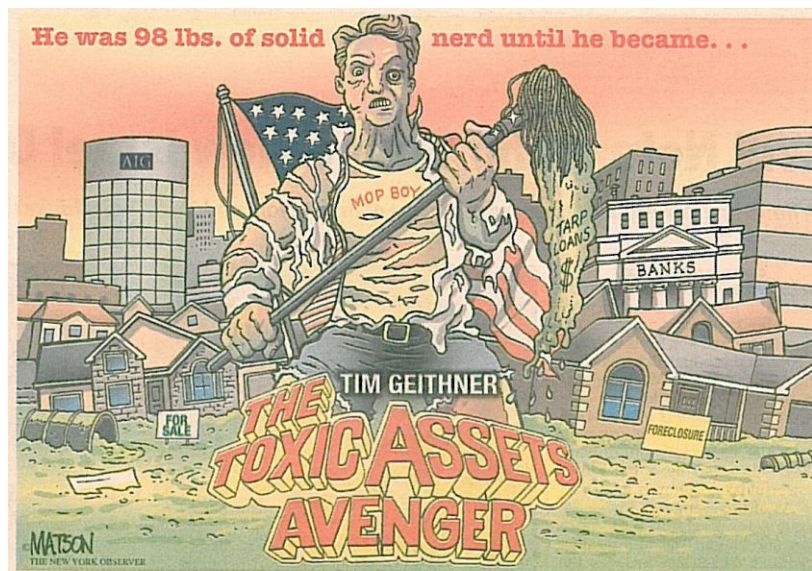


March 30, 2009



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LUDDITE LOVE

TO THE EDITOR:

Re "New York Without a Net" [March 23]:

I am a Spartan. I do not own a cell phone, an i-anything, a personal computer (I check my email from the public library) or even a television.

My current lifestyle is not an experimental "diet" to be diaried but a stubborn, muddled, somewhat masochistic stab at a semblance of authenticity.

I am attempting to "opt out" of the system as much as possible without committing suicide.

In Heideggerian terms, I am turning from chatter and toward Being. I rough it.

That being said, I enjoyed Ms. Quinlan's article.

She does not come across as a spoiled, vociferating dingbat, but rather a chronicler of the wearied, nihilistic, "post-everything" world. She also did not delve into hipster nihilism or smarty-pants irony and sing a song to sapped serotonin or a dirge for depleted dopamine.

She is a person five years younger than me who recognizes that our lives have been cluttered with techno-excrement to the point of suffocation.

We live in a very grim time. The past eight years have been as pessimistic as Schopenhauer on a showery day.

Has the world been corresponding to my depression, or vice versa? Solipsism aside, most people nowadays seem wounded. I know I am.

Adriane Quinlan poked the wound and made it "hurt so good."

As a matter of fact, I will now go for a walk and listen to John Mellencamp on a Kmart Walkman.

WILL JOHNSON
Neptune, N.J.

TO THE EDITOR:

Adriane Quinlan's article about traveling back in time to 1985 to a New York without Internet, cable, email or cell phones reminded me of my arrival in Manhattan that same year as an intern with the American Society of Magazine Editors.

Assigned to Condé Nast, I worked on Madison and 44th.

One of my first memories is of the lines, each three or four people deep, before the pay phones at Grand Central.

At the front of each line, one invariably found a bike messenger—slick with sweat, a metal chain about his neck, saddle bags laden with coins—reporting a delivery.

At the N.Y.U. dorm where many of us lived, we shared a single pay phone.

We'd make plans before we left for work, at ASME weekly lunches, or during dorm-room visits during which we'd trade reviews of clubs and restaurants.

My sister, also a Condé Nast intern, would often join me at the doors of the Palladium, on 14th Street, where I'd sneak us in on the VIP passes I'd swiped from fashion editors while sorting their mail.

In those days before digital media, there was a certain mystery to goings-on, because we never knew if an event would live up to its buzz—as contrasted to today's practice of texting ahead of time to see if a party is worth attending.

I wouldn't mind going back to 1985 for one week—no, not at all.

MARY CRESSE
Melrose, Mass.

BAILOUT THE M.T.A.!

TO THE EDITOR:

Re "The Smith M.T.A. Plan: Yield to Toll Foes, Worry Later" [March 17]:

Washington has gotten warmer with its decision to allow people to take the cost of riding public transportation to work as pre-tax deductions, but there's still a far better tack Congress and the Obama administration can take.

Especially given the highway robbery by big corporations, rather than watch the New York's Metropolitan Transit Authority go ahead full throttle with fare and toll increases or new payroll taxes this summer, Congress and the Obama administration should insist that the M.T.A. tighten its belt, then furnish whatever funds the M.T.A. requires to make ends meet.

Millions of ordinary people would benefit, versus the greedy, select few who've been allowed to plunder our pocketbooks under the guise of corporate necessity in recent months.

Bailing out the M.T.A. is such a no-brainer that I can't help feeling woefully disenchanted with Washington again.

I can't help wondering: Where are the common-sense candidates for whom I and millions of Americans pulled the lever in the voting booth last November?

SUSAN KROSS
Ellenville, N.Y.

ABOUT LETTERS

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