

many questions," I said, "even when it makes he get little bumps on my arms to keep from asking you questions, but I have to ask you a question now. Why do you want to learn to call ducks?"

"Why not?" he asked. "I have to have someone to talk to."

"Ignoring the fact that you've just insulted me," I said, "I'd like to know how a grown man—or even you—can spend every day for four weeks practicing a sound that makes me think the wallpaper is tearing every time you do it. What about your music? What about your songwriting? What about cleaning up the living room?"

WOULD BE USELESS

"It would be useless for me to even attempt any of those things," David replied. "I'm in the middle of a farkoon."

I didn't want to ask. I *didn't* ask. For three whole minutes we sat looking at one another while I didn't ask. Then I asked.

"What," I said, biting off each word like a sausage, "is a farkoon?"

"I thought you'd never ask," David said. "farkoon is a very rare astrological phenomenon that happens only once



ABOVE all, David feels that "Partridge" brought him closer to his step-mother Shirley & step-brothers Shawn & Ryan! And, closer to fans like you!



LOTS of "good luck" wishes are pouring in from fans all over!

or twice in a lifetime, when all your stars and planets and asteroids and things cancel each other out absolutely. At such times, a person can do nothing whatsoever. Basically, until it's over, you don't even really exist."

"I see," I said, getting a headache.

"For example," David continued, warning to his subject, "have you ever heard of Ferrando Arcimboldo?"

"No," I said truthfully. My eyes ached, too.

"Well, he discovered America," David said. "Only when he landed it was so foggy he thought he had gone clear around by mistake and bumped into England. He and his crew died of hunger looking for a fish and chips stand in the wilderness of Virginia."

A FEW STORIES

"Ah," I said, wondering if I could retell a few of the stories from last year's column and make them different enough to fool editor Sharon at *TIGER BEAT*.

"What about Sir Geoffrey Latex?" David asked. "Ever hear of him?"

"Uh-uh," I said. "Another farkooner, I'll bet." No way I could get away with it. They probably kept files and everything.

"The victim of a first-class farkoon. A hundred years ahead of his time, he

invented the rubber band. Unfortunately, he only had the means to make a small one, and what he was trying to invent was a way to hold his pants up. It worked fine for a couple of days, but then the strain on his circulatory system was too much for him. Have you ever wound a rubber band around your finger so tight that it got all swollen and weird?"

"Mmm," I said.

"Well, imagine the rubber band being around your *snit*. Poor man."

"Poor man," I echoed. "Must have been a mess."

"Headline news," David said in a sympathetic tone. Then he quacked. I got up.

"So you can see why I'm not doing anything except working on my duck call," David said. "I'd be taking my life in my hands."

"Not such a bad idea," I said, going through the door.

"What did you say?" he called after me.

"Nothing," I called back down the hall. "I've got to write my column."

"I hope you can think of something interesting for a change," he shouted.

As you can see, dear reader, I couldn't. I'm probably in the middle of a farkoon.

Sam