

SMURF COLLECTORS' CLUB
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THIRD YEAR
NEWSLETTER 9
SUMMER 1988

Dear Smurf Collectors;

Welcome back to all TRUE BLUE members for this, our Third Year. A special welcome to all new members who have come on board and to our first members from the State of Alaska!

We have lots of information to share with you in this issue, so let's get right down to it!

First, we would like to thank member Kim M. from Va. for her delightful sketch featured above. Kim is a freelance artist and, besides collecting Smurfs, she also collects Antique Carousel Horses. Kim says, "I enjoy collecting both, but the Smurfs take up considerably less room!"

We were sorry to disappoint some of you: The Club's Limited Edition, "GOOD LUCK SMURF," was sold out within a few weeks. The Edition number was only 100 pieces.

In late March we received the 1988 "BODYBUILDING SMURF" (featured in Newsletter 8). Please add this piece to your Club listing. The official number on this piece is #20228. The mail on this piece from you, our members, was great! I think if we were to take a vote, many of our members would say, "MY FAVORITE SMURF FIGURINE IS BODYBUILDING." The Club has recommended, and most members have agreed, that for display purposes each collection should include two of these figurines. The detailing on the front and the back of this piece should be shown when displayed.

If any of you are still confused or unsure of the injection process, (featured in Newsletter 5) your Bodybuilding Smurf is a perfect example of an injected BLUE SMURF. The only painting on this piece is the eyes, mouth, white hat, and the bathing trunks. Please take note also of the markings. We can put our magnifying glasses away for this one! The BLACK PAINT DOT means that the piece was PAINTED in PORTUGAL!

We have issued a new page for our Club Brochure showing the "GOOD LUCK SMURF" and the "BODYBUILDING SMURF." Anyone wishing this new page, please send your request with a S.A.S.E. to the Club.

A GREAT article about the Smurf Park being constructed in France has been received and we share it with you in this issue. We are sure this Park will have loads of great Smurfy items for sale. NOW IS THE TIME to start considering what items you might like to have from this park. Our European staff will be working overtime to supply our members with souvenirs from the park. Send us your want lists NOW! T-shirts, Banners, Pins, Posters, Postcards etc. etc. (NO BREAKABLES PLEASE)

Never forgotten is our American Market merchandise. If you haven't already seen the following, be on the look out for them:

Milton Bradley has issued a series of new PUZZLES featuring the Smurflings, Grandpa and Puppy. They are really nice and retail for about \$2.00 each. Watch for SMURFLING MAGNETS by ARJON and Children's sunglasses also featuring the Smurflings by NASTA INC., retailing for \$1.50 - \$2.00.

ANOTHER GREAT ITEM is the SMURF TELEPHONE by ENTERPREX. See the special offer on this item in this issue!!!!!!

GENERAL FOOD CORPORATION, THE MANUFACTURERS OF POST CEREAL, IS NOW MARKETING THE NEW SMURF MAGIC BERRIES CEREAL. The box, of course, is BLUE with PAPA SMURF pictured. On the back of the box is a checker board and on the side of the box are your checker pieces featuring PAPA SMURF and GARGAMEL.

FROM OUR MAILBOX

Question: In our last Newsletter a member placed an ad seeking pieces with GREEN PAINT DOTS on the bottom of the figurines. I have always meant to ask: What do the various color paint dots mean? I have a number of European pieces with these dots.

Answer: The Paint dots you refer to identify the countries where the figurines have been PAINTED. The dots are, in fact, a manufacturer's code.

When the pieces are injected in West Germany, but painted in other countries, these paint dots will appear:

GOLD PAINT DOT-PAINTED IN PORTUGAL

RED PAINT DOT-PAINTED IN SRI LANKA

GREEN PAINT DOT-PAINTED IN TUNESIA

BLACK PAINT DOT-PORTUGAL (USED WHEN A MOLD IS INJECTED IN A COLOR)

The following letter (and many similar letters) has been received by the Club this quarter:

We love our LIMITED EDITION "GOOD LUCK SMURF." What a GREAT IDEA it was to design our very own American version of "SMURF HOLDING PIG" (Good Luck Smurf in Germany.) Four stars to the Club for a completely beautiful presentation. Our numbered Certificate of Authenticity, bound and preserved forever, even makes the LIMITED EDITION piece that much MORE SPECIAL!

We are now even more anxious than ever to own a "SMURF HOLDING PIG" (THE GERMAN "GOOD LUCK SMURF.") WE MUST HAVE THE PAIR!

Dear Suzanne;

Hardee's Fast Food Restaurants are giving the Smurf miniature figurines in the children's meals. The boxes the meals come in are very cute with games for the children to play, and Smurfs on them as well. There are four different Smurf boxes.

Bev. K. from Mo.

Tom M. from W.VA.

Thanks for sharing this information with the Club! We do not have Hardee's in this N.Y. area!

Dear Suzanne;

Since I've joined the Club, my two daughters have quit teasing me about my Smurfs and have become confirmed collectors. They go to every show with me. NOW IT'S EVEN MORE FUN COLLECTING SMURFS THAN BEFORE!

S.M. from Ca.

Dear S.M. from Ca.;

I sure wish I could say the same! I think my two sons will always tease me. Can you imagine what they have to put up with, with their MOM! I am known as the SMURF LADY to all their friends. To make matters worse, this fall my oldest Son leaves for College and the Club will be losing its Post Office errand boy. As a going away gift he handed me the following article he discovered in a teen publication.

Suzanne

teen to teen

Do's and don't's for college freshmen

(or some things that I wish I had been told before my freshman year)

A spook for a roommate

By ALISON MORAN

You've finally arrived at college, everything's put away and Mom and Dad have left for home. Everything's perfect. Suddenly, out of nowhere, comes a stranger.

