



KELLY'S CORNER

by Jan Kelly

Jan relied in large part for information in this article on a press release provided by Jay Critchly.

Jay Critchley strikes again! Like a medieval troubadour, itinerant and interesting, he peddles his art and protective messages throughout the world. We who live here have observed through the years the involvement of Jay's conceptual staged art we thought "bordering on stunts." But we were never alone. Recall these...

The Swim For Life in Provincetown, Miami and Amsterdam, the Statue of Liberty costume constructed of plastic tampon applicators washed up on our beaches from some far-away plumbing, the Blessed Virgin rubber goddess, Re-rooters Day (January 7th)—a day when all the negative of the past year can be attached to a burning Christmas Tree and towed out to

Jay Goes To

HARVARD

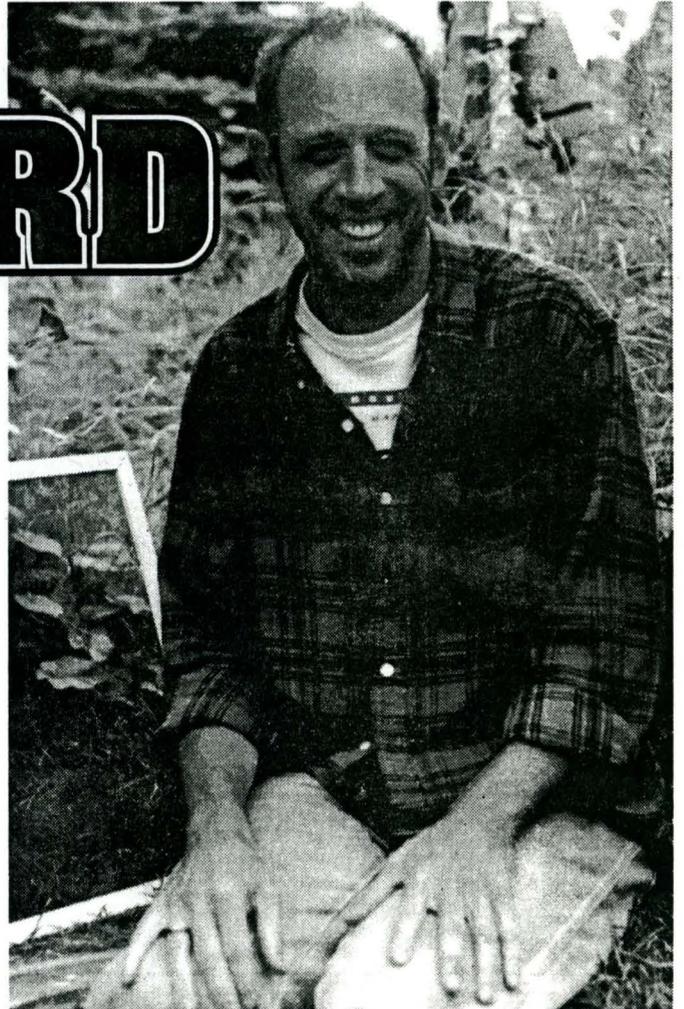
sea., the Old Glory Condom Company founded in 1989 as part of a show at the List Visual Arts Center at M.I.T. (Some were trying to amend the U.S. Constitution in 1989 to make flag-burning illegal. Jay invented, developed and produced a patriotic condom depicting the American flag. His caption read: "It's patriotic to save lives; long may it wave.") The septic tank in his back yard was offered as alternative housing including a Nativity scene and a theater setting. The Big Twig provided an artist's concept of the Big Dig. All of this long list and much more was under observation not only by the locals but by much of the world.

Jay arrived home yesterday at 4 am from the University of Oregon where he was the guest speaker at an architectural conference and delivered his paper "The Big Twig." The presentation was well received and Jay rejoined many old friends who worked with him as Vista volunteers between 1970 and 1972 in Creswell and Cottage Grove, Oregon, rural towns around Eugene, Oregon. A bit of sleep and Jay was off to host a luncheon program featuring the poetry of the late Grace Gouveia Collinson as part of the Second Annual Provincetown Poetry Festival.

Jay is both local and global. Today he's off to Cambridge for a week of rehearsals for his play—a workshop production

for the drama club at Harvard University. There will be 25 productions at Harvard this semester and Jay Critchley is the only director selected from outside the university. Auditions were held last February. Over a six-week period in three weekly sessions the script was developed. Not one of the original students who initially joined the project has dropped out. With the final set of intense rehearsals this week "The Lympdick Diatribes: It's hard to be a man" will take shape. Jay will be working with five female and five male undergraduates as collaborators and cast members: Kathy Cheng '03, Jeff Dubner '03, Jonathan Dunn '00, Randy Gomes '02, Tiffany Lai '03, Julia Lunetta '02, Marvin Pittman '02, Bryan Tallevi, a junior visiting from Brown University, Katie Watson '02, and Many Whitman '01.

A satirical look at masculinity and gender roles, this play takes place in the town of Lympville where the motto is "Live and let lymp." Lympville is an experimental community in gender diversity, a peaceful retreat from the phallogocentric world.



A conflict arises when Englishman Lord Peter Everhard III arrives to recruit "Hardonles" for his island paradise of Hardonnia. Miss Kitty has her hands full running the Lympville Hospitality Center and moonlighting as a confidant of wrestling champ Rockefeller.

The plot thickens when Rockefeller loses his penis before the big match with former champ Canon. Their roles in the ring extend as those of stars in the soap opera "World Without Friends" and they unravel in surprising ways in their personal lives. This play extends a multimedia piece Jay created for the

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Atlanta Arts Festival in 1995 in conjunction with the Olympic Games. In the artist's words, the show "challenges society's obsession with the erect male penis, the phallic metaphor of masculinity, by examining its flaccid nature which is often ignored or demeaned."

During the workshop process that led to the creation of the show, a process which utilized discussions, improvisations, and a survey developed by Critchley, students examined attitudes surrounding the "cult of phallicism and its inherent dismissal of lymptness" while exploring masculinity and body image, eroticism and sexual practice in the age of AIDS.

Since 1981 artist/activist Critchley has created a body of work often humorous, yet taking risks and challenging assumptions about the nature and content of art. His work incorporates performance, conceptual manifestoes and sometimes recycled materials to explore hot button topics such as the environment, sexuality, religion and gender roles.

"The Lympdick Diatribes: It's hard to be a man" was presented last April 28-29 at Harvard University by the Office for Arts. A discussion with the cast, the creative team and the audience took place on Friday night after the performance. For those of us just hearing of the project for the first time, fear not. Jay plans to bring the play here to Provincetown. Several members of the Provincetown Theatre Company have already participated in a reading of the piece and are eager to perform it locally. As with all of Jay's works, you learn through humor and incisiveness.

Jay is the 1999-2000 Marshall Cogan visiting artist at Harvard under the auspices of Learning From Performances, a program of the Office For The Arts at Harvard. In addition to collaborating with students on this project, Jay participated in a panel discussion entitled "Art for AIDS Sake: Is disease still a valid metaphor?" on World AIDS Day last December 1st. In February he spoke on a panel convened in conjunction with the Harvard production of Eve Ensler's award-winning play, "The Vagina Monologues."

Jay has been a resident of Provincetown for some 25 years. His thinking and works go far beyond Provincetown. When interviewing him, I am always amazed at how far-flung his notoriety is becoming. How is this coming about? He replies with a straight face "I slept my way to the top."