

# ACRIMONY



Reporting on the Alternative, Gothic, and Paranormal Scenes

<http://www.Acrimony.org>

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# Was GothCon 2002 a Snow job?

## CONTRA/DICTIONS: *GothCon In the Spotlight*



by **Dan Shaurette**  
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[www.ShauretteNet.com](http://www.ShauretteNet.com)

**"Welcome to the Grand Illusion.  
Come on in and see what's happening.  
Pay your price, get your tickets for the show."  
- Styx, "The Grand Illusion"**

Atlanta, Georgia is the home of the Braves, Ted Turner, and Coca-Cola. It has had a tumultuous history, not only owing to its destruction and reconstruction during the Civil War, but it is where Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. was born, made his famous speeches, and is buried. Many cultures and sub-cultures, often in opposition, fight and thrive in Atlanta. It is a land full of polar opposites.

This Halloween weekend, Atlanta is set to play host to the fourth annual GothCon convention celebrating that culture (sub, counter or otherwise) known as "Goth". Just as Atlanta is no stranger to explosive confrontations, neither is Sara Sieber, the director of GothCon, whose staff members find themselves embroiled in their own nasty battle.

Though it started in Atlanta, GothCon had hosted from the Goth mecca of New Orleans the last two years, and is back home in Atlanta this year. From its inception, it served not only as an opportunity for the Goth community to come together and enjoy that experience which makes it unique, but it had noble intentions as well.

Sarah, whose friends know her by her nickname and online handle, "Snow Elizabeth", lost two friends to AIDS; a personal subject to her to say the least. But this encouraged her to try to set up a non-profit charitable event from which part of the proceeds would help some local AIDS-related groups.

Setting up any event is a struggle, and making it successful is difficult enough. Trying to donate all profits is a rare thing indeed. I still have not been able to confirm whether or not GothCon was successful enough to make donations in its first two years, even though they claimed that they did. In 2002 it was successful enough to make one donation.

The sole confirmable benefactor of GothCon 2002 was Project Lazarus who operates Lazarus House (<http://www.lazarushouse.net>) in New Orleans. Project Lazarus provides a residence and hospice for men and women with various stages of AIDS who are no longer able to live independently. I myself have spoken with their Assistant Director and they confirmed that they did receive a donation in December of 2002.

Continued on page 4

# Acrimony

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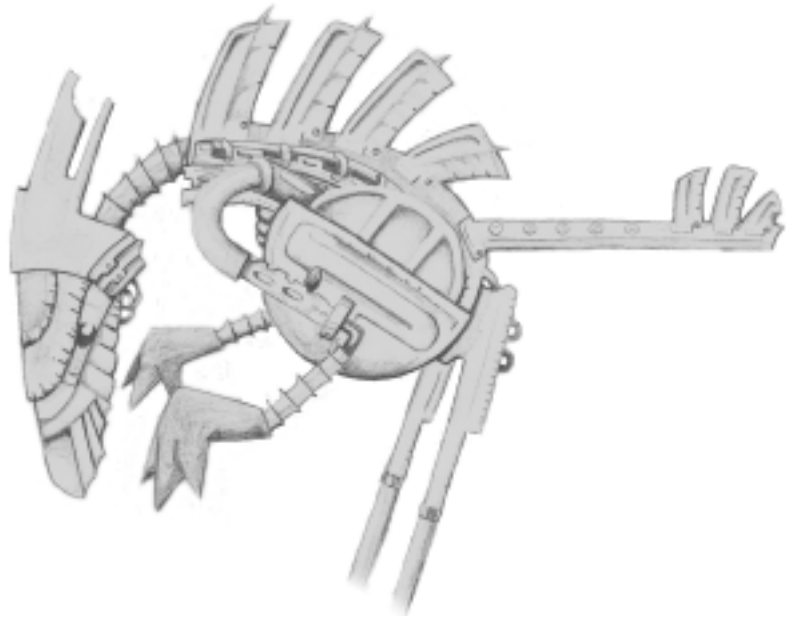
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by Abby

<http://abbaddon.nova-kaine.net.nz>

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There are 3 steps to getting your work in Acrimony.

- 1) E-mail your content to [editor@acrimony.org](mailto:editor@acrimony.org) or mail it to Acrimony, P.O. Box 18330, Phoenix, AZ 85005.
- 2) Include an email or written letter stating that you own all of the rights to the content and grant Acrimony the right to publish the work.
- 3) Payment for work published is handled through PayPal.com. Include in your correspondence your PayPal account name. If you do not have a PayPal account, you can sign up for free and PayPal will give you \$5 just for doing it. To sign up for PayPal go to <http://ad2.acrimony.org>

# Editorial Page

In June, the Supreme Court made a ruling that struck down a Texas law banning gay sex. Thirteen other states across the U.S. have similar anti-sodomy laws and the courts ruling will most likely have a ripple effect across the nation. This most recent ruling on gay rights has reignited the controversy of gay marriage.

Immediately following the ruling, gay rights activists denied that the court's decision was a step toward gay marriage. It is now a little more than a month later and the rhetoric has changed. Right before President Bush left Washington for his scheduled month long working vacation he said in a press conference:

*"I believe in the sanctity of marriage. I believe a marriage is between a man and a woman, and I think we ought to codify that one way or the other. I am mindful that we're all sinners, and I caution those who, uh, may try to take the speck out of the neighbor's eye when they got a log in their own."*

This statement by the President did nothing but fuel the gay marriage debate.

Most Americans do not object to the notion of gay marriage. The problem lies in terminology. To redefine marriage as any union, versus a union solely between a man and women, offends most Americans. There are millions of married couples in this country. How is it fair to redefine what marriage is after these couples have married? Should these couples be forced to clarify that they are married to a person of the opposite sex?

There are many arguments in support of legal gay marriage. I am not going to debate those reasons. However, whatever accord is reached, I hope that marriage, and all it entails today, is not redefined. To do so would be akin to changing the rules mid-game. It is this main concept that I feel most Americans are in opposition of.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CT' followed by a stylized name.

**CT Thompson**  
Editor-in-Chief  
editor@acrimony.org



## Looking for a new hobby?

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<http://ad6.acrimony.org>

## To the Editor...

These articles are great! Excellent work!

*Fletcher T.*  
Fort Worth, TX

I read your newsletter last night and found it to be very informative and enlightening on the goth scene. It was all very professional and I would like to congratulate you all and wish you every success in your new business venture.

*Pam L.*  
Ireland

I just had a chance to read the first issue of Acrimony. Applause, applause.

*Clay E.*  
Columbia, MO

I think its a damn good 1st issue...lots of info...and lots of scrolling down

*Durinda O.*  
Mesa, AZ

Send your comments to [editor@acrimony.org](mailto:editor@acrimony.org)

## Was GothCon 2002 a Snowjob?

*Continued from Cover*

It was a memorable occurrence for them because they were in the middle of a holiday event when the check was dropped off in the amount of \$500.00. A hand-written receipt records the unexpected donation, which is now infamous for its conspicuously unprofessional nature. It took Project Lazarus by surprise because of the timing, and now they are constantly receiving calls from people like me who want to confirm the donation.

So at least as far as GothCon 2002 is concerned, they made at least a \$500.00 profit and donated that much to a charity. That charity is on record as having received the donation, and did also confirm that the check was cashed.

So what happened to the donations that were to have been made in 2000 and 2001? This is the very question that former GothCon staff and volunteers as well as former attendees want answered.

Many of them have come together to get to the bottom of this and encourage Sara to prove her case that money was donated or admit her failure to donate. They are also banding together to put the word out on the Internet to as to why they plan to boycott GothCon 2003. One thing is sure; Sara certainly didn't expect a kind of Spanish Inquisition.

### THE GOTHCON INQUISITION

***"NOBODY expects the Spanish Inquisition! Amongst our weaponry are such diverse elements as: fear, surprise, ruthless efficiency, an almost fanatical devotion to the Pope... and nice red uniforms - Oh damn!"***

*- Cardinal Biggles, Monty Python's Flying Circus*

There is a LiveJournal blog dedicated to the self-named GothCon Inquisition. In addition to this, the former gothcon.com website is now the home of the GothCon 2003 Boycott website. The former Webmaster, whose company still owns the domain name, has turned it against the unsuspecting convention promoters. Anyone who wanted to visit the original website they knew from previous years, will now find a website lobbying against the convention. The domain name was meant to be a donation, but since GothCon is not a valid non-profit organization, the original ownership is still intact.

People who attended GothCon in the past did it for many reasons. Certainly at the top of the list was the opportunity to enjoy a convention. But for others they were glad to see the convention making a donation to a

worthy cause. For those people, they believed it when the original GothCon website made the following claim:

***"GothCon Is A Non-Profit Organization. A Portion Of The Proceeds Will Go To Assist Those Who Suffer From AIDS And HIV."***

<http://web.archive.org/web/20000609030506/http://www.gothcon.com/>

The key phrases here are "non-profit" and "a portion of the proceeds". Both of these satisfied anyone who realized that they were announcing their intentions to make some donation of their profits to some charities. This certainly satisfied me at first when I realized that perhaps they were only able to make a donation to one charity - Project Lazarus. But the fact of the matter is that GothCon was never registered as an organization, let alone a non-profit one.

