His head pounded and he began feeling nauseous. Todd and I began to get concerned and we considered turning back to set up camp at the lake, but John urged us to keep going as long as we took frequent breaks. Our pace slowed to an agonizing crawl as we climbed above the treeline.

\* *Ed. Note: We're not quite sure what crampons are, but we're fairly certain they have nothing whatever to do with feminine hygiene.*

We passed a few hikers as they were coming down, asking each how much further it was to Trail Camp. Almost to a person, each said it was not that much further and the trail was snowy but passable, with only a couple of tricky areas. I soon realized how subjective these replies were. "Not that much further" may have been true, but the trail got steeper and became more and more a series of switchbacks skirting below a series of peaks. "Tricky areas" turned out to be two spots where we had to traverse across the face of a snowfield that was steeper than an advanced downhill ski run. Each of these areas was over a hundred feet wide and required following the postholes of other hikers. For this, we broke out the ice axes to plant in the uphill side and give us something to grab onto if we slipped.

Looking down the face of these snowfields, I could see the only thing to interfere with a thousand-foot slide was a few jagged rocks sticking out. I didn't look down again. Todd and I kept John between us and made sure he rested before each traverse. Even so, each step came painfully to him and he appeared a little unsteady on his feet.

As we got closer to some of the lower peaks, the trail became more of a stream for the snowmelt runoff. We hiked on the edges of the trail, forcing us to step in more and more snow. The postholes were deeper here, some even thigh deep. Not only that, at the bottom of some of them I could see running water! We chose not to follow the postholes. Our progress slowed even more and we still could not see the lake beside Trail Camp.

Gasping for air at 12,000 feet, I found it hard to make a decision. My hiking partner was getting a bad case of altitude sickness. The sun had already disappeared behind the peaks towering almost two thousand feet above us. Should we keep climbing to our campsite or turn back for a long descent in the dark? When John said, "I can taste blood in my throat," I knew that we had to stop soon and that John was in no condition to even go down. We decided to climb no more than 30 minutes and set up camp regardless of where we were.

As we crested one peak, we finally saw the lake that preceded Trail Camp. The camp was probably another half mile away and down through a snowfield. "Can you make it?" we asked John. "No," he responded "I can't go another step." Todd and I were at this point tired, worried and frustrated to be so close to camp. More than just reaching our goal, I had hoped to stay in camp to be near other people in case John got much worse. No, we had to camp right here, on this peak. Luckily, this spot turned out to be pretty nice. We found a level spot that not only was snow-free but had enough dirt for us to drive our tent stakes. At 12,500 feet, we had a grand

view overlooking a frozen lake on one side and dwarfed by a sheer face of granite on the other.

Perhaps it was because I was tired, but maybe the altitude was affecting me since I had difficulty deciding which of the tasks to do first in setting up camp. Setting up the tents and getting John into his sleeping bag was the top priority. We had drunk most of our water on the climb and needed to melt some snow in order to cook dinner. The temperature dropped quickly and we needed to put on warm clothes. Someone needed to keep an eye on John. I set up the tent for John and me while Todd started on his. Todd soon began to struggle with his tent and confessed he had used it only once before. Finishing up our tent, I got John squared away then set up Todd's tent. Tired, cold and hungry, I realized how thin the air was just moving around camp and doing simple tasks. Even moving my backpack a few feet left me gasping for breath and I had to rest after taking off my boots. And this was after I used my inhaler.

I threw on some warm clothes and asked Todd to help with preparing dinner. By now he was inside his tent and sleeping bag and refused to come out. Why? When lightening his pack that morning, he took out most of his extra clothes. He was in his sleeping bag, wearing all the clothes he had brought and he was *still* cold! That meant I had drawn cooking duties too.

Todd and I got a chance to talk over dinner — he, from the comfort of his tent while I got a chance to rest, finally, on a rock. John was silent inside his tent, presumably asleep. I didn't want to discuss this before with John nearby, but Todd and I had to consider our options. "I hope John sleeps well tonight," I said, "and we'll see how he feels in the morning. Maybe we can still make a summit attempt." That was the hopeful side of me. The cautious side considered the worst-case options. "Todd, why don't you check your cell phone to see if you can get a signal." This was my final play if things got really bad — we'd

call 911 and have him airlifted out. It would probably cost a few grand, but he'd be rescued. Todd looked at me blankly for a second and then replied, "It's with the rest of the gear I left in the car."

*Aaaaah!*

That night the temperature dropped to the mid-30s. John and I were cozy in our tent, but Todd's was more of a three-season tent and he froze. In the middle of the night, the wind picked

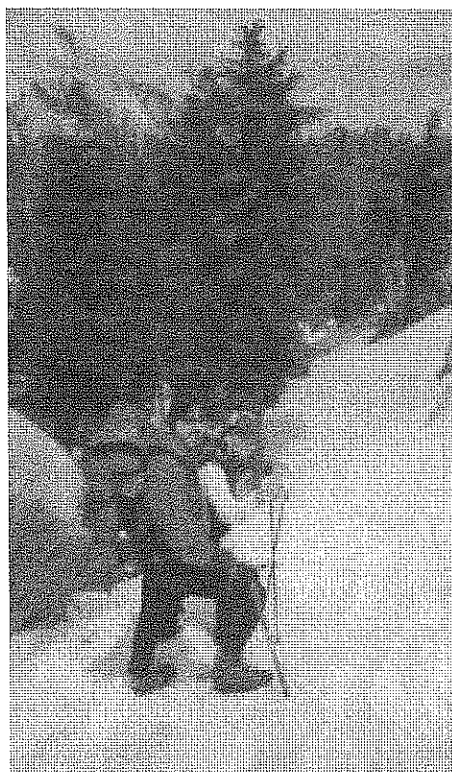
up. Since we were on a peak far above the treeline, we were blasted. The gusts probably topped 50 miles an hour as our tents shook and flapped throughout the night. As comfortable as I was in my tent and sleeping bag, I slept fitfully, worried about John and how secure our tents would be in this gale.

The winds died down before dawn and we awoke to a clear crisp morning. The bright sun warmed our tent but the air kept its chill. I stepped out to an incredible view before me. About a half-mile away lay the most challenging portion of the climb, a stretch called 98 Switchbacks. We could make out the zigzag trail as it wound its way up a sheer face of mountain. The ranger we had spoken to

mentioned that the Switchbacks were rocky and covered with ice and advised us to not even attempt them. Instead, we should go straight up the mountain by taking a snowfield next to the Switchbacks. This meant a technical climb as crampons and ice axes would be used. Any misstep meant a long slide down to the frozen lake below. We could see the tiny specks of a team of hikers already on it and watched as they made their way up at a snail's pace.

John had slept off and on for over 12 hours and felt a little stronger but his head still pounded and he had no appetite. He had barely eaten anything in 18 hours and it became clear he was in no condition to continue. We would not make it to the top.

Breaking camp in silence, we packed up and soon were headed down. An amazing thing about



**ABOVE:** "We were told that Sherpas would be carrying our gear!"

altitude sickness is how quickly you can recover. We had been descending maybe 30 minutes and John realized he was hungry. We stopped, ate a snack and kept going down. After another 30 minutes, John felt noticeably better. By the time we reached Outpost Camp — the point where John first felt ill — he had almost fully recovered. The rest of the hike down we talked about coming back and trying again. Next time, we would be better prepared: more conditioning hikes at altitude, spending an extra day at 8,000 ft. to acclimate, and carrying less food.

I should note that of the dozen or so people we met on the mountain, only two made it to the top. The others turned back due to sickness, exhaustion or just ran out of time. While that 60-year old woman made the climb during the Summer, our climb was in much more difficult conditions. With this understanding of the mountain and of ourselves, Todd, John and I have vowed to return to Mt. Whitney in the New Millennium. We'll make plans over our next bottle of wine.

