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MERV GRIFFIN,
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AND MALCOLM FORBES
AT BOHEMIAN GROVE—THE
ESTABLISHMENT'S
SECRET TWO-WEEK
FRAT PARTY

PLUS

RONALD REAGAN:
ULTRA-EXCLUSIVE
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HERMITS' HERMITS

DAVID MAMET ON BROADWAY
THE HOME VERSION





1989

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Photographs by Neil Selkirk (bodies);
Lisa Quinones/Black Star (Griffin head).
Globe Photos (Kissinger head).
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Inside BOHEMIAN GROVE

BY PHILIP WEISS

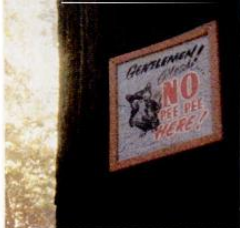
MY THREE WEEKS
OF MALE BOND-
ING AND FUNNY
COCKTAILS WITH
HENRY KISSINGER,
WILLIAM F.
BUCKLEY, HENRY

KRAVIS AND RONALD REAGAN AT THE MOST EXCLUSIVE FRAT PARTY ON EARTH

MONTE RIO IS A DEPRESSED NORTHERN CALIFORNIA TOWN OF 900 where the forest is so thick that some streetlights stay on all day long. Its only landmark is a kick-ass bar called the Pink Elephant, but a half-mile or so away from "the Pink," in the middle of a redwood grove, there is, strangely enough, a bank of 16 pay telephones. In midsummer the phones are often crowded. On July 21 of this year Henry Kissinger sat at one of them, chuffing loudly to someone — Sunshine, he called her, and Sweetie — about the pleasant distractions of his vacation in the forest.

"We had jazz concert," Kissinger said. "We had rope trick. This morning we went bird-watching."

Proudly Kissinger reeled off the names of some of his fellow campers: "Nick Brady and his brother is here." Brady is the U.S. Treasury Secretary. "Tom Johnson is here."



Though impulse rules in Bohemia, a few ancient redwoods are off-limits—even to heads of state.



The then-publisher of the *Los Angeles Times*, who had copies of his news-

paper shipped up every day. "That Indian is here. Bajpai." Shankar Bajpai, former ambassador to the U.S. "Today they had a Russian."

The Russian was the physicist Roald Sagdeyev, a member of the Soviet Supreme Council of People's Deputies, who had given a speech to Kissinger and many other powerful men too. George Shultz, the former secretary of State, wearing hiking boots, had listened while sitting under a tree. Kissinger had lolled on the ground, distributing mown grass clippings across his white shirt, being careful not to set his elbow on one of the cigar butts squashed in the grass, and joking with a wiry, nut-brown companion.

The woman on the line now asked about the friend.

"Oh, Rocard is having a ball."

Kissinger was sharing his turtle-neck with Rocard, for nights amid the redwoods grew surprisingly cool. The two of them were camping in Mandalay, the most exclusive bunksite in the encampment, the one on the hill with the tiny cable car that carries visitors up to the compound. Meanwhile,

THE PRIESTS

WORE BRIGHT
RED, BLUE
AND ORANGE
HOODED ROBES
THAT MIGHT

HAVE BEEN DESIGNED FOR THE KU KLUX KLAN BY MARIMEKKO

Kissinger had been offering Rocard advice: "I told him, 'Do anything you want, hide in the bushes—just don't let them see you.'"

Rocard was Michel Rocard, the prime minister of France, and this was a secret trip. No one was supposed to know he was peering up at ospreys and turkey vultures and hearing Soviet speakers along with former American secretaries of State and the present secretary of the Treasury. And David Rockefeller too. And Dwayne Andreas, the chairman of Archer-Daniels-Midland. Merv Griffin. Walter Cronkite.

No one was supposed to know that Rocard himself would be speaking the next day down at the lake, under the green speakers' parasol. As orange dragonflies coupled dazzlingly over the water, as bullfrogs sounded, Rocard would lean forward and say, "Because you are such an astonishing group of men, I can speak privately."

It was a devilishly charming thing to say, calculated to flatter the men of the Bohemian Grove.

Every summer for more than a century, the all-male Bohemian Club of San Francisco has led a retreat into a redwood forest 70 miles north of the city, four and a quarter square miles of rugged, majestic terrain that members consider sacred. The religion they consecrate is right-wing, laissez-faire and quintessentially western, with some Druid tree worship thrown in for fun. The often bizarre rites have elevated what was once a provincial club for San Franciscans embarrassed by the rude manners of the Wild West into the most exclusive club in the United States, with 2,300 members drawn from

the whole of the American establishment and a waiting list 33 years long.

In the first 50 years of the club's existence the Bohemian Grove was comparatively accessible to outsiders, but in the 1930s, as the club gained influence and its redwoods provided a haven for Republican presidents, it grew quite secretive about its rituals and membership—you won't even find the Grove on public maps. This has been especially true in the last ten years as Bohemia's stunning roster has waxed ever more statusy, as Kissinger and Rockefeller and Nick Brady have joined, drawing the attention of left-wing protesters, scholars of elites, and reporters. The encampment has become the primary watering hole for Republican-



I. P. Daley: an old-timer enjoying his most hallowed Bohemian right

administration officials, defense contractors, press barons, old-line Hollywood figures, establishment intellectuals and a handful of German-speaking men in lederhosen. What the Bois de Boulogne was to the ancien régime, the Grove is to America's power class. Ronald Reagan and George Bush are members. So are Gerald Ford and Richard Nixon—though club directors are said to be miffed at Nixon, a longtime Bohemian Grover who's still listed as sleeping in Cave Man, one of the Grove's 119 curiously and sometimes appropriately named camps.

Today the Grove is stocked with Reaganites. Former Defense secretary Caspar W. Weinberger, former attorney general William French Smith and former Transportation secretary Drew Lewis are all members. At the encampment last July, Al Haig was there, along with three other former secretaries of State: Kissinger, Shultz and William P. Rogers (Rogers as a guest of former national security adviser William P. Clark's). James A. Baker III, the current secretary of State, is also a member, but he

couldn't make it this year. The right-wing Hoover Institution at Stanford attended in full force and brought along the president of Washington's Heritage Foundation. William F. Buckley Jr. and Malcolm Forbes held court. Big business shows up: Thomas Watson Jr. of IBM, billionaire John Kluge of Metromedia. Former Bank of America chairman Samuel Armacost brought IBM chairman John F. Akers, Bechtel chairman S. D. Bechtel Jr. brought Amoco chairman Richard Morrow. Noted and hoary writers and personalities are members: Herman Wouk, Art Linkletter, Fred Travalena. Scenting power, press lords skip in from all over the country. Joe Albritton, former owner of *The Washington Star*; Charles E. Scripps and Jack Howard of the 21-paper Scripps Howard newspaper chain; Otto Silha of Cowles Media; the McClatchys of the McClatchy chain; and David Gergen of *U.S. News & World Report* all obey the Bohemian command of keeping the goings-on from their readers.

Every spring for many years now, Bohemian Club presidents have formally summoned such men to the Grove with great effusion:

"Brother Bohemians: The Sun is Once Again in the Clutches of the Lion, and the encircling season bids us to the forest — there to celebrate... the awful mysteries!"

"Bohemians come! Find home again in the Grove! Burn CARE and hurl his ashes, whirling, from our glade!"

"Come out Bohemians! come out and play, come with all the buoyant impetuous rush of youth!"

And this year, when president George Elliott wrote, more drably, "Around campfires large and small, warm hospitality awaits you. Of course you must be with us," I heard his summons, too.

It was a good time to visit the Grove. The country was still steeped in the aw-shucks authoritarianism of the Reagan years, and if there is any place to study the culture of our ruling class, it is here among the Grove's benevolent, string-tie aristocracy. Also, it seemed possible that Ronald Reagan himself might make a triumphant return to his longtime camp, Owl's Nest. While president he had avoided the Grove, a custom Nixon cemented in 1971 when he canceled a speech planned for the lakeside in the secret encampment after the press insisted on covering it.

For me, the trick was getting in. A guest card was out of the question: club bylaws have stated that a member-sponsor's application "shall be in writing and shall contain full information for the guidance of the Board in determining the merits and qualifications of the proposed guest." No, Section 8, Article XVIII was too fine a screen for me. And my attempts to get a job as a waiter or a valet in one of the camps failed. (The only

book entirely devoted to Grove life, *The Greatest Men's Party on Earth*, was written in 1974 by John van der Zee, a San Francisco writer who got in for four days as a waiter.)

