

# Red Rover Issues

The Good/Bad Art Collective



REVOLUTION  
SUMMER  
ART SPACE

July 4 — 28 1997

# Letter from the Director

Welcome to Revolution Summer.

Please don't park in the neighbors' driveway.

Mark Allen

# When I'm on the Third Floor of this Place, I Feel Like I'm in Heaven

WHY WOULDN'T RICHIE BUDD SMILE TO HIMSELF WHEN THE HOUSTON CHILDREN run down Marconi holding his lawn chair high? The chair is special and, for a time, the kids will know this. They'll sit in the chair and it will be tugged at, pushed and pulled, and lifted high in a futile attempt for more air. With distractions, gradually the chair will be forgotten by the children, considered just another piece of shit.

But what about Richie Budd? You'll see him on Letterman and Leno, a lifting account of his act in the latest printing of "Chicken Soup for the Soul." A little self help for all of us, and thick with laughs. Stupid, yet inspirational.

Much later Richie Budd will kill himself. He will shoot himself in the heart with a pistol the type of firearm you use to lose altitude.

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*"Do something children will remember all their lives..."*

Hakim Bey, T.A.Z. (*The Temporary Autonomous Zone*)

On the playground the kids divide into two groups and face one another about twenty feet apart. Everyone on each team grasps and locks hands, wrists and elbows, forming a human chain. When the decision is made, and the time is right, the players on one side advance and retreat with swinging arms chanting,

*"Red Rover, Red Rover, send Richie Budd over ..."*

Richie Budd, being a member of the chanting groups opposing team, scans the children, looking for a weak link in the line up. Backing up to increase his momentum, Richie Budd sprints to connect with the chanting chain. Until the very last moment Richie Budd is careful not to let on which member of the chain he is charging. He knows the impact is more stunning and spectacular that way. Should Richie Budd fail to break the link of his choice, he becomes part of the chain. If he succeeds, he returns home with one member of the broken link.

Why did they call Richie Budd? Was it a social given among the children that Richie could not break the chain? Or was it a risk on their part, knowing that if they could survive Richie Budd's charge, he would become a powerful member of their team. Richie Budd knows better, if that was the case the tone of the chant wouldn't be

**so** mocking, and his treatment would not be **so** different in other situations with the kids. It is no surprise that his arms are directly involved in every attempted charge and break of his team's human chain. It is also no surprise that his participation with one particular team is never constant: his failure as a charging runner becomes his failure as a link, and so on. Richie Budd is in an adolescent social flux, a type of forced independence. The root of potential deviance is found in this status.

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Now Richie Budd hangs high in the air; tethered by a shoelace, tied for tripping (in a manner not unfamiliar to Red Rover combatants), and anchored by his tennis shoe. Richie Budd's oiled legs hang in leisure. A bare foot airs as witness to the pathetic anchor downstairs. Richie Budd's left sneaker is neither cause for celebration or discouragement. The shoe saves and limits him. What is normally on the ground is in the air. It is independence day and the sky is filled with the explosions of fireworks. We look up at Richie, we look up at the shoe, we look up at the fireworks, and Richie Budd looks up at the sky.

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The *Mars Pathfinder* has reached an important point in its mission. It arrives on Mars, entering the Martian atmosphere on July 4, 1997. On arrival, the primary data taking phase begins, and continues for thirty Martian days, or sols (24.6 hours). During this time, a micro rover is deployed and operated for at least 7 sols.

As the rover begins its journey of the red planet on the fourth of July, NASA and the rest of Houston celebrate — a carefully calculated moment full of intentional symbolism — a time of back slapping and flag waving, millions brought together and touched by the promise of individual freedom.

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*"But the best piece of equipment was the lawn chair.*

*It was a Sears.*

*It was extremely comfortable."*

Larry Walters (July 2, 1982)

Please laugh at Richie Budd's folly, and we will laugh with you. On our special day we will all draw inspiration from his independence. Let us join hands and praise the literal, because heaven is just a lawn chair away.

**Martin Iles**, Director  
Good/Bad Art Collective

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# Truck Driver Takes to Skies in a Lawn Chair

**LONG BEACH, Calif., July 2 (AP) —** A truck driver with 45 weather balloons rigged to a lawn chair took a 45-minute

ride aloft to 16,000 feet today before he got cold, shot some balloons out and crashed into a power line, the police said.

"I know it sounds strange, but it's true," Lieut. Rod Mickelson said after he stopped laughing. "The guy just filled up the balloons with helium, strapped on a parachute, grabbed a BB gun and took off."

The man was identified as Larry Walters, 33 years old, of North Hollywood. He was not injured.

The Federal Aviation Administration was not amused.

## Spotted by Airline Pilots

A regional safety inspector, Neal Savoy, said the flying lawn chair was spotted by Trans World Airlines and Delta Airlines jetliner pilots at 16,000 feet above sea level.

"We know he broke some part of the Federal Aviation Act, and as soon as we decide which part it is, some type of charge will be filed," Mr. Savoy said. "If he had a pilot's license, we'd suspend that. But he doesn't."

The police said Mr. Walters went to a friend's house in San Pedro Thursday night, inflated 45 six-foot weather balloons and attached them to an aluminum lawn chair tethered to the ground.

This morning, with half a dozen friends holding the tethers, he donned a parachute, strapped himself into the chair and had his friends let him up slowly.

Minutes later, he was calling for help over his citizens band radio.

