



From TRASH to TREASURE

By AARON KIDD
FOR THE GAMECOCK

DAVE BIRD AND VAL MYERS, CO-hosts of Turner South's Emmy Award-winning television series "Junkin'," have been on a constant quest to unite people all over the world with the most odd, unique and interesting "junk" they can find.

Traveling around in a vintage 1970 El Camino nicknamed The General Flea, Bird and Myers have visited flea markets, yard sales and thrift shops all over the South, including Columbia. The show's viewers act as silent companions to Myers and Bird as they comb through endless piles of junk in search of odd, kitschy and obscure items.

After haggling the prices down as low as possible, their purchases are placed up for sale on eBay, and each show ends with an update telling who bought the item and for how much it sold. All profits are donated to Goodwill at the end of the year.

Bird, who created, co-produces and writes the show, is a Tennessee native who looks more like a '70s-era NASCAR driver than the host of a television program, which adds to the show's charm. He created "Junkin'" out of boredom from a mundane job in video production.

"The idea floated in one day as I sat at my desk in my boring office at my boring dead-end job," Bird said. "It's weird, but the whole concept just materialized over about a 10-minute period. We tweaked it later on, but 95 percent of the format came to me all at once."

Myers, a Seattle native, hosted an Internet radio show that held a top-10 spot on Real Player for more than six months of which Bird was a regular listener.

"I was brainstorming casting ideas and it hit me that she might be perfect for the job," Bird said. "She was always funny and smart, and I really dug the tunes she picked."

According to Myers, she knew that she and Bird shared a similar sense of humor after he sent her a copy of Dancing Outlaw, a video documentary about a hillbilly mountain dancer with multiple personalities.

"We met for the first time while shooting the pilot for 'Junkin',' but we had an e-mail

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DAVID BIRD
HOST OF 'JUNKIN''

thing going," Myers said. "Also, Dave sent me [Dancing Outlaw] and I think we bonded comedy-wise."

"Junkin'," which shoots two episodes every other weekend, always gets permission from flea markets before showing up with the cameras, but not from the yard sales they visit.

"Flea markets always know we're coming," Bird said. "Yard sales don't know until we pile out of the car and ask them on the spot. We've only been turned down a few times."

As for the flea markets themselves, the "Junkin'" hosts acknowledge a recent trend where many seller's carry new, pre-packaged items at their booth's instead of the prerequisite old, cheap junk that used to be the norm.

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Bird's wife, Alyson, serves as the eBay auction administrator and ships the items straight out of the couple's home in Cleveland, Tenn.

"My house is a constant pile of junk," Bird said.

When asked about the highest price paid on eBay for a "Junkin'" item, Bird and Myers responded in unison: "E.T.' necklace."

"I bought a bag of old 'E.T.' necklaces for \$2.50 at a flea market in Athens, Georgia," Myers said. "One went for \$425. They were the original 1982 hang tags."

"It was just a little plastic image of 'E.T.'s head," Bird said. "The others went for more reasonable amounts, like \$5 or \$10."

The "Junkin'" co-hosts claim they are not allowed to purchase items for themselves, but admit they do keep things from time to time.

"I keep things when we have multiple items," Myers said. "Like, I took an 'E.T.' necklace."

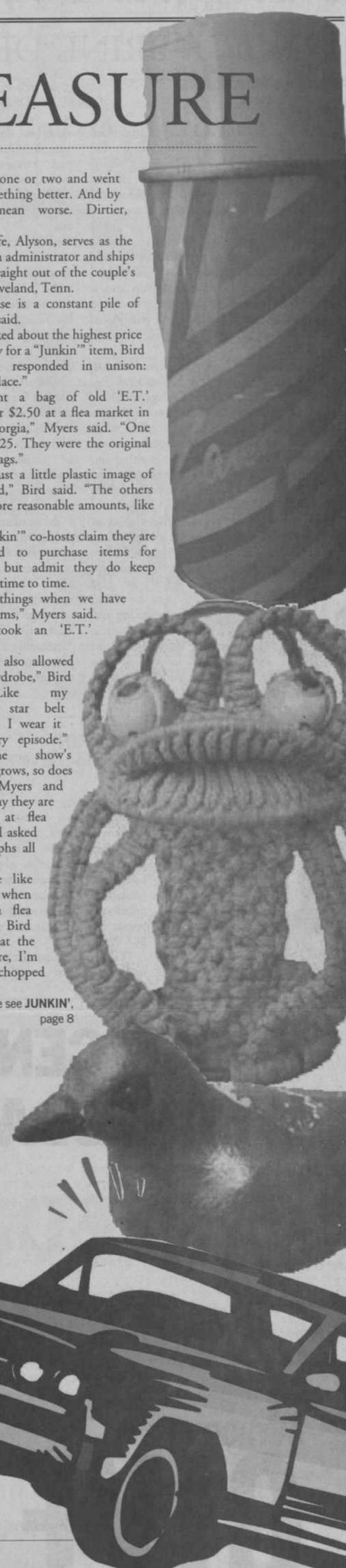
"We are also allowed to keep wardrobe," Bird said. "Like my homemade star belt from 1976. I wear it during every episode."