In the end I entered

by stealth. Students of the Grove had warned that security was too good; they'd sniff me out quickly. I might last three hours before they put me in the Santa Rosa jail for trespassing. Lowell Bergman, a producer with *60 Minutes* who used to hunt rabbits in the nearby hills, remembered a fire road leading into the site near the Guerneville waste-treatment plant but said they'd spot me sneaking in. Others mentioned barbed wire and electronic monitoring devices at places where the Grove abuts Monte Rio, and helicopters patrolling the "ridge roads" that traverse the 1,000-foot hills and form the Grove's perimeter. One day I drove up to the front gate and got a daunting glimpse of what looked like the Grove sheriff, a barrel-like figure in a Smokey the Bear hat. A Berlin-ish set of checkpoints seemed to stretch



What would Smokey say? At the annual Cremation of Care, grown men dress as Druids and the outside world goes up in smoke.

out behind him.

But by then I'd made my connection. My driver was Mary Moore, an Earth Mother type with long silvery-blond hair who is the most active member of a distinctly Californian left-wing group called the Bohemian Grove Action Network. Moore agreed to help me get in, providing me with a sort of underground railroad. She put at my service a mountain guide who demanded only that I keep the methods he devised for me confidential. He had a keen geographical sense and a girlfriend who described a plan to seed magic crystals at the Grove gates to make them open of their own accord so that Native American drummers could walk in.

We didn't do it that way, but it turned out that Grove security isn't quite what it's reputed to be. Reporters seeking to write about the Grove had rarely been inside, and then usually for only a few hours at a time, but I was determined to have a good, long look, so I took care to blend. I outfitted myself in conservative recreational wear—a pressed plaid shirt, Perma-Prest chinos, Top-Siders, a sport jacket—I always carried a drink, and I made it a point to have that morning's *Wall Street Journal* or *New York Times* under my arm when I surfaced (though television is against the rules, newspapers are sold at the Grove Civic Center). Thus equipped, I came and went on 7 days dur-

Where the establishment boys are: roughing it in 1941



ing the 16-day encampment, openly trespassing in what is regarded as an impermeable enclave and which the press routinely refers to as a heavily guarded area. Though I regularly violated Grove rule 20 ("Members and guests shall sign the register when arriving at or departing from the Grove"), I was never stopped or questioned. (Another rule forbade cameras outside one's own camp. I waited till my last day to bring one in.) Indeed, I was able to enjoy most pleasures of the Grove, notably the speeches, songs, elaborate drag shows, endless toasts, prebreakfast gin fizzes, round-the-clock "Nembutals" and other drinks—though I didn't sleep in any of the camps or swim naked with like-minded Bohemians in the Russian River at night.

My imposture included misrepresenting myself in conversation with other campers, and my story kept changing as I learned more about how life inside was organized. I said I was a guest of Bromley camp, where unsortable visitors end up. At 33, I was one of the youngest Bohemians, but I was welcome almost as a policy matter. "We looked around and saw we were becoming an old-men's club," a member said, explaining recent efforts to recruit fresh blood. Being from New York was fine; the Grove limits retreat guests to out-of-staters (though clamoring by well-connected Californians to visit the forest has resulted in the rise of the June "Spring Jinks" weekend). I used my real name. No one inside acted suspicious, but paranoia about the Grove seemed justified, and I brought along my own version of cyanide: Interol, a tranquilizer used by actors to counteract stage fright. One day a member asked if I was related to a Bohemian named Jack Weiss. "No, but I've heard a lot about him and I'd like to meet him." "You can't," he said. "He's dead." After that I began working a dead West Coast relative's promise to have me out to the Grove one summer into a shaggy-dog story about my invitation.

In this way I managed to drop in on the principal events of the encampment, right up to the final Saturday, July 29, 12:30 p.m., when I attended a Lakeside Talk whose giver was, intriguingly, the only one not identified in the program of events. "Speaker: To Be Announced," it said, raising the question of what dignitary might be thought more important than Prime Minister Rocard, who was listed as the speaker on the middle Saturday.

My first full-strength dose of Bohemian culture took place two weeks earlier, the first Saturday night, when after a long day in the Grove I took a seat on the grassy lakeside among 1,500 other men for the encampment's famously surreal opening ritual. As the magic hour of 9:15 approached, a helicopter from a network newsmagazine circled frantically far above the darkened forest, searching out a spectacle lit at that point only by

the hundreds of cigars whose smokers had ignited them in defiance of the California Forest Service's posted warnings. My neighbor suggested that someone ought to "shoot the fucker down," flashing the press hatred that prevails in Bohemia.

"My friends don't understand this," a pudgy 35-year-old in front of me confided to his companion. "I know that if they could see it, they would see how terrific it is. It's like great sex...."

It was the sort of analogy I was to hear often in the nearly 60 hours I spent inside the Grove. The friend and I leaned closer.

"It's *more* than it's cracked up to be. You can't describe it," he explained. Then everyone hushed as a column of hooded figures carrying torches emerged solemnly from the woods 100 yards away, bearing a corpse down to the water.

YOU KNOW YOU ARE INSIDE THE BOHEMIAN GROVE WHEN YOU come down a trail in the woods and hear piano music from amid a group of tents and then round a bend to see a man with a beer in one hand and his penis in the other, urinating into the bushes. This is the most gloried-in ritual of the encampment, the freedom of powerful men to pee wherever they like, a right the club has invoked when trying to fight government anti-sex-discrimination efforts and one curtailed only when it comes to a few popular redwoods just outside the Dining Circle. Tacked to one of these haplessly

KISSINGER

OFFERED FRENCH PRIME

postprandial trees is a sign conveying the fairy-dust mixture of boyishness and courtliness that envelops the encampment: GENTLEMEN PLEASE! NO PEE PEE HERE!

Everything in the encampment is sheltered by redwoods, which admit hazy shafts of sunlight, and every camp has a more or less constant campfire sending a soft column of smoke into the trees. The walled camps are generally about 100 feet wide and stretch back up the hillside, with wooden platforms on which members set up tents. Bohemians sleep on cots in these tents, or, in the richer camps, in redwood cabins. The camps are decorated with wooden or stone sculptures of owls, the Grove symbol. Members wash up in dormitory-style bathrooms and eat breakfast and dinner collectively in the Dining Circle, a splendid outdoor arena with fresh wood chips covering the ground and only the sky above. It never rains when the encampment is on.

During the day, idleness is encouraged. There are few rules, the most famous one being "Weaving Spiders Come Not Here"—in other words, don't do business in the Grove. The rule is widely ignored. Another, un-



The world's most exclusive enchanted forest

Heigh-bo, heigh-bo: the Bohemian-bound Secretarial pool



written rule is that everyone drink—and that everyone drink all the time. This rule is strictly adhered to. "His method was to seize a large horse bucket, throw a hunk of ice into it, pour in several bottles of gin and a half a bottle of vermouth, and slosh it all around," goes one Grove recipe. The traditional 7:00 a.m. gin fizz served in bed by camp valets set the pace. Throughout the skeet-shooting, the domino-playing and the museum talks, right up through the "afterglows" that follow each evening's entertainment, everyone is perpetually numbed and loose, but a clubbish decorum prevails just the same. No one throws up. Now and then, though, a Bohemian sits down in the ferns and passes out.

The sense that you are inside an actual club is heightened by all the furnishings that could not survive a wet season outdoors: the stuffed lion on top of Jungle; the red lanterns in the trees behind Dragons at night, which add to the haunting atmosphere; the paintings of camels, pelicans and naked women that are hung outside; the soft couch in the doorway of Woof; and everywhere pianos that, when the encampment is over, go back to the piano warehouse near the front gate. There's a feeling of both great privilege and rusticity. Bohemians talk about roughing it, but at a privy in the woods near the river, there is a constantly renewed supply of paper toilet-seat covers. And the sand at the Russian

Then the beer brewer himself came out to sing: "Mandalay," the song based on the Kipling poem. He was a goateed giant with massive shoulders and a beer gut. Rudyard Kipling, romantic colonialist and exponent of the masculine spirit, is, naturally, one of the Grove's heroes, and "Mandalay" is a triumphant white-



All aboard for a Rim Ride!

BA-DUM-BUM: THE LIGHTER SIDE OF POWER-MONGERING

A Completely Authentic 1989 Bohemian Grove Joke Book



1. "Tallulah Bankhead goes into a stall in the '21' Club bathroom. She soon pokes her head out. 'Is there any paper?' she asks an attendant. 'No.' A little later she sticks her head out a second time. 'Just some Kleenex?' 'I'm sorry, we have nothing at all.' A few minutes pass, and she leans out again. 'How about two fives for a ten?'—from Malcolm Forbes's Lakeside Talk.