### Bringing in the New Millennium

In my past career, I did what my friends and I referred to as "computer whoring." As an independent consultant and programmer, I went wherever the work and money were. I've left those days behind me in favor of more stability and safer computing. However, I haven't completely given up my freelance gigs. My one remaining client is a company that produces fundraising events. Okay, they're really just an excuse to have a really big party. Instead of taking the money for my computer skills, I got to party in places like the Bahamas, Banff Canada, Alyeska Alaska (see cover picture with a few of my friends from Hawaiian Tropic), and Hawaii. My personal favorites have always been the winter events where I can ski, snowmobile, and take full advantage of the hot tubs.

This coming winter should be no exception and I expect the first event of the New Millennium to be really special. However, I wasn't sure what to think when I first heard of what they were organizing. To be sure there will be skiing, and in a great place—Vail. It's just the host of the event and a star-crossed history that makes me pause. The event? VAIL 2000, benefiting several charities supported by the Kennedy family. Having survived one major ski injury, I don't know if I want to be skiing with *any* member of the Kennedy family. Will I be expected to take part in football Kennedy-style? Maybe I should challenge one to a race. As of this writing, the event is still tentative as the Kennedys recover from their latest careless mistake. Stay tuned and I'll describe what happens in the next issue of the *Immortal Chronicles*. That, or you might be seeing my obituary in its place. ♦

## Letters

Immortal Chronicles  
c/o WCG Comics  
3765 Motor Avenue, Ste 471 (PMB)  
Los Angeles, CA 90034  
or e-mail [immortals@wgcgcomics.com](mailto:immortals@wgcgcomics.com)



### A New "Pen" Pal!

Dear Editors:

Keep up the good work!! Me and the boys really love the *Immortal Chronicles*. Especially that Westal guy. Inmate #323436 asks can you guys print a full body shot of Bob Westal?

Did you know that an issue of *Immortal Chronicles* and a pack of smokes buys you private lavatory privileges for a whole week!!

If you have any female readers can they send me photos. I get out in two to three years with good behavior!

Your "Pen" Pal,  
Inmate #476512

Corcoran State Correctional Facility

*Unfortunately, I don't believe we have any female readers. But at right is the full-body shot of Mr. Westal you requested. By the way, his telephone number is 323-555-4522. Give him a call when you get out. And say hi to Inmate #323436 for us!*

### Rubbing it in our faces

Dear Sirs:

In describing my trip to Las Vegas and the Miss Hawaiian Tropic International Pageant in issue 1, doubts were raised about my not providing full disclosure on all the activities that weekend. Those critics were right, but the reason is that portions of my account somehow did not get published. For example, I went into detail about the "Milk and Cookie Social" which provided me private interviews with a number of the contestants. Over skim milk and low-calorie cookies, they discussed such vital issues as how they planned to increase world peace and which person they most admired. We concluded by joining hands and singing a rousing rendition of Kumbaya. This, and other stories, somehow got omitted from the published version. Unfortunately, the original submission was lost in a freak mishap

so it is impossible to pinpoint exactly where the story got truncated. Not to raise suspicions, but I submit to you that some unknown persons have conspired to prevent the full story from being revealed. These "missing paragraphs" are probably lost to the world and the reader will have to fill in the blanks using his or her own imagination.

While on the subject of late-night parties and close encounters with the HT girls, I'll share a few highlights about my return to Las Vegas in April for this year's pageant. Armed with as much camera equipment as we could carry, Chris and I succeeded in blending in with the mob of photographers throughout the event, particularly the poolside photo shoot. While waiting for the various lights and cameras to

be set up, the contestants posed for shots from still photographers. The weather was unseasonably cool that weekend so many of the contestants wore something over their swimsuits when not posing. Mindful that they were cold, Chris and I gallantly held their clothes as they posed, then politely wrapped them up afterward. Chris and I switched off as photographer all afternoon.

Spotted at many of the parties were Marcus Allen, Franco Harris, Jerry Buss and Dennis Rodman. While the first three behaved like gentlemen, nothing about Rodman or

his accompanying "posse" was civil. He disrupted the entire mood and pacing of the final event by going up on stage and insulting emcee Ryan Seacrest. How people can admire him is beyond me.

In addition to Chris, another friend came as sort of a hired gun. This man has the most incredible opening lines and is quite the smooth talker, qualities which I figured could be useful over the weekend. This paid off as he got a group of us into the nightclub at Mandalay Bay by schmoozing the bouncer. Not only did we get in free, but several of the underage contestants got in without ID. However, he was also



like an attention-deficit disorder kid in a toy store. He quickly disappeared at the parties as he would make a bee-line to start a conversation with the first contestant he saw, see another contestant, and dash off the chat her up. We got tired of keeping tabs on Gregg and throughout the weekend Chris and I kept asking each other, "Where's Gregg?"

The theme of this event was "Girls of the New Millennium" and the crowning event for us was attending the rehearsal. Thanks to my well-placed friend at Hawaiian Tropic, Chris, Gregg and I were among the six men in the theater to watch the 96 contestants rehearse for that evening's show. This included a musical number where they would cross the stage in futuristic Millennium wear and strike a sexy pose. Even though they were wearing sweats and casual clothes at the rehearsal, we voted on our favorite poses and contestants with hearty applause and cheering. Most of them sat in the orchestra pit with us between numbers to rest, nurse their hangovers and catch a few winks. When a few of them complained about how little time there was for the many costume changes during the event--

from evening gown to Millennium outfit to swimwear--Chris and I offered to stay backstage and help them change but alas, we were denied. However, as they could not leave the theater during rehearsal, we cleverly started a coffee and pastry delivery service that made us extremely popular.

I shouldn't bore your readers with any more stories, so that's all for now. With any luck, it appears Hawaiian Tropic will return to Vegas next April for another pageant. If Chris and I have any say in the matter, so will we!

Homer "Viva Las Vegas" Tom

Dear Sirs:

It has come to our attention that your publication, the *Immortal Chronicles*, has been making unauthorized use of characters from the television production *Dawson's Creek*, namely Dawson, Joey, Jen, and that other guy, which characters are protected under the copyright laws of the United States, Canada, and the European Intellectual Property Treaty signatories.

As attorneys for Megacorp, parent company of Mammon Entertainment, of which TeenGush

Productions is a wholly-owned subsidiary, we are committed to defending the licensing and publication of the *Dawson's Creek* characters to the utmost. Therefore, please note that any further attempt to parody and/or fraudulently misrepresent these characters, or to interfere with the contractually guaranteed dreaminess of Dawson, Joey, Jen, and that other guy will result in civil litigation so extensive and torturous that you will plotz thereof.

Very truly yours,  
C. Biff Ratbastard, Esq.  
Schmuck &  
Ratbastard  
Attorneys at Law

Colder than...

Dear Editors:

Just saw the illustrations by Raymond Marcus in the last issue of *Immortal Chronicles*. Now that's REALLY scary !!

Blair J. Witch  
Burkittsville, Maryland

**TIME FLIES** (from p. 2)

tributions to arrive.

We're still waiting.

Notwithstanding the truancy of some members, all agree to the man that the *Immortal Chronicles* must continue. So we've gone ahead and gone to press with what we had.

Yes, some of the pieces are out of date, but think of this issue as a time capsule of a more innocent age (pre-21st century), when the Immortals were more idealistic — and paranoid. On a more serious note, the events of "9/11" gives the apocalyptic tone of this Millennium-themed issue some unintended resonance.

Anyway, enjoy — consider this our holiday gift to the Immortals. And let's agree not to wait for another millennium to arrive before we do another issue, okay?

Best wishes for a happy holiday and new year.

— The Editors  
December 2001

**HAVE YOU SEEN ME?**

These Immortals, delinquent in submitting articles to the *Immortal Chronicles*, are presently in hiding.

If spotted, please contact the editors immediately.