When the GCI challenged Sara about this issue, her response on March 27, 2003, in her own LiveJournal (<http://www.livejournal.com/users/000100010001/8803.html?thread=11619#t11619>), was that "Gothcon was/is non-profit, and gothcon is an event not a company. New Orleans only required of us an event permit. I would only need non-profit status if the revenue would exceed 25,000 or more. This is what I was told by the state and was confirmed by our new accountant, A&S Financial. We tried to file for non-profit and were denied because we are only a once a year event and gothcon is not a company."

What does all this mean? GothCon made an incorrect claim on their own website in 2000. Sara could have easily said the event was to be non-profit, meaning she intended to make a donation. But that is simply not what she did. Instead she implied her organization, in this case Seraphim Productions, was a non-profit organization, bound federally by IRS regulations.

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www.aidatlanta.org

April 15, 2003

To Whom It May Concern:

AID Atlanta was recently contacted about an event called GOTHCON, an event which was being billed as a benefit for AIDS organizations in the cities in which the event was being held. For three years this event has taken place alleging to donate funds to AIDS organizations in New Orleans and Atlanta.

As the Special Events Manager for AID Atlanta, one of the largest AIDS organizations in the southeast and the largest AIDS organization in Atlanta, I have extensively researched this event and any proceeds we were to receive from GOTHCON and its organizers.

To date no contribution has ever been made to AID Atlanta from either GOTHCON or Seraphim Productions, nor has anyone approached us in the last several years about the event. I have also gone as far as to contact my predecessor to assure that we were never approached. Again, we were not.

At this point, AID Atlanta cannot with any good will confirm a contribution to our organization from an event called GOTHCON or from an organization called Seraphim Productions.

Should you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at (404) 870-7731 or [claudia.zevallos@aidatlanta.org](mailto:claudia.zevallos@aidatlanta.org).

Sincerely,

Claudia Zevallos  
Special Events Manager

*From the AIDS charity, AID Atlanta, rebuking the claims that GothCon made any contributions. A similar letter was put out by NO/AIDS.*

After this, I dug deeper, into the same web archive, and came across this cost analysis breakdown of what they claimed to have donated and why.

<http://web.archive.org/web/20010803031700/gothcon.com/support.html>

**A breakdown of the cost of the 2002 event and the amount donated to NOAIDS Task Force.**

**Event Incurred costs: \$19,956.00**  
[hotel, guest rooms, sound equip, stage rental, pipe & drape, badges, programs, bands/guests, t-shirts, alcohol, table rental, & advertising]

**Income Assessment: \$18,500.00**  
[pre-sold tickets, vendor sales, door tickets, t-shirt sales, bar donations]

**Sponsor donations: \$1,214.00**

**Donation to by Gothcon to NOAIDS Task Force: \$1,456.00**

Continued on page 18  
[www.Acrimony.org](http://www.Acrimony.org)

# Runes



by **CT Thompson**  
ctthompson@acrimony.org

Runes are an ancient alphabet that describe the pulsating rhythms of life. Runes operate on all levels and all dimensions. They are the link between the cycles of nature and planetary bodies and their movements. They are glyphs of the cosmic forces all around us. The proper reading of runes can lead to a better understanding of the cosmos.

## Time Line

No runic inscriptions can be dated with accuracy before 200 AD.

## History

There is wide disagreement upon where Runes originated. The most popular theory is that they originated among the Goths or other Germanic tribes in an area north of the Black Sea. Migration of these tribes spread the Runes across middle and northern Europe. Runes were most likely inspired by the Greek and Latin alphabets.

By 300 AD the Runic alphabet had gone out of use in middle Europe due to the popularity of the Latin alphabet, which had followed the expansion of Christianity. Runic inscriptions were still in use throughout the world as late as the 15th century.

## The Elder Futhark of Runes

Futhark is the most common Runic alphabet. It is named from the first six Rune letters. Rune means Secret, Whisper, and Mystery.

## Aetts

Runes are divided into three groups of eight, representing the three streams of mind and matter in which Rune power can be contacted and have particular effect. The Aetts are named for Norse deities. Freya, the Earth

Aett. Hagal, the Warrior Aett. Tyr, the Heaven Aett. These represent the psychological, practical, and organizational worlds respectively.

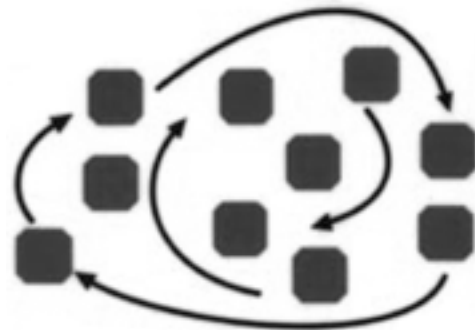
## Moon Phases

Best casting times are during a waxing Moon, just after a New Moon or prior to a Full Moon. Avoid casting during the new Moon.

## The Casting Rituals

Lay out a white or other important cloth. Make each reading symbolic by placing special stones, amulets, or other symbols on cloth corners. Sit before the cloth and place all Runes facedown on cloth. Ask a specific question and while concentrating on it for a few moments, hold hands above the Runes three to four inches. Then swirl the Runes clockwise mixing with hands.

### SWIRLING



Runes facedown. Mix clockwise with palms

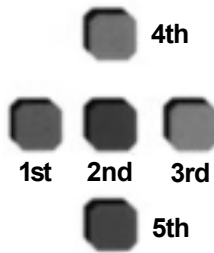
Select one of the following casting rituals. Randomly select and place each Rune face down in its casting position.

### Elemental Cross

Pick a Rune and place it in the first position. Select another for the second position and so on. Read each Rune, one at a time, for each cast position.

## ELEMENTAL CROSS

- 1 - Past
- 2 - Present
- 3 - Help
- 4 - Challenges
- 5 - Future



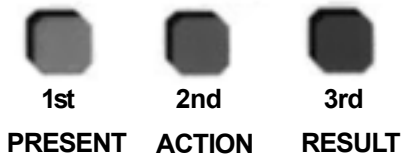
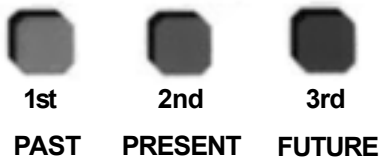
### Single Rune

Ask a question, then choose one Rune from your pouch. Unfold your hand. If the Rune is upright, the answer is yes. If it is reversed, the answer is no.

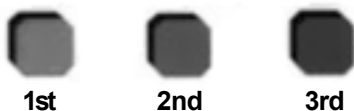
### Morning Rune

Ask a question, "What will today bring?" or "What energies are flowing my way?" Select a Rune from the pouch. Rune meanings present the opportunities and the challenges of our lives.

### Three Rune Method



### Three Rune Yes - No



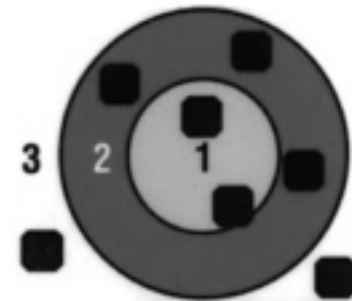
All upright - YES  
 All reversed - NO  
 Mixed - UNKNOWN

## Destiny Wheel

Draw two circles on a cloth. Select seven Runes from your pouch and cast. Read the Runes out from center, spaces 1, 2, 3.

Circle #1 is *Karmic* destiny (past-fate)  
 Circle #2 is *Mental-Emotional* influence  
 Circle #3 is *Physical* influence

## DESTINY WHEEL



## Rune Meanings

### 1st Aett - Earth Family



**FEOH** - Wealth, fulfillment, power, material gain, greed.

**REV** - Disappointments, loss, money problems, arguments.



**UR** - Strength, promotion, health, distant influences.

**REV** - Weak will, low energy, illness, missed opportunities.



**THORN** - Protection, counsel, non-action, luck, warning.

**REV** - Stubborn, foolhardy, doesn't heed advice, folly.



**AS** - Wisdom, apprentice, tests, inspiration, advice.

**REV** - Trickery, interference, dilettante, deceit, dissipation.



**RAD** - Journey, messages, career, right action, control.  
**REV** - Upset in plans, delays, unexpected travel, lost.



**KEN** - Energy, positivity, lust, rapport, knowledge.  
**REV** - Terminations, facing up to death, giving up the old.



**GIFU** - Partners, love, gifts, fortune, divine union.  
**REV** - Problems with roots of an emotional nature.



**WYNN** - Harmony, blessings, joy, affection, desire.  
**REV** - Dissatisfaction, misery, fear, impatience, headstrong.

### 2nd Aett - Warrior Family



**HAGAL** - Limits, upheavals, risks, delays, shadows.  
**REV** - Disruptive forces, negative payoffs.



**NYD** - Patience, omens, stress, obstacles, necessity.  
**REV** - Wrong direction, possessive, inappropriate.



**IS** - Static, energy loss, cooling, separation, focus, privacy, ill feelings.  
**REV** - Breach of loyalty.



**JERA** - Harvest, legalities, reward, peace, commitment.  
**REV** - Fruition cannot be rushed, seasonal.



**EOH** - Rebirth, persevere, quest, conflict, success.  
**REV** - Stagnation, undoing, inactivity, tensions.



**PEORTH** - Destiny, mystery, secrets, sexuality, initiation.  
**REV** - Revealed secrets, unexpected results, disloyal.



