

The Realist

Autumn, 1993
Price: \$2

- Dennis the Menace II Society
- A Post-Communism Amusement Park
- Bill Baird Answers the New York Times

Number 125
Editor: Paul Krassner

The Toyota Comedy Festival by Hank Rosenfeld

Two weeks of Toyota TV commercials heralded the opening of their 1993 Comedy Festival this summer in New York. Every night, there was co-organizer Alan King, doing mother-in-law jokes in front of a pickup truck. Opening day, he was at a free outdoor show in Bryant Park, announcing, "I got comedians coming out of my *tuchus*." He wasn't just kidding—52 comedy events followed in the next ten days.

Rumors were rampant. Did the *Times* refuse to print ticket prices in their Sunday section ad because they were so prohibitive? (Most events at the festival cost \$15–\$35.) Would a Toyota truck somewhere explode, be set on fire by a network, or turn up with a dead body in it? Worse, would Toyota be mentioned by a comic?

Word got around at the comedy clubs, and 274 people answered an open call at the Carnegie Deli. Twelve comics would be selected to perform throughout the festival. A motley line began forming at 6 a.m. and wound around 55th Street and down 7th Avenue, while inside the deli the judges waited, stuffing Reuben sandwiches down their shirts "for later."

The streetspill of hopefuls included a guy from Queens in red-and-blue tights who said he was "Super Hombre," a woman from Connecticut prepping a series of fat jokes she called "That's the Weigh It Is," a young joker selling jokes for five bucks a gag, and a guy offering to *buy* jokes for five bucks a gag. Each would get three minutes. The comedy scene that had been called the rock'n'roll of the '80s was now looking like the soupline of the '90s.

After a few hours, the cameras showed up. Comedy Central wanted everyone to shout their favorite punchline, so a dozen obliged: "To get to the other side!" Others hid. One comic called her therapist every few hours to go over material changes. Another kept trying his best line out: "What's the best way to get to the Carnegie Deli? Practice—cutting pastami." By the time he got inside, one of the judges, Joey Adams, *New York Post* columnist and king of the bad one-liners, had fallen asleep.

The judges decided to do the right "New York is a gorgeous mosaic" thing by selecting a black, a couple of Jews, some women, a juggler from Jersey and an improv group (if you consider that comedy). Bob Greenberg got in line at 6:55 and was seen at 11:20. He won them over with his Stan Laurel as Prissy the maid in *Gone With the Wind* and Oliver Hardy on a sex hotline.



Nancy Redman, seen after nine hours, remained undaunted. "I knew that even if they didn't pick me, I did three minutes for Alan King." She had appeared on *America's Funniest People* with her first-pig-heart-transplant routine and entertained U.S. troops in the Persian Gulf. She served two months on an R&R ship off Bahrain, knocking 'em dead with, "What's a cocker spaniel and a B-52 have in common? Both are very good at carpet-bombing."

An afternoon at the Museum of Television and Radio was titled, "Determining What's Funny." The packed auditorium was treated to a selection of clips including Andy Kaufman swearing a blue streak on *Late Night*. "I'm sorry to use these words on television," he apologized. David Letterman replied, "I think you can use *some* of those words." Another highlight was Tom Schiller's short film of John Belushi at the wintry gravesite of his old *Saturday Night Live* partners, gloating how he'd survived them all because, "I'm a dancer!"

Moderator Robert Krulwich (CBS) began the discussion by saying that Lenny Bruce's humor "had a politic and an edge to it, but today it's all smirks and smugness." Steve O'Donnell (Letterman head writer) explained how for a generation "there was so much biting satire, but now comedians don't come up because they love jokes or a funny line or a weird idea, but they're here 'cause they want to be on *Full House*."

When it came to determining what's funny, O'Donnell opted out. "Analyzing comedy is like dissecting a frog—something dies in the

process." Krulwich pressed on about Andy Kaufman. "Was he a performer or a deranged person?" O'Donnell replied, "Let's give him credit. I think he was both."

Krulwich wanted to know, "How was comedy created in those days?" Marilyn Suzanne Miller, who wrote for *The Odd Couple* sitcom, said, "It was all gold chains, cigars, and flushing dope down the toilet." She started out "whispering jokes in Garry Marshall's ear. If he liked it, he told the others. If not, he kept smoking." Tom Schiller said that at *Saturday Night Live*, "You went to the office, you smoked your pot, you wrote your sketch."

Finally, one of the audience's many audio-taping note-takers asked, "What makes us laugh?" Schiller plunged into a description of "the dilation of the epiglottis" and then concluded, "Nobody knows. It's a mystery of life."

At another event, Paul Zaloom said that he was not allowed to utter any car names in his act except Toyota, so Barry Crimmins came out and apologized for mentioning Pinto. "Sorry, Toyota, sorry. I don't get a lot of corporate sponsorship."

Crimmins is a no-bullshit beat-up-beard in blue jeans. He cut an album in 1988 with fellow satirists Randy Credico and Jimmy Tingle, and now performs mostly at political benefits. His take on Adolph Coors: "Don't drink Coors. Drink Beck's and send the money directly to Germany." He said that, contrary to lefty beliefs, there actually is a nickel's worth of difference between the two parties. "If I

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COURT JESTER

A Letter from the Editor

Dear Bill Clinton,

This November will mark the 30th anniversary of the murder of your hero, President John F. Kennedy. Do you believe that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone, or do you think he really served as a decoy for the Mafia end of the CIA spectrum? Are there never any actual political assassins in this country, but merely a conveyor belt offering us an assembly line of one lone nut killer after another?

Recently, former Alabama Governor George Wallace sent a letter asking you to reopen the federal investigation into the attempt to assassinate him during the 1972 campaign, which left him crippled, ending his presidential aspirations, and, combined with the murder of Bobby Kennedy, allowed Richard Nixon to be voted into office without any true competition. Wallace said he doesn't believe that Arthur Bremer, the man who shot him, was acting alone. A White House spokesperson said that you received the letter and that you were "taking it under advisement." What does that mean?

Come on, now, why *not* reopen the investigation of the Wallace shooting? I mean, it was okay to dig up the long-buried corpse of President Zachary Taylor, wasn't it? Maybe in a hundred years, it'll be okay to dig up John Connally and examine that magic bullet still lodged in *his* body. Just what are you afraid of—that if you threaten to rock the conspiracy boat, then maybe the invisible government will send some lone nut *your* way too?

