

A Biographic Appreciation of Wavy Gravy

for his 70th Birthday May 15, 2006

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This will be a biographical salute to the vast-vim'd human known as Wavy Gravy. Shakespeare once began a poem, "Who is Silvia? What is she?" Those are the questions we shall try to answer in this appreciation. Who is Wavy Gravy? What is he? as we trace his life and times, pointing out interesting facts here and there, in order to savor and understand the meaning of his celebrated voyage in the Great Flow.

Early Years

Wavy Gravy was born Hugh Romney on May 15, 1936 in East Greenbush, New York, which is located near Albany, the State Capital. His mother's name was Charlotte. His father, also named Hugh, was an architect.

I was interested in his decades of trying to help others, to do good, to shape the destiny of a troubled culture. So, in several of our conversations while I was writing this appreciation, I asked, were your parents volunteers? Did you learn from them to be a volunteer? I pointed out that people I know who later worked for Good sometimes got that impetus from experiencing their parents' volunteer work for causes.

"Absolutely, my dad, he did lots of volunteer work in architecture. He got solar stuff into schools in New Jersey. He did the children's wing at the Metropolitan Museum. He did the Wesleyan University, the dorms and new stuff there. He did the top of Whiteface Mountain. He also did the kitchen at my children's camp, which was very sweet. He also went down the waterslide in his 80s. We have a 350 foot waterslide."

Strolling with Einstein

When he was five or six his parents brought him to live in Princeton, New Jersey, on a street where Albert Einstein used to take his daily walks. This would have been around 1941 or '42, two years or so after Einstein had written his famous letter to Franklin Roosevelt, which he later said was one of the worst mistakes of his life, urging the United States to build a nuclear bomb. Einstein was 62, and teaching at the Institute for Advanced Study when young Hugh and his parents were residing nearby. "Right behind us was a cinder parking lot," Wavy recently recounted, "and I could look across the cinder parking lot and there was campus. And so we were very close to campus."

The great genius was at work on a "unified field theory," trying to create a single group of equations to unite the phenomena of gravitation and the phenomena of electromagnetism, the second of which is the transmission of energy in the form of waves containing both an electric and a magnetic component. Einstein was ahead of his time, and his late-life work would help lead to string-theory, P-branes and the modern search for the Total

Equations of Reality.

One day Albert E was out for a stroll, perhaps with equations of the Universe on the blackboard of his mind, when he spotted the very young Hugh Romney. I asked Wavy about it recently: "I was being aired in the yard and he asked my mom if he could take me for a spin around the block. And they got to be a daily occurrence, four or five days a week, for I don't know how many months. I can only remember really his twinkle and his smell. (chuckles) He smelled like nothing I've ever smelled before or since."

Grade School and High School

During Hugh/Wavy's time in Princeton, his parents were breaking up, which seems to give his recollections of the strolls with Albert Einstein an additional poignancy. He returned to Albany, New York with his mother where he attended grade school.

"First I went to school in Albany (at P.S. 16)," Wavy said recently, "then we went to West Hartford. My mother remarried. Also, my father remarried. And I went with my mother and stepfather to Connecticut where I went to Junior High and High School."

There were early political divergences. Wavy: "My mother, when she remarried, he was a Republican. Then they later admitted I was right about Nixon. (chuckles). But, when I was in high school they would be playing Fulton Lewis, Jr. for the news."

Did he have siblings? "Each parent got married and had children. Half brothers, one on either end."

Hugh graduated from William Wall High School in Hartford in 1954. (Hartford is the home of the renowned 1842 Wadsworth Atheneum, the oldest public art museum in the States, where Hugh later briefly studied art.)

Army Years

A military draft had been imposed during World War II, which ended after the war, but then was revived during the Cold War brouhaha beginning in 1948. (The draft was vehemently targeted by anti-Vietnam War protesters, and Congress finally voted it out in 1973.) Hugh Romney was facing two years in the military, and Eisenhower had not yet warned of the dangers from the "Military-Industrial Complex," so right after high school in '54 he enlisted in the army and was honorably discharged after twenty-two months of service. As he later recounted it: "I am in no way recommending the military as a career choice. The Korean War had just wound down and I figured it was a reasonable assumption that I could slip in and out before the next little war rolled around. It was a dumb decision on my part but it helped pay for my college education." (In those days the G.I. Bill actually paid a good part of the college costs of veterans.)

College in 1957, and the Urge to Perform

Sometime during his early youth Hugh was overtaken by the urge to perform, to work a crowd, to stand in the floodlights in the Joy of Perf. He enrolled in Boston University in 1957 to study theater. The Beat Generation had just begun its big impact on American

culture. Allen Ginsberg's epochal book, *Howl and Other Poems* had come out in 1956, had survived a court challenge, and now Ginsberg was the most famous American poet since Whitman. In the world of prose, Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* was being read by an entire crosscountry network of youthful rebels at the moment Romney was filling out his course forms at BU.

The Beat Generation already had its detractors, typified by the invention of the quasi-hostile word "beatnik" by a San Francisco columnist, seeking to connect the generation with the Russkies, Bolsheviks, and the Russkies' successful satellite, Sputnik. That just made young people more drawn to its path, and so the quick-witted freshman named Hugh Romney began picking up on what was going on in the West Coast and leaped into its Flow with full faith. "I was a teenage beatnik," he told me, and he started publishing his verse in magazines.

The Beats, the Concept of "Go! Go!," and Inspiration from Combinations of Art Forms

It was already a wild era of Combinations of Art Forms, and a time of Simultaneity and Spontaneity in the arts. Back in the early 1950s at Black Mountain College in North Carolina, John Cage had produced events of simultaneity, such as surrounding the audience with dancers led by Merce Cunningham, while Charles Olson read his poetry, and David Tudor performed live music while various recordings were being played and projections of slides at the same time. Then there was Action Painting and Abstract Expressionism, and the spontaneous yet disciplined genius of American jazz. By the time young Hugh Romney had devoured Ginsberg, Corso and Kerouac, the Happening Movement was happening, such as artist Allan Kaprow's "18 Happenings in 6 Parts," which defined the genre, offering blendings of sound, text, sculpture, collage, projections and urging the audience to get in on it!

"Go! Go!" Jack Kerouac had shouted while beating on a jug of burgundy as Allen Ginsberg recited "Howl" for the first time. That "Go! Go!" echoed through the minds of an entire generation for at least ten years.

When Hugh Romney was deciding to become involved in theater and performance, the Civil Rights Movement was on the rise. Soon there would be the Lunch Counter Sit-ins and the epoch-shaking Freedom Rides of 1961. The beating back of McCarthy and his fake Red Scare was recent and on everybody's mind. The Rising Tide of Expectation seemed overwhelming, while the culture seemed polarized: Beats vs. Squares. It was a situation utterly pregnant with ideas for humor and satire. "Go! Go!" the culture seemed to be shouting, "Go! Go!"

Jazz-Poetry

Hugh Romney was not born with a platinum Pigasus in his creche, and pointed out during our recent conversations that he was on his own beginning at age 17. It's nigh on to impossible for a creative person to earn a living from his or her art, and like almost all performers, Romney had to plot aplenty to earn enough to survive. Early on he became an

impresario. One path to what was called in the era “scratch,” or “bread” was the new genre called jazz-poetry. It was also exciting and fun. Daring to have Fun, plenty of Fun, has been Hugh Romney’s watch cry since the days he was a teenage beatnik.

Jazz-poetry was in the cultural Mind. Kenneth Rexroth in California was an early practitioner as was Lawrence Ferlinghetti, whose New Directions book, *Coney Island of the Mind* had a huge influence on the New Simultaneity. The California poet Kenneth Patchen performed his poetry with the great Charles Mingus and saxophonist Booker Ervin at New York’s Living Theater. Jack Kerouac read from *On the Road* and *Visions of Cody* while Steven Allen played piano, a performance which millions watched on Allen’s widely watched national program on NBC. Kerouac and the composer/performer David Amram also perf’d together.

You’re standing there in the Jazz Zone, on a stage where guys are creating a 4-dimensional musical mise en scene into which your verse is placed like sacred furniture. More circuits of the brain are involved and your words sail into the noggins of the listeners on the Good Ship Jazz! Wow.

I asked Wavy Gravy about his experiments in jazz/poetry. “I started jazz and poetry on the East Coast. I think I was the first one to do it. I was at Boston University and I read about this stuff on the West Coast, and we immediately put some stuff together, and went into this joint on Commonwealth Avenue in Boston, Pat’s Pebble in the Rock.”

Hugh also organized jazz-poetry in his old home town: “I got some of the great great players in the world, because we got paid money every Monday night in Hartford, Connecticut.” The Monday nights “were at a place called the Golden Lion in Hartford,” he said.

“They had never heard of a cover charge in Hartford.” (chuckles) So, I initiated the cover charge. I was able to pay all these fine musicians on Monday night. They’d come to Hartford with me. It was like a regular deal for a number of years. And people started lining up around the block. People were also interested in Beatniks.”

You read the poetry and they made the jazz? “Yeah, including people like Jackie Bayard, and Don Ellis. He became a big star. Some of the people I played with,” he continued, “Buell Neidlinger. He was a fantastic bass player. Somebody gave me a book called *Acoustic Stories*, and there’s a whole chapter on Buell. Buell played with Jimmy Giuffre also, and Jackie Bayard was a big guy that I played with.”

This was before you went to Greenwich Village to work at the Gaslight?

“Yeah, before.

Did he recall any specific poems?

“Certainly. What comes to mind is a piece called ‘Altar Piece.’ That piece comes to mind immediately. It’s a long poem I did to jazz.”

The concept of the Beat Coffee House was also on his mind as an avenue to performance and, of course, scratch. Hugh tried opening a coffee house in Maine: “And also I had started a coffee house in Kennebunkport, (he chuckles), there were no Bushes there at that time. The same guy that I worked with in Boston, we ran a coffee house there.”

Neighborhood Playhouse

1958/9-1961

After a year and a half in Boston, Hugh Romney enrolled in the Neighborhood Playhouse School of the Theater in New York City. That would be around early 1959, or perhaps late '58. Precise dates in the Romney Time Flow sometimes get caught up in Heisenberg's Principle of Uncertainty.

What's the Neighborhood Playhouse? I asked him.

"That's a theater and performing arts school. After I left Boston University, I got a scholarship there. The (theater) teachers there all quit. They were there at Boston University due to the McCarthy blackball, and once the blackballs were over, and the University started fuckin' with them, they went and took me with them to the Neighborhood Playhouse. Pretty much the same teachers. It's in the fifties in New York. Martha Graham also taught there."

For the theatrical arts? I asked. "It's a theater school in New York. It's there now as we speak. Gregory Peck was a graduate." I checked into the Neighborhood Playhouse School, and it is famous indeed. Among its graduates (in addition to Hugh Romney, class of 1961) are Lee Grant, Ann Jackson, Grace Kelly, Steve McQueen, Diane Keaton, Tony Randall, Marian Seldes, Robert Duvall, Peter Falk, and a pleth' o' others

Gravitating to Greenwich Village and the Big Capital I

It was extremely organic and natural for an aficionado of jazz/poetry to start hanging out in Greenwich Village, especially in the famous set of streets which formed a Big Capital I— that is, the East-West Bleecker Street which is perpendicular to the North-South MacDougal Street, and parallel to the East-West West Third Street to the North.

It was the Capital I of No Return.

It was a place that celebrated American freedom, a place of outrageousness and experimentation— multiracial and multicultural— where the races and monetary levels could mix in tsk-tsk-less ease in the coffeehouses, bars, loitering on street corners and in Washington Square Park. Generation after generation of kids came to dig the scene— they'd subway, bus, train or even hitchhike in from New Jersey, Queens, Long Island, Brooklyn, Westchester, Hartford and Nebraska to walk down MacDougal Street.

There were bars such as the San Remo on MacDougal— famous among Beats and post-war Existentialists— and the Kettle of Fish— legendary in the folk/folk-rock era, and of course the White Horse on Hudson Street, but also cafeterias and coffee houses such as the Figaro, Rieni's and the Fat Black Pussy Cat on MacDougal.

Lengthy discussions and even loitering were a Village hallmark. It was also a place of tradition: you were walking the streets where John Reed, Eugene O'Neill, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Paul Robeson had worked their art.

Greenwich Village rents tended to be high, but just a few minutes lope away was the legendary Lower East Side, where, thanks to the World War II rent controls which were

still in place, and a youthful beatnik or rhyme-maddened balladeer could rent a pad for \$30 dollars a month.

The Pads

Where'd you live when you first came to New York to study at the Neighborhood Playhouse?