**ELHAZ** - Friendship, optimism, aspiration, fortune, soul.  
**REV** - Used by others, wait, mislead, vulnerable.



**SIGEL** - Victory, clear vision, honor, achievement, rest, mostly positive Rune.  
**REV** - Self-centered.

### 3rd Aett - Heaven Family



**TYR** - Warrior, sacrifice, intrigue, courage, justice.  
**REV** - Blocked energy, listless, questionable motives.



**BEORC** - Purity, becoming, birth, great mother.  
**REV** - Family problems and needs, anxiety, worry.



**EH** - Progress, future, changes, movement, trust.  
**REV** - Long journeys, sudden change, timing.



**MAN** - The self, modesty, thought, altruism, creative.  
**REV** - Selfish, uninvolved, victim, egotism, alone.



**LAGU** - Emotions, psychic, feminine, dreams, intuition.  
**REV** - Escaping, temptations, greed, against conscience.



**ING** - Potential, freedom, conclusion, consequence.  
**REV** - Marking endings and beginnings, milestones.



**ODAL** - Property, heritage, dwellings, mountains to climb.  
**REV** - Reckless, frustration, legal problems, hassled.



**DAEG** - Ambition, light, breakthrough, growth, cosmic consciousness.  
**REV** - Attitude, radical change.

### Upright / Reversed

When a Rune is upright it means something positive or beneficial. If the Rune is not toward the reader but reads reversed (upside down), it is noted as REV. The REV meaning differs from upright as being an opposite flow of energies.

Nine Runes look the same upright or reversed. These have challenges too, which are indicated for the REV meaning. Those nine Runes are:

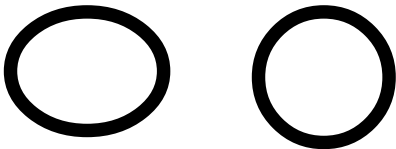
**THORN, GIFU, HAGAL, IS, JERA, EOH, SIGEL, ING,** and **DAEG**

### Additional / Optional Runes



**WYRD**

The *WYRD* Rune, or Fate Stone, is read as a doorway to the cosmic power of fate. The part of fortune: Past, Present, and Future. Also sometimes referred to as a Blank Stone (Not to be confused with the Gender Stone), it indicates fate, fateful, and fated. It is secrets. Toss all Runes and read it via those next to it, spiraled out from the center, clockwise.



**BLANK**

Querent's *Gender Stone*. Oval for men and round for women. Remove the unused one from the pouch. It is the outward (male) or inward (female) energy. Shake all Runes in hands and gently toss onto a cloth. Turn over all Runes and read clockwise, spiraled from the *Gender Stone*.



## Sky Watch



SkyWatch provides a personalized, on-line sky calendar by sending email to its subscribers about satellite passes that can be seen from their location. It also keeps them informed about meteor showers, eclipses and other astronomy news.

<http://ad3.acrimony.org>

## Shadows of the Dog

by Pam Logue  
 emerald@hotmail.com

In the splintering half-light of the dawn, shadows contorted, before dancing away from any effort to focus on them. Just as they became a solid form, a blink would shatter the illusion. They would once again become a dark forbidding non-thing that was somehow more frightening than a monster with size, shape and substance.

The long hours of night had trickled by. Tiredness became the over-tiredness that denied sleep. She reached for the pack of cigarettes that had been fresh just a few hours before. She took the last one and crumpled the packet before tossing it aside. The noise was unreal and echoed hollow in the silence before the dawn chorus. Blue smoke curled upwards, adding to the haze of the early light. It drifted skyward and then caught on a passing breeze. It then disappeared along with the ever-shortening shadows.

Unconsciously she tapped the side of her leg and looked for.... for what? Something was missing, a weight that should be by her leg. There should be warmth, a pressure, and a comfort. She realized what was missing and once again the overwhelming sense of loss threatened to swamp her. Tears welled up in her hazel eyes and finally over spilled to roll unchecked down her cheeks.

She could see the bottom of the garden clearly now and despite willing herself not to do so, she left the chair to walk the borders of the carefully manicured lawn.

She was being drawn to a particular point; trying to avoid it she knelt down and plucked the head from a dead flower. She crushed it between her fingers and watched as the brown dead leaves crumbled to dust and floated like ash to the lawn beneath. Slowly she arose and continued the walk towards the point in the garden where she really did not want to be.

Under the beech tree, in the corner of the garden where no one much went, sat a low mound of earth. It was positioned so as to catch the first rays of the morning sunlight, and too be cool and shady in the late afternoon. She knelt at the side of the small grave, her fingers playing with the gardenia flowers that she had planted there. At the head of the mound a small stone marker was embedded so it lay flush to the surface of the earth. She brushed dirt and fallen leaves from its surface and traced the letters etched in its surface with a fingertip. Tears came freely now, trickling over her long lashes, flowing in tiny rivulets over her pale white cheeks before dipping off the end of her chin and splashing silently on to the grave below.

Slowly and unsteadily she regained her feet. Her tears gave way to sobs that raked her body and made it difficult for her to remain standing. She reached out a hand to steady herself against the old beech. Feeling the unevenness of the surface and glancing down, she saw the many deep scratches that were the result of years of clawing. Involuntarily her clenched fist went to her mouth and sobbing she bit down on her knuckles as if somehow the physical pain could make the mental one go away.

Eventually the sobs that racked her body subsided and staggering slightly she made her way back up the garden. The dawn was breaking properly now, the sounds coming from the kitchen told her that Stephen was awake and preparing breakfast. She sniffed, wiping her eyes to try and hide the tears. Stephen could not understand. He, like everyone else, could not comprehend the depth of her grief. She had come to him sobbing and in struggling gasps. She had explained to him how she had held her pet's head and looked into his eyes as the vet gave the animal the injection that sent him to his last rest. He had held her for a moment. Then he gently pushed her away and told her this weekend they would go and buy her another dog. She had become angry then, cold rage burning within her as he turned back to study the papers he had brought home from the office.

She re-entered the house through the french windows, avoiding the kitchen, knowing her eyes would be red and her face streaked by tears. Softly she went up the stairs and retreated to the bathroom, the only room in the house to have a lock on the door. She put her hands on either side of the sink. She leaned close to the mirrored doors of the bathroom cabinet that hung over the basin. Critically she examined her face and then with a sigh opened the cabinet door and began to try to mask her feelings behind

layers of makeup.

The smell of warm toast filtered up the stairs and she caught the scent of it. Her mouth watered, an involuntary reaction to the tantalizing aroma. She suddenly realized how hungry she was. She put away her makeup and once again critically examined her features in the mirror. It wasn't perfect but Stephen was always too busy in the morning to pay much attention to her. Doubtlessly he would not notice the slight strain in her eyes and the odd imperfection in her normally flawless makeup.

The kitchen was spacious and decorated for large open expanses. The kitchen had pale muted colors and reconstituted marble worktops. The dawn sunlight spilled in through the large windows and transfixed dust motes leaving them spinning and shining in the early morning brightness. Stephen whistled tunelessly as he straightened his tie in the mirror and then stopped for a moment to grin maniacally into the mirror to check his teeth for remnants of breakfast. She casually reflected that Stephen was an irritatingly fastidious soul. He looked round and then came to her. He tilted her head gently forward and kissed her forehead as if she were a child. This was another of Steve's habits that she found annoying. She smiled at him weakly as he spoke, "I got to run Hon, there's toast in the toaster and I left you some cereal, though you might want to re-stock. We seem to be kind of low on the food front". With a wave and a lopsided smile he was gone.

She sighed and sat on a breakfast stool. The toast popping from the toaster barely registered. She absently searched her pockets and realized that she had smoked the last of her cigarettes in the early hours as she had sat staring into the gloom. She was alerted to the paperboy delivering the early morning news by his whistling. It only impinged upon her because normally she would be informed of his arrival by the barking of her dog. She got up and went to stand by the window. She stared mutely down the well-manicured lawn. She noticed the weeds that had crept in between the rapidly declining summer bedding plants. Her breath was caught on the glass and without thinking she traced with her fingers the misty area. She was suddenly aware of what she was doing. She looked at the letters she had scribbled and tried not to shake: R U S S. Russ, the name of her dog, dead five days and still she could not bring herself to return to normal. Even her friends had begun to lose patience with her. She could see it in their eyes, the unspoken accusation, "For Christ sake Jane it was your dog not your child! Get over it!"

The day, as is its wont, contrived to travel its routine. Stephen had left for work. The house got cleaned. The shopping was done. The evening meal was prepared and ready for cooking later. Still, Jane glanced about her. Whilst her mind was occupied on the mundane almost automatic duties of running a household her thoughts turned to Russ. Normally as she did this work, she would constantly be talking to the dog that would follow her



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through the rooms and sit with his head cocked to one side listening to the tone of her voice. Come one o'clock he would become restless and bark at her until she would relent and reach for his leash. Jane's eyes went misty as she looked at the leather strip that hung on its hook set into the kitchen wall. She wandered over to it and ran her hands across its surface. It was worn smooth and soft from constant use. Ingrained into the leather was a scent she knew well, the musky tart smell of dog.

She stood staring at, but not seeing the leash. She heard a noise. It was a noise that was familiar to her, the padding clicking sound of a dog's claws on kitchen linoleum. Somewhere in her mind, but far too deep for her to acknowledge, screamed a voice that the sound should not be, could not be. This small warning was ignored. She reached down with her palm flat and absently stroked the large furry head at her leg. Her hand received attention from a lolling, wet tongue and the sensation caused her to smile. The act had become so foreign to her these last five days that it snapped her to attention. Her face changed. She jumped and snatched away her hand. She stared down at the empty where her hand had been.

