

Arts & Entertainment



Photo courtesy of NETV

Zaphod Beeblebrox and Trillian of "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Universe."

Stuff for silly humans

By David Wood

Earth is a pretty blue-green, but otherwise it's nothing special. Space is a big place. That's the first thing you should know about the universe.

In the cosmic scheme of things, Earth is less than a drop in the bucket. A pebble on the beach is more distinguished than it. If you have to bulldoze it to make way for a hyperspace bypass, you have to bulldoze it. That's that.

But when the heavy machinery arrived and hovered over the planet's capitals,

Television Review

announcing, "Ahem, we're here," the little humans behaved as if they were outraged. They had no cause to be surprised. The plans had been in open file on Alpha Centuri for months, if they'd cared to look. The bypass foreman explained this, then blasted Earth to smithereens.

Humans are dumb, silly things. They're apes who came out of the trees and still think digital watches are pretty neat. They're dumb, silly and mostly unhappy. About 2,000 laps around the sun before Earth was blasted, one man was nailed to two pieces of timber for saying it's nice to be nice. They're silly, and that's that.

Arthur Dent, for instance, is a perfect dodo. The absurd Londoner was yanking his hair out over trifles like heartn and home when, in minutes, Earth and all its stuff would perish. He was lucky to have a neighbor like Ford Perfect, a dapper young gent, partial to pinstripes, who encouraged Arthur to quaff as much beer as he could in the time there was left and to secure as many peanuts as his money could buy. He even shared his baton with Arthur, so they could teleport to the bulldozing Volgonian spaceship in the last instant.

Ford isn't the average guy next door. Actually, he's from the star system Betelgeuse (pronounced *bettle-juice*) and just happened to be on Earth doing research on the updated edition of "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Universe," which is the most informative text a spacefarer can have since the "Encyclopedia Galactica."

The source book looks like a calculator with a fancy display, and Ford gives one to Arthur for reference. Suddenly, the Volgonian spaceship prepares to enter hyperspace. Ford tells Arthur to lay down, put a towel between his ankles and a fish in his ear. Ford happens to be carrying a spare fish.

That's much of the tone and some of the action of the first episode of "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Universe" (Saturdays, 10 p.m., Nebraska ETV Network), a BBC space comedy that premiered Oct.

30 and is rather good. It's based on a book by Douglas Adams, whose latest book, by the way, "Life, the Universe and Everything," is currently a Top-10 best-seller.

In the same time slot on weekdays is another British (i.e. low-budget) space-comedy serial called "Doctor Who," an ongoing (15 years now) spoof of the ridiculous old cliff-hanger thrillers. Unfortunately, cliff-hangers are spoofs enough in themselves, and the good two-headed doctor comes off a little lame. "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Universe," on the other hand, lampoons sci fi at large, is fast-paced, twisted and funny (i.e. wry, as it's distinctly British).

Arthur, who's never even had time to change out of his robe, is somewhat befuddled by the fast action. But under the circumstances, he takes it good-naturedly, even if he's a bit sarcastic at times. Ford's fast-thinking, though. He knows everything. After all, he's a researcher for the definitive "Guide." He's not particularly arrogant, but he keeps in a tizzy over the ignorance that surrounds him. Volgonians, meanwhile, are big lumps of crud with piggish noses and no sense of humor.

Episode two pens with Arthur and Ford on their backs with fish in their ears. Arthur taps "Babel fish" into his "Guide" and is told, with scrolling, talking text and flashy graphics, that Babel fish can be used as telepathic translation devices. In this way, he knows what's said when the Volgonian captain summons them.

Ford and he are tortured, strapped down and read excruciatingly bad poetry. The victims praise the captain's poesy with polysyllabic rhapsody, lest they are tossed into raw space. The captain considers it, then says he was going to chuck them anyway.

A man, especially when he's only dressed in a robe and slippers, can survive in naked space only 30 seconds. They were lucky then that, in the 29th second, they're picked up by a passing spaceship, caught in its infinite improbability drive.

Things are momentarily strange. Arthur's legs stretch to the sunset, and his left arm and digital watch vanish. Ford turns into a penguin. Before them, waves of high-rise buildings wash against a solid sea. Behind them, monkeys type out "Hamlet" and other classics.

