

# etCetera

September 14, 1981

## From stage to rock'n'roll. . . and everything in between

By Susie Bridges

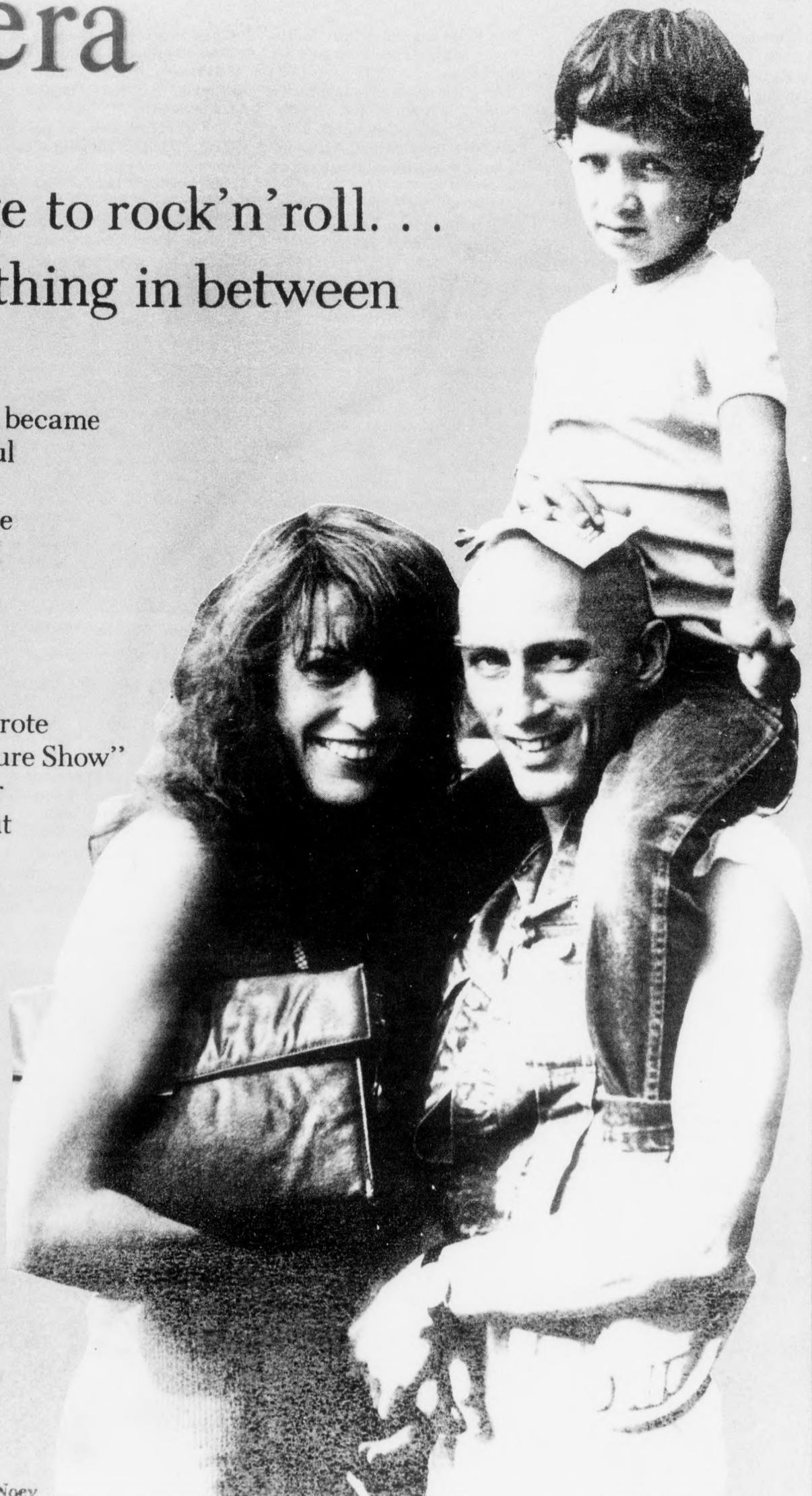
He wrote the movie that became one of the most successful cult films of all times.

He's written a new movie with as much music and madness as his first box office success.

And now he wants to be a rock'n'roll star.

Richard O'Brien, who wrote "The Rocky Horror Picture Show" and played the character Riff Raff, plans to live out all his teen-age dreams by his 40th birthday this year.

