

will go along with it. (APA-L #564)

PROBABLY SOMETHING

BUT NOT

TWELVE HOURS OF DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME TO GET THE SUN AS A NIGHT LIGHT FOR CRIME PREVENTION PURPOSES.

This would make it dark during the daytime, but with slight improvements in street lighting the presence of all those crowds of people should keep the criminals scared off. (APA-L #558)

PROBABLY SOMETHING

BUT NOT

HAVING TO DISGUISE YOUR PET ROCK AS A PAPERWEIGHT BECAUSE YOUR APARTMENT DOESN'T ALLOW PETS. (LASFAPA #13)

PROBABLY SOMETHING

BUT NOT

INSTEAD OF A CUCKOO CLOCK, TRAINING YOUR CAT TO MEOW THE HOURS.

Various subsidiary problems like how to get the cat to look at the clock to know when it's time to do something will be left as an exercise for the reader.

PROBABLY SOMETHING

BUT NOT

COMBINING LIPSTICK OR CHAPSTICK WITH SUPER GLUE FOR PEOPLE WHO TALK TOO MUCH.

Or, perhaps, for people who want to lose weight but don't have the will-power to go on a diet. (LASFAPA #27)

PROBABLY SOMETHING

BUT NOT

DECIDING THAT IF WOMEN OWN SEX IT'S AN UNLAWFUL MONOPOLY AND THEREFORE ANTITRUST ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN AGAINST THEM.

But can you have a class-action suit with a class as the defendant? And if you won, how would the judgment be enforced?

And if women do lawfully own sex, it's a

commodity that many would try to steal or take under false pretenses, etc., like expensive jewelry. So, like jewelry, the owners of sex have to be careful about walking around with it without bodyguards or similar protection. But unlike money or jewels, sex can't be taken off and stuck in a safe somewhere when you're not using it. Therefore a woman must worry about it, similar to a man who for some reason is required to always carry large amounts of cash and who knows the thieves know about it.

Maybe the ownership of sex should alternate in odd and even years or . . .? (APA-L #658)

PROBABLY SOMETHING

BUT NOT

THAT THE REASON ROME FELL WAS THAT ALL THE LIGHT THEY HAD TO READ BY WAS ROMAN CANDLES.

