12-1999

Bern Porter International: Volume 3 Number 6 (December, 1999)

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Bern Porter predicts

By Al Crichton

You can forget about it for now, but, particularly as these next two years begin, we will be more and more swamped by talk of the end of the second Millennium. Predictions from most major, minor and off-the-edge religions abound. and the word is: either ecodoom and The End or else the Brave New Age and spiritual transformation. In about equal portions, the Internet is aswarm with all this: the countdown, which year is it actually 2000 or 2001, weird prophecy, alien arrivals and departures, the Second Coming, the rising of Atlantis, or Apocalypse. Make your reservations now. The only thing one sees too little of is satire, tomfoolery and rapscallionism.

This past Friday morning Andy Gay and I drove over to Bern Porter’s Institute of Advanced Thinking for a chat. I am expecting it to get rather intense as the next few years go by, and I wanted to know what an old iconoclast like Porter might want to venture to help us weather the upcoming event. Would Porter predict?

Porter is recovering from a recently broken hip and, though he is not quite as lively as he certainly could be, he is not grumbling about it and seems to be healing well. Dressed in colorful knits, surrounded by his Found Art, he was ready to declaim on the state of the world and how it should be changed. Citing his great-great-grandfather, Andrew Porter, as the author of the principles behind the Institute of Advanced Thinking on Salmond Street, Porter launched a few piquant ideas into the ozone surrounding the New Age.

Porter will always be a mixture of puzzling and questionable facts, blatant self-promotion and hellishly rigorous recipes for transformation or awakening, but when the conversation goes around the bend a bit further, he comes solidly as a humanist who sees in the world and the millennium a grand possibility for peace and harmony. He advocates it, however, through decidedly strange routes which seem designed to jolt and ratchet the mind into change rather than lead it down a garden path.

The institute, Porter maintains, is composed of 34 scholars who are working worldwide with agents in Verona, Italy, and Cincinnati, Ohio. The scholars are currently working very hard on a Japanese project in which they are assessing the health benefits of eating but one meal a day, in the morning.

• PORTER

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BERN PORTER PREDICTS (cont. from page 1)

composed of nothing but onions, the only food which grows worldwide containing everything the body needs. Waking at 6 a.m. after a deeply satisfying nine-hour sleep, one starts the day with onions. Try them boiled, fried, baked or flaked for variety.

Another project is going forward, Porter says, to evolve battery powered roller skates for travel around town. In development for women and sure to be a big hit, the institute advocates no undergarments beneath floor-length gowns with institute-designed hoods and shoulder-to-fingertip gloves. For men, the disposable suit or the sprayed-on, dissolvable suit would set the new look.

The somewhat daunting image of a future in which 34 reeking scholars are gliding silently up and down High Street on electric roller skates, every innuendo invisible under their long, hooded gowns and disposable suits, and each with a lunch bucket of creamed or flaked-onions is surely enough to aggravate Millenialists of all stripes and send gentlemen to Verona, Cincinnati or way beyond.

Worldwide, the institute advocates easing the conditions of mankind by open trade, no tariffs and the ending of embargos. America getting out of Bosnia and Korea, minding its own business and relaxing; no more wars. Electric cars.

Porter says that the state of Maine could be much more effectively run by the governor and six others rather than the colossal waste of 127 legislators with their salaries and pensions. Thus, the institute advocates cleaning out the city councils and the House and Senate, and giving them all boxing lessons.

As for “dear old Belfast,” Porter comes closer to earth. Belfast, an “overgrown town,” would be far better run by four selectwomen than the council. He advocates that the town fix the footbridge, that MBNA restore the opera house, that the train rails be taken out of Heritage Park and a bandstand be built, that the “13 religions” in town get together to help the hungry and disadvantaged: that the Salvation Army have a homeless shelter.

He is sad to see Artfellows fold, and when asked how to encourage art in everyone, he advocates that each person keep a daily record of their thoughts and feelings and states that the judging of art chills creativity.

Porter’s Utopia, as James Schevill says in his biography of Bern, “reflects both the horror of an age destroyed by mechanistic science operating without morality and the transcendental idealism that could be if science and art were imaginatively combined.”

Whoever thinks we’ve heard just about enough from Bern Porter probably ought to think again. He threatened his doctor that he’ll be living to 117 years. The doctor, middle-aged, doubts he’ll be around to wait on Porter by then.