Jane staggered slightly and only the kitchen worktops provided support to stop her from falling. It had been so real. The sensation and feel of fur under her finger tips. She stared at her hand and felt the stickiness begin to fade. Was she imagining things now? Had she gone mad? She could feel the saliva from his tongue as it dried on her hand, she could feel the after affects of stroking the ever so slightly greasy hairs of his head. She stared down at the floor. She had vacuumed that morning and swept out the kitchen. Yet here and there about the floor wiry black hairs caught subtle drafts and drifted into the air.

She pinched the bridge of her nose and closed her eyes briefly. She opened them and glanced down again. She had seen the hairs. Briefly, but she had seen them. Now the floor was clear and clean. Almost frantically she dropped to the floor on hands and knees. Her eyes desperately searching for a sign that would prove she was not mad.

Jane almost screamed. The hard rubber ball bounced once in front of her and rolled across the floor. She jumped to her feet. Impossibly it stopped for a moment then turning right angles it sped across the floor. Jane slowly regained her feet and with open mouth watched as the ball flew into the air. It raced back to the floor and stopped mid air. The ball bounced towards her at knee height. An insistent but unseen wet cold nose thrust the slightly gooey ball into her hand. Shaking, she held the ball. She knew then she had lost her mind. The darkness crowded in and the room spun. Jane did not hear the sickening crunch as she met the hard kitchen floor. She was already unconscious by the time it came up to hit her.

The room was stark white and as she returned to consciousness she realized that she was in a hospital. Somewhere from beyond her peripheral vision she could hear voices. The sound was annoying. She could not make out individual words. Straining to hear, she could only make out concerned whispered tones that buzzed in her mind like irritated insects. A face bent low over her. A face contorted by its closeness into a nightmarish blur of pink flesh with white teeth glinting wide into a smile. She closed her eyes as she was hit by a wave of nausea.

She tried to raise her hand to her ease the thumping pain in her head and immediately she regretted the action. A wave of blackness threatened to take her back into the painless oblivion. The thought of loosing the pain was a seductive, tangible thing that beckoned to her. The black wave took on form and it was a thing of beauty. Its substance was purity and sweetness. It called to her and held out its hands. The hands, which for some reason had become soft and hairy under her touch, were strangely comforting and familiar. The black creatures face had elongated into a muzzle and a long pink tongue lopped mockingly from between sharp white teeth. The blackness suddenly frightened her and she fought to be free of it. Struggling away from the seductive promises of oblivion, she clawed for a grip on the conscious world. With a hint of sadness in its brown eyes, the black form slipped from her. The pink tongue merged with the darkness around it and suddenly it was gone.

The bright whiteness of the room returned and she could see faces peering down at her. Slowly she became coherent and started to understand words, "... ink she's coming out", "nasty bump on the head knocked her cold", "well it looks like she is coming out of it finally."

Continued on page 15

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## Scrying Times

Firey spheres of crimson, pulsated  
In the chasm of polished night,  
Judicial tempest burned the glassy orb;  
In a blind frenzy of intense hues,  
oracle divines naught  
the where nor when of  
Meteorically sovereign dimensions.  
Held captive in the continuum -  
The priest, compelled, did pray

The splendor of the horror, now  
Etched deep within dismay,  
Bore witness to creation's sin;  
The grace of mankind's decline,  
an unfolding universe; affects  
of infinite eternal evolution;  
truth, myth, immortality -  
weakened resolve

"scry & urn"

DM

Diana M. Merchant  
PsyChick93@yahoo.com  
(c) 21 August 2000  
REVISED/ 4.21.2002

## Twilight

I watched the sun set tonight  
It was a long day, and a long night  
With the dawn she left today  
Now she's gone, my life to pay

In this game of life, they say  
You cannot win, you cannot stay  
A gambler's life for the chosen few  
In the end, you can't take it with you

This table's cold now, my hand I fold  
Even though my story's left untold  
No one here wants to hear the tale  
Of a broken heart that's gotten stale

In pain we're born, and naked true  
In our twilight's darkest blue  
We find the strength to end the pain  
In twilight's hour my heart will stain

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Daniel@acrimony.org

<http://www.ShauretteNet.com>

## Passion's Dance

Passion's fire rages close,  
Can you feel my flame  
Scorch your flesh.  
Desiring, wanting... Ever needing;  
Your touch.  
Draw close in my dream  
Become one with me,  
Ah yes... Oh yes... Destiny it shall be  
Oh, white flame of wanton need  
Coursing through our veins  
Crying out to embrace, and hungrily match...  
Your passion's dance.

by Pam Logue  
emaerald@hotmail.com

## Rant

I.

Burning bright in the guts of a city that has no guts- never  
a challenge. Burning at all in a city of guts and balls,  
money-men fast-talkers back chatting, backhanding,  
backstabbing

People climbing people  
over people to get  
on top of people.

Fighting for the souls of man-  
No longer an issue.  
Fighting for one soul,  
one man,  
Me.

*For the blood is the life, the blood is eternity...  
But at what cost?*

**What would you do...**  
*If the mysterious woman in your dreams was real?  
If the woman in your dreams was a vampire?  
If you were dying would you want to taste immortality?*

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Barely an issue.

Barely a thought, a peep, a twitter down in the valleys of concrete, down in the veins below the city, where iron monstrosities churn and burn their way through the guts of a city with too much guts.

The city still breathes- still moves.  
Yawning awake to the sun with a saxophone player in front of the open market, playing the blues in the half-light before the day's even begun. It hums and bustles through the day-

bagpipes in the Mall, djembes doumbeks  
djembed doumbeked on  
the Ave, settling into the low final pulse of electric bass

"I will not give up,

I will not go away,

I am not afraid."

As the sun sets, as the last students, shoppers, and tourists tuck in. And for a while,

we are not.

But the City is violent, like any other beast.

Cell killing cell in an almost necessary part of the social macro organism. After all, it must be necessary, mustn't it? Nothing happens that isn't All part of the grand plan?

BREATHEEATFIGHTFUCKKILLDIE

After all, we're all just cogs in the machine, meat for the grinder, rocks for the gizzard of the great big Man-unkind monster of whatever it is we call

Home

Never was a place with these faceless gray towers,  
Silicon on crystal on steel on concrete on  
cinderblock on ash  
Never faceless people milling in their millions, stumbling

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about in dim procession,  
trying to prove that their lives mean something.  
Home was a place, and a face-  
-warm voice over cups of coffee  
something in between the space between two bodies.

I remember it

-I do.

It still flashes in the space between the space between  
my burned out memories

-gaps in the ash-  
the dust.

The music, the pulse of the city eats into me- bite by bite-  
wearing me- aching me.

I will not give up  
I will not go away  
I am not afraid

And I remember a time when I was not.

## II.

Brain-burning my way into another disused, rundown, run  
out, java-junkie  
anciently justified coffee shop, trying to remember the dif-  
ferences in the things that mattered-

Love and Sex  
Sex and Hate  
The raven and the writing desk

Multiplicity of thousand-dollar words with no meaning  
buzzword their way through me.  
Music surrounding me burning in an inartistic burn from  
signal to noise to signal to noise to signal but the whole  
remains noise.  
Artists scrawling away in their little black charcoal-lust  
smeared books-  
Readers passing away, passing time- passing eyes across  
dusty pages  
they've read too many times before- and here I sit- alone.  
Pen and paper  
cold solace against the bad coffee and worse thoughts  
churning in my gut- the shakes  
from just one more, just one more, just one too many  
smokes littering my brain.

Fighting to find my way through to the next poem,  
the next novel, the next something.

The Character? Me but not me but someone like  
me.

The Roommate? You but not you but someone  
like you.

Then the lawyer walked in and it all went to shit.

A hodgepodge of so and so  
blurring over what depths of meaning  
that are found in the bottom of a coffee cup  
A car?

My car?

Something just drove off in the dark- my thoughts,  
my heart,

I don't know what but it just dissolved under a  
strange mutter of psychobabble.

But that one thing.

-one  
Whatever it was  
car, thought, mind, heart, soul-  
That was it. What mattered, what made  
the difference between

One and one  
One and all  
One and none.

Lost in the space that it took for my heart to beat.  
Lost in the space between the space between.

As I became lost.

## III.

Multimedia desperately interplaying a hookup  
buzzes in my ears-

I walk  
step  
step  
step

through the city,  
my city- a part of the whole social macro  
organism

one one  
one all  
one none  
one one

The breatheatfightfuckkilldie chorus of life drones around  
me- with one slip,  
I could become part of this, part of the whole nothing-ev-  
erything, another cog

in the techno-monstrous Sheol I inhabit.

Pain-  
Isolation-

Howling in the cold void outside of warmth outside of con-  
tact- My own stubborn damnedness keeping me from the  
slip the sideward plunge into reality, into numb acceptance.

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Keeping me in the space between the space between my  
burned out memories, keeping me one and not one with  
the City.

Inside my walls-  
Inside my cold void-  
I scream-

I will not give up  
I will not go away  
I am not afraid

As I wait for the day when I am not.

by **Dmitri Arbacauskas**

WinneganFake@hotmail.com

<http://www.livejournal.com/users/winneganfake>



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## *Shadows of the Dog*

*Continued from Page 11*

Jane groaned and even this much effort caused her to wince from the pain in her head. The doctor bent low over her bed and spoke to her. His tone was insistent and his voice nagged at her.

"Jane? Jane can you here me? Do you know what happened to you? Jane listen to me. I'm Doctor Singh Indejit. You know me, remember? You're in the Manor Hospital. Do you know why?"

