AN OPEN LETTER TO PARENTS ABOUT POP ROCKS

INVENTOR OF POP ROCKS, WILLIAM A. MITCHELL, RESEARCH SCIENTIST.

Dear Mom & Dad:

My name is Bill Mitchell; I am a retired scientist for the General Foods Corporation of White Plains, New York.

I am also an inventor. I have the distinction, if you want to call it that, of "inventing" the new Pop Rocks Crackling Candy that is creating such a sensation around the country.

I have brought a lot of fun into the world with Pop Rocks, I guess; but I am writing this letter because I want to assure you that the product is a safe one. Safety is one of my real concerns. I have seven children of my own, and 14 grandchildren.

WILD RUMORS

You have probably heard a lot of wild rumors about Pop Rocks. I can assure you that we have investigated, and there is nothing to worry about. It seems to be the nature of this "fun" product that it also attracts rumors. This has been true wherever the product has been sold.

I think that is because it has the image of an exciting and mysterious product that causes those funny little sensations when you put a tiny bit on your tongue. The expression on people's faces when they do this for the first time is fun to watch, as you know.

Pop Rocks is a candy. Its ingredients are the usual ones and chosen from those approved by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration in Washington, D.C. The FDA has reviewed Pop Rocks and found it "safe" and acceptable.

The carbonated fizz in the candy, that causes the funny tingling, is equal to less than one-tenth the amount in a can of soda pop.

INVENTED IN 1956

My seven kids grew up with Pop Rocks. I invented it in 1956 and I would make a little bit of it every once in a while to have it around the house for birthday parties and other fun occasions. I became very popular around our neighborhood!

Our Company finally decided to introduce it on the market. We tried it first in Canada and we couldn't make enough of it. It was an instant hit with the kids up there.

SAFE AND FUN

You know, you hear a lot of people talk about how "serious" business is, that people who work for big corporations don't have very much "fun."

Well "Pop Rocks" is a proof that this isn't so. This is a fun product and a lot of people have enjoyed the product. The company has sold more than 500 million packages! Can you believe that?

Anyway, I just wanted to say to you that this product is a safe and fun product. If you'd like to write to me, just drop me a line to:

Bill Mitchell
Pop Rocks Inventor
General Foods Corporation
White Plains, New York

SHOWTIME

★ Arts
★ Music
★ Theatre

The 'Iceman' cometh with Peaches and Herb

By Ida Peters

Jerry "Iceman" Butler, whose career spans two decades and who now has a new album on his hands, "Nobbing Says I Love You (Like I Love You)" and a hit single "Cooling Out," has teamed with the hot disco duo, Peaches and Herb for a date at Constitution Hall in D.C. this Sunday.

Peaches and Herb, classy and earthy, have a disco - pop - R & B hit album "2 Hot" which is No. 40 on Cashbox's Top 100 Albums. Their "Smoke Your Groove Thing" is No. 4 Disco and No. 11 on R & B.

Jerry Butler is remembered when he started his career in Chicago in 1958 as a member of The Impressions.

In 1960, Jerry teamed up with Curtis Mayfield, another ex - Impression member, to form Curtom Publishing Company, where he and Mayfield collaborated on such tunes as "Thanks To You" and "He'll Break Your Heart." Jerry's association with Mayfield continued until 1963 when The Impressions were revived.

Later he recorded "Moon River" from the soundtrack of "Breakfast At Tiffany" which went on to become the No. 1 Song Of The Year.

Jerry boosted his career in 1964 when he recorded "Delicious Together," a duet album with Betty Everett that included the big hit, "Let It Be Me." Always moving upwards, Jerry co - wrote the fantastic "I've Been Loving You Too Long" with the late Otis Redding in 1965.

In 1967 Jerry played an important role in the development of what is now called the Philly sound when he began a three year association with producers - songwriters Kenny Gamble and Leon Huff. During that period Jerry wrote and - or co - wrote such hits as "Only The Strong Survive," "A Brand New Me" and "Hey Western Union Man." Jerry's tunes were so good they eventually were recorded by such artists as the late Elvis Presley, Tony Orlando, Aretha Franklin, the late Otis Redding, Dusty Springfield, Earl Grant and Liberace.

In 1970 Jerry started a workshop for budding musicians in the Chicago area. The purpose of Jerry's workshop was to tap undiscovered talent and put them on the road to success. From his workshop came Chuck Jackson and Marvin Yancey (the two men most responsible for the emergence of Natalie Cole), Len Ron Hanks and Zanie Grey (who were the writers of "Back In Love Again" which led the group LTD to their first platinum LP.)

In 1971 Jerry Butler started a new phase of his career when he recorded the soundtrack for the movie "Joe." This led to his scoring the soundtrack to the movie "Melinda" (with help from Jerry Peters), as well as singing the title tune and appearing in the movie "The Thing With Two Heads." Later that year Jerry introduced Ms. Brenda Lee Eager when he produced their million seller "Ain't Understanding Mellow."

