

# Smart Assed World: A Collection

By Mike Berger

---

## Half Mile High

By Mike Berger

Catalogs; catalogs they jam our mail  
box My wife is a catalog shopper; she  
beats a daily path to the mailbox.  
She gets two dozen catalogs every  
day. She's such a good customer  
she sometimes get one by special  
delivery.

I got curious one day. While she attended  
a town meeting, I pulled a catalog  
from the pile. Here is what I found:  
I was intrigued by the John Wayne  
cookie jar. I looked twice at the blow up  
bra that made boobs look three sizes  
bigger. There was a wine glass that  
lights up when full, and a stuffed  
duck that quacks "You are my sunshine."

The condiment gun shoots catsup and  
mustard. Here is a Tasmanian Devil  
that farts There were a hundred T- shirts  
with every conceivable smart assed  
saying.

## Captain Elegant

By Mike Berger

Captain Elegant was a superhero, but he was no Superman. He had just 20/200 vision; myopic to say the least. As for jumping, he was a box of rocks. He couldn't fly because his pilot's license had been revoked.

For all of that, he was elegant in his snow white uniform. How he hated to get dirty. He had only that one flaw; he was a neat freak

The Captain's favorite thing to do was catch dastardly villains committing their crime, He would ride in like the cavalry and stop their nefarious deed.

Before cops would arrive, he would give them a second chance. He would recite his smart assed poetry. Most said that they would give up their life of crime if he would stop..

## Protocol

By Mike Berger

The captain and I were reassigned from the ugly mess in Afghanistan to a little slice of heaven.

Sent to be the liaison to the British headquarters of an infantry division. We were quartered in the rolling green English country side.

After a brief adjustment period, we were invited to a fox hunt.. We were surprised; those Brits thought we were a couple if Yankee smart asses.

We had a great time as we cornered that fox against a crumbling stone wall. After the hunt was over, we attended a cocktail party.

As we mixed and socialized, we were approached by one of the generals aides. He took us aside with a grave look on his face. He explained to us British protocol.

He said that when we see the fox, you shout out, "Tally-ho, the fox." He pursed his lips and looked through his eyebrows and said, "We don't shout out, there goes the son of a bitch."

## Beethoven

By Mike Berger

We expected to find an ancient skeleton.  
Not so! When we opened the casket, there  
he was with an eraser in one hand and the  
score of the Fifth Symphony and the other.

We asked him what he was doing. He looked  
at us if we were a sack of hammers. He shook  
his head and snarled out, "What does it look like,  
can't you see that I am decomposing?"

## Big Brother

By Mike Berger

Can't fight it; turned into  
electronic blips. Another  
number among the millions,  
in a hundred databases

I hate being boxed and  
packaged, but "What is  
your number?" I am not a  
digit or two; I am pure  
human through  
and through.

Now I'm just a blip or two;  
a string of 0s and 1s, but .  
I've been formatted, condensed.  
and archived. Next, those smart  
asses in Washington will  
legislate that we all have  
bar codes embossed on  
our foreheads.

## **Eat Your Heart out Robert Frost**

By Mike Berger

Forest primeval.  
Drifting snow.  
Stopping to watch  
In my convertible.  
Burry cold,  
Top is down.  
Must move on.  
Hurry hurry  
I'll miss.  
The last episode  
of Survivor.

## **Maverick**

By Mike Berger

If you said yes; he'd say no. He could argue either way He was a dilettante of first report; dripping charisma. You soon became convinced he pulled most of his facts from some ethereal mist but joust with him and he'd skewer you like a leg of lamb. He dated a bright young woman who hated to argue. She developed a cunning scheme. She told him that if he would shut up for once, she would make him an offer that he couldn't refuse. He pondered the offer over and over, then gave this smart assed quip, "I think I would rather talk."

## Surprise

By Mike Berger

The brat next door is a smart  
assed surly snot. He's nine with  
a attitude. You'd think he was  
fourteen the way he talks back.

I'd like to hit him with a stick  
when he flaps his Ralph mouth.  
If I ended up in the gray bar hotel.  
I'm thinking it might be worth it.