2. "My wife was talking to a friend of hers the other day who says, 'You know what they say about oysters being an aphrodisiac? It's not true.' 'How do you know that?' 'Well, we went out to dinner last night and my husband ordered a dozen oysters. Only five worked!'—Ibid.

3. A Bohemian at dinner holds up a wine bottle filled with a yellowish liquid and reads the label in puzzlement: "*Château du pissoir*"—from the Owl Hoots cartoons at the Camp Fire Circle.

4. "You're as young as the woman you feel"—from the Low Jinks theatrical performance.

5. A Bohemian cuts out a photograph of a woman's crotch from a skin magazine and carefully tapes it to the cover of *Cockpit*, a magazine for private-aircraft fanciers that's popular among many corporate members. He leaves the magazine on a table in the campground. All day Bohemians grab the magazine to look inside, where they find only pictures of leather jackets and airplanes—a Bohemian prank recounted at the Grove beach.

6. "A man stumbles home early one morning. His angry wife yanks open the door and he lurches onto the floor. Getting up, he says, 'I think I'll skip my prepared remarks and take your questions now.'—from Associated Press president Louis Boccardi's Lakeside Talk.

7. "A ten-year-old boy is fornicating with his nine-year-old sister. 'Gee, you're almost as good as Ma,' he says. 'Really?' she says. 'That's what Pa says.'—Bohemian rib-tickler told at Land's End camp.

8. "Take care when you unsheath your sword—it can pierce a young lady's... heart"—advice from one character to another in the Grove play.

9. "The gravity on Jupiter is extremely strong. It's kind of like the lady in the play with the big boobs—she has to crawl out onstage!"—from a museum talk by Wally Schirra, the former astronaut, or, as he put it, "smart-ass-tronaut."

10. Two Vassar women run into one another in New York during the Depression. Their families have suffered terrible reverses. "It's gotten so bad I've taken to the streets, I'm practicing the world's oldest profession," says one. "Oh my God," says the other. "Before I did that I'd dip into capital!"—Forbes.

11. "A lot of years have been going by for me. You know, there are three things that begin to happen as the years pile up. First, you begin to forget things. [Pause.] I can't remember the other two"—from Ronald Reagan's Lakeside Talk. —P.W.

MINISTER MICHEL ROCARD ADVICE: "DO ANYTHING YOU WANT, HIDE IN

River beach is traversed by coconut-fiber mats and rich figured squares cut from the carpets in the "City Club," the five-story brick Bohemian building in downtown San Francisco.

All day long there is music in the Grove, and at night in some camps there are programs of entertainment: comics, singers, actors. Any Bohemian is welcome at such events. One afternoon, for instance, the Valhalla deck was crowded with men drinking Valhalla's home-brewed beer and listening to singers. They sang from a small stage in front of a redwood on which was hung a framed nineteenth-century engraving. The scene was permeated by a kind of Nazi kitsch Black Forest imagery, and the setting seemed very Wagnerian—though the music was sometimes undercut by the soft drumming of tinkling urine off the edge of the porch, where the beer drinkers went one after the other. The deck's railing posed a dilemma. It was set at crotch level, so you had to sort of crouch.

man's-burden song. The brewer finished tearily, his arms high above his head, fists clenched: "Take me back to Mandalay-ah."

Amid wild applause one man removed a heavily chewed cigar to say, "If that don't send a chill up your spine, you ain't a Bohemian."

His friend, a man in a yellow brocade vest, agreed. "He really put the balls into it."

"Yep, Big Daddy's in town."

ONE REASON FOR THE BOHEMIAN CLUB'S POOR public relations is the name it gave to the yearly opening ceremony: The Cremation of Care. The cremation is intended to put the busy men of the club at ease and banish the stress of the outside world, but it arouses critics of the encampment because they interpret it to mean that Bohemians literally don't care about the outside world. Cremation of care, they fear, means the death of caring. Demonstrations outside the Grove a few years back often centered around

THE BUSHES—
JUST DON'T
LET THEM
SEE YOU"

the "Resurrection of Care."

The cremation took place at the man-made lake that is the center of a lot of Grove social activity. At 9:15 a procession of priests carrying the crypt of Dull Care came out of the trees on the east side, along the Grove's chief thoroughfare, River Road. They wore bright red, blue and orange hooded robes that might have been designed for the Ku Klux Klan by Marimekko. When they reached the water, they extinguished their torches.

At this point some hamadryads and another priest or two appeared at the base of the main owl shrine, a 40-foot-tall, moss-covered statue of stone and steel at the south end of the lake, and sang songs about Care. They told of how a man's heart is divided between "reality" and "fantasy," how it is necessary to escape to another world of fellowship among men. Vaguely homosexual undertones suffused this spectacle, as they do much of ritualized life in the Grove. The main priest wore a pink-and-green satin costume, while a hamadryad appeared before a redwood in a gold spangled bodysuit dripping with rhinestones. They spoke of "fairy unguents" that would free men to pursue warm fellowship, and I was reminded of something Herman Wouk wrote about the Grove: "Men can decently love each other; they always have, but women never quite understand."



Then the crypt of Care was poled slowly down the lake by a black-robed figure in a black gondola, accompanied by a great deal of special-effects smoke. Just as the priests set out to torch the crypt, a red light appeared high in a redwood and large speakers in the forest amplified the cackling voice of Care: "Fools! When will ye learn that me ye cannot slay? Year after year ye burn me in this Grove... But when again ye turn your feet toward the marketplace, am I not waiting for you, as of old?"

With that, Care spat upon the fires, extinguishing them. The priests turned in desperation to the owl. "O thou, great symbol of all mortal wisdom, Owl of Bohemia... grant us thy counsel!"

Every year there are new wrinkles on the cremation ceremony. The big improvement this year was to project a sort of hologram onto the owl's face so that its beak seemed to move. Also, it was Walter Cronkite

IN THE END

I ENTERED BY STEALTH. STUDENTS OF THE GROVE HAD WARNED THAT

talking. (Cronkite camps in Hill Billies along with George H.W. Bush, William F. Buckley Jr. and former astronaut and ex-Eastern Air Lines chairman Frank Borman.) Cronkite, as the owl, said that the only way Care could be cremated was to use fire from the Lamp of Fellowship before him, an "eternal" gas flame that burns day and night while the encampment is on.

That did it. Care went up in blazes. Around me the men ex-

ploded in huzzahs. Fireworks went off at the lakeside, and a brass band in peppermint-striped jackets and straw boaters came out of the woods playing "There'll Be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight."

The sudden appearance of men in striped jackets shows what a bouillabaisse of traditions the Grove is. Bohemian Club literature is pious on this score. It boasts that the Cremation of Care ceremony derives from Druid rites, medieval Christian liturgy, the Book of Common Prayer, Shakespearean drama and nineteenth-century American lodge rites.

Early Bohemians were hungry for exaltation and grabbed on to any tradition they could find to dignify their exile in the vulgar West. The club was founded in 1872, just three years after the transcontinental railroad was completed, by a group of newspapermen and artists who plainly felt social anxiety about their surroundings. Early club menus offered dolled-up western dishes such as "boiled striped bass au vin blanc" and "café noir." The club's "men of talent" (i.e., artists and writers) included writers of a populist bent: Mark Twain, Bret Harte, Henry M. Stanley. Bohemian Jack London was a socialist; Bohemian Henry George, a radical reformer.

But the club's newspapermen were also socially ambitious, aiming to chronicle California's rise in the arts and sciences. *Bohemian*, they agreed in their early annals, didn't mean an unwashed shirt and poetry; it signified London, the beau monde, men of eminence whose purses were always open to their friends. By such standards, San Francisco businessmen surely looked crude.

Just the same, the club needed such "men of use" to support their activities, and inevitably the businessmen took over. Prohibition dealt a deadly blow to the club's democratic leanings by closing the central Grove bar. Social activity became decentralized, relocated to individual camps, and less egalitarian, a trend that continued during the Depression, when rich camps got even richer. Members poured money into capital improvements for the Grove, as if it were the haven to which they could flee during the revolution. (By 1925, according to one account, most of the Grove's 2,800 acres had been purchased for the sum of \$99,500.) Teddy Roosevelt had been a member. Franklin Roosevelt was not, and by the 1930s the Grove had become clannishly conservative. Will Rogers is said to have been denied membership because he once made a joke about the Grove.