*(See O'Brien, page two)*



Cover photo by Ben Noey

# O'Brien

*Continued from page one*

He began as an actor in London, landing parts in the musicals "Hair" and "Jesus Christ Superstar."

Then he wrote the book, songs, stage and screen versions of "Rocky Horror."

He followed with another adventure for Brad and Janet (the innocent and luckless central characters in "Rocky Horror") in his latest movie, "Shock Treatment."

But there's more to O'Brien than acting and writing unconventional screenplays. He draws and paints. And he writes songs.

"I'm still just a kid with a guitar," he joked. He reminisced about what he calls the "golden age of rock'n'roll," its enthusiasm and energy.

Contemporary rock, like that of Eric Clapton, O'Brien said, bores him to tears. "I want to see energy... the Bam Da Dam Oompa Oompa."

He squinted his eyes and sang in the tiny fern bar in Dallas, beating the strings of his invisible guitar.

He described himself as thin. He is bald and has a demon smile. His Ajax-white jeans cling to the bones of his legs, and the cut-off white T-shirt revealed arms that were tight, but not muscular. His thumbnail was blue, like a carpenter's who'd missed a nail.

"Physically I suggest I'm strange, but I'm fairly straight....There's no great craziness going on," he said.

"I am a royalist. It's part of my heritage, part of my life," said O'Brien, discussing his ties to Britain. "I have socialist inclinations... but I believe in a democratic society."

His belief in a democratic society doesn't extend completely into his friendships.

"A prerequisite to being my friend is listening to me play the guitar," he said, then laughed. He glanced to Jane Moss, sitting on his right, who had been introduced as his "friend."

She wore a bright pink mini-dress, silver sandals, heart-rimmed sunglasses and a six-inch silver bracelet. She smiled and nodded. She chuckled, implying that much of their time together is shared with his guitar as he bangs out the six chords he said he knows.

Song is his best medium of expression, he said.

"I do not write scripts to exploit or extol my own philosophies of life," he said seriously. "I don't plan to ram any messages down anybody's throat."

With no messages said to be intended, the reasons he writes are varied.

"Rocky Horror" was partially inspired by O'Brien's childhood fascination with trashy horror flicks.

Also, he said he was out of work and wanted to write something he'd want to be in, something he'd want to see.

"I thought Rocky might appeal to about 15 and a half people," he said nonchalantly. Anyone that smokes a little pot, likes science fiction, is a rock'n'roll fan or who is "like myself" he said he expected to like "Rocky Horror."

The young people that have flocked to see the film week after week, some enacting the parts of their favorite characters, are "frustrated actors and actresses," said O'Brien.

Stage success is a "dreadful rush," he said in a high-pitched British

tone, and acting along with the show gives them a theatrical outlet.

O'Brien himself said he is delighted by "Rocky Horror," but not seduced by it.

"Rocky has been a wonderful thing... but my life hasn't centered around it," he said.

In writing "Shock Treatment," O'Brien said, he was "aiming to have the opportunity... to indulge in more fantasy and madness."



Richard O'Brien

Fantasy, especially on television, is "always flickering in the corner," he said.

He recalled the night Dallas' J.R. Ewing was shot. "They showed it on the 9 o'clock news in London, just like they did Kennedy and the Pope... that's nonsense. We're talking about fantasy here!"

Television fantasy has even affected him, O'Brien said. Documentary television, and what he calls trash—"Hawaii 5-0," "Mission Impossible" and "Sgt. Bilko"—are his favorites. "And 'Star Trek.' I'm always convinced I'll see a new one."

This human infatuation with

television fantasy is what "Shock Treatment" is all about.

"I hope 'Shock Treatment' is a huge box office success. I want the single to pour out of the radio," he said, "but I want these things so people will give me money and say 'You did allright in that, here, go have some fun.'"

Having fun, not making money, is what O'Brien said is his motivation. "I don't do it if I don't enjoy it."

With "Shock Treatment" soon to be released, O'Brien said he will soon be launching his next career project—a rock'n'roll album and tour.

His five-piece band will tour to promote the album in the next year or so.

The band has no name yet, despite the suggestion made by O'Brien's 9-year-old son, Linus, named for the "Peanuts" character, climbed onto his father's lap, urging him to call the group "Oscar Drill and the Bits" after the young rock'n'roll band in "Shock Treatment."

Songs from both "Rocky Horror" and "Shock Treatment," as well as other original pieces, will be included on the album.

