

SAY WHAT?

Who cares about the fourth Banana Split? I can't get out of my %!#@ math requirement

First of all, I just want to say that it was not my fault.

My usually reliable research assistant let me down last week and gave me the wrong names of the Banana Splits. I know, I know. I let this research assistant have it with both fists and then fired this person before something else went wrong. I'm really sick of these incompetent people thinking they can get away with second-rate work and then leaving it to me to take the flak. I just won't stand for it. I won't.

For the correction, Bingo and Fleagle were right, but Drooper was a lion in Vuarnets, and the elephant who never said anything was Snorky. Thanks to Alan McGee and Mike "the video veg" for the corrections.

Also, Mike, Racer X was Speed's older brother Rex. I'm tired of all these printer's mistakes showing up in my column.

Editor's note: He hasn't got a research assistant, he never has had a research assistant, and they weren't printer's mistakes. He's just lost too

JOHN BLAND

less filling

many brain cells.

Speaking of early Alzheimer's disease, I made a friendly visit to Steele Building recently to calmly and rationally present my case as to why I should be released from the General College math requirement.

I felt afterwards that I had made positive progress in the negotiations, but I don't think I really needed to be billy-clubbed into submission. I wasn't planning on actually using that grenade.

As all of you know, students are required by the General College to a) take four semesters of a foreign language and one semester of math; b) take three semesters of a foreign language and two semesters of math; or c) take the bus home.

So far, I'm angling for that third option.

See, as Caesar had Brutus, as Napoleon had Waterloo, as Fred Flintstone had Arnold the paperboy, I have math. The stuff just don't make no sense to me. I'm an English major, I'm not going to need this stuff when I'm perusing "Absalom, Absalom" or "Archie" comics.

Unfortunately, my pleas for math leniency have thus far fallen upon deaf ears. Take this exchange from my first encounter with the administration:

"I can't get it! I just don't know how to do math! Calculus? I can't hardly spell calculus! Math 1? I flunked it! Math 2? Ditto! Maths 3 and 4? Ditto ditto! Please, you've got to release me from that requirement! I'll do anything, anything, just please don't throw me in that there briar patch!"

"Well, then," said the little old lady behind the counter at Steele after my third unsuccessful attempt at blowing up the building, "have you tried completing the foreign language requirement?"

I wanted to bust that little old lady's glasses.

When fulfilling the foreign language requirement, don't be stupid and place into French 3 like I did. I still don't know how it happened. All I can remember about the test is that it took place real early in the morning during C-Tops and that I was humming along to the theme from "Mission: Impossible." I'm convinced someone mixed mine up with someone named "Jacques." Either that or there was one hell of a curve on that sucker.

That fall I went to class and tried to figure out just what my teacher was saying, which is kind of like trying to stop a lawnmower with your feet. (Why do French people insist upon talking so fast? Is it a genetic thing? No wonder they're uptight. Nobody knows what the hell they're saying.)

"Monsieur Bland," my French teacher would begin. "Voulez-vous blah blah blah" and then she'd get to talking about as fast as a blender stuck in the "puree" mode and I'd usually give my standard response, the same one that got me through a trip to France in the ninth grade:

"Je ne sais pas."

For all I know, she could've been asking me about the average rainfall in the Congo Basin, in which case my answer would have been right. Then again, she could've been asking me what "two plus two" was, in which case my answer would have been right. And besides, it was in French.

After struggling through a semester and ending up with a grade somewhere lower than a D-minus but higher than an F, I realized that although I had passed, there was no way in hell I was gonna take another French class in my life. It's up to math to get me through (help).

What am I to do, then? Do I take math and flunk, or do I take French and flunk? Will I spend the rest of my natural life wandering around campus, mumbling basic theorems and past-imperfect participles? Am I doomed to a degree-less life because I can't translate "My pencil-box is blue"?

Naaaaah — 'cause I'm gonna be the next Burt Reynolds.

This one's better than 'Return of the Living Dead'

You might remember my little cousin Wilbur, who lives in a cardboard box down on Jackson Street and only has one nostril. He was born that way, but we didn't notice it till he was four years old. Otis Leakey was visiting one day from Paducah, Kentucky, and he said, "Have yall looked at Little Wilbur lately?" And we said, "What?" and he said, "Have yall looked at Little Wilbur lately? You know, you ought to get that boy checked." Otis couldn't put his finger on it, but he knew something was wrong with Wilbur's face. And so we took Wilbur to the doctor and sure enough, he was missing one nostril. We probably never would of known about it if Otis hadn't come to visit that year.

Anyhow, that's beside the point. The point is that we've been trying to get Little Wilbur to get a good paying job for several years now, but Wilbur is what you call your chronically unemployed. It's partly due to discrimination against the partial-nosed population, but I think it's cause of Wilbur's own attitude.

"I don't have to work," he'll tell you. "I have a handicapped sticker." It's true. Wilbur wrote off to the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles and got himself a handicapped sticker. He wears it on his forehead.

