

"And now I'm this semi-regular," Bernhard says, sounding pleased with herself. "Letterman kept me out there when I didn't have much else going. Being on his show gave me some ideas of what I ultimately wanted to do with my career."

Some five years later, Bernhard is swimming in what she wants to do. She's got fame, semi-fortune and friends in all the hippest circles. "Madonna is my friend," she says, casually. "Yes, I met her last year at one of my shows. We're friends. We hang out together. Of course, it's hard to be really good friends. I'm not really into this hanging out with stars. It's easier on the brain if you don't hang out with celebs. But I've found that Madonna is just a person."

"We go to clubs together. I have a great time when I'm in the mood. Madonna's a normal person. I'm a normal person. I do tell her, 'I can't imagine being you.' She tells me, 'Well, Sandra, I can't imagine what it would be like being you.'"

What Sandra Bernhard is all about today is mostly business. "Basically," she says, "I'm shooting for success. I like to think that the projects I've got now are close in spirit to who I am. You know, free-spirited, unique and independent."

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Spelling

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Correct Punctuation, Spelling and Usage (SECPSU). As a member of SPELL, you'll get a handful of "Goof Cards" to mail to publishers and broadcast stations who goof up on spelling or correct English usage, a *No Goofs Error-Avoidance Handbook* of common errors, and *Spell/Binder*, a bi-monthly newsletter. SPELL awards a Dunce Cap Award annually to the most outrageous error spotted by a member. SECPSU members sally forth writing polite letters to spelling offenders, or using felt-tip markers to correct errors located in public places. (One member recently crossed out apostrophes in a grocery store sign reading "Carton's of Cigarette's Available at Cashiers Office.")

To join either group, write to SPELL, 1527 Gilmore Street, Mountain View, California 94040. (Membership \$15); or Association for the Encouragement of Correct Punctuation, Spelling and Usage, Mrs. Verdenal Johnson, 88 Garfield Avenue, Madison, New York 07940 (membership free).

Play Spelling Games. Remember

Scrabble? Set up a board on your coffee table. Or round up a few buddies to rattle a Boggle® cube a few times a week.

Use Computers. Not everyone is convinced that computer programs that check spelling will make you a better speller. Some feel it actually leads to complacency (although Pat Carter says they're wonderful). A major problem is that computers can't catch incorrect homonyms—words that sound the same but have different spellings and meanings. Since this is a major source of spelling errors, your word processing machine may leave some dumb-looking mistakes in your manuscripts.

A great new computer product to improve your spelling is one of the new hand-held dictionary aids, a device that you can carry in your pocket or purse. Use it anytime you're not sure how to spell a word. Just type in the spelling. If you're right, the device will indicate so. If not, it will present you with a series of related correct spellings from which to choose.

These hand-held devices eliminate the excuse that one often hears for not using a dictionary: "How can I look up a word if I don't know how to spell it?"

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