

Back to the Future

By Reg P. Wydeven
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As we prepare to ring in 2007, I can't help but look back at New Years Eves of years past. My sister and I always looked forward to having fun with our babysitter when our folks and the Currys went to the Red Ox for dinner.

We would stay at home and play board games, like my sister's favorite 'The Donnie and Marie Osmond TV Show Game' and listen to my sister's favorite tape of all time, the soundtrack from 'Grease'.

Dick Clark would be drowned out from such songs as 'Summer Nights' and 'Beauty School Dropout'. Zillions of copies of the soundtrack have been sold, making oodles of money for Universal Music Group Inc., causing one star of the movie to file a lawsuit faster than Grease Lightning.

Olivia Newton-John sued Universal in Los Angeles County Superior Court for allegedly failing to pay more than \$1 million in royalties on sales of the soundtrack. The Australian native contends that while Universal did pay some royalties, it failed to make a range of other contractual payments. According to the suit, a recent audit showed Universal owes more than \$1 million to Newton-John's company, ON-J Productions, Ltd.

When we got sick of 'Grease', my sister would put on an album of another Wonder from Down Under – Rick Springfield. A few years ago, Springfield was introduced to the justice system. On September 18, 2000 (my birthday), he was arrested in LA for the worst kind of 'Human Touch' – spousal abuse.

Because his wife, Barbara, refused to press charges, the case against Springfield was dropped. Earlier this year, however, Rick had a much for fun encounter with the American justice system – at age 57, after living here for nearly 34 years, Rick officially became a resident of the U.S., while still retaining his Australian citizenship.

If we got tired of board games, our babysitter would let us watch some TV. One of our favorites was 'CHiPs', for I liked the cool motorcycles and my sister liked Eric Estrada. Famous for his role as Francis 'Ponch' Poncherello, Estrada has gone from a TV cop to one in real life. Estrada, along with several other B-list celebrities, have been sworn in as reserve officers of the Muncie, Indiana, police department as part of CBS' reality show 'Armed and Famous'.

Because of tough TV guys like Ponch and Fonzie, I thought motorcycles were pretty cool. Therefore, I loved watching Evel Knievel specials. Evel's latest stunt, however, was filing a lawsuit in federal court in Tampa against rapper Kanye West for impersonating him in a music video.

According to suit, West dons a star-studded jumpsuit in his 'Touch the Sky' video as he jumps a canyon in a vehicle "visually indistinguishable" from the one used by Knievel in his failed attempt to jump the Snake River Canyon in Idaho in 1974.

Knievel's suit also names Roc-A-Fella Records, director Chris Milk and AOL as defendants. Krievel alleges West infringed on his trademarked name and likeness, and that the "vulgar and offensive" images depicted in the video damage his reputation. He is seeking unspecified damages and a halt to distribution of the video.

Some things never change. I'm still lucky enough to spend New Years Eves with my sister. And she still loves Rick and Ponch.

May your 2007 be filled with blessings and happiness.

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