Wavy: "I think it was 96 St. Mark's Place. I got a refrigerator repair shop for 30 dollars a month. I called it A Very Little Gallery. It was downstairs. It had lions, with draperies coming out of their mouths, carved in stone. I painted them white, and the draperies red. And I made it look like it was a gallery in the first room."

NYC rules forbade living in storefronts, so that you had to make it appear it was a "store," not a pad. Wavy's Very Little Gallery, with the stone lions at the entrance, had a number of rooms in the back, including a bathtub in the kitchen. Ahh, those glorious years of cheap rents and rent control!

Later he moved to a top floor pad on 10th Street between 1st and 2nd Avenues, and turned over the stone lion gallery to his very good friend John Brent.

"My bear turned on all the water, while I was in school, and flooded out the Ukrainians. The landlord came up to turn off the pipe, and the bear jumped on his head."

What bear? I asked

"I had this little coati mundi. It was given to me. I used to let him loose in the bathroom during the day, because the cage was so small, and he turned on all the water in the bathroom. So I got a notice from the Housing Department that I was harboring a wild kangaroo. Then the the police came, 'where's the kangaroo.' I said, 'I just got a bear. A honey bear.' A bear! and then they went crazy."

The Gaslight

Hugh Romney discovered the Gaslight Café, a coffee house located in the basement of 116 MacDougal Street which a guy named John Mitchell had opened in 1958. There had been a series of famous Beat poetry readings shortly after it opened which were packed to overflowing. Public recitations of verse had dropped off since early in the century, when Vachel Lindsay toured the nation on foot giving poetry readings. The Beats brought back the concept of reading to, and interacting with, a live audience. My future wife Miriam and I (we met in Greek class at NYU) attended some of the Beat readings at the Gaslight. I remember Jack Kerouac stepping up on a stool to read, his head brushing and bumping the stamped metal ceiling.

The Gaslight was renowned as the Place of Finger-Snaps. There were air shafts and windows leading up from the Gaslight basement, so that applause disturbed the nearby neighbors who would call the fuzz. In response Gaslight management decreed that at the end of poems or performances the audience would snap their fingers!

The Gaslight finger snaps are still snapping.

Somewhere around the time that the youthful beat poet named Hugh Romney became involved with the Gaslight, it had been sold to Clarence Hood to be managed by his son

Sam. (The Gaslight's founder, John Mitchell, opened the nearby Fat Black Pussy Cat, a place where Romney also performed). Hugh, with his talents as an impresario, became involved with programming the entertainment at the Gaslight.

There are a few Space/Time-Continuum Flow Analysis Problems associated with trying to get a precise sequence on the rise of Hugh Romney as a Bruce Generation monologist from say '59 through 1962.

He was attending the Neighborhood Playhouse by day, and, for the nights, became "poetry director" at the Gaslight, working with his close pal John Brent. (Brent and actor/writer Del Close did a 1959 album on the Mercury label, "How to Speak Hip.") "We ran the Gaslight together as co-poetry directors and entertainment directors," Wavy told me, "until Brent went off to Second City in Chicago." Apparently the actress Marlene Dietrich attended one of the Romney/Brent evenings and gave Hugh a book of Rilke's poetry. Perhaps she was suggesting some Mingus-a-um behind the *Duino Elegies*.

Getting Married in the Gaslight

Hugh married Elizabeth D'Jazian (spelled here phonetically because in our conversations Wavy seemed to have a noggin-block on the precise spelling), known as Lily, in a ceremony conducted at the Gaslight by the blind singer and preacher, Rev. Gary Davis.

Wavy: "Dave Van Ronk was there, Tommy Paxton was there, Dylan was there, and my mother. She came down (from Connecticut) for the wedding and was freaked out! Gary Davis was way too weird for her, plus he using *Peter Rabbit* instead of the Bible. He brought *Peter Rabbit* by accident."

I suggested that, since he was blind, or nearly blind, Reverend Davis couldn't differentiate between the sets of letters.

Wavy: "He had very thick dark glasses on. He did play 'Just a Closer Walk With Thee.'" There was an additional component to the wedding which may have struck Wavy's staid mom Charlotte as oddwaddish. Wavy: "Davis made us bring in a board. We had to stand on a board so that our children would not be born mad."

Lily was "very French and very beautiful," Wavy recalled, but it was not a marriage that would withstand the canoes of eternity. They would split up three years later.

Stand Up

Perhaps in part through his studies at the Neighborhood Playhouse, Romney evolved from "teenage beatnik poet" to something that could be described as "standup story teller," or monologist, or even commentator/comedian. As Wavy once described it: "I went from being a published teen-aged beatnik poet to hip comic tongue dancer right before my very eyes."

He started doing stand-up gigs, "talking about weird stuff that had happened to me," at Art D'Lugoff's Village Gate, an important and long-lived club of the era located on Bleecker Street at Thompson Street. He opened shows for John Coltrane, Thelonius Monk, Peter, Paul & Mary, and Ian & Sylvia, and organized an ensemble called the Phantom Cabaret with Tiny Tim and the musician/composer Moondog.

Meeting Lenny Bruce

Sometime in this early Greenwich Village flow, Hugh Romney met the monologist genius Lenny Bruce, who by 1962 was at the peak of his renown and at the peak of his troubles with the law as well. I asked Wavy where he met Lenny, and he replied it was at the Village Vanguard, a very famous jazz club. They became friends.

His first wife also befriended Bruce. Wavy: “Elizabeth. They called her Lily. Lenny was very attracted to Lily. She liked the way he talked. She became a much more intimate friend of Lenny’s than I. She became his manager for a while. (Laughs) He would like to send her in to make deals.”

Potential Highly Remunerative eBay Items Lost in Fire (The Hard Rain Typewriter and Lenny Bruce’s Couch)

Part of the Hugh Romney legend is that Bob Dylan wrote the first draft of “Hard Rain’s a-Gonna Fall” on Hugh’s typewriter. “I was given the room upstairs from the Gaslight,” Wavy told me. “That was much later when Dylan got me to go back to the Gaslight. I was playing the Village Gate, and Dylan came by and said ‘You’ve got to save the Gaslight.’ And so I came back as kind of a big star at that juncture, and I was doing stand-up head riffs. They kicked Bill Cosby out, and moved me in. And that’s when Dylan wrote ‘Hard Rain’ on my typewriter, and all that.”

(The later very influential comedian Bill Cosby was at Temple University, apparently on an athletic scholarship, and began appearing at the Gaslight in ’62, where his routines were loudly applauded.)

The literature says that Dylan wrote “A Hard Rain’s A-Gonna Fall” in September of 1962. Part of the tune may also have been composed in the basement of the Village Gate, in a small apartment occupied by Chip Monck, later to become one of the most sought-after lighting directors in rock music.

Do you still have the typewriter? I asked Wavy during a recent conversation. I was of course thinking of one of those glass cases at the Rock and Roll museum in Cleveland, or perhaps eBay. And also I could picture a big article in the *New York Times Sunday Magazine* about some Tribeca loft owner with Lenny’s couch starring in the living area mix. But alas, as Wavy informed me, “The typewriter was destroyed in a fire at a Beacon Storage along with Lenny Bruce’s couch.”

Meeting Julian Beck and Judith Malina

The Living Theater, as many know, was absolutely crucial to New York culture in the 1950s and 1960s. The Living Theater was located on the northeast corner of 14th and 6th Avenue, and Judith Malina and Julian Beck supported many a nonviolent demonstration, such as the beautiful “World Wide General Strike for Peace,” which occurred in late 1961. (It was at a benefit for the General Strike at the Living Theater that I first heard the young

Bob Dylan sing. The audience literally wouldn't let him off the stage.)

How did you meet Judith Malina and Julian Beck? I asked Wavy.

"First I went to *The Connection*," Jack Gelber's play starring Warren Finnerty. Wavy met fellow monologist Steve ben Israel, Finnerty, Judith and Julian, and the others. "How we became friends is when the Phantom Cabaret got locked out of the Fat Black Pussy Cat. We did this show— Moondog, I and Tiny Tim. It made the front page of the Village Voice. There was a wonderful picture of us in Fred McDarrah's book (*Anarchy, Protest & Rebellion— and the Counterculture that Changed America*.) The next day the club was locked for back taxes. The Feds closed it. Somebody, probably Steve Ben Israel, directed me to the Living Theater. The Becks said, 'We've been kicked out of a lot of places. We'd love to have you.' We stayed really close after that. I went with the Living Theater to the Great March on Washington (in August 1963). I was on the bus with them, and then I got swept up into Peter, Paul and Mary's entourage, and I was ten feet from Martin Luther King when he had a Dream."

To California in 1962

Wavy once described 1962 as follows: "Moved to California at the request of Lenny Bruce, who became my part-time manager. Recorded *Hugh Romney, Third Stream Humor* for World Pacific Records. (I recorded this live when I was the opening act for Thelonius Monk on the night the great Club Renaissance in Los Angeles closed its doors forever.)"

Lenny was your part-time manager? I asked during one of our recent chats.

"Yeah, for a little while, until he got busted at that hobby (?) store with a matchbox full of pot. We ended up leaving New York, and coming to LA to help Lenny out with his trials and tribulations, which went on and on forever."

Lenny was doing something sacred and emblematic for someone so Far Out— he was making a living from his art. Bruce was quite experimental. He was known to shoot up methedrine and was becoming hooked on heroin. In a way, Bruce became a drug martyr, in the mode of other underground stars of the era. Bruce attracted the hostile attention— way too much attention— from the Squares, especially Square prosecutors. Wow, did he attract their fascination, as he worked up stage routines that laughed their way into the core of modern America. Bruce was busted in Chicago, basically for mocking the Pope, on December 5, 1962, while playing the Gate of Horn folk club. Because of his increasingly complex problems with the courts, Bruce decided in late '62 that he'd have to study— **really** study— the law.

I mentioned how much trouble Lenny was when Hugh first went to LA. "Oh yeah, a lot of the job of me and my wife was to recruit typists, and Lenny would frequently want us to listen to tapes that this detective, I think he name was Grogan, would tape through his overcoat. Lenny'd say, 'Listen to this,' and he would play (Wavy makes rrr-ing sound, impossible to understand, imitating the tape). 'Did you hear that?' Then he would play it as part of his act and he would Sooo Bomb when he did that. But then, by the end of making us nuts and boring the shit out of us for a long time, he got it into a really solid terrific act."

On February 11, '63 a jury hung 6-6 in his obscenity trial in Beverly Hills, then Bruce

headed off to Chi for his 3rd smut-flow trial. Ouch! he was found guilty in Chi on March 1, '63. His troubles became international, as when on April 8, 1963 Bruce tried to go to England but was prevented by the British Home Office— he was set to play The Establishment in London— and then returning to Idlewild (later Kennedy) Airport an immigration officer cheek-spread him and KY-smearred rubber gloved him up the ass looking for dope.

Bruce stayed engulfed in trouble for the remaining three years of his life, including the celebrated arrest and trial for his performance at Bleecker Street's Café Au Go-Go in the spring of 1964.

Lenny Tries to Fly from the Swiss American

I asked Wavy about trying to help Lenny. When you went out to California, I pointed out, it was right in the midst of all his troubles. He'd been arrested in Chicago, and the trial in early '63 in Beverly Hills...

"I was at the Swiss American Hotel," Wavy replied, "when Lenny went out my window." He was talking about a legendary event which occurred on March 29, 1964, when the apparently nude Lenny Bruce sailed out of the second story window of the Swiss-American Hotel at 534 Broadway in San Francisco.

On the acid? I asked.

"On the acid-dmt," Wavy replied, "which I suggested. I had it all laying on the dresser with a note, 'Smoke till the jewels fall out of your eyes.'" And he smoked the DMT, and he had not really seen like really vivid color before and it absolutely blew his mind, and as he went through the window, in mid air, he screams up to Eric Miller, 'Man shall arise above the rule!' And then he hit the concrete. I remembered going to the hospital. I was totally freaked out, and he had been medicated. He just smiled at me, he said, "No blame. It was worth it.'

"He wrote me a note on a paper bag. He was always writing me notes on paper bags. This was to seal up his hotel room, because the press was in there taking pictures of his disposable powder blue hypodermic needles."

1963, The Committee

For a while Hugh Romney joined the historically important San Francisco improvisational group The Committee, which had been started in the early 1960s by veterans of Second City. I asked him about it.

Wavy: "This is when I had done this show at the Living Theater called The Phantom Cabaret, with Tiny Tim, Moon Dog, and then later Sandy Bull. And then I tried to take that show to San Francisco, and I had arranged for a Rolls Royce full of daffodils to meet Tiny Tim at the train station, and the day before he was supposed to show up I got a telegram, "sorry, I can't come. My mother won't let me." So, I opened with another show, with a guy that Ralph Gleason recommended, and then (chuckles) Ralph Gleason proceeded to pan the guy he'd recommended. My show went down the toilet, and thank God, there was auditions for the Committee, because they were taking another show to

Broadway and they needed somebody to hold down the San Francisco company, so it was me and Del Close and people of this ilk.”