PEACHES AND HERB had their beginnings back in January of 1965, when producer Van McCoy happened into a Washington, D.C. record store to promote his current record by a female vocal group, The Sweet Things. A young salesman, Herb Fame, talked McCoy into auditioning him in the storeroom.

It was almost like a scene from an old MGM musical: singer corners producer, auditions for him on the spot, and becomes a star. Almost. Herb did have to wait a few months for it was then that Van got his idea to pair him with the lead singer of The Sweet Things, Francine Barker — and the two made musical history with such hits as; "For Your Love," "Love Is Strange," "Close Your Eyes," "United," and "Let's Fall In Love."

The string ran through the late '60s, when Francine decided to get married and settle down. Herb returned to Washington, and became a policeman — far removed from the field of entertainment. Still, he could never really turn his back on singing. "Every time I was on duty at a concert or show, I found myself wanting to be up on stage."

Jerry Butler

He only recently left the force, after having ended his search for a new "Peaches," Linda Green. A search that took nearly a year of auditioning, listening, and "I'm sorry, dear . . . Next!." But it was all well worth the effort, for as you will discover, Linda Green is pure velvet fire in person or on records.

Enter Freddie Perren, producer of Yvonne Elliman, The Sylvers, Tavares, and The Jackson 5, and president of his own, dynamic MVP Records. An ironic entrance, because Freddie was there at the beginning.

In 1965, Freddie, a music teacher in the Washington, D.C. public school system, wrote arrangements for The Sweet Things, and became friends with their manager, Sonny Gordon, now co - manager of Peaches and Herb with Paul Cohn and Clay Hunt. Subsequently, Freddie went on tour with Jerry Butler, writing arrangements and playing piano, came out to L.A., became a Motown staff producer as a member of the famous "Corporation," and then in 1975, went independent. He formed Grand Slam Productions, and built his own studios, "Mom & Pop's Company Store." In 1976, Freddie was in New York for the Billboard Magazine convention to receive an award for being named Top Disco Producer of the Year, and ran into Cohn, who took him to see Peaches and Herb. . . .

Peaches and Herb

When he formed MVP Records he knew he had to debut it with a really hot talent that could carry his creative ideas to their fullest. The choice was simple . . . Peaches and Herb.

Says a modest Herb Fame, of his return to the business he loves, "Most people don't even get one opportunity. Lucky for me, what goes around came around again . . . only better!"

Reggie Daniels... TV cameraman

Reggie Daniels is a native Baltimorean making good as a Videotographer - Cinematographer with WMAR - Ch-2.

At the station for nine years, he can be seen all over town and his job calls for him to be precise and excell under pressure.

He is the son of the Rev. and Mrs. Reginald Daniels of Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church. He is a product of Baltimore City College, Morgan State University, Maryland Institute in Advanced Film and the Kodax Marketing Educational Center in Rochester, New York.

He started his career as a school teacher and doing free - lance still photography. Harold Kennedy of the Urban League interested him in applying to Channel 2.

In 1976 he won the Maryland Associated Press Award for the Best TV film of 1976. You saw his film on the shoot - out at City Hall. He just happened to be at Central Police with Andy Barth when the Signal 13 came in and rode to City Hall with Dennis Hill, police department public relations.

Daniels covers everything from Romper Room to Commercials to News. In news he is a master in having his camera ready, at the proper film exposure so that the film you see on the air is smooth with a good sense of composition.

Reggie's ambition, while he finds news photography rewarding thrilling and exciting, is to do special documentaries and feature films.

Baltimore born Daniels has spent nine years with WMAR-TV.

On black classical music

Great black music on records

I was just glancing through the 1978 catalog from Desto Records, which I must have been saving for a cold winter's night. I've long been the kind of person who got turned on by reference books, bibliographies, catalogs, encyclopedias and the like, but I know this is a strange hobby.

Anyway, Desto's catalog reminded me of several good friends they have honored in disc, and I note a few things I'd like to be able to review for you in the future.

First, the friends. There are two all - black anthologies whose value has been proven in about six or seven years of use.

One of these (DC 7102 - 3) is a collection of works for piano, performed by Natalie Hinderas. It was this volume which identified Natalie as an exceptional artist on the national level, although she would certainly not have considered herself invisible or inactive before this.

And this is a volume which belongs in every shool library without exception. It demonstrates a wide range of styles and a lot of fine creative talent, ranging from favorites by R. Nathaniel Dett and John Work to more contemporary idioms of Olly Wilson and Talib Hakim (aka Stephen Chambers).

Rather than list all the contents of this two - disc album (also available on cassette), I'll simply state that I'd almost be willing to guarantee the satisfaction of all who acquire this album on a double - your - money back offer. Those of you who are teachers or performers have probably already worn one copy out.

