

Despite their shortcomings, Westerberg and band carry on

By PAT GRANDJEAN Collegian Arts Writer

I wasn't ready for the Replacements, sons of Minneapolis, Minn., when I first heard them. Nothing about other "college radio" bands I knew and loved first, be it R.E.M.'s melodic eccentricities or Husker Du's L.S.D.-inspired psychodramas, prepared me for the "Mats' initial successful mix of "big fucking guitars" with the philosophy of being an asshole and enjoying it.



(Left to right) Bob Stinson takes time off from fishing, Tommy Stinson from songwriting and Chris Mars from illustrating to pose for a picture with head Replacement Paul Westerberg, who didn't have anything better to do.

Since early hardcore-inspired records like *Sorry Ma, Forgot to Take Out the Trash and Stink*, the band—featuring lead singer and songwriter Paul Westerberg, guitarist Bob Stinson, bassist Tommy Stinson and drummer Chris Mars—has continued to surprise. Its most recent album, *Let It Be and Tim*, reveal Westerberg to be a lyricist with a firm grasp of the impotence and frustration of young adulthood, particularly on songs like "Unsatisfied" and "Swinging Party."

Compounding his frustrations is the fact that the only place he has to compose is the basement of his parents' home. "I was just over there today. The apartment is too small and I can't really shut at the top of my lungs here because the neighbors will call the police," Westerberg said. But his system of coming-and-going to write songs helps in one respect: knowing which tunes are to be kept and which blown away. "I never write things down, except sometimes words. If I can come back to a (song) the next day and remember it without writing it down, then it's good. If I can't, I don't bother with it."

As of the beginning of July, the "Mats" were making "very minimal progress" towards the completion of a new album. Their foremost task is to find the right producer, and Westerberg feels that that person should be "different" in nature from Tommy "Ramone" Erdelyi, who produced last year's *Tim*. "We worked fine with Tommy,

(but) he is very quiet, and that sort of made us quiet. . . . As soon as we did (Tim) we knew it was good, even though it wasn't as raw as the others. It was a great collection of songs with good production—not great production—but that was not Tommy's fault, necessarily. We were very lazy about doing some things—he would ask us to do a guitar part over and we would say 'no' because it sounded good to us," he said. Though they'd like to see the band create a more rough-edged album, the wags at Sire Records have been little or no help in the producer search process. "Everyone they come up with seems pretty much a stick-in-the-mud. We don't want to work with someone who's gonna be all business and no pleasure, but then again we don't want to have someone who's suggesting some people who are engineers. We'd like to work with a name producer," Westerberg asserted.

Such camaraderie proved fatal to this year's summer tour. During a June 21 gig at the Ritz in New York City, Westerberg's decision to take part in the "extremely physical and wild" audience slum-dancing resulted in a broken finger. "I don't know how many songs we played all the way through, probably not many," he said. "I had never seen more trash and clothes and things thrown onstage. . . . It was out of control, which doesn't happen often. People were stage-diving from the balconies."

"I figured, the show is out of control and everyone else is doing it. . . . what the hell, I'm tired of playing. I might just jump in and join the fun. I came back onstage a minute later, and (my hand) hurt. I think someone might have stepped on my hand with a boot or don't remember it actually happening because it wasn't excruciatingly painful. The next day my finger was swollen way up and I couldn't use it," he said.

"I'm an old man," he marveled (he's actually 26 "going on 50"), "and these damn whippersnappers can do it and get right up." For his inking, old man Westerberg found himself sidelined indefinitely from the road grind. But far from being angry or disappointed by this turn of events, he figures it's all in a good day's work. "It sort of turns my stomach to hear someone say 'I'm going to hear the Replacements in concert,'" he noted. "It's like, you're missing the point—come down and we'll be there and you'll be there and we'll see what happens. We don't feel comfortable as performers—we're more like ringleaders of a circus."