Del Close had been one of the founders of Second City, performing with talents such as Mike Nichols, Elaine May, Barbara Harris and Joan Rivers in the early '60s, eventually leaving Chicago to do a stint with the Committee in San Francisco in the '60s. While on the West Coast, Del was a regular on *My Mother the Car* and had a recurring role on *Get Smart*. And in his spare time he used to do light shows for the Grateful Dead.

I asked Wavy about Del Close. “I was in the Committee with Del, but we did another show in LA later. Also in the Committee with Del and me were John Brent and Gary Goodrow.”

What did you do? “We used to do Monday nights there. We did a much more involved show with Del and me and Severin Darden and Tiny Tim across from the Hollywood Ranch Market, called the Phantom Cabaret, which was a similar show that I did with Tiny Tim and Moondog at the Living Theater, which first opened at the Fat Black Pussy Cat to rave review in *The New York Times* and the *Village Voice*.”

Life Reaching a Whirl

1963 was an up and down year. There was the nuclear test ban treaty, the Great “I have a dream” March on Washington, but there was also the Birmingham bombing and, of course, the assassination of Camelot, which many millions believe was a kind of military coup.

It was the year Hugh and his wife Elizabeth had their daughter Sabrina.

Wavy once wrote a tightly packed, though perhaps intermittent, sequence of events for the year 1963, indicating perhaps an acid trip or two, and a personal crisis: “Purchased a condo in Marin City and a Packard Caribbean convertible in Hollywood. Tuned in, turned on, and dropped out — way out. Entered deep space. Left wife, daughter, and stuff and journeyed to northern Arizona to join up with Hopi Indians and await the coming global cataclysm. (The Hopis said I was early but let me hang out anyway and regroup my head.) Connected with interconnectedness of everything and surrendered to Law of Sacred Coincidence. Returned to Los Angeles and regrouped life. Divorced wife, gave away stuff, and began to float aimlessly on the ocean of one thing after another.”

It was apparently a genuine crisis, not just Hokusai hubris.

The Psychedelic Years— Sharing the Vision

Acid, peyote, bu, psilocybin and other substances came roaring into the American underground by the early '60s. Invited by researcher Gregory Bateson in mid-may o' 1959, Allen Ginsberg (and others later associated with the counterculture, such as Ken Kesey and I think also the guy who later became the Unabomber, Ted Kaczynski) took LSD at the Mental Research Institute at Stanford University at Palo Alto. Ginsberg felt LSD was a “link between Blake's ‘gates of wrath,’ Rimbaud's ‘derangement of the senses,’ and Huxley's ‘doors of perception.’” Allen wrote his father Louis that his LSD voyage was “like

a cosmic movie,” as Michael Schumacher noted in his biography of Ginsberg, *Dharma Lion*.

And then at Tim Leary’s place in Cambridge on November 26, ’60 Allen downed some psilocybin and in the ensuing flush of Revelation believed he could cure Leary’s bad hearing and fix his weak eyes. Mr. Leary, for his part, was loath to allow the naked Irwin Allen Ginsberg to venture forth and roam the streets of Cambridge to preach love, especially at midnight. Allen took very seriously his psychedelic experiences with Leary to the point he felt he had to proselytize their use for a New Consciousness and a New Aeon. Among the first of those he turned on to psilocybin were Thelonius Monk, Dizzy Gillespie, Willem de Kooning, Franz Kline and Robert Lowell. “The Revolution has begun,” he wrote to Neal Cassady as a New Year’s salute.

That feeling of Sharing the Vision spread throughout the counterculture.

LSD

LSD arrived in the counterculture in a very open way by 1964 and 1965. The shrill fife and the hearty thum thum thum of thousands of feet in General Leary’s Primary Color Universal Swirl Turn On/Tune In/Drop Out Marching Band could be heard (if you had your Head turned properly) from coast to coast.

It played a big role in the era, as Abbie Hoffman noted in the first paragraph of the book he was writing in ’68: “Once one has experienced LSD...one realizes that action is the only reality.” The artist R. Crumb has talked about how acid changed his art— helped him expand his drawing.

The public promotion of psychedelics and bu produced its Pot martyrs and Acid martyrs, as police in places like San Francisco, New York, and smaller venues everywhere took action to stomp down those Extolling Reefer and Psychedelics in an Public Format. Neal Cassady, Tim Leary, Leary’s daughter also, Ken Kesey, John Sinclair, and many others had their lives badly impacted by the counter-counterculturalists. Federal narcotics agents tried to set up Allen Ginsberg for a pot bust in New York City in 1965.

1964

Sixty-four was the year of the culture-shaking Free Speech Movement at UC Berkeley. It was also the year that Ken Kesey, Neal Cassady and the Merry Prankster crossed the United States in the bus named Furthur, initially to arrive in NYC in time for the release of Kesey’s new novel. The voyage of Further developed a mythology and impact way beyond any book release. After all, it was the year of Freedom Summer in the South, and the Sixties were actually just warming up and Vietnam was not yet a factor in ruining them.

Wavy’s condensation of ’64: “Financed free-floating lifestyle through sale of single ounces of marijuana packaged in decorator bags and containing tiny toys. (The dubious apex of this short-lived profession was when I scored a kilo for the Beatles.)” 1964 was also the year Wavy first met Bonnie Jean Beecher at her restaurant, the Fred C. Dobbs, in Los Angeles. The Fred C. Dobbs was on Sunset Boulevard. “It’s from Humphrey Bogart and *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, nobody ever put anything over on Fred C. Dobbs.

“She put peanuts in my hamburger and I fell in loooove.”

The Hog Farm

The Early Years, 1966-1967

Published accounts vary as to the exact Flow of Time in the founding of the Hog Farm. There's a rather lacuna-divoted flow from Wavy's 1992 book, *Something Good For A Change*: “The Hog Farm is the name still associated with our expanded family. We acquired it while living rent free on a mountaintop in Sunland, California, in exchange for the caretaking of forty actual hogs. Within a year of moving there, the people engaged in our bizarre communal experiment began to outnumber the pigs. At first we all had separate jobs. I had a grant to teach brain-damaged children improvisation while teaching a similar class to contract players at Columbia Pictures. Harrison Ford was one of my students. My wife Bonnie was a successful television actress. Joining the scene were musicians, a computer programmer, a race-car driver, a telephone company executive, a cinematographer, several mechanics, and a heap of hippies.”

I'm going to rely a bit on the history of the Hog Farm which Wavy published in *The Realist* for November-December of 1969, a publication that has lurked in my archives now for 37 years. In it he says, “The farm was once located on a mountaintop in the San Fernando Valley.” He also writes that “to equalize the division of work and save wear and tear on the available vehicles, we instituted the dance master program. Our dance master ran the farm and the dance mistress ran the kitchen, and each day it was some different person working off this wheel with everybody's name. We could feed 30 people on \$3 a day combined with a garbage run at local supermarkets. In California they throw away a lot of stuff; tons of near fresh fruits and vegetables plus scooter pies and other goodies.”

It was during his time at the Hog Farm in the San Fernando Valley that Wavy began to suffer back problems, which were severe indeed. I asked him if maybe it was from lifting up food and water for the oinklings? He wasn't sure.

One thing was sure— Hugh Romney, his wife Bonnie, and the Hog Farmers were Eager to Instruct! They acquired a bus, in the spirit of Ken Kesey and the Pranksters' Furthur, and the Hog Farm decorated it and used it to promote a more sharing and egalitarian civ.

The Acid Tests and the Trips Festivals

Late '65-early '66

Lyndon Johnson and his eager pals in the military began the ill-fated ground war in Vietnam in 1965. There were big demonstrations in major cities and on colleges around the nation, including a series of Teach-Ins against the war.

Hugh Romney and Bonnie Jean Beecher were married in 1965. I asked Wavy about Bonnie being a television actress, and he replied, “She was doing *Star Trek*, and *Gunsmoke*, and stuff like that.”

The marriage was apparently cemented in part through living in the roaming buses of the Hog Farm for the first seven years. “That was extremely intense,” he told me. The marriage lasts to this day.

Trying to sort out the chrono-tracks of the era is daunting. They were experienced in a murky moil of semi-mania, so that it was a set of years in which everybody seems to have an autobiography. Acid did bring brilliant vistas, roils of bright universal colors, but it also tie-dyed egos. The following is an attempt to sort out the Acid Tests and the Trips Festivals.

Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters put on a few parties, called Acid Tests, where LSD was given out free to all, and where the slogan on fliers was, "Can You Pass the Acid Test?" They were all the rage for a few weeks and months, featuring a mix of dancing, rock and roll and light shows, with participants and audience in wild attire, painted with day glow adornments, and in general coming together as a Grand Parade of Eyeball-and-Ear Thrills.

The first Acid Test took place in late November o' '65 at a bookstore in Santa Cruz. Neal Cassady was there, endlessly commenting, and the Pranksters screened their Bus Movie, and there were lightshoesque projections. Plus there was oodles of free LSD. "The room is a spaceship and the captain has lost his mind," someone said o'er the mike, not really the best flight instructions.

The next Acid Test was held December 4, 1965. At the Rolling Stone Concert at Oakland Civic Auditorium that evening, the Pranksters handed out leaflets, "Can You Pass the Acid Test?" and gave an address 40 miles away in San Jose. 400 showed up. A band called The Warlocks, soon to call itself the Grateful Dead, performed.

On December 10, 1965, Bob Dylan sang at the Masonic Auditorium in SF, while in Palo Alto down on the Peninsula in a rented night club another Acid Test was held, featuring Stewart Brand's *America Needs Indians* show, plus the music of the Warlocks, and the shenanigans and free LSD of the Pranksters.

The fourth Acid test, the biggest one so far, was held December 17 at the Muir Beach Lodge, a large log cabin on stilts.

January 8, 1966 there was a follow-up Test at the Fillmore Auditorium in San Francisco. So powerful was the word of mouth on the Tests that the Fillmore was rented only two days before the event. Nevertheless, 2,400 people showed up. The Grateful Dead played, plus there was a baby bathtub of LSD-spiked punch in the middle of the floor.

Then the acid ante was upped, as, for the weekend of January 22, a three-day event was organized called the Trips Festival at the Longshoremen's Hall, which would feature key local artists, musicians and psychedelic pioneers. The Trips Festival was coordinated by Bill Graham, who had produced a series of benefit performances in support of the San Francisco Mime Troupe. Graham was All Energy, and often able to coordinate the shrieking shreds of the avant-garde in ways that kept art art while still turning a profit.

During these weeks, head Prankster and famous novelist Ken Kesey was getting into considerable trouble with the law. He was becoming a Pot Martyr, even though the establishment was probably most concerned about his promotion of public use of psychedelics.

On January 17, 1966 Kesey was found guilty for a previous pot arrest at the Pranksters' base in La Honda. Four nights later, in the early a.m., Kesey was popped by the fuzz on the roof of Stewart Brand's North Beach pad. Also arrested was the then-underaged legendary woman named Mountain Girl. Kesey had tossed a mj plant onto a nearby roof, and

now was facing five years with no parole.

The Judge told him not to attend the Trips Festival.

Sure, Judge Sure.

Meanwhile the poster for the Trips Festival promised “Revelations—nude projections, the God Box. The endless explosion. The Congress of Wonders, the Jazz Mice...” And other Eye/Mind Thrillies as well.

The three day Festival tripped into action on January 21, 1966. Night one was to be devoted to the cabaret show of the Open Theater and Stewart Brand’s *American Needs Indians*. There was random factor wildness, perhaps encouraged by a shopping bag of Owsley’s LSD being handed around the crowd. A crowd, by the way, which utterly thirsted for rock and roll, so that a band called the Loading Zone was put upon the stage.

According to several accounts, on January 22, the second night of the Trips Festival, an operation called the Tape Center presented films by the Canyon Cinema Group in something called ‘Options and Contracts at the Present Time.’ Also performing were the Ann Halprin Dancers while electronic inventor Don Buchla’s synthesizer provided sound. Big Brother and the Holding Company sang and played as did the Grateful Dead. “Anybody who knows he is God go up onstage” was flashed on the wall and voiced through the mikes.

Then there were events on Sunday also. All in all, 6,000 attended, and thanks to Bill Graham’s sense of cash-stash, cash was made! \$4,000! Kesey was voted half of the profits by the organizers, because it was agreed that the Acid Test “was more successful than the films,” in the words of Charles Perry in his interesting history, *The Haight-Ashbury*.

