

competing in their event, just kept tooling down the road until they were out of sight. The head of the Dominican delegation called the 10 "deserters and traitors."

**Transplanted tradition:** The game of baseball is as American as Marines in Nicaragua. So it made sense that during a series of U.S. invasions and occupations of Nicaragua in the first two decades of this century the Marines taught the Nicaraguans how to play baseball. Soon it became their national pastime and the dictator Somoza fielded an all-star team that played local teams throughout the country.

It was at these games that the peasants had their only chance to vent hostility toward Somoza by cheering on the home team. With the Sandinista victory in 1979, the repression ended but the enthusiasm for baseball remained.

Last year, the Nicaraguan team went on a road trip to California to play a number of West Coast college teams, most of which the Nicaraguans defeated. The tour engendered a lot of good will, if not a reminder of how poorly California teams play baseball. The easy victories in California perhaps deluded the Nicaraguans into thinking that the U.S. national team was similar. By the end of the first inning, when the score was already 10-0, this was one group of Sandinistas who were definitely California dreaming.

The Nicaraguan team was being housed and fed at the local U.S. Army base, Fort Benjamin Harrison, which gave the visiting press corps much to chortle about. Being surrounded by the U.S. military was nothing out of the ordinary for these players, though, and most remarked that they felt "right at home."

It was no easy task trying to talk to the Nicaraguans. The military police and the Pan American officials refused to let me into the area where the Nicaraguans were staying. It was a "new rule," I was told, instituted "about five minutes" before my arrival at the gate. Did this have anything to do with the fact that the Nicaraguans were receiving a lot of favorable press, I asked one official. "You could say that," he replied.

**The Bianca factor:** At that moment, Nicaraguan native Bianca Jagger was whisked through the gate with no credentials, no questions. "You see," the sergeant told me, "if only you had sex with rock singers, you could get in, too."

Bianca had been hired by CBS Sports as an "essayist" to do a piece on her countrymen at the games. (The Nicaraguans were competing in baseball, swimming and weightlifting.) Later, when I arrived at the stadium, I saw Bianca again receiving the red-carpet treatment and decided to stick close by and make it appear I was with her. (I realize that no amount of imagination on the reader's part will be able

to conjure up this scene.) Bianca was wearing Sandinista red (dress) and black (stockings) and she easily drew the players out of the dug-out for some pre-game interviews, which until her arrival they had refused to do.

**Mission of peace:** First baseman Nemesio Porras of Managua said the Nicaraguan team was in the U.S. "on a mission of peace"

## Cuban boxers decked right-wing antagonists in an unscheduled ring-side bout.

and asked that the U.S. "stop the aggression against my country." He said he lost two uncles in the revolution against Somoza in the late '70s and that he and his fellow teammates support the Sandinistas. This comment led a *New York*

*Times* reporter listening nearby to comment, "Yeah, and if they lose this ball game, Ortega will ship them all to the Miskito Coast."

Infielder Ariel Deleudo said that the team was "trying to defend our country through sports. Our friends are back home fighting in the fields and we are here to show that we are just as good as the United States of America."

Second baseman Julio Medina, who was drafted by the Cincinnati Reds five years ago, said that the Nicaraguans had "a simple desire for peace. We are fighting for our survival, and thinking about the war at home affects the team psychologically." He pointed out that a number of the country's best players were not in Indianapolis because they were in Nicaragua fighting the U.S.-backed contra force.

**Blow by blow:** The U.S., unfortunately, didn't send the contras to play ball for them in Indianapolis and opened up the first inning with a barrage of runs. When the Nicaraguans, who were ironically desig-

nated as the "home team," came to bat in the bottom of the first, they were unable to score off the American pitcher (and Flint, Mich., native) Jim Abbott, who was born with only one hand.

That's the way the rest of the game went, with the U.S. coach ordering double steals even after his team was ahead 12-0. When the slaughter was finally called to an early end by the umpire in the seventh inning, Roberto Vargas of the Nicaraguan Olympic Committee commented that "the game was like sitting through the last three months of the Iran-contra hearings."

The team was visibly dejected and by the time the Pan Am Games were over on August 23, they had compiled a record of 3-4. The only medals won by Nicaragua were stripped from the team when it was discovered that weightlifter Orlando Vazquez, who won three bronze medals, had been taking a banned drug to lose weight.

