

# Short Takes

Reading between the lines of business, politics and culture

Edited by Becky Ebenkamp

## RIGHT GUARD

### This Is Your Brain on Pure Creativity



**What's left without the right brain:** A half-interested-motivated-ready-engaged kid.

to create a logo, film and Web site to remind parents that their kids' career landscape might look unfamiliar, which will require two working halves. "In their world, factories and foundries won't rule the day, but ideas, unshackled, integrated, 365-degree imagination," the ad says. "So, we have to ask ourselves, 'Is now the time to pull the plug on arts in schools?'"

**OUR RIGHT AND LEFT BRAINS** were made to work in sync, but you wouldn't know that from the way school funding is divvied out. With every precious dollar in play—and more going to traditional educational programs, fewer to the arts—our creative and logical sides feel like discrete entities; at times even resentful stepsisters. This campaign by Portland, Ore., agency North for the local arts collaboration, The Right Brain Initiative, argues the right's more righteous qualities and that arts education needs to be integrated into every K-8 classroom. Doodles by local artists ages 5-50 were used

## ADVENTURES IN UNWINNABLE GAMES

**MIRAMAX IS GOING BACK** to the future to promote the past. Or something like that. To promote a movie that doesn't release for several months, the studio has launched a site containing vintage midway games.

The studio hired company Liquid Generation to create and distribute versions of the games Whack-A-Mole, Skee Ball, Horse Derby and Root Beer Pong that are tweaked to feature characters from *Adventureland*. The games are all housed on the comedy's Web site, [www.adventurelandthefilm.com](http://www.adventurelandthefilm.com), and are being promoted through online ad networks, social media and gaming sites via Internet agency Media Storm.

The point of the viral campaign is to seed early awareness for the movie among its potential 18- to 34-year-old audience, and familiarize them with its wacky characters. So, instead of whacking moles, one can play whack-a-Bill-Hader-from-Saturday-Night-Live, who plays Bobby in the film. In Beer Pong, I spied my favorite Freaks and Geeks character while some girl repeatedly called me a "Nancy" for rolling the ball off the table.

*Adventureland* is a coming-of-age comedy set in the summer of 1987 about James, an uptight college grad who's forced to accept a job at a local amusement park when he can't afford to take his dream European vacation. The film won't launch until spring 2009 (no



**Whack a 'stache:** Miramax is using midway games to promote its spring release, *Adventureland*.

release date yet), so the pre-Thanksgiving release of the arcade site is intended to build early buzz.

There's also a prize component. Game scores that are submitted will be posted to a leaderboard on the film's Web site. For an eight-week period ending Jan. 16, players with the top weekly score for each of the four games will win an *Adventureland* branded Flip Mino digital video camera. Following this contest, users who submit their scores through Feb. 13, 2009, will be entered into a sweepstakes. The winner gets what James didn't: That coveted trip to Europe.

## HEY, SKATER BULLDOG!



**Dog day morning:** Natural Balance pet food will debut a float in the 2009 Rose Parade.

## Dogtown and Skatepups

**IT'S CLEARLY NOT ENOUGH** for a dog to shake, fetch, roll over and play dead; he's got to perfect a 360 Shove-it Nose Grind and an Eggplant-To-Fakie like he's some kind of canine Tony Hawk as well, these days. Therefore, his food can't be just plain premium; he requires a super-premium product such as Natural Balance, apparently.

To show off their moves—on a moving platform, no less—the brand's über-talented skateboarding bulldogs Tyson and Tillman will make their debut appearance on Jan. 1, on a float at the 120th Rose Parade, which has a "Hats off to Entertainment" theme.

The Natural Entertainers float will feature a 15-foot long sculpted skateboard and a 16-foot tall floral bulldog, which will be adorned by Tyson and Tillman, who will scoot around on a specially created skateboarding track.

Natural Balance is conducting a World's Most Amazing Dog Contest to correlate with the festivities. Dog owners are being asked to upload a video or photo of their own pooch to the Natural Balance Web site, where visitors vote on their favorite. (Skateboarding skills not necessary.) The winning dog and its human will join Tyson and Tillman on the Natural Balance float in the Rose Parade on Jan. 1, in Pasadena, Calif. Winners also receive a year's supply of Natural Balance Pet Food, and will stay at the Pasadena Hilton. Natural Balance—whose co-founder is actor Dick Van Patten, oddly enough—is sold at Petco as well as local independent pet shops.

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