The Bohemian Club's waiting list, which had first appeared in the Coolidge years, grew to ridiculous lengths. I was told that if a Californian is not admitted before he is 30, he can despair of membership unless he achieves commercial or political prominence. Many older men die waiting. And membership

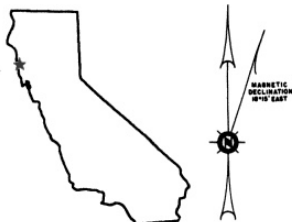


OVER THE RIVER AND THROUGH THE WOODS

A Guide to Right-Wing Fantasia

BOHEMIAN GROVE
CAMPS, FACILITIES AND ROADS
SONOMA CO., CALIFORNIA

SCALE IN FEET
0 100 200 400 600 800
SURVEYED BY W.S. KEN, 1986



1. Where Bohemians pass around binoculars to check out talent on the non-Bohemian public beach upriver

2. Late-night nude swimming

3. Here in the fall of 1942, physicists met to discuss isotope separation as part of the project to build the atom bomb

4. Zaca: Prentiss Cobb Hale sleeps here

5. THE PRODUCTIVE DRUNK IS THE BANE OF ALL MORALISTS

6. Totem Inn: Allen Drury sleeps here

7. Wool: where James A. Baker III and Merv Griffin sleep

8. Aviary: Singers' camp—the biggest

9. Isle of Aves: William P. Clark and Caspar Weinberger sleep here

10. Mandalay: Nicholas Brady, Gerald Ford, Henry Kissinger, George P. Shultz, William French Smith and Thomas Watson Jr. sleep here

11. Toyland: Al Haig slept here

12. Statue of St. John of Nepomuk, patron saint of the Grove (d. 1393)

13. Deer lick on redwood

14. Where Mac McCandless plays the organ

15. Dragons: Art Linkletter sleeps here

16. Have a Nembutal!

17. The only place you can use money in the Grove

18. Where Wally Schirra revealed that astronauts don't like Tang

19. Bromley: where unsortables and guests of the board of directors bunk (Ed Meese was a guest in 1981)

20. Guests and members must sign in and out here

21. Here last July a Grove employee spent two and a half days marking parking spaces on the grass with lime

22. Sit-ins here forced Gerald Ford to take a three-mile detour through the woods in 1984

23. Where pianos winter

24. Wohohnno: John Kluge sleeps here

25. Stowaway: where David Rockefeller sleeps

26. Buy your official souvenir snapshots of the encampment here

27. Phone circle, where Henry Kissinger cut in line

28. In the 1910s Japanese servants wore white uniforms by day, blue by night, with gold-braided caps to match

29. Siestas here on wooden benches

30. Sheldrake Lodge: where former California governor Pat Brown sleeps

31. Taxidermied puma on

50. Popular cruising spot

49. A sleepy guard whittles sticks here

48. Rim Riders ho!

47. Hill Billies: where Frank Borman, William F. Buckley Jr., Christopher Buckley, George Bush, A. W. Clausen and Walter Cronkite sleep

46. Dog House: where Fred Travalena sleeps

45. Photographer from Time magazine hiked in here in 1982; a Time reporter got in as a waiter. Their story never ran

44. Cave Man: right-wing coven where Martin Anderson—who before becoming Reagan's domestic policy adviser said poverty had been "virtually eliminated"—bunks with Emil Mosbacher, grain merchant Dwayne Andrews and press bosses. (Note Nixon's empty bed)

43. Camp for Navy admirals

42. Owl Shrine: where National Public Radio secretly taped Kissinger's 1982 Lakeside Talk—a recording that it later declined to air

41. Procession of priests begins here

40. Jack London got "full" here in 1912

39. Statue of the huntress—"the only woman here"

38. GENTLEMEN PLEASE! NO PEE-PEE HERE!

37. Waiters forced to confine themselves here since disappearance of cashmere sweater from a camp two years ago (when waiters were allowed to accept invitations to camps during off-hours)

36. 301-foot redwood here

35. Doctors in wigwags

34. Owl's Nest: where Eddie Albert and Ronald Reagan sleep

33. NO TRESPASSING signs here—a favored Bohemian jogging path

32. Wayside Log: where Oscar Lewis and Herman Wouk sleep

SECURITY WAS TOO GOOD; I MIGHT LAST THREE HOURS BEFORE THEY PUT ME IN

comes dear. The initiation fee for regular voting membership is said to be \$8,500, and dues are set at more than \$2,000 a year. Because the regular members require entertainment, "men of talent" pay greatly reduced fees. On Wouk's acceptance, for instance, he was put to work writing a history of the club.

The encampment became controversial in

the early Reagan years when reporters, still suffering the hangover of Carter populism, questioned club executive appointees about the club's sexist practices.

The Grove's keenest adversary is Mary Moore, who lives in a countercultural shantytown in nearby Occidental. Moore was the 1953 San Luis Obispo County Fiesta queen, but by 1980 she

THE SANTA ROSA JAIL FOR TRESPASSING

I WAS ABLE

TO ENJOY MOST
PLEASURES OF
THE GROVE—
THE SONGS,
ELABORATE
DRAG SHOWS,
PREBREAKFAST
GIN FIZZES AND
ROUND-THE-
CLOCK "NEMBU-
TALS"—THOUGH

I DIDN'T SWIM NAKED WITH LIKE-MINDED BOHEMIANS IN THE RUSSIAN RIVER AT NIGHT

had become, she says, a "woman-identified woman," and the Grove's thunderous maleness and what she calls its "closedness" disturbed her. Of course, just about anybody could hate the Grove. With its dense concentration of extravagant war- and money-mongers, it's an easy object of protest, and 72 left-wing groups eventually joined Moore to form the Bohemian Grove Action Network.

For a while, in the early 1980s, Moore and BGAN thought they might actually liberate the redwoods. In 1984 folksinging demonstrators tried to quarantine the Bohemians inside the Grove because they were so dangerous to the outside world. Fifty people were arrested. Summer after summer BGAN stoked Grove conspiracy theories by getting hold of the guest list. In 1981, for instance, Dan Rostenkowski, Ed Meese and former president of CBS News Van Gordon Sauter attended (Sauter as the guest of former California governor Edmund "Pat" Brown—Jerry's father). Meese, by the way, is about the only major Reaganite who didn't end up as a member.

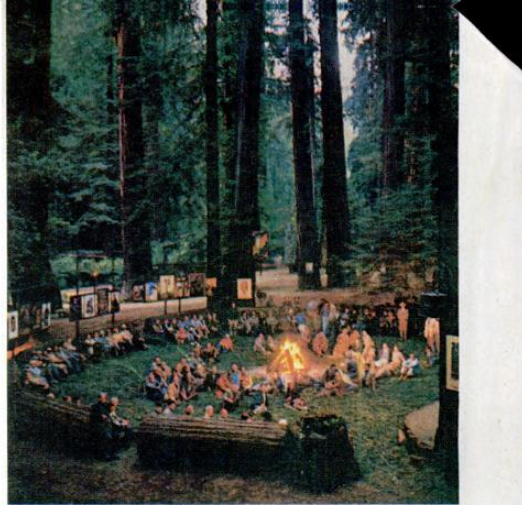
In its obsession with the encampment, BGAN has unwittingly taken on Bohemian

traits, becoming a kooky mirror image of the Grove. It wove spidery webs of string across Bohemian Avenue to block the way in. It urged its followers to form "Boho Clubs" to study members so they could be "held accountable by the American People" for participating "in the maintenance of the process of plutocratic patriarchy which threatens the planet Earth with omnicide from the nuclear menace." When BGAN resurrected Care, it chanted its own hymns:

*On a day much like this five score years ago
The first hideous fire was lit in Monte Rio
And sweet Care was banished from this lovely land,
And Bohemians revelled upon their shifting sand.*

But by 1985 BGAN's energies were ebbing. The media's anti-elitist mood, never all that ferocious, was spent. The reporters that Mary Moore had helped spirit into the Grove for hours at a time had come out with vague, watered-down versions of what went on, or their news organizations had suppressed the accounts. By 1988 the gauntlet of hippies and solarheads and woman-identified women whom the Bohemians had been forced to maneuver their Jags

Kawabunga!
Bohemians in
skivvies hear a
speech, 1950



Campfire of the vanities: recumbent Bohemians like to sleep it off on the redwood benches of the central Camp Fire Circle.

and limos around to get to the gate had disappeared. The Grove was still there.

When I got to Monte Rio, only a couple of signs of protest remained. Moore's answering-machine message asking friends not to call her at her vintage-clothing store in the town of Sebastopol included a denunciation of the Cremation of Care. And inside the Grove the guest list was well guarded. It was posted in a locked glass case during the day, and was removed every

night. This was about the highest security I saw inside.