All was not lost, though, as the

Nicaraguans were winning, at considerable cost, the real-life competition for survival at home. The U.S. mercenary force still did not hold one inch of ground after five years of war and the American public still opposed aid to the contras. As one fan in the stands remarked after the game, "One thing's for sure: the peace process in Central America has a better chance of succeeding than the Nicaraguans had here today."

The Nicaraguan national baseball team will tour the U.S. during the next few weeks, visiting Racine, Wis., Seattle, Wash., and, happily, a number of cities in California. For information on times and locations, contact Athletes United for Peace, (415) 543-6671. ■

**Michael Moore** is the former editor of *Mother Jones* magazine and the *Michigan Voice*. He is currently making a documentary about General Motors and will begin publishing a critical review of the media later this year.

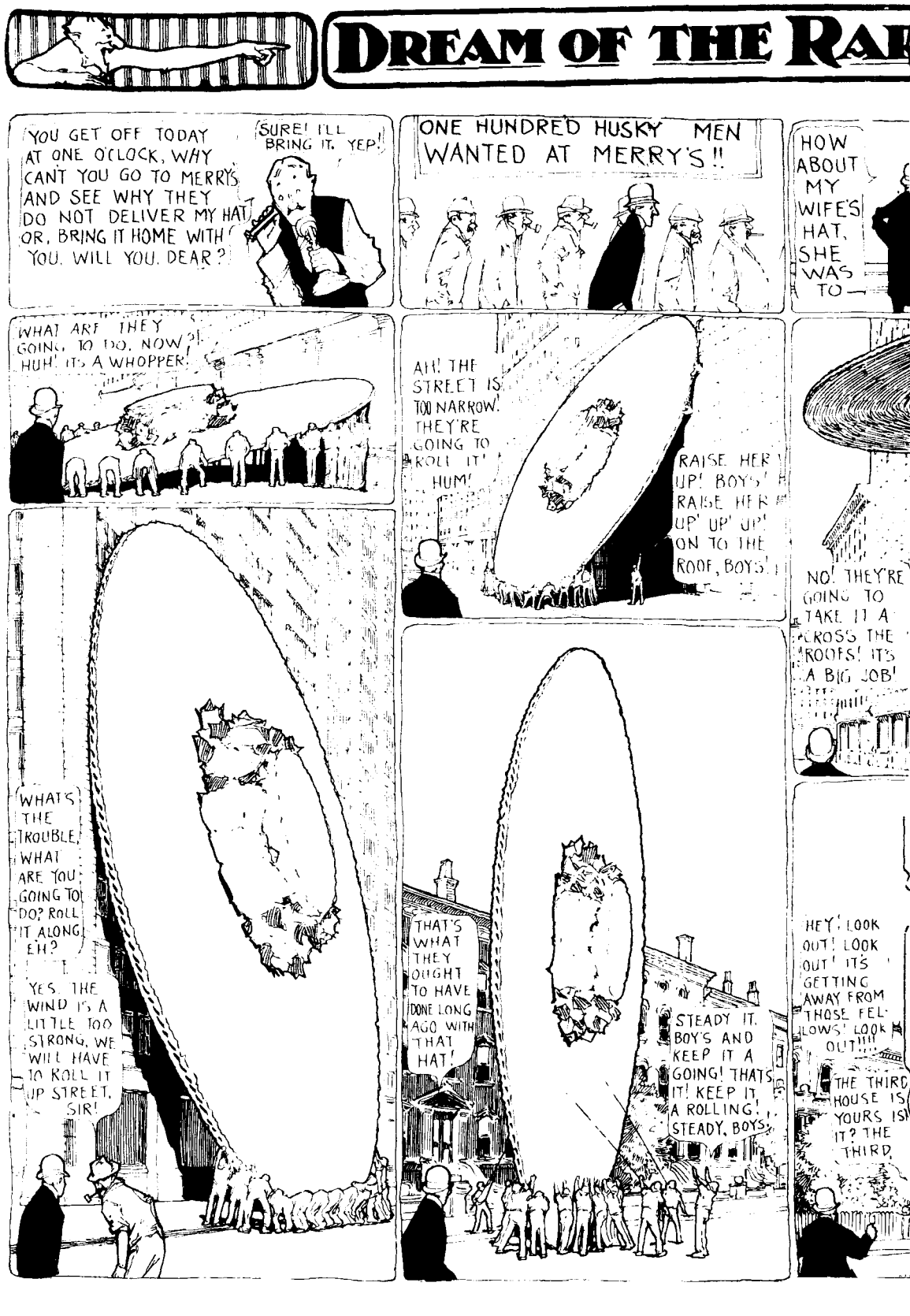
## Fine 'tooning by past masters

With the recent vogue in adult comics, such as Art Spiegelman's death-camp serial *Maus* and Frank Miller's Batman redux, *The Dark Knight*, a nod to past masters seems in order. None looms larger on the artistic horizon than cartoonist and animator Windsor McCay, creator of *Little Nemo in Slumberland*, *Gertie the Dinosaur* and *Dream of the Rarebit Fiend*. McCay's surreal Sunday paper dreamscapes and groundbreaking animations in the first three decades of this century

### ART

are but a part of the artist revealed in John Canemaker's sumptuous new biography, *Windsor McCay, His Life and Art* (Abbeville Press, 1987). The influential artist was also a vaudeville star with his fast-draw act and an esteemed editorial cartoonist. If you're drawn to McCay's volume you might check out another cartoon pioneer's sadomasochistic masterstrokes in *Krazy Kat, the Comic Art of George Herriman* (Harry N. Abrams, 1986). The text is rock solid and the art...well, it's better than getting bonked on the head with a brick.

—Jeff Reid





# Oil

Continued from page 13

the repayment problem, Costa Rica and Honduras have received only intermittent shipments of Mexican and Venezuelan oil since 1984, while shipments to El Salvador under the terms of the accord have all but ceased. In mid-August the Guatemalan foreign ministry reportedly said that by year's end Guatemala will also not be able to make the payments on its San Jose Accord debt.

But Nicaragua had experience long before these countries of the accord's commercialization. In 1982, when economic problems caused the Nicaraguan government to admit that it could not make payments on its \$22 million oil debt to Venezuela, the flow of Venezuelan oil was promptly cut off.

