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Voice: Fred W. McDarrah

AVANT-GARDE FESTIVAL: Geoff Hendricks & mouse; (right) Shirley Clarke's ferris wheel. (See story, page 90.)



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The middle class fights back

Battle of Forest Hills

by Clark Whelton

When Mayor Lindsay gets around to writing Poor John's Almanac, one of the little sayings certain to be included is: any block worth busting is worth busting right. The annotated edition will explain that this means

think big. Don't just settle for chasing out the middle-class families. Break up the entire neighborhood. Turn Brownsville into World War III and the South Bronx into an open sore. Stick a string of welfare hotels into Greenwich Village and knock down a community of self-built homes in Corona. And if someone points out that these changes have made life worse, not better, in the area, then stencil him with words like "racist" or "bigot" and open fire on another neighborhood.

If Poor John's latest attempt at progress-through-disorder goes ahead as scheduled, his Almanac will probably award it a special footnote of its own. Right now on the edge of Forest Hills, Queens, bulldozers are clearing an 8.6-acre site for construction of three 24-story buildings which will provide 840 apartments for elderly and low-income tenants. Thousands of middle-class residents of the area, who have been

fighting this kind of public housing project since 1967, are now picketing the construction site at 108th Street and Horace Harding Boulevard. They are trying to tell John Lindsay and anyone else who'll listen that they're terribly

afraid of the project as it's now designed. The Mayor has responded by calling their demonstrations "deplorable" and by getting a court order to prevent them from picketing. No one in the city administration has been willing or able to calm the fears of these Forest Hills residents that the three public housing towers—divided into 60 per cent low-in-

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Cockettes in New York

History of a hype: Worm in Big Apple

by Maureen Orth

New York is dead, everyone complained. The last thing to hit town was "Jesus Christ Superstar," and it was so unbelievably crass. The major art openings were over, and the holiday parties hadn't yet begun. Dull dull dull. But didn't Rex and Truman rave about some divine hippie drag queens from San Francisco who actually wear glitter on their "private parts" as well as their eyelids? Right. "The Rockettes like rocks, and the Cockettes like—" How utterly outrageous! And weren't they opening down in the slummy crummy East Village along with Sylvester, a black rock queen who sings falsetto? How off off can you get? And isn't this the Year of the Gay?—it's all right for men to dig other men in public. Everyone understands now. And hasn't the underground press been covering the Cockettes favorably for over a year, even though the regular San Francisco

press accepts their ads but doesn't review them? Isn't it time for something different? Let's discover the Cockettes!

Not since Andy and Edie had New York made a group of society's freaks its very own darlings in one short week—seven days to scale the highest media peaks, only to fall opening night with a great dull thud. How come? One reason is that the media-heavy audience came opening night expecting to see some sort of new art form and got comatized instead; but more importantly, the Cockettes were victims of the Big Hype—that peculiar New York phenomenon whereby people and things are declared hot, cool, in, out, under, and over. The poor little gold differs of '71 from San Francisco made a big mistake—they believed it.

Reality is fantasy and fantasy is

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His last mouse

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stoned up there," she said. Lots of familiar faces showed up—Edith Stephen, Larry Calgano, Rose Slivka, Bridgit Murnaghan, Irving Sandler, Ruth Sansegundo, Calvin Tomplins, Lenny Horowitz. Lots of new faces too—Carey Fisher, Jo-Ann Cross, Frank Gillette, Leonard Dworkin, Ellen Thomas, Michael Cooper. But where were Tom Hoving, Doris Freedman, Leonard Harris, Tom Hess, Andy Warhol, Ivan Karp, and John Canaday? Oh, well, they couldn't be everywhere.

Anyway, Howard Smith came with his entourage: a photographer, a writer, a sound engineer, a wardrobe mistress, an art interpreter, and Cass, a 10-year-old inventor. Howard looked around and said the festival needed a frankfurter stand. "They could call them Art Dogs."

Charles Henri Ford invited me to Greece. He didn't have a film or even a poem in the festival this year. Rosalind Constable interviewed me and then I interviewed her. It was only fair. Nam June Paik called me over and put me on color tv. I stood there and stared at myself. Everybody was on tv.

