

THE GROUP GROPE

It Takes A Group

Volume 1, Issue 7

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Price 69¢

Taste This!

by Craig Mitchell

beer (bir) n.—a fermented alcoholic beverage brewed from malt and flavored with hops.

taste (tast) v.—the sense that ascertains the sweet, sour, salty, and bitter qualities of substances coming in contact with the taste buds on the tongue.

Summer is officially upon us, the sun shines longer, the work-weeks are never-ending, and life and the season are just too damn short. So are you wondering what to do to bring back the lost days of your youth, add more spring to your step, make yourself irresistible to the opposite sex? I don't have the slightest idea! If I knew those answers I'd be pulling down six figures at Upjohn. But don't hurl your tormented carcass into the path of an oncoming SEMTA bus just yet, there's a little soiree coming up guaranteed to upgrade your state of mind.

If being adventurous about beer is having a Corona instead of your regular Bud Light or you think Killian's Red is imported, open bowling at Thunderbird Lanes would be more your speed. But if you consider yourself a beer snob like me and enjoy good beer, good food, and more good beer, keep the date of Friday, July 26 open to attend the 1996 Rivertown Beer Festival. Beer, the elixir of the pharaohs, two-hundred different makes of it... will be available to sample, TWO-HUNDRED FOR GOD'S SAKE! And, it's only \$25.00, which breaks down to \$0.125/brewski for you misers and accountants (tickets are available at Merchant's Fine Wine Warehouses.) The cost is even less when you factor in the chow and you'll have the opportunity to mingle at Stroh River Place (yes Sherman, I know it's downtown) from 5:30 to 9:00. This happening is one of the premier tastings in the Midwest, so get there parched or ravenous, but just go. Of course I'll be in attendance, and as a special treat, you'll get to meet the infamous Rex Halfpenny, homebrewer and beer aficionado (this guy has more beer bottles than I have compact discs), who'll eagerly answer inquires and expound on the virtues of including lagers, ales, porters, and stouts in your diet. Rex was present at last year's Festival and is still telling anyone he can corner what a great time he had. Call Craig at Mary Ann's (810-~~333-0733~~) for further information and updates.

The Group Dope

by Justin Smith

PARODY OF DURANGO

(or the unofficial rebuttal to Rick's "Live Forever")

As I sit here on the shores of Lake Huron, I cannot escape from the notion that none of us will ever likely bestow any lasting influence on human-kind beyond our physical existence here on earth. Certainly, in one-hundred years, people will be more likely to remember the 2096 Stanley Cup final between the Santa Cruz Quakers vs. the Durango Richards than what Justin Smith has accomplished.

This being the case, the focus of our energies should be centered about personal happiness without regard to attempts, ultimately futile, to influence others. Indeed, even if we were to create lasting impressions, the recipients of those so impressed will be dead soon thereafter and, insipid influence imparted, if any, would be deep-sixed. Temporal influence, in today's world is most often fleeting and exponentially diluted as the generations and years pass.

The concept of altruism is as empty as Detroit's Hudson's building. We humans are not born with a divine sense; no, all of what we know, including "self-serving goodwill," is based upon what we have come to know and experience. Altruism is a fallacy created in a selfish world. Accordingly, this state of being should be flogged like the neighbor's red-headed step-child that has trampled your tulips. We do not act for the goodwill of others without subconsciously, sometimes consciously, evaluating the degree of acclaim or subsequent personal favors eventually returned by others. Again, the fuel running the machine is a utilitarian evaluation of how our actions will bestow eventual emotional or physical gains upon us that will invariably inflate our misconceived self worth.

So concentrate on yourselves, my friends, without the false perception that we can create any lasting influence on the "what-have-you-done-for-me-lately" selfish world around us. Drink a "Q" of Colt, use others for your own gratification, engage in relationships of convenience to pass the time, wrap yourself up in cellophane and drink yourself into oblivion. Next weekend try "speed-balling." Erect a fortress between your inner-self and others. Because "everlasting influence" is a mirage, do not taint your present existence with effort to realize the unattainable goal that you will do anything long-lasting or genuinely altruistic.