"Hi," says this strange person. "I'm you roommate."

Oh no. One look at this person tells you that you and he/she are complete opposites. She is hanging up Snoopy and Garfield posters while you stare at your Sex Pistols albums; he is wearing plaid polyester pants and a pocket protector while you wear Ray-Bans and your high school lacrosse jersey. You're going to have to live with this person for at least nine months. What will you do?

Wait. Before you call Mom to tell her you're coming home and going to Nassau Community, think about your situation. Make a few compromises. Agree that you won't play your Metallica albums while she's studying, and she'll keep his Smurf posters off you side of the room.

What if one of you is neat and tidy and the other is a slob?

Well, it is possible to live with each other. If it does get too bad, you can usually switch roommates with someone else.

Just remember, you don't have to be friends with your roommate—you don't even have to like him/her. If you really can't stand the person, move out of your dorm room. And remember to take your Smurf posters with you.

A MAJOR SMURF DISCOVERY!!!!

Dear Suzanne;

I have just made, I think (HOPE), a major and truly exciting Smurf discovery!

Recently I acquired a variation of # 20009, DRUMMER, that is totally different! Are you aware of the fact that the DRUMMER was made with TWO molds as were Smurfette, Astro, Digger, etc? It was news to me: At first I thought I had selected what was simply a color variation. Well, surely you know the thrill of adding a rare color variation to your collection so you can come close to imagining how I felt when I noticed an even greater difference....a mold variation! I could hardly believe my good fortune!!!

Since I can describe this Smurf more clearly with sketches, than with words, I have enclosed a few sketches with pertinent notations.

Because I know you require positive verification I will gladly, if necessary, make arrangements for a "first-hand" inspection so you can see my "prize" for yourself. If you deem my discovery newsworthy, you certainly have my permission to share it with members of the Club via the Newsletter.

My compliments to you and your staff on a great Club and a very enjoyable Newsletter.

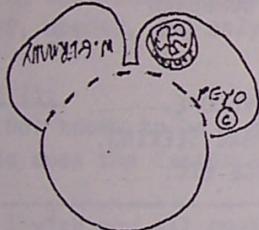
Laurel from CT.

TO ALL CLUB MEMBERS:

THE CLUB HAS VIEWED THIS PIECE, FIRST-HAND, HERE AT CLUB HEADQUARTERS. IT HAS BEEN VERIFIED!!!

YES, IT IS A MAJOR DISCOVERY!!!

SKETCH # 1



-----FEET "CUT AWAY" (AT
DOTTED LINE TO ACCOMODATE DRUM)
PERFECTLY ROUND DRUM....
A SEPARATE PIECE.

SKETCH # 2



SIDE VIEW OF SMURF W/O DRUM!
AREA CUT AWAY FOR DRUM TO FIT INTO.

NOT REALLY TALLER THAN SQUATTING
DRUMMER, EVEN THOUGH STANDING
UPRIGHT.

SKETCH # 3

REAR VIEW

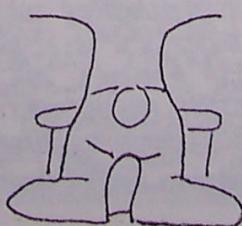
1 REGULAR VERSION

SQUATTING; KNEES HUGGING
AND HIDING VIEW OF DRUM

FIGURE AND DRUM MOLDED
IN ONE PIECE!



2 DIFFERENT MOLD FOUND



DRUM IS IN VIEW (SEPARATE PIECE)
STRAIGHT LEGS
DRUM IS MUCH LARGER THAN ON
OTHER PIECE.

SQUATTING POSITION, KNEES BENT,
KNEES HUGGING DRUM.

STANDING STRAIGHT UP, LEGS RIGHT BEHIND DRUM.

ATTENTION: ALL MEMBERS INTERESTED IN BIDDING ON THIS QUARTERS AUCTION BLOCK: PLEASE SEND A SELF ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE, WITH YOUR REQUEST, TO THE CLUB.

JOIN IN THE FUN!!! PARTICIPATE!!! SEND FOR YOUR BID FORM AND AUCTION BLOCK LISTING TODAY!!!

BUY-SELL-TRADE

AD #

77 FOR SALE - BEAUTIFUL FULL COLOR POSTER, "THE SMURFS ARE COMING TO KINGS DOMINION" SIZE 18" by 24". FEATURING THE SMURF VILLAGE, LOTS OF SMURFS, SMURFETTE AND PAPA. VERY LIMITED SUPPLY!

78 WANTED - SMURF BACKPACK. ANY COLOR IS FINE WITH ME! SUBMIT DESCRIPTION AND PRICE PLEASE.

79 WANTED - SMURFETTE PORCELAIN FIGURINES SET BY WALLACE BERRIE. EACH PIECE FEATURES SMURFETTE WITH A NUMBER. ALL NUMBERS, 1-12 NEEDED. WILL PURCHASE ANY PIECES YOU HAVE.

80 WANTED - SMURF MUSIC BOXES BY WALLACE BERRIE. 1982 "MERRY CHRISTMAS", 1983 "THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS." BOTH ARE PORCELAIN!

81 FOR SALE - FROM ITALY, COMPLETE SET OF ALBUM STICKERS 180 IN A SET. ALL CHARACTERS FEATURED IN FULL COLOR. DATED 1982. PRINTED BY EDIZIONI PANINI.

82 FOR SALE - FROM FRANCE, ONE PAIR OF CHILDRENS SMURF SUSPENDERS. BACKGROUND IS PINK WITH ALL DIFFERENT COLORED FIGURINES OF PAPA, SMURFETTE, GARGAMEL & AZRAEL AND SMURF COTTAGES.