The voice seemed to go on and on. It ignored the pain in her head and dug at her. She had no wish to answer but her lips moved in spite of her. The doctor leaned close to catch her words.

"My dog," was all she managed to say. The doctor smiled slightly.

"Its okay Jane. Someone will take care of your dog. Don't worry about that now. Can you tell me what happened to you?"

Jane's eyes closed again and the voice of the doctor began to recede. Soon it was only a lingering faint echo that would soon be gone. From the darkness the shape came again, its brown eyes looked up at her pleadingly and between its teeth it clenched a stick. She smiled, surprised that the pain in her head had gone. She grabbed at the stick but the black thing darted nimbly away, tail

wagging. It danced closer again; one of its four feet she now noticed had a white stocking. Laughing she murmured, "Okay Russ I'll come play."

The doctor looked down at the sleeping form of the woman. He turned to the man who was standing slightly behind him with a concerned look on his face. The doctor said, "I think we should let her rest for the moment Steve, she has had a nasty bump to the head. Normally I'd expect her to have come around by now, but these things affect people differently. The good news is that the CAT scan is clear. No signs of damage to the brain and she has not damaged her skull. As I said when you brought her in, it is a nasty blow. We'll keep her here overnight for observation. She should be able to go home with you in the morning. I want someone with her for a couple of days though. Is anyone at home?"

"I can take a couple of days off Inde," Steve said.

"Good. You do that. She should be kept quiet and lay off anything too strenuous for a week or so. I'll look in on her again in the morning and sign her out," the Doctor replied.

"Thanks Inde," said Steve.

The two men shook hands and the doctor walked to the door to continue his rounds. He turned and looked thoughtfully at the woman as he walked through the door. Glancing down at his hands he noticed that somehow he had managed to get black hairs on them. Irritated, he wiped them on the sides of his white coat.

Around midnight the nurse came quietly into the room. She glanced at the woman's chart and carefully checked a couple of instruments before adding additional notes to the existing figures. She checked the woman's pulse and re-arranged the bedclothes about the sleeping form. As she turned to leave something caught her eye. Stooping, she picked up a hard blue rubber ball. She held it up. With a confused look on her face she examined the object. She was slightly annoyed that the well ordered

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room should contain such an incongruity. She noticed the once smooth surface of the ball was pitted with teeth marks, and with distaste realized the ball was slightly damp and gooey to the touch. She placed it in the patient's personal locker and wiped her hands down the sides of her uniform. She headed to the door without giving the ball another thought.

The sun rose and light streamed in through the windows. The bright sunlight made the room slightly warmer than was comfortable. Stephen released his wife's hand and rubbing his eyes he looked around for the room's environmental controls. The movement disturbed Jane and she awoke. The pain in her head had retreated to a dull ache. The previous twenty-four hours rushed in on her and fragments of sights and sounds all fought to be uppermost in her consciousness. The affect was disorientating and for a moment. She could not quite place the man who was smiling down and talking at her. She realized with a start that it was Stephen.

"Ugh, What honey?" She spoke absent mindedly, not really wanting to hear what he was saying. She was looking around the room, easing herself up onto her elbows so she could see into the corners. She was looking for something, something that she had misplaced. Or rather she was looking for someone. Someone? No, that was not right either. Not someone, not something. There was.... She allowed herself to fall back onto the bed. Her mind grasping for whatever it was she had lost. She realized that Stephen's voice now carried a hint of panic. She knew she had better answer him.

"Err, morning honey." She held her hand to her forehead, "I hit my head didn't I?"

She saw Stephen smile, relief flowing into his features as visibly as water filling a sink.

Jane felt a searching snuffling muzzle on her left hand. The large furry black head thrust itself under her fingers and she heard heavy breathing. Brown eyes looked balefully at her as two, overly large front paws plunked themselves onto the bed. She rubbed the white blaze on the dog's chest and a happily panting pink tongue rolled out. Jane laughed and with mock sternness admonished the animal, "Hey Russ! Bad lad! You know you're not allowed on the bed. What's this? Ahh, what's this?"

As she spoke she lightly patted the dogs paws with her fingertips and then hugged the animal around its neck. She was rewarded by a lick from a large pink tongue for her trouble. "Ugg," She gasped with mock solemnity and pushed the furry head away from her face.

She looked across at Steven who stood looking back at her, his face a mask of horror. "What's up?" She asked brightly as she turned back to the dog that was again insisting on being stroked by shoving its head into

her hand.

Before Stephen could say anything a thought struck her. "Steve how on earth did you get Russ into the hospital? They'll go bonkers when they find him." She reached out her hand, took her husband's, and held it close to her cheek. "Thank you love. It was really good of you to sneak him in here for me."

Stephen sat heavily on the edge of the bed. His mouth opened, then closed, then opened again. He looked into his wife's eyes. "Honey, what's going on?"


The look of confusion that she returned him was more frightening than when he had found her on the kitchen floor. She took her hands from his, and as he sat open mouthed, she returned to talking to the space on the other side of the bed.

She went on, "Yes, you are a naughty dog. A lovely big lad. Just look at those paws. What are those paws doing there?"

Stephen backed away from the bed. He ran from the room and raced down the corridor shouting for the doctor.

The grounds were beautiful. The landscaping had been designed to compliment the buildings that lay scattered all around. Many people sat in the sunshine, some simply stared into space. White clad nurses wheeled some about while others appeared to be in animated conversation with themselves. Stephen walked uneasily across the grass. This place made him uncomfortable but Inde had assured him that this was the best place for Jane. Here she would get the best care and attention. For the first three months he had visited dutifully twice a week. Then as his work once again took him, he had begun to come once a week. Just for a while he had told himself. Just until things slow down a bit at work. Jane had been here over a year now and this was his first visit in nearly a month. It did not matter he told himself; she did not hear him or even really want to see him. When he came, she sat and listened to him, a disbelieving half smile on her face as she stroked, patted, and hugged something that as not there.

Continued on page 21



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# ***New style of belly dance spreads***



by **CT Thompson**  
ctthompson@acrimony.org

A new type of belly dance is sweeping across the western United States. American Tribal Style Belly Dance encompasses original gypsy-style dancing, but also includes a contemporary American touch. Belly dancing in general has had a long history of mutation. Quite often dancers would change their art in order to suit the audience they were performing for. The latest evolution of American Tribal is no exception.

"American Tribal Style belly dance incorporates Middle Eastern moves, Indian moves, and a little bit of the Flamenco-Spanish style. But the concept of American Tribal Style is that it is focused on group improvisation and that whole theory is what makes it really new. Regular Middle Eastern dance and belly dance doesn't incorporate cues and working with other dancers, they're more of a solo art." Tells Heidi Alexander, an instructor at the Domba school in Tempe, Arizona.

Where cabaret and gypsy dancing often include long complicated sequences of moves and positions, American Tribal Style is less demanding. There are fewer moves, but they are more precisely defined. The dance environment is one of lead and follow. The strength of American Tribal Style is seen when the troupe performs together. Though there are fewer moves, (and they tend to be repeated), they are done in unison and a greater effect is achieved.

At some point in the dance, two to four members of the troupe break free and perform in the center. They lead a group improvisation and the remaining dancers make up the chorus.

The costumes vary greatly, but they are for the most part, of traditional gypsy origin. The music is also more often traditional versus contemporary, having a heavy emphasis on percussion.

When held in contrast with other dance styles, American Tribal is usually learned quicker. "If the student has a dance background they're going to learn a lot quicker. Some people just pick it up quicker than others. So it all depends on the student. On average I would say, before I would consider them to be a professional dancer, it takes at least two years of lessons." Tells Heidi.

American Tribal is a style dominated by women. Although some of the greatest belly dancers in history have been male, that is not the case with American Tribal Style.



"We've had a couple of men come into the class and try it once. It's not their thing. The men usually take the drumming class." Tells Heidi.

All and all the success of American Tribal Style seems to come from the group interaction of the women. Working together, especially when new, boosts their confidence. Inhibitions are lowered and learning is easier.

When asked what a woman should do when she is thinking of starting of dance class of this type but is too afraid to try, Heidi responded, "Its so much fun that if they just came once they would be hooked. And its great exercise. A lot of people come in for the exercise."



*Domba offers American Tribal Style belly dance, Cabaret belly dance, Indian styling, skirt styling, tribal sword, Poi fire spinning, Middle Eastern drum, and children's belly dance classes. They also sell tribal gypsy costumes, tribal belly dance costumes, and ethnic musical instruments and CD's. For further information:*



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*Photographs by CT Thompson*



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## *Was GothCon 2002 a Snowjob?*

*Continued from Page 5*

Thank you to everyone who attended the event and we hope all of you will come back in 2002 and bring a few friends with you! We want to double this amount next year!

Your attendance and support **DOES** help! We were able to give our chosen charity over \$1,100 more in 2001 than in 2000.

This breakdown is either flawed, confused, or I've lost my ability to solve word problems. GothCon claimed that they incurred costs of \$19956.00, but had an income of \$18500.00. This alone comes out to a negative of \$1456.00. Are they claiming then that the NO/AIDS donation is included as an incurred cost, and if so, why is it not in their quick list of costs? What about the sponsor donations? Is this just a breakout of the "income" or is

this credited as additional income? This page just suffers from too many mistakes, intentionally misleading or not.

At first glance, this appears to detail the costs and donations from 2002. Despite the failed attempt to explain how they came up with this amount, there are two other problems. First, there's no mention of money donated to Project Lazarus. Second and more damaging, NO/AIDS reported to ACT-UP Atlanta that they never received any money from GothCon.