Repeat this sentence over and over; write it down or tattoo it on your inner thigh:

I WILL ATTAIN NIRVANA IF I IGNORE ANY URGES TO STRIVE FOR UNATTAINABLE GOALS.

Once internalized, this will allow you to live your life as you have always wanted to (in a state of isolationistic bliss) and prevent you from ever suffering from chronic insomnia attacks at two o'clock in the morning.

Individuals live in three hierarchical strata of isolationistic or detached bliss, as arranged hereunder in descending quanta of happiness:

1. **TED KACZYNSKISM (TK)** — The ultimate in self-actualized isolationist happiness. Here's a guy that's truly happy and free from societally-fueled goals. Also, imagine all of the Geo. Washingtons he saves by casting away the suffocatingly oppressive end-all of personal cleanliness. Shampoo, Gillette and Aqua Velva sales-persons need not knock!

Parody of Durango, cont'd on page 2

Parody of Durango, cont'd from page 1

2. **CHRIS OZDARSKISM (CO₂)** – A second-tiered, yet easily obtainable, state of detached exhibitionistic behavior. Practice this level of self-actualization by responding to others' logical arguments by merely rolling your eyes and by rejecting any opinion incongruent with your own. The possibility of conducting a tenable discussion with an Ozdarskist is quickly and efficiently discarded after witnessing the eye-rolling maneuver. Indeed, a fruitful two-way discussion with an Ozdarskist is about as likely as convincing an acrophobic to fly to Miami on a Valu Jet. Practice some more by eating peanut butter and jelly while all the world is succumbing to the Thai food rage.
3. **GILLIGAN ISLANDISM (GI)** – The entry-level state of being as oft exhibited within this GROUP of friends. Even though there is interdependence among friends in the group, the wonderfully dysfunctional inability to escape from the island or break from the cocoon exhibits basic isolationistic bliss. Ginger's curves, however, are never beyond pie-throwing distance.

Looking for a place to call home?

Call Rick Richard and Mike Morand. They are looking for a third roommate. Rent is ONLY \$235/month plus 1/3 of the electricity. What do you get for this insanely great price? Your own room, your own bathroom, use of the pool (and it's right out the back door!), plus – location, location, location. The estate is conveniently located in downtown Royal Oak. You can walk, run, or even skip to the hottest social scenes in the area. So what's stopping you? Call Rick at 810-~~555-1234~~ or Mike at 810-~~555-1234~~. Operators are standing by to take you call!

"Who's Virginia?"

Rose Kennedy, when asked why her daughter-in-law Joan lived in Boston while her son Ted lived in Virginia.



For July 1996...

CANCER (June 22-July 21)—Things will go surprisingly well this month. Especially in the realm of love. Don't fret, it will be for the best. You have been racing all over the place lately and should spend more time with those you love. Best Sex: Nov. 3, 2001.

LEO (July 22-Aug. 22)—Although in the past, you have been known to run out of gas, take the mystic sign that fell out of the sky and buy some bug spray and head up north with your friends. There will be lots to do and many to do it with. Best Sex: On an air mattress.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)—You have recently discovered that your true erogenous zone is your insatiably curious mind. Be careful that this doesn't get you into hot water, unless of course it is a hot tub while on a business trip. Best Sex: While on a trip.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23)—It is time to dust off that two piece bathing suit and go for those tan lines. For extra zest buy some of those stick on tattoos and put where only the privileged few will get to view. Best Sex: After baring your tan lines.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21)—You are dying to get away for a long romantic weekend with Mr. Wonderful. Sorry this is not going to happen so get away for a wild weekend with friends. Best Sex: Not this month.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)— You are saying what do I do now that Hockey season is over, well watching reruns of COPS is not the answer. Spend a lot of time enjoying the great outdoors. Best Sex: Outdoors.

