

POTPOURRI

She lives down under, but she's not Australian

By MARY McWHORTER
Entertainment Writer

It's not easy being cute.

What's worse, it's not easy being cute and short. But I guess being short goes along with being cute. I've never seen a cute, tall person. So I guess my problem is that I'm not tall enough. Or am I too short?

How short am I? I'm 5 feet 1 inch short. Actually, I just missed out on being a dwarf. A dwarf is a full grown person who is under 5 feet tall. At least I'm lucky in that respect. However, if I was a dwarf, I'd probably be Sneezzy. I have a lot of allergies.

Life is full of frustrations for short people. Of course there are the obvious problems. For example, not being able to reach things other people can reach. Another headache is finding clothes that fit right without alterations. By the way, if there are any shoe store managers out there who carry women's shoes size 6 narrow please leave a message for me at The Battalion and I will be right over.

When I was a kid, it always made me sad to be the last one picked when everybody chose sides for a game. I liked sports and put a lot of effort into them, but that didn't make up for the fact that I just couldn't run as fast as the other

kids or hit the ball as far.

And then there is always the annoyance of people mistaking my age. Actually, I'm not sure if that is due to my lack of height or my immature behavior. Anyway, people are always telling me how grateful I will be when I get much older and will want to look much younger. I don't believe them. I will just look like an short, old lady with a lot of wrinkles.

Now we get down to the real crux of the problem. Discrimination. I am talking about the lack of short, female sex objects. Maybe that's my problem. I have a non-sexy self-image due to the media's incessant habit of always portraying sexy women as being tall and sinuous, with long legs and long bodies and long arms and long necks. And if you want to be a model these days you might as well forget it if you aren't at least 5 feet 10 inches tall. And have you watched the Miss America Pageant recently? Secretariat never had legs that long. Not only can't I be sexy, I can't be American either.

And to top all this off, I am tired of looking up to everybody all the time. I will probably need physical therapy for neck strain one of these days.

But now I have a heroine. Her name is Mary Lou Retton. She has given me hope and inspiration for the future of short people.

Never in the history of short people has one

of us become so famous and so loved. (Napoleon was famous, but he surely wasn't loved, at least not by the Russians. Then again, I bet Mary Lou isn't loved by the Russians either. And most certainly not by the Romanians.)

Anyway, I have formulated a plan that will give tax breaks to short people who marry other short people and produce short children. After all, short people use less of our natural resources. They eat less, (unless they're real fat), and wear smaller clothes, and generally take up less space and breathe less air. I also think clothing stores and restaurants should give us a discount.

I am also petitioning my local congressman to declare a national short people day where everyone over 5 foot 3 inches will have to hobble around on their knees so they can know what it's like to be short.

And finally, I am recommending a law whereby any businessman that stocks store shelves over 5 feet 5 inches will automatically receive a prison sentence and have his legs amputated below the knee.

Speaking of things that extend themselves too far, this article is getting a little too long so I guess I'd better cut it short. I'm not ending my struggle for equality, however. Maybe, with a little more publicity, Mary Lou and I can make short chic again. But we have a long (but at least not a tall) way to go. □

Sissy Spacek awed by woman's life; 'Marie' tells story

By BOB THOMAS
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — The period just before a movie opens is a nervous one for Academy Award-winning actress Sissy Spacek. However, with her latest effort, "Marie," about to show, luck is on her side.

"Fortunately, I have a red-headed diversion," she said.

The Oscar winner and her diversion, her 3-year-old baby, Schuyler, arrived in a long, gray limousine at the Westwood Marquis hotel, midway through a publicity whirl for "Marie." Accompanying her was the real Marie Ragghianti, the Tennessee parole board chairwoman whose revelations of corruption helped send a governor to prison.

It's easy to see why Spacek was interested in the saga of Marie Ragghianti. A battered wife with three small children, Ragghianti left her husband and worked her way through Vanderbilt University, then earned a job in the Tennessee state government.

As the first woman to head the Board of Pardons and Paroles,

she discovered payoffs were being made. Gov. Ray Blanton was among those who went to jail.

Spacek was fascinated with the saga of Marie Ragghianti, who was fired and vilified before suing to get her job back. The actress commissioned a script, but had to shelve the project when she became pregnant.

Later Spacek learned that Peter Maas ("Serpico," "King of the Gypsies") had written a book, "Marie: A True Story," and producer Dino De Laurentis owned the rights. John Briley ("Ghandi") had written a script, and Australian Roger Donaldson ("The Bounty") would direct.

"I felt desperately that they needed me," she recalled. Indeed they did, and the deal was struck. Ordinarily a relentless researcher for her roles, Spacek was filming "Violets Are Blue" with director-husband Jack Fisk just before the start of "Marie." Hence, she was unable to meet with Ragghianti.

"But Roger sent me a tape of a conversation with Marie," Spacek said. "I read the manuscript of a book she had written while things were happening to her, and I read Peter Maas' book. So I felt I knew her before we met." □

Group Mr. Mister finally hits charts

By WALTER BERRY
Associated Press

PHOENIX, Ariz. — Though their songwriting talents have earned the respect of their music peers for years, the rock group Mr. Mister is just now seeking some self-recognition — and getting it.

"This band is really starting to happen," says bassist and lead singer Richard Page. "People who don't ordinarily call us are calling up to say, 'Hey, I heard your song on the Top 40. I punch the buttons on the radio and your song is on three different stations.'"

The commotion is over Mr. Mister's second album, "Welcome to the Real World," which is climbing the charts thanks to the hit single, "Broken Wings." A black-and-white video for the song currently is in heavy rotation on MTV. Jazz great Miles Davis has recorded his own version of it.

"We were recording recently in Los Angeles and we heard him rehearsing it in another room," drummer Pat Mastelotto recalls. "Miles was playing the tape back and forth, teaching his band the song. It knocked us out. We couldn't believe it. I mean, Miles Davis!"

"Miles, my idol," says keyboardist-saxophonist Steve George, who's been Page's partner since high school.

Page, now 32, and George, 30, formed the group, Pages, in 1975 and had three albums on three different record labels. They were better known as writers, sessionmen and backup singers for such performers as Al Jarreau, Donna Summer, Dionne Warwick, Quincy Jones, REO Speedwagon, Rick Springfield, Marty Balin and the Village People.

Mr. Mister took shape in 1982 when Page and George auditioned Mastelotto, 30, and Steve Farris, 28, who had toured for three years with Eddie Money.

Mr. Mister's debut album, "I Wear the Face," peaked at No. 55 on Billboard's Hot 100 last year because of the singles, "Talk the Talk" and "I'll Let You Drive," and the hit, "Hunters of the Night," which was co-written with their manager, George Ghiz.

"We've always felt we had something to offer," Page says. "We've been in the studio racket a long time and we've always been on the threshold as a band. Now, all these things seem to be happening — maybe a little later than we had hoped for — but we're happy and we're glad it's happening." □