

# 2 Titles & A Lie

By Candace Jackson

We at NYRM have a soft spot for strange titles. Kinda like those crazy stories you pull out of your pocket for party games like “Two Truths and a Lie,” magazine names — and their subject matter — are sometimes just too weird to be believed. Play our version and see if you can guess which of each set of three bizarre titles and descriptions is invented and which two you could actually find on a newsstand.

1

**A) Lubes-n-Greases**

A monthly magazine for the lubricant industry, with stories covering everything from automotive and industrial lubricants to lube additives and packaging.

**B) Dock and Deck**

Published since 1971, this magazine is a quarterly manual for general contractors and architects, with features on building materials and innovative design.

**C) Nuts and Volts**

Describes itself as “the leading magazine for those interested in electronics,” including those with a penchant for amateur robotics, circuit design, and lasers.

2

**A) Lowrider Euro**

Provides “tips and techniques” for lowrider enthusiasts working with European cars. Also covers lowrider culture and happenings.

**B) Shotgun Reader**

A monthly read for the shotgun sportsman that features techniques, history, and current events.

**C) Sex and Guts**

An art magazine that “aims to cover a wide variety of art, both mainstream and underground.”

3

**A) Turkey and Turkey Hunting**

A magazine “emphasizing success and the enjoyment of the sport of turkey hunting,” offering everything from hunting tips to turkey behavior.

**B) Sheep Connection**

“Dedicated to promoting the sheep industry,” *Sheep Connection* provides information to sheep producers quarterly.

**C) Pork**

A monthly magazine for professional pork producers, “covering the industry in an innovative and informative” manner.

4

**A) Parrot Talk**

“The top magazine in North America for parrot owners and enthusiasts.” Includes tips on parrot care, the latest in parrot news, and poetry.

**B) Crappie World**

Each issue of this quarterly magazine features the latest in crappie fishing, including where to get the best gear, tips from professionals, and news.

**C) Modern Ferret**

Describes itself as a “ferret lifestyle magazine.” Often features real-life stories from ferret owners, as well as tips on care and ferret humor.

5

**A) Homes of Color**

Calls itself “the magazine of African-American living and style.”

**B) Backwoods Home**

A magazine about guns and self-reliant living, for those living in remote parts of the country.

**C) My Boat My Home**

An American publication with an international readership that claims to be the premiere magazine for people who live on houseboats.

# OMNI PRESENT

By Channing Joseph

**A** LONG, long time ago (just under 10 years), in a not-so-distant land (right here in New York), *OMNI* magazine began its slow death, crushing the dreams of teenage sci-fi geeks across the world. The 18-year-old magazine of science fact, science fiction, and innovative, high-quality art owned by *Penthouse* publisher Bob Guccione halted publication and became one of the first mass-market consumer mags to go totally online. From there, it was a slippery slide down the hill of misfortune, and the magazine was put out of its cybermisery for good in 1998.

Why, with all the science magazines out there now, do we still miss *OMNI*? Let’s rewind.

Originally called *Nova* (until the PBS program issued a cease-and-desist order), *OMNI* hit newsstands in 1978, publishing articles on the latest developments in science and technology alongside fantastic stories by Isaac Asimov and Stephen King — and taking them equally seriously.

Some former staffers describe having a “love-hate relationship” with the magazine. Love for its colorful design, its inspiring vision of the future, and its good salaries. Hate for its publisher, his eight-hour staff meetings, his “lumpy” Sicilian bodyguards, and his tendency to fire people on a whim.

“*OMNI* was a huge wake-up call to the fact that science could be sexy,” said Trudy E. Bell, former *OMNI* senior editor. Guccione “made it dashing, he made it colorful, he made it mainstream.”

Ellen Datlow, an *OMNI* fiction editor (now editor of *scifi.com/sci-fiction*), concurred, saying: “[*OMNI*] influenced every American large-format magazine I’ve seen, with its design. It brought William Gibson into the public consciousness. It helped blur the genres because while there I published [sci-fi/fantasy]

names alongside Joyce Carol Oates, William Kotzwick, Jonathan Carroll, T. Coraghessan Boyle, John Updike, William Burroughs, Stephen King, Peter Straub, etc., etc.”

Still, both former staffers agreed that *OMNI* office culture was nothing like the highly advanced future civilization envisioned in the magazine’s pages. “[Guccione] ran *OMNI* like he ran *Penthouse*,” Bell said. “It meant his word was the final word. I stopped getting manicures as a form of protest. I didn’t want to be identified with the *Penthouse* people.”

Datlow expressed similar sentiments: “I miss a print magazine with beautiful art. That’s about it. I don’t miss having to avoid the whims of a ‘king and queen’ [Guccione and his domestic partner, *OMNI* president Kathy Keeton]. I don’t miss the stupid decisions made by the corporate honchos.”

Former readers remember *OMNI* much more fondly. They can still be found reminiscing about the magazine in remote corners of the Web, many buying and selling back issues, others just chatting on message boards about their favorite articles, and all of them more than a little nostalgic for their favorite bygone mag. So, in a similar spirit, here’s a completely unscientific sampling of what three of them have to say.

