

MADemoiselle

October 1993 \$2.00

working class

how to get started
get dressed
get ahead

work out
where you
need it

exercises for
every body part

makeup that
matters

4 new faces for fall

love at
first byte

a man, a woman
& a machine

shoplifting—
the thrill
of the steal



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NOT GEEKS

digital designer



Jaime Levy, 27, is the designer of the Macintosh disk that is included in Billy Idol's latest CD, *Cyberpunk*.

"I was selling my digital fanzine, *Electronic Hollywood*, at bookstores in Hollywood," recalls Levy. "Billy Idol walked in, paid his six dollars and—my guess is—had his assistant play it for him on his Mac. He said, 'Oy've got to have one with my album.' His management contacted me the next day."

Slip the latest issue of her fanzine, the *Riot '92* disk, into your computer, and you can click on-screen buttons to navigate the audio-visual flow. There are essays by angry young Los Angelenos and acid-colored animation, set to musical samples of political rappers Disposable

Heroes of Hipocrisy.

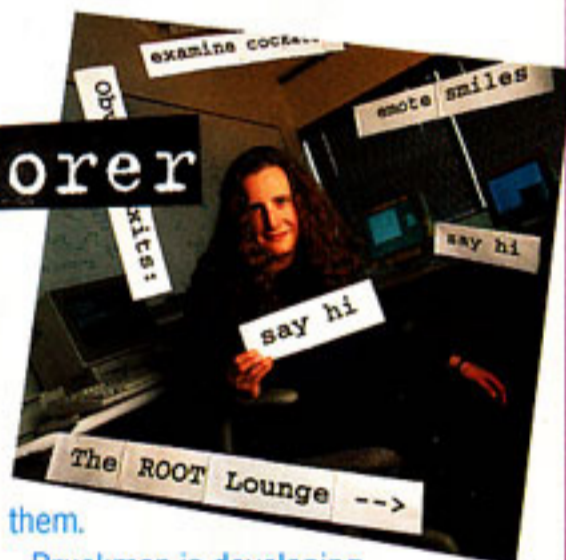
But *Electronic Hollywood* is just one of Levy's many projects: She is also working on an interactive CD project for MTV, and she says she's been approached by Propaganda Films, the producers of *Truth or Dare*, the Madonna movie. A fan of Madonna, Levy may be just the person to transform the Material Girl into the Digital Girl.

Levy—surprisingly—used to be "afraid of all that digital-code stuff." Then she discovered the Macintosh computer, with its point-and-click graphics and pull-down menus. Now she's spreading the word: "It used to be that there were hardly any women using computers. Why not have a female be a software designer or programmer? All these Silicon Valley companies are full of men. Is it because men are smarter? I think not."

electronic explorer

Who would've thought that a computer version of *Dungeons & Dragons* could be used to educate children? Amy Bruckman, that's who. A 27-year-old researcher at MIT Media Lab in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Bruckman works with Multi-User Dungeons, or MUDs. Explains Bruckman: "Originally, they were a kind of multiplayer adventure game. That's where the acronym comes from."

MUDs are "worlds" described in text on-screen that you access with your modem. You read what's happened so far in a story and type in what you'd like to do in the situation. There are MUDs of both real-life and fantastic places, from Venice Beach to Venus. MUDs are limited only by the imagination of their inhabitants, who create the geography and characters, and write in new objects and decide what happens if other people use



them.

Bruckman is developing a MUD for fifth- and sixth-graders called *Moose Crossing*. "When you start, you're at a crossroads, under a tree," she says. "Hanging from the tree is a horn, and if you blow it, a moose comes to answer questions and lead you places."

MUD programming amounts to describing objects in simple language. Says Bruckman: "Kids in MUDs are reading, writing and learning how to program. They'll say, 'I want to build a virtual dog that wags its tail when I pet it.' Then they figure out how to do that. And they're doing it because they want to do it. It's fun."

CYBERLOVE

Romance, the electronic bulletin board way

by MARISA BOWE



certainly didn't jack onto ECHO in order to flirt. I had a boyfriend. I wasn't looking for action of that kind. All I wanted to do was talk. Meet people. Mostly, I just wanted to swim in the shimmering pixels. I saw ECHO as a neighborhood bar where I could hang out without coming home reeking of cigarettes.

For my online persona, I chose "Miss Outer Boro," since I live in Brooklyn, New York. Within minutes of introducing myself, I received declarations of love. Losers, I thought smugly. I'll hang out for a few weeks, check out the scene and skip back to my world. Because, unlike these guys, I have a real life.

But then I began an e-mail flirtation with "Raoul." It started out innocently, with witty put-downs whizzing back and forth. I started liking him. Weeks later, I began thinking about him all the time, even when I wasn't online.

I didn't know how he felt about me until one morning, after a late-night digital heart-to-heart, I woke up, logged on and read "Miss Outer Boro...I NEED YOU...Raoul." My bosom heaved like those ladies' in historical romances.

I felt guilty because it was my boyfriend's computer that was the instrument of Raoul's and my illicit passion. But our relationship had begun to go stale, and anyway, what was I really doing wrong? I had never talked to Raoul on the phone, let alone met him.

Nevertheless, it was affecting my relationship. At the sound of my boyfriend's voice, I hastened to cover the screen and hide my guilt. I knew my obsession was unhealthy. But when it comes to social life, what is healthy? Singles bars? Affairs at work? Mosh pits? Besides, I hadn't gotten this much attention since my late teens, when I'd spend hours getting dressed and made up to go out to rock clubs at night. And Raoul had never even seen me!

I decided it was time for that to change. Raoul and I would meet. I knew it was crazy to get so excited, but as I walked to our meeting place, I felt fear, desire, writhing self-consciousness. And then there he was. Smiling at me. Raoul.

My heart fell. It wasn't that he was ugly. He wasn't weird, either. But his eyes reflected no mysterious depths. His clothes revealed no extraordinary style. I was polite, but Raoul just wasn't my type. Why hadn't I been able to sense this over the computer?

As I later found out, cyberspace relationships are like that. In some ways, you learn more about a person than you would in a face-to-face encounter. In other ways, less.

That doesn't mean all cybercourtships are doomed. On the contrary, since Raoul, and after breaking up with my boyfriend, I've had three real-life love affairs with ECHO guys (on my own computer). The most recent lasted over a year. So I don't spend my days chasing cyberspace knights anymore. Mostly I just talk. Which is what I originally intended.

