

EYEBEAM

In Love

BY BYRON LAURSEN



Texas love Eyebeam, both the University of Texas-launched comic strip and its crinkly-haired, reluctantly-maturing main character. They even love Hank the Hallucination, the grinning, shape-shifting, reality-bending monster who drops in on Eyebeam during long study sessions. Back in 1982, "H.T. Hallucination" was entered in the U.T. student body elections by some non-serious types. He won the presidency in a landslide. Eyebeam is the creation of Sam Hurt, now recently graduated from Texas' law school. It features a goofily-interlocked cast of characters as appealing as those of the Taxi garage or the M.A.S.H. field hospital.

There's Eyebeam himself, for starters, laconic, cynical and observant. Ratliff, his roommate, procrastinator and under-achiever par excellence. Sally, the wisest, sharpest-tongued of the lot, and also Eyebeam's steady girlfriend. Rod, the maximal macho jerk and Beth, Sally's roommate and Rod's "main squeeze," a girl who thinks football players are gods incarnate.

But character, of course, is defined by action. Here, then, are the folks of *Eyebeam*, activated each in their peculiar ways by the mysterious force of love. Why love? Because Valentine's Day is here, and because you'll love these University of Texas knuckleheads as soon as you get to know them.

Born in Austin, Sam Hurt now 26, started doing cartoons for the *Daily Texan* back in 1978. He was then a junior. He started calling the irregular feature *Eyebeam*, then later decided to invent a character with that name. Things just grew after that, as Eyebeam acquired a roommate, a girlfriend, an hallucination to call his own, and other necessities of college life.

Hurt has published three books of collected Eyebeam strips: *I'm Pretty Sure I've Got My Death Ray In Here Some-*

where, Eyebeam — Therefore I Am and Eenie Meenie Minie Tweed. Famed editorial cartoonist Ben Sargent wrote in the first book's foreword: "The only apt comparison for *Eyebeam's* imaginative-ness is George Harriman's late, great *Krazy Kat*, and any comic strip buff will tell you that is high praise indeed. . . . I think Sam Hurt is just what the comic strip trade needs."

Hurt recently graduated from Texas' Law School and, concurrent with facing the real world, is gradually "growing up" his characters. Eyebeam has gone through law school and taken a job with Shortbread & Snuff, Attorneys at Law. Ratliff got a position (and then got fired) at a local TV station, where his function was to turn up the volume whenever mobile home commercials interrupted the late movie. Sally is still trying to decide on an occupation. That is, Hurt is trying to decide for her. But he is certain that she still listens to the Roche sisters bizarre new wave music almost exclusively and she was very excited about Geraldine Ferraro.

Hurt's books are available in some bookstores or by mail from AAR Tantalus, Inc., P.O. Box 893, Austin, TX 78767 for \$4.95 plus 50 cents extra per book for postage and handling.



Sally and Eyebeam have found their own private wavelength.



Beth has a precise grasp on Rod's appeal . . .



Ratliff needs a good coach.



Sometimes Sally tries, in her ironic way, to help Ratliff understand how love works.

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