All in all the Trips Festival was “Gone,” in the finest sense of post-Beatnik/pre-Hippie Gonitude. Beginning in two weeks regular Fillmore dances/concerts were held every weekend as an important musical era was inadvertently started by these weeks and months of seething American experiments in psychedelic freedom.

1966

1966 was the year of The Mothers of Invention’s *Freak Out* and the Beach Boys’ *Pet Sounds*. The Beatles’ great *Rubber Soul* had been released in December o’ ’65, followed in ’66 by *Revolver* so that the turntables of an entire generation were twirling with astonishment. Hugh and Bonnie Jean Romney, and the Hog Farm, experimented also in the Light Show Revolution. As Wavy once described it: “We performed light shows and energy games at the Shrine Exposition Hall in Los Angeles with Cream, Jimi Hendrix, the Jefferson Airplane, and the Grateful Dead. The Shrine holds ten thousand people. On Sunday afternoons we had free happenings on our mountaintop. Maybe a hundred people in open celebration.”

Meanwhile, the Acid Tests went south to Los Angeles where on February 5, 1966 the Dead performed at an LA Test. There was a second Acid Test on February 12 at the Youth Opportunities at 13331 South Alameda very near Watts “The Pranksters... gleefully filled a large plastic trash can with what they announced was ‘electric’ Kool-Aid,” as one account stated. Unlike SF Acid Tests, the 200 at the LA Acid Tests did not realize they were being stealth zapped.

Wavy has a long-time complaint about the Watts Acid Test. All of a sudden in one of our chats, Wavy said, “Ed, I didn’t do it, I did not. Tom Wolfe says I put the acid in the Kool-Aid at Watts. It’s in his book, the *Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*.”

It bothers him, even to this day: “The strange thing is that he (Tom Wolfe) was living with the mom of one of the people in the Hog Farm, Helena Le Brun. She was married to David Le Brun. He’s made an amazing movie called *Proteus*, if you ever get a chance to see it. He’s won some awards. He did a thing on Tibetan tankas, on animation boards. He did the *Hog Farm Mobile Home Movie*. Anyhow, they would put us up. We’d park the bus outside and use their style-ly bathroom. Then, I was in New York over a period of time.

“I’m at Tom Wolfe’s place on Beekman. I’m doing Bob Fass’s show till 5 in the morning, and putting up the flags with that guy at the U.N., and then I’d go to Tom Wolfe’s and I’m wearing the cowboy hat with the horn coming out of it, and making Truman Capote scratch his head, and the Kennedys nervous. Tom was working on the book then. He had a hit of acid on his bureau, and he kept sayin’, ‘Should I take it?’ And I’d say, ‘Take it,’ and he’d start to sweat (chuckles). And it was the only time I ever saw him sweat is when he thought about taking that hit of acid. I’m certain he never took it.

“But he got this information from a reporter for the *L.A. Free Press*, that I put the acid in the kool-aid at Watts. And he didn’t ask me. It just really hurt me that he didn’t ask me. He just took it for granted, yes, that I did that.”

The wounds of the chrono-track wind onward sometimes without any resolution.

Meanwhile Kesey had disappeared the night after the Trips Festival in SF, placed a fake suicide note in a psychedelic bus near the Oregon border, split to Mexico but was caught in October in California. And made a martyr to to the hatred of psychedelia.

Open Dose vs. Stealth Dose

Wavy pointed out, during one of our talks, a difference in attitude between the Hog Farm and Kesey on the question of stealth-zap vs. open-zap. It came when I asked him what the official name of the Hog Farm’s traveling show was. He replied, “The Hog Farm and Friends in Open Celebration, and it was kind of like the Acid Test but you had to bring your own head. We didn’t dose people. That was an argument I had with Kesey. I didn’t think it was a good idea to dose people if they didn’t know they were being dosed.”

The War in Vietnam Holding Hands with The War on Drugs

1966

That spring there were more big anti-Vietnam War protests and parades in American cities. In April, Sandoz Pharmaceuticals pulled LSD from distribution, citing “misuse.” In October, LSD, mescaline and psilocybin became illegal in the USA.

It was a war on drugs that would bumble along for the next 39 years and beyond.

The American Commune Movement

The 1960s witnessed a longing to live in a more sharing, communal way. The idea of the commune of course is very ancient, but the idea of an egalitarian, non-patriarchal, non-authoritarian commune has elements of newness. For ancient communes, you can check out, for instance, the Russian communities of artisans called Artels which existed all the way back to the 12th century. You can go on the internet (or to your local library) and find oodles of information about, say, Brook Farm or the Oneida Colony of the 19th century. To learn about some of the American communes of the 1960s and early '70s you can find interesting details in Iris Keltz' *Scrapbook of a Taos Hippie*.

A key part of the '60s communes was the celebration of Fun and Goof Time, emblemized by a fine poster Gilbert Shelton once designed called "Workers of the World Relax." Why not conspire to stand in the way of the Rat Race? Our grandparents' generation worked hard to lower the work week from 70 to 60 to 50 to 44 to 40 hours? Why not lower it to 20? Why not waste time, for is not time itself is the biggest waster of them all? Allen Ginsberg's *Howl & Other Poems* changed many lives by the early 1960s, especially on the question of Goof Time and the abandonment of money-lust. His great poem, "America," for instance, in the same book, thrilled a generation with goof lines such as these:

America I've given you all and now I'm nothing.
 America two dollars and twentyseven cents January 17, 1956..
 America when will you be angelic?
 When will you take off your clothes?..
 I smoke marijuana every chance I get.
 I sit in my house for days on end and stare at the roses of the closet

The Spirit of Free

Another line from "America" spoke to the issue of Free:

When can I go into the supermarket and buy what I need with my good looks?

When indeed? Why not right now, in my own life time! For is not money, after all, just an hallucination, and banks create it, poof! out of nothing when they write a loan. I think that the spirit of Free provided much of the fuel of the communes, whose inhabitants wanted more than to "feel" free. They wanted Genuine Free! When the San Francisco Diggers served free food in Golden Gate Park, when the Free Store opened up first in San Francisco, and then in New York's Lower East Side in 1967, when free bins and community switchboards appeared by the thousands across the nation, the era was speaking its wildest desires: True Free— a world without profit, yet where everybody profits.

Communes Around the Nation

True Free was a message as inimical to the control class as the Paris Commune had been in the 1870s or the Ghost Dances had been in the 1880s. Yet it was an unstoppable spirit that spread in the late 1960s around the nation. Communes brought their hunger for sharing and social justice to just about every state. California, Colorado, New Mexico, Oregon and Washington had a bunch. There were 'unes in New York City, in upstate New York, in Illinois and the Midwest, in Kansas.....

Public Fear

Fear of nudity, fear of pot and acid, fear of dissolved property boundary lines, fear of disrespect for Christ and Jaweh, support for the war ("my country right or wrong"), and fear of orgies and ambisexuality— these were some of the fears that convulsed through commune country in the late 1960s.

1967, Off to New Mexico, and Public Performances

1967 was the year of the Summer of Love. It was also the year we learned that it was likely that elements of the CIA had bumped off John Kennedy. It was the year of a *Time* magazine cover story: "The Hippies: Philosophy of a Sub-Culture." Lo, indeed, t'was like a miracle! For a few years at least, the Beat/bongo/black attire visual gestalt was placed in limbo and everybody thought we would be wearing primary colors for the next five hundred years! One minute crackers at a voter registration demonstration in the South would have called you a "Beatnik race-mixer!" but the next it was "Dirty Hippie!" or "tie-dyed Commie!"

Meanwhile Hugh and Bonnie Romney, and the Hog Farm prepared to head for New Mexico in several old school buses purchased with money earned as extras in Otto Preminger's *Skidoo*, presenting the free "Hog Farm and Friends in Open Celebration" show here and there as they traveled. One Hog Farm bus, called the Road Hog, went to get outfitted at Ken Kesey's farm in Oregon.

The Hog Farm apparently had been spotted by a casting person for Preminger at an Easter 1967 Be-in in Los Angeles. *Skidoo* starred Jackie Gleason as a retired mobster, and his wife Carol Channing, who were distressed over their daughter's new hippie boyfriend. Groucho Marx was also in the flick, his final movie, and other stars such as George Raft and Mickey Rooney. Groucho was reported to have taken an acid trip in preparation for his role. The plot is intricate, with Jackie Gleason by accident taking LSD. Hog Farmers were hired as hippies who help a prison break and then are involved in action which takes place on board a yacht borrowed from John Wayne.

I asked Wavy about *Skidoo*. He told me he wasn't in *Skidoo*, unlike other Hog Farmers, because of his back operation which caused him to spend two months in Bryn Mawr Hospital getting a spinal disc removed and recovering.

You had to get out of there, i.e., the mountaintop?

“Yeah, I had to get some surgery, and so I missed *Skidoo*, and I flew into New Mexico which is where I joined up with the caravan, and we continued driving across the country putting on shows until.....”

The Hog Farm and Friends in Open Celebration —Wavy’s Bad Back

How did you hurt your back? I asked once again.

“Who knows. I was beat up a lot by the police and national guard. I think it was New York things, Washington things. And living in a bus was not all that therapeutic. In order to get me out of the bus in a body cast on a stretcher into a demonstration, we had a drill, it took about ten or fifteen minutes to get me out the window.”

1968 and Llano

Wavy’s condensation of the 1968 Hog Farm tour, which apparently began at the Summer Solstice: “Accompanying our extensive entourage was Pigasus Pig, the first female black-and-white hog candidate for president. We debuted our traveling road show at the Los Alamos proving grounds and set off cross-country to share our open celebration with the rest of the free world. (Driver! The United State of America! And step on it!) We were a light show, a rock band, a painting, a poem, an anti-war rally, an anthem for freedom and change. Mostly we were a palette for the audience to blast off from, and the audience was also the spaceship and the star. Bought twelve-acre farm in Llano, New Mexico.”

Where is Llano? I asked Wavy.

“Near Penasco.... on the way to Taos.” That’s northeast of Santa Fe.

Did you purchase it?

“Yes we did. We still own that property. It was like 12-16 acres, something like that.” There was considerable hostility from the locals against the Hog Farm commune in Llano, and against the other ’unes in the area. America, since the 19th Century when yahoos dragged Joseph Smith out of a jail and killed him, has tended to dislike communal behavior. It’s difficult now to imagine the hostility the ’60s commune movement evoked in the towns of America, and that included the rural areas where the communes of New Mexico set up their Tepees of Truth.

Pigasus & the Decision not to go to Chicago

1968

Was it your idea, I asked, to run the Pig for President? or did you pick up on Abbie and Jerry? I remember being in Chicago when Abbie and Jerry had a squabble over the Pigasus they brought to the demonstrations (Jerry didn’t think the pig Abbie had chosen was sufficiently ferocious and revolutionary.) Apparently it was the Hog Farm’s idea to nominate Pigasus.

Wavy had promised to bring the Hog Farm and their bus to Yippieland. The historic record is not clear, but it is thought Hog Farmers, rightly as it turned out, voted not to go to Chicago out of fear that Yippie leaders were trying to foment pizza streets, i.e. unearned suffering and bloodshed to help create what SDS a year later called a revolutionary Prairie Fire.

Wavy: "Abbie never forgave me for not being there. We were stuck in New Mexico, with our drivers with hepatitis, and he was saying, 'Why don't you get on a plane,' and I couldn't get on a plane with a 2,000 pound pig! (Chuckles).

E.S.: "Well, some of the literature says that you (the Hog Farm) voted not to go. I don't blame you."

The Counterinaugural (or the InHoguration) in DC

January 1969

Hubert Humphrey had a wonderful early career as a fiery progressive activist back in the 1940s and '50s, and then had been squashed as Vice-President beneath the oppressive war-love of Lyndon Johnson, who glowered and refused to help Humphrey's bid for the 1968 presidency. Humphrey, after the disaster of the Chicago riots, nevertheless put on a energetic campaign, with polls showing him about to overtake Nixon by early November, though he lost by .7 of 1 percent to Tricky Dick.

In January in D.C. anti-war groups held a Counterinaugural in a big tent by the Washington Monument. I was one of the m.c.'s, and Wavy was there also. They brought him in on a stretcher, as I recall, suffering from his bad back. I had tapped into the liquid rainbow, and the swirly-swirlies caught me up. I could no longer correctly focus on the microphone, and so I rested in the Hog Farm bus parked nearby.

"I was a bit out of it," I reminded Wavy during a recent conversation.

Wavy: "I remember, you conked out in our bus. We were doing egg creams."

Late Spring 1969 in NYC

Here's Wavy's condensatory on early '69: "The Hog Farm, the 'mobile, hallucination-extended family,' was on the road on the East Coast in '68 and '69, and was holed up in a big loft on New York's East Side, when Woodstock Ventures made a proposition.