Ask The Mystic... *Anyone who would like a more complete and accurate reading can mail specific questions to Mary Ann the Mystic, c/o the Grope. Submissions may be anonymous; however, she must know your sex (gender, not preference) and your astrological sign.*

The Astrological Connection

By Mary Ann the Mystic

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)—It may be time to take up a new hobby, like huh...dusting and before you know it you'll be vacuuming too. Take things slow and be sure not to over do it even though you are feeling better this month. Best Sex: In the nursery.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)—The fitter you are, the better sex gets, this month tantric yoga improves your flexibility and erotic control. Don't forget to do those Kegel exercises. Best Sex: UM...UM...UM...

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)—Your warm smile is testimony of a generous nature in all areas. A visit from a relative is eminent this month. Be sure to show them the sights. Best Sex: After watching the sunset on the beach.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)—If you were living in Europe 1,300 years ago, you'd likely have spent the days performing ritualized lovemaking in the fields as a method to increase the size of the vegetables. But you were not, so you will settle for your back yard and hope for little traffic at the grocery store. Best Sex: Under the stars.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)—After a wonderful 4th, a new relationship is possible. But you have to act immediately. Get away to the great outdoors and go boating together. Best Sex: When the boat is a rocking, don't come a knocking.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21)—A frisky game of touch football that ends with the two of you in a fervent triangle and you discover sweat is a turn-on along with duct tape, saran wrap and that a "Q" always helps. Best Sex: Before the "Today" sponges expire.

Letter from the Editor



Dear Friends,

I've been doing a great deal of thinking about our group... for a couple of reasons. First, this living in Grand Rapids has made me all the more aware of just how lucky I am to have so many wonderful friends. I will admit that many a weekend have come and gone since the big move when I wondered what you all were doing and wished I could be doing it with you.

But, beyond being sappy...when I tell my new friends out here about "The Group," they're amazed...that there are so many of us, that we are so diverse, that we actually make an effort to keep in contact with one another and support one another. Face it...you could get stranded just about anywhere in the Metro area and help would be only a phone call away with this group...any time of day.

The other reason I've been doing this thinking is that a few weeks ago I arrived home to a phone message asking Chris and I to put a chart/drawing in the Grope to illustrate the group. I started drawing, and soon it was abundantly obvious that I needed help. As I started calling around asking how people had met and became friends, I was surprised at some of the reactions... most of them good but some very hesitant about the chart endeavor. What if we left someone off? What if we missed a link between people? How do we establish a beginning?

Well, I decided to try it anyways and the results are on the next page. Now, I realize this is going to sound sappy, but... the center of the chart is an infinity symbol. Why? Because who knows where this group is going to go from here. If I live to be 90, I plan to still know all of you, your children, and a whole lot of other people I have yet to meet. Plus, I'm really beginning to believe that we all are only six people away from knowing everyone on the planet.

And why Matt, John, Bob and Chuck at the center? They've know each other since grade school! Really though anyone could be in the center because it takes everyone to make our circle of friends so wide and so much fun.

For the next two months, Chris and I hope you comment on the chart... tell us what needs correcting and tell us your thoughts. Do you remember what you thought the first time you met most of the group? Where did you meet the group? Anything. And if you think the chart was a bad idea... feel free to voice that opinion. I'm getting the ball rolling on this by including three poems/quotes that I believe are fitting.

With that I'm going to close and finally get this edition in the mail to you.

P.S. Special thanks to John Morand for his help in compiling the chart and for sending along his thoughts on the subject.

A few words from John...

So is this some kind of genealogy or what? I mean, I think we should all be damn proud of ourselves. With respect to the United Nations and our respective schools of choice, I think we have assembled here one of the brightest, most diverse collections of individuals I've seen voluntarily interact in a social setting. I think that we can all be extremely proud of the job we have done here. The thing that amazes me is that there was never any conscious decision to form a group like this. This spontaneous combustion of social activity just sort of happened. Now whether this is the logical result of highly intelligent, social people interacting with each other or not, I am really not sure. Nor do I care. I simply know that I'm thankful that it's around.