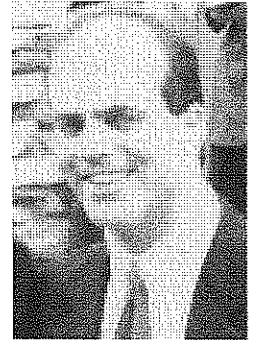


Raymond "Taterman" Marcus and Terry "Bubalicious, the Shoeless Bear" Delegeane in last known photo of both.

Scott "Dogboy" Brick (other headshots available on request).

# BANG OF WHIMPER?

by Bob Westal



*"Only our concept of time makes it possible for us to speak of the Day of Judgement by that name; in reality it is a summary court in perpetual session."*

— Franz Kafka

Think back to the mid-1980s, when perfectly rational people were, for the first time in years, worried about the end of the world. This was when the Reagan Administration was doing a lot of "talking tough" and "standing tall" against the Soviets (and a lot of "kicking 'em while they're down" against the Third World). *The Day After* was on television, *Testament* was in the movie theaters, and loonies were in the Reagan Administration, talking about surviving nuclear war by covering ourselves with a few inches of dirt.

For those of us who weren't high on cocaine and junk bonds, the mid-80s was a scary time.

From my point of view, the prospect of nuclear war seemed, for lack of a better word, terribly unfair. This planet (and this boy) had, it seemed to me, barely achieved its potential; barely started to do much of anything. How horrible if it was all to end, for everybody and right now.... *You can't kill me, I haven't seen Tootsie yet!*<sup>1</sup>

And, there was I was, across from the UCLA's notorious Beta House and some anonymous Westwood apartments, waiting for a ride from my father. My car had broken down again. Actually it wasn't really my car at all. My father performed all maintenance on it and watched it with the obsessional vigilance of an especially deranged OCD sufferer. Nevertheless, whenever anything went wrong with it, it was always because of something I'd done.

It was near midnight and I was starting to wonder where my dad was, he always ran late but I'd been waiting for well over an hour.

Suddenly there was a loud noise coming from somewhere, maybe about a quarter of a mile away. Not quite a siren and not quite the sound of a train, it reverberated about the empty neighborhood. (It was Thursday night, so the notorious Beta-boys were undisturbed, probably starting their weekend early with a night out on the town date-raping sheep.)

But the siren-train sound continued its wail. Of course, it had to be some siren or train nearby. It really didn't sound anything like an air-raid siren, did it? Those were much higher pitched, and since this was not the last Friday of the month at 10 a.m., where were all the people screaming in terror? Not a one.

Well, actually, there was one guy, a graduate student type who wasn't screaming but appeared before me wearing only pajama bottoms. He asked

if I knew what the noise was about. I told him calmly that I had no idea but it was probably nothing at all, maybe a train somewhere nearby.

He nodded and turned back to the warmth of his genuine-graduate-student bed. In the not-really-a-graduate-student cold I began to worry. "Worry" is actually much too mild a term. "Obsess" or "go into a state of panic" more or less hits the nail on the rhetorical head.

*Where was the sound coming from?* I asked myself.

*How do I know it's not an air-raid siren?*

*Is this the end of Little Rico?*<sup>2</sup>

I had to find the source of the noise. In that crazed moment, it suddenly became possible to me that, somewhere, hidden among the parking lots of the Southwestern end of the UCLA campus, was hidden a railroad track. Either that or nuclear death was about to rain over Los Angeles. Where was that #S@# track!!!!

But, no track was to be found. Was this really it? Would I now know what it feels like to be literally melted to death, spending my last moments without even my family's beloved collie, George, to comfort me. Then, it stopped. No one else followed the pajama-clad grad student. From frat row, there was silence, not even the sound a lone "Fuckin' A" could be heard.

Well, it turned out that my father had got lost in the hills of Westwood and didn't find me until he got the directions from some of the Greek brothers who were up late working on a homecoming float. And I eventually discovered that the train/siren noise was an occasional prank played by someone with a truly mind-blowing stereo system.

But, within a few months, I read Jonathan Schell's *The Fate of the Earth* and went to work for the (all-but-moribund) Alliance for Survival. The world didn't end. You can all thank me now.

*"We will have time to murder and create."*

— T.S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"

Just for the record, let me say right here and now that if anything the least bit catastrophic occurs on January 1, 2000, I will tempora fry my Y2K-compliant hard drive.

1 This line, stolen wholesale from an episode of "Soap" (the line was "You can't kill me, I haven't seen *Kramer vs. Kramer!*", actually goes back at least as far as the *Three Stooges*. "You can't kill me," said Curly (or Larry, or Shep, or Curly Joe DeRita), "I haven't seen *The Jolson Story*." Of course, that means the joke was old even then. "You can't kill me, I haven't seen the early experiments of the Lumiere brothers!"....

2 I actually hadn't seen *Little Caesar* yet, but you get the idea....



The fact of the matter is that dates are completely without real importance, though we love to attribute false meanings to them. Anniversaries, birthdays, and the like may have emotional meaning and help us mark the passage of time, but we could just as easily celebrate them every 250 or 432 days instead of every 365.

Even less important is the number we assign to a particular year. "1984 isn't that far away, folks," left-wing public radio personalities used to warn during fundraising drives, implying that, if listeners failed to supply enough cash, Big Brother would materialize from nowhere in the year 1984, and we'd suddenly be in the middle of an insane state devoted to squelching the soul of man and resorting to stupid and random wars as a form of endless distraction. Of course, public radio stations have never received any cash from 90 percent of their listeners, Ronald Reagan was elected and everything described above happened, but that was in 1980.

Now we wait for the 20th century to finally end. Even the lunatic fringe is starting to sense that the best they can hope for is a couple of ATM shutdowns and maybe a plane crash in Manchuria. The sense of impending boredom is palpable. No great adventures for us, just more of the same.

So, where are we?

No utopias in sight, unless you count our "unprecedented prosperity [for rich people]"; no dystopias either (except for a few lucky countries in the third world and Eastern Europe).

At the risk of accidentally quoting U2, aside from hangovers, disappointment and the Rose Bowl, nothing happens on New Year's Day. I

think the year 2000 will be strangely quiet. Furthermore, I suspect that the next few years will be among the *least* significant of the coming century.

*"The past is but the beginning of the beginning, and all that is but the twilight of the dawn."*

— H.G. Wells

I have this slightly insane, entirely groundless, yet firm belief that preparing for the worst automatically prevents it from coming true, even when the preparations are only emotional or intellectual. My instant reaction the first time I heard the more or less rational fears of mass panic and civil disaster caused by massive Y2K foul-ups was, "Well, it could have happened but now that people are worrying about it and fussing, it certainly won't." And I didn't just mean that because people were now working to fix the problems they would be prevented. It more of a superstitious belief that terrible things only happen when you're not looking for them...When you're not worried, *that's* when to worry!

This is pure magic thinking, but it sure seems to be the case in my life. When my elementary school best friend killed himself, I was certain he hadn't shown up at school the first few days because he had the flu. Deaths in the family always come at unexpected times. Even emergencies at work always seem to blindside me. One second, everything's placid, the next moment all is total chaos.

Which is why it worries me that we're not particularly expecting a worldwide thermonuclear war to break out just right now. Even though it is very hard to imagine how an all-out

doomsday scenario would occur in our current fragmented geopolitical set-up,<sup>3</sup> it could still happen. Really, it could.

On the other hand, I'm probably worrying too much about not worrying. Maybe we can prove ourselves more intelligent than we have any right to hope for and avoid mass suicide indefinitely, maybe survive long enough to move to another solar system before Sol goes nova, and instead live up to the day, a few billion years from now, when the cosmological types tell us the universe will finally run out of cosmic gas.

By that time, maybe man will be so advanced that if one universe ends, we can simply create another. (I'm imagining a bunch of guys who look like the Watcher, complete with shiny heads drawn by Jack Kirby.) Or maybe by that time we'll all have actually attained nirvana and actual nothingness will be welcomed as a logical outgrowth of enlightenment.

And when everything finally does end, when Yahweh or Vishnu or Zeus or Madeline Murray O'Hare comes to greet us, maybe then we'll finally know what's really up with things, but I doubt it.