Scent of a Borrowed Idea

David Letterman said on his first CBS show that he woke up one morning and found the head of the NBC peacock in his bed. Below is the last panel of a strip which appeared on the cover of *The Realist* in 1985. Hmmm. Coincidence or plagiarism?



And, in the film *Scent of a Woman*, we learn that the character played by Al Pacino, a retired general, was blinded when he was juggling hand grenades and one exploded. I don't know if screenwriter Bo Goldman ever read my New Age media satire, *Tongue Fu*, about a man with a 15-inch tongue who goes to a summer camp for gurus. It was originally serialized in *Co-Evolution Quarterly* and the *Whole Earth Epilog* in 1974, then published as a book in 1981. On the first page, there was this sentence: "A young man in Army fatigues is juggling several tear-gas grenades and rifles-with-bayonets-extended alternately in the air, accompanied by the band playing a schmaltzy rendition of *Come On, Baby, Light My Fire*."

Also in *Tongue Fu* a representative of the Asshole Liberation Front shows the proper way to defecate by toilet-squatting on closed circuit TV. "Sometimes," he says, "I think my bowels move me more than I

move them . . . but my demonstration should be on all the networks." Back in real life, on a Tampa public access show, *The Morbid Underground*, 23-year-old producer Suzy Smith aired a videotape of punk rock musician G.G. Allin defecating onstage for 25 minutes. The state attorney was "personally disturbed and offended," but his office cannot prosecute because "excretory conduct" is not specifically mentioned in Florida's obscenity law.

Turning Myself into a Commodity

Now that my autobiography, *Confessions of a Raving, Unconfined Nut: Misadventures in the Counter-Culture*, has been published, I'm about to go on tour to promote the book by doing standup satire. Publicity angle: "He writes, he talks." Here's my schedule so far:

October 4, New York, 8 p.m., reading at the Performance Garage.
October 5, New York, WABC, Lynn Samuels, 10 a.m.
October 7, New York, 8 p.m., performance at the Village Gate.
October 7, New York, WBAI, Bob Fass, 11:45 p.m.
October 10, Los Angeles, performance for FAIR (310) 826-2995.
October 13, Los Angeles, 7 p.m., signing at Book Soup.
October 14, Venice, 6 p.m., signing at Small World Books.
October 14, Los Angeles, KPFA, Roy of Hollywood, midnight.
October 15, Los Angeles, performance for NORML (310) 652-8654.

October 16, Santa Monica, 2 p.m., signing at Books on the Edge.
October 16, Santa Monica, performance at Darkroom Cafe (310) 471-3979.

October 17, Los Angeles, KLSX, Michael Benner, 7:30 a.m.
October 18, Chicago, 7:30 p.m., signing at Barbara's Bookstore.
October 23, New York, performance at Learning Alliance (212) 226-7171.

October 24, Minneapolis, performance for MIST (612) 341-3249.
October 25, Minneapolis, 7 p.m., signing at Borders.
October 30, Portland, performance for NJA (503) 281-3664.
November 2, Berkeley, 7 p.m., signing at Cody's Bookstore.
November 3, Berkeley, KPFA, Chris Welch, 8 a.m.
November 4, San Francisco, KQED, Michael Krasny, 10 a.m.
November 5, San Francisco, KITS, Alex Bennett, 8 a.m.
November 5, San Francisco, 8 p.m., performance at Noe Valley Ministries—unconfirmed.

November 6, San Jose, 3 p.m., performance at New Age Renaissance Fair.
November 7, San Francisco, 11 a.m., reading & signing at Bay Area Book Festival.

November 7, Berkeley, 8 p.m., performance at Ashkenaz.
December 5, Los Angeles, 6:30 p.m., performance for the Humanist Association, Union Savings Building, NE corner of La Cienega and Wilshire Blvd.

Subscription Information

We're planning to change *The Realist* from a quarterly to a bimonthly, perhaps starting with the next issue. Rates will remain the same as in the coupon below. Issue #124 features "The Parts Left Out of Paul Krassner's Book" and includes an index of back issues.

The Realist, Dept 125
Box 1230, Venice, CA 90294

Enclosed please find:

- \$2 for a copy of issue #124
 \$6 for a copy of *Tongue Fu*
 \$12 for a six-issue subscription
 \$23 for a twelve-issue subscription

Name _____ Apt _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

The Op-Ed Piece That Wasn't

by Bill Baird

On April 14, the *New York Times* printed an unbalanced story about me containing scurrilous, unsubstantiated accusations—a propaganda practice called McCarthyism—written by staffer Lindsay Gruson. (He is also the husband of TV talk-show host Jane Whitney. Gruson offered me \$1000 from his wife and promised an appearance on her talk show as incentives for the interview. I never received the money and never was invited to appear on the show.)

For 30 years I have fought for individual rights to legal birth control and abortion. I was jailed eight times in five states lecturing for these rights in the '60s, and sentenced to prison for three months as a convicted felon for a speech to 2,000 Boston University students.

My three Supreme Court victories are equally as important as Pulitzer Prizes won by the *Times*: Baird v. Eisenstadt, 1972, legalized the equal rights of unmarried individuals to birth control based on the right of privacy, and was quoted six times in the 1973 abortion decision; and Baird v. Bellotti, 1976 and 1979, established minors' rights to abortion without parental veto. These decisions have benefitted millions of people.

How shocking to read hyped *New York Times* headlines pitched to different markets, followed by altered but similar stories. For example, my statement, "Gloria Steinem conceivably used birth control when she was with Mortimer Zuckerman, but she won't shake the hand of the man who got the law changed," was not published accurately in all editions.

Who benefits from such carefully crafted fraudulent headlines revising a life-long struggle for reproductive freedom? Headlines that proclaim as if factual: "Abortion Rights Zealot Is Enemy Among Allies." "Abortion Rights' Scorned Prophet Hated by Both Sides." "Movement pariah; Both sides of the abortion battle agree; They vilify Bill Baird." "The Devil of Abortion, A Zealot For a Cause, Turned Casualty." And sub-headline, "father of a woman's cause is anathema to allies and enemies alike."

Many of my supporters across the nation have sent letters to the editor protesting this article, yet not one letter has been published. Richard Bowers, renowned attorney and Founder of Zero Population Growth, has attacked this biased article, calling for the "outright firing" of editorial writers who have jeopardized my life. He also called for a retraction by the *Times* for labeling me the Devil.