Gregory Battcock was in his expensive cashmere suit from Jean Roll of Paris. He put on a demonstration of mayonnaise making. Gregory cracked an egg and slid it into the mixing bowl. He wiped his hands immediately. Then he poured the olive oil, wiped his hands again, stirred, wiped, cut and squeezed the lemon, wiped again, stirred, wiped, more stirring, more wiping, and then

presto—Avant Garde Instant Mayonnaise.

It was 5 o'clock. I thought maybe when Metropolitan Life got out the place would fill up. The East Village Theatre group put on its show. They were all in mime costumes and clown make-up. They bowed heads, meditated, huddled together with the audience, did acrobatics, and filled in the gaps with Love, Peace, Touch, Liquid Theatre bullshit, a great group if you were deep into 1964.

I smelled that unbearable five-and-dime incense coming from Jeni Engels's teepee in the middle of the Armory. It didn't bother Geoff Hendricks, who seemed stoned on silence on top of his mound of dirt. It was 6 p. m. and he still hadn't moved, hadn't eaten, hadn't gone to the toilet. How could he endure such self-torture?

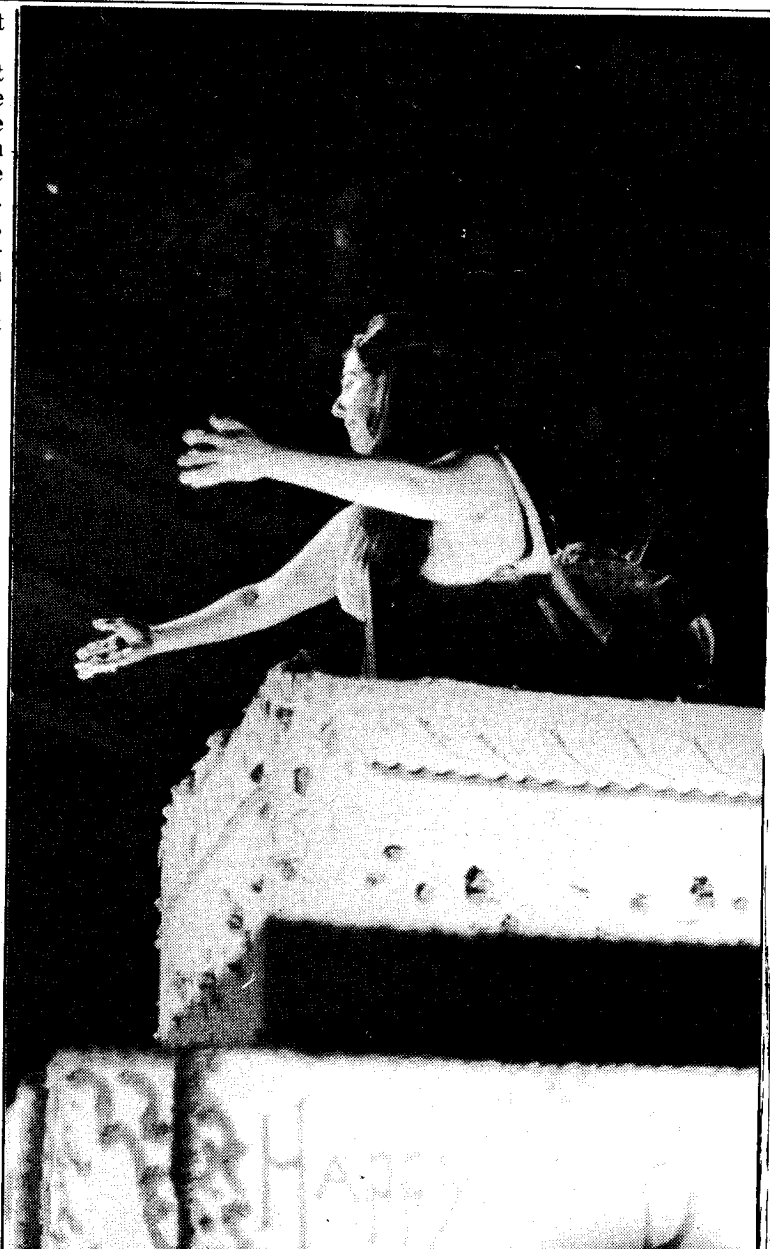
Finally Jill Johnston and David Bourdon of Life arrived. The festival was then declared an official event. The orchestra in the balcony struck up "Hail to the Chiefs," but the fan flipped the pages to "My Funny Valentine." David cleared his throat and spoke. "I'll have to look into this more carefully. Life is not a frivolous publication. We don't do stories on just anything. We're serious."