As the show's popularity grows, so does fame for Myers and Bird, who say they are recognized at flea markets and asked for autographs all the time.

"We are like rock stars when we're at a flea market," Bird said. "But at the grocery store, I'm still just chopped

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MOVIE REVIEW

Bullock charms again in 'Congeniality' sequel

"Miss Congeniality 2: Armed and Fabulous" ★★★★★ out of ★★★★★

By MARJORIE RIDDLE
FOR THE GAMECOCK

Finally, there is a sequel that lives up to the original. "Miss Congeniality 2: Armed and Fabulous" is just as funny and, well, fabulous as the first "Miss Congeniality."

Sandra Bullock returns as the beloved Gracie Hart, FBI agent and forced beauty queen. Heather Burns and William Shatner also reprise their roles as Cheryl Frasier and Stan Fields.

"Miss Congeniality 2" begins three weeks after the original movie left off with Hart trying to ignore her public adoration following the pageant. Hart and fellow FBI agents take on an undercover mission and attempt to foil a bank robbery, but their efforts go awry after Hart's cover is

blown because of her "congenial" popularity.

Hart is asked to step down as a field agent and become the new face of the FBI. Hart begrudgingly accepts. During the next 10 months, a book is written about Hart's life and career, and she appears on multiple talk shows, holds news conferences and presents an overall glamorized view of the FBI.

But when Cheryl and Stan are kidnapped by loan sharks, Hart and her entourage — fiery fellow agent Sam Fuller (played by Regina King), Hart's flamboyant hair dresser Joel and two other image consultants — travel to Las Vegas to help rescue Miss America and the pageant host.

Hart has to work under the egotistical Las Vegas Bureau Director Collins to find her friends, and Agent Jeff Foreman is assigned to work the case with Hart and Fuller.

An embarrassing and hysterical episode occurs when Hart chases

after and tackles a supposed Dolly Parton look-alike, only to find that she is the real Dolly Parton.

After the FBI receives bad press for the incident, Collins takes Hart and Fuller off the case and insists they return to New York.

Hart and Fuller convince Foreman to help them investigate the kidnapping on their own. Hilariousness results as the ransom deadline approaches, and Hart must single-handedly crack the case if she is to save Cheryl and Stan's lives.

Bullock is as lovable and funny as she was in the original, showing again why she is one of Hollywood's premiere actresses.

Amid the film's comedy, Hart reveals a vulnerability and depth, leading the audience to understand more of her character — specifically why she chose to become an FBI agent.

King plays the same tough but compassionate character she perfected in "Jerry Maguire," packing as much punch with her

sarcastic retorts as her lethal dropkicks.

Bullock and King both are in top shape as the boisterous female FBI agents, and for once, a movie showcases two actresses with admirable body types — muscular and trim, but not unreasonably skinny.

For a comedic sequel, "Miss Congeniality 2" more than satisfies with the same clever wit as the original. And while the plot is equally corny and predictable, it is also enjoyable.

The film's only drawback is the hard-hitting violence wrought by King as the unruly Fuller. While she sheds her crude attitude by the film's end, her initial maneuvers will make viewers cringe.

Fans of the original "Miss Congeniality" will absolutely love "Miss Congeniality 2: Armed and Fabulous."



PHOTO SPECIAL TO THE GAMECOCK

Sandra Bullock reprises her role as FBI agent Gracie Hart in the comedic sequel, "Miss Congeniality 2: Armed and Fabulous."

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