Mexico continued oil shipments of 10,050 barrels per day in 1983, accounting for some 64 percent of Nicaraguan oil consumption. But that amount was cut back to 3,850 barrels a day in 1984. And when in March 1985 the Sandinistas told Mexico they could not pay up on their \$500-million oil debt, the De la Madrid administration followed the Venezuelan example and cut off oil shipments. Since then, said a diplomat here familiar with Mexican oil dealings, only "a couple" of Mexican petroleum shipments have been sent to Nicaragua, both of those only because Nicaragua met the Mexicans' demand of "cash on the barrelhead."

**Soviet motives:** It's unclear why the Soviets have cut back on oil shipments after more than two years of supplying the lion's share of Nicaraguan oil needs. Nicaragua's Ruiz credited it to "limitations" faced by the Soviet Union this year due to other commit-

ments. But political observers speculate that the Soviets may be trying to lower their profile in Nicaragua in order to gain concessions from the Reagan administration in Afghanistan or Europe. One Nicaraguan economist here said that the Soviets cut oil shipments because they interpret Nicaragua's reticence to further centralize its economy as economic mismanagement.

A clear indication that the Nicaraguans have been left in a bind by the Soviet cutback was Daniel Ortega's public request of Lusinchí and De la Madrid to establish "new formulas" easing the terms of the San Jose Accord so that oil shipments to Nicaragua could be resumed. But Lusinchí clearly torpedoed the notion of a joint Venezuela-Mexico special deal for Nicaragua in his final press conference.

Lusinchí put his foot down in response to reporters' questions, saying there was "no possibility" of a compromise to allow resumption of shipments without payment of the debt incurred under the accord.

"There is no value judgment whatsoever with respect to any regime or country" in that decision, he said, but "there can be no conditions which differ from those set down" in the agreement.

**"The Central America thing":** One diplomatic source here said that "Venezuela would like to wash its hands of the entire Central America thing, but can't because of national pride." Not only is Venezuela a co-signer of the San Jose Accord, he explained, but its role as one of the four Contadora countries keeps it duty-bound to continue participating in regional efforts toward peace and development.

Despite Venezuela's refusal to resume oil

shipments without debt repayment by Nicaragua, it is possible that the Mexicans might do so in coming months with only a "token repayment" from Nicaragua on its \$500-million debt, according to the diplomat, who requested anonymity.