"One day this guy showed up looking like Allen Ginsberg on a Dick Gregory diet with an attaché case," Wavy recalls, "and he asked us 'How would you like to do this music festival in New York state?' The Hog Farm had just rented land in Llano near Black Mesa, New Mexico, and the commune was just about to split the New York scene and settle in Llano. He said, 'We'll fly you in on an Astrojet.'"

New Mexico to Bethel

The condensatory continueth: "We just figured he was one toke over the line, went back to New Mexico, and thought nothing of it. So we're celebrating the summer solstice in Llano (June o' '69), and this guy shows up with one of those aluminum rock-and-roll

valises full of 'linear overlay,' and an Astrojet with room for 85 hippies and 15 Indians."

The Hog Farm's original duties apparently included building fire pits and fire trails around the festival grounds, but once on site they convinced the promoters on the necessity of setting up a free kitchen.

Wavy's website has the following chrono-flow (<http://www.wavygravy.net/bio/biography.html>): "When they stepped off the plane at Kennedy Airport, the Hog Farmers were met by the world press and told that they had been assigned the task of doing security at Woodstock, too.

"I said, 'My god, they made us the cops,' Wavy recalls. 'And I said, 'Well, do you feel secure?' The guy said, 'Yeah.' I said, 'See, it's working already.' That's when he said, 'What are you going to use for crowd control?' I said, 'Cream pies and seltzer bottles,' and they all wrote it down and I thought, 'The power of manipulating the media, ah ha!'"

Peace & Love at a Dairy Farm

August 15–17

More than 400,000 came to Max Yasgur's farm in Bethel, Sullivan County, NY for the Woodstock Festival and heard some of the best popular music groups of the century including Richie Havens, Joan Baez, Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, the Who, Janis Joplin, the Jefferson Airplane, Santana, Country Joe & the Fish, John Sebastian, & of course the great Jimi Hendrix with his heart-rending "National Anthem" in the closing set.

There was a drenching rain and oodles of LSD, pot, nudity, fucking and instant instruction courses in communality. There was the birth of the freak-out tent and Abbie Hoffman coming up with the concept of a Woodstock Nation that offers its citizens Free Food, Free Health Care, Free Fun, Free Music —a nation that still exists like a faintly burning coal in the stalk of Prometheus. Why? Because Free has a power that awaits its rightful centuries.

On the Stage at Woodstock

Still known as Hugh Romney, he stood on the Woodstock stage and announced, "What we have in mind is breakfast in bed for 400,000!"

I asked him about that famous statement. "It was picked by *Entertainment Weekly* as one of the top entertainment lines of the 20th Century," Wavy told me. "It's in the Woodstock film."

I said, "We were thinking about sampling it for our Wavy Gravy anthem, but I guess we're not going to be able to do it."

Wavy replied, "Lots of people sample it. You know who sampled it, and didn't ask, is that cretin swine. This is a really interesting story. Stacey (apparently in the room in Berkeley) what's the name of the guy that ripped my thing off. He's with Led Zeppelin. It's not Jimmy Page. It's the other guy."

E.S.: Robert Plant?

Wavy: "Exactly. And Country Joe is saying, 'Sue him. Sue him.' And Barry Melton, who was my music lawyer says, 'We tore up lots of hotel rooms together, he's a good guy.

“I called up Ahmet Ertegun. And I say, Ahmet, he listed my— it’s for a tune he (Plant) did called ‘Tie-dyed on the Highway’ for an album called *Manic Nirvana*. So, anyhow, I said, ‘Ahmet, can we get a donation to send homeless kids to Camp Winnarainbow, the circus camp, from them. I don’t want any money for myself. We’re a 501.C3 charity, and he could just kick in a few bucks for doing the lift. And so I got a thing from their management saying I should be fuckin’ honored that Robert Plant lifted my words, and could I go fuck a chicken or something.”

I mentioned some creepy anecdotes about Led Zeppelin I’d heard from the Eagles.

“You know who else lifted it?” said Wavy. “Kenny G. He did a thing on the Millennium. Where they were having the Millennium, where it started with Thomas Alva Edison, and I come in some where between Kennedy and Roosevelt. (Laughs)”

Flood of Post-Yasgur Hippies at Llano

I asked if the Hog Farm still owns the Llano land.

“Yes we do. We still own that property. We returned from Woodstock, where we became whatever it was we turned into, some legendary thing, and every hippie in America that had a car and could this stuff on top of it, suddenly showed up there. Fortunately, we moved on to the Texas Pop Festival.”

Texas International Pop Festival

Labor Day Weekend 1969

The Texas International Pop Festival was huge, and, like Woodstock, featured some of the best singers of the era, including Janis Joplin, B.B. King, Led Zeppelin, Sly and the Family Stone, Santana, the Incredible String Band, et alia multa. Texas was held on Labor Day weekend near Dallas, just a few days after Bethel, but was subsumed by the media splash that spread from the East.

The Texas International Pop Festival now has its own website, which I visited. Texas can be a unreasonably conservative place, and back then the locals were frothing in anxiety over casual nudity, bushes, dongs and skinny dipping. The mayor of the town outside Dallas where the Festival was festivaling issued an edict: You will not dangle dongs or breasts or expose pubic hair in My Town! Hugh Romney helped cool out the skinnies by addressing them over a bullhorn, “Little old Baptist ladies are out looking for bathing suits for you.” He urged them either get swimsuits, “or slam a little mud on your yosh.”

Wavy: “I drove around the lake in a boat, and told them if they wanted to stay high they had to put their pants on, because the Job’s Daughters were going to call the National Guard. There’s film of that, even.”

Named Wavy Gravy

It’s still a bit of a mystery how he bestowed upon himself his new name. I have read several explanations of the origin of W.G., and the one that seems acceptable, at least for

now, is in an article by Tahl Raz on Wavy's website:

"We were asked to go to Texas where they were having a bit of friction between a rodeo and a rock festival. I had served as chief of the Please Force at the Woodstock music festival, where the Hog Farm administered the free kitchen and bad-trip/freak-out tent. Almost overnight I had become a good-humored peacemaker and purveyor of life support at major rock festivals and political demonstrations. Anyway, I was working the stage when I felt a hand on my shoulder and this voice, "You move like you Wavy Gravy." I turned around and it was B B King and I just said, "Yes, sir." "

"It's worked pretty well through my life," Wavy reported in another article on his website, "except with telephone operators – I have to say 'Gravy, first initial W."

It all comes down to the apothegm, "Handle fame before it handles you."

Earth People's Park

Beginning in late 1969 and through 1970, and beyond, Wavy Gravy threw his vim into the concept of an Earth People's Park. To understand the concept of Earth People's Park we must revisit the confrontations in the spring of 1969 over People's Park in Berkeley.

People's Park, Berkeley

The year was 1969. Ronald Reagan was governor of California, and revving up to be president. UC Berkeley was trying to build some student housing on an empty 445' x 275' lot that spring when around 500 students, locals and faculty lay down flowers, sod, statues and playground equipment on the lot, and declared it People's Park.

What followed was a fierce confrontation. The university decided to try to evict the demonstrators from People's Park. Governor Reagan ordered in the National Guard and arrests continued for 3 days. The situation attracted the international attention, especially in anti-war and leftist circles, as 2,000 demonstrators fought the National Guardsmen.

On May 15, James Rector, a 25-year old carpenter from San Jose, was shot to death.

500 mourners then went to Chancellor Roger Heyn's house chanting "murderer! murderer!" while as a guest gift from the military-industrial-surrealist complex a National Guard helicopter hovered above those chanting "murderer!" and spew-sprayed them with a skin-stinging white powder alleged to have been used against the VC.

In the end, People's Park remained & the housing was not built.

Then Life Raft Earth, or the Starve-In

October 1969

By the time that the Hog Farm had returned to New Mexico from Woodstock, and then from the Texas Pop Festival, Wavy had decided to get involved again in activities in California. I knew that he had helped with a happening that fall of '69 called Life Raft Earth, and also known as the Starve-In. And that he had helped organize Earth People's Park, so I asked him about it.

Wavy: “We at that point were in Llano, New Mexico, and some people came and told us about it (People’s Park in Berkeley), and I said, ‘Let’s go!’ And they said, well, it’s over, and that’s when I decided to abandon the rural lifestyle, and put together a fast bus, which we bought from a Catholic high school basketball team. A Greyhound which could cross America in three days. We fixed it up so it could crew between 12 and 16, and speakers that screwed on the roof, and the first major event that we went to was the Marijuana Smoke-in on the 4th of July.”

Then we talked about the Starve-in, which occurred in October of ’69.

“You know, there’s a film made about that thing,” Wavy said.

About the Starve-In?

“Robert Frank. It’s called *Life Raft Earth*.”

During the weeks in which he became Wavy Gravy, Wavy had gone to California in advance of the Hog Farm bus to work with *Whole Earth Catalog* editor Stewart Brand on the “The Hunger show,” a week long fast sponsored by the Portola Institute to spotlight, in a personal way, the world wide plight of those suffering hunger and malnutrition. Robert Frank agreed to film it. His 37-minute film, *Life Raft Earth*, records the event which took place from October 11 to October 18, 1969 in a parking lot in Hayward.

“What we had originally planned to do,” Wavy told me, “was to to inflate this enormous plastic inflatable, like the Ant Farm was doing all over the place. But the Fire Inspector got napped with this shit, so we we not able to do it inside this thing with netting. Instead we were able to create this giant tube around this huge parking lot in Hayward, and it resembled a life raft. Stewart had engaged Robert Frank to shoot the event, and I said I would do it if I could be dressed as a hamburger. So, I went up to Kesey’s place and created my hamburger suit.”

“It was a magnificent event,” said Wavy, referring to the Starve-In. “We eventually got rained out, so we had to finish starving in the offices of the *Whole Earth Catalog* in Menlo Park. We had to abandon the Life Raft at a particular point because of a monsoon.”

Earth People’s Park

Around that time, Wavy Gravy and a bunch of others came up with the idea for Earth People’s Park. The Hog Farm began raising money during their peregrinations, enough to purchase 550 acres in Northern Vermont, as the first installment for the world wide Earth People’s Park. I asked Wavy about the 550 acres in Vermont. What did you do— purchase it, then turn it over?

Wavy: “We had this whole movement called Earth People’s Park. Milan Melvin, Bobby Steinbacher, Cass Elliott, a bunch of folk, John Sebastian was involved, I have the first tapes from that. It was an idea to buy back the Earth and give it away. So we’d set up an office, and everybody’d send a buck, and we’d keep buying land and liberating it. The Hog Farm drove around putting on these shows with our buses, called Earth People’s Party, panhandling spare change for the earth. We had this big hollow earth that people put money in; we’d bring it around to the concerts in a little wagon. When we hooked up with Warner Brothers (for the travel movie, *Medicine Ball Caravan*), and were leaving for Europe, we wanted to see something down, so these people found some land on the

Canadian border, in Norton, Vermont.”

I asked what happened to the land in Vermont.

Wavy: “It became Earth People’s Park. People built houses there, they lived there for 20 years until these bikers with guns moved in, started cutting down the trees for heroin, chased all the people away. Our lawyer on the Board wrote a cease and desist, and sent it to the businesses and law enforcement agencies everywhere from 20 miles around, and they stopped and they got busted selling like fifty pounds of weed to the Feds. So, the bikers got turned into the Feds’ star witnesses in their attempt to seize the land. And it was with the aid of Roz Payne— Roz could give you very heads up on this— pro bono lawyers, and Howard Dean, who was governor of Vermont then, and Ben and Jerry, we turned it into a State Park.”

As best I can determine, Earth People’s Park is now called Black Turn Brook State Forest. Wavy: “It’s the last off turn in America. You can’t miss it. There’s a big boulder, and carved in the boulder, it says ‘Earth People’s Park, Free Land for Free People,’ and the dates that it existed. It’s quite touching.”

1970

1970 was an up and down year. There was the impressive joy of Earth Day on April 22, but the Beatles split up— there would be no more achingly beautiful art song vowels to shake the soul. In early May National Guardsmen murdered four demonstrators who were merely practicing their American freedoms at Kent State University in Ohio, after which many of the major universities in the nation closed down for the rest of the school year because of what they called “student unrest.” And then Jimi Hendrix passed away on August 18, followed by Janis Joplin on October 4, right after she had recorded “Bobby McGee.”

The huge anti-war demonstrations of the fall of 1969 had failed to stop the evil rain of napalm and Agent Orange, and the Counterculture was trying to figure out how to respond to all the negativity. Thanks to Nixon, Altamont, Cointelpro, the CIA’s Operation Chaos, et al., the counterculture was slipping into a place not really as bad as Pete Seeger’s “Big Muddy,” but bad nevertheless.