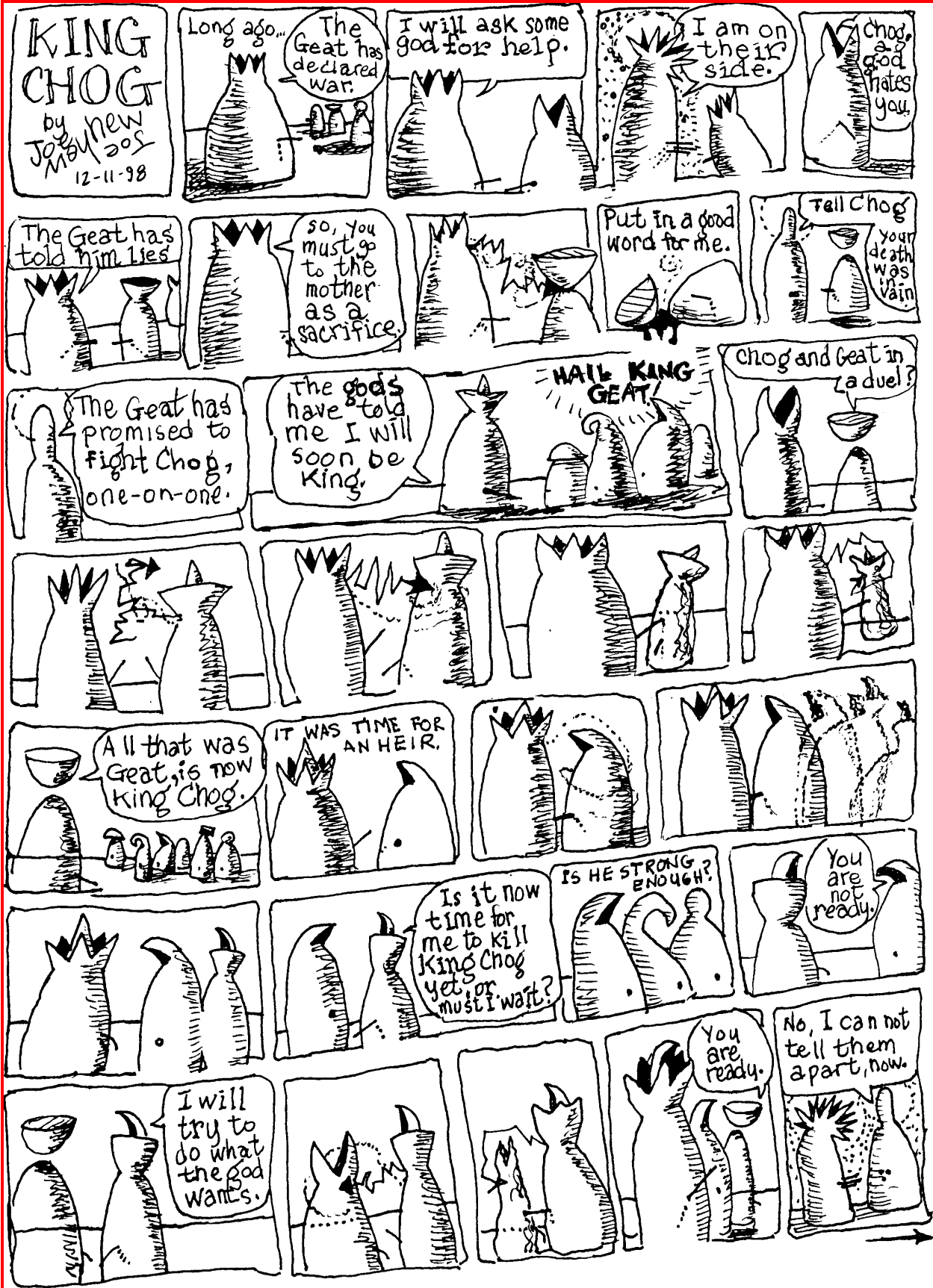
Which are probably good enough for non-critical reading like carved stone inscriptions where in case of doubt you could feel the letters with your fingers, but I suspect that many of the more discriminating preferred to simply curse the darkness. In fact, it got so bad that in the more crowded neighborhoods the din of people cursing the darkness prevented others from sleeping, thus setting the stage for the legendary Insomnia Wars. This constant all-night fighting so sapped the strength of the people that soon the barbarians from the north were able to slip in under cover of daylight when everybody was resting up for the next night's fighting. Thus Rome fell. (APA-L #678)

PROBABLY SOMETHING

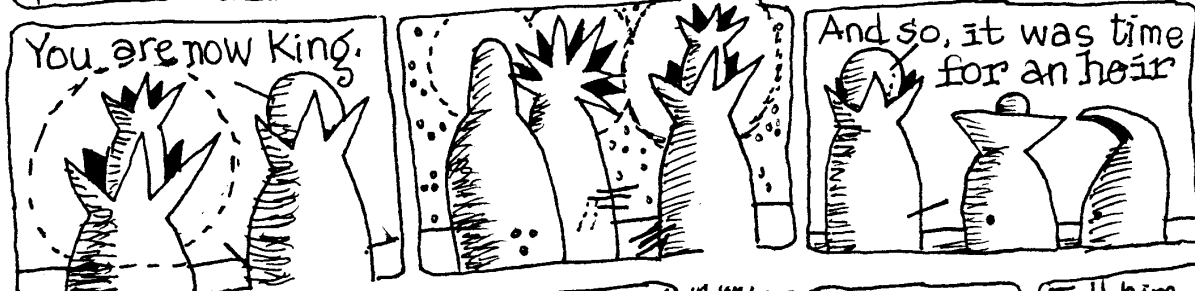
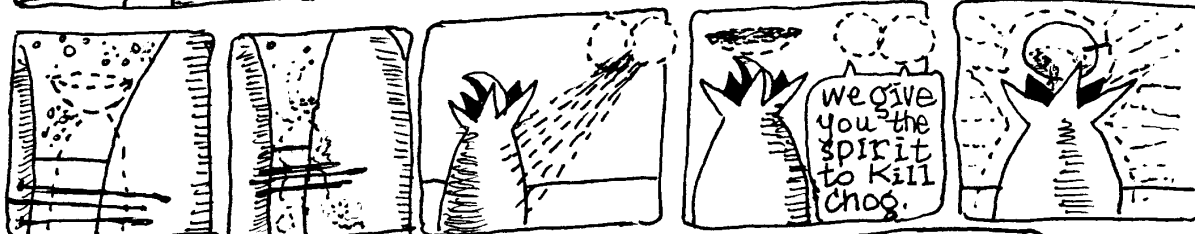
BUT NOT

PUTTING DIGITAL CLOCK DISPLAYS ON CARS INSTEAD OF LICENSE PLATES SO IF YOU NEED TO GET THE LICENSE NUMBER OF A CAR YOU SEE SPEEDING AWAY FROM A CRIME ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS LOOK AT YOUR WATCH.