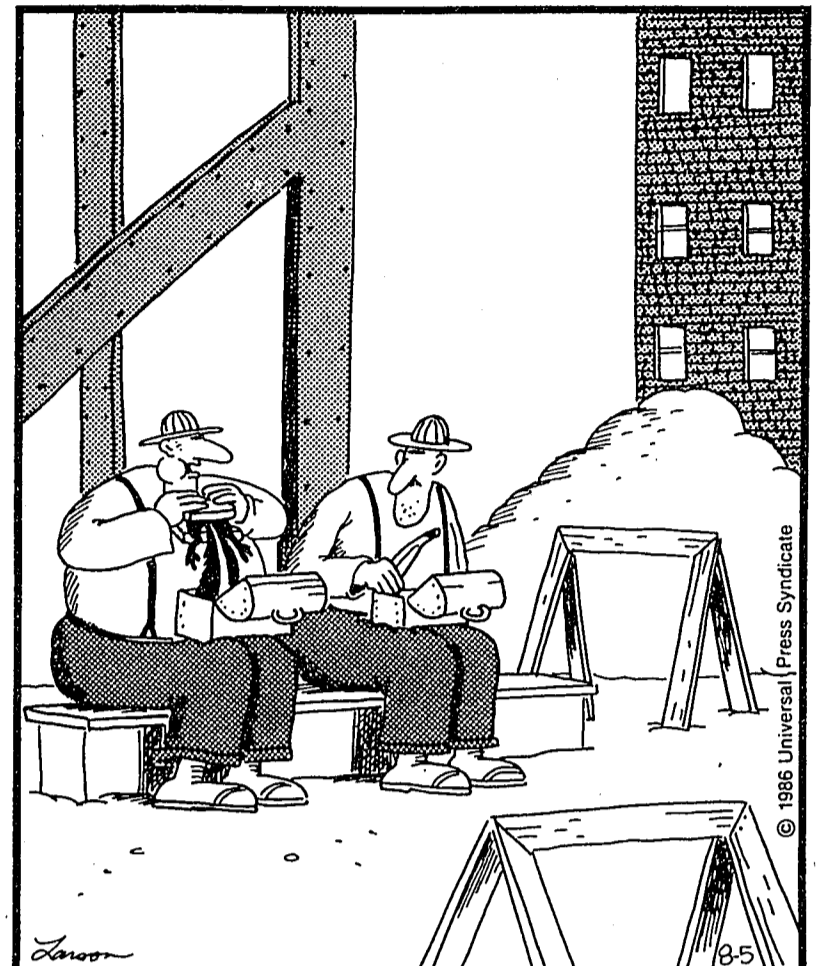
Which is why recent forays into the realms of *Saturday Night Live* and MTV have left him, if you'll excuse the expression, unsatisfied. For last fall's appearance on *SNL*, Westerberg recalled that the "Mats" "luckily got 20 of our friends in, and they were sitting right in front. So that helped. But that was not us: The Replacements who thrive upon having a few drinks and being boozed were not in our element."

"They're only in their element on MTV insofar as they're relishing thumping their noses at it. Yet they finally received video airplay on June 22, when the cable channel aired "Bastards of Young" during 120 Minutes. The clip's main feature is a steady shot of a stress speaker blaring the song; an unidentified actor, back to the camera, enters midway to listen. Westerberg recalls only that this stand-to do anything other than this—it gives us the courage to do what they want. Good shows are almost magical, with people that understand the band. It's like making a couple hundred friends in one night."