There has been increasing violence by anti-abortionists, resulting in the cowardly murder of Dr. David Gunn. Doctors and staff are quitting the pro-choice movement out of fear for their safety. I myself was shot at in November, 1992. My tires were slashed. Lindsay Gruson knew that when I recently spoke at Southampton College, police demanded I wear their bullet-proof vest. As a result of this article, I have been swamped with calls from anti-abortion fanatics gleefully

proclaiming that the *New York Times* has finally substantiated their bigoted charges that I am, in fact, the Devil.

The Catholic Church has held masses for my soul, and their newspapers have editorialized that I am the Devil. Apparently, the *Times* recognizes no liability for publishing irresponsible headlines that could incite fanatics to take my life and the lives of my staff. The Bill Baird Institute has already endured fire-bombings, chemical bombings and floodings.

Gruson told me that he had written some positive remarks about me made by pro-choice people. An "Editor's Note" in the April 29th edition admitted "A reference to others who praise his work was deleted in editing." Why were those statements removed? Gruson saw over 40 plaques adorning my wall, from such groups as the National



Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL), the National Organization of Women (NOW), and the American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors and Therapists.

This year alone I have been given four awards: Pennsylvania NARAL's Clara Duval Award; the New Jersey Freedom From Religion Foundation's Man of the Year award; the American Humanist Association's Pioneer of the Year award; and the American Atheists' Pioneer of the Year Award. Gruson had press books, including recent letters of support from feminist leaders such as Karen DeCrow, former president of NOW, Norma McCorvey ("Jane Roe" of *Roe v. Wade*), Karen Bell (mother of 17-year-old Becky Bell, who died of a quack abortion), and sex educator Dr. Sol Gordon.

Instead, the *Times* quoted the "Big Three" celebrity women's movement feminists: Robin Morgan, who in her book, *Going Too Far*, calls me "one of the more male supremacist men around"; Betty Friedan, founder of NOW, who calls me a CIA agent; and Gloria Steinem, who was a Playboy bunny in 1963 when I was fighting for her freedom of reproductive choice. None of these elitist women has worked as I have for three decades with their black and poor sisters.

Most intriguing is Friedan's history of difficulty getting along with Steinem, whom she has similarly called a CIA agent. Friedan has

also called lesbians and radical feminists CIA infiltrators. This name-calling diverts attention away from the very real existence of sexism against men within the feminist movement. Apparently, to some feminists, I am not politically incorrect but rather I am sexually incorrect. What I call "vaginal politics" has no place in a movement for equality.

Also, how could the *Times*, with any amount of journalistic integrity and honesty, state that I am "hated by both sides" when anti-abortion leaders I have debated—John Short, Judie Brown, Mort Downey, Rachel McNair—have publicly stated their respect for me as a formidable opponent? The *Times* even omits its own 25-year-old reports that I instituted the first birth control group on a college campus, Hofstra University in 1966, and that I "drew the loudest cheer" in '67 when I said I was "arranging for an abortion referral service" at a time when every woman I helped meant a potential ten-year jail term.

Yet a news clip from 1973 documents my clash with Robin Morgan concerning her bigoted policy of not allowing men to ask questions at her lectures. One male student whose fees helped pay for her appearance was assaulted by karate-trained females. In the past, no male reporters were allowed to cover NOW meetings. Recently, at Manhattanville College, eight female professors walked out at the beginning of my speech, screaming, "No man should be allowed to speak on abortion!" Others said, "When you can get pregnant, Baird, you can speak." Following their logic, if the inability to conceive is the cause for censorship, then no sterile woman (i.e. Betty Friedan) would be allowed to speak.

Gruson's article paraphrased from Morgan's book, saying my "mission was an effort to get women to sleep with" me, rather than accurately quoting her statement that "Men frequently support these issues in the hope that abortion reform and more easily available birth control will make women 'come across' better and more often."

In fact, Morgan not only urges oppressed women to "kill your fathers," but also sums up her sexist agenda: "It's up to the 'brothers' . . . they'll have to make up their own minds as to whether they will be divested of just cock privilege or—what the hell, why not say it, say it!—divested of cocks. . . ."

For intentionally publishing its mean-spirited, malicious, untrue and biased "news" story, the *Times* owes me a public apology, a retraction and space for an op-ed piece. My rebuttal appears in *The Realist* instead.

The Real Yellow Peril

From *Saucer Smeat*: "If everybody in China jumped up and down at the same time, they would knock our planet out of orbit. This upcoming synchronized jump is clearly suicidal—when the Earth sails away from the sun and into the dark and icy vastness of space, China's 1.3 billion population will freeze to death like the rest of us. 'The Chinese tried the same thing in 1991,' stated one scientist, 'but the plot failed because tens of millions of Europeans and Americans performed a counter jump, which neutralized the jump in China.'"

Opening Soon Near You: Tinseltown!

by Bob Wieder

Having weathered the "colorization" controversy, Turner Home Entertainment has begun selling the rights to its stable of classic films for use as the themes of amusement parks. Already in the planning stage are *Gone With The Wind Country* near Atlanta (including recreations of Tara, Rhett Butler's mansion, and presumably the burning of Atlanta), and a Wizard of Oz park destined for Kansas City.

Alas, this has all the earmarks of a dimly predictable trend. Indeed, one Turner spokesman mentioned *Ben-Hur* as the next likely candidate for fun-filled family amusement, a notion that raises such all-too-plausible images as a harrowing Chariot Race ride, a Galley Slave Workout feature ("Pull those oars! Melt those pounds!"), and some politically correct infotainment attraction involving a leper colony.

Don't be surprised if you eventually see a *Lawrence's Arabia* just outside Las Vegas, or an *Indiana Jones Temple Of Exploitation*—especially since the Indy trilogy was itself little more than one long thrill ride—near Indianapolis.

In fact, don't be surprised if you see amusement parks based on any or all of the following . . .

The Ten Commandments: Test your faith and fortitude on the Series Of Plagues ride; experience the pulse-pounding Flight From Egypt across the parted Red Sea; traverse the grueling 40 Year Of Wilderness maze; evade the "fog of death" in *Passover Peril*; and don't forget to top off your visit with refreshments and socializing at the adults-only Golden Calf Lounge (dancing nightly).

The African Queen: A movie that fairly cries out to be "parked." You've got your Down The Rapids thriller, your Dodge The German Gunboat skill-test, your Trapped In The Reeds labyrinth, your Gauntlet Of Gunfire river challenge, and most hair-raising of all, your Marriage to a Missionary Teetotaler at the end.

