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AIR FORCE

Junk mail more than wasted paper

MESA, Ariz. (AP) — Wanna buy a cemetery plot, cheap? How about a free spinal exam by a chiropractor? Or 20 percent off on your first dental visit? Maybe a free appraisal of your house would interest you.

These offers and more, covering almost every aspect of life, including death (undertakers) and taxes (accounting firms), are a billion-dollar annual business.

If you have a permanent address, you've received coupons or business reply cards from advertisers as big as American Express and as small as your neighborhood pizzeria, promising to save you money or improve your life.

It's called "direct mail," more commonly known as junk mail.

In 1988, more than 221 billion coupons, up from 215 billion in 1987, were distributed and 3.2 percent, or about 7 billion, were redeemed, according to American Advertising Distributors, Inc., the largest U.S. direct mail franchiser. With more than 100 franchises, the company distributed 650 million coupons last year.

While discounts on name brands and new products are appreciated, AAD says consumers prefer coupons from local merchants.

But what clicks in one area of the country may not do as well in another, and what works one year may wear off the next.

For example, according to AAD research in 450 cities, a year ago pizzerias reported the best results with coupons offering \$1 off a large pizza. More recently, customers preferred "buy one, get one free" offers.

Likewise, last year's coupons offered 99-cent video rentals while this year they're of the "rent one, get one free" variety.

Other businesses find one type of offer works best year after year. For restaurants, it's usually "buy one, get one free;" drycleaners "clean one, clean one free." For car washes it's "\$1 off any car wash" and for dentists it's "\$25 off the first visit for any new patient."

American Advertising says a local merchant typically will contract for a mailing of 10,000 to 15,000 coupons at a cost of \$400 per 10,000.

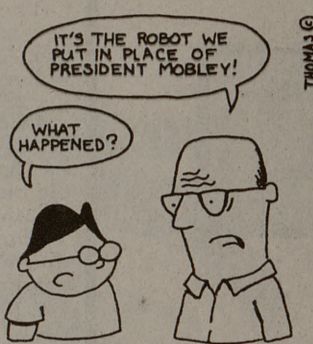
A clothing store offer of \$5 off any \$20 purchase, according to AAD, will generate about 70 customers and from \$2,000 to \$4,000 in sales.

WaRPd



by Scott McCullar

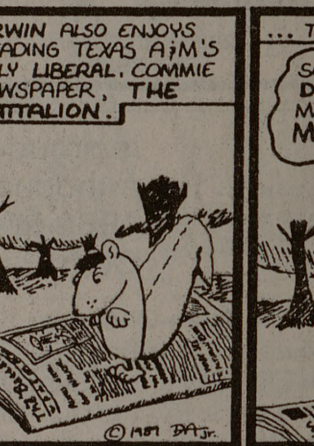
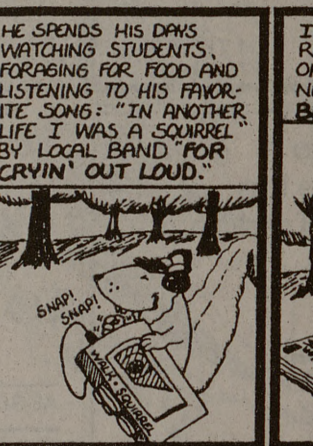
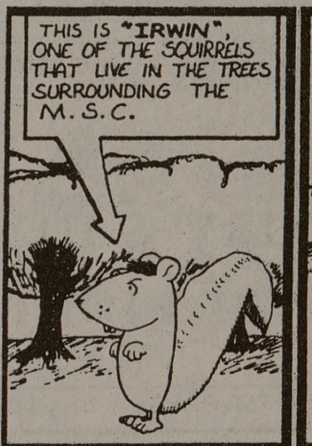
WALDO



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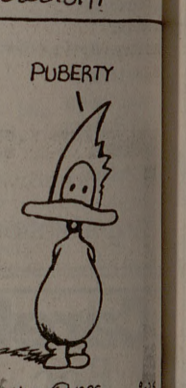
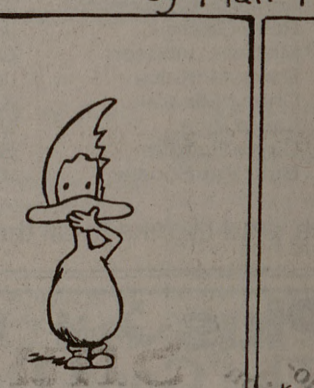
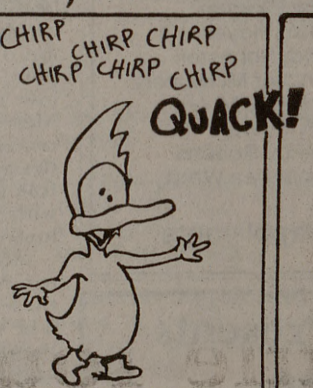
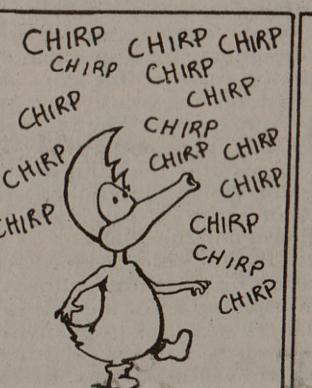
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B-52's still making crazy dance music