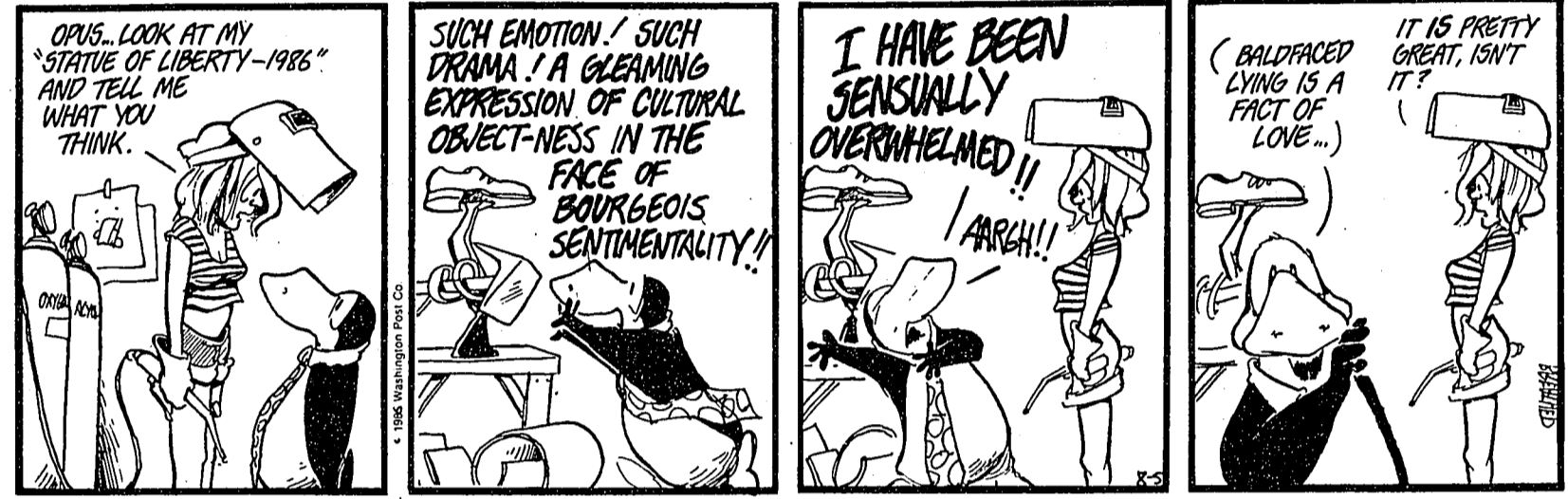
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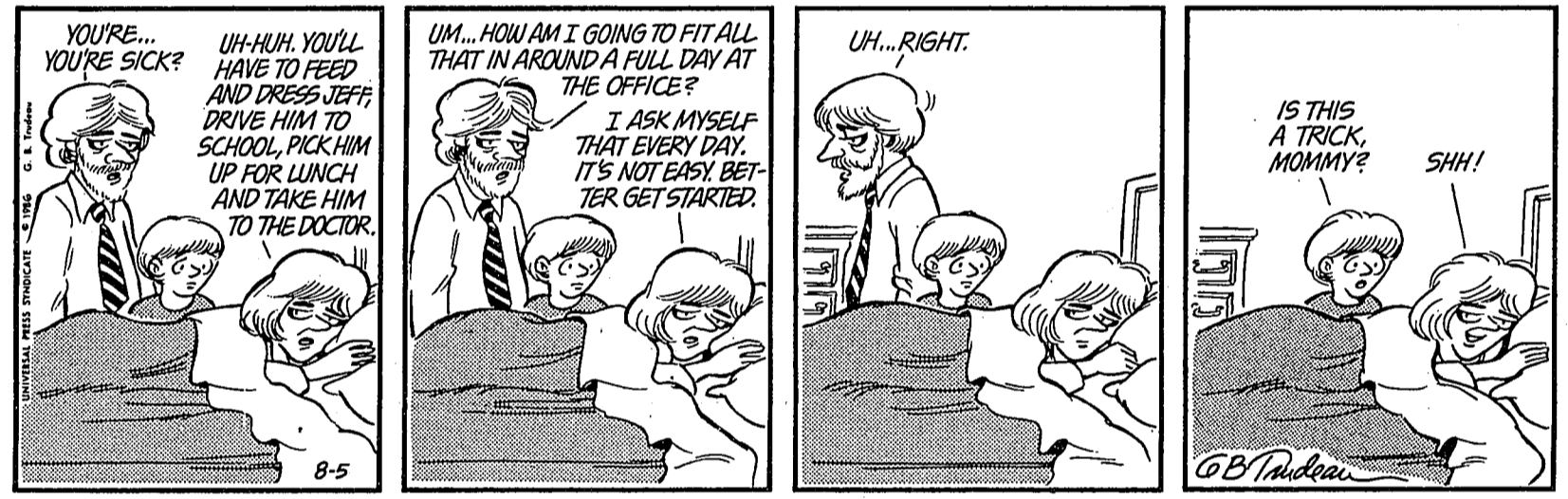
far side



