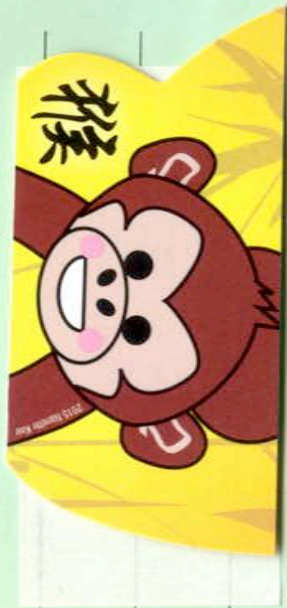


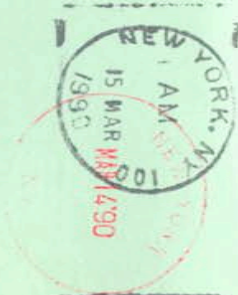
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**TELLER  
& PENN**



# Mofo's Nose



Issue # 4 GRAPHIC ARTIST: AARON TARDOS  
Mar. 1990 WRITER: SPENCER CHANDLER TELLER & PENN NEWS LETTER



## Introduction

By Spencer Chandler

Could it be? Another issue? Yes, I think so. The fourth edition of Mofo's Nose is right under yours. It's wierd--it doesn't feel like four issues since the beginning. It feels like...it feels like...it feels like a hemorrhoid.

It does feel like it's been a while since the last issue. Oh! Where are my manners? Excuse me for not inquiring sooner! How are you? Is that a haircut or did your head swell up? My, how your kids have grown! It seems like yesterday when they were yay high.

Satisfied? Good. Now we're past the formalities. On to this issue's contents. There's a fabulously long advice column chock full of helpful hints for baking shortbread in a hat, as well as a hearty amount of cruel tricks suitable only for teacher/student relationships.

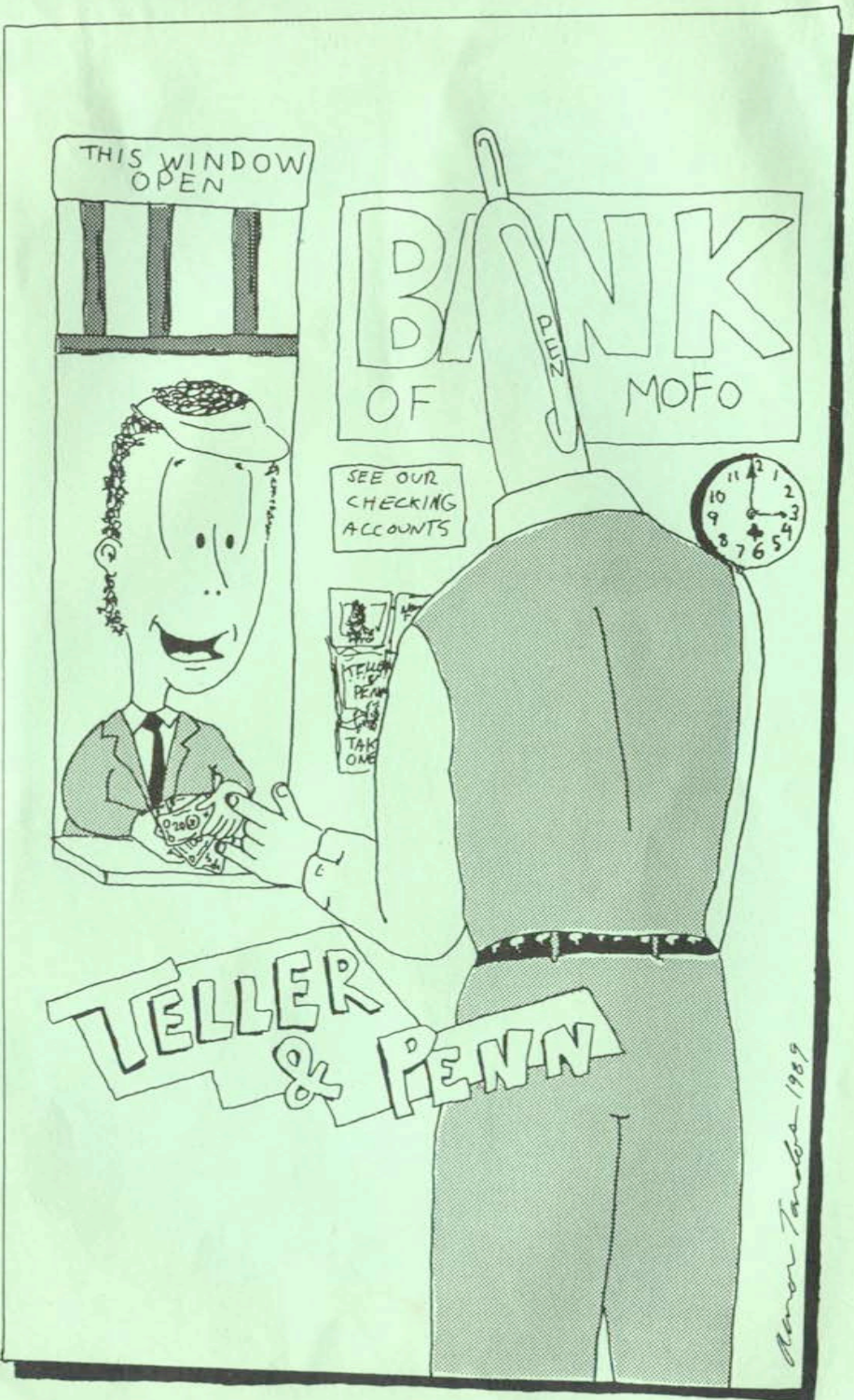
In addition to those, you'll find the article on yo-yos sweeping the nation surprisingly pleasant, and my report on Penn's and Steven Banks' recent jackpot win in Vegas will be most entertaining.