With the album's release, O'Brien will have accomplished all his teenage dreams: writing, acting and being in a rock'n'roll band.

So what comes next? Who knows.

"I'm like driftwood. I never plan at all," said O'Brien. "I only work a year to 18 months ahead. To see a big black hole, a tunnel with no light, that would be dreadful."

He did, however, say he will direct a film or stage production. He might direct his own work, but, he said, there is a danger of being too limited.

"Writers need directors..." O'Brien said. "You can't do everything well."

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THE GANG—Hopeful actors and actresses performed scenes from "Rocky Horror" at "Shock Treatment."

Photo by Lyle McBride

## 'Shock Treatment' not another 'Rocky'

By Susie Bridges

There is no blood-thirsty Transvestite from Transsexual Transylvania, no hump-backed butler, and no Rocky.

But the violent oddities remain.

"It's not Rocky, it's something else," writer Richard O'Brien told a full house at a sneak preview of "Shock Treatment," his latest movie, in Denton, Texas, Aug. 28. Texas is the test area for the new movie.

"Shock Treatment," from the creators of "The Rocky Horror Picture Show," is another adventure in the lives of the innocent suburban couple Brad and Janet Majors (Cliff de Young and Jessica Harper).

Brad and Janet are at home in Denton, USA, described in song as a place with "tolerance for the ethnic races," as "the Bethlehem of the West," and, of course, as "The Home of Happiness."

The people of the town, set inside a television studio, are caught up in a whirlwind of game shows, soap operas and medical programs. The couple's story is told in the context of the kinds of programs that have addicted America to television.

Denton, USA, is not necessarily Denton, Texas, said O'Brien. "Actually, (the movie's) Denton is more in the Midwest, like in Kansas."

As Dorothy and Toto were lost in the strange fantasy in the Land of Oz somewhere in Kansas, Brad and Janet get lost as contestants in the "The Marriage Maze," a daytime marriage-counseling show.

Janet, complaining she and Brad have been "bitchin' in the kitchen and crying in the bedroom all night," is persuaded to have Brad committed to Dentonvale, the local asylum run by the insane Dr. Cosmo McKinley (O'Brien) and his incestuous sister Nation McKinley (Patricia Quinn).

As part of the twisted scheme in which Brad and Janet are unwitting pawns, Dr. Cosmo presents Janet to the population of Denton as the leading and only candidate for "Miss Mental Health." Harper easily portrays the girl-next-door turned star, as she follows the orders of Dr. Cosmo, believing she is helping her beloved Brad.

Farley Flavors, the station's sponsor, is behind the evil plan as he attempts to settle an old score with Brad. Cliff de Young portrays both Brad and Farley, establishing a dual role of hero and villain.

In writing the film, O'Brien depended on the audiences' familiarity with the characters of Brad and Janet from "Rocky Horror."

Without such familiarity viewers could easily become lost.

The minor characters of Judge Oliver Wright (Charles Gray) and talk show host Betty Hapschatt (Ruby Wax) have the potential to be

effective, but are underdeveloped.

They, like Brad and Janet, are the objects of Farley Flavors' vindictiveness, and as such their plight is made clear. Their relationship with each other, however, is unclear.

The physical violence of "Rocky Horror" is replaced by psychological violation in "Shock Treatment."

O'Brien, who wrote both "Rocky Horror" and "Shock Treatment," had little to say about the meaning of "Shock Treatment."

"If the film says anything at all, it's to be careful to separate indulgences, to make your own value judgments," O'Brien said.

At points in the movie, one can recognize traces of mockery of the "Rocky Horror" cult in the blind enthusiasm of Denton's citizens.

O'Brien also said he writes strongly for women, explaining that in this film Janet is a heroine. "She rejects 'Mr. Big.' The world could be her oyster, but she goes with compassion."

He described "Shock Treatment" as "romantically optimistic," and it is.

The film is directed by Jim Sharman, who coauthored the screenplay of "Shock Treatment" and directed the stage and film versions of "Rocky Horror."

The soundtrack from the film is madly exuberant. Dr. Cosmo tells Janet in the title song that she and Brad are "blinded by romance, blinded by science, in need of a bit of shock treatment."

Jessica Harper is a strong attraction in the musical productions. Her voice is clear, throaty and seductive.

Bizarre choreography and off-beat photography are also prevalent. Teen-agers dance to disco music in ballet tu-tus; the asylum staff and patients sing "Night Night, it's time for Bye Byes," each engaging in separate bedtime "rituals."