"Wilbur, just cause you're handicapped doesn't mean you have to sit around on Jackson Street all day being pitiful. You could at least volunteer for the Special Olympics or something."

JOE BOB BRIGGS

at the drive-in

"I earned this nostril," Wilbur told me, "and I'm gonna use it."

Besides, two years ago we tried to put Little Wilbur in the Special Olympics, but they said he was the only single-nostriled person they'd ever had and they didn't have anybody to compete against him.

"That just shows you," he said, "the prejudice of the full-nosed population at large."

I told Wilbur it would be different if his nostril got shot off in Vietnam or something, but he was a natural one-nostril man and so . . .

"There are plenty of cocaine-head Hollywood producers with nostrils worse than mine!" he interrupted. "They could have put them in the Special Olympics."

"Wilbur, cocaine-head Hollywood producers can't use a table fork, much less a discus."

Wilbur snorted.

"Please don't do that again," I told him. "That's the one thing you can do that grosses me out."

"You see?" Wilbur said. "It's because I have one nostril, isn't it? If anybody else had a cold, as I have at this very moment, you wouldn't say anything, would you? But when it's a handicapped person . . ."

"Wilbur," I said.

"Yes," he sniffled.

"I don't care how many nostrils you have. I don't care whether you're handicapped or not — and, by the way, take that sticker off your forehead, it's annoying — the least you could do is work the check-out line at Kroger's."

"Do you know what people would do in a grocery store check-out line the first time they saw a one-nostriled person?"

"Check out?"

"They would laugh! They would whisper! They would turn away! They would make their children go to another line! They would . . ."

I guess it was about then that I smacked Wilbur right in the . . . well, I guess you know where I smacked him.

He'll be out of the hospital this week.

Maybe the carnival has something.

And speaking of mutated human flesh attempting to be taken seriously, the best drive-in movie of 1989 came out this week — "Mutant on the Bounty," the engrossing (and grossing) story of a horribly mutilated saxophone player who's rescued from a freefall through outer space by a ship full of bored singles-bar rejects. Meet the Hawaiian-shirted Skipper, his stuttering first mate, the transvestite droid Lizardo, and the adorable chain-smoking nymphomaniac doctor who performs open-brain surgery with a pair of scissors. This wacky crew takes in the sax-playing mutant and tries to make him forget his troubles — namely, that his face now looks

like a can of Raviolios, and a couple of intergalactic Seven-Eleven robbers named Rick and Manny are coming to point ray guns at him and giggle a lot. What's the point? The same points as every outer-space movie for the last thirty years — will the universe be destroyed by the virus that only they know about?

There have been several attempts at outer-space comedy before, but this one is the champeen. Kyle T. Heffner, as the deformed but good natured Max the Mutant, gives the best performance of the year by a man who picks dead skin off his face in every scene.

Remember when "Return of the Living Dead" first came out, and we all knew it was gonna be a classic, but it took everybody three years to figure it out?

Four dead bodies. One dead droid. One pus-faced mutant. Open-brain laser surgery. Goopy objects removed from cranial cavity in closeup. One giant outer-space rubber dart gun. Face-frying. Exploding spaceship. Excellent Freddy Krueger ripoff voice. Aardvarking. Mutant aardvarking. Gratuitous Hawaiian shirt. Gratuitous baby blue tuxedo shirt. Toilet Fu. Drive-In Academy Award nominations for John Fleck, as the droid who switches between the personality of a transvestite stripper and a Nixon Administration press secretary; John Durbin, as Manny the goofball sidekick of the standup comedian armed robber, for his love of puff weasels; Deborah Benson, as

the dippy reporter whose idea of cheering up a man who's had his face fried off is a little tic-tac-toe, for saying "Could we just turn out one more light?"; Victoria Catlin, as the nympho chain-smoking surgeon, for saying "Don't die on me now, you son of a beech" in a dimwit French accent; Scott Williamson, as Rick the intergalactic convenience-store robber, for having the world's most obnoxious giggle and saying "Out there, somewhere, is a very very very unlucky saxophone player"; Kyle T. Heffner, as Max the Mutant, for saying "first they mutilate me, then they lose my luggage. I don't think I'm even gonna get credit for my Frequent Flyer miles" and "Even if I didn't look like I was bobbing for French fries, I'd be thrilled to be with you"; and Robert Torrence, the producer, director and co-writer, who's already planning a sequel called "Seven Brides for Seven Mutants."

Four stars. Joe Bob says check it out twice.

Joe Bob Policy

OK, OK, we're running Joe Bob this week. Happy? Good. Here's the deal: We'll try to run Joe Bob every issue, but our primary commitment is to student writers (no, contrary to popular opinion, Joe Bob is not a student here; he lives near Dallas, Texas), so we may boot him off the page once in a while if we have a good guest column. Enjoy!