

ARTS & SOCIETY

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Books of the Region

Beatles, battles, betrayed, Bay waters

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Yellow Submarine is the 1968 cartoon movie in which the Beatles travel the deep seas to Pepperland, where Sgt. Pepper's Band is being held captive by the Blue Meanies. The Fab Four appear as themselves briefly, at the end. The film is a classic — and a hot book subject nowadays is how the famous films, one by one, came to be made.

Robert R. Hieronimus began assembling *Yellow Submarine* material in the 1970s; now his book, *Inside the Yellow Submarine* (Krause, 432 pages, \$24.95) is out. So let listeners to Dr. Bob and his wife Zoh, hosts of a long-running futurist and environmentalist radio program, make whoopee: The book, based on interviews with dozens of people from the original film crew, is good stuff — lively, insightful and authoritative.

Yellow Submarine, the movie, was made by some 200 anti-Disneyites, 150 of them women, in Swinging London, with a tight budget and a rigid 11-month deadline. The director was Canadian; the art director, German. For a while, there was no script at all; Peter Max had nothing to do with the project; other actors, not the uncooperative Beatles, spoke the animated Beatles' lines. Those seven-day work weeks nonetheless had time for 13 illegitimate babies and five marriages. The show's big song, "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds," translated as LSD. Hieronimus points out, though, that only earnest, clear-headed people could have produced all those oversized cels.

For one moral: love and music can unite even such opposites as Pepperlanders and Meanies. For another, Hieronimus quotes George Harrison: "The entertainment industry is almost entirely controlled by the Blue Meanies."

