

FACE TIME

Bleak news on Farrah Fawcett disputed

Farrah Fawcett is being treated for anal cancer that has spread to her liver and has been hospitalized for a complication from a routine treatment, a producer who worked with the actress and her doctor said Monday, The Associated Press reported.

In separate phone interviews with AP, Fawcett's producer and her doctor said that Fawcett is in a Los Angeles hospital, recovering from complications from a medical procedure in Germany, and is "not on death's door," as the producer, Craig Nevius, put it.

Nevius, who has worked with the actress, confirmed that the 62-year-old "Charlie's Angels" star, who has been fighting



was arrested Sunday on suspicion of bringing narcotics into a jail facility and was being held on \$25,000 bail.



AP PHOTO 2004

Spitzer: The gremlins made him do it

In a peculiar interview with the "Today" show's Matt Lauer on Monday, disgraced former New York governor Eliot Spitzer made reference to his personal demons, er, "gremlins," and acknowledged that, yes, it did occur to him that someone, somewhere would figure out that he was seeing a high-priced call girl.

"It crossed my mind," he said of getting caught. "But you ignore the obvious at certain moments because you simply don't want to confront it."

While emphasizing that what he did was "egregious" (he used the word twice) and saying there is "no excuse for his behavior" (repeated three times), a tense but self-assured Spitzer also noted that he has faced his flaws.

"I have tried to address these gremlins, confront them," he said, offering a tantalizing image but few specifics.

Also intriguing: Spitzer told his interviewer that the call-girl period did not last long "in the grand context of my life."

How long did the period last in the humble context of an ordinary life? We still don't know.

—Nara Schoenberg

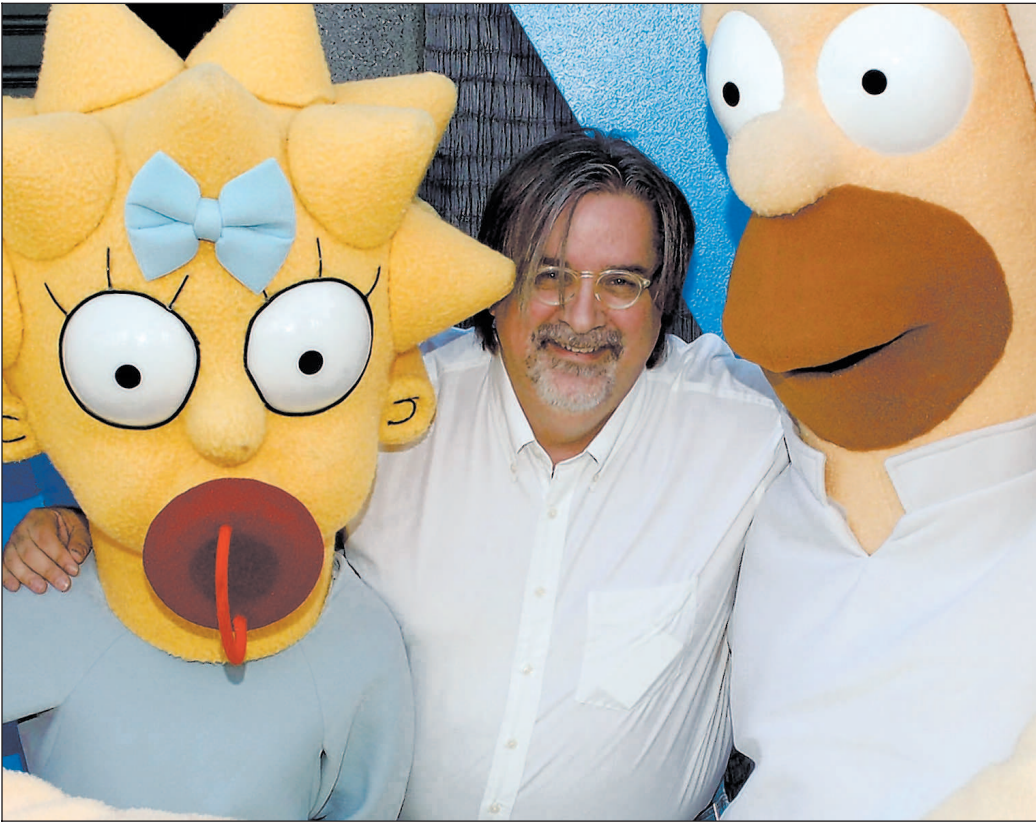
SOUND BITE

"I don't have a Twitter, a MySpace or a Facebook or anything like that. I kind of value ... people not knowing where I am or what I'm doing."

—Zac Efron, telling People.com that he avoids the latest technology

The Ticker

Lindsay Lohan and Samantha Ronson reportedly have split, according to Usmagazine.com, which details a Friday night fight and Saturday a.m. lock change. ... Trista and Ryan Sutter, stars of the first season of "The Bachelorette," have welcomed their second child, a girl named Blakesley Grace Sutter, People.com reports. ... Tom Brady and Gisele Bundchen reportedly were married again Saturday in Costa Rica, AP reports. A photographer with Agence France-Presse said a bodyguard for Bundchen shot at his car after he refused to give up his camera. ... Kiefer Sutherland and Chace Crawford have been named to co-star alongside rapper 50 Cent in the drug drama "Twelve," according to Variety.



Cartoonist Matt Groening, creator of "The Simpsons," will take part in this year's Chicago Humanities Festival, which will tackle the theme of laughter. AP PHOTO 2005

Chicago Humanities fest really is a laughing matter

By Patrick T. Reardon  
TRIBUNE REPORTER

Laughter makes the world go 'round. But why?