There are people who irritate you;  
with this kid that's an understatement.  
He's a burr, chapped lips and grinding teeth  
all wrapped up in one obnoxious package.

His parents have no control; he talks back  
to them. They threaten but never follow  
through. He runs the show because his  
parents are afraid they will bruise his psyche.

He has a birthday just a month away.  
My Pollyanna wife says maybe he'll change.  
I think the only way to stop his mouth  
would be with a hot potato.

I'll make him a fine birthday present.  
It will be a highly decorated piñata  
filled with miniature Snickers bars  
and I'll let him know what's in it.

I'll give him my old broomstick.  
You know he won't wait for his party.  
I'd like to the fly on the wall, when that brat  
whacks that stainless steel piñata.

## Astro Snots

By Mike Berger

Retiring from the NASA space program, I took a summer job as a lark. I would be the pre-flight instructor at a space camp.

My seven years of astronaut training could be imparted to bright young minds. Was I ever in for a surprise.

The group of kids attending the camp were a smart assed bunch. They were 20 kids who knew it all. They had watched hours of the Discovery Channel and didn't have anything more to learn.

After two days of the smartass remarks, I went to talk to my boss. He was a ten year veteran of the space camp. He listened intently to my complaints.

I asked if every group was like this. He said they all were and some were even worse. He laughed as he explained that I knew a lot about the aerospace program but not very much about fourteen-year-old kids. They expect a primetime performance without the luxury of the leaving of the bad footage on the cutting room floor.

## The Ultimate Smart Ass

By Mike Berger

Sweet perfume hangs;  
it's the coming of the Rose.  
Shafts of Sun dance  
chasing shadows away.

Reds tulips joust with yellow vying  
for attention. Puffs of white cotton  
cling to the cherry tree.

The last bastion of dirty  
snow hides from the Sun.  
Prickly pink blossoms dot  
the redbud tree.

The garden spade turns up rocks  
where last year's crops had offspring. .  
The apricot tree stands in singular  
beauty. Popcorn blossoms are  
sheer delight.

Letting the fruit ripen, I eat a few,.  
give a grundle away. I horde the  
rest so I can throw them at the  
neighbor hood kids.

## Ants

By Mike Berger

Daily routines;  
minutia and mundane.  
Hollow people  
in mindless herds

Raping the blue planet.  
Consume, consume.  
Leaving it barren and ugly.

Only children and psychotics  
are oblivious.  
We envy them.

Why oh why;  
are there hungry children,  
in a world of plenty?

Flowers and symphonies  
linger but a moment;  
masking despair.

The smart assed graphite  
on the tenement wall reads,  
“When we blow ourselves  
away, ants will rule our planet

## Big Kahuna

By Mike Berger

I did somersaults in midair. The shock  
of hitting the water stole my breath.  
Doing another somersault deep in the  
murky mess I swallowed a gallon of water.  
After what seemed forever, my head  
popped up and I grabbed a breath.

Wanting some extra excitement, we  
maneuvered our raft into the wildest  
rapid. Thrashing white water pounded  
on enormous rocks. It's spewed spray  
twenty feet into the air. We took on  
a massive boulder head-on.

Our raft folded and crumpled like a  
smashed beer can. Ricocheting off  
the rock, current grabbed us, tossing  
us into the sky. We slammed down  
like a home sick rock.

Flying down a tumbling shoot, our raft  
stood on its side. Thumped by the rocks'  
blow our raft flipped over. Trying to swim  
was futility itself.

We thought the old river rat was being a  
smart ass when he told us that we wore  
bright orange life jackets so they could  
find our bodies.

## A Bodacious Poem

By Mike Berger

These lilted lines are intended to be  
the apotheosis of aesthetics. It's  
laden with laudable beauty; the meters  
is completely panegyric.

It speaks of epistemological truths.  
It launches forays into the dark  
depths of the human psyche. It evokes  
profound surrealistic and existential  
images. However, don't expect this poem  
to elicit a penetrating epiphany. This poem  
is nothing more than a jumble of smart  
ass words.