83 FOR SALE - FROM GERMANY, SMURF CANDY. NINE PIECES OF CANDY TO A SET. EACH PIECE COMES INDIVIDUALLY WRAPPED WITH A DIFFERENT SMURF PICTURED IN FULL COLOR. GREAT FOR DISPLAY! TWO SETS ONLY!

84 FOR SALE - FROM GERMANY, PAPA SMURF, SOFT P.V.C., 4½" TALL MARKED "PEYO" "KEHL" ONE PIECE!

85 WANTED - HELP! HELP! HELP! WON'T SOMEONE HELP ME FIND PEWTER SMURFS! MARKED "PEYO"

86 WANTED - OLD CATALOGS 1979-1983 SHOWING ANY SMURF ITEMS. MAILORDER CATALOGS, SEARS, TOYS R US, PLAYWORLD, KAY BEE ETC. ANY SMURF PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL!

87 FOR SALE - POSTERS ALL IN MINT CONDITION BY WALLACE BERRIE. NUMBERS 7605,07,09,10,14,17,18,20,22,23,24, 25,26,27,28,29,30,31,32,33,34. TITLES UPON REQUEST OR TELL ME THE TITLE YOU NEED.

88 FOR SALE - SMURF VELCRO POUCHES, WALLETS, RULERS, PENCILS, ERASERS, PENCIL CASES. ALL BY W. BERRIE.

89 FOR SALE - SMURF METAL BADGES GIVEN AS PREMIUMS 1983. THREE STYLES, ALL SAY "TRUE BLUE SMURF AWARD." 1-"MOST MISCHIEVOUS" 2-"MOST FUNNY" 3-"MOST DARING" ALL HAVE PICTURES AS WELL!

90 FOR SALE - 1983 LIMITED EDITION SMURF PLATE BY W. BERRIE. BEAUTY! MINT IN BOX WITH NUMBERED CERTIFICATE.

91 FOR SALE - BUCKETS FOR ANGLER SUPER # 40208. MARKED 1979, W. GERMANY.

HOW TO RESPOND TO AN AD: SEND YOUR REQUESTS TO THE CLUB WITH A SELF ADDRESSED STAMPED ENVELOPE.

HOW TO SUBMIT AN AD: SEND YOUR AD TO THE CLUB. GIVE ALL INFORMATION ABOUT THE ITEM YOU ARE SEEKING.

FOR SALE ADS MUST HAVE ALL INFORMATION: ITEM, CONDITION, ASKING PRICE ETC.

VARIATIONS.....

#20058 CHAMPION 1. GOLD WREATH
2. GREEN WREATH
3. SEÉ PROMOTIONAL PIECE B.P. SMURF (NEWSLETTER 6)

#20059 TEACHER 1. RED BOOK WITH BLACK LETTERING
2. BROWN BOOK WITH RED LETTERING
3. BROWN BOOK WITH BLACK LETTERING
(STYLE OF LETTERING VARIATIONS WILL BE FOUND)

#20060 CANDLE 1. DARK BROWN SHOES AND CANDLE HOLDER
2. LIGHT BROWN SHOES AND CANDLE HOLDER

#20061 BANDLEADER 1. RED TONGUE PAINTED
2. NO TONGUE PAINTED
(ALWAYS WATCH FOR THIS VARIATION ON PIECES!)
(VARIATIONS IN THE GREEN COLOR OF THE BASE WILL BE FOUND)

#20062 TELEPHONE 1. THIN TELEPHONE CRADLE
2. THICK TELEPHONE CRADLE
3. ORANGE CORD AND ORANGE TELEPHONE INSTEAD OF RED

#20063 TAILOR 1. WITH THREAD ATTACHED TO NEEDLE AND GARMENT
2. WITHOUT THREAD ATTACHED TO NEEDLE (NO THREAD AT ALL!)
(VARIATIONS WILL BE FOUND ON THE SHAPE OF THE PATCH ON THE GARMENT)

EUROPEAN MARKET MERCHANDISE

In our last Newsletter we announced a new feature that would be added to our quarterly Newsletters: "INFORMATION ON SOME FASCINATING AND RARE SMURF ITEMS FROM EUROPE." Although the following cannot be classified as an "OLD" Smurf Item I think, after reading the course of events that took place, you will agree that I can safely classify this item as RARE!

I hope you all enjoy my story as much as I enjoyed the experience!

Suzanne

SCENE I:

In February I was informed by one of our European Buyers: "FERRERO is now making a new promotion with Smurfs (SOCCER SMURFS). As you can see, according to the enclosed display, you have the possibility of getting 1 Soccer Smurf in each 7th Chocolate Easter Egg."



Having a small selection of older FERRERO SMURFS in my collection, and loving them, I immediately gave instructions to our buyers to BUY! BUY! BUY! (These are licensed items bearing the PEYO marking.)

My next communication was very disheartening. One hundred Chocolate Easter Eggs were purchased on my behalf, opened, and only 9 Smurfs found! What happened to the 1-in-7 odds I wondered?

SCENE II:

Not known to be a quitter, more instructions to BUY were given, but this time I gave instructions NOT to open the Easter Eggs, but to ship them to me intact.

I wish you all could have been at Club Headquarters with me the morning my "EGGS" arrived! What FUN I had! Each piece was wrapped in foil. As I carefully unwrapped each piece, I tasted a bit of the delicious chocolate (FOR LUCK). Inside each EGG was a plastic capsule containing the prize: a wide variety of interesting little novelty items. The LUCKY bite of chocolate worked for awhile until I got a horrible headache from my chocolate overdose! Three hours later I had 17 Smurf Football (Soccer in U.S.A.) Players, but still not a full 12 piece set. What to do next?