The purpose of this chart is not to make any kind of judgment or to assign responsibility or give credit for the formation of our group to any individual or subset. Its purpose is merely to show who knew whom from way back. Reflected in this group are people who have been friends for over 20 years. What a rare gift that is! We have brought in friends from grade school, junior high, high school, college, work, and the bar. We have brought in friends from singles magazines, blind dates, other (albeit lesser) social circles, and family reunions. Hell, some of us have even brought in people we met in church! The point is, this is and continues to be bigger than our collective selves. Peace.

John Morand

We cannot be sure of the precise moment that friendships are formed...

As in filling a vessel with water drop by drop... there is that last one that makes it overflow...

So in a series of kindnesses there is that last one that makes the heart overflow.

*Original idea Samuel Johnson,
adapted by John Rusin, Jr.*

The making of friends
who are real friends
is the best token we have
of a man's success in life.
Edward Everett Hale

Greater love has no man than this,
that a man lay down his life
for his friends. *John 15:13*

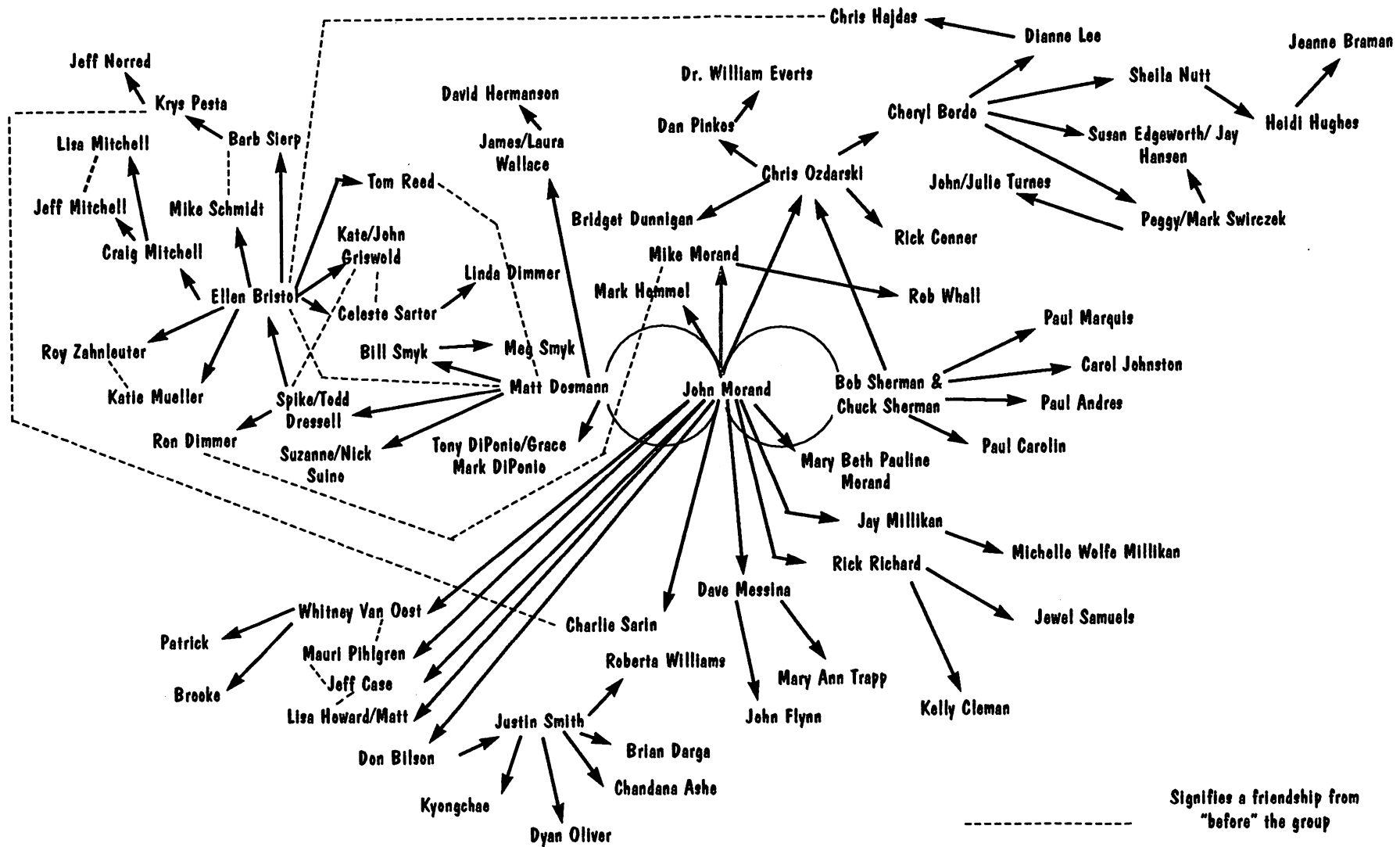
Directory Updates

- John "it's not a nursery, it's a guest room" and MaryBeth "What's in the blue trunk?" Morand can now be reached at their new pad.

, Apt. 101
36

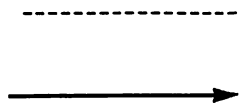
- John Flynn's correct street address is ~~1585 Marina~~ (not Marina). OOPS!

THE GROUP



Signifies a friendship from "before" the group

Signifies how we came to know one another in the group



JULY 1996

Groping Opportunities

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4 <i>Independence Day</i>	5	6
