

# AIDS and "Tell-Tale Farts"

By NORMAN WILNER

It still works. All those years ago, when a group of Chicago comedians founded the cabaret they called The Second City, it worked, and it worked well. Fifteen years ago, when Toronto got the second Second City, it worked again, this time with a uniquely Canadian slant to its humour.

And it still works. Brutal comedy, vicious satire, and downright hilarious character turns are back again and ready to party in The Second City's latest revenue, "Four Horsemen Of The Apocalypse And A Baby."

The concept-six or seven young comedians acting out hysterical vignettes and improvisations live on stage with almost venomously brutal wit-is simple. The jokes range from lowest-common-denominator to

highbrow humour (a parody of Edgar Allan Poe called "The Tell-Tale Fart" is of the former, and a wonderful piece about casual sex in the age of AIDS, with a women's risk value being referred to as "no-risk" is of the latter), and all work equally well.

Highlights among the individual actors: Mark Wilson, a four-show veteran and one of the most stable comic actors in recent memory, as the exuberant bartender in the aforementioned "no-risk" sketch, realizing that the women he's brought home is absolutely free of any kind of infection (she'd spent the last seven years in a nunnery); Ryan Stiles, doing a devastating impersonation of David Letterman, from the cigar down to the horribly overstated mugging for the camera; and what basically amounts to a star turn by Dana Andersen in an extended

sketch that takes up most of the second act.

A variation on *Going Down The Road* (which was about two Eastern Canadians on a journey to potential fame and fortune in Toronto), follows Andersen and newcomer Tim Sims as they decide to quit the Second City and try their luck in Los Angeles. The characters they meet flash by at a dizzying speed. One terrific running gag concerns their car (a six-inch long red model) and the various ways it's used. The line "You drive; you're too drunk to run around the stage" is one of the funniest in the show.

Simply put, "Four Horsemen Of The Apocalypse And A Baby" is one of the funnier Second City revues of recent years. This is no small feat, considering that an "average" Second city revue is capable of causing convulsions.

# Book Fair to feature alternative small press lit

By RUBERT PUPKIN

Just when you were getting sick of the dross that passes for good reading these days, the Toronto Small Press Book Fair is revving up again. The annual event, which make its strange debut last year, will be kicking off a week of literary activity during this year's National Book Festival.

"We want to prove that there is a market for the strange, the offbeat, the underground, and the interesting," says fair coordinator Kevin Connolly. Fellow organizer Stuart Ross adds, "Last year we dragged people out of the woodwork and gave alternative and small press literature an opportunity to reach an unprecedentedly large audience. And people were excited about it. You'd get people who probably had read nothing but Harold Robbins and the horoscope, and they were snatching up weird little rubber-stamped poem leaflets, and magazines like *The Shit* and *Industrial Sabotage*."

Among the 50 or so small presses and literary magazines displaying at this year's fair will be York's trio of student-run magazines, *Yak*, *Existere* and *Eat Me, Literally*. Connolly points out that the three mags will be spread out throughout the auditorium at St. Paul's Centre to avoid "the exchange of blows that so often occurs when these guys get near each other's throats."

Other presses include Coach House, Charnel House, Nightwood Editions, Gesture Press, Lowlife Publishing, and Surrealist Poets Gardening Assoc. Participating magazines include *Shloodo Shaada*, *Poetry Canada Review*, *Dwarf Puppets On Parade*, and *Rampike*.

The fair will also feature an "(Almost) Instant Anthology," a 40-50 page book edited and published in three days by the event's organizers. Writers are invited to submit a page of poetry or fiction, typed, and their name in the lower right corner and



**Box-Head:** Co-co-ordinator Stuart Ross with his chronic skin condition.

their address penciled in on the back of the single sheet. Editors will look at submissions received up until April 12. York creative writing teacher and Governor-General Award-winning poet bpNichol will be one of the editors, along with poet and publisher Bev Daurio, and the notorious Jones, author of *The Brave Never Write Poetry*. Submissions must be mailed to (Almost) Instant Anthology, Box 789, Stn. F, Toronto M4Y 2N7. Literary hopefuls can check in at the Fair to see if they made it into the book and those accepted will receive a free copy.

The Toronto Small Press Book Fair will also be organizing a Mass Market Paperback Rejection-Fest, sponsored by The Coach House Press. The first 50 people to show up at the Fair with a "schlocky, mass market paperback" will be able to trade it in for a Coach House Press book. The rejected books will be turned to their publisher "with a really nasty rejection slip and REJECTED stamped all over them," says Connolly.

The Fair takes place on April 16, from 10 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. at St. Paul's Centre at Trinity, 427 Bloor St. W. (west of Spadina).

# Discrimination in "hard" design

By JENNIFER PARSONS

If you are sitting on a bus or even just leaning on a wall while reading this, you are in contact with an object of someone's design. Contrary to popular opinion, people in the art of design are not only creating graphics and the latest fashions, but are dictating the shape of anything from stoves and elevators right down to the curve of coffee cup handles.

Linda Lewis, who teaches design at Ryerson, was last week's guest speaker for the Women in Art series lecture; "Women in Design and Communication." Lewis explained to the thirty people who attended that women are unfortunately found mainly in graphic, fashion and interior design and that their absence from "harder" disciplines, such as industrial design and architecture, could be "detrimental to society."

As an example of how not having women in the design process could be problematic, Lewis described a

recent car design which had a single, banked front seat. Lewis explained that if a woman was driving the car, a man in the passenger seat would more than likely have his knees tucked up right under his chin. "It was obviously designed by male drivers," (for male drivers) Lewis said.

"I am not suggesting that design be gender specific," Lewis stated "But having more women bringing knowledge of their own experience to design would greatly improve the industry."

When queried by an audience member about the reason women were not involved in industrial design, Lewis offered from her own experience in school, that there is a definite "lack of encouragement for women to study math and geometry," (both of which are prerequisites for the study of architecture and engineering.)

Lewis, who studied interior design, agreed that upbringing had a

lot to do with how a woman makes a career decision. Of the architects she knew, their fathers had been architects, like their fathers before them. But the expectation that their children follow in their fathers' footsteps was not often placed on the daughters.

A large part of Lewis' discussion focussed on architectural design. As President of the design committee for the new Design Centre which will be constructed in the Toronto's old stock exchange building, Lewis focused on what she sees is a real division between interior designers and architects.

According to Lewis, however, architects look down on interior design, which she said has a reputation as a "band-aid profession." She continued by saying that because 85% of interior designers are women, the division between interior and exterior design is another factor in the exclusion of women from architectural design.

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