Whenever the end comes, and however we try to greet that ending, the only thing I am sure of is that it will not happen artistically. The last surviving human's last words will not be the 23rd psalm but, "Oh, hey, look a giant fireba...."

Happy New Year. ♦

3 There are some encouraging press-propagated worries about germ warfare waged by "rogue states," but the worst of these scenarios involves a few hundred thousand people dying...a long way from the sort of megadeaths involved in full-scale nuclear war.

# IMMORTAL PROFILES

## FUN FACTS AND TRIVIA ABOUT YOUR FAVORITE IMMORTALS! THIS ISSUE--**BOB WESTAL!**

**BOB'S BEARD IS NATURE'S MOST DEPENDABLE SOURCE OF FIBER!**

**ON OCTOBER 27, 1995, AT CARROW'S RESTAURANT, BOB ACTUALLY ORDERED LUNCH FIRST! RIOT POLICE WERE IMMEDIATELY SUMMONED TO THE AREA.**

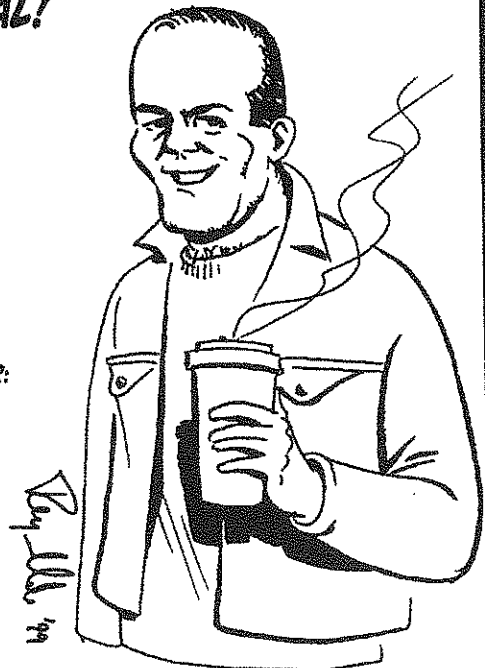
**LITTLE-KNOWN FACT: THE OFFICIAL NAME OF LAS VEGAS' TROPICANA AVENUE IS ACTUALLY THE "BOB WESTAL THRUWAY."**

**BOB IS THE AUTHOR OF FOURTEEN BOOKS ON FILM CRITICISM, INCLUDING HIS LATEST: "AUTEUR, SCHMAUTEUR: MY LIFE AVEC DU CINEMA."**

**RECENTLY, GENETICISTS UNDER BOB'S DIRECTION HAVE PRODUCED A HYBRID COFFEE BEAN, WITH FIVE TIMES THE CAFFEINE OF A NORMAL BEAN. IT WAS GIVEN THE SCIENTIFIC NAME: "C. WESTALIANA SPARKII."**

**ACCORDING TO LEGEND, THREE EXPEDITIONS HAVE BEEN LOST ATTEMPTING TO TRAVERSE BOB'S LIVING ROOM.**

**BOB'S LAST NAME IS DERIVED FROM THE GERMAN WORD "WEISTALCH," WHICH MEANS "HARD EIGHT."**



# Where Immortals Gather...

Heard and Seen about Your Favorite Immortals, as surreptitiously recorded and observed  
by Lola Monique Sanchez

Well, what can I say, here we are at the start of a new century (I don't care *what* the experts say about when the new century actually starts, yours truly is still going to party like it's 1999 — whatever *that* means), and what are the Immortals up to? *Damn little!* You all should be ashamed of yourselves.

Perhaps it's not my place to (openly) editorialize, but I must say the Immortals are all as moribund as a snail swimming in the Dead Sea. Domestic bliss is *murder* on a gossip columnist!

I mean look at all you parents... you're all busy raising the *same* children. *Boring!* Get some new ones, for God's sake! It's not like I insist that you actually *bear* them...adoption is a perfectly decent option (especially if you do it through a Yugoslav baby broker using laundered Columbian drug money)....

It makes a girl want to make something up... But, I am nevertheless committed to my journalistic integrity, so to the truth I must stick...but, as you read this issue's column, just don't forget for one second the following truth: *You all make me sick to my stomach!*

**Marry in Leisure, Repent in Haste.** Speaking of a slow news century, there was the impending, er, *long-awaited*, announcement of July nuptials for Randy "Scribbler" Reynaldo and Sadina "Woman of Ten-Thousand Pseudonyms" Rothspan. That's not news, much less gossip.

During the geologic progress of this relationship, giant nation-states have risen and fallen; tow-headed toddlers have grown into strapping young women and men; and dogs of all breeds have gone from puppy-hood to senility. When this twosome were in the first bloom of romance, the *Simpson's* was a daring television experiment, there was the exciting new music called "grunge" and Vanilla Ice was the next big thing, and Ray "Taterman" Marcus was just *one* year behind on his thesis while Bob "Old Man Ogen" Westal was just contemplating delaying work on his screenplay. This engagement has been of such vintage that rumors have been circulating that ol' R.J. was trying to save money on the wedding ring by waiting for the carbon deposits buried deep under his house to crystallize and become diamonds!

And it gets worse. Randy, Sadina, I got bad

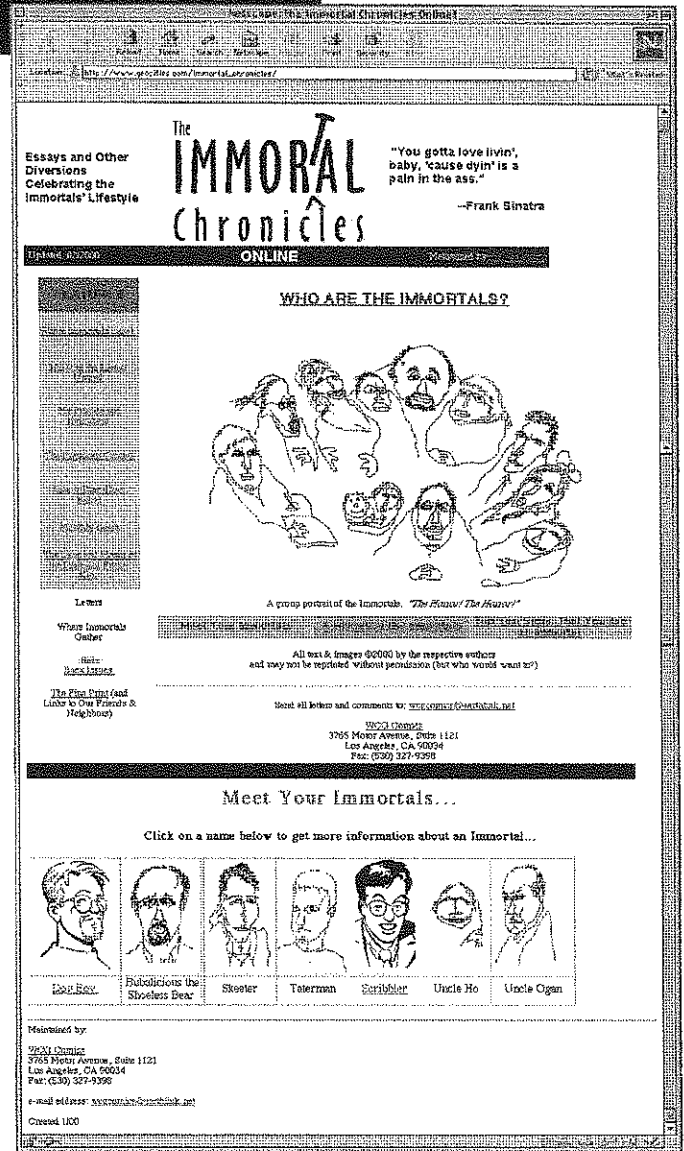
news for you, *bubbies* — under both Hebraic and English Common Law regarding prolonged cohabitation, you are *already married*...This gossip-monger has to describe herself as severely unimpressed. I certainly hope the guests at your wedding are not expected to bring gifts.