Another diplomatic source from a prominent embassy here said he had heard the Mexicans might "go it alone" in supplying Nicaragua with oil in coming months. He said Mexico could take advantage of a precedent set by Venezuela in 1983 when it sent petroleum under terms of the San Jose Accord to Curaçao, despite Mexico's unwillingness to match the shipments.

"Something is in the air and [Nicaraguan Vice President Sergio] Ramirez definitely asked for the oil when he was here in June," said the diplomat.

Those observations coincide with reports circulating here that Mexico may join other major Latin American countries in stepping

up economic aid to the Sandinista government later this year. According to differing versions, the Nicaraguans sent several emissaries to key Latin American capitals in May and June seeking economic aid to compensate in part for the Soviet oil cutback, but also for economic difficulties resulting from the Reagan administration's ongoing economic embargo against Nicaragua. Argentina is mentioned as the likely source of cereal grains in such a bail-out package, with Mexico cited as the petroleum supplier.

**The "perfect solution":** Whether or not such an overall Latin American plan exists remains to be seen. The Mexican Foreign Relations Secretariat has denied knowledge of any such plan.

But according to a private U.S. oil analyst, either within the framework of a regional economic aid plan for Nicaragua or on its own, it appears probable that Mexico will resume at least limited oil shipments to Nicaragua in the near future. But where will the financing come from?

"I was told by an official in the [Mexican] Foreign Relations Secretariat that the Soviet Union is going to give the Nicaraguans the cash instead of the oil," said the oil analyst.

"Mexico will have to get some repayment in order to justify renewing shipments," said the oil specialist, who noted that the difficulty of tracing financial aid as opposed to petroleum tankers would provide the Nicaraguans with the "perfect solution" to their oil woes. At the same time, it would give the Soviets the lower profile they are said to be seeking in Nicaragua. It would also provide Managua with the financing to begin repayment on the debt to Mexico, the gesture of good faith said necessary to renew the flow of Mexican oil to Nicaragua.

Mike Tangeman is a U.S. journalist based in Mexico.

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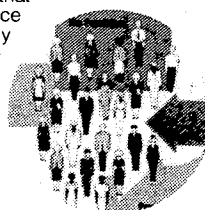
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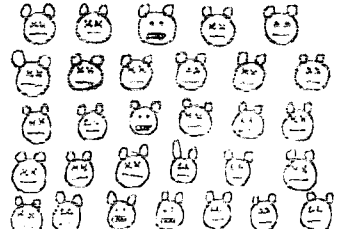
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#### BE CAREFUL!!

IN AN AVERAGE 30-KID CLASS:



15 KIDS ARE HALF-ASLEEP  
10 KIDS ARE TOTALLY ASLEEP  
5 KIDS ARE AWAKE  
GUESS WHICH 5 KIDS THE TEACHER IS MOST SUSPICIOUS OF?

#### WORTHLESS THINGS IN HIGH SCHOOL

- ANY WORDS OF WISDOM BY THE PRINCIPAL
- ANYTHING MIMOGRAPHED
- ANY ADVICE FROM A GUIDANCE COUNSELOR
- ANYTHING ANNOUNCED BY THE ASSEMBLY

**HOW TO GET BY WHEN YER SMARTER THAN YER TEACHERS**  
(1) DON'T ANSWER THE ASSEMBLY  
(2) DON'T TALK BACK  
(3) DON'T TALK BACK  
(4) DON'T TALK BACK

### LESSON 15: HOW TO GET BY WHEN YER SMARTER THAN YER TEACHERS

REMEMBER: TO THE SLOW, DIMWITTED BEAST KNOWN AS THE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL, SMART = UPPITY.

SO, WHEN YOU ARE SENT TO THE OFFICE FOR INSUBORDINATION, ACT ABASHED.

**WRONG**  
THE CRIME IS NOT THAT I REBELLED. THE CRIME IS THAT THE OTHER KIDS DO NOT-- THAT THEY ARE TOO BORED AND DEFERRED TO CHALLENGE THE STULTIFYING RULES, THE ABUSE OF POWER, AND THE SHEER JOYLESSNESS OF EVERYDAY SCHOOL LIFE.

**RIGHT**  
I'LL BE GOOD FROM NOW ON, SIR.

#### NEVER CORNER A TEACHER

ALTHOUGH GENERALLY DOCILE, TEACHERS HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO ATTACK SAVAGELY WHEN BACKED UP AGAINST A WALL.

REMEMBER, TEACHERS HATE SAYING:

I DON'T KNOW. I'M SORRY.