Below is a sticker which was enclosed in each football (Soccer) Smurf capsule and the display showing what the whole collection looks like. Each player has a name and number.



SCENE III:

Okay, now after Easter, can more still be found? An URGENT S.O.S. goes out for the third and, I hope, the last time. Clever Suzanne has a system (so I THINK). My instructions to our buyers:

"Please shake each EGG before purchasing. Eliminate all EGGS that sound like they have small parts in them as the Football Players capsules are packed solidly and do not rattle." Not asking for much am I? I wish I could have been there to see this scene: Grown people shaking Easter Eggs and listening to them intently!

FINALE:

My story does have a happy ending. I did manage to get a complete 12-piece set! I had loads of fun with our buyers and boosted the European economy as well. I sure hope the brisk sale of FERRARO Easter Eggs will lead to the production of more items of this nature in the future.

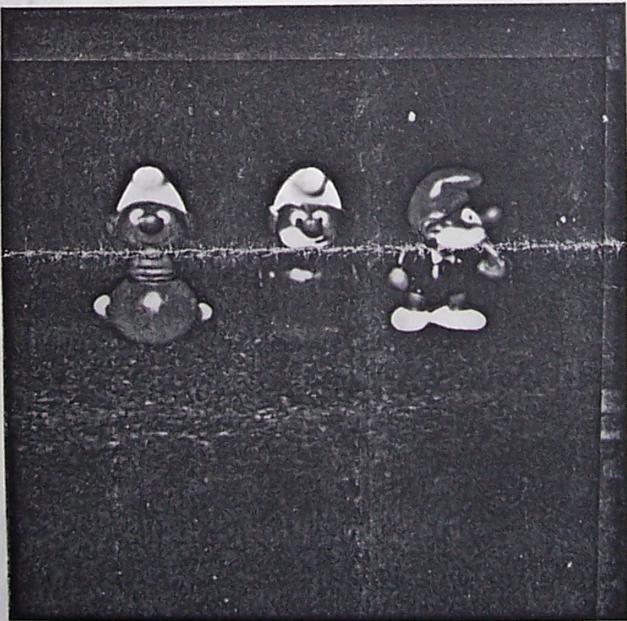
FACTS ABOUT THE FERRERO SMURF FIGURINES:

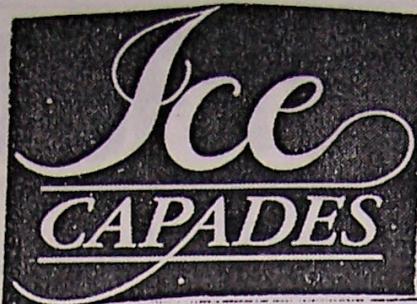
- 1- THEY ARE MADE OF HARD PLASTIC.
- 2- THEY ARE APPROXIMATELY 1½" IN HEIGHT.
- 3- THEY ARE HAND PAINTED WITH GREAT DETAILING.

FACTS ABOUT THE FOOTBALL (SOCCER) SERIES:

- 4- Each player has it's own number painted on it's uniform.
- 5- Their shirts are white with black trim, their shorts are black.
- 6- Number 10 is holding a gold trophy.
- 7- Papa Smurf has a red hat.
- 8- Number 1 has a gold shirt (GOALIE).

The Photo below is of earlier FERRERO figurines:





Special Appearance
by the **SMURFS**®



The Club has received numerous reports from around the country about the Smurf's appearance in the 1988 Ice Capades.

The following are some features and comments we would like to share with those members who missed the show:

"The Show was beautiful! The Smurfs were in one skit---it was cute and some of the kids in the audience got to ride in wooden sleds on the ice with the Smurfs."

"There were Smurf 2" Figurines for sale, but none had "ICE CAPADES" written on them." (See Newsletter IV)
"The only, and inappropriate we think, figurine sold in New Heaven, Ct. was Smurf with Surfboard!"

"For Sale were Smurf T-Shirts, Coloring Books, Banners, Pins, Stuffed Smurfs." Special Note: Not all items were available for sale in every area.

"Enclosed is a Program from the Ice Capades; it is an important part of my collection and I would like to share it with the Club." Special Note: We will share our Smurf Ice Capades program, with any members interested, by supplying photocopies. Please send your request to the Club with a L.S.A.S.E. and 50¢ to cover printing costs.

"Papa Smurf was at a photo session and we received autographed photos."

"One point: Nat was "BAREFOOT".... on ICE yet! Shoes best for all SEASONS indeed!!!! Ridiculous decision and explanation!!!!!!" (See article in Newsletter VII.)

"We had a coloring contest in our town. The winners received free tickets to the show and their names were published in the newspaper."

We have even received the following SMURFY SAGA relating to the Ice Capades:

Dear Fellow Smurf Collectors;

I would like to share this Story with all of you!