Home Alone: Talk about something for the whole family! Kids get to inflict various forms of brutally violent damage on realistic android "grown-ups" via such enchanting attractions as Anvil Drop, Greased Staircase, Roofing Nail Barrage, Blowtorch Haircut, Hot Tar Shower and the like. Parents get to drop the kids off at the park and make a run for it.

RamboWorld: If you thought the lines outside the Rambo movies were long (and vaguely scary), wait till you see those for Police Station Massacre, Manhunt In The Mountains, Vietnam Vendetta, and Afghanistan Adventure. And for the truly non-squeamish, there's the arduous Abysmal Acting endurance test.

Psycho: Picture a recreation of the Bates Motel the size of a Hyatt Regency, every inch thereof designed to scare your pants off. Bet you won't take the vividly executed Shower Scene ride twice!

A Post-Communism Amusement Park

by Dan Dion

As a result of the increasing activity of the United Nations, we now have the first U.N. boredom relief effort. It is EastEuro Disney, an introduction to both natives and foreigners of the culture, history and limitless possibilities that encompass what used to be the Soviet Union and its satellite countries and Communist neighbors.

Administered and created by the East European governments themselves, but financed by the U.N., it represents a landmark in international cultural cooperation. It is a symbolic pulling back of the Iron Curtain, and a big *willkommen, fziwefen, and dobrodosilica* to civilized nations everywhere.

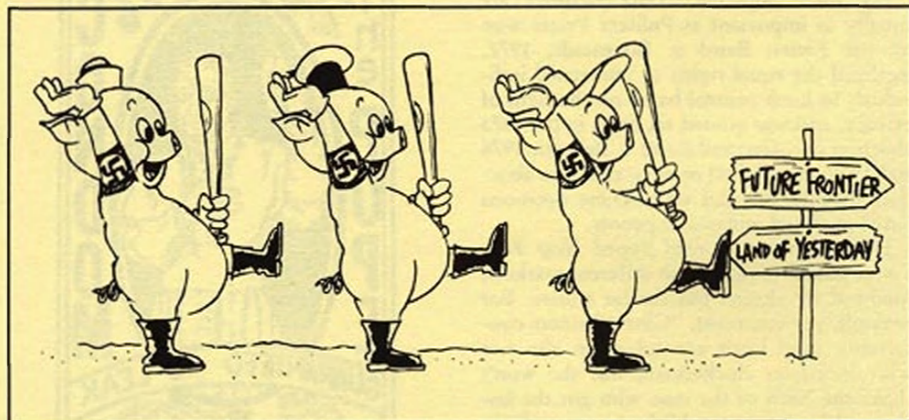
Through globally beloved characters of

Walt Disney, the wonders of Eastern Europe are transformed into a magical land of fun and excitement. Like its western counterparts, the park is divided into theme territories, each one a playground in itself. They feature familiar cartoon faces, but with a decidedly EastEuro feel.

The Land of Yesterday

Run by the East Germans, this area showcases the pre-revolution past. Concessions are airlifted in on the hour. Don't miss the *Ich bin ein Berliner* booth with JFK-shaped pastries. Break the head apart to reveal the tasty jelly inside.

ReichVision Super Cinema—Relive the horrors of the blitzkrieg. Take a slow and agonizing journey in a boxcar to Bergen Belsen. Experience the mesmerizing power of a Nazi rally. Be a part of the final solution.



Animal House: Try to stay dry, and upright, through Beer Bust! Get lucky—or trapped—in the Blind Date tunnel-of-lust! Take wild, felony-filled rides like Road Trip and Parade Gone Mad! Test your wits with Defy The Dean! But be cool. Remember, you can be expelled from the park on any pretext.

Birth of a Nation: Being based on an epic sympathetic to the origins of the KKK, this probably wouldn't get much non-white patronage; but location is everything, and it could become, say, the cash-cow of Moscow (Idaho).

Spartacus: Imagine a Road To Rome roller-coaster, the tracks lined with lifelike crucifixions. Actually, given the success of TV's *American Gladiators*, maybe it's time to bring back the classic Roman approach to popular entertainment for real. It's not all that great a stretch from pro football, boxing, or for that matter, the rodeo. And it's one occupation that youthful gang members wouldn't need costly re-training for, and/or that could be filled by imprisoned lifers without riling the unions.

Six Bonds Over Directed: Rides and attractions patterned after the countless chases, perils, predicaments, traps, and death-defying escapades in the "007" series, with the park divided into sections devoted to the various actors who've played Bond, such as Real Bond Land (Sean Connery), Dumb Bond Land (Roger Moore), Pathetic Bond Land (Woody Allen), and Forgotten Bond Land

(George Lazensby).

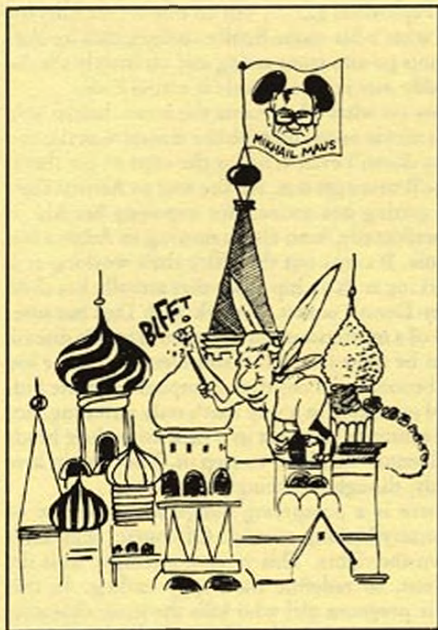
Poseidon Inferno: Assorted thrills and chills derived from Irwin Allen's "disaster" blockbusters, with daredevil features like Tidal Wave, Highrise Firestorm, Copter Crash, Upside-Down Escape, and a chillingly realistic, holographic "meeting" with the fabled producer himself in Abominable Showman.

French Connection/Blues Brothers/Bullett! etc.: Every great car chase you ever saw on film, in a computerized, interactive, virtual-reality environment that puts you behind the wheel!

The Longest Day: For all those cammo-vested armchair soldiers who lament that they "weren't around for the Big One," here's a chance to see all the combat action of World War II without ever being far from a restroom. Experience the adrenaline rush of utter hopelessness in Hit The Beach; test your nerves in the Minefield obstacle course; charge blazing machineguns in Suicide Bunker Assault; soil your clothing on the Behind Enemy Lines parachute drop. Then enjoy some hearty Shit on a Shingle at one of the K-Rations snack bars, and take in the colorful Andrews Sisters Tribute at the USO pavilion.