Save the ducks.



XXX  
Spencer  
1/2 of the Fanclub Kids





Interview with "S. Pie"  
by J.

The offices of Penn & Teller are located in an apartment building near Times Square. Only two small rooms and a bathroom house all the books, video tapes, T-shirts, clippings and diet cola beverages. It is run by Penn & Teller's Director of Internal Affairs, S. Pie.

J. Tell us about your name.

P. It's a nickname that Penn gave me, back in 1983. It had to do with the Presidential debates in '84. Barbara Walters was the mediator. At the beginning of the debate she asked the two men what they'd like to be called during the debates. Reagan said "President Reagan", Mondale said "Senator Mondale", Penn remarked, "It would have been really great if just ONE of them had said, "Call me Sweetie Pie", and I said if I ever ran for president that's what I would say. So, Penn's called me that ever since.

J. How did you come to meet Penn & Teller?

P. I was on staff at the LA Stage Company. Marc Garland was our technical director. We had a six week opening in our theatre, so Marc came to Susan Dietz, the artistic director, and said "I have this really great act that I want you to see". Marc had worked with Penn & Teller in San Francisco when they were doing the Asparagus Valley Cultural Society. They had just become a two-man act known as "Penn Jillette and/or Teller". So they came to audition, and everybody loved them and that's when they shortened the name of the act to "Penn & Teller". That was in November of '83.

J. Can you remember any funny experiences you want to share?

P. The "Iron Comedian" incident was a wacky experience. They were going to host the "Comedy Club Allstars" Showtime Special from Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas. They were still on tour in D.C., and were going to fly to Vegas the very next day. So I flew to D.C. to help Gordon Clark make the device they call the "Iron Comedian", which was a new bit written especially for the show. We built it, we worked it, it was all rehearsed and ready to go. We shipped it on

American Airlines special one-day freight service. When we got to Vegas, the boxes never showed up! So in a panic decision, Teller finally said "we're gonna build another one". Now this was something that had taken us five days to construct, and we had only 8 hours til the taping. Luckily, Caesar's Palace had a wonderful crew, and all the measurements were still in my head, so we were able to rebuild it.

J. Can you describe a typical Penn & Teller fan?

P. I think they fall into two categories. One is the teenage boy who goes through high school not having a girlfriend, and is into math and computers, and just thinks that Penn & Teller are really cool. Cuz if you look at them, you can tell that that's the way they were in high school, and you can identify with that. The other type is the yuppie who is 30-something, and has an affinity for Penn & Teller cuz they're the same age. There are a lot of disillusioned yuppies out there who were into rock and roll when they were teenagers, and Penn & Teller are very rock and roll. So people envy them, but it's a good envy because they like them. People love Penn & Teller. They think they're buddies. You know, they feel like they can walk up to them on the street and say 'What's happening?' as if they know them. There's no mystique. For all the mystery in their magic there's no mystique about them as people.

J. Like Sigfreid and Roy?

P. (Laughs) I don't know about that. David Copperfield might be a better example.

J. Tell us about upcoming projects for Penn & Teller.

P. They're going to start writing their new show very soon. They'll rehearse and perform it in a residency situation at SUNY Purchase in New York, and then take it out on tour. Tickets will be sold, and people will be able see it if they want to, but it'll be mostly students and locals, I imagine. We don't have the specific dates, but it will probably take place from July-September of this year.



## How I Spent My Winter Vacation

By Teller

Here, as you know, is where we tell you stuff nobody else gets to know. So, hmmm, let's see. We both just took four months off.