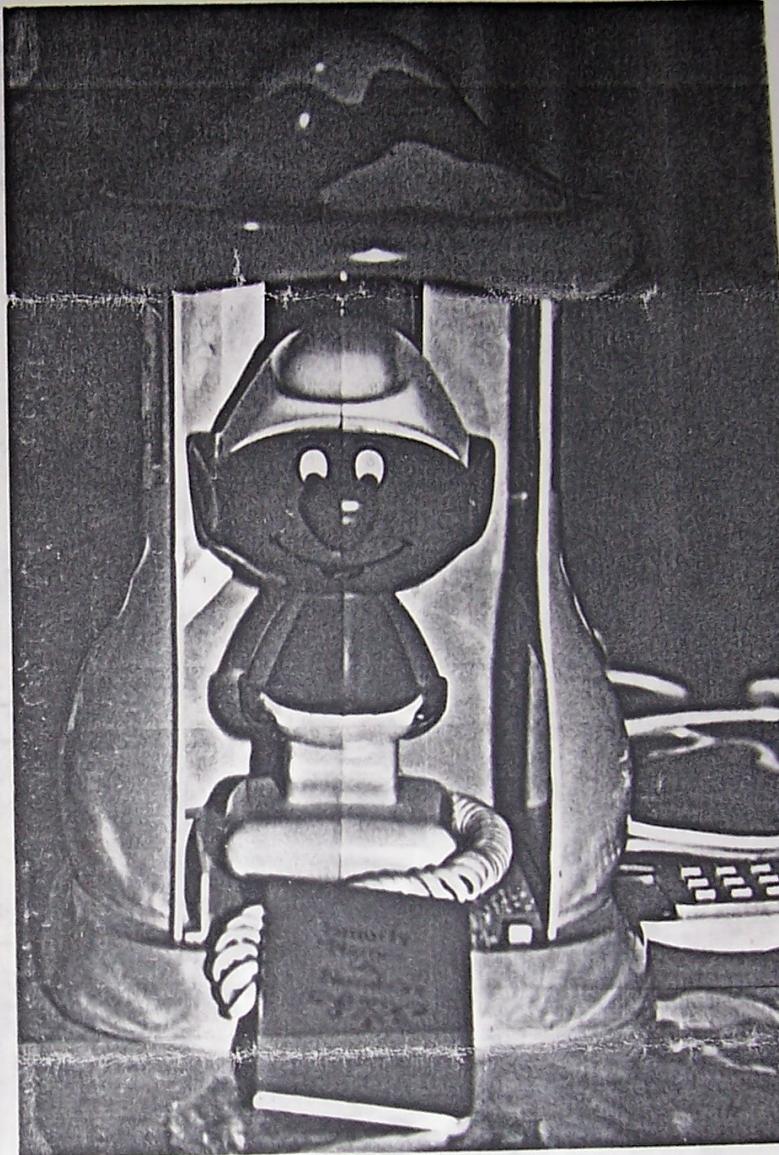
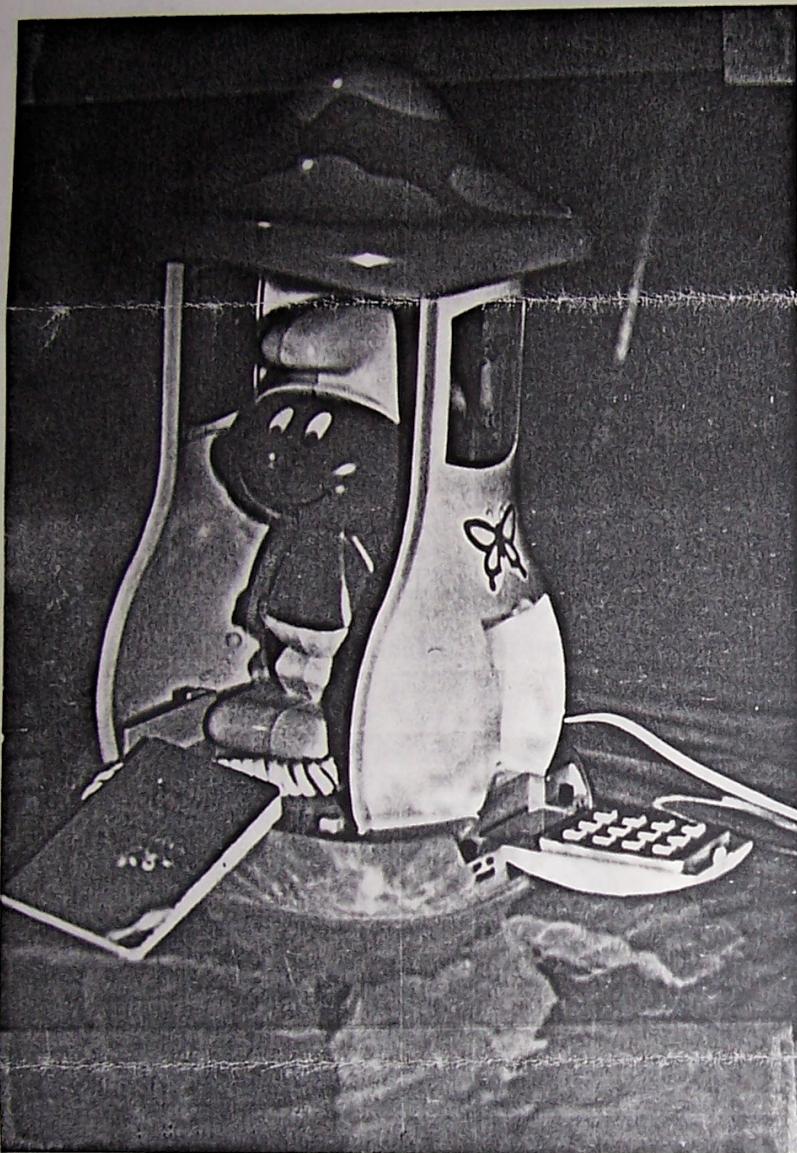
As you may know the Ice Capades is featuring the Smurfs this season. Recently I was in a local Super Giant grocery store and they had a huge poster advertising "SUPER GIANT" night at the Ice Capades. The poster is 40" by 57" and has Papa Smurf and Smurfette ice skating. I explained to the manager that I was a "SMURF FREAK" and he promptly took the poster down and gave it to me! It now hangs proudly in our Smurf Room. A RARE FIND!!!!!!

