

Signals in the Static: Actor and Mensa member **Sharon Stone** turns 47. Actor, activist, author, and fitness expert **Jane Fonda**, 68, will have hip replacement surgery this month. Died: **Samuel Alderson**, 90, inventor of the crash-test dummy; **George Atkinson**, 69, who opened the first video rental store in 1979; writer/journalist **Hunter S. Thompson**, 67; computer pioneer **Jeff Raskin**, 61, who helped create the first Macintosh; **Myron Blank**, 93, who first introduced popcorn into movie theaters; designer **John Ebstein**, 92, called the "father of streamlining." He created the iconic '63 Studebaker Avanti sports car.

For the first time in 40 years, all of baseball's National League games will be played on natural grass. In the American league, artificial turf remains in only three stadiums—Toronto, Minneapolis, and St. Petersburg, Fla. CNN becomes the first national cable TV news network to accept commercials for distilled spirits, running a spot for **Grey Goose** vodka. **Nike** launches an environmentally-conscious collection called **Considered** with fewer plastic components. **Adidas** will offer a new, computerized "smart shoe" (\$250) that automatically adjusts itself to a runner's size, pace, terrain, and fatigue level. They are spending \$20M on the rollout ad campaign. **Toyota** launches a new **Scion** hip-hop record label. Adult film company **New Frontier Media** offers ring tones for mobile phones featuring porn stars making groaning and moaning noises. The **University of Chicago** School of Business sponsors the first annual conference for "buzz, viral, blog, and word of mouth marketers." See www.womma.org. The producers of sci-fi series **Battlestar Galactica** are making a podcast (see JOHO, Jan. '05), designed to run at the same time as the show itself, so that viewers can hear their "making of" comments as the show plays on television.

Dining Out: **Moto**, a Chicago pan-Asian restaurant, offers diners edible menus made of soybean and potato starch paper printed with fruit-and vegetable-based ink. **One World Café** in Salt Lake City allows customers to choose their portion size and pay what they think their meal is worth based on that portion. Seaweed-based mock caviar called "Cavi•Art" is being used by top chefs to decorate their dishes.

Animal-Human Hybrids: Stanford University has approved research to implant stem cells from aborted fetuses into a mouse to create an animal whose brain cells are 100% human. Such research might lead to a cure for Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease but also raises ethical concerns regarding the "rights" of these "chimeras." Last year, the Mayo Clinic created pigs with human blood flowing through their veins. www.nationalgeographic.com

T-Shirt Trends: Coming soon to a mall near you—vintage t-shirts with Disney and retro/childhood images like Candy Land, Cookie Monster, The Care Bears and Popeye; t-shirts with painted-on woody murals, embroidered t-shirts with American Indian motifs, and psychedelic designs from the '60's.

Fertile Red States: Conservative Utah, where President Bush made his strongest electoral showing, has the country's highest birth rate. Liberal Vermont has the lowest. Fifteen out of 17 of the country's most fertile states voted for Bush in 2000. *NY Times*.

China vs. USA: Over the past 25 years, on an inflation-adjusted average *annual* rate, the US economy has grown at 3%, while China's has grown at over 8%. The CIA reports that by 2020 the China's economy will have surpassed Japan's to become second only to that of the U.S. *Wall St. Journal*.