## 72 Virgins

By Mike Berger

Terribly deluded;  
committing heinous crimes.  
Attacks on Uncle Sam.

Sacrificing themselves  
for the greater good.  
All in the name of Allah.

Reaping the rewards of  
heaven, joining the martyrs  
waiting for their 72 virgins.

What those poor deluded  
souls don't know. It's a  
sham; those smart assed  
fanatic didn't tell the suicide  
bombers that heaven ran out  
of virgins a long time ago.

## One Smart Ass

By Mike Berger

The view ain't much; staring at the world  
through gray bars. Get used to it, you'll  
be here for the next six months.

It took more than two years for those  
revenue boys to catch me. I moved  
the still every two weeks. My friends  
lit fires all around so the smoke wouldn't  
give me a way.

I cried long and loud when they smashed  
my still. That old still was my best friend.  
It produced finest sipping whiskey; none of  
that awful white lightning stuff.

Sour mash smooth as glass, with a hint  
of jackpine used to stoke the fire. It was  
aged more than a week. The good old boys  
who bought the stuff only had good things to say.  
It cost half of a bottle of Jim Beam.

This is my third stint in the gray bar hotel.  
The food is bad but the company is great.  
They don't put tough guys in the county jail.  
They treat me like a king. When I get out,  
even the local cops will buy my stuff.

## That Hot Pepper

By Mike Berger

Tears streamed down my face  
and fire belched from my nose.  
The juices cauterized my throat  
on the way down. "Don't eat that  
pepper", the waitress said. Her  
refrain bounced around in my mind.  
I woofed it down.

My kids were laughing and hooting  
to see their dad cry. My wife rather than  
trying to help, shook her head and  
hysterically laughed. I couldn't speak.  
The fire had seared every membrane  
In my throat.

I took the family to dinner at a classy  
restaurant. The chef stuck that evil  
pepper on the top of my salad. It was  
waxy orange-yellow and it beckoned  
me on. I picked it up. It's stubbly gnarled  
end gave me a double dare. I bit off the  
end below the seeds where the smoke  
and fire resides.

My nose dripped, my eyes were  
crossed, my toes were curled and my  
tongue swelled. The smart assed waitress  
laughed as she brought me a grundel  
of napkins to blot the tears.

## Smart Assed Misanthrope

By Mike Berger

The little man had a stunted soul; he was a curmudgeon, misanthrope, and malcontent rolled into one. They say he smiled once and his face and nearly cracked.

Regardless of how beautiful a picture is, he can find flaws. He hates the sunshine because it gives him a sunburn. Even a French creampuff brings a scowl.

For him, nothing ever turns out right. He feels that it is another day older and deeper in debt. The only thing you can count on in this world is Murphy's law.

In a vivid dream, he came face to face with God. He looked at God through his eyebrows. With a surly look, he snarled out, "I thought you didn't make any junk; yeah! Well, just look at the crack in my fanny."

## Eye of the Beholder

By Mike Berger

The black night was a steel veil;  
exotic rhythms danced through  
the dark alley. Behind a massive,  
foreboding door, a Spanish melody  
spilled forth.

Creaking loudly as it opened, the  
door yielded to a murky room.  
Silhouettes of bodies seem to hang  
in the dark. Light from a small stage  
revealed a dozen hideous creatures.

A necrotic creature was playing the  
guitar. Loose flesh hung from his  
bony body, but that thing could play.  
Joined by a woman, the apotheosis  
of ugly, her skeletal fingers worked  
castanets. Slowly her feet began to  
dance; her body remained motionless.  
The music became louder and faster,  
and her hands and feet became a blur.

When the dance was over, her audience  
called for more. She caught my eye and  
made her way through adoring fans. She  
came straight to me. She was as brash  
as her dance as she hit on me. The smell  
of rotting flesh turned my stomach. It stuck  
in my throat; I couldn't speak. I held the  
my hand showing her my wedding ring.  
She shrugged her shoulders and walked  
away.