AMERICAN MARKET MERCHANDISE

SMURF TELEPHONE

MANUFACTURER - ENTERPREX

RETAIL \$79.95



FEATURES:

- AUTO REDIAL
- TONE/PULSE SWITCHABLE
- MUTE BUTTON
- RINGER ON/OFF SWITCH
- D C ADAPTER JACK
- RINGER LIGHT (TELEPHONE BOOTH WILL LIGHT UP WHEN IT RINGS.)
- AUTO REDIAL FOR PULSE DIALING
- NIGHT LIGHT BUTTON
- SMURF TELEPHONE BOOK

NIGHT LIGHT/RINGER LIGHT: WHEN THE PHONE RINGS, THE BOOTH WILL FLASH ON AND OFF, OR SIMPLY PUSH A BUTTON AND USE IT AS A NIGHT LIGHT.

GREAT ITEM!!!!!!

PLEASE TAKE NOTE: ENTERPREX HAS BEEN IN CONTACT WITH THE CLUB. ARRANGEMENTS ARE BEING MADE FOR CLUB MEMBERS TO PURCHASE THIS SMURF TELEPHONE DIRECTLY FROM THE MANUFACTURER. A SPECIAL PRICE WILL BE OFFERED TO MEMBERS ONLY. FOR MORE INFORMATION AND A COLORED PHOTO SEND A S.A.S.E. TO THE CLUB!

LAND OF THE SMURFS

A uniquely French experiment

By HAL LIPPER
Times Film Critic

We're taking a meeting. The subject is Smurfs. *Les Schtroumpfs* in French. The benign blue beings who populate Saturday morning cartoon shows are about to have a \$103-million theme park erected in their honor.

Better in France than America. Let the French have the Smurfs, Jerry Lewis and sweetbreads. We have fast food and the greeting card company-inspired Care Bears.

Ah, but the Smurfs were born in Europe, Belgium to be exact. They've been popular here for 29 years. They're an institution, like Mickey Mouse, who in 1992 will take up residency 20 miles east of Paris.

The Smurfs will live 3½ hours farther east of the capital, near Metz, in a densely wooded valley.

Their home will be in the Lorraine province, directly south of Luxembourg and west of West Germany. Their 35-acre park will be ready by spring 1989, providing all goes well at this and subsequent meetings.

Six Parisians are seated in chrome and leather chairs around a sprawling white table. They talk quietly, waiting for their speaker to begin his presentation.

Grady Larkins, a park and recreational design consultant from St. Petersburg, enters the room. He displays a French architect's rendering of a Smurf house and states in English, "We are going to have to convince them this will not work. It will not look good because it's out of scale for both children and the *Schtroumpfs*."

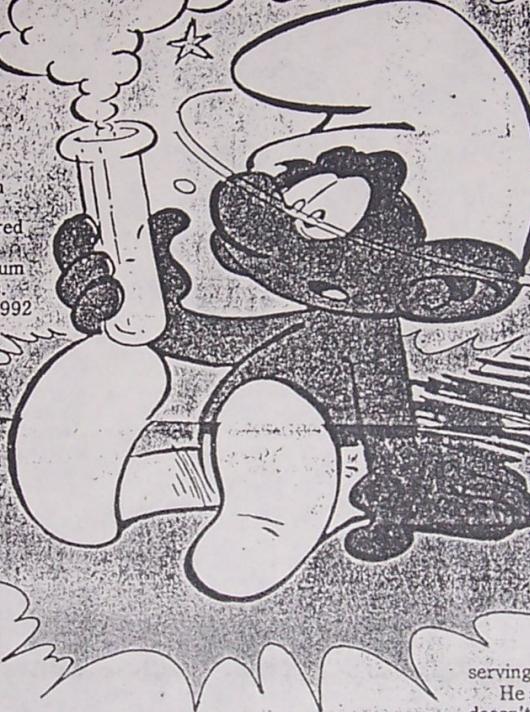
Everyone leans forward to see the drawing that arrived by telefax this morning. It is a pen-and-ink rendering of the sort of rustic, woodsy house you'd expect the Smurfs to live in, except the doors are disproportionately high.

"I talked to them about making doorways absolutely minimum height so we could try to pull the scale of things down," Larkins says, using a black marker to highlight the drawing's inconsistencies. "The world of Peyo (the Smurfs' creator) is a world of miniature. With these designs, it's not miniature anymore."

There is silence, then murmuring, mostly in French. The architects and administrators are concerned such an obvious oversight was made. It will cost time. They wonder if Larkins' vision was conveyed to TPI, the French firm that sketched the drawings.

Larkins, who is bilingual, says he did. He will call TPI again. An architect working under Larkins says his staff can make additional drawings to convey their needs. Larkins concurs, then continues his presentation, discussing how the doors must be comparable in size to the

PARIS



windows and roof.

Les Nouveau Monde Des Schtroumpfs, or the New World of the Smurfs, has been in the planning stages for three years. Larkins, one of the world's leading theme park consultants, has been part of the project for 11 months.

He was contracted to lead what essentially is an all-Gaul endeavor because the French have no experience with super-sized theme parks. They have town fetes and amusement parks, little bigger than what Americans erect at county fairs, but nothing the size of Busch Gardens, Sea World or Boardwalk and Baseball (formerly Circus World), all previous clients of Larkins.

"We're dealing with a public accustomed to '50s-type parks," Larkins later explains. "With the Smurfs and Walt Disney World, they'll advance 30 years in 10."

Cultural identity

The Smurfs are ingrained in French culture. They are popular among children and adults alike, much the way Peanuts and Mickey Mouse have crossed generational lines in America.