**Yes, We Have No Plot or Dialogue.** Another Immortal non-event was the reading of Bob ("Kubrick was a *Fast Worker!*") Westal's newly semi-completed screenplay, *Midnight at the Oasis*. While little Monique was there only briefly (I'm a gossip columnist, dammit, not a drama critic!), I could see that the Bobster's latest (only?) effort is going to go down as... actually I'm not sure, but I'm fairly certain it's going down.

Nevertheless, the event was attended by nearly the entire Immortal glitterati, who all did their level best to inject some life (or *something*) into the less-than-scintillating proceedings. Special plaudits must go to Terry Delegeane and Raymond Marcus. While we enjoyed Terry's *accent très ridicule*, Raymond, in particular, delighted with his "one-dialect-fits-all" approach — showing great range, the African-Americans sounded like Jed Clampett — and the hipsters also sounded like Jed Clampett. If Ray had read the part of a millionaire hillbilly, he probably would have ended sounding like a hip Afro-American....

I should also add something nice here about the fine work and just plain acting stamina of Mr. Scott Brick, but I can only reflect on the words of my mother, the sainted Señora Sanchez (writer

**BELOW:** The *Immortal Chronicles* are now online at [http://www.geocities.com/immortal\\_chronicles/](http://www.geocities.com/immortal_chronicles/). Below is a screen shot of the site.



of *El Nacional Inquirista's* famed *Celebridades es Muy Malo* column) taught me: "If you can only think of nice things to say, you're obviously not trying hard enough!"

**The Jew-Ess Monster.** Speaking of Ray "My Dad won a Nobel Prize and Yours Hasn't Even Won an Emmy" Marcus, I have to admit to being just a bit grateful for his presence this month. For when a reporter is forced to cover this godawfully *settled* group of people and their eternally alabaster-pure existences, Ray at least bothers to add a frisson of, if not *scandal*, then some sort of attempt at a personal life.

In particular, Ray has recently rediscovered his Jewish roots (we always thought he was some sort of pantheistic-sex-positive-quasi-Episcopalian or something). Not one to let the pulchritudinous possibilities of his Semitic patrimony go to waste, the Taterman has offered his amorous wares to unsuspecting non-*shikas* on a Jewish dating website.

*Or so he says...* for it seems that *three* (or is it four or is it fifteen?) of the lucky ladies hail from Taft High School, the San Fernando Valley alma matter of Immortal Chief Executive in Charge of Sports Trivia David "Skeeter" Gordy. Is something more sinister transpiring? Could it be related to the time Ray got hold of Dave's high school yearbook, holding it closely, muttering softly to the book, and refusing to relinquish it until he was given a bottle of sherry, a blanket, and a VHS copy of *Dead Poet's Society*? Could this be some devil's bargain the Gordster made in order to retrieve his precious 1980 yearbook. *Stay tuned to this column for more mildly sordid details!*

**Audios Amigo.** *Scott Brick*, ever the rebel, has been swimming against the tide of career lethargy just *slightly* with his new venture as book-reader *par excellence*. No, we don't just mean that he has given up everything to engage in his favorite activity, sitting at home on Saturday night reading his prized first editions of the works of Orson Scott Card, slowly repeating to himself "I know this guy... I really personally know this guy... I am so cool because I actually know this guy..." No, it seems that Dog Boy has actually found a way to be *paid* for reading the works of Orson Scott Card (and others), recording so-called "audiobooks," for the literacy-challenged. Our sources tell us that Scott's been getting rave reviews for his performance — except from audio engineers, who have to spend hour after tedious hour editing out Scott's sudden shrieks of unnameable delight.

**Into Thin Hair.** *Homer Tom*, if not quite the *roue* I would like him to be is, however, continuing his peripatetic, globetrotting ways. Lately, Mr. Tom has eschewed the free-ski junkets and visits with the bikini bunnies of Hawaiian Tropic for something just a bit more serious, mountain climbing...K-2 style. Accompanied only by two (less than perfectly equipped) office pals, Homer led the group to — if not total victory and domination of the giant land mass — then something less than *Blair Witch Project*-style intra-group discord, despair, and death. No, Homer led his group to a thoroughgoing victory over illness, insufficient food, and oxygen-deprived brains. Our hat's off to Homey. We only have question: Why does he want to do it again?

(Answer: *Because it's there!*)

Well, that's all I've got for this millennium. May I join the gossip columnists of the world (not forgetting our sisters and brothers among the paparazzi and bottom feeders of the tabloid press), in wishing you and yours a truly spicy, sensation-filled millennium. Now go out there and scandalize me!

#### Monique Predicts!

What will the coming millennium bring for the assembled multitudes of Immortals....What, you think I'm psychic or something? Actually, I am!

So, hold on to your respective hats because, while Y2K (sorry Pat Robertson) may not quite be the ends of days, a hard rain will indeed fall on the Immortals in the coming years....

*Monique Predicts: Randy and Sadina* will finally have their first child, an adorable baby girl they will name, in a touching act of homage, *Monique*. However, the child, who will be born just after my death in 2035, will shock the medical community by taking 3 years to gestate and 15 months to conceive.

*Monique predicts...*Turning an oft-repeated cliché into tangible reality, *Scott Brick* will be hired to by NewStar Media to record the audio version of the *Los Angeles Phone Book*. However, Scott will be disappointed when the coveted follow-up, the *Des Moines Yellow Pages*, is read by Sir Michael York.

### BE IMMORTALIZED — SEND A LETTER TO THE EDITOR!

If you have comments you wish to share and have a burning desire to have your words immortalized here, the *Immortal Chronicles* welcomes your contribution. As you've no doubt noticed, we'll print most anything, especially if it's about our favorite subject — us.

Send your letter via e-mail to:

*immortals@wgc.com* or  
*bobwestal@mail.com*

or via snail mail to:

The Immortal Chronicles  
c/o WCG Comics (PMB)  
3765 Motor Avenue, Suite 471  
Los Angeles, CA 90034

*Monique predicts...* *Homer Tom* will scale Mount Kilimanjaro accompanied only by his faithful Sherpa, his bound copy of the *Portable Hemingway* and the winners of the Hawaiian Tropic Girls. Homer and his tanned companions are never seen or heard from again. One hundred years later, a mysterious, primitive tribe will be discovered near the peak of Kilimanjaro...though they will subsist on a simple diet of greens and nuts, will have no word for "war" or "hate," they will also be uniformly attractive and skilled in the application of MIS systems to large businesses.

*Monique predicts...* John Thomas will, shockingly, leave his position at the L.A.P.D. and return to his former post as editor of U.C.L.A.'s *Nommo* magazine. Only this time, John will drop one "m" from the name, drastically changing the focus from issues facing African-American students to the career of former Dodger pitcher, Hideo Nomo. Afterwards, he will take on the editorship of the newsweekly-turned-cooking-periodical *Thyme* and the new magazine devoted to very large bottles, *Jugs*.

*Monique Predicts...* *David, Lois, and Matthew Gordy* will all move to Cooperstown, New York. After a withering op-ed piece assailing city officials' poor knowledge of baseball trivia, Dave will be elected Mayor. However, David will quickly go mad with power, and an Amnesty International report on his crackdown on "Soccer Moms" will lead to his ultimate defeat and indictment by the World Court in the Hague.

*Monique Predicts...* *Terry Delegeane*, driven to near-madness by grief at the closing of the Carlsbad Anderson's Pea Soup Restaurant, will open "Delegeane's Pea Soup" as a concession in nearby Legoland. However, the business will come to a bad end after it is revealed that Delegeane's Pea Soup's secret recipes calls only for salt, green food coloring, and Elmer's Glue.

*Monique Predicts...* *Bob Westal* will stun observers by leaving his tiny Hollywood hovel and moving into his first ever one-bedroom apartment. Reacting, Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan will dramatically heighten interest rates, citing a "dangerously overheating economy."

