

## speaking of birthdays...

Yeah, we're tickled pink that Baltimore is turning 200.

But what about us? We're going to be 90 next year, making us the oldest city magazine in the continental U.S.! Where's our parade? Where's our citation from the mayor? (Uh, sorry. We needed to get that off our chests.)

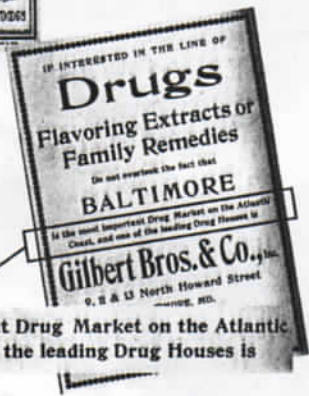
Anyway, in the spirit of shameless self-promotion, we figured it might be fun to take a glance back at *Baltimore* magazine: The Early Years. We dug up some old issues of the magazine, starting in 1910 (as far as we know, there are no existing copies from the years 1907-1909).

Okay, we cannot tell a lie. Some of this stuff was pretty dry. You could even go so far as to say boring. Here's what the cover of our magazine looked like in August 1911:



Articles back then had compelling titles like "Conventions in Which the Merchants and Manufacturers Association Will Participate" and "Our Greatest 'Natural' Problem—The Oyster." Yee-haw!

And here was one of our many cryptic ads (from December 1910):



is the most important Drug Market on the Atlantic Coast, and one of the leading Drug Houses is

But apparently, the magazine was well-received by its readers, as evidenced by the following letter to the editor:

*I desire to congratulate you on the highly creditable publication, Baltimore. The October issue just at hand is superb and reflects great credit on its managers. It is a corking good number, both from a literary and typographical standpoint.—From the president of a new manufacturing plant in Baltimore.*

In our efforts to remain a "credible publication" and, more importantly, a "corking good number," look for more *Baltimore* flashbacks in the months to come.

**W**hen we think screen painting, we think old-time Highlandtown. We think kitsch. We think dying art.

But would you believe screen painting is alive and thriving in Catonsville? Timonium? Owings Mills?

"People are moving out of the city, and they're taking screen painting with them," says Dee Herget, an Essex artist who's been painting screens for 19 years. Folks who grew up in the city remember painted screens from their childhoods, Herget says. They get nostalgic. "Young couples grew up with it, and now they want it in their homes."

In case you're not up on your Bawlmer history, screen painting is a native folk art, started in 1913 by Highlandtown grocer William Oktavec. Back then, the screens had a dual purpose—they were both decorative and kept nosy neighbors from looking into eye-level rowhouse windows. And FYI: If your screen painting didn't have water, swans, or a cottage with red roof, it was considered a wash-out.

These days screen painting is more decorative than functional, especially in the 'burbs, where houses are set back on lawns and everybody has central air. But people are still fascinated by that painted mesh. Many even buy them to hang inside on their walls, says Herget.

At a recent demonstration at the Baltimore City Life Museums, about 40 folks from all over the city and suburbs showed up to watch Herget, a self-taught screen painter, practice her craft and to purchase screens (\$20 for a typical one-panel window). And for wannabe screen painters, the Screen Society offers classes once or twice a year at the Canton Library.

So will screen painting endure? Will Baltimore continue to tacky up the world into the next millenium? "Oh, yeah," says Herget. "There's always been someone around who paints screens. And there always will be."

• MICHELLE ALBERT

# screen play



Screenpainter Dee Herget. Note the all-important cottage with a red roof.

## Zoh knows

We always thought that WCBM talk-radio host Zoh Hieronimus was just a little loopy. Now it turns out she might also be . . . right?

For years, Hieronimus and hubby Bob have been prattling on about the possibility of intelligent life on Mars. Of course, this was just another one of their dally conspiracy theories (they've also prattled on about the Loch Ness Monster, the scourge of One World government, and the nefarious intent of the Masonic seal on the dollar bill). So sue us if we were a bit skeptical.

Needless to say, Zoh is feeling pretty darn vindicated ever since a NASA

report suggested that there was once life on Mars. Never mind the fact that even NASA is backing away from the reports. Never mind the fact that under the best of possible circumstances we're talking single-celled organisms, not little green men. Faster than you can say "media conspiracy," Zoh sent out a press release with the following breathless claim: "Life on Mars? The true story was first told in the American media not by NASA on August 7, 1996 but by Zoh M. Hieronimus on July 11, 1995 on Talk 680 WCBM radio, Baltimore, MD. USA."

Zoh, what can we say? You were right. We were wrong. End of story.



It's not easy being green: WCBM's Zoh Hieronimus.