Walk into large bookstores along Paris' Boulevard Saint Michel and you'll find hardbound Smurf comic books, Smurf dolls and Smurf statuettes. This, in a country that loathes kitsch,

"Because of that cultural identity, we can base a whole park on the Smurfs," Larkins, 45, observes. "Whereas, in America, only a portion of a park could be dedicated to the Smurfs."

The Smurfs will be competing with Asterix, another popular French cartoon character, getting his own theme park in Paris in 1989. *Les Nouveau Monde Des Schtroumpfs*, therefore, is expected to draw less from north-central France and more from nearby West Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands — where the Smurfs are also extremely popular.

Many planners seated around Larkins at Sorepark, the firm building the Smurfs' park, have never been to Walt Disney World or Six Flags or seen a recreation area as large as the facility they're planning. Larkins, who has designed children's museums, amusement parks and shopping areas on three continents, is serving as their eyes and ears.

He stresses that what works in America doesn't necessarily work abroad. Earthtones, for example, are despised by Parisians, who favor hot colors, such as the tangerines and scarlets that decorate their subway stations. Fast foods like burgers and pizza are only now being accepted by the French, who prefer to eat with utensils rather than their hands. And, while the British love standing in queues, the French hate being regimented.

"The first thing I do when I come to a country is figure out what the culture is about. I don't come in as a know-it-all American," Larkins says. "They design. I advise. We exchange ideas."

Larkins unrolls a blanket-sized blueprint of the Smurf park. There are three distinct areas, like Adventureland and Tomorrowland, only these sectors are accorded greater philosophical weight, representing nature, arts and culture, and intelligence. In the center are the Smurfs. With luck, Larkins reasons, they can be confined there.

Three of the children's rides will enter the House of Gargamel (the Smurf villain) near the center of the park. Each ride, he explains, will go through the house and have a different effect. The river ride symbolizes water, the sky cycle represents air, and so on.

The river and train rides are only for young children, "so the effect inside the house cannot be

Please see SMURFS 3-F

very strong because little children are easily frightened," Larkins says. "For them, it's an adventure just to go away from their parents."

He shows photographs of similar rides at amusement parks in the United States, Europe and Japan, stressing the importance of maintaining visual continuity throughout the park.

Wood and stone enhance the Smurfs' image and the park's rustic setting. Steel and plastics should be avoided, he says, or disguised to look like organic substances.

Larkins then submits a package of options and manufacturers so the park's developers can solicit bids. There will be 15 major rides, including Europe's first wooden roller coaster.

"We must design for low maintenance, high capacity and SAFETY. I cannot emphasize safety any stronger," he says.



A complex breed

Theme parks are a complex breed: part city, part recreation area, part hotel and restaurant chain. Building them is more than pouring a circuitous macadam ribbon between the parking lot, concession stands and rides.

Traffic patterns are considered. Where people will congregate, how they'll choose to get there? Cultural affinities are weighed. Theme parks in the Far East, for instance, invariably have castles at their center because the public is awed by them.

Prevailing winds are taken into consideration so cooking odors

Maintenance barns and administrative offices must be hidden, yet convenient to all areas of the facility. Shops must be convenient to entrances and exits.

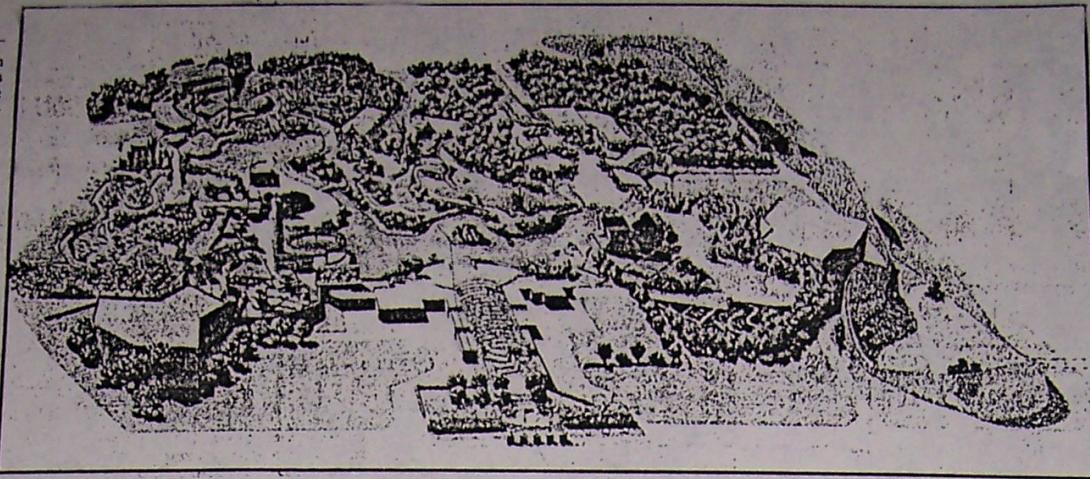
"Then there's the financial and fiscal aspect of park design," Larkins explains over lunch that afternoon with Dominique Mauduit, France's top advertising design director. "We have to figure how much people will spend on food and merchandise. Per capita spending. The most important elements have nothing to do with the Smurfs, Goofy or Donald Duck."



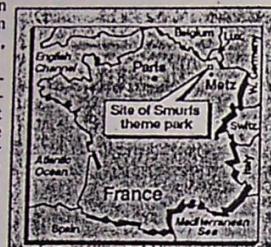
The French, with lower wages and higher taxes, have less disposable income than Americans. They are less inclined to spend money while traveling.