And if you're caught in a traffic jam at midnight on New Year's Eve you can still celebrate watching the license number of the car ahead of you change from 23:59:59 to 00:00:00. Of course those who want personalized plates may object to the enforced sameness of everybody's number being the same as everybody else's, but they can always go out and buy bumper stickers. (APA-L #680). M



CHOG 2



INTO THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE

by
Milt
Stevens

Milt sent this e-mail posting to accompany his article.

For all I know, I am now the second person in recorded history ever to have read entirely through Dhalgren. Ted Sturgeon is the only other person ever to have gotten past page 200. I had really underestimated how truly awful the novel would be. I should describe the prose of the first 700 pages to be tortured. After that, it becomes entirely incoherent. It's sort of difficult to write a nonsense article about a novel that was nonsense to begin with.

[Baretta, extra clips of ammo, Swiss Army knife, rappelling gear, hip boots, shovel, aspirin, and a gallon bottle of Pepto-Bismol. Yes, I think I have everything I need. I'm finally ready to read *Dhalgren*.]

At over eight hundred pages, Samuel R. Delaney's novel *Dhalgren* was considered an absolute monster when it appeared in 1975. It loomed over the literary horizon like Godzilla about to stomp on Tokyo. Science fiction readers fled in gibbering terror at the very sight of the book. It was even worse if they tried to read it.

In chapter one, we meet a Man With No Name. He bears no resemblance to the character of the same lack of name portrayed by Clint Eastwood. He has only one sandal. Many mythological characters have only one sandal. He meets a woman. They have sex. She shows him to a cave where he finds a mystical thingie which he uses for underwear. She then turns into a tree. He gets a ride from a man driving a truck loaded with artichokes. This brings him to the bridge at the outskirts of The City. He meets five women with flashlights who strangely resemble a Greek chorus. They give him a multi-bladed weapon called an Orchid. It slices, it dices, it does perfect garnishes. He crosses the bridge and enters The City.

The City is called Bellona. It's sort of like Detroit but without the charm. In the past, an unspeakable disaster has occurred which has left The City entirely devoid of chickens. Nobody speaks of it. The City seems to twitch and reconfigure itself at irregular intervals. Streets that didn't cross now do. Streets that used to cross now don't. Burma Shave signs appear almost anywhere without warning. The people who still live in The City are either enigmatic or unemployed. The City has been on fire forever, but it never burns down. One suspects they are using gas logs.

While wandering the streets, he sees a parade of creatures including a dragon, a mantis, and a couple of aardvarks. They flicker. He later learns this is the latest fashion among the local sociopaths. The creature illusions come from things called light shields, and the people who carry them are collectively known as scorpions. A little later, he meets a former engineer named Tak Loufer. We learn that No Name has previously been in the Indiana Home For The Criminally Confused. Loufer starts referring to him as Kid. He starts referring to himself as Kidd. They go to Loufer's place and have sex.

The next morning, he wanders into a park where he meets a woman named Lanya, who has nice boobs and plays the harmonica. They don't have sex, but she gives him The Notebook. Apparently, the notebook had been previously owned by a copy writer for a fortune cookie company. The right hand pages are filled with lines which may mean something or other. He wanders off to find Roger Calkins, the legendary publisher of the local newspaper, the Times. He comes upon a church which has a clock tower with no hands. The church is presided over by Reverend Amy who also distributes porn in her spare time. He meets an aging newsboy named Faust. He learns that days in The City are determined by whatever is published in the newspaper for that day. Sundays usually occur once every seven days. Tuesdays usually happen, but Thursdays are frequently omitted. Dates are whatever Calkins feels like putting at the top of the page.

Kidd wanders onward to the vicinity of Calkins Mansion. He encounters a newt, a spider, and some other bug. They flicker. They beat him savagely. Two residents of the mansion, a civil rights leader named Paul Fenster and a poet named Earnest Newboy, come out and watch Kidd bleed for awhile. They discuss the matter at length. You can tell