The second friend in Desto's catalog is an orchestral anthology (DC 7107) excellently performed by the Oakland Youth Orchestra. Here we find some of the same figures whose piano works had been represented by Ms. Hinderas, plus works by Ulysses Kay, William Dawson, and a very exciting performance of Arthur Cunningham's "Lullabye For a Jazz Baby", featuring a fine, but anonymous, trumpet player.

While the scope on this record lacks the comprehensive range of Columbia Record's "Black Composers Series", the function it originally filled is still well served. To hear young people performing so well is certainly a tribute to the entire musical climate of Oakland!

One other friend is a miscegnated anthology by pianist Alan Mandel, whose three - disc album (DC8445 - 7) permits us to dig back into Afro - Americana for a few brief works by Francis Johnson and Thomas Bethune ("Blind Tom"), both from the 19th century. These were the first recordings of any music by these rather significant figures.

If you haven't read Eileen Southern's "Music of Black Americans" yet, Francis Johnson was a celebrated bandmaster in Philadelphia who introduced the British concept of "pop" concerts to the United States, thus being a precusor of Arthur Fiedler by about a century.

And Bethune was one of a music's most remarkable geniuses, born in slavery and, in effect, stayed in bondage well after the Emancipation.

With respect to Bethune, I'm happy to note that a multi - volume study on him is soon to be issued from the pen of Geneva Handy Shoubail, currently director of the Afro - American Studies Program (perhaps one of the few which remains) at the Univeristy of Minnesota.

As for the potential friends, there are several Desto releases which I've not auditioned yet. For one thing, it appears that Desto has acquired the rights to reprint quite a large number of recordings which the late Dean Dixon recorded (all works by American composers, performed with European orchestras). Who knows how many recordings Dixon made? Here is the idea for yet another list, but the recordings need to be preserved and heard.

We also note some spirituals included on an album by the Syracuse Music Festival Chorus, and within Tom Glazer's second volume of "The Musical Heritage of America."

Dance-music

Impetus at CCB Little Theatre

"Dance can't be music or words. They (the audience) should look for what is there." And what is there is Impetus, Baltimore's first resident professional dance company. The Community College of Baltimore is proud to announce that on Saturday, Feb. 17, at 8 p.m., Impetus will perform at the Liberty Campus Little Theatre, 2901 Liberty Heights Avenue.

Under the direction of Jeff Duncan, Impetus is a new contemporary dance company whose desire and goal is to bring to the Baltimore - Washington area the highest quality of style, ideas, and presentation in concert dance. Based at University of Maryland Baltimore County, Impetus consists of UMBC faculty, graduates and advanced undergraduates, as well as professional guest artists.

Although the company has only been in existence since the fall of 1978, they have appeared at numerous colleges, community centers and theatres in the Baltimore - Washington area. They recently broke all attendance and box - office records during the January Dance Festival at the Baltimore Theatre Project, with Mr. Duncan's premiere work, Square — the Heptasoph Pieces, proving to be a genuine sensation. This piece, as well as other highly acclaimed works, will be featured at the upcoming CCB performance.

Impetus is an exotic experience in contemporary dance. Duncan describes his style as "a humanistic approach channeled through a very theatrical mode. It is an outgrowth of study with people interested in essentially open and lyrical movements, augmented by a large spectrum of dramatic devices. Human behavior serves as the material for the movements, for the fabric of the dance."

Jeff Duncan, director - choreographer of dance company "Impetus."

For further information concerning tickets call Dr. Richard Eldridge at 396-0450.

Walbrook Dancers at Goucher College

Eight students from Walbrook Senior High School in Baltimore will be among the dancers performing in a dance concert at Goucher College on Saturday, Feb. 24, 8 p.m. Kraushaar Auditorium.

The students, all seniors, will perform in a jazz piece, "Here's to Funky Broadway," and will dance in a duet to Neil Diamond's "He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother." They are all members of the Walbrook Dance Ensemble.

Sponsored by Goucher's Dance department, the concert will consist of works choreographed by three Goucher dance majors. One of those students, Jill Laill, recently completed her student teaching experience at Walbrook and selected her former pupils to perform in her works.

Also dancing in the program will be Goucher dance students and members of the Wally Saunders Dance Troup. Selections will range in style from ballet to modern dance and jazz.

Night Scene Seen — Reviving AFRO After Hours Tradition

With Bob Matthews

Pat's Place

Got a phone call this week from Walter Williams, who said: "If you don't think things are happening on a Wednesday, bad weather or not, you should check out our place."

Sounded fair enough to us, so undaunted by the terrible weather forecasts, we bundled up, cranked up old Betsy (our venerable car) and trundled off to Walter's place.