Porter chuckles, he will be 87 years old on Valentine’s Day.

The Waldo Independent, Thursday, February 12, 1998

DEC. 1999

UPDATE

Bern Porter will be 89 years old on Valentine’s Day 2000. He continues to live alone at his home, also known as the Institute for advanced Thinking, 50 Salmond Street, Belfast, Maine, on next to no physical sustenance, to the amazement of one and all.

Meanwhile, mechanistic science continues to operate without morality, as transcendental idealists dream on.
endless conversations which will never be heard what does it profit?

what does it profit?

it was a dark and rainy night the sound of the rain doth soothe my soul or so i wish there is no end to it dear i am the voice of one crying out is there no solace all these years and tears like rain the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath when you die you will understand understanding isn't everything this i am told and most days i am content with it but some days some nights when it rains when my body is weary my soul cries out how long? how many more empty words must i write type scrawl scratch carve into my flesh? when you die you will understand i am told my dear one have faith believe in love believe in love i do believe i do i do or do i? do i lie? what will it be faith or understanding? love or understanding i am asked two wings of a bird to soar the heavens

is there more?

the rain like mercy gently falls

the beauty of the flower exists because of the work of leaves and unseen roots

the seed gives new life when cared for and nurtured

so it is with sharing and understanding

To enter the goddess anus is more difficult than passage of a dromedary through the eye of a needle

Many called few are chosen

some baptize by immersion, some dare to cross river

i walk with you to the end of rainbow

Letters from Duke
What's your road, man? -- holyboy road, madman road
rainbow road, guppy road, any road, it's an anywhere
road for anybody anyhow.

Jack Kerouac
ON THE ROAD

Postcard from Stonehenge
by C.A. Conrad

Dear Sheila, meteor showers these nights. T'day we climbed
a 5,500 year old burial tomb out in the woods of Uffington.
Ah, each morning I mix fresh lavender from near the pond with
mashed apples and tahini to spread on our krumpets. It's
delicious energy. The rose is said to have the highest hertz
on the planet. The roses of this early fall weather fill us
-- drunk -- on hertz! Please my dear Sheila, you must know
you are always alight on my hair -- flash dear. Cannot send
you what I feel being with these ancient stones. Blessed be
dear, ALL LOVE

C.A. Conrad

SUNRISE OVER STONEHENGE  SLALISBURY PLAIN, WILTSHIRE
THIS FAMOUS PREHISTORIC, MEGALITHIC MONUMENT IS SITUATED ABOUT
10 MILES NORTH OF SALISBURY. ITS ORIGIN AND PURPOSE
ARE STILL-UNKNOWN, THOUGH IT IS THOUGHT TO
HAVE BEEN USED FOR SUN-WORSHIP. still well known to many

of us who have promised to remember -- by heart

............

This dream may yet descend, but... the best we can do is present
the one side as scenario -- what might have happened -- and the
other as event -- what we think did happen. On of the charms
of dream is the annihilation of the borderline between those
two, though casting a veil of obscurity anf futility over
the things we imagined to have been there and elevating those
worlds we feared unattained to a greater glory than might else
have been reserved for them. Timing, I've said? Ah, but
when the light has changed the painter's vision in the space
between 4:00 and 4:20, on another scene, a light with that
subtle brilliance of 4:00 shines on, and all these scenes
are mine.

One need not see merely the things he has been brought up to
see, the pictures placed in front of him.

A.R. LaBrunie

"I can feel him in th wind,"
said Mary of her Master.
"I can feel him," she said.
and she knew.

S.R. Yostin
here we stand at the shining dawn of the year 2000. i am sure you all, like myself, are amazed that we standing here to welcome it in, insted of lying vaporized under 20 miles of atomic ash and nuclear fallout. i must admit, i am not only amazed but also grateful to the omniscient powers of the universe that have allowed to come this far. we as a species appear to have surprisingly good karma. Not only have survived 50 years of mutually assured destruction, two world wars and one cold war, aliens at Roswell, vietnam, kent state, richard nixon, Monica's blow job, meltdowns at three mile island and chernobyl, the apparent death of elvis, the assassination of john lennon, star wars I, II, III, and IV as well as the Great Maine Ice Storm of '98, BUT we also appear to have gotten through Y2K without any major glitches. The millennium ball decended from times square in good order and terrorists did NOT blow up broadway.