The audience at the preview, composed mainly of "Rocky Horror" fans, tried to participate in "Shock Treatment" as they had in O'Brien's last movie.

As Farley Flavors addresses Denton citizens with "My Friends," a voice yells "Look, it's Jim Jones!"

Janet, posing in a little black dress that was designed as "medicine" for Brad, is told "You're a slut. I love you." And of course, Brad's nickname in "Rocky Horror" is yelled in unison by the crowd.

Perhaps typical movie audiences wouldn't be looking for ties to "Rocky Horror," but this audience was.

Before the preview was shown "Fort Worth and Dallas Reviews" were presented.

"The Seventh Street Bunch" from Fort Worth and the Dallas group of young actors and actresses who've seen "Rocky Horror" as many as



RIFF RAFF - A member of the Fort Worth "Seventh Street Bunch" assumes the character of Riff Raff, whom O'Brien played in the "Rocky Horror Picture Show."

Photo by Lyle McBride

356 times and have acted it out in the audience weekend after weekend, acted out scenes from the film on stage.

In an enactment of Rocky's unveiling, The Dallas Review's Brad and Janet come to Dr. Frankenfurter's mansion to use the phone to call someone to come repair their car, which has broken down on the way to their honeymoon.

"We'll just say where we are, then go back to the car. Don't want to be any bother," Brad says in his naively friendly, but worried tone.

But, instead of showing them the phone Frankenfurter has them stripped nearly naked and takes them down to his lab to see the "man, with blond hair and a tan" that he's been making for his own enjoyment.

In another scene, Eddie, one of Frankenfurter's earlier creations, dances to "Whatever happened to Rock'n'Roll," a song about the good old days of early rock and normal sex. He and his girlfriend act out the latter on stage, but (surprisingly) remain clothed.

The Fort Worth Seventh Street Review, singing and dancing "The Time Warp," did a "jump to the left, and then a jump to the right. Put your hands on your hips, and pull your knees in tight. Then do the Pelvic Thrust. Then you'll go insane...."

After the reviews, which O'Brien was said to have considered the best he'd seen, the "Rocky Horror" fans stayed for the preview, anxious to see what the creators of "Rocky Horror" had produced this time.

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# events etC.

## Monday 14

**Brown Bag Series**, noon, Vernon Fisher, gallery.  
**Panhellenic**, 3 p.m., Student Center Room 218.  
**Interfraternity Council**, 3:30 p.m., Student Center Room 222.  
**BSU, Worship Focus Week**.  
**CLEP exam**.

## Tuesday 15

**Phi Upsilon Omicron**, tea, 6 p.m., Bass 107.  
**Wranglers**, 6 p.m., Student Center Ballroom.  
**Young Life**, 6 p.m., Student Center Room 202.  
**Student Life**, 8 p.m., Student Center Room 218.

## Wednesday 16

**University Chapel**, noon, Robert Carr Chapel.  
**American Keyboard Music Fest**, "Sounds from Inside the Piano," 3 p.m., Ed Landreth Auditorium.  
**Forums Committee**, 4 p.m., Student Center Room 218.  
**Women In Communications, Inc.**, 5:30 p.m., Student Center Room 204.  
**Talent Show try-outs**, 7 p.m., Student Center Ballroom.  
**Wednesday Night Bible Study**, 8 p.m., Student Center Room 207.

## Thursday 17

**Fall Convocation**, 11 a.m., Ed Landreth Auditorium.  
**American Keyboard Music Fest**, "TCU Young Artists," 3 p.m., Ed Landreth Auditorium.  
**Class of '83**, 5:30 p.m., Student Center Room 205.  
**Tau Beta Sigma**, 6:30 p.m., Student Center Room 203.

## Friday 18

**Faculty recital**, Jo Boatwright, 3 p.m., Ed Landreth Auditorium.  
**Cowtown Horned Frog Stomp**, 5:30 p.m., Student Center steps.  
**Film**, "Mary Poppins" 5, 12 p.m. and "101 Dalmations," 8 p.m., Student Center Ballroom.  
**Religious Studies** Chi Delta Mu Retreat.  
**Fall Minority Retreat**, Camp Carter, \$5.

## Saturday 19

**Football**, TCU vs. UTA, 7:30 p.m. Amon Carter Stadium  
**Film**: "101 Dalmations," Special Matinee, 10 a.m. Student Center Ballroom.  
**Chinese Bible Study**, 7:30, Student Center Room 218.