That was the year Wavy and the Farm took part in the Warner Brothers movie, *Medicine Ball Caravan*. For the movie, the Hog Farmers bused around the States, setting up stages for mainstream rock acts. It was before heading for Europe with Medicine Ball, that the partisans of Earth People’s Park purchased the 550 acres in Vermont.

1971 The Seeds of Seva

After the Medicine Ball tour, the Hog Farm traveled to Pakistan and the Himalayas, a stunningly anguished journey that helped create the seeds that helped led to the founding of the SEVA Foundation a few years later. It began after one last concert on the tour, with Pink Floyd in Bishopsbourne, England, when the Hog Farmers pooled their movie pay and some funds raised for them from a benefit staged by a London commune and then voyaged with two buses filled with food, medical supplies, and some friends from around

17 nations, to Pakistan and the Himalayas. "We'd had so much attention from that free kitchen at Woodstock," Wavy said later, "we thought if we were in Pakistan with any kind of food, we could embarrass the large governments, and they would speed up the food relief. Then the Indo-Pakistani war broke out, and we hung a left into Kathmandu, distributing food and medical supplies to Tibetan refugee camps as we traveled. We fixed leaky roofs with rolls of plastic and built a playground in Kathmandu for impoverished kids. We also saw a tremendous number of blind people in Nepal. We were touched by the countless number of people suffering from unnecessary blindness and appalled at how slowly they were being treated."

When Wavy returned to the States, he dictated his book, *The Hog Farm and Friends*, and returned to the west coast.

1972

It was the year of the Watergate Break-in, the attempted hit on George Wallace (perhaps by the forces of Nix to keep Wallace from draining racist votes), and the ghastly 13-day Christmas bombardment of North Vietnam, the most ferocious in the history of warfare up to that time. It was also the year of the Federal Clean Water Act, Neil Young's "Heart of Gold," and Don McLean's "American Pie."

And also the the year Bonnie Jean Beecher Romney gave birth to Howdy Do-Good Gravy Tomahawk Truckstop Romney at the Tomahawk Truckstop in Boulder, Colorado. (He has since simplified the name to Jordan Romney. It's the by now multigenerational issue of what to do when parents call you things like Soybean Sunset or Treetrunk Stash.)

'72 was the year Wavy had what he has described as his "third and final spinal fusion. The surgery left me in my cast of thousands, firmly ensconced at Pacific High School in the Santa Cruz mountains. This is a center for alternative education rented by David Crosby for me to recuperate at with the whole Hog Farm."

As Wavy described the body casts during one of our conversations: "They used to put me in body casts for four months. One body cast we painted blue and covered with stars, that was the All Star Cast. The other one we covered with money from all over the world, that was the Cast of Thousands. We auctioned both of those off, at one point or another. But anyhow, those surgeries, now they get you up the next day, without a body cast. So, everything has changed enormously."

Berkeley, Gem of the Bay

Wavy and his family wound up setting down roots in Berkeley, California, one of the most complicated of communities. To me Berkeley has always seemed like a compromise, or a synthesis, between psychedelia, actual(not lip-service) belief in the Bill of Rights, social democracy and direct action. In any case, Berkeley has for decades been one of the advanced outposts for that difficult frontier where the Theory of Doing Good and Easing Suffering is put into action.

The Rainbow Bridge

early 1970s

We were talking about the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in Cleveland, and the seemingly faint chance of the Fugs, or at least founders Tuli Kupferberg and myself, getting inducted. “My teeth got inducted only,” he said. “My rainbow bridge.”

When did you get your psychedelic teeth? I asked. What year? It was the same cat that made Kesey’s famous tooth?

“Yes, Dick Smith. They were briefly inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. It would be in my book, *Something Good for a Change*.”

It was after Woodstock, or before?

“It was after,” replied the Hokusaidal Engravement. “Remember, I had no teeth at Woodstock.”

I joked that, well, he could have not been wearing them while on stage at Bethel, perhaps soaking them in a glass of Orange Sunshine.

Wavy: “It was a surprise actually. He heard me in his office, he was making regular teeth, and he heard me say one day, there was a really large body count, and they were showing that on the TV, and I said, fuck this, the only flag I want to salute from now on is a rainbow, so he made me the rainbow bridge. I still feel that way (chuckles).”

Camp Winnarainbow

1974

1974 had a few definite moments of Absolute Joy. A complicated but successful drive by a Democratic House and Senate drove the election-meddling Tricky Dick Nixon out of office. The sight of him waving and flashing victory-V’s on the White House lawn just before his helicopter lifted off the day he resigned from office is one of the grand images of the 20th Century.

1974 was also the year that Wavy’s book, *The Hog Farm and Friends* came out.

And the year Wavy and his wife Bonnie-Jean founded a summer camp for kids near Mendocino, California. As Wavy later described it in an interview: “It originally started as day care for Sufi kids. I thought it unjust that parents should be penalized spiritually, not being able to meditate and stuff, because they had kids. So I said ‘Give me all your kids,’ and we concocted this little circus arts day care. We discovered that perhaps the kids would be better off without the parents and the parents would be better off without the kids, so we rented the next camp down the road, which was maybe two miles away, and turned it into an overnight camp.”

As it ultimately evolved, Camp Winnarainbow held four two-week sessions for kids, a one-week introductory session for seven-year-old novices, and a one-week session for grownups.

Teachers share skills in juggling, unicycling, tightrope walking, and trapeze, as well as

music and art. "Grownup camp is just like kids' camp," Wavy explained to one reporter, "except you get to stay up late and you don't have to brush your teeth. We're not trying to turn out little professional actors or circus stars, although it does happen. What we're really into is producing universal human beings who can deal with anything that comes down the pike with some style and grace. We've been pretty darn successful at that. A lot of the kids who are running the camp now started as campers when they were seven.... In school, kids learn numbers and letters; we teach timing and balance, which I think is equally important – without competition, except with yourself."

Wavy becomes a Clown and "Able to Move outside My Own Bummer"

I was interested in when Wavy Gravy began appearing in clown makeup and costumes. You didn't start wearing clown makeup and costumes until after Camp Winnarainbow was founded? When you started visiting the children in the hospital?

"Yeah, I was being a clown at the Oakland Children's Hospital. And I didn't have time to take my makeup off, and I discovered they didn't want to hit me anymore."

So, I reiterated, that's when you first started wearing clown makeup.

Wavy: "I started wearing clown stuff at the Children's Hospital, as I began to turn into a clown."

There's no way adequately to describe the hideousness of back pain, how it wrecks thought, kills joy and sinks the sufferer toward the sludge of the Utter. When he began entertaining children at the hospital wearing his clown outfit, he was still in horrible pain from his third spinal surgery and "bouncing on the bottom," as he described it. So, he decided, why not go to make the children smile? "On my way out the door, somebody handed me a rubber nose. Without it I could have struck out completely. With it I was able to move outside my own bummer and make little kids laugh. I thought I had troubles until I eyeballed some of those kids!"

He became a clown of Gaia.

1975

That year Bonnie-Jean took the Sufi name Jahanara.

There's always the question of "earning" a "living," two of the most difficult words. Here's Wavy's own sketch of 1975 from his book, *Something Good for a Change*: "Woolsey Street house purchased by the Hog Farm, followed soon thereafter by the founding of the Babylon Telephone Answering Service on the front porch."

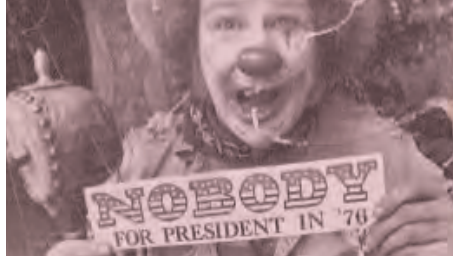
Wavy also paid attention that year to the fun=sacredness synthesis: "I attended the World Survival Symposium in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and started a new world religion in San Francisco called The First Church of Fun."

1976

Wavy this year first took part in the "Nobody for president" campaign. It seemed some-

what William Blakean to have Nobody replace Pigasus.

It turned out Wavy was partly right, as the years rolled past and Jimmy Carter's many failures stuck out like clown's thumbs (such as Carter's refusal to pass National Healthcare when National Healthcare had the support of Congress, and kowtowing to big oil). The Carter years saw a wrecking of the momentum of reform, hope and expectation of more Great Society legislation after Nixon's toss-out.



More Years of Pain

During times of intense back pain, Wavy had to take time off, and he lost considerable weight. Wavy: "I never want to be that skinny again. My bottom weight was 78 pounds, Ed, in 1976-77."

I had mentioned that I had spotted lacunae in his autobiography listed as "blank" so I assumed that occasionally he took a few months off. Wavy: "I just don't remember. They were just giving me vials of percodan. It took me three to get out of bed. I only slept once every three days, because it hurt so much to wake up."

Because of your back? I asked.

"Yeah."

Your back, your spine is more or less fused now?

"A couple of years ago, I had a surgery high up— they slit my throat and put a piece of my hip up around C-6"

In your C-spine?

"Yeah, up in my neck, and I've had five down below, and the last ones for bone spurs and stuff from the early shit." Existence precedes essence, John Sartre famously scribed. But extreme back pain eats essence all the way back to raw, shrieking existence.

1978 Seva



Wavy became one of the founders of the Seva Foundation in 1978, which is by now a world wide organization, based in Berkeley, and in whose service he has helped produce a number of big benefits. Its name comes from the Sanskrit word for service.

I picked up the basic story of the Seva Foundation from its own website and from the website volunteersolutions.org. The Seva Foundation was founded by several public health leaders who had worked on the World Health Organization smallpox eradication

campaign. Since its founding, Seva has “built partnerships with underserved communities around the world as they attempt to build healthy communities.”

One founding board member was Baba Ram Dass. The principle organizers were Larry Brilliant and Giriya Brilliant, joined by “a devoted group of doctors, social workers, activists, and at least one clown. Wavy Gravy was motivated to join their efforts when he learned that millions of blind people could see again immediately for a cost of about five dollars per eye.”

Seva provides more than 80,000 eye surgeries a year through locally run programs in India, Nepal and Tibet, and also in Cambodia, Bangladesh and Tanzania.

The Seva Foundation partners “with communities in India, Nepal, Tibet, Cambodia, Bangladesh, Tanzania, Mexico, and Guatemala as well as Native American peoples to reduce suffering and improve quality of life while honoring cultural beliefs and traditions.” Its three main areas of suffering-relief are: the Sight Program, the Community Self-Development Program, and a Native American Wellness Program.

“Seva’s Community Self-Development program helps indigenous communities seeking basic health care, economic sustainability, environmental protection and cultural survival. Because of Seva’s work, thousands of indigenous people in Chiapas and Guatemala drink clean water, deliver healthy babies and learn to read and write. Community leaders trained by Seva and its partners direct high priority projects for their villages or neighborhoods.”

Seva established a Native American Wellness campaign: “Diabetes claims lives at four times the national average in Native American communities. Recognizing that conventional health practices failed to stem the tide of diabetes, Seva offers a Native solution, a ‘Talking Circles’ model, based on the core values, beliefs and traditions common to Native peoples. Program participants dramatically improve their blood sugar levels by reclaiming a more traditional diet and exercising.

Seva also helps “preserve indigenous languages, conserve water rights, prevent drug and alcohol abuse by Indian youth, and provide cultural activities in schools. Native people hold solutions to many of their problems, and... they put them into action, reclaiming their traditions and the health of their communities.”

If you’d like to help the work of Seva, their address is: 1786 Fifth Street, Berkeley, California 94710, and their website is www.seva.org.

1979 and then the 1980s

Wavy’s précis o’ ’79: “Purchased the Henry Street house and sold Woolsey Street house, with the exception of the front porch, where we continued to maintain our answering service.”

Then came the 1980s. By 1980 Jimmy Carter’s approval rating dropped down into the zilch zone, as he botched the Iranian hostage rescue, refused to allow even a national catastrophic health system (though he would have had the support of the House and Senate), and urged Americans to forget about fun. Along came Ronald Raygun, almost too scary to satirize, and the years of assault on the Roosevelt New Deal and the Kennedy-Johnson Great Society. It was the decade of the mining of the harbors of Nicaragua, of CIA/US con-

tra dope deals to get around the Boland Amendments. A creepy creepy time.

Wavy bucked the trend.

During the grim months o' '80 when Americans were faced with the Gate of Carter vs. the Gate of Reagan, Wavy in role as "Nobody for President" toured cross-country in the family Greyhound, which was temporarily renamed "The Nobody One."