The idea was: remember how Chevy Chase used to be a really wonderful, surprising performer? Then he got into the rhythm of making his National Lampoon Vacation comedies, and now he's rich (and still talented) but dull? Well, we started to get scared. We had worked continually for five years, turning out things we were really proud of -- stuff we thought WE'd like to see on stage and TV. But when it came time to do the last David Letterman spot in the fall, we sat for FOUR DAYS in our office without an idea coming to us.

It was clear we needed input, a change of pace, a chance to learn new things and think. What the SubGenius folks call Slack.

So we took off. Penn for California, where he toured with his girlfriend and Steven Banks playing a bunch of cool original songs. And me, for Australia, to have adventures and learn SCUBA-diving on the Great Barrier Reef (Penn's been a diver for a couple of years.)

It was a majorly cool trip. I got to fly in a helicopter with a really smart millionaire (he runs Australian Geographic magazine) who has flown his 'copter around the world. I hung out with a husband-and-wife shark-photographer team. (Some useful information here: People are not part of a shark's natural food chain. Sharks won't eat you unless you do something stupid like swim into their faces when they're already in a feeding frenzy. They also have a very curious practice of gently "mouthing" their prey before biting, i.e. they run their mouths lightly and gently over their prospective food before biting in. So, if a shark should close his jaws around you, the shark photographers said, stay REAL still. The shark will realize that you're not a fish and go away. But, for course, if you struggle, it'll get excited and all bets are off.)

If you ever get to go to Australia, here's a word of advice: Don't spend too much time in the cities. I mean, Sydney is a perfectly fine city. It's got a great harbor, a neat Opera House designed to look like a bunch of giant sailboats all huddled together, a zoo where you can see a real platypus (they're a lot smaller than you think and swim just like fish), a big Botanical Gardens where you can see fifteen different kinds of lawn-grass in little planters side by side. But hotels are really expensive, and after all, it's just a city.

Instead, get out into the less urban areas. I went up to Cairns, sort of mild-mannered Miami. Here lodging can be really cheap: you can get a room in a backpack hostel for ten bucks a night, or a motel for twenty-five. Taking a dive course (two days of instruction in classroom and pool plus three days diving off a boat on the Great Barrier Reef) costs \$325. The place is full of people from all over the world, and it's really neat to be in a class with people from Switzerland and France and Denmark and Austria and England. And most Aussies I met were quite friendly and had a good sense of humor. They drink beer far too much for my personal taste (walking past a pub in an afternoon, you smell that special sour stench of carpet marinated in beer for 200 years) but have a sincerely fraternal attitude. That "mate" thing you hear them say really means something to them.

Anyway, we're back. The video of "Penn & Teller Get Killed" will be out in May on tape and laserdisc. (Please bug your local video store to buy a copy so you can rent it.) We're writing a whole bunch of new material this spring/summer that will go into a big TV thing (details soon) and our live show touring this fall. Expect to see us in the company of a million bees and an 18-wheel tractor-trailer. By summer we'll be completely equipped to shoot and edit our own broadcast-quality videos, so we can do stuff with NOBODY looking over our shoulders.

Oh, by the way, if you like really eccentric, crazy, witty, dirty music, pick up Crispin Glover's "The Big Problem", and if you're into Stravinski-esque electronic music catch Tod Machover's "Spectres" and "Valis". Eatem up good stuff here.

As Usual,

TELLER



TELLER  
& PENN

## A Few Things Mofu Should Nose

By Penn Jillette

This has been vacation time for Teller and me. The last thing we did together before vacation was a Library of Congress thing where we showed a video camera around the Houdini collection. We ended up locked in the vault and that's the bit. They're putting some video together to pimp the library and now we're part of it. Also on the tape will be Francis Ford Coppola, Steve Jobs, and the funny one of the Watson and Crick team. We figured it was better company than Howie Mandell so we were there. It was a fun shoot in the cold capital city.



Right from there Teller left for Australia and I started having real fun. Steven Banks (of Showtime's "Home Entertainment Center") and I have been really close friends for over 10 years. We played in my backyard with Teller in a band called "The New Christian Right Wing Band", which we thought was really funny (see "Quote of the Day") but we had never really gotten down. Last year Steven made a bet with me about Springsteen's real last name. It was a sucker bet but I took it. If I lost I had to spend a week rehearsing and a week doing shows of just music (none of that magic or yapping jive) and if he lost we would have to audition to be in "Man of LaMancha" at the Covered Bridge Dinner Theater near my home town of Greenfield, MA. He won and I can't tell you Springsteen's real last name because secrecy was part of the agreement. We rehearsed for a week with just us, two backup singers (J. and V.) and El, my painter friend, who wrote "C'mon Baby, Let's Party like it's 1922". El was roadie/manager and came on stage for one song. The gigs went really well, I dressed in all black with a white bass and Steven dressed in all white with a black guitar (both Gibson loaners). The women dressed in polka dots and we rocked out. We played around San Francisco and LA and had a blast. There was no money since many of the gigs were benefits but we got to play music. We did lots of tunes from "Home Entertainment Center" and "Never Mind the Sex Pistols - Here's Bongos, Bass and Bob - What on Earth were they Thinking?" and a few new ones. The newest song for me was "Atheist Woman" and I enjoyed performing it, especially in Orange County. It was rock and roll, I wore jeans, thrusted my pelvis and sweated. It was great, all non-drinkers playing bars, and we did all sit in the hotel jacuzzi in our underwear (J. and V. tied in the El Pennybanks Wet T-Shirt Contest). The women sang like angels, we played like the devil and it was real fun.

