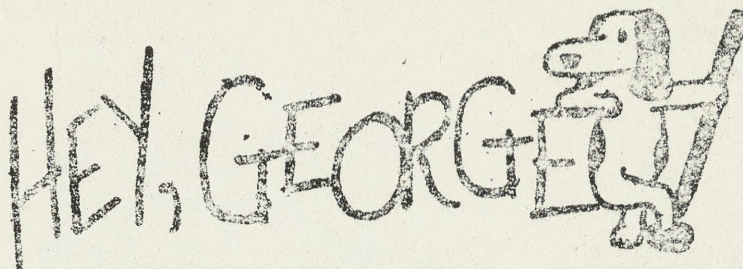


By: Susan M. Siciliano



A belated Happy New Year to all you at Del. Co.! But you know, somehow 1976 looks like the 1975 we left before Christmas break, except the kids look a little worn from all the partying. There's something else different around here but I just can't put my finger on it...George! I haven't seen George! Has anyone heard from her...I hope she's okay. I don't know what we'd do--hey, that looks like a fuzzy head peaking at me from under the Tastykake machine. She doesn't seem to be moving so let's go find out what's going on.

ME: Hey, George! Happy New Year!

GEORGE: Shhh! Oh God! Don't you know that certain high decibels have been known to actually kill people?

ME: What are you doing under there?

GEORGE: Someone's been hitting me in the head with this hammer and I figured this was one of the safest places to hide and still keep an eye on the food situation.

ME: A hammer? Sounds like the typical symptom of an over celebrated holiday and well welcomed New Year.

GEORGE: The flu? Mono? Pregnancy? Acne?

ME: No, dummy. A hangover.

GEORGE: I thought you were supposed to be the straight guy?

ME: It's a new year, George, full of promises, new dreams, and hopefully, a change for the better.

GEORGE: If you take over my column it won't be.

ME: What--?

GEORGE: Oh, I was just saying how good it felt to be back among all the tension, cramming and complaining again. It feels good to be back to school again, too. I'm beginning to realize how considerate the people running this place really are.

ME: See that! It wasn't that hard to look at things a little differently, now was it?

GEORGE: No. Remember how grateful I was for all that outdoor plumbing? Well, being winter and the freezing temperatures and all, they've also devised a way to heat the outdoors to make sure those green little devils grow.

ME: "Heat the outdoors"?