NEW YORK (AP) — Before the B-52's became rock stars, they were friends. After 10 years and six albums, they're still close. So close that when guitarist Ricky Wilson died of cancer in 1985, the four surviving members stayed together.

"It seemed like at that moment we weren't going to continue," said vocalist Kate Pierson. "But we kept hanging around together. We helped each other. I just felt we kept wanting to do music. Being friends, we found a lot of strength in each other."

So close they need an outside producer because nobody wants to give orders.

"We all have different strong points, but there's no leader," Pierson said.

"It's been a problem in some ways, but creatively it's good. Everybody is more satisfied, no one's left out. It's very laissez-faire; you can't force creativity. The fact we all collaborate so much is what gives us our unusual sound."

They are rock's most subversive cartoon, spreading their message under bouffant hairdos and giggly vocals. The B-52's combine the inspired silliness of 1960s surf groups with the social consciousness of the folk-protest music that Pierson performed in high school. Imagine The Flintstones warning against deforestation or The Jetsons defending animal rights.

"Our influences are really eclectic," Pierson said. "Stephen Foster,

Brazilian music. We're really influenced by Patti Smith and Captain Beefheart. We've been influenced by movie soundtracks, TV, it's just in the air."

It all started at a Chinese restaurant in Athens, Ga. Five friends — Ricky Wilson, his sister, Cindy, Keith Strickland, Fred Schneider and Pierson. Five straws and one drink: Flaming Volcano.

"We went to our friend Owen's house and started writing," Strickland said. "We had no notion of starting a band. We just wound up at his house because there were instruments and a tape recorder. Owen went upstairs to write a letter, otherwise he would have been in the band, too."

"We started playing at parties and had great response. People wanted us to play more. We would go to parties and dress up and be ridiculous. The slang term for bouffant hairdo was B-52 and that was what we called ourselves. That's the most calculated thing we've ever done."

A self-proclaimed "trashy little band," the B-52's quickly became a favorite of critics and dancers with "Rock Lobster," "Dance the Mess Around" and "Private Idaho."

"We had this perpetual innocence," Pierson said, "like the film 'Born Yesterday.' We still have this enthusiasm, like we just started. I don't feel jaded at all."

For "Cosmic Thing," their new album, the B-52's decided some stripping down was in order after mak-

ing increasing use of studio effects over the years.

"We wanted to approach this as a band," Pierson said, "not as a studio album. The first two albums, we played the stuff ourselves. We didn't overdub anything that we couldn't do live."

When he finds an epitaph he likes, he copies it down, and he's copied a lot. Many of them are included in "Famous Last Words & Tombstone Humor" (Sterling), an interesting and often funny collection not only of epitaphs but of a diverse selection of the last earthly words of a variety of people.

They are so close that they need an outside producer, because none of them want to give orders to the others.

"The next three albums will have more and more overdubs and last record, 'Bouncing off the Lites,' was the most produced we were able to add layers of and do some different moon now we really have this urge to do No more drum machines!"

Gravestones intriguing for epitaph-hunting author

NEW YORK (AP) — Gyles Brandreth spends a lot of time prowling about graveyards. With good reason.

As he observes: "I have always enjoyed walking around graveyards — it's not much fun being carried round them — and reading the inscriptions on the gravestones."

When he finds an epitaph he likes, he copies it down, and he's copied a lot. Many of them are included in "Famous Last Words & Tombstone Humor" (Sterling), an interesting and often funny collection not only of epitaphs but of a diverse selection of the last earthly words of a variety of people.

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There's some surprising here. "Don't worry, be happy" the message of a recent pop song. But the phrase surfaced in 1925 when a guru named Meher said it. Although Meher died in 1969, "Don't worry, be happy" regarded as his last words before he said it in 1925, "the last silence for the next 44 years."

Phineas T. Barnum, the impresario and showman, is reputed to have said these last words: "How many circus receipts tonight at Main Square Garden?"

In the book's collection of epitaphs, there's: "Here lies Lester Moore, slugs from a 44, no Les, no more." "In memory of Mrs. Alpha Weight 309 lbs. Open wide to the only gates."

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