

## Simpsons

Continued from page 8

**MG:** Now, I have to work all night to do "Life in Hell." It's become a lot harder because I'm getting older. I'm a lot more tired now than I'm 36.

**JL:** Let's talk about "The Simpsons." How many people are involved in creating each episode?

**MG:** There are 80 animators here in L.A. and 200 in Korea. We're doing 24 episodes for this season.

**JL:** Who's actually responsible for creating the five Simpsons?

**MG:** I came up with the main characters. They're named after members of my family. My family doesn't act like the Simpsons, but there's a little bit of Bart in me. I used to get in trouble in school.

**JL:** In the opening segment, there are always different things about the animation. Bart's always writing a different

message on the chalkboard, and the family always does something weird on the sofa at the end. Why do you pay attention to those details?

**MG:** What I like are the little details that reward those who pay attention. Most of television does not reward you. It penalizes you because if you don't pay attention it doesn't matter. My show is full of that kind of stuff. The nature of animation is that you can



control every aspect of the sound and visuals. It's more fun if you throw in stuff. When you work on something for so long, you want to put in those little details.

**JL:** Does it bother you that people are pirating "Simpsons" memorabilia?

**MG:** Well, the phenomenon of a pop cultural icon taking on its own life fascinates me, especially now since I created the icon. The money rip-off aspect

doesn't bug me enough to pursue it. Some of the T-shirts are good and some are pieces of crap. I don't get outraged when I see a guy wearing a pirated T-shirt. There are lots of other injustices in the world that take priority over mine.

**JL:** Do you think the Simpsons are on the downhill now?

**MG:** It's the nature of any pop fad to eventually become less fashionable. It's not my concern to keep (the fad) fresh. We just try and do the best and funniest show we can by amusing ourselves. I didn't work on the show to create a pop phenomenon. I've just gone along with the ride. But I hope we can keep the show alive for a long, long time.

**JL:** Do people recognize you now that you've broken out of underground cartooning and created this pop icon?

**MG:** Yeah, sometimes. It's a little unsettling because I feel like a movie star, but generally everyone's friendly about it.

## Crayons

Continued from page 8

shade of blue."

This called for some serious action. With the help of some high school friends, Latinik circulated a petition and wrote a letter to Binney & Smith, Crayola's parent company, on behalf of the lemon yellow crayon. "Please reconsider your fateful decision to terminate the production of such a classic crayon," the letter read.

She signed the letter as national president and indicated copies had been sent to state presidents, an admittedly deceitful act. "Actually, there aren't any state presidents," she said. "We just wanted it to look like there were a lot of people involved with this."

About 100 friends and co-workers signed the petition, and Ellyn Scott, Binney & Smith's consumer communication manager, replied to their letter two weeks later.

Scott wrote that the letter and petition had been "forwarded to product management for consideration" and signed her name in a yellow scrawl.

The reply came as a surprise, but the yellow signature "seemed kind of rude to me, like they were rubbing it in our faces that there wasn't going to be any more lemon yellow," Latinik said.

On Aug. 7, Latinik and two friends drove almost five hours from Alexandria, Va., to the Crayola headquarters in Easton, Pa., to protest the retirement of lemon yellow, raw umber, blue gray, green blue, maize, orange red, orange yellow and violet blue.

Clad in lemon yellow T-shirts emblazoned across the back with "Save Lemon Yellow," Latinik, Karen Moore and Gail Johnson left Virginia at 3 a.m., headed for the new Crayola Hall of Fame.

Although the event was supposed to be by invitation only, they managed to slip in briefly and see the five-foot-tall models of the retired crayons and two cakes decorated in the old and new colors. Outside, they joined forces with about a dozen other protesters who carried signs for their favorite colors.

The lemon yellow supporters held large signs that said, "We love lemon yellow," "Save lemon yellow" and "Bring back lemon yellow." Their efforts attracted the interest of the national media, but as Latinik expected, the attention died down and she has moved on to more pressing concerns.

"I wish I could keep fighting it," she said, adding that tests and quizzes had caught up with her.

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