#### WHAT NOT TO SAY TO YOUR GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

IF YOU KNOW SO MUCH ABOUT MAKING INTELLIGENT CAREER DECISIONS, HOW COME YOU'RE A GUIDANCE COUNSELOR?

#### WISE UP

- LOOK AROUND YOU. THE OTHER KIDS DON'T HAVE A CLUE.
- SAME WITH TEACHERS.
- SAME WITH PARENTS.
- FIGURE IT OUT FOR YOURSELF.

#### HOW TO GET BY WHEN YER AS STUPID AS A ROCK MUSICIAN

BE INARTICULATE. LAUGH MORONICALLY. DON'T STRAIN YOURSELF. SPEAK IN FRAGMENTS. FIDGET. BECOME A ROCK MUSICIAN.

#### HATE SCHOOL???

CONSOLE YOURSELF WITH THIS THOUGHT:

AT LEAST YOU GET TO GRADUATE AND SCRAM. YOUR TEACHERS NEVER GRADUATE. THEY'RE STUCK HERE.

#### NO MATTER HOW BAD IT GETS, DON'T KILL YOURSELF!!!!

THEY WILL MAKE JOES ABOUT YOU. DEATH LASTS EVEN LONGER THAN GRADE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL PUT TOGETHER. THERE IS NO TV IN HEAVEN. (THERE IS TV IN HELL, HOWEVER.)

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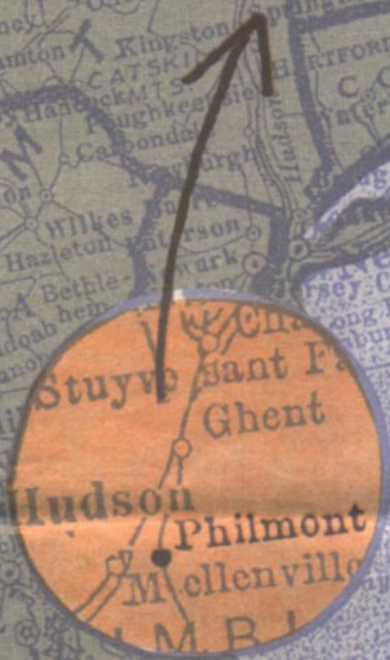
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# North of Nowhere

Ollie-mania sweeps his hometown, but North is a no-show.



By Billy Goodman

**T**HE IRANAMOK-CONTRA HEARINGS COVERED many issues, but they left the following questions in my mind: *What is the Harmonic Convergence and when did it occur?*

New-Age mystics and aging hippies say the Harmonic Convergence started at dawn on August 16 and marked the end of cycles in the Mayan and Aztec calendars and the beginning of 25 years in which humanity can enter a new era of peace by harnessing collective spiritual energy. Barring that, the world may end.

But the real meaning of harmonic convergence was revealed to me on August 15, when dozens of reporters, 20 New York state troopers, several hundred polite demonstrators and a handful of the curious converged on Philmont, N.Y., (population 1,642) for the village's annual Community Day. This year it was rechristened in honor of the hamlet's favorite son, Lt. Col. Oliver "Larry" North.

Unfortunately, the guest of honor didn't show. Village Clerk Patricia Near said North's mother called to say he wouldn't attend. He hadn't even received the official invitation because "his mail comes by the truckload."

Mayor Philip Mossman, holding court for reporters near the headquarters tent shortly after the 10-minute parade in North's honor, 24 IN THESE TIMES SEPT. 2-8, 1987

explained that the idea for "Oliver North Day" came during North's testimony in July. "We decided to have the day to clear his name."

The mayor, who wore a button with Ollie North's visage on an American flag and a red, white and blue tie draped around his neck, was in high spirits about what all the attention might mean for his once-sleepy village, located a few miles up the road from Claverack, N.Y. "Maybe somebody will open up a store," he said. "A lot of business people are here."

**And how is business in Philmont?**

On Oliver North Day, the answer was mixed. By business people, the mayor may have meant some youthful vendors representing a firm known as PBR Novelties. They pushed their shopping carts laden with balloons, pennants and other paraphernalia along Main Street before, during and after the parade. And they were disappointed. The few hundred demonstrators and few dozen North supporters who came to Philmont apparently preferred local hamburgers to the vendors' imported wares.

