

7/2004
indie
culture

whose *My Year of Meats* took readers behind the scenes in the meat industry. In her latest, Japanese-American Yumi Fuller returns to the Idaho family farm she ran away from at age 14. There she discovers a brewing conflict involving genetically modified potatoes, heirloom seeds, and her father as the unlikely hero of a group of environmental activists.



October *Hungry for the World: A Memoir* by Kim Barnes (Anchor)

The daughter of a devout Pentecostal father,

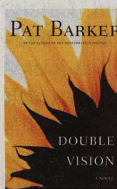
Barnes grew up in rural Idaho, bookish and yearning for the wider world. This is the story of her bold departure from her home town just after her high school graduation in 1976. With no skills and no prospects, she fared forth anyway, armed only with determination and a desire to live her own life.



November *Outlet* by Randy Taguchi (Vertical)

Taguchi's brusque prose style and heady mix of sex, spirituality, and mystery have made her a household name

in her native Japan, where all three of her novels have been bestsellers. *Outlet* follows the adventures of Yuki, who discovers a strange talent for sexual healing while searching for the truth about her brother's suicide.



December *Double Vision* by Pat Barker (Farrar, Straus, Giroux)

This history teacher turned writer won the Booker prize in 1993 for her stunning *Regeneration*

trilogy, among the best World War I novels ever written. Since then, Barker has explored contemporary themes. In this deft psychological novel, a burned-out war reporter retreats to a small town in search of respite and instead uncovers a sinister mystery. **U**



The art of selling ice cream

Our Guilty Pleasures

Utne staffers reveal their forbidden favorites

Judge Parker

I began following this comic as a kid in 1966, and since then I'll bet I haven't missed more than 30 of the daily strips, even while working in Japan and Mexico, and traveling in Europe. When it debuted in 1952, it followed distinguished, greying-at-the-temples jurist Alan Parker, but it now spends all of its time with his hunkier 30ish protégé, lawyer Sam Driver, along with Sam's wife, megabuck heiress Abby, and their adopted daughters, Sophie and Neddy. It's a straight dramatic strip, without the ironic-hipster appeal of, say, *Mark Trail* (which is so stiff and strange that it might have been concocted by German performance artists; see below).

Still, *Parker* can be charmingly behind the times: a "fast" high school girl will wear a head scarf and dangly earrings—the gypsy look, right out of Bizet's *Carmen*. The setting is a small, presumably Southern town with more

than its share of colorful grifters, bitter loners, mysterious visitors, and other plot-generators. But the best stuff is in the relationship between teenage Neddy (proud, beautiful, insecure) and pre-pubescent Sophie (nerdy, resourceful, sharp-tongued, and already grown-up). When they're on stage, *Judge Parker* crackles.

—Jon Spayde

Ice Cream Franchise Poster Art ▲

There was a classic TV commercial in the '80s called "The Land of Dairy Queen," in which the camera soared above an ice cream sundae landscape—rivers of hot chocolate and butterscotch flowed around boulders of nuts; cities of curlicued ice cream cones glistened next to mountains of chocolate chunks. This edible wonderland lives on in posters found at franchise ice cream shops today, and I love looking at the stuff as much as eating it. This summer, at my hometown

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