A careful examination of the context of the rest of the breakdown page shows that this was the tally and donations for GothCon 2001, not 2002. The website was setup for announcing GothCon 2002, so the beginning sentence claiming breakdown of "2002" is yet another mistake. (This was confirmed by *The Wayback Machine* itself; the URL includes the archive folder of "20010803031700" which is a timestamp of the date August 3, 2001 at 03:17:00 AM.)

This explains why there is no reference to Project Lazarus. However that breakdown page only claims a donation was made to NO/AIDS Task Force, not to AID Atlanta. This owes to the fact that AID Atlanta was to be the main recipient of GothCon 2000, which I cannot find files for. But, again reading their breakdown note, they claim they donated more than \$1100 more in 2001 than they did in 2000, i.e. to AID Atlanta. Quick math gives the estimate that AID Atlanta should have received about \$356.00.

The Boycott website has two letters from NO/AIDS Task Force and AID Atlanta that explain that no money was ever received from GothCon. So, where did these donations go? Was the money intended to be donated, but it never materialized? Sara's answers to this in the past are so contradictory in nature, that I was hoping to contact her myself and find out what happened. To date, she has not been available for comment.

## THE FUTURE OF GOTHCON®

So what does the future hold for GothCon? If it goes on as planned at the end of October, the boycotters are planning to picket outside of the hotel it will be held at. Their goal is not to prevent people from going to GothCon, but to make them aware of the history of the event. They have asked their questions and not gotten satisfactory answers.

Saying that however, the former Webmaster does have one goal - to prevent the name of GothCon from being used. Not only does she still own the domain, she also just recently secured a registered trademark on the name GothCon.

Rumors of harassment by both sides are causing the issue to spin out of control, and no spin doctor seems to be able to put out this fire yet. I myself have tried to keep an open mind and hear both sides. The people I interviewed on both fronts are sore to be sure at the other side. It doesn't take much to turn an Inquisition into a witch hunt. The Inquisition knows no donations were received by two charities. Finally admitting what happened is probably the only thing that will stop this chaos. Life is all about drama, but in a town nicknamed Hotlanta, you are bound to find more than your share.

***"Frankly my dear, I don't give a damn."***

*- Rhett Butler, "Gone With The Wind"*



*Photo by CT Thompson  
ctthompson@acrimony.org*

# Ask Scarlett!



by **Scarlett Crawford**  
scarlett@acrimony.org

Dear Scarlett,

I am certain my girlfriend is cheating on me. I don't have any proof, except for her odd behavior. She locks her cell phone so I can't see the call history. She always has her purse in view. Quite often after coming home she rushes straight to the shower. How do I find out for sure?

Dear Suspicious and Distrustful,

The seed of doubt is planted for a reason. Plus, if you're catching on to her cheating she must be getting sloppy. You need to trust your instincts; even if she isn't cheating there must be some underlying deception that you are picking up upon. The basis for any relationship must be trust, without trust you might as well just be jerking off. I think you should confront her about it. If the conversation leaves your questions unanswered you then will have clarity as to what your next move should be. Either way you have hard decisions coming up. Just remember that this is a growing process and significant others are just like busses: if you miss out on one, another will be coming along shortly.

Dear Scarlett,

You are a nut-job! I read your column last week and I think you need to learn the word compassion. Why in the hell would ANYBODY listen to you?!?!?!?

Dear Nut-job Accuser,

Compassion! I have compassion for puppies and babies. Compassion is not needed for adults as we create almost all of our own problems through either poor choices or lack of action. If you are looking for fluff and feel good support for your poor decisions seek advice elsewhere. Here you will not find the crappy advice that will tell you only to do what feels good. I am here to provide the hard cold reality check that this society is crying out for. Life is chock full of hard decisions and no win situations. The key to a happy life is having the courage to make the tough choices and not to be immobilized by fear.

Dear Scarlett,

There is this rapist on the run roaming around our once peaceful town. News has it that he is impossible to cage because a black magic spell is protecting him. I really want to get his views up close without harming myself. Some people have advised me to get a *blessing* from people who are practicing *magic* so I could be protected. But how? As much as I'm afraid of *gate crashing*, I'm also at loss of words to tell them. What should I do?

Dear Criminal Inquirer,

Do you really have so little self esteem that you'd knowingly endanger yourself in the attempt of conversing with a rapist? What's wrong with you? What intrigued you? Was it the outlandish behavior, the *bad boy* image, or was it the black magic factor? What views are you looking for? Why he lusts for violating others rights, or how he eludes the police? Why would you start practicing magic, something you clearly don't believe in? I think you really need to take a step back and look within yourself.

Even amongst the most hardened criminals, rapist are shunned, the worst of the worst. In prison rapists have the shortest lifespan because they are usually killed, and not by the judicial system either. People usually seek out the views of those they consider to be their equal, or in some cases their superior. What makes you think that you are equal to a rapist? Is this just an outward expression of a need for suicide? My advice is to seek help, and not in the magical realm. See a councilor or talk to a friend. You may email me again regarding this and will reply to you personally.



Scarlett's column is run exclusively in *Acrimony*. Email your question to her at [scarlet@acrimony.org](mailto:scarlet@acrimony.org)

## Vampyrlic Chat

Where Vampires chat  
on the Internet



<http://www.UndernetVampires.com>

## *Shadows of the Dog*

*Continued from Page 16*

Sighing, he crested the small rise and stood for a moment watching Jane run across the grass. She fell laughing and rolled, apparently tripped by something at her feet. She knelt on all fours facing something he could not see. She was growling playfully as she shook her head. It was a game he had seen her play with Russ a thousand times. She would take one of the endless chews she brought him and pretend to chew it herself. Growling at Russ whenever he came to try and take it. Jane waved to him. For a moment her eyes clouded. As always he was stabbed by a moment of hope, then her eyes cleared and the smile returned to her features as she continued her game.

Stephen sat in the paneled office. The doctor sat across the desk from him, tapping his pen thoughtfully on his front teeth as he re-read the case notes. "Hrm. An unusual case. Quite a fixation. Of course I can't guarantee she will never ever get better. But neither can I suggest any further treatment. All of our efforts have failed to produce any results and your wife appears to have slipped further into her delusional state."

Stephen surreptitiously looked at his watch. The doctor noticed and a half smile twisted his features, "Am I keeping you from something Mr. Johnson?"

Stephen had the decency to blush slightly, "Well I have someone waiting in the car for me."

The Doctor nodded with an unreadable expression, "Well I shall keep you no longer sir. I will make out the papers as you requested and I can see no objection to the court granting you your divorce." Stephen smiled weakly and thanked the Doctor, shaking his hand briefly to say goodbye.

Doctor Carter put aside Jane Johnson's case notes and sighed. He leaned back in the chair and linked his fingers behind his head. He could not blame Mr. Johnson. In eighteen months there had been no headway with his wife's condition. After a little consideration he decided it was the man's attitude that annoyed him. He seemed to look on his wife as a broken product. A commodity that he had returned to the manufacturer, but the manufacturer had failed to repair it. The doctor snorted a sound of utter derision. He got up and walked over to the liquor cabinet. Something caught his eye beneath his desk. Bending down he found a leather leash folded double and knotted in the middle. Teeth marks and worn leather indicated frequent use. Grimacing he realized it was still wet from a recent chewing. Confused for a moment at how it came to be in his office he dropped it thoughtfully on his desk. He paused and glanced down at Jane Johnson's file. He picked it up and shaking his head said aloud, "No." He replaced the file in the out tray.

As Stephen walked up the gravel path he paused to watch his wife disappear down one of the landscaped banks. As he turned he thought he caught a flash of hind-quarters and a black shaggy tail disappear from view just in front of her. Laughing to himself he thought, "God I'll be as crazy as her if I stay here." He reached the car and was slightly annoyed to find it empty. He looked around and then turned at the call of his name.

Sharon waved to him from the corner of the building. He leaned against the car as he watched her break into a jog to reach him. When she came close enough he spoke, "I thought you were going to wait in the car."

"I got bored," she replied.

Stephen grimaced. He still had to get used to the way Sharon turned the end of her sentences into a whine.

"Thought I'd look around a bit. It's a real nice place," she continued.

Stephen nodded noncommittally. He wanted to get out of here as quickly as possible. Glancing down he noticed Sharon was holding something. "What you got there?" He said.

She laughed and tossed him the hard blue ball. He caught it, a one handed reflex. Looking at the ball with hard eyes, he spoke through gritted teeth, "Where did you get this!"

Momentarily afraid of his tone, Sharon took a step backwards and did not answer. Stephen spoke slowly, menace in his voice, "I said where?"

He stared at her, his eyes blazing and rage barely suppressed.

"O.. O.. Over there..." she stuttered, pointing to the corner of one of the buildings. Stephen followed her pointed finger as she asked quietly, "What's the matter, are you all right?"

He looked down at the teeth marked rubber ball and angrily threw it long and hard. "Yes. Yes, I'm fine. But someone has a sick sense of humor. Now drop it okay?"

They climbed into the car silently and Stephen could not help spinning the wheels as he drove away as quickly as possible.

The man walked nervously up to Jane, hugging himself and looking around with a vaguely worried expression. He scratched incessantly at some unseen irritant. He stopped about five feet away, his simple face smiling nervously. His eyes appeared fixed at a point just above Jane's left knee.