"This guy broke into our channel with a mayday," said Doug Dixon, a member of an Orange County citizens band radio club. "He said he had shot up like an elevator to 16,000 feet and was getting numb before he started shooting out some of the balloons."

Mr. Walters then lost his pistol overboard, and the chair drifted downward, controlled only by gallon jugs of water attached to the sides as ballast.

The ropes became entangled in a power line, briefly blacking out a small area in Long Beach. The chair dangled five feet above the ground, and Mr. Walters was able to get down safely.

"Since I was 13 years old, I've dreamed of going up into the clear blue sky in a weather balloon," he said. "By the grace of God, I fulfilled my dream. But I wouldn't do this again for anything."

**GIVE TO THE FRESH AIR FUND**

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## Army Sentences a G.I. to Die In Rape-Murder of a German

**WURZBURG, West Germany, July 2 (UPI) —** A United States Army court has sentenced an American soldier to death for the rape-murder of an 18-year-old German woman, an Army spokesman said today.

Specialist 4 Joseph N. Brown, 21 years old, of Spring Valley, N.Y., was convicted of the Feb. 13 stabbing death of Ursula Schrimsher in the basement boiler room of an Army family housing area in the Bavarian city of Aschaffenburg.

He was convicted of rape, forcible sodomy and murder and was sentenced Thursday by a board of six officers after a two-day trial.

Another soldier in his unit, Pvt. Roy W. Gore, was sentenced to life imprisonment for the same murder at a trial June 2. He was also convicted of murder and rape.

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## Lawn-Chair Pilot Faces \$4,000 in Fines

LOS ANGELES, Dec. 18 (UPI) — Larry Walters, the lawn-chair pilot who catapulted to fame when balloons lifted his contraption 16,000 feet into the sky, faces \$4,000 in fines for violations cited by the Federal Aviation Administration.

"If the F.A.A. was around when the Wright Brothers were testing their aircraft, they would never have been able to make their first flight at Kitty Hawk," said Mr. Walters, who plans to challenge the fines.

Mr. Walters, a 33-year-old truck driver from North Hollywood, surprised himself and several airline pilots July 2 with his aluminum lawn chair tied to 42 weather balloons. He had to pop some with a pellet gun to land.

The F.A.A. has cited him for four violations of the Federal Aviation Act, including operating a "civil aircraft for which there is not currently in effect an airworthiness certificate" and operating an aircraft within an airport traffic area "without establishing and maintaining two-way communications with the control tower."

# Larry Walters; Soared to Fame on Lawn Chair

By MYRNA OLIVER  
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Larry Walters, who achieved dubious fame in 1982 when he piloted a lawn chair attached to helium balloons 16,000 feet above Long Beach, has committed suicide at the age of 44.

Walters died Oct. 6 after hiking to a remote spot in Angeles National Forest and shooting himself in the heart, his mother, Hazel Dunham, revealed Monday. She said relatives knew of no motive for the suicide.

"It was something I had to do," Walters told The Times after his flight from San Pedro to Long Beach on July 2, 1982. "I had this dream for 20 years, and if I hadn't done it, I would have ended up in the funny farm."

Walters rigged 42 weather balloons to an aluminum lawn chair, pumped them full of helium and had two friends untether the craft, which he had dubbed "Inspiration I."

He took along a large bottle of soda, a parachute and a portable

CB radio to alert air traffic to his presence. He also took a camera but later admitted, "I was so amazed by the view I didn't even take one picture."

Walters, a North Hollywood truck driver with no pilot or balloon training, spent about two hours aloft and soared up to 16,000 feet—three miles—startling at least two airline pilots and causing one to radio the Federal Aviation Administration.

Shivering in the high altitude, he used a pellet gun to pop balloons to come back to earth. On the way down, his balloons draped over power lines, blacking out a Long Beach neighborhood for 20 minutes.

The stunt earned Walters a \$1,500 fine from the FAA, the top prize from the Bonehead Club of Dallas, the altitude record for gas-filled clustered balloons (which could not be officially recorded because he was unlicensed and unsanctioned) and international admiration. He appeared on "The Tonight Show" and was flown to New York to be on "Late Night

With David Letterman," which he later described as "the most fun I've ever had."

"I didn't think that by fulfilling my goal in life—my dream—that I would create such a stir," he later told The Times, "and make people laugh."

Walters abandoned his truck-driving job and went on the lecture circuit, remaining sporadically in demand at motivational seminars. But he said he never made much money from his innovative flight and was glad to keep his simple lifestyle.

He gave his "aircraft"—the aluminum lawn chair—to admiring neighborhood children after he landed, later regretting it.

In recent years, Walters hiked the San Gabriel Mountains and did volunteer work for the U.S. Forest Service.

"I love the peace and quiet," he told The Times in 1988. "Nature and I get along real well."

An Army veteran who served in Vietnam, Walters never married and had no children. He is survived by his mother and two sisters.

# Artists

## Good/Bad Art Collective Is...

Richie Budd	Martin Iles	Sean Slattery
Jeff Dalton	Elliot Johnson	Chris Swenson
Rob Eager	Tim Kaminski	Erick Swenson
Curtis Fairman	Susan Laswell	Schell Taylor
Heather Grace	Jesse Meraz	Marshall Thompson
Dana Harper	Will Robison	Chris Weber

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Jaimie Courville	Jeff Zilm

**This action is dedicated  
to the memory of Larry Walters  
(1949 – 1993)**

For more information regarding Good/Bad Art Collective...

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