"I'M ADMITTING FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MY life having no willpower," a man was saying to his wife on one of the public phones. He looked bewildered and hung over, and I figured Bohemians were warmly and mysteriously saying to him what they were saying to me: "I can tell this is your first Grove."

It was just past noon on Sunday, the middle weekend at the encampment—the busiest weekend, with attendance approaching 2,200 men. The most dignified had arrived. On the River Road you heard some small business talk.

"David Jr.'s going into the family business now."

"He's got a scruffy beard."

"Yes, he looks radical, but he doesn't talk like one."

"Abby, now, she's the one who raised her fist at graduation? Had a red fist painted on the back of her gown."

Of course. The Rockefellers.

"Where was that? Radcliffe?"

"You know, they've got a lot of liberal faculty."

"They're always on the periphery of radicalism."

"My son was in Santiago, and David sent him letters of introduction to seven leading bankers in seven countries."



At lakeside the grass was crowded for the day's talk. Under the green parasol stood General John Chain, commander of the Strategic Air Command, who spoke of the country's desperate need for the Stealth B-2 bomber. "I am a warrior and that is how I come to you today," he said. "I need the B-2."

The important men come out for the Lakeside Talks, and each speaker seems to assume that his audience can actually do something about the issues raised—which, of course, it can. On the first weekend, for instance, Associated Press presi-

dark-haired man said to an older fellow.

Three other men discussed a friend of theirs who had left early that morning for New York. One of them seemed puzzled—the friend wasn't the sort to get going at 7:45, he noted.

"It was a free ride," the other friend explained. "Bill Simon had room on his plane."

"Simon doesn't know he doesn't have money."

They all got a big kick out of this. Simon was Treasury secretary in the Ford administration and today is a major savings and loan conglomerateur, active in takeovers. It would seem that this year's encampment was useful to him. Two weeks later he plunged into Sir James Goldsmith's battle to take over B.A.T. Industries PLC of England, a deal that could give Simon a toehold in Europe. He was surely influenced by Prime

Minister Rocard's Saturday-afternoon Lakeside Talk, in which he dangled the most sanguine business expectations of the new European order [see "The Case of the Disappearing Prime Minister."]

In 1982 reporters followed German chancellor Helmut Schmidt to the Grove gates, and the front page of *The Christian Science Monitor* termed the Grove "the West's hidden summit." This year Rocard's visit went unreported. A week after the encampment, a Washington correspondent for a French paper insisted to me that the last time the prime minister had visited the U.S. was a year and a half ago.

"One of the contemporary myths about the Bohemian Club is that it is a gathering and decision-making place for national and international 'power brokers,'" the club's then-president said in 1980. In fact, the encampment has always had political significance. Richard Nixon, Barry Goldwater and Nelson Rockefeller all stopped in as they geared up for their respective

presidential campaigns. Politicians say there is no place like the Grove to help get a campaign rolling. No wonder this year's guest list included the two biggest congressional bagmen of recent years: Representative Tony Coelho, former chairman of the House Democratic Campaign Committee, and Representative Guy Vander Jagt, his counterpart on the Republican committee. These men were interested in something more than pseudo-Druidic rituals.

The club says it serves as a "refuge" from the strivings of the marketplace, and though it's true that actual deal-making is discouraged, I heard business being done on all sides. The pay phones were a hub of activity. "Owner slash developer," a man dictated to his secretary one morning. On the blackboard near the bootblack stand there were phone messages for corporate raider Henry Kravis and Bloomingdale's chairman Marvin Traub. That day as I sat writing a letter (actually my notes) at the Civic Center, a one-story building in which various amenities (Grove stationery, laundry facilities) are available to Bohe-

THE CASE OF THE DISAPPEARING PRIME MINISTER

What France's Michel Rocard Said on His (Secret) Summer Vacation

The people and press of France thought their crafty prime minister, Michel Rocard, was on his boat off the coast of Brittany during the last two weeks of July this year. But thanks to an invitation from his pal Henry Kissinger, Rocard had been smuggled into the Grove—and not just to party with the guys, but also to talk openly and honestly before his fellow campers. (Whether highly placed aides arranged pillows under the covers of his bed back home is unclear.) His speech has, to date, gone entirely unreported.

Prime Minister Rocard began his July 22 talk at the Grove lakeside with a clumsy miscalculation—"There is no press here"—but from that point on it was all Gallic charm. Hundreds of miles from AP stringers and *Le Monde* reporters, he whispered secrets, he punctured allies. The speech was remarkable not so much for its content as for its candor

and tone.

Of the Europeans' goal to eliminate trade barriers in 1992, Rocard confided dramatically, "We are building a nation. The world is rich with multilingual nations." Within ten years, he said, Europe will have a unified currency. Only Margaret Thatcher will resist, but "as always," he added, "she will get on the train when it is leaving the station."

In Europe, Rocard has a reputation as a right-wing socialist. Among the Bohemians he was chummy. The Americans and the French, he said, have a special alliance in leading the way to disarmament, while Thatcher is "defiant"; she cannot be counted on. Rocard also considered the Germans hopeless. They suffer what the prime minister called "the German disease"—fear of fighting on their own soil, making them partial to nuclear arms.

To the subject of business

matters, Rocard brought a Bohemian zeal. Government-subsidized farming, he said, is "hypocrisy!" The farms aren't efficient but governments back



Michel Rocard

them because of the political consequences of opposing them. "Ridiculous," he said, then tilted forward in a delightful gesture of conspiracy. "Let me tell you a secret. We too are fed up with subsidizing farmers. We too want to get out of this silly system." The only way out, he whispered, is a private, "gentleman's agreement" involving agricultural trade. At lakeside there was an approving murmur. For the gentleman's agreement is the stock-in-trade of Bohemia. —P.W.

dent Louis Boccardi, addressing his listeners as men of "power and rank," gave them more details than he said he was willing to give his readers about the plight of Terry Anderson, the Middle East correspondent held hostage since 1985. It was a transparent plea for help.

Other Lakeside speaking is more indulgent. Here Nicholas Brady examined the history of the Jockey Club. Here William Buckley described how he had sat at his desk and cried upon learning of Whittaker Chambers's death. Here Henry Kissinger made a bathroom pun on the name of his friend Lee Kuan Yew, who was in attendance—the sort of joke that the people of Singapore, whom Lee rules with such authoritarian zeal, are not free to make in public. The speeches are presented as off-the-record—one of the absurdities of Grove life, given that they are open to several thousand people. As the Soviet Sagdeyev said in his speech, "There is no *glasnost* here."

After General Chain's talk, the usual quiet business chatter went on. "Your secretary, I got to tell you, she's 110 percent," a

mians, I overheard a large fellow in cranberry-colored shorts on the phone, bragging to someone back at the office. "I got slightly inebriated—slightly!—*heavily* inebriated with the president of the Portland Opera last night. I said we might have a deal for him. They're going to have Pavarotti there in November. I said when we got back we'd talk about it."

It was in the phone circle that Henry Kissinger alienated some brother Bohemians on the middle weekend. Wandering into the clearing, he announced to the air, "I have to make two phone calls." A man finished his call, and Kissinger, ignoring a half-dozen men in line, took the booth and proceeded to retail to a woman, evidently his wife, the Russian speaker's joke about the KGB's interrogation of a CIA agent. (The CIA agent denies involvement first in a calamitous ship disaster, then in Chernobyl.) "So

what are you responsible for?" the KGB asks him.

AS A HELICOPTER

FROM A NETWORK NEWSMAGAZINE CIRCLED FRANTICALLY FAR ABOVE

"Your agricultural policy.") The woman on the line evidently objected to the joke, for Kissinger said, revealing a dovish streak, "Maybe the KGB *did* write it, but it is not a sign of strength."

Kissinger's crusty performance was not appreciated by the men he'd cut in front of in line. One Bohemian, a patrician fellow with silver hair, wheeled in rage, saying, "I'll be god-damned." Cutting in line is distinctly un-Bohemian behavior.

Everywhere you hear what is Bohemian and what isn't Bohemian. One night I wandered into Fore Peak camp and got a lecture from a man named Hugh about Bohemian values as they concerned Fore Peak's famous drink, a mixture of hot rum and hot chocolate. Many years ago a doctor called it a Nembutal, and the name stuck, so much so that one Fore Peak camper wears a stethoscope and a white lab coat with DR. NEMBUTAL stitched on it. Hugh said that an old college friend came to stay in Bohemia and took over the mixing of the drinks. He persisted in putting in too much rum to see how many guys would pass out.

