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Volume 23 • Number 14

March 10, 2005

(303) 773-8313 • Published every Thursday • 75¢

## Interest in 'girls and sports' inspires comic collaboration

*Cherry Creek and Kent Denver grads 'make it' in comic strip business*

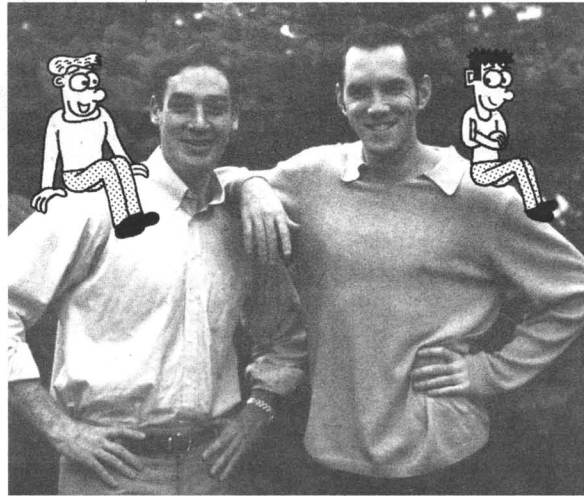
BY SHIRLEY SMITH

There they were: two college guys on a tour bus in Denmark just talking about sports and girls and girls and sports. Finally, the young woman who was sitting in front of them said she couldn't stand it any longer. "Please shut up, all you talk about are girls and sports."

The light bulb of inspiration went on and the idea for their comic strip *Girls & Sports* was born.

Andrew Feinstein laughs when he tells this story, so you can't be quite sure if he's putting you on. His partner in comic strip creation, Justin Borus, swears it's true.

It is a fact that Cherry Creek High School graduate Feinstein, and his best friend and business partner Borus, a graduate of Kent Denver School, turn out seven strips a week of *Girls & Sports*. They sell them to over 175 newspapers, and more than 100 of those aren't college papers, Feinstein maintains. Their audience has expanded from college campuses to include readers in their 20s and 30s.



Justin Borus, left, and Andrew Feinstein, creators of the comic strip "Girls & Sports."

The two main characters – Bradley and Marshall – are loosely based on themselves, Andrew readily admits. The guys are kind of klutzy and clueless, but rather sweet all the same. "Swinging bachelors in pursuit of one true love," he cracks.

Borus said he is "closer" to "Bradley," who has a girlfriend in the comic, as does Borus in real

life. He said Marshall is more like Feinstein: "perpetually single."

"It's making fun of yourself. I find myself in one quagmire after another," Feinstein said with a laugh. "It's an equal opportunity to make fun of everyone."

"Bradley" and "Marshall" do the same kinds of things that Borus

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and Feinstein like to do in real life: "go to sporting events, bars," said Borus.

Feinstein, who grew up in Greenwood Village, said that he has been drawing all his life on menus, napkins, whatever was available. Jo Cole, director of the Curtis School Arts and Humanities Center, wrote a story about Feinstein for *The Villager* when he was 12 years old. He told her: "I will definitely be a cartoonist when I grow up." He was already creating cartoon characters.

He and Borus were friendly in high school. He describes the 6-foot 2-inch Borus as "the funniest person I've ever met." (Feinstein is 6 foot 5 inches tall). Their comic strip "alter egos" are a couple of lanky guys. They got to be good friends and partners on the comic strip after their time abroad in college.

After high school Feinstein went on to graduate from Emory College in Atlanta, Ga., and Borus, Williams College in Williamstown, Mass.

Their collaboration is long distance. Feinstein lives in California where he works for Warner Brothers

producing and developing cartoons. Borus manages an investment fund in Denver. Borus does most of the writing, and Feinstein the artwork, although they both come up with ideas.

Not only do the two produce the comic strip, but have also marketed it themselves. "Rather than go syndicated, why not use the power of the Internet, sweat equity?" they figured.

It has meant being tenacious and a lot of hard work, but Fein-



stein claims that their method works. Their strip runs in more than 80 mainstream publications including *The New York Daily News*, *The Denver Daily News*, *The Vail Trail* and now *The Villager*. Feinstein said, "*Girls & Sports* has even become a hit in *Stars and Stripes*, the newspaper distributed to the U.S. military worldwide. "It's because of our strong appeal to young people," Feinstein said.

He pointed out that he doesn't

have hard data, but judging from their fan mail, he believes that comic strips are the first thing people read in their newspapers.

The two creators mine the topics they say most young people are interested in: dating, relationships, the bar scene, sports, outdoor activities, working out and more. There is enough commonality of experience in their comics about two naïve guys in the world of relationships that the strips have a universal charm.