*Continued on page 23*

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# Meditation

## Why is Meditation important?



by **CT Thompson**  
ctthompson@acrimony.org

The decision to undertake a meditation regimen is among the easiest and most difficult decisions a person can make. Meditation, once properly learned, is a very simple process. The hard part is sticking to a regimen. Whether you decide upon once, twice, or three times a day is less important than sticking to the program you set. Once you construct your schedule and begin your practice you will find all kinds of little things trying to pull you away. This what makes meditation hard.

The benefits you will reap from the practice of meditation far outweigh the effort you will put into the endeavor. Meditation is the key to obtaining an organized mind, inner balance, and spiritual awareness. Your dreams will intensify, opening links with your third eye and subconscious mind. Your perceptions will strengthen and you will be able to see beyond linear time. All improvements of the self begin with meditation. It is the foundation upon which you can build a strong spiritual presence.

There are, quite literally, thousands of meditation practices in use today. Some will claim certain methods better than others. The simple fact is any practice is better than no practice. As you begin your meditation journey you will be exposed to many different methods. You will find some work better for you than others. In the end, you will develop your own practice that is a culmination of your experiences.

Guided meditation is for most, the easiest way to begin a regimen. Many tapes are available where the practitioner need only lay back, relax and concentrate on the audio of the tape. This method should be varied, exposing the practitioner to several different meditation tapes and methods. In time, the use of tapes should be totally eliminated from the practitioner's regimen.

In the beginning an unskilled practitioner will setup a comfortable room for their meditation sessions. Over time, reliance on this environment should be weaned. If you come to a point in your practice where focus and serenity are

only attained if you are using meditation tapes along with serene music in a beautiful chamber, then you have a problem. The tapes, music, and room are doing the work, not you. The skilled practitioner can attain inner balance regardless of outside influence. The skilled practitioner can transcend the environment he or she is in and achieve supreme spiritual awareness.

Transcendence should be the goal of all meditation practitioners. When small things throw you off, you need to realize that the issue is with you and not other people. If a rude waiter enrages you, you need evaluate why such a tiny event disrupts your inner harmony. You should have the ability to transcend any situation or circumstance. If you persevere, your rewards will be great.

### Heaven or Hell? It's Your Choice...

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<http://ad5.acrimony.org>

## Shadows of the Dog

Continued from Page 21

"Hello," he spoke slowly, concentration evident on his face, as if forming the words were an effort.

"Hi," replied Jane cheerfully. She placed a reassuring hand on Russ's head.

The man hopped from one foot to the other. Jane smiled while waiting patiently. Finally the man spoke again, "M... M... May... I pet... y... your... dog?"



**Abby**

<http://abbaddon.nova-kaine.net.nz>

# Weird News

## Local Farmer having trouble protecting his crops

(England) - In a farmer's field in England, local police lie silently in wait. The farmer has had a number of his crops stolen. The farmer's crop? Legally grown hemp plants.



One person has already been arrested and charged. It is thought many more people are involved. Under the darkness of night unknown persons have been digging up the farmer's crop leaving only footprints and empty holes where the plants once stood.

Some local residents, convinced that the farmer was farming an illegal crop, have reported the plants to the police. The police have assured the local community that the plants are being grown legally and under license.

Hemp is used to make a number of products, including paper, rope, clothing, and even medicine. It contains no THC and there are no psychoactive effects when it is consumed. But this hasn't stopped local drug users from helping themselves to the plant.

## Man burns down his apartment in attempt to kill wasps

(Zurich) - No one likes wasps. Unlike bee's, who die after their initial sting, wasps can sting over and over again. They know what they can do, and they have no problem doing it.



A man stumbled across a wasp nest just outside his apartment. Determined to be rid of the vile creatures, he armed himself with a cigarette lighter and can of insect spray.

He used the entire can of insect spray on the wasp nest, but many more were still alive. When the angry wasps came at him for destroying their home, he tried to ward them off with his cigarette lighter.

The remaining fumes ignited and the apartment went up in flames.

### Mother's party for son goes astray

(Shenango Township, Ohio, USA) - Some mom's are more fun than others. Ms. Patricia Johnson doesn't want to be viewed as a square by her son. His birthday was coming up and she wanted it to be special. She took her son and several of his friends to a local go-kart track. She went to the counter with the intention of renting out the entire facility so the young teens could play as they liked.

The go-kart attendant informed Ms. Johnson that the track had already been rented out for the night. Apparently this didn't sit well with Ms. Johnson.

Ms. Johnson left and went to a beer distributor at the state line. She returned later with a 30 pack. She was also witnessed by some of the boys to be taking pills.



Ms. Johnson rounded up the children and took them to the Radisson hotel. The boys stated that by this time she was already drunk and driving erratically. Ms. Johnson rented a room with a hot tub and it was after this that the real antics began.

Ms. Johnson gave all the boys beer and told them they could drink as much as they liked. She was also seen taking more pills. She offered pills to the boys as well but they all declined. At some point Ms. Johnson told the boys she wanted to be a stripper. She gave them dollar bills and told the boys to stuff them in her bra and panties.

Ms. Johnson's son was in the room the entire time and appeared very embarrassed. He was screaming at his mother and trashing the room.

When the party began to wind down and everyone was going to sleep, Ms. Johnson tried to lie down between two of the boys. One of them reported she was fondling him. The other left the bed and went to the balcony.

The following morning Ms. Johnson drove the boys home. The boys stated that she was driving in excess of 100 miles-per-hour.

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# Calendar

**GateCon**  
**September 11th through September 14th 2003**  
**Best Western Richmond Inn**  
**Vancouver, BC, Canada**

The world's largest Stargate SG-1 Convention. Many of the show's cast will be attending.

<http://www.GateCon.com>  
USA: (719) 574 - 6427  
UK: +44 1386 881047  
UK: +44 1242 672681  
AUS: +61 2 6293 1881  
Price: \$210 All Event / \$65 Day Pass

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**Your Inner Oracle: Dreams, Symbolism, and Intuition**  
**September 20th 2003      10am - 4:30pm**  
**Virginia Beach, Virginia, USA**

Grasp how your own subconscious mind holds insights to nearly every question imaginable!

<http://www.EdgarCayce.org>  
(800) 333-4499  
Price: \$25 - \$59 (Depending on your age)

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**Arcana 33**  
**September 26th through September 28th 2003**  
**Saint Paul, Minnesota, USA**

A convention of the Dark Fantastic

<http://pages.prodigy.net/rekal>  
(612) 721-5959  
Price: \$25 before Labor Day, \$35 after

**Archon 27**  
**October 2nd through October 5th 2003**  
**Collinsville, Illinois (St. Louis, MO area), USA**

General science fiction convention that's been running since 1977.

<http://www.stlf.org/archon>  
Price: \$40 in advance / \$45 door

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**AZ Witches Ball**  
**October 25th 2003    5:30pm - 1:00am**  
**The Crowne Plaza Hotel**  
**2532 W. Peoria Ave, Phoenix AZ 85029 USA**

An elegant event and celebration of Samhain for Arizona Pagans, Practitioners of Magick and those walking the Old Path. We will honor the Ancestors through the spiritual celebration of Samhain while also providing dinner and entertainment.

This event is for Ages 16 and Up Only!

Seating from 5:30 to 6:00 PM  
Dinner from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM

<http://www.azWitchesBall.com>  
Price: \$32

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**Goth Con**  
**October 30th through November 1st 2003**  
**Atlanta, Georgia, USA**

A 4 day convention that has everything Goth. Grab your fishnet and mascara and jump on the bus!

<http://www.GothCon.org>  
Price: \$48 / 4 day pass

# Horoscopes

by **Michael Ramses**



**ARIES** (March 21 - April 19): You are going to start out the month with feelings of independence and freedom. Now is the time to act and make positive life changes. Normally an Aries needs to use caution before plunging into new situations. This month don't worry about that. Your biggest obstacle will be your own fear. Overcome it, and the rewards will be great.



**TAURUS** (April 20 - May 20): Break out of your restraints and strive for better surroundings. People and events around you will try and pull you down this month. Don't let them! You will feel like you are working twice as hard this month. That is because you will be. Keep up your pace and reach for the brass ring. It's within your grasp.



**GEMINI** (May 21 - June 20): You will defiantly be challenged this month. This is not a time for drastic life change. You will be a little off-kilter all month long. Your best bet is to lower your head and endure. This will pass and things will be better for you in October. Above all else, do your absolute best to keep your anger in check.



**CANCER** (June 21 - July 22): All Cancer's suffer from monthly turmoil. This is due to Cancer's ruling planet, the moon. Its quick revolution around the earth and quickly changing perigee and apogee in relation to the earth wreak havoc with the emotional crab. This month the moon is in perigee (closest to Earth) September 1st. The apogee (furthest position from Earth) occurs September 16th. The Cancer can use this as a road map to the obstacles in his or her life. Traditionally Cancer's are challenged the most at perigee, and at apogee they experience smooth sailing. However some Cancer's are exactly the opposite. Keep track of the moon's position and figure out which you are. This small amount of information can drastically help balance the crab's life.



**LEO** (July 23 - Aug. 22): The beginning of this month will be by far, a difficult time for you. Leo suffers from a double opposition. The Sun, your ruling planet, is in opposition to both Mars and Uranus. The opposition with Mars will brings

relationship turmoil, and an inability to deal with stressful situations and circumstances. The opposition with Uranus is far more damaging. Uranus will pin you down making inaction a huge problem. What action you do take will be ruled by runaway impulses that will more often than not, be detrimental to you. The end of the month brings relief, as the Sun moves into Libra and Neptune moves into Aquarius. Where there was once an opposition there is now a favorable Trine alignment. Here you will recover from whatever chaos was stirred in the beginning of the month.