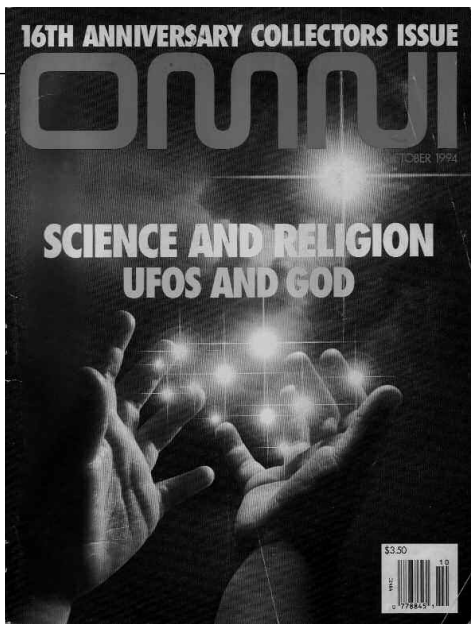
**NYRM:** What did *OMNI* mean to you?

“When I was a teenager, it helped fuel my growing interest in science and learning. Its greatest virtue for me was its cross-fertilization of ideas coming from hard science and speculation, both serious and fantastic. The variety of topics and authors exposed me to world-views and approaches to learning that were absent in school and nonexistent in my schoolmates.”

— David Wilson, 36, computer programmer from Potomac, Maryland, who started reading *OMNI* at 16.

“It was a childhood inspiration of sorts. The stories were great, although I admit some were a bit

Answer key: Fake: 1) B, 2) B, 3) C, 4) A, 5) C



above my full understanding. But I began to understand them more as I matured. The artwork, the articles, and the stories gave me the feeling that nothing is impossible for the future. For our future.”

—Jim Nickerson, an over-40 technical consultant from San Francisco who started reading *OMNI* at the age of 15.

“[*OMNI* was] a mag that published quality science fiction, but not enough of it.”

— Steve Reynolds, 46, IT professional from England who started reading *OMNI* at 19.

**NYRM:** What is your favorite *OMNI* memory?

“One image I recall was a male figure in a space suit with his helmet off, standing next to this sor-

cerer-looking guy writing equations on a blackboard. A very detailed image that seemed to tell a story of perhaps an advanced culture studying and teaching how to travel throughout time and space, changing history and the course of civilizations and worlds. I thought it was the coolest thing! OK, I was 15 years old.”

— Jim Nickerson

“So much great SF [science fiction] in one mag!”

— Steve Reynolds

**NYRM:** What was your reaction when you first found out *OMNI* was dead?

“I think I had seen a few years earlier that it had moved to an Internet-only publication, so I figured the writing was on the wall then.”

— David Wilson

“When *OMNI* magazine died, I think we as the human race had reached [the] level of realizing a lot of the things *OMNI* spoke to, like genetics, cloning, computers, and space technology. I think we need that kind of hope, introspection, and vision for the future. Life does imitate art and literature.”

— Jim Nickerson

“I didn’t know. I stopped read-

ing when the SF content dropped to one story per issue.”

— Steve Reynolds

**NYRM:** Is there is a place for a magazine similar to *OMNI* in today’s magazine world?

“While I think there is a need for a quality publication like *OMNI* that mixes science, literature, and fiction, I don’t think it would be received well today. Most of the consuming public doesn’t want to be challenged or inspired; they want their preconceived notions reinforced.”

— David Wilson

“I have not found a magazine or website as rich or insightful. *OMNI* was a wonderful space for creative writers, artists, and imaginative readers to come together to play and share the world of the future. It can, will happen again. How — I don’t know. ‘Build it and they will come.’”

— Jim Nickerson

# CELEB LIBS

By Marnie Hanel

**I**n the cliché-ridden world of magazine journalism, celebrity profiles are repeat offenders. At worst, they are the informational equivalent of Splenda; the formulaic text only serves to frame the pretty pictures. At best, they have the emotional impact of junk food; you know you shouldn’t love it, but it’s hard to resist. In any case, the classic celebrity profile is an art unto itself. With a playful nod to our childhood favorite, “Mad Libs,” the celebrity profile gets the treatment it deserves.

Heads turn as \_\_\_\_\_ walks into \_\_\_\_\_ wearing \_\_\_\_\_ jeans, a \_\_\_\_\_ tank top, and \_\_\_\_\_ shoes. She is absolutely \_\_\_\_\_, without a drop of makeup. Paging through the menu, she jokes about her night out at \_\_\_\_\_ with young Hollywood’s hottest stars \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_. When the \_\_\_\_\_ waiter comes by, she orders a \_\_\_\_\_ and — to my surprise — a \_\_\_\_\_. From watching her work, such as her starring role in \_\_\_\_\_, you may think that she is a \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, but she is actually a down-to-earth, naturally beautiful girl-next-door. In fact, I think we would be \_\_\_\_\_ friends, if I were as big a celebrity as I think I am. \_\_\_\_\_ is currently working on \_\_\_\_\_ . She lost \_\_\_\_\_ pounds to star in the role by spending \_\_\_\_\_ hours per day for \_\_\_\_\_ months doing Strippercise and Pilates with fitness expert \_\_\_\_\_. It is amazing that she even has time to exercise, between buying designer accessories for her purse-sized puppy, launching her new reality TV show \_\_\_\_\_, designing her own beauty line \_\_\_\_\_, and shooting her cameo on “The OC.” Rumor has it that she is seeing bad boy \_\_\_\_\_, but she’s planning to take her mother, \_\_\_\_\_, to this year’s Oscars. When asked about her hot new romance, \_\_\_\_\_ replied \_\_\_\_\_, “Ladies don’t \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_” before flashing her \_\_\_\_\_ -karat personalized promise ring.