Around The World In 80 Days: Ballooning, train rides, storm-tossed schooners, a race against time—it's hard to believe this one hasn't already been built.

The Best Little Whorehouse In Texas: The title pretty much speaks for itself.



Pinocchio Regimes—Everybody's favorite puppet story is given a new meaning as Gepetto represents the U.S.S.R. in a post-World War II morality tale.

The Hunted House—This chilling and realistic ride is a maelstrom of past Germanic atrocities: elevators that turn into gas chambers; ghosts flying from burning Dresden. Watch Out! You're at the table with Hitler and Chamberlain in 1938!

The Berlin Wall Sprint—Test your luck against Chip and Dale, the Checkpoint Charlie Chipmunks as they do their best to foil your "escape" into Reality World.

Reality World

Presented by the former U.S.S.R., it is designed to give a taste of what Eastern Europe is like to the unknowing traveler. Though not as glamorous or as exciting as the past or future is made up to be, reality has its modest charms. Administrators claim the U.N. has been neglecting its duties and promises, resulting in unsafe and delayed developments.

Others blame stunted growth on the world recession and point to WestEuro Disney's financial failure. True, there are longer lines here, and college students have overrun the Prague Log Adventure, but help is on the way. A large aid package from the United States is expected soon, despite the eroded condition of its own Los Angeles facility.

The Georgian Jug Band Jamboree—Watch the country bears go from frenzied nationalistic music to a drunken stupor as the homemade vodka shows that independence and freedom can be intoxicating.

The Unstable Nuclear Light Parade—Come nightfall it is time to gather in Red Riding Hood Square and marvel at the beautiful hues of iridescent emanations from reactor floats and disarmament waste.

The Rumanian Shooting Gallery—This has only two targets, but fire away at Nicolae

Ceausescu and his wife, reenacting the glorious execution of a classic dictator.

Sputnik Mountain—Get trapped as the operator, Mikhail Maus, steps down and nobody accepts responsibility for you. A nice leisure ride for parents.

Reunification Follies—With the cold war having thawed, Beauty and the Beast are skating on thin ice in this re-nuptial celebration. But don't expect a happy ending, as Beauty's family is reluctant to pay the bill, and the Beast just wants to get at the buffet.

The Future Frontier

To get there from the Land of Yesterday, just follow the goose-stepping skinhead pigs. The future is not as far from the past as you might think. This is the only theme area with sponsorship, provided by DuPont. It is the park's commercial center, where free enterprise and consumption meet up with exploitation and poor quality.

101 Corporations—In a virtual maze of 7-11s, Burger Kings, Blockbuster video stores, and faux-Levi's vendors, experience the thrill of a market economy. See the cast of *Aladdin* barter for inferior Soviet weapons. Bring your credit cards, but in all fairness, spending limits have been created for Asian visitors.

Pirates of the Mediterranean (under construction)—Watch Macedonian and Grecian forces slaughter each other over a national copyright dispute.



Helpful Hints

Not blessed with WestEuro Disney's free trade policies, ride tickets are not transferable or interchangeable. The resulting devaluation, inflation and general instability of the many different currencies may prove unsettling. Boundaries between lands may change without notice and perhaps amidst violence. As a guest, you should avert your eyes and leave the civil disputes to the locals. Portions of the Balkan Village are periodically closed for ethnic cleansing. Walt Disney always demanded a pure and immaculate park, so the occasional roundup of heathens is a must.



Dennis the Menace II Society

by Beth Lapidés

Warner Bros. and New Line have announced a new joint project to hit the big screen next summer, *Dennis the Menace II Society*. The picture will be co-exec produced by John Hughes and the Hughes Brothers, whose co-venture will be called Hughes x 3. The picture will utilize elements of both *Dennis the Menace* and *Menace II Society* and will serve as sequels to both films simultaneously. In their press release Hughes x 3 stated that "*Dennis the Menace II Society* will fuse elements from both black and white cultures. The demographics will cut across racial and age segments of the movie-going audience. The only problem we foresee is in the story-line, since many of the main characters in *Menace II Society* are dead at the end of the film."

Here is a story note memo obtained from our inside source:

"One scenario involves Mr. Wilson's search for a more meaningful existence. Sure he's pushing 70, but should this mean he must be consigned to being the butt of his pint-sized next-door neighbor's practical jokes for the next twenty years? He signs up for a Big Brother program and becomes overly involved with his young charge, what's-his-name the killer with the dreadlocks from *Menace II Society*. Next thing we know he's disappeared into the hood. Dennis feels cranky at having been abandoned by Mr. Wilson, goes to the hood and discovers that Mr. Wilson has bought the liquor store owned by the slaughtered Koreans and turned it into a halfway house for the neighborhood kids. Dennis wants him to come back to the suburbs, but Mr. Wilson has found his calling, and finally Dennis joins him in his efforts.

"Another plot-line focuses on Mr. Wilson as well. Unseen in *Dennis the Menace* is Mr. Wilson's gambling habit. (Something the grumpy screen character shares with the great screen actor who plays him.) In this story Mr. Wilson gets mixed up with a gambling ring run by what's-his-name with the dreads. Mrs. Wilson and Dennis are taken hostage and Mr. Wilson has to go save them. By realizing that risking his life is so much more exciting than risking his bank account, Mr. Wilson becomes an avid bungee jumper and starts a bungee-jumping scholarship for inner city youths.

"Of course Dennis himself figures very heavily in a few plot possibilities. One strong contender starts out with Dennis finding his birth certificate. It turns out that his dad isn't his dad at all—at least not his birth dad. No, it turns out his mother had a very short but passionate affair with the black teacher character played by what's-his-name, the guy from *Roc*. But both of them realized that they would be a menace to society because they would never fit in anywhere (this was the '50s, don't forget) and become alienated and bitter and ultimately enemies of the public who had made their love impossible. As luck would have it, they met another interracial couple just after Dennis was conceived and they each fell in love with members of their own race. Somehow Dennis turns out pure white so no one ever suspects. Dennis finds his dad, now a schoolteacher, and his half brother, a young man dedicated to Allah, and forges the path of race-blind love that his mother was forced to abandon. It all ends with a wedding at which Mr. Wilson and Grandpa share a doobie out on a suburban lawn.