**VIRGO** (Aug. 23 - Sept. 22): Things are a little boring for Virgo this month. The beginning will be much of the same. There's a little excitement in the middle, perhaps an emotional tryst, either physical or emotional. Look for someone new to pass into your life. The end of the month brings Mercury into a Sextile alignment with Saturn. Here's you can build upon whatever happens near the middle of the month.



**LIBRA** (Sept. 23 - Oct. 22): If there is something you need to get out from under, now is the time. Libra is favored this month with multiple Trine alignments. A Trine is the most positive of all planetary positions. Venus's Trine with Neptune lends to increased creativity and psychic prowess. Venus is also in Trine with Uranus. This will bring freedom and an ability to make changes to things in your life that have been in place for a very long time.



**SCORPIO** (Oct. 23 - Nov. 21): You will start the month with difficulty. Multiple Square alignments between your ruling planet of Pluto with Venus and Mercury will cause you to have difficulty with communication, social affairs, thinking processes, creativity, and your artistic abilities. Things shape up in the middle of the month when Neptune moves into a Sextile alignment with Pluto. Imaginative and Psychic abilities are enhanced. A further Sextile alignment between Pluto and Jupiter at the end of the month lends to gain and growth.



**SAGITTARIUS** (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21): Sagittarius has two Conjunctions this month. Jupiter is in Conjunction with both the Sun, and later in the month,

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Mercury. These alignments will increase your desires. Don't be concerned with over-indulgence. Mercury will temper and excessive feelings or emotions. Later in the month Jupiter and Saturn move into a Sextile alignment. This gives you the chance to overcome your fears and build upon what happens earlier in the month.



**CAPRICORN** (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19): This month is interesting for Capricorn. Your personal energy will be at a high. Your ambition will also be fueled. These two things combine for infinite possibilities.

The end of the month brings a Square alignment between Saturn and Venus. Be careful here. This will lead to stress in your love life (Most likely from action you undertook in the beginning of the month).



**AQUARIUS** (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18): This month you will feel the need to break free and express your freedom. You will invent new ways of doing things in your life. All of this is very positive and should

be encouraged. The only word of caution is an Opposition alignment between Uranus and Venus late in the month. Make sure you don't exclude your love life from your personal life. If you do, your significant other will feel slighted and stress and arguments are sure to ensue.



**PISCES** (Feb. 19 - March 20): Emotions will run high most of this month. Just do your best not to let them get the best of you. Keep your impulses in check. Don't go running off of any cliffs.

Things get better at the end of the month. Your ruling planet Neptune is in a Sextile alignment with Pluto and also a Trine alignment with Venus. This is extremely favorable and you will be able to accomplish anything you set your mind to.



*Michael Ramses has been a horoscope writer for over 12 years. His speciality is personal natal charts. Look for his column right here in Acrimony each month.*

## August Crossword

A									S	C	O	R	P	I	O
D	R	A	C	U	L	A			I		R		E		U
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## August Brain Teaser

Mary is reading braille. Mary is blind.

# Personals

.....

### Large

Looking for my light in the darkness..... Can you be she?

.....

### Vicious with a caring heart

Greetings, I am a 22-year-old male from Michigan. I am truly unique and one of a kind. I am into music by groups like Manson and Rammstein and enjoy only one movie, The Crow. If you feel the need to get to know me e-mail me at drifter632@hotmail.com

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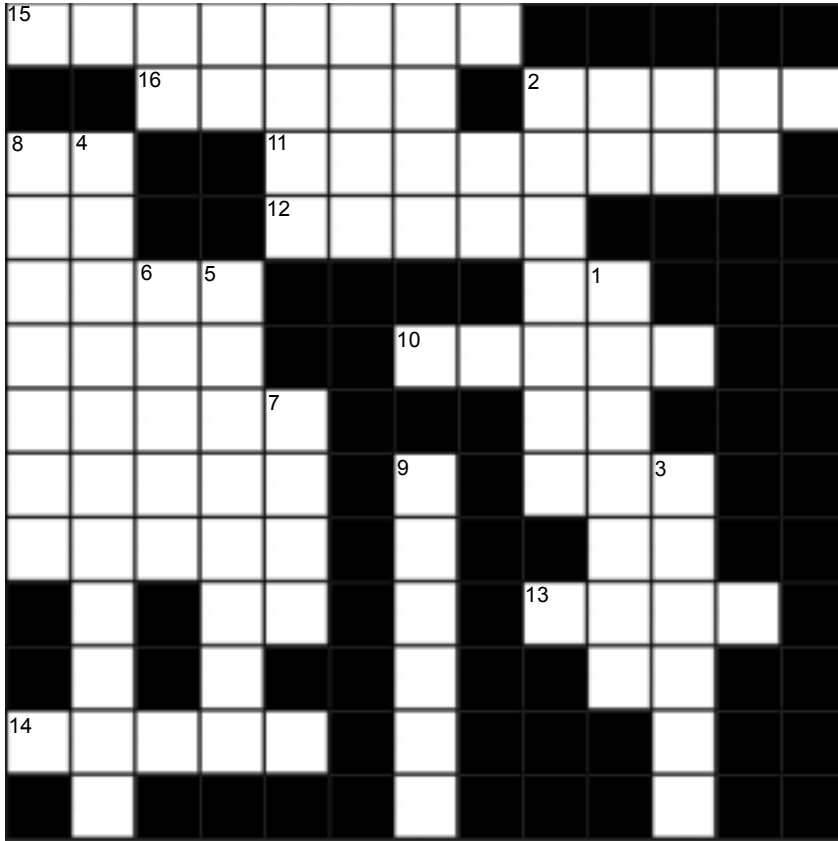
## Have you found your life mate?

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Full details at <http://www.Acrimony.org>

Click on Personals

# Gothic Crossword



## Across

2. Blonde haired man created to be a love slave
10. Unconscious interaction
11. Stone by day
12. Betrayed his master for 30 silver coins
13. The most commonly seen alien
14. Preferred gothic footwear
15. Stays away from silver
16. Staple of vampires

## Down

1. Gothic necessity
2. UFO crash site
3. He invades your dreams
4. Execution method
5. Bane of vampires
6. Tempted eve
7. Dracula apparel
8. Archangel
9. Escorts the dead to the after-life

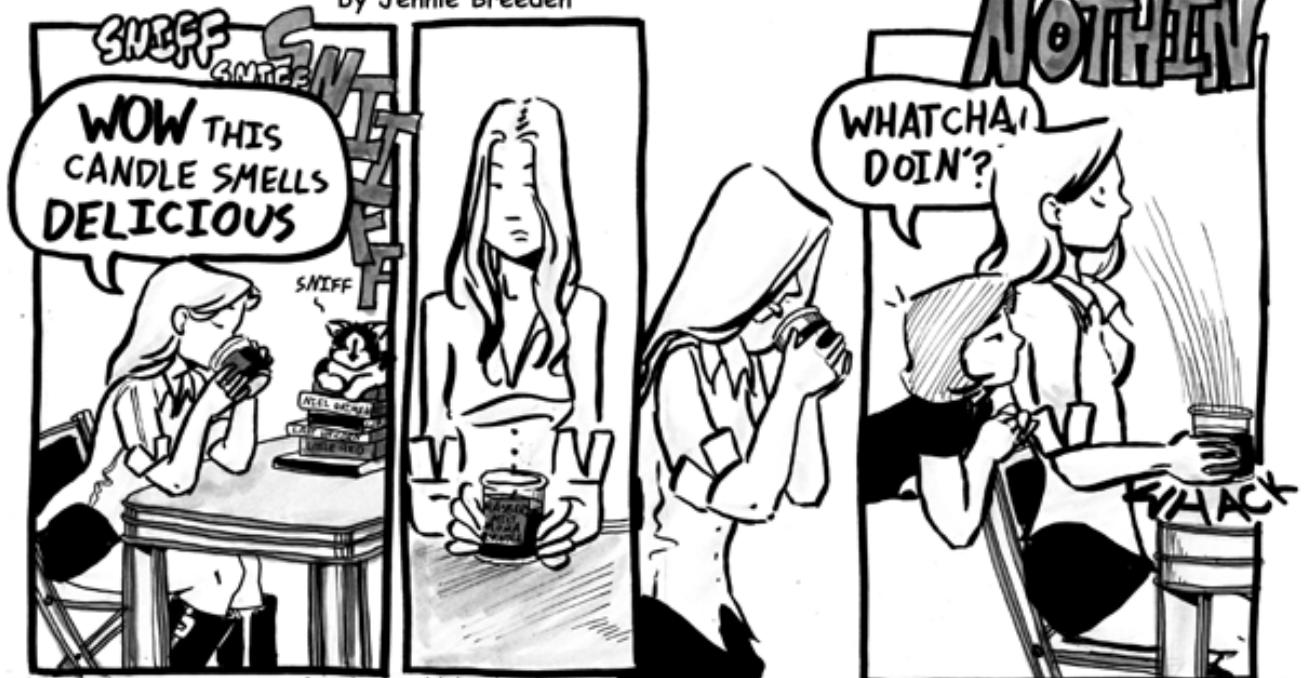
## BRAIN TEASER

What are the next two letters in the following series and why?

W A T N T L I T F S

## The Devil's Panties

by Jennie Breeden



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by Jennie Breeden

[jennie@acrimony.org](mailto:jennie@acrimony.org)

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