In 1982, Wavy and his wife Jahanara, plus around 50 Hog Farmers began the purchase of a big chunk of land in Laytonville, California, called Black Oak Ranch. Wavy told me that the Hog Farm landowners meet twice a year to make decisions about the land, sitting in a circle, with a decision making procedure he called "consensus minus one," which allows for one crazy person to dissent, he told me, while still being able to do consensus. In '83, the year Raygun and Edward Teller foisted the Star Wars nuclear x-ray scam upon a great nation, Wavy and Jahanara moved Camp Winnarainbow to Laytonville. There was a fine oak grove for camping, and Lake Veronica for swimming and boating, plus a 350-foot water slide from Marine World. In 1984, Walter Mondale could have used some theater skills workshops at Winnarainbow to set his soul aglow as he ran against Raygun, who was conducting secret wars in Afghanistan, El Salvador, and of course in Nicaragua. Wavy went out on the road in the Nobody for President tour with a musical entity known as the Unreal Band for Nobody. Wavy helped organize the Seva Foundation "Sing Out for Sight" concert with the Band and the Grateful Dead which was held outside Toronto.

In 1986, Mr. Gravy no doubt received his first invitation to join AARP. In May there was a big benefit in Berkeley for his 50th birthday. It was a long voyage from strolling around Princeton with Einstein.

Here's Wavy's condensations of the next two years: "1987: Jerry Garcia, with acoustic and electric bands, inaugurated our annual fundraiser to help pay for Black Oak Ranch. Produced in cahoots with Bill Graham, it is called 'Electric on the Eel.' 1988: Nobody IV tour, with the rock band Vicious Hippies. We went from sea to shining sea. Busted with the homeless in Washington, D.C. Help produce Home Aid Concert for The Seva Foundation in New York City at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine."

1989

1989 was the 20th anniversary of the Woodstock Festival, celebrated with a weekend of concerts held in Saugerties, New York about 100 miles due north of the Apple. Wavy, and Country Joe also, helped m.c. the event, which was packed with hundreds of thousands who again were drenched with rain as in '69.

In the spring, the Jim Thorpe of sixties radicalism, Abbie Hoffman, whose natural abilities and prowess were astounding, killed himself after several decades suffering cycles of manic depression. There was a memorial in New York City. The Fugs, Wavy Gravy, and many other friends saluted Abbie at a packed Palladium on 14th Street.



Tuli Kupferberg of the Fugs, plus unknown woman, and Wavy Gravy backstage at the Memorial concert for Abbie Hoffman, June 17, 1969, at the Palladium in New York City

1990

The Wavester ran for the Berkeley City Council that year. “Let’s elect a real clown” was one of his urgings. He apparently did not win, at least in this particular set of P-branes, mish-moshes of super-tiny strings, or II dimensional weirdosity.

The Dot-Com/Bomb Kosovo/No-Fly-Zone/Knee-Pad Years of Clinton followed by the Kill-the-New Deal Years of Shrub 2 1990s-early 2000s

The “Nobody for President” Campaign became both more difficult and less difficult after the presidential campaign of 1992. The Dot-Com Boom/Bomb Kosovo/No-Fly-Zone/Starving Children in Iraq years began when Democrat centrist Bill Clinton became president. The tear-down of the New Deal/Great Society societal structures became slightly more subtle, but remained equally relentless, as a grim, war-eager generation of neocons who’d grown up hating— or grew to hate— Woodstock, hippies, pot, communes, psychedelia, anything called Earth People’s Park, and lifestyle experimentation— grabbed power and promoted America as a New Rome.

Wavy’s book *Something Good For A Change: Random Notes On Peace Thru Living*, was published in ’92 by St. Martin’s press in NYC.

It was also the year he became a flavor for Ben & Jerry’s liberal ice cream company. I asked Wavy how that had come about.

Wavy had an acquaintance that went to high school with Ben Cohen. “He showed us how to write a request for money, and we got a little bitty taste. And they had just put

out the Cherry Garcia flavor from left field, and I was able to hook their people up with the Grateful Dead people to solve that problem. They couldn't just do that without asking, and it ended up, Jerry got a lot of money out of that."

So, after you helped Jerry Garcia get royalties for Cherry Garcia they asked you for permission to use your name?

"Oh, yeah! And Camp Winnarainbow started getting royalties. Toward the end it got close to thirty grand a year. I got that for about eight years or so, some less, some more. And then, Unilever took over, and dumped me."

They dumped the Grav'? I asked in horror.

"Yeah, because I wasn't cost effective. I knew I wasn't cost effective anyway when they wouldn't make me a Peace Pop when I was one of the leading flavors in all of Ben and Jerry."

1995

In 1995, Wavy Gravy's comedy album *Old Feathers — New Bird* (Relix Records) was named Best Comedy Album of the Year by the National Association of Independent Record Distributors.

The Continuation of Camp Winnarainbow

It's a multi-decade success. And it's no wonder, judging from the clear text of the Winnarainbow website: "Drawing from our knowledge of circus and performing arts, we teach timing, balance and a sense of humor... We honor the creative spirit of each child in an atmosphere of approval and mutual encouragement. Our goal is to provide a training ground to nurture future leaders for a harmonious and sustainable world."

One article on Wavy's website describes how the camp operates: "Camp Winnarainbow's concept of practice embraces so much more than physical skills. Mornings begin with Wavy reading from something like the *Tao Te Ching* or *Everything I Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*, and then the kids choose between high-intensity aerobics or yoga for their warm-ups. 'I've also in the last five years discovered that kids will do anything if they can stay up later than other kids, even sit with a straight back and watch their breath. So we instituted WISE Gaias. WISE is Winnarainbow Inner Space Exploration. Three or four years ago we created a labyrinth for Jose Arguelles's Dreamspell ceremony. They leave their problems at the center of the labyrinth and come out pretty clean."

The royalties from the Wavy Gravy Ben & Jerry label plus grants from the Grateful Dead's Rex Foundation, has helped Winnarainbow give scholarships to homeless children from the SF/Berkeley area and to Native American kids from a South Dakota reservation.

His Room in Berkeley

Now and then Wavy violates the important dictum: never allow a reporter into your bedroom. One reporter described how, on a warm September morning in Berkeley, Wavy

went up to “his corner bedroom, a psychedelic cave in which every inch of wall space is festooned with posters, photographs, mandalas, banners, and bumper stickers. Every shelf, nook, and cranny is crowded with books, beads, videotapes, Buddha figures, crystals, tetrahedrons, incense, Mickey Mouse and Goofy figurines, antlers, wind-up teeth, and empty soda pop cans. A pair of oversized clown shoes appear to be crawling out of one of the canvas bags on the floor. Wavy’s lair feels like a cross between a tree house and a New Age/kitsch shrine to the bard of Woodstock himself. Wearing shorts and athletic shoes.....”

The Smithsonian in D.C. should consider bronzing the Wavester’s room, or capturing it as an anthropological diorama.

Current Times

Today, the Hog Farm still exists, or has reconstituted itself, apparently collectively owning and operating the 700-acre Black Oak Ranch and hosting an annual fundraising Pig-Nic. Wavy resides a few months each year in the communal house in Berkeley, which he has described to me and others as a “hippie Hyannisport”

I spoke with Wavy not long ago on the question of “wha’zup?”

“Mostly these days I just do Seva, which is this foundation that I’ve given my life to. We work mostly in incurable and preventable blindness in India, Nepal, Cambodia, and now Tanzania. And like it’s happening. Eighty percent of the people in the world that are blind don’t need to be, and could get their sight back for not very much money. And so the shows that I’ve done over the years have been called Singout for Sight and Blues Against Blindness, and things of this ilk.”

Wavy mentioned how Seva is currently involved in helping create more potable water in Chiapas and Guatemala. Better water squads than death squads.

“The Hog Farm, we’re still together. He have this hippie Hyannisport in Berkeley. We have 700 acres up north. I run my kids camp. There’s an organic farm. There’s a bioengineering office. There’s a tepee and awning making scene. It’s quite extraordinary.”

His son Jordan runs the wavygravy.net website.

“I get paid for Camp Winnarainbow and the Seva Foundation is the place where I can put my good where it will do the most, which is a tip I got from Kesey, ‘Always put your good where it will do the most.’”

“I’m going out of town for a few days,” he said during a recent chat. “I’m going to see Al Gore at Google, talking on Global Warming, and have lunch and stuff. My friend Larry Brilliant is there now, and we’ll see how that goes.”

I replied, “Please tell Al Gore that text time he runs for President, and right wing goons are trying to disrupt the counting, send in Democratic forces to confront them.”

Wavy: “Are you familiar with David Eggers? Brilliant writer. They have this literary magazine called *McSweeney*. And inside the literary magazine was a DVD. One of the things on the DVD was something called “Al Gore’s Dog,” I watched it the other night, and I suddenly felt terrific empathy for this guy. I didn’t find him stiff at all. It was shot by a young person who was friends of his daughters. And boy I was touched by it.”

I mentioned being on the Woodstock Democratic Committee with my wife Miriam for

around 20 years. “We fight like hell for the Democrats,” I told Wavy. “but Gore just gave up in 2000. George Pataki, and this guy who heads the U.N. now, Bolton, that asshole, plus Christy Whitman, and others flew down there to disrupt the counting. They let these goons go down there to disrupt. It was like an act of treason. And it worked! They stopped the counting. So, the Democrats have to get tougher.”

“Think Nader, Vote Gore, Imagine Nobody”

Wavy pulled away from the Nobody for President movement in 2000 and '04. “I didn’t wanted to deflect any votes,” he told me. “That’s why I said ‘Think Nobody but Vote Gore,’ and I have buttons and bumper stickers that say that.”

Wavy stayed totally away from Kerry-Bush 2004. “‘Think Nader, Vote Gore, Imagine Nobody’ (because nobody’s perfect) that was my final hurrah. I didn’t go out this last time. I was certain we were going to win.”

“They stole!” I replied. “Every district in New Mexico with electronic voting machines went for Bush in 2004, even those in strongly Democratic places. They just shaved the election all over the country, and then in the key states where the electoral votes were up, they didn’t have to shave, they just pushed and bullied and disenfranchised, such as in Florida and Ohio, Pennsylvania, and swung it. I’m convinced to a moral certainty it was stolen.”

Involved in Recent Anti-Capital Punishment Demonstrations at Q

Wavy, as he enters his 8th decade, is determined to go out in a blaze of leaflets and direct action. “I’m still getting arrested and beat up and all that shit,” he told me in one of our recent conversations. “I went to San Quentin as Escape Clause instead of Santa Claus, and I brought a life preserver for Arnoldt! (Austrian accent) and some lifesavers for the inmates— the wintergreen kind you bite on and electric sparks come out of your mouth. Twinkies with files stuck in them. They loved the Twinkies. Actually, it was emory boards. You could see them sticking out of the ends.”

The sit-in was in February 2004. He was dressed up as Santa Claus, or as he preferred to describe it, “Insanity Clause,” joining 14 other protesters, including long time activist, writer and Unitarian Universalist minister Rev. Paul Sawyer. They tried to block the traffic at Q’s west gate.

I suggested that he could do a San Quentin concert like Johnny Cash at Folsom.

“The guards liked me fine, and I probably could get in that way with Bread and Roses, which is something that Mimi Farina put together in the Bay Area. And I did get in with the Tibetan Gyuto monks and Mickey Hart, and we exchanged tunes with the Gospel Choir inside San Quentin. But I got beat up as Insanity Clause there, trying to get them to stop executing this guy Cooper, Kevin Cooper. And we got a stay of execution. But this guy they just injected, Mr. Williams— we weren’t so lucky.”

A Film on Wavy

For the last few years, a documentary has been under construction on the remarkable human known now as Wavy Gravy.

Legacy

When you speak with Wavy, occasionally the subject turns to legacy. That's only natural for a guy whose 70th birthday is on May 15, 2006, and whose life has been somewhat controversial, On the Edge, dealing with pain, and seeking new pathways toward peace and sustainability.

"I've done a lot of flashy things, but the best legacy are the kids that have come out of this camp. What did Steve ben Israel say— he said 'nostalgia for the future.' I do 700 kids a summer, in five sessions, and we've done it for 34 years. A lot of the kids who are running the camp started out as campers when they were seven!"

E.S.: "Your best legacy is your ability to sum things up. Some people call them one-liners. Other people call them apothegms. That's one of your great skills— to think on the spot, and come up with a summation that's to the point. That's an art form that few have."

Wavy: "I thought we must be in heaven, man. That's a good one. There's a little bit of heaven in every disaster area. That's an even better one."

Without passing on the Vision of a movement there is no movement. How is it done? Alton Ellis' reggae tune, "Set a Better Example" always comes to mind. Ultimately the artifacts, images, writings and memories of something such as a commune BECOMES the commune. "Who digs LA IS LA," Allen Ginsberg noted in "Footnote to Howl." It's the same way with movements for a Better America.

