

# Book 'em — charges of laughter

By Colette Hutchings  
Battalion Staff

Funny books are in this year. The latest crop of paperback coffee table books covers anything from dead cats and people to political jokes.

Maybe the reason for the "funny" trend is that we're in such hard times, we have to have something to console us by making us laugh at the world and ourselves.

Or maybe the best way to fight something you're opposed to is to make fun of it.

But no matter what the reason, funny books are here, they make us laugh and with any luck will be around for a while.

Another plus for the trend is the books make great Christmas gifts for friends, for everybody from the ol' sticks in the mud.

Most of the books are clumped into several categories — cartoons, how-to or how-not-to, and trivia.

Hastings Books and Records in Culpepper Plaza has a wide selection of funny books in both hardback, quality and paperback.

Hastings' book manager Jai Cochran said "quality" is the term for books which are merely over-sized paperbacks. Quality books are the most popular sellers at Hastings, he said.

The most popular funny books selling have just over 100 pages, are easy to read (or for cartoons, easy to look at,) and don't cost much.

Cochran said he's noticed that humorous books have become popular within the last year.

"It really took off," he said. "For each successful humor book there's a book with an opposite reaction."

Cochran said the influx of humor books probably started with the Cat books.

## Cat books

B.Kliban's Cat book was the first to attack the poor felines.

The Kliban cat is the black and white tabby who is fond of wearing read and white high-top sneakers and whose image frequently dons trash cans, sheets and anything else that might sell.

"Cat," Kliban's first book, is published by Workman Publishing and sells for \$3.95.

"The Second Official I Hate Cats Book," by Skip Morrow, is a collection of creative things to do with the little critters. Many of the ideas could save energy costs. It sells for \$2.95.

"101 Uses for a Dead Cat," written by Simon Bond and published by Clarkson N. Potter, is another collection of the same. (A using-cats-for-footstools type book.) It sells for \$2.20.

"Cats Revenge — More Than 101 Uses for Dead People," written by Philip Lief, is just that. Revenge means using humans hands for coathooks as well as other *sabidistic* uses.

Published by Simon & Schuster, the book sells for \$2.95.

The cat books never seem to end.

A whole series is devoted to Garfield, the fat, lazy cat who loves lasagna, created by Jim Davis.

"Garfield At Large," the first of the series, sells for \$4.95. The second, "Garfield Gains Weight," sells for \$5.95 and will hit the funny bone of anyone who has ever faced the grim task of dropping pounds. The latest book, "Garfield Bigger Than Life," sells for \$5.95.

All books are published by

Ballantine Books.

A picture-story cat book, "Cat Tales," told by Richard Wather-wax, is published by Wallaby books. Willoughby is the cat star and his mug pics are indeed funny. This features teaches such lessons as how to teach your cat to talk on a leash. ("You may have to use a little force.") The book sells for \$3.95.

## Preppies

It all started with "The Official Preppie Handbook" edited by Lisa Birnbach. The tongue-in-cheek manual defines the true preppie lifestyle and how to attain it if you weren't born into the ranks. It covers everything from choosing a preppie name to how to conduct yourself in social circles.

Now, however, there seems to be a counter trend.

"101 Uses for a Dead Preppie," written by Kate Reed, offers creative new uses for preppies as bookshelves, umbrella stands, bowling balls, ship mastheads and other energy-efficient recycling ideas.

The book sells for \$2.95 and is published by Ten Speed Press.

The "I-Hate-Preppies Handbook," (a guide for the rest of us) by Ralph Schoenstein, includes photo quizzes (i.e., which car on the following page was not on Long Island last weekend?)

Anti-preps are divided into three categories — freaks, jocks and punk rockers.

Published by Simon and Schuster, the handbook sells for \$3.95.

## Comic-book heroes

Comic characters have become well-known not only

through daily newspaper appearances, but through the book-bound comic strips in which they star.

Doonesbury, a cartoon by Gary B. Trudeau, has been compiled into several books to cater to its many fans.

"Doonesbury's Greatest Hits" and "The People's Doonesbury — Notes From Under Foot," are two quality books selling for \$8.95.

"In Search of Reagan's Brain," a collection of strips Trudeau created during the 1980 presidential campaign, and "He's Never Heard of You, Either," are two smaller books which sell for \$4.95.

Doonesbury books are published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada.

"The New Shoe" is done by Jeff MacNelly. Shoe is a bird-brain journalist (he really is a bird) who lives, writes and deals with the rigors of life in a treetop newsroom.

Published by Avon Books, the volume sells for \$6.95.

Cathy is a not-quite-liberated single girl who tries valiantly to keep up with men, jobs and the times. Cathy Guisewite created the character, based on herself.

Cathy's "What's a Nice Single Girl Doing With A Double Bed?" sells for \$4.95 and is published by Bantam Books. Her torment? A feminist girlfriend, a male chauvinist boyfriend and a mother with a lifetime subscription to *Bride's* magazine.

## Adolescence

Some funny books take you back in time include "Teenage Romance," by Delia Ephron. This one gives solutions to such painful memories as how to hide

a pimple. (Solution: "Hold a strand of hair across face, secure in mouth.") Published by Viking Press, this hard-back book sells for \$9.95.

Another Ephron book takes you even farther back in time. "How to Eat Like a Child (And Other Lessons in Not Being a Grownup)," offers advice that might jog your memory. Maybe John Belushi gets ideas from this author.

For example, when torturing your sister, "Talk to your mother while your sister is listening: "Do you remember Christmas when I was three years old and you gave me that stuffed animal? That was so much fun." Turn to your sister: "You weren't alive."

"Your Adolescent: An Owner's Manual," by Carol Eisen Rinzler seems like a book for moms and dads, but this actually tells how to behave like an adolescent. If this time brings back painful memories, leave this one alone. Published by McClelland & Stewart this hard-backs sells for \$8.95.

## Sex

Sex, always a popular topic, has inspired it's share of laugh-filled books.

"101 Reasons Not to Have Sex Tonight," by I.M. Potent, M.D. includes explicit illustrations of positions not to have sex in. The book is published by Harmony Books and sells for \$2.95.

"The Dieter's Guide to Weight Loss During Sex," by Richard Smith, tells such juicy tidbits as how many calories are burned off while having an affair or gossiping. If your'e doing either of these and are weight conscious, read it and see how much good it's doing you. It sells for \$3.50.

## Texas Trivia

"The Texas Book of Lists," edited by Anne Dingsus and published by the Texas Monthly Press, contains tidbits from "Famous Murdered Texans" to "10 Famous Aggies." This hard-back sells for \$12.95.

"If I Tell You a Hen Dips Snuff..." by Bob Bowman, is a book of West Texas sayings and their translations. If you're wondering how there can be enough Texas sayings to fill a book — wonder no more. This \$10.95 hardback and is published by Lufkin Printing.

"Graffiti of the Southwest Conference," by Marino N. Haan and Richard B. Hammerstrom, is one of a series of graffiti volumes from the major football conferences. Yes, they collected the little ditties from bathroom walls and desktops and are selling them.

Aggie trivia is sprinkled over the pages, even the all-time motto: "Highway Six" runs both ways.

Published by Warner Books, this hardback sells for \$4.50.



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