"Hey, knock it off, this is Bohemia," Hugh had to tell him. He never invited the chum back.

A tenet of Grove life is noncompetitive egalitarianism: all men are equal here. But in fact, class and status differences among camps are pronounced. Just as you have to be sponsored for membership, you have to



be sponsored for a camp. The screens get pretty fine. Nonetheless, the ideal of equality is comforting. Among other things, it permits alcoholic failures to feel equal for a few days with their workaholic cousins. Since everyone is supposed to kick back and forget work, it's the fuckup's annual revenge. At Sundodgers there is a motto on the mantel: THE PRODUCTIVE DRUNK IS THE BANE OF ALL MORALISTS. It tells the productive they can drink, it tells the drunks they're productive.

A HIGH POINT OF THE MIDDLE WEEKEND WAS the performance of The Low Jinks, the Grove's elaborate musical-comedy show. Over the years the Jinks has become the leading entertainment at the encampment, surpassing the mannered and ponderous Grove Play, which is performed the next weekend. The Jinks is vigorously low-brow. It takes place on the Field Circle stage, which is wedged in between two camps, Pink Onion (notable for its pink sheets) and Cave Man (notable for big-deal right-wingers and a plaque commemorating Herbert Hoover).

The Field Circle seats are steeply canted; sitting in one feels like being inside a megaphone. The mood was American and bellicose. For a good half hour the band warmed up the audience, playing the fight songs of many California colleges and the armed services and culminating with "The Star-Spangled Banner." Individual melted into group, but what a group: George Shultz was seated below me, and word in the camp was that a year and \$75,000 or so had been spent for a production that would be seen just once, just by them. I felt like a mem-

THE DARKENED
FOREST, MY
NEIGHBOR
SUGGESTED,
"SHOOT THE
FUCKER DOWN"



That's the way it is: the 40-foot-tall Great Owl of Bohemia lip-synched Walter Cronkite in this year's Cremation of Care.

THE MAN

PEELED OFF THE

MASK TO REVEAL

THAT HE REALLY

WAS KISSINGER,

AND HE SAID

IN HIS FAMILIAR

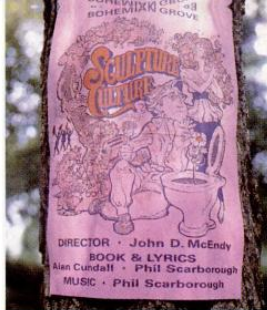
G R A V E L L Y

ACCENT, "I AM

HERE BECAUSE I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN CONVINCED THAT THE LOW JINX IS THE ULTIMATE APHRODISIAC"

ber of the greatest nation ever, the greatest gender ever, the greatest generation ever. At such times—at many such times, among strong leaders, deep in the forest—the Grove takes on a certain Germanic *übermenschlich* feeling.

This year's Jinks was called *Sculpture Culture*, and the humor was not just lame but circa-1950s college follies lame. Rex Greed, an effeminate gallery owner who sells toilets ("a counterpoint of mass and void"), tries to convince artist Jason Jones Jr. that his future lies in sculptures composed of garbage. When a character describes modern art as "the talentless being sold by the unprincipled to the bewildered," the crowd's roar seemed to contain the grief of hundreds of businessmen who have shelled out



Calling Alfred E. Newman: the ultrasophisticated poster for this year's Low Jinks revue, which cost about \$75,000 to produce once

his capital"). One day in the Grove, I tipped a camp valet and he offered some unsolicited information. Hookers came to a certain bar in Monte Rio at ten each night, he said. It was the same bar-lodge-motel where the local police had arrested a man for pandering a few years back. The bust came right after a Lakeside Talk by William Webster, then the FBI director,

and the timing suggested it was his doing. But the charges were dropped, and the man is remembered fondly in the Grove. A Bohemian I overheard on the beach one day said that the man's genius had been in keeping vacationing families in the motel ignorant of the other business going on there. "Now, that's good management," he declared, capturing the robust *laissez-*

for headquarters art they do not understand.

The girls were all played by men, and every time they appeared—their chunky legs and flashed buttocks highly visible through tight support hose—the crowd went wild. After one character called the secretaries in the show "heifers," the audience couldn't resist breaking into "moos" every time they came back onstage. But the biggest crowd pleaser was Bubbles Boobenheim, a showgirl turned patroness who rubbed her prosthetic behind against the elevator doors at stage left. The doors were used repeatedly for wrong-floor gags. For example, at one point a Little League team came out that included Bohemians Bob Lurie and Peter O'Malley, the real-life owners of the San Francisco Giants and the Los Angeles Dodgers, in uniform.

When one character, a PR executive, expressed a desire to make his mistress an honest woman, she objected, reminding him of an old Bohemian saying: "If it floats or flies or fools around, don't buy it, rent it." The scene brought to mind the reputation for prostitution that hangs around the Grove. From time to time law enforcement

has tried unsuccessfully to bring cases against local procurers, and the Bohemian Grove Action Network circulates testimonials by a former paid mistress of a club member ("I only saw him troubled by one thing," she wrote. "He bought [an apple juice concern] for one million dollars and...he was fearful he would have to dip into

faire spirit of the Grove.

The sexism and racism of the Jinks were of a peculiar sort. Black jokes are out because there are a handful of black members—though one day near the Civic Center I did hear a group of old-timers trying to imitate Jesse Jackson. As for Jews, old membership lists suggest that they have taken a very small part in the club for decades. That leaves women and Hispanics as targets for jokes—such as the one about Bubbles's protégé Raoul, who painted Puerto Rican flags on the backs of cockroaches.

The Jinks jokes about women were straight out of an old jokebook. "My father said if you have a choice between an angry woman and a rabid dog, take the dog," Jason Jones Jr. said. "It's already got a fur coat and the license is a lot cheaper." And Rex Greed said, "The only difference between rape and rapture is salesmanship." The sensibility of the Grove recalls an era before the surgeon general's report on smoking, before the death of God and duty, before the advent of cholesterol and Sandra Day O'Connor (whose husband, John, bunks in Pelicans). The mood is reminiscent of high school. There's no end to the pee-pee and penis jokes, suggesting that these men, advanced in so many other ways, were emotionally arrested sometime during adolescence.

The most striking prop in The Low Jinks was a sculpture of a female torso whose breasts and buttocks had both been attached to the front, an improvement that looked vaguely hostile. And all the talk about male fellowship often sounds just like a college freshman's version of NO GUYS ALLOWED, an institutional escape from women, from their demands, aggressions and vapors. At certain times of year women are

The iconography of the Grove



allowed to enter the Grove—but only under “chaperonage,” according to a 1980 statement by the club president. *Chaperonage*—for adult women. It’s another Bohemian wee-wee word, something you haven’t heard since you were 14.

The club’s nemesis here is the state of California, which keeps chipping away at the Grove’s maleness, lately threatening to take away its liquor license and its tax-exempt status because it discriminates against women. The state has established a beachhead at the Grove’s front office, a hundred yards outside the main gate, where, under legal pressure, seven women have been employed. Inside the Grove there is a feeling of mournful inevitability about the day women will join the encampment. Bohemians talk about how much it will muddle things. “It would screw everything up, excuse the pun,” said an old-timer sipping a drink by the river. “There’d be a lot more preening and peacocking than there already is,” a big gay Bohemian told me. Members have cited their privilege to walk about in “various states of undress.” And former California governor Pat Brown has said publicly, many times, that the presence of women would keep Bohemians from enjoying their hallowed freedom to pee.

The peeing is ceaseless and more than a little exhibitionistic. Everyone talks about it. Bohemian reminiscences describe such bizarre initiation rites as escorting new members to the redwood at which one of the founders “did his morning ablutions.” The Owl Hoots, poster-size cartoons tacked up each day near the Camp Fire Circle, are filled with pissing pictures. One featured a spurious design for a commemorative stamp of club member U.S. Postmaster General Anthony Frank relieving himself on a redwood.

“Are you going to show it?” I heard a 50-ish Bohemian, the “captain” of Pow Wow camp, call out one day as young George went to pee off the deck.

“Most of it. At least six inches.”

“Now, don’t be modest, George.”

A screen door creaked on a little house farther up the hill, and a Bohemian named Richard poked his head out, emerging from his siesta.

“Do it counterclockwise, Dickie, that’s best,” the captain called out.

“Oh, I’ve had my hand off it for two minutes now,” Richard protested.

“There’s a lot of wasted time.”