bloom county



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Crossword

- Across: 1 Pale purple, 6 Wardrobe, 12 Heather genus, 13 Dawn goddess, 14 Inhibit, 15 Tull, 16 Historical periods, 18 Urban railway, 19 Needlefish, 21 Sea, in Marseilles, 22 Close, 27 Unsorted flour, 28 Boswulf, for one, 30 Lyric, 31 Child, 32 Prevalator, 33 Spill, 34 Pertaining to amide, 36 Corroded, 37 Shade tree, 38 Exclamation, 40 Andy's partner, 42 Parsley camphor, 46 Heavenly hunter, 49 Client, 50 Mother-of-pearl, 51 Exchanged, 52 Inquired. Down: 1 Calculator numbers, 2 Fury, 3 Charlas, 4 The Maples, 5 Burnt sugar, 6 Heal, 7 Bait, 8 Exams, 9 Propagate, 10 Before, 11 Sailor, 17 Dark brown, 19 Nurse shark, 20 Smallest particle, 22 Lasso, 24 Longing for family, 25 Land held in fee simple, 26 Expression, 29 Violin city, 31e32e33e34e35e36e37e38e39e40e41e42e43e44e45e46e47e48e49e50e51e52

Unions agree to tentative pact

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Neither side claimed victory after motion picture and television actors and producers reached a tentative agreement averting a strike that could have cost the entertainment industry millions of dollars. Actors got a 10 percent pay hike instead of the 22 percent they sought. But there were no major changes on the sticky issue of residual payments, a favorable outcome for the two actors unions. "To say I'm totally happy with this contract would be a falsehood," Screen Actors Guild president Patty Duke said Saturday after negotiators reached agreement on the three-year contract. "The unions are holding our own for now and are determined to do even better in the future."

Officer Ripley of 'Aliens' is the ultimate role-model for women

By JILL S. KOSKO Collegian Arts Writer

There's only one time you can relax while watching *Aliens*—when the final credits roll onto the screen. Only then can you sigh with relief and thank God it's over. And when you leave the theater, you'll feel like you just stepped off a roller coaster. Everyone should see *Aliens* this summer—everyone, that is, who can stomach gore, adventure, tension and terror all rolled into one blockbuster movie. If you're the type that finds late night TV movies unbearably scary, better stay at home.



Sigourney Weaver is pictured with three of her *Aliens* co-stars: Michael Biehn as Hicks, Carrie Henn as Newt and Bill Paxton as Hudson.

Continuing the story of 1979's *Alien*, *Aliens* does something very few sequels do nowadays—proves itself to be just as good if not better than its successful originator. In the days of *Karate Kid II*, *Psycho III*, *Ricky IV* and now *Friday the 13th, Part VI*, it's refreshing to see a movie that's not trying to milk undeserved profits from its predecessor. The movie begins with the rescue of Officer Ripley, who has been floating around in a spaceship 57 years. After she's revived from her coon-like sleep, Ripley wants to forget those dang'ly aliens and get on with her life. Yet, less than a half-hour into the movie, she's back in space again, heading towards another alien confrontation.

But no matter how wonderful the star, any movie would crumble without a strong supporting cast. Fortunately, *Aliens* provides one. Carrie Henn is convincing as Newt, a little girl who survives her camp's destruction and becomes a danger-like figure to Ripley. The colorful crew of Marines provide much of the comic relief desperately needed in a movie this intense. The dialogue, which is concise without being sparse, shows a sharp wit at work. Especially funny is Hudson (Bill Paxton), a tough marine that turns to mush at his first alien encounter. And Paul Reiser as Burke, the sneaky company executive who would sell his soul to the devil (or an alien), succeeds in making us thoroughly despise him.

As for the aliens—they're nasty, all right. Thanks to an \$18 million budget, the creatures as well as the setting are authentically unsettling. This is a movie that shows its money value. But *Aliens* doesn't merely rely on special effects to frighten the viewer. Weaver may be the hero on screen, but director James Cameron is the star behind the big picture. He looks into our hearts, sees what will scare us, and then sets the scene—with the right setting, the right camera shot or the right moment for an alien to pounce its next victim. He creates a claustrophobic, paranoid atmosphere that leaves the audience wobbling on shaky knees.

Perhaps the film's biggest flaw is that it expects us to believe too much that Ripley could be so courageous and so moral, and that she could even survive such an ordeal. But who minds a little stretch of the imagination, when what's stretching it is so good?

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