

*double lives*

**Look Who's Talking**

**W**illie Brown has no problem putting his livelihood in the hands of a dummy.

After all, as a professional ventriloquist, the 28-year-old Forestville man has been working with one for years. So

ventriloquist Jay Johnson on the television sitcom "Soap."

"My mother worked for Nationwide Insurance, and they would hold an annual talent show," Brown remembers. "I practiced for a year before entering it. I didn't want the guys



why not let the thing help him sell portable phones too?

"Occasionally I take my dummy Woody [pun intended] on a sales call," says Brown, who started selling for Cellular One about a year ago. "Or after we make the sale I may bring Woody in as a special treat.

"My clients are excited about the whole thing. When I don't have Woody with me they ask, 'Where's Woody?'"

Not far away, most likely. Usually, "he's in the trunk."

Brown's professional objectives are appearances on "The Arsenio Hall Show" and lucrative performing contracts in Las Vegas. Meanwhile, he's happy to hone his ventriloquist skills in D.C. and other cities along the East Coast performing about four times a week in clubs and at special events, and selling telephones.

Brown's mother bought him his first dummy for Christmas 15 years ago when his idol was

going around telling people I like dolls, so I had to be good before going outside with the dummy."

He won.

—EDWARD E. WOODHOUSE JR.

*the bit list*

**Gift Rapping**

**F**orget that homey metaphor.

"We are *not* the nation's attic," says Madeleine Jacobs, director of the Smithsonian Institution's public affairs office.

In fact, though the Smithsonian has accepted more than 100 million objects and specimens, there are some pretty strict donation guidelines that foil a lot of would-be donors. A dirty half-dozen examples of items rejected in recent months alone:

1. An old tobacco press—too big.

2. More letters signed by presidents than the Smithson-

ian will ever need—some of them fake.

3. A fully equipped television truck from the 1950s—way too big.

4. Portraits of family members—they're nice, but . . . they're yours.

5. A roomful of gems left by a now deceased gem-cutter—seems every other gem cutter left a roomful too.

6. Tapestries depicting Charles Lindbergh on one side and his plane on the other.

The curator tries to be gentle when he tells proud owners that the tapestries were mass-produced and the Smithsonian already has one anyway.

—ELIZABETH DEVITA

*world views*

**Fore Warnings**

**D**umping on Japan for a variety of sins seems to be fashionable in Congress these days, especially for two vocal members of the Maryland congressional delegation.

Republican Rep. Helen D. Bentley is concerned that Japanese companies or Japanese-backed groups will own an estimated 1,000 American golf courses by the year 2000, and consequently recently urged U.S. golfers to monitor the ownership of the courses they play on. "Golf friction now exists between the United States and Japan," she warned. "Instead of crying fore, golfers can cry banzai. Will we have to plant a flag with the Rising Sun on each green?"

The congresswoman also has a problem with the "wasteful packaging" of compact discs sold in America by Sony Corp.'s CBS Records and Matsushita Electric Corp.'s MCA Records. Bentley told her House colleagues that CD sales create an estimated 20 million pounds of non-recyclable plastic and cardboard garbage a year, adding that "with



so many of our landfills reaching saturation levels, eliminating some of the paper waste seems like a good idea." Accordingly, she's written Sony and Matsushita to ask them, as CD sales leaders, to voluntarily solve the overpackaging problem.

Not to be outdone, Democratic Sen. Barbara Mikulski has chastised Sony Electronics for suing under trademark laws to force Maryland restaurateur Resurrecion "Sony" Robles-Florendo to remove her name from her eating establishments.

"I can't believe that Sony can sign a \$1 billion contract with Michael Jackson and still feel your corporation is threatened by having a couple of 'Sony Florendo's' restaurants in Baltimore," Mikulski wrote in a letter to the company. "Let Sony Florendo use her good name. Then you might restore your own good name as well."

—MICHAEL J. VOLPE  
AND MARY BETH FRANKLIN

*the twilight zone*

**The Post critics thought the new Albert Brooks movie "Defending Your Life" was hilarious. So did I. But the piece of dialogue that has stayed with me came not from the screen at Union Station's AMC Grand, but from the row behind me.**

**Said he: This is a very nice theater.**

**Said she: Yes, so comfortable.**

**Said he: And I like the holes for your hands.**

**Yes—he was resting his hands in the Coke holders.**

—SHARON ISCH