The creature standing next to me was  
shaking it's head. In a gravelly voice, that  
smart ass spoke "I'll never understand  
women. Why would beautiful thing like  
her be attracted to you?" He added,  
"You are the ugliest thing I have ever

## Cutting Back

By Mike Berger

Hooked on diet Coke. Drinking  
at least a six pack a day, I'm keeping  
Coke in business.

All that Coke can't be good for me,  
but I so enjoy the rush. Caffeine  
puts a bounce in my step and a  
sparkle in my eyes. When I began  
to tremble and shake, I know I've  
had enough.

I've tried to cut back drinking Coke,  
but a little imp with a hammer pounds  
in my head. He delights in pounding  
on the tenderest spots. If I could catch  
him in a dark alley, I would teach him a  
thing or two..

I'm going to cut back to one can a day.  
Don't think I'm a smart ass when I say.  
when the blahs and the headaches  
set in, I'll drown them out with Mountain  
Dew.

## Dreaming of the Zoo

By Mike Berger

A purple cockatoo takes to wing,  
flying upside down.

The mongoose confronts a snake,  
hysterically laughing as it pounces.

The great ape growls as it pounds  
sand in a rat hole.

The monkeys use the microwave  
two heat yesterday's leftovers.

The giraffe finally swallows yesterday's  
drink of water.

The Lions are starting their own singing  
group.

Not to be outdone, the Tigers are  
starting a karaoke band.

The hyena is suffering from depression;  
it hasn't laughed in weeks.

The smart assed orangutan throws dung  
at you and wakes you from your sleep.

## Smart Assed Sign

By Mike Berger

Blinking my eyes, I try to focus;  
I'm getting rummy. This long straight  
stretch of road is hypnotic. It is  
forty miles of nothin'. I pull a hair  
from my nose; the pain keeps me  
awake.

The waitress at the truck stop said  
I should be on the lookout for antelope.  
If antelope are a foot tall, with long  
pointy ears, I ran over one a mile  
back.

Why don't they have rest stops  
along this desolate stretch? In the  
next wide spot, I'll pull over and  
stack a few ZZZs. I'll dream of the  
big city with people milling around.

I knew I had to pull over, but there  
ahead was a bill board; It jarred me  
awake. That smart assed sign read,  
"Enjoy driving Wyoming."

## Good Old Boys

By Mike Berger

Plaid shirts, Levi's, and hightop boots are a fashion statement. You won't find them on the racks in Paris or Milan. They are the uniform of the good old boys.

They sit in the park playing checkers, soaking up the sun. A six pack of Bud lasts the full day. The game proceeds between sips. There is a moment of delight when someone wins; nobody keeps score.

Why do they while away the hours? Is there something more to life than an old friend and a checkers game? Getting a king is there daily excitement. One smart assed old codger observed, "It doesn't get any better than this.

## Echo

By Mike Berger

I stared at the massive Blue Rock  
Mesa. I shouted, "Hello." The echo  
Came thundering back. The pail blue  
Rock returned my greeting.

"How are you today?" I shouted.  
"I'm fine, how are you?"  
No! No! No!  
Echoes aren't supposed to talk back.

I searched the rock to see if someone  
was playing a joke. It seemed clear that  
no one was there. I knew full well those  
bluish rocks were inanimate and couldn't  
answer back.

If the rock can't talk, what did I hear? I  
sat and pondered. One thought became  
an inescapable. The echo I heard must  
all in my head.

I shouted again, "Bite the wall." That  
Smart assed echo answered , " You  
jerk, I am the wall."

## Evil Thing

By Mike Berger

Grotesque, ugly  
The apotheosis  
of gruesome.  
Necrotic flash;  
hanging.

Massive hulk;  
yellow eyes;  
curved claws;  
guttural growl.

Slowly advancing;  
reeking;  
frozen;  
feet turned lead.

Eye to eye;  
tears spill;  
body trembles;  
mucous flows.

Dull yellow teeth.  
Breath stinks;  
curls toes;  
growling, that smart  
assed creature says,  
"You are one ugly dude."