## Sunday 20

**Tapping of Order of Omega**, new members.  
**American Keyboard Music Fest**, "New sounds Plus New Notation Equal New Simulation," Donna Edwards, Ed Landreth Room 103, 3 p.m.

## Monday 21

**"Works by Women"**, Collection of the Gihon Foundation, art by Georgia O'Keefe, Mary Cassatt and Helen Frankenthaler. Opening reception 4:30 p.m. Student Center Gallery.  
**Lecture/Recital**, Guest artist Maurice Hinson, 10 a.m. Ed Landreth Auditorium. Master class in American music for pre-college students, 1 p.m.  
**American Keyboard Music Fest**, Organ recital of American music by Michael Bedford, 3 p.m. Ed Landreth Auditorium.

## Tuesday 22

**Marson Oriental Exhibition and Sale**, Student Center Lobby.  
**BSU**, 6 p.m. Student Center Room 218.  
**Young Life**, 6 p.m., Student Center Room 202.

## Wednesday 23

**Unity Chapel**, 7 p.m. Robert Carr Chapel.  
**University Chapel**, noon, Robert Carr Chapel.  
**Forums**, 4 p.m. Student Center Room 214.  
**Wednesday Night Bible Study**, 8 p.m. Student Center Room 207.

## Thursday 24

**Career Planning and Placement Senior Seminar**, 4 p.m. Student Center Ballroom.  
**Forums Guest Lecturer, Frederick Storaska**, Discussing rape, 8 p.m. Student Center Ballroom.  
**Campus Crusade Fraternity/Sorority Breakfast**, 8 a.m. Student Center Ballroom.  
**Flying Club**, 5 p.m. Student Center Room 202.  
**Nurse's Christian Fellowship**, 5:30 p.m. Student Center Room 215.  
**Campus Crusade Concert**, Phi Delt House, 8:30 p.m. Open to everyone.

## Saturday 25

**Film**: "All the President's Men," 5, 12 p.m., "The Graduate," 8 p.m. Student Center Ballroom.  
**Hideaway**: Barry Drake, 8 p.m.  
**Pops Choral Concert**, 8 p.m. Ed Landreth Auditorium, Tickets, \$2.  
**Campus Crusade Fall Retreat**, Hilton Inn, \$30 weekend.



Cindy McKinney

## 'Official Preppies' named

By Anne Stabile

They move in only the "highest" circles.

Their colors are green and pink.

They have an affinity for alligators, polo players and designer clothing.

Putting yourself in their shoes means wearing topsiders (also called boat shoes) and weejuns (a brand of loafer).

They can be found in large numbers where alcoholic beverages are served.

They are increasing in number every year.

They are preppies.

Tuesday, Sept. 8, two TCU freshmen received the highest honor possible for this group: The Official Preppie Award.

Thomas (Tod) Edward Lippy II (a typical preppie name) from Hampstead, Md., and Cindy McKinney from Fort Worth were named the preppiest preps on campus.

The contest judge was Lisa Birnbach, author of "The Official Preppie Handbook," invited to campus by the Programming Council Forums Committee.

She began by calling each contending preppie up on stage and asking them important questions about their preppiness.

"How far would you go on the

first date?" Birnbach asked McKinney.

"I don't know. Probably kiss him once," she said.

The 5-foot-2-inch Tri-Delt pledge was dressed in a bright green and yellow golf skirt, a green Izod (better known as alligator) shirt, a matching hair ribbon and not just leather topsiders, but green leather topsiders. She carried a green and white bermuda bag (the crescent-shaped ones with interchangeable canvas parts).

"Tod," Birnbach addressed Lippy, "What would you wear to meet your girlfriend's parents for the first time?"

"A navy blazer, white oxford shirt, grey flannel pants and weejuns," the 6-foot-3-inch pre-major answered. For the contest he wore madras plaid pants, a blue Izod shirt with a yellow oxford shirt over it and topsiders.

One look at these two and Birnbach knew they deserved to win.

Their prize was a "Preppie Survival Kit" including a "Preppie and Proud" bumper sticker, alligator pin, L.L. Bean order form, an extra leather tie for topsiders and, of course, golf tees.

"I never thought of myself as being that preppie," McKinney remarked later. "I just like to dress that way sometimes."

"It's sort of funny," said Lippy. "I always dress like this."



Tod Edward Lippy II