i however, have not been nearly so fortunate. Here in Belfast i am experiencing my own personal Y2K. In the past two days the following machinery has broken down and/or terminally malfunctioned:

(1.) my car stereo
(2.) my computer
(3.) my bifocals
(4.) my immune system, as i struggle, choke and snort under the effects of some cold, flu, or virus

so, i have had to resort to my ten dollar second hand manual typewriter to produce this issue, but now even that is failing me. i want you all to know, i am sweating bullets here. i have typed the last one and a half pages in the following manner:

with my left hand. meanwhile, with my right index finger i am holding a littlegizmo, while pausing after evry word to manually advance the ribbon, with my right middle finger.

and now, even THAT has stopped working.

What am i, a masochist? some of you may be wondering. some of you may think. Some of you even know so.

so, with that, allow me to conclude, that the final casualty is:

(5.) my will to continue. this December 1999 issue marks the final final ("final final". yes. "In the final final..." are words bern uses to refer to his own inevitable yet seemingly distant death.) the final issue of bern porter international.

(continued next page)
In the new millennium I will be retiring to the woods to live a simple 19th Century life in a cabin by Toddy Pond at "Mandala Farm" in East Orland, Maine. No Phone, no pool, no pets. No running water. Wood stove for heat. No computer, no fax, no email, no cell phone, pager or world wide web. No mail delivery. Up a 3 1/2 mile dirt road accessible only by 4-wheel drive. Then park and walk down 500 yard winding path through rocks and woods accessible only by foot. Not accessible at all in snowstorms. I'm telling you, this is the life.

I would like to personally thank all of you for your support. For those of you who actually paid money for subscriptions (there may be 3 or 4 of you) if you would like a refund, please send s.a.s.e. to

Sheila Holtz
P.O. Box 44
East Orland, ME 04431

I will get your mail, eventually, and return your money, eventually.

It has been my great honor and privilege to offer my service in support of the art, literature and life's work of the great Bern Porter. He is, was, one of the great, and misunderstood - perhaps under appreciated - geniuses of the 20th century. Having lived through most of it, he has seen alot, both heartache and joy. But now his century is ending, and so is mine. When I leave here next week (assuming this cold/flu doesn't kill me and they have to carry me out feet first) I don't know if I will ever see him again. While Mandala Farm is only 27 miles from Belfast, I am not planning on coming out of the woods for a very long time. (Perhaps not until they carry me out, feet first.) Or pry me out with a crowbar.

Special thanks to one and all: My dear friend Maureen Neville; Special thanks to Bern's (and my) publisher, Roger Jackson, who has offered valuable helpful suggestions. Also to scholars Amy Flaxman and Nguyen Ducmanh for their faithful support. Also to Dan Russell, who always kicks in two bucks for postage. Also Mary Weaver, scholar in drama, for use of her Belfast office. And C.A. Conrat, a brilliant poet and great genius of the 21st century. The future is all yours.

Sheila Holtz ...........
Natasha Bernstei...n
M. Ho. Monroe.......
S.K. Yostin ........... one and the same

BELIEVE IN LOVE,

Sheila Holtz
Editorius Defunctus

11/3011
Retraction of Discontinuation of Publication
from the Editor, January 7, 2000

Shula Holg

As the viruses slowly retreat from my braincells, the light of reason slowly returns. I conceive that Bern Porter International may yet continue, in another form, under another name, one more appropriate to the far-reaching implications of the dawning of the new Millenium: BERN PORTER COSMOGRAPHICAL.

This publication could be, conceivably, produced by hand in my fire-lit room in the deep woods, and mailed out to co-conspirators in the real world for reproduction and distribution. This publication would largely consist of my own literary and philosophical distibutes, as well as reflections on my five-year personal association, (and 15-year mail association) with Bern Porter. Communications by international snail mail from Scholars, friends, associates, or the merely curious could also be welcomed and included.

This publication may be 8 pages, 4 pages, 2 pages, on a single sheet. It may come out monthly, bimonthly, bi-weekly or even weekly, or more likely, at irregular intervals. It may be of interest to no one, or to many. There is really no way to know.

It may have a coherent theme, a leitmotif; or it may merely be the unbridled ravings of madmen. It may reflect the dawn of the new universal Millenial consciousness, or it may reflect nothing of the kind. In the words of the immortal Bern Porter:

"We'll see, dear. We'll see."