At last, they materialize inside a slick, gleaming spaceship that is, Arthur notes, much classier than the Volgonians'. Marvin, a bored, bummed-out robot, leads them to the captain, who's a groovy longhair with two heads and a curvaceous girlfriend receptionist, and all's set for episode three.

Stay tuned. "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Universe" may have crude production value and its continuity may be piecemeal, but for ludicrous satire, whirlwind repartee and good clean yucks, it's out of this world, and that's that. It's just the stuff for silly humans.

Rotisserie is a treat

By C. Scott Thompson

In the wake of the steak-and-potato mentality that pervades the majority of eating establishments in the Midwest, there is a restaurant in Lincoln that is a truly refreshing change from the ordinary. The Rotisserie at 12th and O streets is a fine restaurant in every respect, indeed rivaling some of the best restaurants that I've sampled in Boston and New York City.

The decor is one of the best parts of an evening at The Rotisserie. It's



Dining Review

decidedly deco, with a beautiful black and gold bar, lots of etched glass and a delicious color scheme of jade and cranberry. The hanging art work is

fabulous, and the waiters' dress of black and white also helps carry out the motif. The tables are meticulously dressed and flawlessly arranged. Most are lit with a single spotlight for a dramatic touch.

Of course, the food is the main attraction, and I can safely say that everything on the menu is a treat. The preparation is simple and, in many ways, reflects the "nouveau cuisine" school. The lunch menu offers meat, a nice selection of fresh fish, omelettes and a wide variety of salads.

I had broiled trout with herb butter and braised vegetables, which melt in your mouth. My companion had a luncheon filet that was very nicely

seasoned and lean. Both entrees were preceded by a lovely mixed garden salad and delicious French bread.

Dinner is an affair to be relished, too. The menu expands for evening dining, but offers mostly seafood and poultry, with just a few beef entrees. Appetizers include prawn cocktail, smoked salmon and hearts of palm. The seafood entrees include a few not seen on any other menu in town. For instance, the grilled swordfish at The Rotisserie was better than some I had at Key West last season. The poultry side of the menu includes duck grenadine, duck with scallions and plum sauce, cornish hen broiled or a l'orange and qual with saffron butter.

Of course, no dinner would be complete without a complementary vintage, and The Rotisserie unequivocally has the best wine list in town. The balance is ideal. There is a wine for everyone. The French whites particularly are well chosen, and the best part about it is that you can order by the glass and prices are reasonable.

In fact, prices overall at The Rotisserie are very reasonable, considering the atmosphere and quality of food. Lunch entrees run between \$3 and \$7, which is comparable to most other establishments in town. Dinner entrees run between \$8 and \$14, a bargain considering prices in larger metropolitan areas.

The Rotisserie is a marvelous place to spend an evening. Owner Bob Sepahpur has created an unparalleled dining establishment here in Lincoln. The environment is chic, the service reserved and efficient and the food is indeed outstanding.

Violin prodigy to appear

Ida Levin started studying the violin in 1966. There's nothing unusual about that, except she was only 3 at the time.

Today, at the ripe old age of 19, Levin is a seasoned performer with many major concerts and recitals to her credit.

Levin will perform with the Lincoln Symphony Orchestra Tuesday at 8 p.m. The concert will be at O'Donnell Auditorium on the campus of Nebraska Wesleyan University.

Levin made her debut with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra at the age of 10. Since then she has performed in the continental United States, Hawaii and Europe.

She is currently a scholarship student at the Juilliard School in New York City. She has been a student there since 1978. In 1979, she won the Juilliard School Brahms Violin Concerto Competition and performed the work at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall. She also won the 1979 violin competition at the Aspen Music Festival.

While at the Aspen Music Festival, she participated in the master classes of Itzhak Perlman and Pinchas Zuckerman. She also participated in the masters class of Zino Francescatti at the Maurice Ravel Music Festival in France.



Photo courtesy of Columbia

Ida Levin

Included among her recent engagements are concerto appearances at Carnegie Hall and Kennedy Center with the New York String Orchestra and Alexander Schneider. She has performed with the St. Louis Symphony, Toulouse Symphony, Juilliard Symphony and other, in

addition to giving radio and television recitals in various parts of the country.

Last year, Levin gave a joint recital at the White House with pianist Rudolf Serkin. This year, she is on an extensive tour of the United States and Canada that will include more than 30 engagements.