Everything was in full swing by 8. The place was jammed. Neighbors from my building showed up with their kids for a free ride on Shirley's ferris wheel.

Alex Gross, with a telephone dial around his neck, greeted everybody at the entrance with a copy of the Art Workers Newsletter. Ely Raman handed out money from an orange crate. Gary Rieveschl watched his ice melt. Woody and Steina Vasulka twirled the controls of their 15 tv monitors. Jackson MacLow shouted his word event. Jud Yalkut stared at his propane flame through the looking glass. Dominic Capobianco stuck his head into a silver-covered box and listened to all the AM stations at once. Steve Reich sat cross-legged in the corner and mixed his "ohms" into the abysmal hum and drone of 1000 sounds. Geoff Hendricks, joined by all of Higgins's white mice, continued his painful plight into numbsville. And Willoughby Sharp walked invisibly.

Time passed and tension mounted. It was the Second Coming of Charlotte Moorman, her great big birthday party. Everyone gathered around a 20-foot plywood cake decorated with real frosting and a few real cakes on top for the ceremony. I went up on the balcony and stood directly over the cake. Here was the ideal picture. It would be a masterpiece. I stood, I waited, I practiced aim. Had I waited only 10 hours for the picture, I asked myself? What could go wrong? The film would jam. The pictures would be blank. The film wouldn't advance. I would forget the lens cap. I began to sweat.

A split second later it was all over. Like a jack-in-the-box, Charlotte had popped up and out of the cake just as the cake lights blew out. There was turmoil, con-



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CHARLOTTE MOORMAN emerging from birthday cake.

fusion, cake was flying, screams of "lights, where are the lights?" I panicked. Cake flew everywhere. "Charlotte," I shouted, "stop, come back, don't go back into the cake. Wait. I'll be disgraced." People were climbing all over the cake by then. The air was filled with fuchsia day-glo icing. I ran downstairs, yelling "Charlotte, it's me, Fred, wait, the picture. Have sympathy."

It was 11.30 p. m. Everybody was leaving. The floor was covered with chunks of cake and paper and wire and dirt and lemons and egg shells and coat hangers and broken electrical gadgets. I found a cap from one of my lenses. It was all covered with icing. Billy Kluver walked out with his EAT chairs under his arms. Al Hansen left with his silver-coated zoot suit.

The clock struck midnight and I thought I saw the Colonel. I think he was in his best dress uniform smothered with rewards of his heroic past. He marched briskly out onto the balcony, stood front and center, clicked his heels, saluted a mythical flag, looked skyward, and pleaded in his loudest bellow to all who would

listen, "Oh, Lord, forgive them all, for they know not what they have done."

213 park ave. so. at 17th
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CREDIT CARDS

LUNCH DINNER
max's kansas city
DANCING AT 12PM

AT TABLE

The Inca

A CROSS BETWEEN MAX'S KANSAS CITY and Elaine's (minus the pretensions), the Inca Bar & Restaurant at 399 West 12th Street is the new hangout for Westbeth residents and other artist and writer types.

A former longshoremen's bar, the Inca has authentic dock-of-the-bay atmosphere and decor. Sandwiched between the Sixth Precinct, gay bars and meat packing houses, it's open seven days a week for dinner from 6 p.m. until 2 a.m. and specializes in reasonably priced fish and meat dishes, prepared by a cook from Thailand.

Entrees at \$2.95 to \$3.95 include East Indian curry, ham and asparagus mornay and shrimp a la Tu. The house favorites are Inca salad, which guests are invited to have seconds of by getting it themselves from the communal salad bowl, and homemade ice creams like grapefruit and quince.

Owned by Bill Gottlieb, a neighborhood real estate entrepreneur, the Inca is considered by patrons and the friendly waiters and barmaids to be more of a family dining room than a restaurant. Lingering over dinner is encouraged at the Inca and the jukebox doesn't damage your eardrums.

—DAPHNE DAVIS

My Back Pages

PAPPAS 14th Credit
OUR TRADITIONAL THANKS
RELISH