7	8 Kate Griswold B'day (1966) Dyan Oliver B'day (1969)	9	10	11	12	13 Wedding- MaryBeth & John Morand (1996)
14	15 Bob Sherman B'day (1965)	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23 Barb Sierp B'day (1962)	24	25	26 Beer Tasting - See Related Article Stroke One, Paddle Two-We're Canoeing Now!	27
28 Still gone canoeing.	29	30	31			

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with news items, possible articles, advertis-
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event information

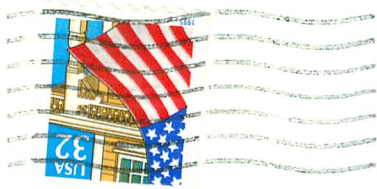
information about specific events and who to contact for more information

ADVANCE NOTICE - Mary Ann Trapp will be the hostess of a festive gather-
ing on Saturday, August 3, 1996. Word is...bathing suits **OPTIONAL!** Call her
to find out what's the haps and plan the proper attire.

CANOE ENTHUSIASTS - This is it! The time has finally arrived! This month is
the annual Club Suburban canoe trip. If you **STILL** haven't got your registra-
tion in and would like to go, contact **Club Suburban, c/o Ted Confer,**
~~2100 Wilson, Berkley, MI 48072~~ **MI 48092**. Send in your registration of \$109
before July 10 or \$129 after July 10.

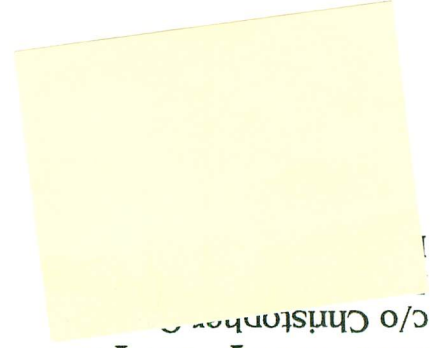
For those of you who have already registered for the canoe trip,
remember that photo ID will be required at check in this year and
NO PETS!

Your life should be filled
with lawyers!
Yiddish curse



1296

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The Group Grope
c/o Christopher

Just in case you were wondering.

group (grōp) *n.* An assemblage of persons or objects gathered or located together, aggregation...Two or more figures that make up a unit or a design...A number of individuals.

grope (grōp) *v.* To reach about uncertainly; feel one's way...To search blindly or uncertainly... *n.* The act of groping.