

[REDACTED]
Albuquerque, NM 87102
April 25, 1994

Dear Mr. Lamb:

The enclosed clip appeared in the Business Section of the Albuquerque Journal today. Since I am at least a spiritual member of The Lead Pencil Club, I have no FAX. And, as I am too frugal to pay for calling you (in the event I could even get through) and being put on hold for who knows ~~how~~ how long while ATT's meter clicks on at daytime rates, my only recourse is to write.

This morning with the Rolling Stone chaps, (and in times past), there was a cursory discussion of which journalists could be considered "on the left". Noam Chomsky was the only one any of you could think of. May I suggest you check out people who write for THE NATION, THE PROGRESSIVE, MOTHER JONES, WASHINGTON MONTHLY, to name a few? Some names that come to mind: Alexander and various other Cockburns, Barbara Ehrenreich, Katha Pollett, Robert Scheer, Jill Nelson, Andrew Kopkind, Molly Ivins, Victor Navasky. Robert Sherill. Kirkpatrick Sale. Gore Vidal. Roger Wilkins. (all these names were gleaned from the masthead of THE NATION, which I happen to have handy.)

~~None~~ Not all of these people can rightfully be accused of being socialists. Except possibly in the minds of Republicans. Those people must sorely regret the demise of the USSR and the Red Menace. Not that this seems to matter, since they keep calling Clinton a socialist. My experience with the alleged fiscally conservative Republicans has been that if you scratch ~~any~~ any one of them deeply enough, you will find a bigot.

I also urge that only those journalists who will swear that (1) They have never cheated on ~~their~~ their spouses, (2) they did not try to avoid the Viet Nam draft, and (3) never smoked, whether or not they inhaled, are entitled to criticize Clinton for any of these things.

I voted for Bill Clinton, although I wasn't too thrilled about it. (I had hoped in vain for Cuomo.) I am not sorry I did. I quake and shudder to think about further ~~more~~ appointments that would have been made to the courts by G. Bush. I continue to be unthrilled by some of Clinton's policies.

New Mexico is something of a backwater. During the '92 campaign I had conversations with various people I encountered in Non-political settings, such as concert intermissions and standing in line at checkout counters. I was surprised to hear that many people (mostly women, I admit) were voting for Clinton because he has Hillary. This was also one of my reasons.

Very truly yours,
[REDACTED]

Gadget-Haters of the World Unite

By Joshua Quittner

NEWSDAY

Bill Henderson is having a bad technology day.

First, the answering machine goes on the fritz. Then his new electric typewriter sputters — dead. Then, as the spring rain turns from drizzle to downpour, a tire on his car hisses flat.

This series of events might poison some people and make them rattle a fist at the colorless sky. Not Henderson.

"It's perfect," he says, smiling the smile of a man whose view of the world has, once again, been ratified.

Henderson hates technology. He hates it so much he has created an organization of techno-baiters, called The Lead Pencil Club, (a division of The Contraptionless Corporation of America).

The club's letterhead describes it as "a pothole on the Information Highway." Its members ask: "What's the hurry?"

Henderson's real job is running The Pushcart Press, a small publishing house based in Wainscott, N.Y., on Long Island's East End, where he lives. From his bucolic home, Henderson issues the club's Manifesto:

"... We are rushing to nowhere and we are running on spiritual empty. Soon, blessed with fax, voice and E-mail, computer hookups and TVs with hundreds of channels, we won't want to leave our lonely rooms — not to write a check, work, visit, shop, exercise or make love (virtual reality will serve the sexual urgings.)"

The club appears to have found a following: Since the Manifesto

appeared in two national newspapers a few months ago, more than 100 supporters a week have been sending letters to Henderson, asking how they can join.

Henderson sends them a pamphlet, which explains that there are no dues, and offers to sell them a T-shirt depicting a sharpened No. 2 pencil, emblazoned with the words, "What's the Hurry?" (\$19, plus \$1 for shipping).

Aside from the usual rantings from people who suspect the CIA is putting electric implants in their brains, most of the letters come from people who have thought a lot about the bad things technology can bring. As one man from Pennsylvania wrote:

"My computer does not communicate, not even with my wife's computer upstairs. I communicate, when I have anything to say, by speaking or putting something on paper. The technofreaks are trying to sell us a further corruption of communications which would benefit mainly themselves"

Is this for real?

"We're doing this for fun, but obviously there's a serious side to it," says Henderson. "We're overwhelmed with gadgetry."

While he doesn't use a personal computer, Henderson's wife, Genie, does, and so do most of his friends. "My friends are absolutely besotted with technology."

Henderson, a bearish man who looks like Robin Williams, got the idea for the club at about 3 a.m. one morning, while reading the memoirs of his friend Doris Grumbach, a former commentator for National Public Radio.

The book, "Extra Innings," isn't about technology at all, but around

Page 200, "Grumbach starts going berserk about all the gadgets in her life." It struck Henderson, who left Bleecker Street more than a decade ago because he was sick of the hurry-up pace of New York, that a lot of people feel the same way about life.

The next morning he called

Grumbach, and suggested forming a club for like-minded people who fear that the world is racing headlong into technology-induced oblivion.

"We're in an electronic panic. Everything has to be done right now. I have friends in the New York publishing industry who say

no one will pay attention to anything unless it's faxed."

What does Henderson expect to achieve? Does he really expect people to abandon their fax machines, disconnect their voice mail and toss their computers on a smoldering pyre?

No, he says, "I wouldn't want to stop it. I just want people to think about it. I'm just raising questions. I'm not sure I have the answers."

Besides, even Henderson admits to sending a fax or two.



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