"One possibility that looms large is a picture that would blend the cartoon reality of *Dennis the Menace* with the gritty reality of *Menace II Society*. This picture will use as source the X factor in the violence-in-media issue: the old cartoons. Certainly they were as violent as anything today, and yet kids weren't out in the street killing each other. Well, there's a possibility that not only did these cartoons not encourage violence, they actually prevented it. Number one, you were home laughing at the old cartoons and so who wanted to go out and drive around and shoot people? Number two, in those cartoons violence wasn't really violence, it was persistence. No matter how many times the coyote tried to get the road runner, he would find a new creative way to escape, get the coyote and go on his way road-running, which was so much fun it made him laugh. So, in this version of *Dennis the Menace II Society*, Dennis, the adorable symbol of oppressive white America, tries to get what's-his-name with the dreads. But what's-his-name is irrepressible and is just as likely to have got to Dennis at the end of each episode. Dennis employs such cartoon-classic methods as building a brick wall in three seconds out of bricks that don't exist and rigging up explosives at the doorway of what's-his-

name's home. There are explosions galore, but no one is ever hurt for more than a frame, and what's-his-name finally realizes that he *does* want to live. He and Dennis go into stunt acting and ultimately are the stars in an interracial buddy movie based on their actual lives.

"One story-line focuses on what's-her-name the acorn-haired love interest and her kid. This movie opens up with the massacre at the end of *Menace II Society*. She doesn't even wait for the cops to get there. She knows if she does she'll never get out. All the way to Atlanta she's berating herself for not getting out sooner, for exposing her kid to such horrors. Well, coincidentally, who else is moving to Atlanta but Mom and Dad and Dennis. It turns out the office she's working at is the office that Dad is working at. It's a hip office that actually has child care. One school holiday Dennis comes to work with Dad because, tragically, Mom has died of a mysterious but not painful movie disease (or maybe AIDS if it can be done tastefully) and Dennis and the kid really hit it off. Dennis becomes the constant companion of the kid, showing him the ropes of menacing in a way that's only irritating, not frightening to society. Eventually they get in a little over their heads and the kid's mom and Dennis' dad have to step in. They fall in love and everyone lives happily, though menacingly, ever after.

"I should mention there is a competing independent version of *Dennis the Menace II Society* kicking around. Of course, they can't use the names, as we own the rights. This version attempts, as is the wont of indie productions, to redefine the happy ending. In this version, the cousin of the pregnant girl who kills the main character goes to jail for the killing. In jail he has a lot of time to think and read, and though he doesn't reform, it turns out he is an incredibly good and prolific writer. One of the ways he channels this is with letters, and one of his pen pals is Dennis, now adolescent and troubled. Dennis has turned out to be a runaway drug dealer with a yen for the pen. He receives his pen pal's letters by having them sent to an office building on Hollywood Boulevard where a sympathetic receptionist (Karen Black is already attached) saves them for him. He wants to get out of the life that's wearing him down, but he only realizes that through his correspondence. The receptionist agrees to help him get a job as a janitor, and a year later, when what's-his-name gets out, he gets a job as a janitor there too."

No one at either New Line or Warner Bros. would return phone calls to confirm the possibility of a sequel, *Dennis the Menace 3 Society*. Rumor has it that Joel Silver is promoting an action-based scenario that would cast Wesley Snipes as the grownup what's-his-dreads and Schwarzenegger as the matured Dennis in an all-out futuristic slugfest. Hume Cronyn is said to be attached as the septuagenarian Mr. Wilson, and ILM is already lined up to create never-before-seen special effects. There's also said to be a behind-the-scenes bidding war to the rights to a virtual reality theme park attraction that would allow visitors to experience virtually first-hand a ride through the hood, with Dennis as guide.

Jokes That Jay Leno Didn't Use

by Lane Sarasohn

- The executives here at NBC *Late Night* are so happy. Know why? That woman who's been stalking David Letterman for the last seven years—she's now stalking Conan O'Brien.
- The leaders at the Economic Summit said they wanted to do something for the 23 million people out of work. So what do they do? They remove the tariffs on beer.
- You know how they've never been able to figure out what killed off the dinosaurs? Well, I saw *Jurassic Park* and I have a theory. Too much red meat—that's what killed the dinosaurs.
- And paleontologists made an important find today—they found a totally intact blood-sucking lawyer trapped in amber.
- The problem with deporting 600 illegal Chinese immigrants is one hour later there's another 600 just off the coast.
- Personally, I'm all for gays in the military. If there were more dykes in the National Guard, maybe we wouldn't be having all this flooding.
- By the way, gays and lesbians don't want to be called gays and lesbians any more. Lesbians prefer to be called Lesbo-Americans and gays prefer to be called Greeks.

Comedy Festival (Continued from Cover)

put a nickel on this table, a Democrat would steal it. A Republican would shoot me for it." When asked who he thought he was, he answered, "I'm whatever threatens you. I'm a Commie with AIDS who bites."

Bill Maher, the most mainstream club comic in the bunch, was next. He hosts *Politically Incorrect* on Comedy Central. This made sense when his comment on William Kennedy Smith—"What is the world coming to when the Kennedys are fucking the common people?"—got hisses from the crowd. This new type of PC heckling didn't deter him. "Aw, come on, JFK always had a smile on his face, one finger on the button, and nine on Marilyn Monroe." He added that "Clinton should've fucked Madonna by now."

Jimmy Tingle from Boston was the most current. Reacting to the recent government refusal to allow Haitian and Chinese immigrants ashore, he said, "If ten thousand Scandinavian women with their tubes tied came in, Let Freedom Ring!" He was also the only one to mention Bosnia. "Imagine if the world's largest oil reserve was found over there." Otherwise, one was left wondering if there is any agenda-edgy humor left on the left. Or perhaps it's just too hard to do satire on a President who is cool enough to read Leon Russell lyrics at a funeral.

Headliner Dick Gregory received the warmest applause for the most lukewarm material. I saw him 20 years ago at Wesleyan University. That night he told the jammed dining hall that we should all trust one another. He said we should be able to leave a book or anything anywhere on campus and have it still be there, so that night I left a book of Rilke poems on the football field's 50-yard line and the next morning it was still there, dewy but intact. I've loved Gregory ever since.