At Stewart's convenience store in the center of town, a harried clerk said, "Thank you, Ollie," as she struggled to keep up with crowds beseeching her at the counter. Ollie North programs displayed prominently on the counter, however, didn't seem to be selling well.

The mayor's boosterism and desire to put Philmont on the map are symptoms of a deeper malaise in Philmont. Cliff Wexler,

whose wife is director of Philmont Hearth, Inc., a home for the mentally disabled on whose grounds much of the day's events took place, said, "Real estate in the county has skyrocketed, but not in Philmont." The demonstrators, most of whom came from the surrounding county or from Albany, an hour away, recognized Philmont's need to break out of the doldrums. One of them, soft-spoken Eliot Asinof, said, "Philmont is famous for being a depressed area."

**What do Oliver North and Elvis Presley have in common?**

They both look good in uniform (remember Elvis in *G.I. Blues*?). And their former homes are now shrines. Elvis died 10 years ago August 16, and his Memphis home, Graceland, attracts half a million tourists a year. When I made the pilgrimage a few years ago the basic tour—without a side trip through Elvis' plane or bus—cost \$6.50 (now \$7). For that price a supplicant boarded a bus across a busy street from the mansion, was conveyed to the front door and was led through the house by a polite guide who struggled to inflect enthusiasm into a spiel given day in and day out. After the house tour, which included the famous jungle room complete with waterfall, visitors could roam the grounds, look at Elvis' several automobiles (and even sit in one), and meditate at Elvis' grave.

Ollie North's boyhood home, not yet widely known as Fall-from-Graceland, is at

20 Maple Avenue in Philmont. During Ollie North Day, it was off-limits to curiosity-seekers, protected by a better security system than the one purchased for North's present home by Gen. Secord. A rope festooned with "keep off the grass" signs ringed the entire property, wrapped around trees at regular intervals to keep it at chest height.

The white clapboard house's present owner, Joe Raco, sat at the end of his cement walk, just inside the rope, reading *Sports Illustrated*. Like tour guides at Elvis' place, he seemed the slightest bit bored as he rose to repeat his story to another damn reporter who wanted to know "was that really the garage roof young Larry slid off as part of a self-imposed rehabilitation for a knee injury?"

By the time I spoke with him Raco said he had already been interviewed by more than 20 reporters. Raco acknowledged to one reporter's question that diverting money to the contras was legally wrong, but nevertheless called North a "patriot" and said he'd be happy to have his kids emulate the Marine. **Who knew Ollie and when did they know him?**

In the wake of any historic event, more people claim to have been there than actually were. Don't be surprised, then, if tens of thousands one day claim to have been at Ollie North Day, though state police put the crowd at 2,500 and some reporters (who were being more diligent than I was) estimated it at a mere 1,000. Likewise, many who did not will probably claim to have gone to school with Ollie, to have dated his sister, or at least to have had premonitions of his greatness while watching the former altar boy in church.

The first person I talked to in Philmont was a white-haired woman sitting on her front lawn. She wouldn't reveal her name but said she had been a cafeteria worker when young Larry went to school and remembers him as a very nice boy. She said the red ribbon she had tied on a porch column meant "I just think the world of him." But she added, "I don't approve of him lying. He was covering up for somebody. I think the head of our government should have checked it out." Then, expressing a sentiment about President Reagan that, in less strident form, was surprisingly common among the solidly Republican people of Philmont, she said, "He's been wrong ever since he's been in there."

**What is the state of youth in Philmont?**

William Robertson, six years old, was dressed in jungle camouflage shirt (partly obscured by the requisite Ollie button), olive pants and a military helmet. His mother said William dressed himself. When asked what he thought of the lieutenant colonel on his chest, he answered, "Good," with a big smile. When asked if he knows about Nicaragua he shook his head "no," smiled shyly, then asked his mom if he could go see the ambulance. Would he like to be in the Marines some day? Again he shook his head "no," and answered, "Army."

Two older boys, near high school age, stopped cruising long enough to say what they thought of North. "I'm kinda split," Keith Schrader said. "Kinda like he's cool, but he shouldn't've got away. He was honest tellin' about it, but he wasn't honest in the first place."

A still older youth with curly blond hair and "question authority" on his t-shirt turned out to be from Massachusetts. Had he come to protest North's actions? No, he was looking for action. He said he thought the day would be the Kent State of the '80s and was disappointed that the crowd wasn't bigger. ■

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