*Monique Predicts...* *Raymond Marcus*, tiring of simply dating Jewish women, decides to *become* a Jewish woman. After years of heavy psychological counseling, hormone therapy, and heavy doses of Chinese food, Ray will re-emerge as *Ramona*, the embodiment of his inner *yenta*. Soon, the sherry-sipping ex-*alter-cocker* will be dishing out her own special brand of *tsuris*, causing the powers that be to collectively *plotz*.

— *Monique Sanchez y Shapiro*

# C.>Y2K + C: A CENTURY'S LOOK BACK

C.> DAVID GORDY 554399CA9876.ACC  
C.> RUM



Here in the year 2100 Proto-Digital Time, at the dawn of the 22nd Century, many of us, citizoids of eUSA, look back nostalgically at *fin de siecle* America at the beginning of the New Millennium, or Y2K as it was once called. In fact, a retro craze sweeps the e-nation, fellow com.rades trading in their sheaths for Old Navy tech vests, Gap khakis and the like, if they can beg, borrow or upload enough AmeriCredits to purchase the originals. Most just buy knockoffs from AmazonColaDowCarbideNike.com. And, utter decadent foppishness, yes, but some boho types insist on writing their byteverse on ancient iMacs. They adamantly claim that the process of touching finger to key reconnects you with the physical, resulting in truer, more human creativity. Myself, I can't imagine how anyone got any work done under such primitive conditions. Let the Luddites have their mere gigabyte memories, we'll keep our ThinkSlates, thank you very much. And don't let the portal hit you on your way out.

One hundred years ago, we lived in an unenlightened age. It's hard to believe that the mere turning of a calendar page, the act of 99 becoming 00, could decimate an entire technology, or at least would cause such an apprehension. Historians will long recount the foolishness of worrying about the Y2K "bug." All fears proved unfounded. Absolutely nothing happened; no region-wide power outages, no mass deletion of files, no planes falling out of the sky like lawn darts, no roving bands of decomposing undead. Okay, granted there was the accidental nuclear bombing of Iowa, Kansas and Nebraska. Oh yes, and the even more embarrassing re-bombing the next year, when the computers couldn't agree among themselves when the new millennium was supposed to begin. But as my mother used to say: When life gives you lemon substitute, you make lemon protein tablets. We did eventually get back to 50 states, by trading Minnesota to Canada for Manitoba, Alberta and New Brunswick, along with a province to be named later. And the Great Plains Canyon is now one of the country's most popular tourist attractions.

**Finance** - With the development of the Ethernet in the 2030s, which allowed access to software programs and the World Wide Web to anyone possessing a flat surface, the bottom dropped out of the computer industry. Bill Gates, by then the owner of 27 of the 50 states, predicted the downturn and diversified Microsoft, and in alliance with the second richest man in the world, George W. Bush, ushered in the newest growth industry: open space providers. With world population approaching 352 billion, the market was brisk, and the Gates/Bush venture Elbowroomsoft was soon providing areas of space as large as 15' x 12' to hordes of tightly packed customers.

As we all know, George W. Bush made his money the old-fashioned way: by running for president. In March of the year 2000, Bush, having already raised \$450 million, suddenly came to the realization that it wouldn't be cost-effective to spend it all on campaign commercials, political consultants, and Iowa barbecues. Instead he invested it all in mutual funds. Of course, he never won the presidency, but every four years, he cried all the way to the asset storage bank.

**Politics** - After the recent co-presidency of the Olson Twins, the office of President was abolished by the Virtual Congress, and replaced with a large well-lit Monolith. Presidents had grown somewhat irrelevant, anyway, since the invention of Quik-Law, the automated legislating system, allowing voters to enact laws with the touch of a button, as many times a day as they want. Unfortunately, on occasion this leads to statutes such as the Execute Everyone Who Looks At Me Funny Act and the Special Privileges For Guys Named Ernie Initiative, but that's the price of [www.democracy.com](http://www.democracy.com).

American politics had changed irrevocably in the late 'Twenty-Zeroes, when Republicans and Democrats, at a historic meeting in Hershey in the former state of Pennsylvania (now East McNownia — see Sports) came to the realization that for the last 20 years there had been no appreciable differences between them. Despite defections to such fringe parties as the Reform Party, the Greens, the Theocrats, and the Creeping Socialists, the two major parties merged to form the Republicrats, who proceeded to enjoy 40 years of uninterrupted rule, beginning with the second presidency of Wilhelmina Jefferson Clinton. After the former Bill Clinton was chemically castrated in 2012, he followed the advice of his legal defense team, which had uncovered a loophole in the 22nd Amendment allowing a third and fourth term to post-operative trans-sexuals. However, he resigned in his sixth year, after

## COMING SOON:

A new call for  
contributions for the  
next Immortal  
Chronicles, due out  
before the next  
millennium!



an illicit affair with a male intern resulted in the Chippengate scandal. He was succeeded in office by vice-president and ex-wife Hillary Rodham Clinton Connery Gingrich.

**Music** - The eminent 20th Century philosopher Neil Young once put forth the hypothesis: "Hey, hey, my, my, rock and roll will never die." He was wrong. Rock and roll died on January 29, 2047, when 90-year-old Michael Bolton topped the Billboard.zine charts with his cover version of "Jumpin' Jack Flash." One hundred-ten-year-old Keith Richards, then in the midst of the Rolling Stones' "Methuselahpalooza" tour, threw his guitar into the crowd, walked off stage, and devoted the next 50 years of his life to the study of the Talmud. Rock had, even then, barely withstood the increased popularity of techno-swing, oompa-ska, and operatic rap. Of course, the kids today love their hyperpolka, especially the Jetsons' new platinum/beryllium alloy hit "musicfile.html." Call me old-fashioned, but I prefer the classics: speed-hymns and Goth samba. Now that was real music.

**TV/Movies** - The movie business reached its heyday in the early part of the century, with the release of such \$4 billion blockbusters as *Blair Witch XIV: Lost on the 405*, *In My Spare Time*, *I Still Try To Find Out What You Did Five Summers Ago*, and the *Star Wars* pre-post-pre-sequel trilogy: *Star Wars 0.41: Yoda Goes To His Senior Prom*; *Star Wars 0.42: The Trade Federation Appropriations Subcommittee Strikes Forward*; and *Star Wars 0.43: Mace Windu, Pet Detective*. Then, just as quickly, audiences began to desert the cinema, tired of the increasing use of CGI effects as replacements for background shots, stunts, actors, screenwriters, producers, and those *Los Angeles Times* commercials just before the trailers. Also, with the release of *Too Close for Comfort: The Movie* in 2027, every single television show had been brought to the big screen, thereby exhausting the studios' most dependable source of material.

Television, too, had long passed the crest of its popularity. The networks, confronted with the rise of thousands of narrowcast cable stations, such as *McBealTV* and the *Orchid Growers Channel*, and the fact that the finite and non-renewable supply of sitcom plots had run out some decades before, merged to form Cerebrovision, the first individually interactive video experience. Cost savings and profitability immediately skyrocketed, as viewers' ability to selectively manipulate the plots of their favorite shows eliminated the need for such superfluous occupations as writers, crew and *TV Guide* summarizers. However, one constant remains, as a comfort to those who feel threatened by rapid progress. Every Monday night, homes across the land access television's longest running show, the adventures of those irrepressible California kids Brandon, Donna, Kel, and Dylan in *Leisure World 90740*.

## Baby Around Town

by Matthew Gordy



*Immortal Chronicles* columnist Matthew Gordy once again provides his knowing insights and trenchant commentary on the foibles and follies of today's world.

