

Other Scenes

John Wilcock

1969

Abbie Hoffman explains the reason for the grass shortage in his new book, *The Woodstock World* (about to be published by Random House). Federal narcs armed with hundreds of thousands of dollars went to Mexico, says Abbie, and outbid the big dope dealers for the new crop. Which they then burned and destroyed.

Naturally they won't do anything about the artificial drugs trade (uppers, downers, etc.) because there are too many business alliances behind this in the right places.

The Woodstock World, a dynamite book, was written like Abbie's previous book in an incredibly productive ten-day marathon. It's fantastic; will be quoted and reprinted endlessly throughout the world. Like Abbie himself it's a ragbag of all the influences around us as well as a prediction of the world to come.

Max Yasgur, Aquarian Festival host, having proved to be one of the only property-owners in NY state to understand young people, should run for governor...

The invaluable book for draft counselors, wrote Tim Slater, is *Guide to the Draft* by Tatum and Tuchinsky (Beacon, \$1.95). Advisory board of the Movement Speakers Bureau (333 E. 5th Street, N.Y.C. 10003) which sends activists and radicals around college campuses is almost a who's who of the movement: Rap Brown, Dick Gregory, Ginsberg, Krassner, Kunstler, Seale...

Houghton Mifflin Company sent a free copy of its new *American Heritage Dictionary* to every underground paper. Are they trying to tell us something...

A new paperback, *Cooking with Astrology* (Signet, 95 cents) by Sydney Omarr & Mike Roy looks like being a winner. It's a complete breakdown of what foods and which signs have an affinity for each other, complete with recipes, horoscopes and what various signs are like as dinner companions.

The subject of Fred McDarrah's "Rent a Beatnik" agency back in the late 1950s Ted Joans, who left his jazz and poetry days in the Village for a nomadic life in Europe and Africa (he rents a \$5-a-year home in Timbuctu) will be back in New York next month for the publication of his poems, "Black Pow-Wow" by Hill & Wang.

SELECTIVE CENSORSHIP: Japanese customs have confiscated almost four times as many pornographic 8mm movies from returning travelers this year than last despite the fact that Japan itself turns out some of the best porn in the world.

San Francisco's autocratic cultural support fund which makes annual grants of \$215,000 to the city's opera, \$80,000 to the ballet and \$26,000 for the Chinese New Year has just cut back its allocation to the world-famous SF Film Festival to a mere \$15,000...

Try sending an underground paper to the Different Drummer (5401 S. Claiborne, New Orleans) whose proprietors don't seem to know where their name came from...

The oil company that bought Paramount Pictures boasts in its ads that they're studying "what people like" so they'll know what films to make, just in case you thought movie-making was creative or something...

Why don't the various committees who want to stop people smoking divert some of their advertising budgets to underground papers where it might really have some effect? The answer: because they'd sooner follow the big money tobacco companies into television and slick magazines.

WHAT'S HAPPENING: Having tried several other unsuccessful approaches to buy favorable publicity, the fascist Greek government will next year finance a multimillion dollar movie near Athens with such liberals as Peter Ustinov, Anthony Quinn and Tony Curtis as stars...

Over in Wales, the ingenious William Williams has devised a way of storing water in porous concrete (on the principle of a firm sponge) which could be siphoned out when needed. The concrete could fill whole valleys, he suggests, and then covered over with farmland—less expense and trouble than building dams...

Every culture has always been hung up on images and it is this which reflect its truest religion. Once it was carved idols, now it's television...

Fastest growing theft in America at present is that of credit cards frauds over these little plastic tokens having almost doubled in the past year...

The natural thing to do is to let the Leaning Tower of Pisa fall and to allow Niagara Falls to erode itself into a mere trickle. But natural phenomena grow to have too many commercial dependents (the tourist trade, etc.) and thereby become, unnatural.

VIDEA 1000 reports that the typical black in TV commercials "seldom speaks, usually doesn't touch the product, dresses according to white standards and is shown with lots of other people." Maybe one of the agencies should hire Bob (Putney Swope) Downey...

Life magazine started a mail order plan to offer its readers products from rural Southern handicraft cooperatives. But—typically—*Life's* overfed, overpaid employees are offered the products at a discount instead of passing the bread on to the cooperatives where it's more needed...

The *Village Voice* is having internal arguments about whether to go up to 20 cents or a quarter: a classic battle between the two major influences at the Voice—pettiness and greed.

John Wilcock will be in Japan as you read this and will be delighted to hear from any readers who write to him c/o American Express, Marunouchi, Tokyo. Send letters, underground papers, anything: it's lonely over there.

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