That's the question the 20th annual Chicago Humanities Festival will address this year with programs Oct. 17 in the Hyde Park neighborhood and from Nov. 4 through Nov. 15 in scores of venues, mainly in and around the Loop.

"Laughter is deeply, deeply important, but not lofty like last year's theme, 'Thinking Big,'" says CHF executive director Stuart Flack.

More down to earth, and just the thing for a world battered by economic woes. But he warns: Don't expect a comedy festival.

"We're not going to have people doing stand-up," he says. "We are going to have people who are well-known comedians, but ask them to reflect on the subject and think about the subject in people's lives."

"There will be scholars there, and, let's say, we'll have a program on the 1st Amendment and comedy which could talk about Lenny Bruce and George Carlin's 'Seven Words You Can Never Say on Television.'"

CHF staff members are still working to nail down participants, but Flack said they will include anthropologists, economists, historians, neuroscientists, poets, musicians, writers and artists.

Among those committed to appear are cartoonists Matt ("The Simpsons") Groening and Lynda Barry; psychologist Irene Pepperberg, an expert on animal intelligence and humor; Barbara Ehrenreich, author of the 2007 book "Dancing in the Streets: A History of Collective Joy," and Firoozeh Dumas, author of "Funny in Farsi: A Memoir of Growing Up Iranian in America."

Flack says that a major focus of the festival will be on ways various ethnic and racial groups use and experience humor.

For instance, the festival is hoping to offer a program on Cantinflas, whose legal name

Themes to think about

During the last two decades, the themes of the Chicago Humanities Festival have ranged across the wide spectrum of human thought and experience. Here's a list:

- 1990 Expressions of Freedom
- 1991 Culture Contact
- 1992 From Freedom to Equality
- 1993 From Communication to Understanding
- 1994 Crime and Punishment
- 1995 Love & Marriage
- 1996 Birth and Death
- 1997 Work & Play
- 1998 He/She
- 1999 New & Old
- 2000 NOW!
- 2001 Words & Pictures
- 2002 Brains & Beauty
- 2003 Saving + Spending
- 2004 Time
- 2005 Home and Away
- 2006 Peace and War
- 2007 Climate of Concern
- 2008 Thinking Big
- 2009 Laughter

was Mario Moreno, the comedian and actor who was a pioneer and major influence on the Mexican film industry.

Efforts are also under way to bring comedian and civil rights activist Dick Gregory to the festival.

"It's a great moment to have laughter as our theme," Flack says. "People need to laugh in good times and in bad."

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Chris Brown pleads not guilty in assault

LOS ANGELES —Chris Brown has pleaded not guilty to threatening and assaulting his girlfriend, fellow music superstar Rihanna.

The 19-year-old R&B singer appeared in a Los Angeles courtroom Monday alongside his attorney, Mark Geragos.

He entered his plea in a soft voice while his mother sat in the first row, red-eyed.

Brown was charged in March by Los Angeles County prosecutors with felony assault likely to cause great bodily injury and mak-

ing criminal threats. He was arrested nearly a month earlier after police said he was involved in an early morning altercation with a woman who identified the "Run It!" singer as her attacker.

Court records list Brown's victim as "Robyn F." Rihanna's real name is Robyn Rihanna Fenty.

If convicted, Brown could be sentenced to probation or nearly five years in prison.

—Associated Press

Diva delivers one-of-a-kind song

Continued from Page 1

"Shock value is really important when showing up," she says, applying Corvette-red lipstick. A moment later, she pauses, assesses her progress, then declares: "No, more makeup."

She applies Preparation H under her eyes, which tightens the skin and gets rid of the morning shadows. A natural brunet, she lightens her eyebrows to complement the blond wig. To warm up her vocal cords, she drinks water and sighs loudly, melodically and—it seems, to the uninitiated listener—obscenely.

After 20 minutes in front of the bathroom mirror, Guccione moves to an upright piano in the living room, where she sings scales. Then, a snippet from Giacomo Puccini's "Gianni Schicchi." Her first attempt at a high note sputters, causing her to break into laughter: "It's too early in the morning for a high D," she says.

She has a reliable regimen, a ritual. "Are you going to sing with me? Give me some good luck?" she asks Quesadora, one of her three small dogs. As Guccione again launches into scales, the tiny bichon frise howls along, on pitch.

"The first time she sang with me, she wet the couch," Guccione says, laughing. People are much the same, in a strange way.

"I love the art form," Guccione says of opera. "It can evoke such emotion in people. It's healing, in a way. It gives you permission to have all these emotions."

Guccione herself has been moved to tears after a job.

"There was one job where I had to go to



Singer Rose Guccione warms up her vocal cords before a personal appearance. TOM VAN DYKE/ TRIBUNE PHOTO

this nursing home," she says. "It was a 50-year-old woman who had a stroke, lost her sight, but loved opera. And for her, I sang genuine opera arias. That made my day. That was really special."

Moments later, she slips on a furry vest, braids and a horned helmet. She looks, for all intents and purposes, like Bugs Bunny from the cartoon "What's Opera, Doc?" But it's the stereotype people are attracted to, she says.

"It's kind of like introducing opera and making it approachable for people who might otherwise be intimidated by it," she says. "It shouldn't be intimidating. The bottom line of opera is: It's about life."

Taking one final look in the mirror, she says, "I think I was born to be a blond."

And with that, she grabs her spear, tilts her viking helmet up and heads out the door to her next conquest.

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