*Millennium, schmillennium I say. What's the big deal? They come every two years anyway, right? At least that's been my experience.*

*Solid food has my vote for the year 2000. You just can't improve on the classics . . .*

*Four teeth down, twenty to go. Nobody said it would be easy . . .*

*RuPaul. Does she look a little mannish to you . . .*

*Let me tell you, you can't fit an entire shampoo bottle in your mouth. I'm living proof of that . . .*

*Y2K doesn't "bug" me. My Simulac will be there on January 1st, so I'm covered . . .*

*I miss Joey Bishop . . .*

*What's the point of having cabinets, if you can't look to see what's in each and every one of them . . .*

*Baby sees glasses. Baby takes glasses. Baby bends glasses out of shape. What part of that don't you understand . . .*

*I'd like to live la vida loca, but the chiropractic bills would be murder . . .*

*Sure I like to wave, and wave often. It's the people person in me . . .*

*Turkey and squash, st. Turkey and beets, no . . .*

*Cher was in the movie *Mask*, right? Good casting . . .*

*Paper shredding is a completely legitimate art form . . .*

*Walking is overrated. Crawling gets you where you want to go, and you save money on shoe leather . . .*

*I can talk as well as the next guy. My parents just speak a different dialect, that's all . . .*

*Dennis Rodman is one strange fellow. And you can quote me on that . . .*

*I don't get paid enough to sit still for diaper changes . . .*

*One day, I'll reach the doorknob. They may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one . . .*

*Hey, that's all I got. It's nap time, baby, and the Sandman's on a tight schedule. ♦*

**Sports** - The people must have their Soylent Brown and circuses, and this last century has seen many changes to its sporting life. Football, of course, merged with hockey in the early 2020s to form the National Hockball League. After star quarterback — and later U.S. President — Cade McNown led the Chicago Bears to 10 straight Super Bowl wins, fans of the other teams began tuning the game out as a foregone conclusion. So, in order to infuse the game with an extra added dose of mayhem, players were allowed to carry sticks, and footballs were made out of puck-like hard plastic, studded with razor blades. Also, the game was played on a large sheet of ice, without helmets, to maximize the impact of head against field after a tackle. And in a backhanded attempt to minimize the McNown factor, the league banned all quarterbacks under six feet tall. Unfortunately, the NHBL folded after reaching a 70 percent mortality rate the next year.

Similarly, basketball met its demise in the 2060s when increased use of genetic engineering and advanced cloning technology led to the obsolescence of the 10-foot basket, and an alarming uniformity of talent. For instance, in 2058, the roster of the NBA champion Roswell Visitors included 12'-6" center Shaquille Jordan, 12'-6" power forward Jordan "the Mailman" Shaquille, and 12' 6" point guard Jaquille "Penny" Shordan.

Baseball, however, remains stronger than ever, and has regained its rightful position as America's favorite pastime. Sports fans appreciate the timeless elegance and simplicity of the game. In fact, record crowds turned out last year to see the Boston Red Sox finally break a 180-year World Series championship drought by beating the Las Vegas-Bullhead City-Laughlin Croupiers eighteen games to seventeen at Phen-Fen Fenway Multi-Dimensional ArenaPark when ultra-high-frequency-shortstop/demi-fielder Cal Ripken VI hit a game winning mega-tater in the bottom of the forty-first over-and-under interval.

**Health** - Our common perceptions about health, aging, and longevity, were radically altered in the 2050s, thanks to the pioneering medical work of Dr. Britney Spears, who discovered that aging is not actually the natural fate of the human body, but is instead a mere by-product of oxygen consumption. Dr. Spears' discoveries were based on empirical observation of the inhabitants of Los Angeles, who seemed to age slower and remain youthful looking longer than their counterparts in oxygen-rich climates. Oxygen substitutes, such as de-ionized ammonia, recycled carbon dioxide, and nitrogen syrup were proposed and tested on correctional facility inmates, but with poor to fatal results. Helium briefly proved promising, but ridicule from fellow prisoners with normal voices, and successful escape attempts by lighter-than-air convicts closed off that area of research.

Today, through such programs as National Breath-Holding Awareness Week, and the Turn Blue Tae Bo instructionals, people all over the world are closing off their air passageways and staying young.

**World Events** - World War III, fought in 2011, after U.N. forces failed to broker a peace between Russia and its 87th breakaway republic, Upper Middle Siberiastan, brought great advances in martial technology, as human infantry were completely replaced by automated mobile attack units, saving countless lives and greatly decreasing costs for uniforms, medical supplies, K-rations, Zippo lighters, and postage for letters to girls back home. World War III was, of course, followed a few years later by World War III.1, the first war to be fought entirely by e-mail.

War itself was finally eliminated by the Inter-Spatial Mutual Non-Aggression Pact of 2032, in which all disputes were to be settled by order of finish in the 100-yard dash of the next Olympic Games. The Pact has served the planet well ever since, although we did have to cede Florida to the Republic of Brazilaguay, due to a false start in the semifinal heat.

The total eradication of the earth's ozone layer, caused by the misguided strategy of disposing of chlorofluorocarbons by shooting them into space, has resulted in a restacking of the deck of world meteorology. The resultant global warming produced average summer temperatures of 140 degrees throughout the Equatorial Zone to a range of 1000 miles, rendering it uninhabitable, except to German tourists. However, it produced greater prosperity for resort towns such as Green Bay, Wisconsin, and Fargo, North McNownia (headquarters of Bill Gates' Sunscreensoft, which successfully markets SPF 4000 products to those of us who haven't already chosen full-body Lucite encasement.) Also, the People's Domain of Antarctica has been the world's most populous country for the past thirty years.

Other than the close call with Asteroid Timmy in 2069, the remainder of the century has been a period of peace, contentment and general calm for our planet, unless you count the Alien Invasion of 2087, during which our 20 largest population centers were menaced by thousands of otherworldly spacecraft. However, it turns out they were only stopping to ask for directions.

Perhaps we denizens of a more perfect earth look back at the nasty, short, brutish times of Y2K with envy as well as pity. Twentieth Centurians were forced out of necessity to live by their wits, to grapple with the vagaries of nature, to survive the most primitive technological and sociological conditions. But they were in that sense, more alive. We seem to have lost this connection with our resources and humanity, what with our Personal Instantaneous Transport Modules, our

Guaranteed Transdural Sustenance Provision Systems, our Instatainment Waves and the complete and utter abolishment of the need for gainful employment. Perhaps it is time, at the beginning of this new century, to regain our inborn initiative, to howl at Lunar Colony One in the designated tree parks, to journey toward a more authentic physical and emotional state. In short, to go as far as our vestigial arms and legs will carry us. Perhaps that is the mission of the next century. If so, I hope they at least let us keep our Orgazmotrons.

#### Top Ten Apocalyptic Signs of the New Millennium.

10. War, famine, pestilence and erectile dysfunction.
9. Snowstorm closes the 405.
8. Large lizard stomps on Tokyo (but only grosses \$20 million).
7. Clippers finish over .500
6. Ladies and gentlemen, our next president: "Stone Cold" Steve Austin.
5. Comet headed straight toward earth (and Bruce Willis has his pager turned off).
4. ABBA reunion tour.
3. Carrow's runs out of strawberries.
2. Summer squash shaped like Erik Estrada.
1. At 12:01 A.M., January 1, 2000, all computers work perfectly.

#### Top Ten Rejected Names for the Immortal Chronicles:

10. Fanboys R' Us
9. Jack Benny-dictions
8. The Entire Left Side of Carrow's Menu
7. Dawson Fan Club Newsletter (He's so Dreamy)
6. The Immortals Arthritis Cure
5. "1776": You Loved the Musical, Now Here's the Magazine
4. Charlton Heston is a Big Fat Idiot
3. The Self-Important Chronicles
2. George
1. Really Big Waste of Time

# SIGNS OF THE COMING APOCALYPSE

## (OR WHAT I DID TO USHER IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM)

What a bust! After all the fear and loathing over the coming of Y2K, and the hysteria that emanated from the millennium cults, 2000 and 2001 arrived rather uneventfully. Rather disappointingly, the anticipated plunge into a post-technological world without credit cards or traffic lights never arrived. My computer still worked, bills arrived on schedule, and I still had to report to work on January 2. Intellectually, I was confident nothing would happen. But as one who was raised Catholic and familiar with many of the religion's mystical and apocalyptic visions — well, you just never know, do you?

by **Randy Reynaldo**

For the rollover to 2000, Sadina and I rented a cabin in Big Bear as part of what has become an annual trip to the ski slopes. Just to be safe, I brought along with my snow chains several cans of Chef Boyardi raviolis and a can opener (hey, I was *prepared*) in the event any of the predictions turned out to be true and we were reduced to fending for ourselves among a society of CHUDS.