## It's All The Same

By Mike Berger

Under the umbrella of a sidewalk café,  
we drank dark espresso. The sounds of  
the city fought with our conversation.

She laughingly spoke of love and life;  
to her life is a lark. I complimented her  
on her dark eyes. She smiled.

I'm a New England Yank, so she spoke  
of the differences between French women  
and Americans. American women are so  
repressed; sex is a dirty word.

American girls hide themselves behind  
headaches. French girls except sex  
for what it is, part of the real world.  
Something to be enjoyed.

Her dark eyes stared into mine. I put  
my hand over hers. She puckered her  
lips and my heart raced. I look deeply  
into her eyes and asked, "Well?"

She broke eye contact, looking away.  
I continued to gaze; she finally looked  
up with a twisted look on her face. She  
gave this smart assed reply, "I'm not  
in the mood."

## Full Moon

By Mike Berger

An enigma; usually quiet  
and demure. Not given to  
wanton desires; a bit shy;  
can't hold eye contact.  
Painful to be around  
strangers.

Then comes the full moon.  
She pounces, tearing at  
my clothes. Scratching  
and biting; she utters  
guttural sounds. She is  
strong beyond belief as  
she presses her body to  
mine.

I'm being serious; not  
trying to be a smart ass;  
why can't there be a full  
moon all of the time?

## Fun, Fun, Fun

By Mike Berger

Red and sleek begging to be  
touched. It a tiger with a soft  
growl. Its body trembles.

She smiles at me as I slide into  
the passenger seat.. She lays a  
patch. Before I knew it, we were  
doing eighty.

Thoughts of romance vanished'  
She laughs at the pinched look  
on my face.

Knuckles turned white; tires  
screech. She laid another patch  
as she romps on the gas..

When she dropped me off, I was still  
shaking. I went into my house and  
changed my shorts.

My old man sees the wet spot and  
He asks if In enjoyed the drive.

## Missing Beer

By Mike Berger

The sun was blistering.  
It was mid day, I stepped  
into a bar The place was  
empty except for the bar  
tender and piano player.

The noon crowd had gone  
and it was too early for  
the working guys. The  
piano picker was pounding  
out some rag time tunes.

I drank a draft and ordered  
another. I left my glass half  
full when I went to the boy's  
room. When I got back all  
of my beer was gone.

I called the barkeep over  
and demanded, "Did you  
drink my beer?" He shook his  
head and replied, "No, it was  
the piano player's dog."

That sounded like something  
from the said in desperation.  
So I ordered draft and drank half.  
I got up and moseyed toward  
the restrooms, but stopped to  
watch. That old dog jumped up  
on my stool and lapped up my  
beer. I came storming over and  
confronted the piano picker. I  
pointed at the dog and growled,  
"Do you know your dog drank  
my beer?" That smart assed piano  
picker replies, "No", sing a few  
bars and I'll pick it up from there."

## Consummate Smart Ass

By Mike Berger

The contemporary novel is a marvel;  
thin as the paper it's written on. Writers  
prostitute their talents to make a buck.  
They substitute sex and gore for good  
writing. Their tales are full of sound and  
fury, signifying nothing. They produce  
drivel to feed the vicarious hedonism  
of the mindless masses. They follow  
the formula, transparent plots and  
inane verbiage that seems to be  
computer generated. Examine the  
book racks of current paperback  
novels; endless tomes with no soul.  
When you're through looking, please  
buy my latest release.

## Road Rash

By Mike Berger

The trail was narrow, lined with pine and aspen. Making the climb to the top was tough, but coming down was a disaster. Rocks grabbed at your tires; gravity was working overtime.

The steep part of the hill looked straight down. Gulping, I decided to let it fly. Halfway down, I must be hitting a hundred, when a tree root jumped out and grabbed my tire.

Like a rocket launched into space, I flew. Arms flailing looking for the skyhook. The ground came looming up, and a disco ball filled my head. I gasp for breath.

My plastic helmet was split in two; an acre of road rash oozed blood. Laying there in a world of hurt, I tried to move each part. Then some smart ass pedaled up and asked if I was hurt.

© 2010 Mike Berger