It is called "Pat's," and is in the 1500 block W. Saratoga St. By the time we got to Gilmor St., was convinced that we had made a mistake. The area looked like most places do after phase 1 of an urban renewal project.

There were myriads of vacant lots, interspersed with boarded-up buildings. But, finally arrived in the 1500 block, and lo and behold, there was a nondescript brick and mortar building sporting a naked light bulb which illuminated the painted words, "Pat's" in script.

Sighed, girded up our loins, and sallied forth. We need not have had any trepidations, for inside this place was like another world.

Practically an entire wall was decorated with red and white balloons, photographic color prints were judiciously placed around the front bar.

In the spacious rear area there was a throng. We mean, the place was packed, and the music was grooving, and everyone was getting down. Oh, the place was really moving.

Reggie K was the disco-jockey on the scene, and was really keeping things moving. Was interested to hear him announce that there were "munchies" available, on the house.

There is a one dollar admission charge on disco nights, which usually are Tues., Thurs., and Sundays. The disco happened on Wednesday this week in honor of Valentine's Day.

Joan Burton was busily working behind the bar, and is our usual custom, we did take her picture. But, the gremlins crept in, and we were unable to get any picture in this issue — so you'll just have to wait for next week's Night Scene for the pix.

No dress code here, spotted lots of dungarees rockin' and freaking on the floor, and all ages seem to flock to the place. It's only been open six months, and Walter Williams, who is owner and manager, says it's a winner.

We agree.

S.S.B.B.D. Club

Onward to East Baltimore to check out the S.S.B.B.D. Social Club in the 1100 block Rutland Ave. at Chase St. It's in a converted row house, and evidently they usurped the property next door, for the club is huge.

They have disco on Wednesdays from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. and again on Sundays from 6 to 10 p.m., and when we visited, every inch of dance floor space was occupied.

The proceedings are presided over by Bob Dockins, who acts as deejay as well as manager. When we wanted to take pictures of the barmaids, he hastened to inform us that they didn't have barmaids per se, some club members serve behind the bar on occasions.

Anyway, we took a picture of Yvonne Dutton and Mary Gillis who happened to be on duty this p.m., plus Dockins, who named the club.

He's a former radio station deejay, and used to signoff his show by saying: "This is the soul socking, bobbing, Bob Dockins." Hence — S.S.B.B.D.

Bob plans to try a jazz night, with the first one held Thursday, Feb. 15, and another scheduled for Thursday Feb. 22. Mickey Field and Jimmy Wells will be featured, along with Bill Nelson on bass, and Ronnie Dawson, drums.

Oh yes, there's a $2 admission charge on these special nights, but there's an interesting gimmick too — if you pay on Wed. or Sun., then things are free on Mondays — neat, huh?

Mostly for Music

Sportsman's Lounge will have Judd Watkins, along with El Prince for the Saturday afternoon jazz set. Of course, Brenda Alford and her trio will be the regular weekend artists.

Will have to chat with Brenda and her manager. Bob Haynes of the Sportsman's says he would like to book her for a month at a time, but her manager says "Nyet." So the stints are just for two weeks. A pity, that's hardly enough time for the word to get around.

The Bandstand has one of the top pianists of the era on hand, Harold Mabern, along with Reggie Johnson on bass, who is simply spectacular, and Jimmi Johnson (no relation) on drums.

Caught the latter two at the newly introduced "Mike's Night" on Wednesdays, when they accompanied Arnold Sterling, alto sax, and Charlie Covington on piano. Need we say more.

Gossip Time

After an auspicious start, Johnny Griffin's House of Jazz is apparently dark. Perhaps it will be opened or weekends, but when we dropped by last Wednesday, it was shattered.

Had heard sad, sad tales about a string of non-payment items, and vulcanized checks floated among musicians who played the room, but have not had a chance to check it all out with Johnny.

We will.

Dr. Walter Lee at Gallery 409

Dr. Walter Lee, obolst will appear in recital on Feb. 25, at 6 p.m. at Gallery 409, 409 N. Charles St. sponsored by the Urban Services Cultural Arts Project.

Dr. Lee will be assisted by Harry Malkus, mezzo - soprano and accompanied by Patricia Springer. The program includes works by Farinaby, Telemann, Handel, Kay, Bozza and Jacob. Admission is free, but donations will be accepted.

Dr. Lee began his early music studies at Douglass High School. He studied further at the Peabody Conservatory where he received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees.

In May of 1978, he was among the first to be conferred Doctor of Musical Arts by the Johns Hopkins University.

Not only is Dr. Lee proficient on the oboe, he also plays flute and English horn. He has performed with jazz combos, wind ensembles and symphony orchestras including the Baltimore Symphony and the Symphony of the New World in New York.

Dr. Lee has taught both privately and on the faculties of the Peabody Conservatory, Preparatory Department, the Settlement Music School of Philadelphia and the New York Schools.