This dick-fussing often manifests itself as that starkest of male nostalgias, the hankering for the punctual erections of boyhood. According to 1979 figures, the average age of Bohemians is 55. Impotence is on many people’s minds. The poster outside Monkey Block advertising this year’s Grove play, *Pompeii*, fea-

tured a gigantic erection under a toga. The set for the play included a wall inscription in Latin meaning “Always hard.” One day I was at the Grove beach when a Bohemian discovered that a friend’s sunscreen was supposed to impede aging.

“You got it too late.”

The owner of the lotion sighed. “Well, I should give up putting it on my face and arms and spray it on my prick—see if that’ll do any good.”

Bohemian discourse is full of oblique organ worship as well. There’s all the redwood talk. Bohemians rhapsodize endlessly about towering shafts and the inspiration they give men. I LOVE

THIS TREE AS THE MOST SOUND, UPRIGHT AND STATELY REDWOOD IN THE GROVE. LET MY FRIENDS REMEMBER ME BY IT WHEN I AM GONE, reads a plaque left by a Bohemian at the base of a 301-footer.

Other references aren’t so subtle. Late in The Low Jinks the elevator doors opened and a man came out wearing a rubber Henry Kissinger mask. He had a dumpy body a lot like Kissinger’s. A “heifer” asked him why he was there. The man peeled off the mask to reveal that he really was Kissinger, and he said in his familiar gravelly accent, “I am here because I have always been convinced that The Low Jinks is the ultimate aphrodisiac.”

THE ENCAMPMENT GOT EVEN LOOSER AS the third and last weekend approached. The fairy unguents were wearing off; after two weeks the place stopped looking so magical and began to seem as ordinary as a tree-house. The nonfamous hard-core Bohemians were more in evidence now, men who wore owls in various forms—owl belt buckles, brass owl bolo ties, denim shirts embroidered with owls. Wooziness was pervasive. At his Lakeside Talk, Malcolm Forbes said

that Khrushchev knows the Soviets “are in over their heads,” and even as the name Gorbachev was murmured throughout the audience, Forbes rambled on, dotty and heedless, 25 years out-of-date.

At Faraway a guy beckoned me into the camp to enjoy “a little orange juice.” It tasted like lighter fluid sprinkled with mint flakes.

“What’s in this?”

“Oh, just a little orange juice,” the host repeated, smiling.

“What do you call this?” I asked another Farawayer.

“I call it dangerous,” he said and told of how a dropped cigar had once ignited a batch.

The men of Faraway had captured the rearranged-woman’s torso sculpture from The Low Jinks and now displayed it against a wall, having wedged a fern leaf in “her” crack. Meanwhile, the tacked-up Owl Hoots drawings dubbed the sculpture the “statue of Piece” and pictured a Bohemian commenting that she would be “fun to dance with.” Several of the Hoots jokes were at the expense of the homeless. One cartoon had a camper at Bromley turning away a filthy guy with a bag of cans.

Anti-Bohemian activist Mary Moore, a woman-identified-woman dedicated to liberating the redwoods from man-identified-men . . .



. . . and some woman-identified-men—the world’s only establishment drag queens



ALL PLAY AND NO WORK

Even Back in the Real World, One Former President Kicks Back and Relaxes

Nicholas Brady missed putting the finishing touches on Mexico's new debt-reduction plan. French prime minister Michel Rocard skipped out on a big post-Bastille-bicentennial mess in Paris. Malcolm Forbes missed out on some of the superexciting buzz about *Egg*, his odd new life-style magazine. Henry Kravis was away while his former partner Jerome Kohlberg prepared to sue him for breach of contract. What did Ronald Reagan miss while he was wandering in the northern California woods with tipsy, overweight guys in lederhosen? SPY obtained a copy of the former president's schedule for one day this year, complete with doodles. His routine, as we suspected, is every bit as hectic and momentous as it was when he put in his standard 11:00-to-3:00 days in the Oval Office.

1 Reagan works in a luxurious top-floor suite in the Century City office tower that was taken over by German terrorists in *Die Hard*. Maintenance man Horatio Ramirez has taken it upon himself to roll out a blue carpet for his building's most famous tenant to walk on as he travels to and from his limousine each day. "He's a big fan of the former president," explains Reagan spokesman Mark Weinberg. "Horatio paid for the carpet, and he cares for it."

2 The former president familiarizes himself with the day's script.

3 Yep, the pen works.

4 Having completed and crossed off each laborious duty in his hectic morning schedule, Reagan turns his attention to lunch.

5 If he's not napping now, you're

not holding a magazine.

6 Given that the Reagans' wedding anniversary is coming up on March 4, it would seem to be a valiant effort to figure out exactly how many years it's been, anyway. Unfortunately, since the marriage took place in 1952, the answer Reagan comes up with is wrong.

7 Ralph Bookman, Reagan's allergist—the man who administers, as the former president puts it, "my sneeze shots"

8 Beverly Hills barber Harry Drucker, who says he has been cutting Reagan's hair exactly the same way for nearly half a century, sees him at least twice a month. He describes the former president's coiffure as "a traditional haircut, a conservative haircut. It isn't," he points out helpfully, "a hippie-type haircut." —Paul Slansky



THE SCHEDULE OF
PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN

Tuesday, February 28, 1989

9:45 am	Depart for Office	Residence
9:55 am	Arrive at Office 1	Fox Plaza
10:00 am (30 min)	Staff Time 2	Office
10:30 am (5 min)	Taping for Robert Schuller's 1,000th Broadcast	Conference Room
11:00 am (10 min)	Phone Call to Bruce Levine	Office
11:10 am (50 min)	Personal Time 3	Office
12:00 m (60 min)	Lunch 4	Office
1:00 pm (1 hr)	Personal Time 5	Office
2:00 pm	Depart for Appointment with Dr. Bookman	Fox Plaza
2:15 pm (5 min)	Appointment with Dr. Bookman 7	Dr. Bookman's Office
2:20 pm	Depart for haircut at Drucker's Barber Shop	Dr. Bookman's Office
2:30 pm (30 min)	Haircut 8	Drucker's Barber Shop
3:00 pm	Depart for Residence	Drucker's Barber Shop
3:10 pm	Arrive Residence	Residence

REVISED
02/27/89
3:30 pm

"This is for the campless, not the homeless," he was saying.

The jokes fit right into the Grove's Ayn Rand R&R mood. "My grandmother always said, 'You can find sympathy in the dictionary,'" a guy with a cigar said, walking on the River Road. I'd made it in that day for breakfast at the Dining Circle, the most lavish meal of the Bohemian day, an experience redolent of moneyed western ease. The rough wooden tables were piled with perfect fruit. As I sat down a great glistening arc of melon was slid before me. Today they were offering Alaskan cod, sautéed lamb kidneys, eggs, French toast, bacon, sausages. The encampment's rules about dealing with waiters reinforce the heartless but egalitarian values of the Grove. Tipping the help is strictly forbidden, but so is reprimanding them. It's easy to imagine that many early Bohemians started out as laborers and had to remind more aristocratic visitors that social mobility was a cherished ideal. In the Grove's Club Med-like plan, the meals are covered in the fee for the encampment, which, judging from schedules I'd seen from two years back, ran about \$850 on top of annual dues.

A waiter in a red jacket dropped an uneaten chunk of the bright red cod into a waste bin, and the Bohemians at my table talked about presidents.

It looked as though Richard Nixon would once again not show. One old-timer said that Nixon was feuding with the board of directors. He was waiting to be asked to give a Lakeside Talk, but the club wasn't going to invite

him until he had shown them the respect of visiting Cave Man for a weekend or so. In my informant's opinion, there was bad blood; Nixon's resignation 15 years ago had offended the club's honor—it had been so un-Bohemian. The feud was unfortunate because Nixon and the club went back a long way. In 1953, when he was vice president, Nixon led a ceremony honoring Herbert Hoover's 40th year as a Bohemian. It took place at the Waldorf-Astoria, in a room piled with redwood bark and branches shipped to Manhattan from the Grove. In 1971, when the press corps forced him to cancel his speech at the Grove, President Nixon had wired the club to say, "Anyone can be president of the United States, but few have any hope of becoming president of the Bohemian Club."

Meanwhile, the Bohemians' new favorite son had arrived in camp the night before. One of the waiters had heard whorehouse piano music coming from Owl's Nest, and he said Ronald Reagan liked that kind of music. Rumor had it that Reagan was going to give the next day's Lakeside Talk. Some said there were Secret Service men guarding the roads and the perimeter. They'd built special platforms in the trees for men with binoculars. I didn't want to disagree. On hikes I'd taken,

my impression had been that the only people patrolling the ten miles of Grove perimeter were a guy at the Guard House on Smith Creek Road who spent a lot of time whittling a walking stick and ancient Bohemians taking the daily 10:00 a.m. open-

The dining circle: drinks and sautéed lamb kidneys all around!