"I'm trying to understand," I said in a recent conversation, "the psychology that drives you onward."

Wavy: "It gets me high. That's it."

All hail Wavy Gravy in the Time Flow, the Time Flame, The Time Glow!

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Resources for the Appreciation of Wavy Gravy

His books:

The Hog Farm and Friends (1974)

Something Good For A Change: Random Notes On Peace Thru Living (1992)

Seva website: www.seva.org

Camp Winnarainbow: www.campwinnarainbow.org

Wavy's website: <http://www.wavygravy.net>

You can order Wavy Gravy's creativity from his website.

Articles, Books, and Sites Consulted in Writing "A Biographic Appreciation of Wavy Gravy"

- Various biographic presentations at www.wavygravy.net (It's NOT [wavygravy.com](http://www.wavygravy.com))

- Material on LSD's impact, Lenny Bruce, Allen Ginsberg, the Woodstock Festival, etc. see Edward Sanders' books, including:

1968, a History in Verse

The Poetry and Life of Allen Ginsberg

America, a History in Verse, Vol. 3 (1962-1970)

America, a History in Verse, Vol. 4 (1971-1985)

and also, *Tales of Beatnik Glory, Vols 1, 2, 3, 4*

- Useful chronology at the Tate Museum's *Summer of Love* exhibition's website <http://www.tate.org.uk/liverpool/exhibitions/summeroflove/timeline.shtm#>

- "A Quick Sketch of My Thumbnail"

From Wavy's 1992 *Something Good For A Change*"

Somewhat lacunae-dappled, but interesting, you can load it down from

<http://www.wavygravy.net/bio/sketch.html>

- "Everyone's Clown and Nobody's Fool" interesting article by Tahl Raz

http://www.myprimetime.com/work/job_hiring/content/cooljob/index.shtml

- On the Neighborhood Playhouse, background and history at

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neighborhood_Playhouse

- Background on the SEVA Foundation

<http://www.volunteersolutions.org/vccc/org/2733180.html>

- Somewhat deprecatory yet ultimately useful article in the *Wall Street Journal*, July 27, 1999, "Wavy Gravy's Camp for Nostalgic Hippies" by Susan G. Hauser.

- Useful material on Greenwich Village early 1960s, “Maps & Legends: Positively 4th Street Remembered,” from *Q Magazine*, May 1995 http://www.edlis.org/twice/threads/village_sights.html
- Biographic information on Del Chose “Comics scripter, comedy legend Del Close dies at 64” by Kim “Howard” Johnson <http://www.geocities.com/SouthBeach/Pointe/2765/KimHowardJohnson/khjdelecl.html>
- Al Aronowitz’s interesting writing on the Gaslight Café and its era <http://www.bigmagic.com/pages/blackj/column6b.html>
- Ron Rosenbaum’s detailed and interesting “Hog Farm’s Wayward Bus— Pilgrims & Profiteers on A Cross-Country Crusade” <http://www.villagevoice.com/specials/0543,50throsenbau,69180,31.html>
- Excellent photographer Lisa Law’s photos of Kesey’s bus, and Wavy Gravy, the Hog Farm, etc. at <http://americanhistory.si.edu/lisalaw/6.htm>
- Useful article, “The Hog Farm.” by Wavy Gravy, when he was yet Hugh Romney, published in *The Realist*, November-December 1969, and lurking in E.S.’s archives for 36 years!
- Charles Perry’s interesting and seemingly accurate book, *The Haight-Ashbury*
- A fine photograph by Fred McDarrah, of Hugh Romney, Moondog and Tiny Tim at the Fat Black Pussy Cat, July 2, 1963, in McDarrah’s excellent photo book, *Anarchy, Protest & Rebellion— and the Counterculture that Changed America; a Photographic Memoir of the ’60s in Black and White*.

Note from the author

I decided to write something about Wavy Gravy—a poem initially— in 2002. I had seen him perform in Greenwich Village when I was at New York University in the late 1950s/early ’60s. And I had run into him now and then over the years, and of course had read about his life and times on numerous occasions; and was especially impressed with his multi-decade efforts to improve American civilization. Events, however, intervened— for instance, work on my 9-volume *America, a History in Verse*, and finishing the final stories in the 4-volume *Tales of Beatnik Glory*. Then, in 2005, Tuli Kupferberg and I decided to write and record a “final” Fugs CD. For it, I began composing the 9-minute 12-second anthem in honor of Wavy Gravy. At the same time I started researching his life and milieu, speaking with him a few times on the phone, the results being “Hymn to Wavy Gravy,” recorded in Woodstock in March, 2006, and the “Biographic Appreciation.”

Anthem to Wavy Gravy

Welcome to the world of Wavy Gravy
 A place where everyone can hold the Wheel
 “Always put your good where it will do the most”
 Ken Kesey said to Wavy Gravy one day
 so that everyone can share in the Commonweal

Everybody stand and shout
 Everybody holler for joy
 I see Wavy Gravy
 He’s waving on the hill
 Get ready for a mighty big thrill
 for Wavy knows that laughing while you work or play
 will keep the dread from calling come what may
 & keep the smile from falling, seize the day!

He was born Hugh Romney in 1936
 in East Greenbush, New York
 When he was five he was living in Princeton
 when Albert Einstein came walking by
 Einstein asked his mom
 if Hugh could walk with him
 and they took daily strolls for weeks on end
 Einstein was thinking about the space-time flow
 and Wavy was thinking of his twinkling glow

2

Hugh went to high school in Connecticut
 & into the army in 1954
 He went to Boston in '57
 It was the year of Kerouac’s *On the Road*
 and everyone was reading Allen Ginsberg’s “Howl”
 Hugh became a teenage beatnik poet
 and organized jazz & poetry
 You can get out the bongos and come along!
 —Oompa-boompa-oomp—
 Everybody loves a good beatnik song a good beatnik song

I was a teenage beatnik

I'll be a beatnik in my 20s
I'll be a beatnik in my wheel chair
I'll be a beatnik in heaven
I'll be a beatnik forever
and it was time for Hugh to come to New York City
& study the theater at the Neighborhood Playhouse

3

He began hanging out in the Village at night
checking out the world of MacDougal Street
He discovered the Gaslight Café, o Lord
and met Lenny Bruce at the Vanguard
He started doing standup at the Village Gate

Hugh Romney had a pad above the Gaslight
Where Bob Dylan wrote "A Hard Rain's a-Gonna Fall"
And then Hugh went out to the West Coast
To help Lenny Bruce keep out of trouble
& to make his mark with words

Things have a way of breaking free
between Berkeley & LA
He found a way of dropping out
in a time of trips and acid tests
He helped create a collective, they called it the Hog Farm
living communally, traveling in buses
"The Hog Farm and Friends" went coast to coast

4

Then came a Festival in '69
Peace and Love on a farm in New York
with a freakout tent and food for all
His famous line, spoken from the stage
"What we have in mind is breakfast in bed for 400,000!" Yeah!

The Hog Farm went to the Texas Pop Festival
& Hugh was working the stage
B B King put his hand on Hugh
then he said, "You move like you Wavy Gravy"
Move like you Wavy Gravy

So now he's Wavy Gravy

and he's helping ease human suffering
 What is the work? Allen Ginsberg asked
 To ease the pain of living
 Everything else is drunken dumbshow
 Allen Ginsberg said
 —Om—

5

Wavy helped found the SEVA Foundation
 and a children's camp called Winnarainbow
 "Always put your good where it will do the most"
 Ken Kesey said to Wavy Gravy that day
 so that everyone can share in the Commonweal

Everybody stand and shout
 Everybody holler for joy
 I see Wavy Gravy
 He's waving on the hill
 Get ready for a mighty big thrill
 for Wavy knows that laughing while you work or play
 will keep the dread from calling come what may
 & keep the sky from falling, seize the day!

High! High! High!
 It's a Wavy Gravy high
 High! High! High!
 It's the high of helping others

In the thusness and thisness
 till Bliss replaces bizness

High! High! High!
 till SEVA saves each eye
 High! High! High!

All hail Wavy Gravy in the Time Flow
 All hail Wavy Gravy in the Time Glow

—Edward Sanders
 Woodstock, NY 2006
 in honor of Wavy's 70th birthday.
 Song published by P.C.C. Music, BMI

A Biographic Appreciation of Wavy Gravy

**in honor of his 70th Birthday,
May 15, 2006**

**and a biographic song
“Anthem to Wavy Gravy”**

CD recorded March 2006

—Edward Sanders

**Published in a Limited Edition with CD of the
“Anthem to Wavy Gravy” included**

by The Woodstock Journal

Box 729 Woodstock, NY, 12498

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Notes for Biographic Appreciation of Wavy Gravy:

In a basement reached by stairs from the sidewalk at 116 MacDougal Street in the Village a man named John Mitchell opened the Gaslight Café in 1958. It was a coffee house, a word in the late fifties and early sixties that was charged with meaning.

It helps to recall that Jesus had an approval rating of about 15. So, controversy and legacy and sometimes partners forever.

Elements: Miriam and I at the Gaslight
as soon as it opened.

MacDougal Street.

Players Theater, Garrick.

Cannabinous Prob's

He asked about John Sinclair. "He's okay? I was concerned, he was a New Orleans guy."

I pointed out John was not in NO, but had gone back to Detroit, and now was headquartered, I thought, in Amsterdam, where he helps run the Cannabis Cup.

Wavy Said, regarding the Cannabis Cup, "I'm not allowed to be in touch with any more, because I'm a children's camp director, and I can't be doing that shit."

Do they make you take drug tests?

"No, but when I got on the cover of *High Times* I had like 15 kids ripped out of my camp. It was kind of a betrayal. I approved all of the stuff on the inside. The deal was that they'd let me look at everything, and they didn't let me look at that. They called me the Prince of Pot. They were going to call me Clown Prince, but the layout guy said that the word didn't fit."

I mentioned how movie stars, even in movies that feature drugs, are required now to take drug tests. And how columnists for the *Daily News* now are made to take drug tests. "The Pot Wars are back. The same Pot Wars that got Kesey, that got Sinclair, that got John Lennon, Neal Cassady, that got Leary, got Leary's daughter. It's baaaaack!"

"I hope they don't get me, because I love my pot."

•••••

His Back

Your back, your spine is more or less fused now?

“A couple of years ago, I had a surgery high up— they slit my throat and put a piece of my hip up around C-6”

In your C-spine.

“Yeah, up in my neck, and I’ve had five down below, and the last ones for bone spurs and stuff from the early shit. They used to put me in body casts for four months. One body cast we painted blue and covered with stars, that was the All Star Cast. The other one we covered with money from all over the world, that was the Cast of Thousands. We auctioned both of those off, at one point or another. But anyhow, those surgeries, now they get you up the next day, without a body cast. So, everything has changed enormously.”

“I’m just a certified mess like the rest of us. A of accumulated error, I like to think of it. I’ve had five spinal surgeries.”

Can you walk?

“I can walk, but not a lot, a (product?) of accumulated error.”

Polevaulting is out, but Challenging the Quality of the Flow is in.

Then I read, Hugh Romney, spokesperson for the Hog Farm, had gone on to California set things up for a seven-day Starve-In which was supposed to happen on October 11.

Buses did not arrive, Hugh was miffed, delayed by mechanical prob’s. When buses finally were ready to roll, the Starve-In had already ended. “Romney was upset. His work had been violated. He vowed to sever all all visible connections with the Hog Farm, even to changing his name.”

Wavy, “They showed up eventually.”

One universal experience in getting older is watching the Great Flow of Bye Bye, as friends, not-so-friends, acquaintances, and even those close to your soul depart into the Einsteinian Equations of Yes/No/Maybe.

According to one account I read, Dylan wrote A Hard Rain’s A-Gonna Fall in September 1962, in the basement of the Village Gate, in a small apartment occupied by Chip Monck, later to become one of the most sought-after lighting directors in rock music.

I am reminded of the scripture by the great bard Allen Ginsberg, “Who digs LA IS LA.”

It’s obvious that he has had a life long “way with words,” and a Skill in Condensation, an ability to come up with an abbreviated descriptions, talents that have not faded in the click clack of Time’s Wingéd Chariot.

In January another Acid Test brought 2,400 to the Fillmore West auditorium in San Francisco. The Grateful dead performed in front of, and amidst a Lycergic Light Show cre-

ated by arrays of audio-visual devices. It was "Gone," in the finest sense of post-Beatnik/pre-Hippie Gonitude.

There were what were called Acid Tests, and there was a Trips Festival

The multimedia 'Trips Festival' is held at Longshoremen's Hall in San Francisco. A psychedelic poster handbill promises slides, movies, soundtracks, flowers and food. The Grateful Dead and Big Brother and the Holding Company perform, and a batch of acid is circulated.