This man who got a million votes for President in '68 is now 61. His beard was grey and trim, and his black suit gave him the look of a hip preacher. In face, he opened by shaking microphone blessings at us like the Pope. He advised us to "think about the contradictions." He blamed AIDS on the government and told us to drink eight 8-ounce glasses of water every day. His theme was "something, somewhere, is wrong," and he came off like an infomercial on religious cable with this bit of inspiration: "We could break this thing tonight!" Oh, well, I still love him. He's a righteous dude.

But Dick Gregory seemed like he was caught in some kind of time warp compared to the *Def Comedy Jam* at the Paramount Theater. It featured rippin' and roarin' angry young gangsta comics. The *Washington Post* hails that late-night HBO hip-hop show as "life-affirming and laugh-affirming at the same time." Well, two hours of the word "motherfucker" may be liberating to some, life-affirming even, but for the nearly 4,000 fans paying \$27.50 a pop, it was beyond laughter.

Deejay Kid Capri started slamming out pumped-up samples from the Tom-Tom Club and Marvin Gaye, thick plumes of blue and

red smoke exploded and poured off the stage, everyone leaped out of their seats, and comedy leaped too as he shouted, "Get out of your muthafuckin' seats and put your muthafuckin' hands in the air!" The sound system failed. "Since this shit is acting like shit, we're gonna move on," he said, introducing the emcee, Joe Torry, who immediately jumped on the equipment glitch.

"If we'd been Bob Hope, this muthafuckin' shit'd be right!" Torry was dressed in Posse black vest and black cowboy hat, and at one point pulled out an authentic-looking gun, firing off a few cartoon rounds in his high-pitched motormouth, aimed at anything he



didn't like. "I hate the muthafuckin' government. I hate anybody'd tell me what to do. Hate 'em, hate 'em! Fuck fuck fuck fuck 'em!" He sounded like a cross between Dennis Hopper in *Apocalypse Now* and Bill Cosby on his "Why Is There Air?" album.

When the sound went bad again, Torry warned, "Hey, we're gonna have a Nat Turner thing here. We got matches. We'll burn it down. Burn it down, burn it down." He explained how *Rescue 911* is a white show and *Cops* is a black show, insulted an old white Paramount usher ("Been working here since Ed Sullivan!"), and then introduced black comedians who discussed poverty, family, sex and politics with the kind of defiant youthfulness the old left had left at the Village Gate. These sons and daughters of Richard Pryor, Eddie Murphy and Pigmeat Markham blew the house apart with smoke and sheer exuberance.

Roy Watkins started with gentle childhood stories, laid out an AIDS public service announcement, and ended with a call for an end to black-on-black crime. But the crowd had come to party, and when he said that parents should "whip their kids' asses," he got more applause than when he announced he'd just had a new baby. Tony Brown commented that

five-and-a-half million children are starving in the U.S. Then he said he was convinced that the way to keep the family together was by "whupping their kids' asses."

Steve Harvey analyzed the term African-American. "I'll take the African, but keep the American. America never did a damn thing for me." He said the main problem in this country is not crime or drugs, it's "You ain't fuckin' your kids up! You can't even kick a kid's ass in public no more," he lamented. Then he went on to explain that "shit" is a white word and "motherfucker" is a black word. "We wrote that. It's harsh to some white people. And it is harsh, if you pronounce all the syllables."

Adele Givens said the "fake bitch" of the '90s has got to go. "Whitney Houston. Like Bush, she got to go." Givens talked painfully about her sister being a crack addict. Then she seemed to strike an even deeper nerve. "The way to a man's heart is through his windshield." This drew the strongest reaction of the night. Torry lashed into her and "this Terri McMillan/Oprah Winfrey bullshit sister shit! Women who talk that Terri McMillan shit never got some real dick in their life," which got an "Amen!" from the men and hyped him into a hip-hop "Dick in Your Life" number.

The misogyny and anti-gay material got stronger when Ricky Harris, who looks like a mini-Ice T in beret and black jacket, came out. His impersonation of reggae artist Shabba Ranks had the man next to me literally falling out of his seat and exploding in glee. There would have been some proverbial rolling in the aisles had there not been people leaping up and down in the aisles.

Harris was prescient when he said that blacks usually kill just one person, while whites "kill all the office." (This, a month before the San Francisco highrise slaying.) Then he launched into a crude yet theatrical cunnilingus routine, growing so heated that after he stretched out over the stage screaming in a woman's voice—"Harder, harder! More, more!"—he ended up blowing her vagina away with his gun, and asking, "Did you come?" Then he pulled his pants down over the crack in his rear, got down on the stage, licking and humping it.

As the mood music faded and the pinspot shrunk him to darkness, the audience howled and screamed. Torry returned and remarked, "The stage smells like ass," which sent the house home delirious, and left me remembering Alan King's opening remarks at the festival: "We're artists. We are an art form." And, of course, "I got comedians coming out of my tuchus."

King continued to do Toyota commercials deep into the summer. The Improvisation comedy club on West 44th Street closed down, but proving that real life is still funnier than standup, a body was found in the back of a pickup. The papers never revealed whether it was a Toyota or not, but the truck did have a sticker on the back: "Sticks and Stones May Break My Bones, But Whips and Chains Excite Me." The Long Island mass murderer behind the wheel was described by neighbors as "a quiet man, a loner, a nice family man." Now that's comedy!

MEDIA FREAK

Lee Harvey Oswald Rides Again

A body tag from the alleged assassin of JFK has been sold at an auction for \$6,600, along with a bloodied lock of Oswald's hair, plus the hat and shoes Jack Ruby wore when he shot Oswald. The body tag had been taken by an ambulance attendant who drove Oswald's body from the hospital to a funeral home.

The gun that Ruby used was auctioned for \$220,000. Bidding for the gun, with the police evidence tag still attached, had started at \$100,000. The original cost in 1963 was \$62.50. The National Historical Mint has been selling, for \$495 each, 5,000 bullets that were recently fired from that same gun.

And a Dallas company is selling "Magic Bullet Earrings" for \$19.95 a pair, made of bullets identical to the ones Oswald supposedly fired at the President.

Circumcision in the News

• A nationwide study is underway to test a procedure that uses the circumcised foreskins of infant boys to help heal adults with chronic open wounds caused by diabetes and other circulatory diseases. A baby's parents must give permission before his foreskin can be used in this experiment. Jim Bigelow, author of *The Joy of Uncircumcising*, objects: "It seems appalling to me that we would allow ourselves to harvest foreskins."