After that I sat around in NYC, watching laser disks on my 10 foot television. I went to Florida and helped Alex Bennett (formally of San Francisco) kick off his radio show in Miami. I would SCUBA dive (down 140 feet on one dive in Key Largo) in the morning and be on radio all afternoon. I was hanging with my favorite people in the world, J., Al Goldstein, Amazing Randi, Alex Bennett, and, towards the end, my high-tech NewTek buddies, Tim Jenison, Paul Montgomery and Brad Carvey (his brother's the "Church Lady" but he's the funny one) who came to NYC after and hooked me up with an Amiga on the big screen. Look out Digi-View. We screamed at phoney psychics, talked atheism, trashed the morning radio guy and I did a whole show with my hands on the breasts of a topless woman from R Donuts Topless Donut Shop while she sat on my lap. (If you haven't been to R Donuts in Fort Lauderdale - GO! It's really a topless donut shop, breasts, coffee and donuts and no alcohol - it's a little bit of Penn-heaven right here on Earth).

We went to the Artificial Life Conference in Santa Fe for a heavy dose of science and people with beards mumbling into microphones, and then to Topeka to do a video for our buddies at NewTek who invented this supercool video effects thang called the "Video Toaster".

We went out for some meetings in LA and hit the Adult film awards where Nina Hartley let me touch her breasts because I was on Letterman (there's a theme to this month) and we got to make jokes with Buck Henry and Carrie Fischer. It was Teller's birthday and they got him a porno cake. That was vacation.

Now we're back to work. We did the "Iron Comedian" from Showtime at Trump and it went well. Robbie Libbon from the Big Apple Circus was on board and had his first 3 days working with us the hell of getting blood to squirt when you want it to. Welcome to our world, Robbie. That's all the news, we're off to Tahoe and Warner's video people seem to like the movie and are putting it out on laser disk and video tape in May. Wow.

On Tuesday, December 19, 1989, Penn's and Steven Banks' concert tour brought them to San Francisco's Cobb's Comedy Club (note the clever use of alliteration). Figuring it would be smart to eat near the club, we chose to dine at the adjoining restaurant. Big mistake. We should have inferred that from the lack of customers it probably wasn't too cool. Unfortunately, we didn't make the connection and suffered as a result.

We were seated in the back (their policy seemed to be the segregation of minors). Another group came in a few minutes after us and was attended to long before we were. In fact, they finished a three course meal before we were even served. Aaron leaned across the table and whispered, "Let's ransack the place!" Just as Aaron was about to chuck the first plate, the waiter came over with our bread. A few seconds later and the waiter would have had to clean up an awful mess.

Forced to bring our food into the Club, we were again seated in the rear. Wait a minute. I'm not giving a review of the concert. Sorry. Here we go. Penn with his wild new hairdo (which he calls 'Urban Samurai') and his slick bass was in top shape, singing with great fervor and soul. Steven Banks was equally energetic, and for an alleged audio/video dealer, he was fantastic.

With Penn and Steven were two lovely and talented ladies (goddamnit, I sound like Lawrence Welk). The brunette was Penn's girlfriend, J., and the other was a blonde named V. Providing perfect appearance and backup vocals, they really added to the show.

A good deal of the songs were from the "Bongos, Bass, and Bob" LP, while others were not (no duh). Aaron and I enjoyed the show immensely except for the smokers who sat near us.

After the performance, people talked with the performers and laughed a great deal. Steven Banks clarified for me that "Steven Banks' Home Entertainment Center" was not a store but a Showtime Special. Alex Bennett (a former comedy show host in S.F.) was present at the affair. We also got to meet J., Penn's girlfriend. She's wonderfully pretty, but in the course of conversation with some character who was standing there, she uttered the words, "You can kiss my stinky white ass". We found out later that the character was comedian Jim Turner (Randee of the Redwoods from MTV), who does a song in his show called "You Can Kiss My Stinky White Ass". We felt better.

I hope that you now have a better idea of what goes on at a Penn and Banks concert. It truly was more fun than a barrel of monkeys.



"El Pennybanks and the Mice"