Les Nouveaux Monde Des Schtroumpfs will be built in France's steel manufacturing region. It is not regarded as a resort area, much the way the marshy grasslands of Orlando were overlooked as a vacation spot until Disney World was opened in 1971.

Metz, like Orlando, benefits from a series of superhighways



Detail (above) of the proposed *Les Nouveaux Monde Des Schtroumpfs*, the Smurf theme park. The French park, planned for an area in the Lorraine province, has been in the works for three years. One of its principal design consultants, Grady Larkins (right), is from St. Petersburg.



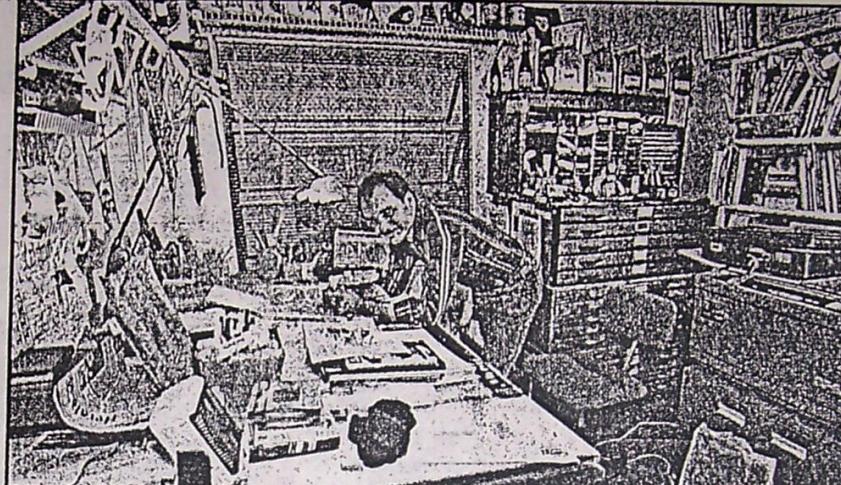
linking it to all of Western Europe. With motorists crisscrossing the continent at 140 km (86 mph), it's expected that more than half of Smurfland's projected 1.8-million annual visitors will be foreign.

This aspect concerns Sorepark executives. At the meeting, its president suggests foreign artists be invited to decorate the park with sculptures and murals. This, he says, will attract more people from neighboring countries.

Larkins disagrees: "Artists hired for the various areas of the park will want the freedom to have their own means of expression.

"We cannot expect them to conform to our theme, which means we'll lose the continuity we're attempting to establish through the design of our buildings and rides," he contends.

Artistic statement in a tightly controlled environment is a uniquely European concern. Americans have lived two generations in a homogenized society where practically all McDonald's look alike, where most Publix supermarkets share the same layout, where identical framed pastoral scenes can be found hanging in Holiday Inns throughout the country.



During the past decade, Larkins has studied the plans for an Oklahoma religious park (complete with a full-sized ark), an Indiana farm park, a military theme park and an Indianapolis observation spire higher than the Eiffel Tower (it wasn't equipped with an elevator). Each time he has advised clients to put their money elsewhere.

Larkins currently is conducting an economic feasibility study for investors considering a theme park outside London; serving as a consultant to Europe's largest theme park, The Netherlands' De Efteling Park; and helping Denver develop leisure-time opportunities with Elitch Gardens, a turn-of-the-century park.

Projects in Denver, Cleveland, Los Angeles and San Jose, Calif., bring Larkins back to the United States every couple months.

He maintains an office at his St. Petersburg residence, which his wife, Elizabeth, uses as an art studio.

The Larkins moved to Florida in 1980, when Larkins was designing building interiors for Busch Gardens in Tampa. The Yale graduate had previously planned theme areas for Busch Gardens and live shows for most of the Six Flags parks in America, although he began his career as a set designer for regional theaters throughout the country.

"It was an easy transition from set-designing for the stage to set-designing for the street," Larkins

says. "The public becomes both the audience and the actors, and the park's design makes it a 360-degree experience."

Fewer than a dozen companies design exclusively for the theme park industry. Most are American, though Larkins notes the best opportunities are often abroad.

"Today Europe and Asia are what the United States was in the early 1970s," he says. "It's a boom market for leisure parks, one that will continue for the next five years."

Major theme parks are underway in Korea, Malaysia (two of which were former clients of Larkins'), the People's Republic of China, Spain, England, Italy, Portugal, The Netherlands and France.



A complex breed

A new blueprint, a schematic of *Les Nouveaux Monde Des Schtroumpfs*, covers the table at Sorepark.

The planners have decided to buy a carousel and retrofit it with capsules that match the Smurf

theme. They now are considering the *CosmoSmurfs*' ride, which will have little orbiting rocket ships. The ride's size and its capacity have not been determined.

"We want to keep the cars full and people on line," Larkins says. "We don't want them waiting long — they can't spend money on souvenirs or refreshments — but we need them in line for a while so they have a feeling of excitement."

He notes how the queues at Disney World's Space Mountain feed riders' anticipation. The screams patrons hear are often pre-recorded rather than live, he adds, heightening the experience.

Larkins and his staff review the location, function and attraction of each ride. The outdoor theater has been moved from the artificial river because the boat ride will prove too distracting. The sky cycle will circle above the water and several rides, calling attention to itself as it swings in the air. There are two existing sky cycle models to choose from.

Sorepark engineers will consider price, capacity, repair records and ease of adapting each ride to *Schtroumpf* specifications. Larkins also is concerned with wear.

"A park is like a hotel," he reminds his staff. "You have to feel like you're the first one there — the first to ride each ride, the first to walk down each path."

There's a murmur of agreement. The next conference date is set. Meeting adjourned.