• Chants heard at an anti-circumcision rally in San Francisco: "Two, four, six, eight! Circumcision's not that great! Three, five, seven, nine! To cut or not, the choice is mine!" And: "Zero, two, four, six! Keep your knives off our (pause) genitals! Seven, eight, nine, ten! Foreskin's great—wake up, men!"

• Marilyn Milos, a registered nurse who opposes circumcision as an unnecessary violation of human rights, was fired from Marin General Hospital after showing parents a video of circumcision. Recently the tip of an infant's penis was cut off during a recent circumcision at that hospital. The baby was rushed to the University of California medical center, where the tip of his penis was reattached. And in Miami, a six-month-old baby bled to death following a circumcision that a medical examiner described as "normal."

• Columnist Louanne Cole: "Hygiene is the most commonly offered reason to circumcise. Isn't it an extreme decision to substitute surgery for habitual cleaning with soap and water? Isn't it insulting to the average man's intelligence to think that surgery is preferable because he can't be entrusted with washing his genitals when somehow he manages to brush his teeth, clean his ears and blow his nose? Female genitals are far more complicated to clean and (fortunately) no one in this country is advocating removal of those folds of skin! Another reason offered: the infant penis will be safer. Sadly, the opposite is true. The foreskin is a protective covering of the glans (head) against excrement that collects in diapers. With circumcision, this protection is gone like a camera without its lens cover."

• The World Health Organization has announced a worldwide campaign against the genital mutilation of pre-pubescent girls each year, estimating that more than 80 million females from 30 countries have been subjected to such potentially lethal circumcision, mostly in Muslim states in Africa, as an attempt to suppress sexual appetite.

• The Second Skin company is marketing foreskin restoration cones, including the following sales points: "Proven method of non-surgical interpreputial stretching. Manufactured of flexible polyurethane elastomer. Progressive cone lengths allow you to set your own pace. Unique construction adapts for penile change 24 hours a day. Water, temperature, bacteria and chemical resistant. No need to remove during urination. Naturally 'manly' appearance even under form-fitting clothing. Developed for circumcised men who want to regain a natural uncircumcised feel and appearance." The price is \$50 for a set of three. The cones come in two models—Amber Non-Weighted and Black Weighted.

Computer Censorship

The Well, a computer bulletin board, refused to transmit the following message from Dr. Gene Schoenfeld in May:

"Last night a girlfriend told me of her sexual encounters with Jeffrey Masson. She doesn't read newspapers and is unaware of the present federal trial. She met Masson in 1990-91 while she was working in Berkeley. Masson invited her to his restaurant. He took her into a bathroom, began 'butt-grinding' (her terminology) and ejaculated in his trousers.

"On another occasion, he offered to give her a massage. The massage was interrupted when he ejaculated on her back. He drove up to her place of employment once and offered to drive with her to Good Vibrations, buy some sex toys and try them out in his car. She declined, telling him she had only a half hour lunch break.

"When I told her one of the allegations in Masson's suit was mention of his sexual hijinks, she said, 'That sounds just like him. He would only talk about sex.' She is willing to identify herself and tell her story in an appropriate venue. She is an attractive single working mother of modest means. If anyone has ideas send me E-mail or telephone my office. . . ."

Filler Items

• Lapel button seen in San Francisco: "I am not an attorney."

• George Crook got a Golden Moniker Award from *California Lawyer* magazine, and responded: "I am not a Nixon."

• When David Gergen, a former speech writer for Nixon, praised conservative speech writers William Safire, Ben Wattenberg and Pat Buchanan, Al Gore's press secretary asked, "Are you trying to woo us or alienate us?"

• Shannon Doherty of *Beverly Hills 90210* allows her three dogs to drink only bottled water. And Mia Farrow's dog has its own psychiatrist.

• A midwest high school board has banned Judy Blume's *Forever*, which describes the

first sexual experience of a 17-year-old girl. However, a complaint was lodged at another midwest school for showing the film *Romeo and Juliet*, because it was "teaching children about suicide."

• A cartoon caption: "Our homemade apple pie is as authentic as you'll find anywhere. All fruit is handpicked in Mexico and blended with Southeast Asian spices. Then the final product is assembled here in the States under Japanese supervision." And a quote from Martin Shafer, a producer of *In the Line of Fire*: "We wanted to make the quintessential American movie. So we got a German director, a British editor, an Italian composer, and used Japanese money."

• A spokesperson for the Humane Society described the Santarians' religious practice of animal sacrifices as an "ancient tribal" rite that could be abolished and substituted with "offerings of cigars, fruit, vegetables or money."

• Joke of the month: Arnold Schwarzenegger married Maria Shriver in order to produce a Kennedy who could take a bullet.

• Rumor of the month: Schwarzenegger, as a client of Heidi Fleiss, orchestrated the myth of Michael Jackson as child abuser to switch attention away from Heidegate.

• When a Jackson concert in Tel Aviv, sponsored by Pepsi-Cola, was scheduled for Saturday night—not very *kosher*—a rabbinical court withdrew its certification that Pepsi was produced in compliance with Jewish dietary laws.

• And, speaking of arresting a *madam*, when's the last time you heard of a *pimp* being busted?

• Michelle Pfeiffer at the 17th Annual Women in Film luncheon: "So this is the year of the woman. Well, yes, it's actually been a very good year for women. Demi Moore was sold to Robert Redford for \$1 million, Uma Thurman went for \$40,000 to Robert DeNiro, and just three years ago Richard Gere bought Julia Roberts for, what was it, \$3,000? I'd say that was real progress."

• Rising Moon: A survey shows that Japanese men use an average of 11½ feet of toilet paper daily, whereas women go through almost 40 feet.

• Burglars stole a stash of grayish-white powder thinking it was cocaine, but actually it was the cremated remains of the victim's sister.

• *Cosmic Retribution*, an anthology of painter Joe Coleman's work, features a front-cover quote from Charles Manson: "His art is something else. Praise! Praise! Praise! He's a caveman in a spaceship."

• A new candy, SNOT—an acronym for "super nauseating obnoxious treat"—is dispensed from a plastic nose container. However, another confectioner has halted production of a candy shaped like a squashed animal and called Road Kill.

• *Propaganda Review* has named Rush Limbaugh "Propagandist of the Year." And the readers of *Mad* have selected Limbaugh as the celebrity on whom they would most like to perform an unnecessary root canal.

• Oxymoron of the month: speculative journalism.