Sadina, spent after a full-day's worth of skiing, was contentedly asleep well before midnight. As for myself — well, I was prepared to defend our rented cabin and hearth if need be, armed



**LEFT:** Awaiting the worst as Y2K approaches — Big Bear on December 31, 2001. (Might as well get some good skiing in!)

with a tomato sauce-stained fork and the dull-bladed plastic knife we found in the otherwise bare cupboard of our rental unit. My mouth was dry with fear as the second-hand ticked towards midnight of the first day of the year 2000 (though it may have been the heater that caused the cotton-mouth). I kept one eye focused outside our window looking for any tell-tale sign of alien invasion or civil unrest, and the other glued to the television, switching back and forth between

MTV and ABC's Dick Clark's "Rockin' New Year." *My God*, I thought. *Whatever does Jennifer Love Hewitt see in Carson Daly?* It was thus that I drifted off into fitful reverie — dressed in nothing but thermals and snow boots and eerily lit by the glow of the television set, sitting in a dingy, unkempt sofa chair like a curmudgeon mountain-man in a ratty, old cabin away up in the hills, as a rap version of Prince's "1999" emanated from the television.

But all we got at daybreak was a rather pleasant layer of fresh snowfall — and some great skiing.

The rollover to 2001 was even less eventful and exciting (I guess old age is setting in.) At the last minute, after a lot of hemming and hawing, Sadina and I decided to throw a quiet new year's party. In a fit of originality, we decided to rent Stanley Kubrick's *2001* — and were shocked to discover that the single DVD copy of the film at the local Blockbuster was actually available on new year's eve. So we actually timed the countdown to the new year to coincide with the *Dawn of Man* sequence from the film and the well known theme to *2001* that accompanies it. Unfortunately, Dave and Lois had to cancel because Matthew got sick, and Ray stopped by late, leaving well before midnight to hasten off to his next doomed relationship.

So here we are, well into the year 2001, and things seem to be humming along swimmingly.



**LEFT:** "It FEELS like our car!"

Or are they?

After some consideration, I realize that there have been signs that, perhaps, the apocalypse is indeed upon us. Oh, sure, there's the easy stuff, like the fact that we have a Republican in the White House and the stock market seems to have gone South almost the moment he took office. (Why do businesses always say Republicans are good for the economy?)

But if this isn't enough to make your heart stop and read your Nostradamus, I submit these additional telltale signs for your consideration:

**I Got Married**

I am sure all the Immortals will back me up when I say that I categorically never used the expression "When hell freezes over" in conjunction with "I plan to get married when..." (c'mon, help me out, guys!), but I am sure my wedding nevertheless surprised quite a number of people. All I can say is that after Sadina finished her postgraduate program and got a job, we ran out of excuses.

**I'm Going to be a Father**

As if marriage and domesticity weren't drastic enough, Sadina and I recently announced that we were expecting our first child. Actually, this was just a ploy: while the wedding finally ended the chorus of "When are you getting married?" it only gave way to "Are you expecting yet?" My father

had me, his first born, when he was 41. So I actually consider myself ahead of the game.

**I Got Promoted**

After years of resistance, I actually caved in and joined the ranks of management in 2000 — I've finally been promoted to my level of incompetence. After marriage and fatherhood, this was a walk in the park. As many people pointed out, as the senior staff person in my office for the past seven years and witnessing a revolving door of supervisors, I was already doing the damn job anyway, so I might as well get paid for it.

**The Return of Rob Hanes**

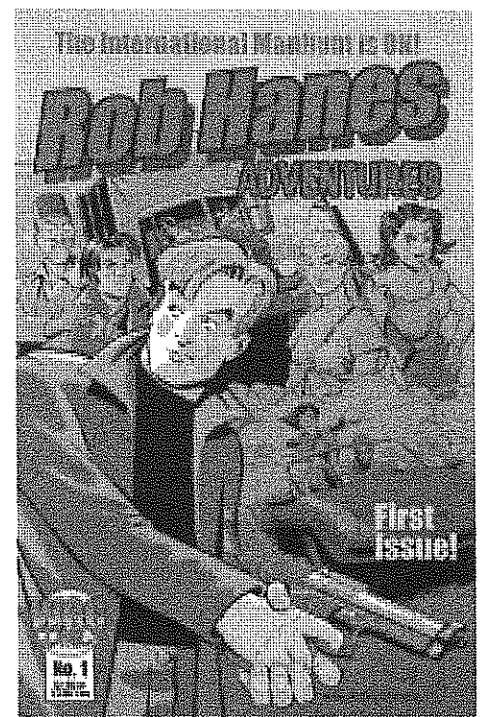
In October 2000, new Rob Hanes Adventures actually hit the stands after being idle since about 1996. Talk about your signs!

And, of course, finally...

**Another Issue of the Immortal Chronicles has been Published**

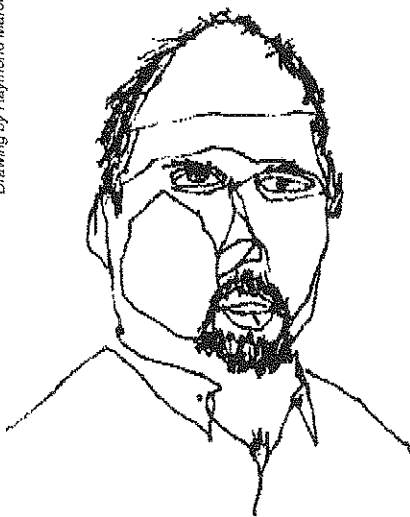
If this isn't the sign of the apocalypse, then I don't know what is! (By the way, when does the next millennium start — we need to start planning the next issue!)

All I can say is — stock up on those raviolis, and don't forget the can-opener! ♦



ABOVE: This reproduction of **ROB HANES ADVENTURES #1** is related to the article at left and not cheap product placement.

Drawing by Raymond Marcus



## YoK in Rome

*As proof that the problems brought on by Y2K aren't just a 20th century curiosity, we submit the following document, translated from a Latin scroll, dated 2 B.C.:*

Dear Cassius:

Are you still working on the Y zero K problem? This change from B.C. to A.D. is giving us a lot of headaches and we haven't much time left. I don't know how people will cope with working the wrong way around. Having been working happily downwards forever, now we have to start thinking upwards. You would think that someone would have thought of it earlier and not left it to us to sort it all out at this last minute.

I spoke to Caesar the other evening. He was livid that Julius hadn't done something about it when he was sorting out the calendar. He said he could see why Brutus turned nasty. We called in Consultus, but he simply said that continuing downwards using minus B.C. won't work and as usual charged a fortune for doing nothing useful. Surely we will not have to throw out all our hardware and start again? Macrohard will make yet another fortune out of this, I suppose.

The money lenders are paranoid, of course! They have been told that all usury rates will invert and they will have to pay their clients to take out loans. It's an ill wind... As for myself, I just can see the sand in an hourglass flowing upwards. We have heard that there are three wisemen in the East who have been working on the problem, but unfortunately they won't arrive until it's all over. I have heard that there are plans to stable all horses at midnight at the turn of the year as there are fears that they will stop and try to run backwards, causing immensedamage to chariots and possible loss of life. Some say the world will cease to exist at the moment of transition.

Anyway, we are still continuing to work on this cursed YOK problem. I will send a parchment to you if anything further develops. If you have any ideas please let me know.

—Plutonius

*(Unattributed, from the Internet)*