This year's surprise speaker: the former president

backed bus tour. Rim rides, the tours were called. Two of the buses bore vanity license plates commemorating the 1989 presidential inauguration—they had the words KINDER and GENTLER stamped on them.

In the afternoon I walked up Kitchen Hill Road to Owl's Nest. I wanted to visit the former president. Owl's Nest is sort of an old-Hollywood-corporatist camp. Eddie Albert is there, and United Technologies chieftain Harry J. Gray, who this year had brought along Union Carbide boss Robert D. Kennedy. The camp has a false outer door and two overlapping walls that form an S-shaped entry. Inside, a plump Secret Service guy in a Members Only jacket sat near a giant wooden owl. There were owl figures everywhere, notably a silver owl ice bucket on the bar whose head tilted off cleverly.

I walked over to the Secret Service guy and asked if it was okay to meet the president. He said Reagan would love it and motioned with an open hand toward the deck.

Reagan was mixing it up with a bunch of old-timers a few feet away. The first thing I noticed was that he had finally let his hair go gray. Also, he's not as tall as he looked in office. He wore western gear all the way, a gray-blue checked western shirt, a white braided western belt, cowboy boots and, in his left breast pocket, an Owl's Nest pin with an owl on it. The getup stood out because it was so fastidious among men who had let themselves go.

We shook hands firmly (his: small, bony) and chatted. Even one-on-one he has that habit of smiling and cocking his head and raising an eyebrow to encourage you. He projects an automatic, almost druggy congeniality. I worked hard to respond in kind (I invented an infant son named Ronald Wilson Weiss). We talked about his guest days at the Grove, before he became a member in 1975 (two months after he left the California governorship, a week after George Shultz joined). I asked him

whether it was true that it was at the

ground, they'd announced the next day's Lakeside Talk. The mystery was over. COMMENTS BY RONALD WILSON REAGAN, said placards on the wooden signboards. By the time the talk was over, the posters had all been lifted by souvenir-seeking Bohemians.

AS DINNER BEGAN THAT NIGHT, PEOPLE WERE already sitting down on the redwood benches at the main stage for the Grove play (despite the poster, a humorless enactment of the destruction of Pompeii). Everything felt peaceful and sweet, like death, the good things they say about it: the end to striving, the sunlight-dappled heavenliness. Music sounded softly. A bagpiper walked in the woods by himself squeezing out a melancholy song, a brass band played "Sweet Georgia Brown" in Cliffdwellers, and in Band camp a young guitarist and an old pianist experimented with the Isley Brothers' "It's Your Thing."

Nearby, a young member of the cast dressed as a woman pulled apart purplish gossamer robes to pee. The popular redwoods between the Dining and Camp Fire Circles now reeked of urine and wore what looked to be a permanent skirt of wet, blackened soil. For a while I thought the bar of salt bracketed on one tree by the lake was an experimental effort to neutralize uric acids before they hit the roots. It turned out to be only a deer lick.

Down by the lake I saw three men lying on the ground, talking. When they got up to go to dinner, one hugged another around the middle from behind and trudged up the bank with him that way, laughing.

"Honey, I lost my ring and I want to sell the house," the third one said, mocking a homecoming speech.

At dinner I sat across from a young broker who shared his wine with me and complained about his girlfriend. The meal (tournedos of beef) was festive and communal. The long ta-



Bohemians like their women stripped down: note Romany camp's headless, shirtless, legless lady in bronze.

TODAY

AIDS HAS PUT A DAMPER ON THE GROVE'S RIVER ROAD PICKUP SCENE,

Grove in 1967 that he, then the new governor, had assured Nixon that he wouldn't challenge him outright for the Republican nomination in 1968.

Reagan didn't get the question the first time around. He pitched himself forward in his seat with a puzzled look, still trying to be genial. I repeated myself, and he said, "Yes, yes, that's true," in the famous furry voice. Then an old friend came up and snagged his attention.

By the time I got back into the central camp-

bles are lit by gas pipes that spring from the ears of wooden owl silhouettes three feet above the table, a half dozen of these per table. Wine gets passed around (though members must sign for the bottles on a chit). Old friends move among the tables, kissing one another, and a ruddy Bohemian gets up on a bench and, as his friends cheer him on, removes his cap and opens his mouth to sing. Great intimacy is achieved in song.

The physical aspect of Bohemian male bond-

BUT A MAN ON HIS OWN OFTEN GETS INVITED BACK TO CAMPS BY BROTHER BOHEMIANS

ing can't be overlooked. Even 100-year-old Grove annals have a homoerotic quality, with references to "slender, young Bohemians, clad in economical bathing suits." Nudity was more common then. Today AIDS has put a damper on the Grove's River Road pickup scene, which Herb Caen used to write about in his *San Francisco Chronicle* gossip column. Just the same, a man on his own often gets invited back to camps by gay Bohemians. The weirdest approach I experienced came from a tall redhead in western wear, a fourth-generation Californian. He wandered up with a beer in his hand as I sat reading on a bench and, pausing for emphasis, pronounced, "In the beginning the Lord created — cunts."

WHEN RONALD REAGAN CAME TO THE GREEN



"I GOT TO TAKE

A SECOND
TO DO SOME-
THING

NAUGHTY HERE," REAGAN SAID, "SINCE THIS IS AN ALL-STAG ARRANGEMENT"

The Lamp of Fellowship warms Bohemians to new heights of brotherly love.

parasol the next day, the organ player broke into "California, Here I Come." Reagan said that it was good to be back. The Grove had been a major factor in his "homesickness... when you are forced to be away, as I was, for eight years."

The speech was canned and courtly. Though he cursed now and then, he seemed uncomfortable with the word *damn*, which he said almost sotto voce. He did take a crack at toilet humor:

"You know, I got to take a second to do something naughty here, since this is an all-stag arrangement. You know how many times we've been in someone's home and we've wanted to go to the powder room and we've maybe said, 'Excuse me, I've got to powder my nose.' Well, a man did that at a party; and his hostess said, when he came back, she said, 'You must have the longest nose in the world.' He said, 'What are you talking about?' She said, 'Your fly's open.'"

Polite laughter.

The only surprises came when he took questions. He got rousing applause when he called for greater regulation of the media. "You know, the press conferences were adversarial bouts — they were there to trap me in something or other."

Reagan also came out in favor of four-year terms for congressmen. "You know," he said, for he started every comment with that phrase, "I haven't said this publicly before. I would like to

make the two-year congressman's term four years, to reduce the number of elections that we have, because I think that's one of the reasons that only about 53 percent of the people vote. We're just overdoing it. There's a kind of emotional experience with an election year, that between state elections, local elections — and besides, with a two-year term, a congressman gets elected and the next day he starts campaigning for the next election."

I wanted to ask Reagan about efforts to desegregate the club. It's only a matter of time before the club gets sued under either California's civil-rights act or San Francisco's civil-rights ordinance, both of which bar sex discrimination in business establishments. The Bohemians will be hard-pressed to prove that they are a purely private club that falls outside the legal definition of a business, when clearly so many members participate for business-related reasons. Some day the walls will fall, though it's hard to see why any woman would want to join a crowd of old Republicans chewing

cigars and reminiscing about potency.

cigars and reminiscing about potency.

I wrote "How do you feel about government and legal efforts to force the Club to admit women?" on a piece of Grove stationery and went up to the fellow taking questions from my section, by the giant owl. It was a risk, but then it was my last hour of my first and last Grove. My bags were packed — a camera in one pocket, a tape recorder in the other. Also, I'd tried to grab one of the free Bohemian Club walking sticks from the museum, something I could lean against my office wall with the B/C shield turned out to remind myself that this right-wing fantasia had not been just a dream. But there were none left; Bohemians had taken them all hiking.

The moderator studied the page and asked who I was and what camp I was in. We were a few feet from the Lamp of Fellowship, and after looking me over he said he didn't know, this was pushing it. He didn't ask Reagan my question, of course. The rest of the questions were about the world outside the Grove. Then the organist struck up "America the Beautiful" and Reagan left in a red truck, waving.

Later I heard a Bohemian on the River Road saying it had been brave of Reagan to take on all comers. But another Bohemian pointed out it really hadn't been a big risk. *Who was going to offend the president?* After all, this was Bohemia. ☐